PART II.

THE SPIRIT OF ISLÀM
THE IDEAL OF ISLĀM

The religion of Jesus bears the name of Christianity, derived from his designation of Christ; that of Moses and of Buddha are known by the respective names of their teachers. The religion of Mohammed alone has a distinctive appellation. It is Islām.

In order to form a just appreciation of the religion of Mohammed it is necessary to understand aright the true significance of the word Islām. Salam (salama), in its primary sense, means, to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, to have paid up, to be at perfect peace; in its secondary sense,

1 For translation, see Appendix.
to surrender oneself to Him with whom peace is made. The noun derived from it means peace, greeting, safety, salvation. The word does not imply, as is commonly supposed, absolute submission to God’s will, but means, on the contrary, striving after righteousness.

The essence of the ethical principles involved and embodied in Islam is thus summarised in the second chapter of the Koran: “There is no doubt in this book—a guidance to the pious, who believe in the Unseen, who observe the prayers, and distribute (charity) out of what We have bestowed on them; and who believe in that which We have commissioned thee with, and in that We commissioned others with before thee, and who have assurance in the life to come;—these have received the direction of their Lord.”

The principal bases on which the Islamic system is founded are (1) a belief in the unity, immateriality, power, mercy, and supreme love of the Creator; (2) charity and brotherhood among mankind; (3) subjugation of the passions; (4) the outpouring of a grateful heart to the Giver of all good; and (5) accountability for human actions in another existence. The grand and noble conceptions expressed in the Koran of the power and love of the Deity surpass everything of their kind in any other language. The unity of God, His immateriality, His majesty, His mercy, form the constant and never-ending theme of the most eloquent and soul-stirring passages. The flow of life, light, and spirituality never ceases. But throughout there is no trace of dogmatism. Appeal is made to the inner consciousness of man, to his intuitive reason alone.

Let us now take a brief retrospect of the religious conceptions of the peoples of the world when the Prophet of Islam commenced his preachings. Among the heathen Arabs the idea of Godhead varied according to the culture of the individual or of the clan. With some it rose, comparatively speaking, to the “divinisation” or deification of nature; among others it fell to simple fetishism, the adoration of a piece of dough, a stick, or a stone. Some believed in a future life; others had no idea of it whatever. The pre-Islamite Arabs had their groves, their oracle-trees, their priestesses, like the Syro-

1 Koran, sura ii. 1-6.
Phœnicians. Phallic worship was not unknown to them; and the generative powers received adoration, like the hosts of heaven, under monuments of stone and wood. The wild denizens of the desert, then as now, could not be impervious to the idea of some unseen hand driving the blasts which swept over whole tracts, or forming the beautiful visions which rose before the traveller to lure him to destruction. And thus there floated in the Arab world an intangible, unrealised conception of a superior deity, the Lord of all.¹

The Jews, those great conservators of the monotheistic idea, as they have been generally regarded in history, probably might have assisted in the formation of this conception. But they themselves showed what strange metamorphoses can take place in the thoughts of a nation when not aided by a historical and rationalistic element in their religious code.

The Jews had entered Arabia at various times, and under the pressure of various circumstances. Naturally, the conceptions of the different bodies of emigrants, refugees, or colonists would vary much. The ideas of the men driven out by the Assyrians or Babylonians would be more anthropomorphic, more anthropopathic, than of those who fled before Vespasian, Trajan, or Hadrian. The characteristics which had led the Israelites repeatedly to lapse into idolatry in their original homes, when seers were in their midst to denounce their backslidings, would hardly preserve them from the heathenism of their Arab brothers. With an idea of "the God of Abraham" they would naturally combine a materialistic conception of the deity, and hence we find them rearing "a statue representing Abraham, with the ram beside him ready for sacrifice," in the interior of the Kaaba.

Amongst the later comers the Shammaites and the Zealots formed by far the largest proportion. Among them the worship of the law verged upon idolatry, and the Scribes and Rabbins claimed a respect almost approaching adoration. They believed themselves to be the guardians of the people, the preservers of law and tradition, "living exemplars and mirrors, in which the true mode of life, according to the law,

¹ Shahristân: Tiele calls the religion of the pre-Islâmite Arabs "animistic polydaemonism."
was preserved." ¹ They looked upon themselves as the "flower of the nation," and they were considered, through their intercourse with God, to possess the gift of prophecy. In fact, by their people as well as by themselves they were regarded as the prime favourites of God.² The veneration of the Jews for Moses went so far, says Josephus, that they revered his name next to that of God; and this veneration they transferred to Ezra, the restorer of national life and law under the Kyānian dynasty.³

Besides, the mass of the Jews had never, probably, thoroughly abandoned the worship of the Teraphim, a sort of household gods made in the shape of human beings, and consulted on all occasions as domestic oracles, or regarded perhaps more as guardian penates.⁴ This worship must have been strengthened by contact with the heathen Arabs.

When Jesus made his appearance in Judæa, the doctrine of divine unity and of a supreme Personal Will, overshadowing the universe with its might and grace, received acceptance only among one race—the worshippers of Jehovah. And even among them, despite all efforts to the contrary, the conception of the divinity had either deteriorated by contact with heathen nations, or become modified by the influence of pagan philosophies. On the one hand, Chaldeo-Magian philosophy had left its finger-mark indelibly impressed on the Jewish traditions; on the other, their best minds, whilst introducing among the Greek and Roman philosophers the conception of a great Primal Cause, had imbibed, in the schools of Alexandria, notions hardly reconcilable with their monotheistic creed.

The Hindus, with their multitudinous hordes of gods and goddesses; the Mago-Zoroastrians, with their two divinities struggling for mastery; the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians with their pantheons full of deities whose morality was below that of the worshippers,—such was the condition of the civilised world when Jesus commenced his preachings. With all his dreams and aspirations, his mind was absolutely exempt from

² Josephus, Antiquities, xvm. 24. They were, so to speak, the Brahmans of Judaism
³ Ezra vii. 10 et seq
⁴ Judges xviii. 14.
those pretensions which have been fixed on him by his over-
sealous followers. He never claimed to be a "complement
of God," or to be a "hypostasis of the Divinity."

Even modern idealistic Christianity has not been able yet to
shake itself free from the old legacy bequeathed by the anthrop-
omorphism of bygone ages. Age after age everything human
has been eliminated from the history of the great Teacher,
until his personality is lost in a mass of legends. The New
Testament itself, with "its incubation of a century," leaves
the revered figure clothed in a mist. And each day the old
idea of "an Aeon born in the bosom of eternity," gathers force
until the Council of Nice gives it a shape and consistency, and
formulates it into a dogma.

Many minds, bewildered by the far-offness of the universal
Father, seek a resting-place midway in a human personality
which they call divine. It is this need of a nearer object of
adoration which leads modern Christianity to give a name to
an ideal, clothe it with flesh and blood, and worship it as a
man-God.

The gifted author of the Defects of Modern Christianity con-
siders the frequency with which the Nazarene Prophet asserted
that he was "the Son of God," and demanded the same worship
as God Himself, a proof of his Divinity. That Jesus ever
maintained he was the Son of God, in the sense in which it has
been construed by Christian divines and apologists, we totally
deny. Matthew Arnold has shown conclusively that the New
Testament records are in many respects wholly unreliable.
So far as the divinity of Christ is concerned, one can almost
see the legend growing. But assuming that he made use of
the expressions attributed to him, do they prove that he claimed
to be "the only-begotten of the Father"? Has the apologist
not heard of the Eastern dervish, famous now as al-Hallâj,
who claimed to be God Himself? "An-al-Hakk," "I am
God—I am the Truth," said he; and the Muslim divines,
like the Jewish Sanhedrin, pronounced him guilty of blas-
phemy, and condemned him to death? A poor simple heart,
kindling with an exalted mysticism, was thus removed from
earth. The Bâbî still believes that his master, "the Gate"
to eternal life, was not killed, but miraculously removed to
heaven. Can it be said that when Abû Mughis al-Hallâj and the Bâb called themselves "Truth" and the "Gate to heaven," they meant to imply that they were part of the Divinity, or, if they did, that their "claim" is tantamount to proof? But, as we said before, we deny that Jesus, whose conceptions, when divested of the Aberglaube of his followers, were singularly free from exaggeration as to his own character or personality, ever used any expression to justify the demand attempted to be fixed upon him. His conception of the "Fatherhood" of God embraced all humanity. All mankind were the children of God, and he was their Teacher sent by the Eternal Father. The Christian had thus a nobler exemplar before him. The teachings of the Prophet of Nazareth should have elevated him to a purer conception of the Deity. But six centuries had surrounded the figure of Jesus with those myths which, in opposition to his own words, resolved him into a manifestation of the Godhead. The "Servant" took the place of the Master in the adoration of the world. The vulgar masses, unable to comprehend or realise this wonderful mixture of Neo-Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Judeo-Hellenistic philosophy, and the teachings of Jesus, adored him as God incarnate, or reverted to the primitive worship of relics and of a tinselled goddess who represented the pure mother of Jesus. The Collyridians, who were by no means an unimportant sect, went so far as to introduce in the Christian pantheon the Virgin Mary for God, and worship her as such, offering her a sort of twisted cake called collyryns, whence the sect had its name. At the Council of Nice which definitely settled the nature of Jesus, there were men who held that besides "God the Father," there were two other gods—

1 Abû Mughis ibn Mansûr, al-Hallâj, died in the prime of life. He was a man of pure morals, great simplicity, a friend of the poor, but a dreamer and an enthusiast. For an account of the Bâb and Bîbism, see Gobineau, Les Religions et les Philosophes dans l'Asie Centrale and the History of the Bâb by Professor K. G. Browne.

2 The use of the word "Father" in relation to God was cut out from Islâm owing to the perversion of the idea among the then Christians.

3 The Isaurian sovereigns, indirectly inspired by Islâm, for over a century battled against the growing degradation of Christianity, stung with all their might to make it run back in the channel pointed out by the great Teacher, but to no purpose.
Christ and the Virgin Mary.\(^1\) And the Romanists even now, it is said, call the mother of Jesus the *complement* of the Trinity.

In the long night of superstition the Christians had wandered far away from the simplicity of the Nazarene teachings. The worship of images, saints, and relics had become inseparably blended with the religion of Jesus. The practices which he had denounced, the evils which he had reprehended, were, one by one, incorporated with his faith. The holy ground where the revered Teacher had lived and walked was involved in a cloud of miracles and visions, and “the nerves of the mind were benumbed by the habits of obedience and belief.”\(^2\)

Against all the absurdities we have described above, the life-aim of Mohammed was directed Addressing, with the voice of truth, inspired by deep communion with the God of the Universe, the fetish-worshippers of the Arabian tribes on one side and the followers of degraded Christianity and Judaism on the other, Mohammed, that “master of speech,” as he has been truly called, never travelled out of the province of reason, and made them all blush at the monstrousness of their beliefs. Mohammed, the grand apostle of the unity of God, thus stands forth in history in noble conflict with the retrogressive tendency of man to associate other beings with the Creator of the universe. Ever and anon in the Koran occur passages, fervid and burning, like the following “Your God is one God; there is no God but He, the Most Merciful.” In the creation of the heaven and earth, and the alternation of night and day, and in the ship which saileth on the sea, laden with what is profitable to mankind; and in the rain-water which God sendeth from heaven, quickening again the dead earth, and the animals of all sorts which cover its surface; and in the change of winds, and the clouds balanced between heaven and earth,—

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\(^1\) Mosheim, vol 1 p 432

\(^2\) Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical Hist* vol 1 p 432; comp. also Hallam, *Const Hist of England*, chap v p 75. From the text it will be seen how much truth there is in the assertion that Islam derived “everything good it contains” from Judaism or Christianity. “It has been the fashion,” says Deutsch, “to ascribe whatever is good in Mohammedanism to Christianity.” We fear this theory is not compatible with the results of honest investigation. For of Arabian Christianity at the time of Mohammed, the less said, perhaps, the better. By the side of it even modern Anabara Christianity, of which we possess such astounding accounts, appears pure and exalted.”—*Quarterly Review*, No. 954, p 315.
are signs to people of understanding; yet some men take idols beside God, and love them as with the love due to God." ¹ What a depth of sympathy towards those benighted people do these words convey! Again, "It is He who causeth the lightning to appear unto you (to strike) fear and (to raise) hope; and formul th the pregnant clouds. The thunder celebrateth His praise, and the angels also.... He launcheth His thunderbolts, and striketh therewith whom He pleaseth while they dispute concerning Him.... It is He who of right ought to be invoked, and those (the idols) whom they invoke besides Him shall not respond to them at all; otherwise than as he who stretched forth his hands to the water that it may ascend to his mouth when it cannot ascend (thither).² He hath created the heavens and the earth to (manifest His) justice; far be that from Him which they associate with Him. He hath created man... and behold he is a professed disputer. He hath likewise created the cattle for you, and they are a credit unto you when they come trooping home at evening-time, or are led forth to pasture in the morn.... And He hath subjected the night and day to your service; and the sun and the moon and the stars are all bound by His laws.... It is He who hath subjected the sea unto you, and thou seest the ships ploughing the deep... and that ye might render thanks. ... Shall He therefore who createth be as he who createth not? Do ye not therefore take heed? If ye were to reckon up the blessings of God, ye shall not be able to compute their number; God is surely gracious and merciful. He knoweth that which ye conceal and that which ye publish. But those [the idols] whom ye invoke, besides the Lord, create nothing, but are themselves created. They are dead and not living...."³

¹ Sura ii. 158 160 ² Sura xiii. 13-15. ³ Sura xvi. 3-21.
the earth, and the upholding of them both burdeneth Him not, . . . 1 He throweth the veil of night over the day, pursuing it quickly. He created the sun, moon, and stars subjected to laws by His behest. Is not all creation and all empire His? Blessed be the Lord of the worlds. 2 Say, He alone is God: God the Eternal. He begetteth not, and He is not begotten; there is none like unto Him. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful, King on the day of reckoning; Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. Guide us on the straight path, the path of those to whom Thou art gracious, with whom Thou art not angry; such as go not astray. 3 . . . Against the evil in His creation I betake me to the Lord of the daybreak" "Thou needest not raise thy voice, for He knoweth the secret whisper, and what is yet more hidden. Say, Whose is what is in the heavens and the earth? Say, God's who has imposed mercy on Himself. 4 . . . With Him are the keys of the unseen. None knows them save He; He knows what is in the land and in the sea; no leaf falleth but He knoweth it, nor is there a grain in the darkness under the earth, nor a thing, green or sere, but it is recorded by itself. He taketh your souls in the night, and knoweth what the work of your day deserveth; then He awaketh you that the set life-term may be fulfilled; then unto Him shall ye return, and then shall He declare unto you what you have wrought. 5 Verily, God it is who cleaves out the grain and the date-stone, He brings forth the living from the dead, and it is He who brings the dead from the living. There is God! How then can ye be beguiled? "" It is He who cleaves out the morning, and makes night a repose, and the sun and the moon two reckonings; that is the decree of the Mighty, the Wise. 6

"There is God for you, your Lord! There is no God but He, the Creator of everything, then worship Him, for He over everything keeps guard!"

1 Sura ii 255.  2 Sura vii 54.  3 This is the Surat-ul-Fâtiha, the opening chapter of the Koran.  4 Sura vii 12.  5 Sura vi 59, 60  6 Sura vi 97
"Sight perceives Him not, but he perceives men's sights; for He is the knower of secrets the Aware." 1

"Say, Verily my prayers and my devotion, and my life and my death, belong to God, the Lord of the worlds." 2

"Dost thou not perceive that all creatures both in heaven and earth praise God; and the birds also?" 3

"Every one knoweth His prayer and His praise.

"Unto God belongeth the kingdom of heaven and earth; and unto God shall be the return.

"Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth? There is no God but He! He maketh alive and killeth. 4 . . . He is the Living One. No God is there but He. Call then upon Him, and offer Him a pure worship. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds! . . . My prayers and my worship and my life and my death are unto God, Lord of the worlds. He hath no associate. 5 It is He who hath brought you forth, and gifted you with hearing and sight and heart; yet how few are grateful! . . . It is He who hath sown you in the earth, and to Him shall ye be gathered. 6 . . . O my Lord, place me not among the ungodly people. 7 . . . He it is who ordaineth the night as a garment and sleep for rest, and ordaineth the day for waking up to life." 8

"Is not He the more worthy who answereth the oppressed when they cry to Him, and taketh off their ills, and maketh you to succeed your sires on the earth? 9 God the Almighty, the All-knowing, Forgiver of Sin, and Receiver of Penitence." 10

"Shall I seek any other Lord than God, when He is Lord of all things? No soul shall labour but for itself, and no burdened one shall bear another's burden." 11

"At last ye shall return to your Lord, and He will declare that to you about which you differ. 12 Knower of the hidden and the manifest 1 the Great, the Most High! . . . Alike to Him is that person among you who concealeth his words, and

1 Sura vi 104
2 Sura vii 158
3 Sura lxvii 23, 24
4 Sura xxv 47.
5 Sura xi 1-2.
6 Sura vi 163
7 Sura vii 158.
8 Sura xxiv 94
9 Sura xxvii 62
10 Sura ii 286.
he that telleth them abroad; he who hideth him in the night, and he who cometh forth in the day." 1

"God is the light of the heavens and the earth; His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, and the lamp is in a glass; the glass is as though it were a glittering star; it is lit from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the east nor of the west, the oil of which would well-nigh give light though no fire touched it—light upon light! God guides to His light whom He pleases; and God strikes out parables for men, and God all things doth know."

"In the houses God has permitted to be reared and His name to be mentioned therein, His praises are celebrated therein mornings and evenings."

"Men whom neither merchandise nor selling divert from the remembrance of God, and steadfastness in prayer and giving alms, who fear a day when hearts and eyes shall be upset, that God may recompense them for the best they have done, and give them increase of His grace; for God provides whom He pleases without count."

"But those who misuse, their works are like the mirage in a plain,—the thirsty counts it water till when he comes to it he finds nothing, but he finds that God is with him, and He will pay him his account, for God is quick to take account."

"Or like darkness on a deep sea; there covers it a wave, above which is a wave, above which is a cloud,—darknesses one above the other,— when one puts out his hand he can scarcely see it, for he to whom God has given no light he has no light."

"Hast thou seen that God? All who are in the heavens and the earth celebrate His praises, and the birds, too, spreading out their wings; each one knows its prayer and its praise, and God knows what they do."

"Hast thou not seen that God drives the clouds, and then reunites them, and then accumulates them, and thou mayest see the rain coming forth from their midst, and He sends down from the sky mountains with hail therein, and He makes it fall on whom He pleases, and He turns it from whom He pleases; the flashing of His lightning well-nigh goes off with their sight." 1

1 Sura xiii 9, 10, 11.
"God interchanges the night and the day; verily in that is a lesson to those endowed with sight."

The chapter entitled "The Merciful," which has been well called the _Benedicite_ of Islam, furnishes one of the finest examples of the Prophet's appeal to the testimony of nature.

"The sun and the moon in their appointed time,
The herbs and the trees adore,
And the heavens He raised them, and set the Balance that ye should not be outrageous in the balance;
But weigh ye aright and stint not the measure.
And the earth, He has set it for living creatures;
Therein are fruits, and palms with sheaths, and grain with chaff and frequent shoots.

He created man of crackling clay like the potter's, and He created the firmament from the smokeless fire.

The Lord of the two easts and the Lord of the two wests,
He has let loose the two seas that meet together; between them is a barrier they cannot pass.
He brings forth from each pearls both great and small!

His are the ships which rear aloft in the sea like mountains.
Every one upon it is transient, but the face of thy Lord endowed with majesty and honour shall endure.

Of Him whosoever is in the heaven and in the earth does beg, every day is He in [some fresh] work.
Blessed be the name of thy Lord, possessed of majesty and glory."

"Every man's actions have we hung round his neck, and on the last day shall be laid before him a wide-opened Book."¹... "By a soul, and Him who balanced it, and intimated to it its wickedness and its piety, blest now is he who hath kept it pure, and undone is he who hath corrupted it."²... "No defect canst thou see in the creation of the God of mercy;

¹ Sura xvii. 13 ² Sura xci. 7-9.
repeat the gaze, seest thou a single flaw, then twice more
repeat the gaze, thy gaze shall return to thee dulled and
weary." 1 . . . "He quickeneth the earth when it is dead;
so too shall you be brought to life."

"The heavens and the earth stand firm at His bidding:
hereafter when at once He shall summon you from the earth,
forth shall ye come." 2 . . . "When the sun shall be folded
up, and the stars shall fall, and when the mountains shall be
set in motion; when the she-camels shall be left, and the wild
beasts shall be gathered together; when the seas shall boil,
and souls be re-paired [with their bodies]; when the female
child that was buried alive shall be asked for what crime she
was put to death; when the leaves of the Book shall be un-
rolled, and the heavens shall be stripped away, and the fire
of hell blaze forth, and paradise draw nigh, then shall every
soul know what it hath done." 3 . . . "What knowledge hast
It is for thee only to warn those who fear it". . . "What
shall teach thee the inevitable? Thamûd and Ād treated
the Day of Decision as a lie. They were destroyed with
thunderbolts and roaring blasts."

And yet with all His might, His tender care and pity are
all-embracing:

"By the noonday brightness, and by the night when it
darkeneth, thy Lord hath not forsaken thee, neither hath He
been displeased. Surely the future shall be better for thee
than the past; and in the end He shall be bounteous to thee,
and thou shalt be satisfied. Did He not find thee an orphan,
and give thee a home; erring, and guided thee; needy, and
enriched thee? As to the orphan, then, wrong him not;
and chide not away him that asketh of thee, and tell abroad
the favours of thy Lord." 4 "Did ye think We had made you
for sport, and that ye should not be brought back again to us?"
"O our God, punish us not if we forget and fall into sin;
blot out our sins and forgive us."  "Have mercy, O Lord,
for of the merciful, Thou art the best." 5 "The heavy laden

1 Sura lxxvii 4
2 Sura xxx. 25.
3 Sura lxxxi.
4 Sura xxiii.
5 Sura xxiii 118.
shall not bear another's load. We never punished till we had sent an apostle.” “This clear Book, behold, on a blessed night have we sent it down for a warning to mankind.” “Not to sadden thee have we sent it thee.”

And so on goes this wonderful book, appealing to the nobler feelings of man, his inner consciousness and his moral sense, proving and manifesting the enormity of idolatrous beliefs. Scarcely a chapter but contains some fervid passages on the power, mercy, and unity of God. The Islāmic conception of the Almighty has been misunderstood by Christian writers. The God of Islām is commonly represented as “a pitiless tyrant, who plays with humanity as on a chess-board, and works out His game without regard to the sacrifice of the pieces.” Let us see if this estimate is correct. The God of Islām is the All-mighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Lord of the worlds, the Author of the heavens and the earth, the Creator of life and death, in whose hand is dominion and irresistible power; the great, all-powerful Lord of the glorious Throne. God is the Mighty, the Strong, the Most High, the Producer, the Maker, the Fashioner, the Wise, the Just, the True, the Swift in reckoning, who knoweth every ant’s weight of good and of ill that each man hath done, and who suffereth not the reward of the faithful to perish. But the Almighty, the All-wise, is also the King, the Holy, the Peaceful, the Faithful, the Guardian over His servants, the Shelterer of the orphan, the Guide of the erring, the Deliverer from every affliction, the Friend of the bereaved, the Consoler of the afflicted; in His hand is good, and He is the generous Lord, the Gracious, the Hearer, the Near-at-Hand, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Very-forgiving, whose love for man is more tender than that of the mother-bird for her young.

The mercy of the Almighty is one of the grandest themes of the Koran. The very name [Ar-Rahmān] with which each chapter opens, and with which He is invoked, expresses a deep, all-penetrating conviction of that love, that divine mercy which unfolds creation.¹

The moral debasement of the followers of the two previous Dispensations wrings the Teacher’s heart, and then burst forth

¹ Sura iii. 124, xxv 50, xxviii. 74, xliii. 3, etc. etc.
denunciations on the Christians and the Jews for the super-
stitious rites they practised in defiance of the warnings of their
prophets. The fire of religious zeal, that had burned in the
bosoms of Isaiah and Jeremiah, was rekindled in the breast
of another and far greater man. He denounces; but above
the wail, the cry of agony at the degradation of humanity, is
heard the voice of hope.

The Korân severely censures the Jews for their "worship
of false gods and idols," the teraphim before referred to, and
for their exaggerated reverence for the memory of Ezra;
the Christians, for their adoration of Jesus and his mother.
"Hast thou not seen those to whom a portion of the Scriptures
have been given? They believe in false gods and idols. They
say to the unbelievers they are better directed in the right
way than those that believe [the Moslems]." ¹ "The Jews
say, Ezra is the son of God; the Christians say, al-Masîh
(Jesus) is the son of God. How infatuated they are! They
take their priests and their monks for their lords besides
God... They seek to extinguish the light of God with
their mouths." ² "The Jews and the Christians say,
We are the children of God, and His beloved." ³ "Many
of those unto whom the Scriptures have been given desire
to render you again unbelievers, after ye have believed....
Be constant in prayer, and give alms, and what good ye have
sent before you for your souls, ye shall find it with God."...
"They say, Verily, none shall enter paradise except those who
are Jews or Christians... Say, Produce your proof if ye
speak the truth. Nay, but he who directeth towards God,
and doth that which is right, he shall have his reward with
his Lord." ⁵

"O ye who have received the Scriptures, exceed not the just
bounds in your religion, neither say of God otherwise than the
truth. Verily, al-Masîh, the son of Mary, is the apostle of
God and His word. Believe therefore in God and His apostles,
and say not, There are three Gods; forbear this... al-Masîh
doth not proudly disdain to be a servant unto God." ⁶ "It

¹ Sura iv. 45. ² Sura ix. 30-32. ³ Sura v. 18.
⁴ The Jews, the Christians, and the Zoroastrians. ⁵ Sura v. 105, 106.
⁶ Sura iv. 171,
beseemeth not a man, that God should give him the Scriptures, and the wisdom, and the gift of prophecy, and that then he should say to his followers, 'Be ye worshippers of me, as well as of God,' but rather, 'Be ye perfect in things pertaining to God, since ye know the Scriptures, and have studied deep.'

The following passage shows the feeling with which such religious conceptions were regarded: "They say the God of mercy hath gotten to himself a son. Now have ye uttered a grievous thing; and it wanted but little that the heaven should be torn open, and that the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down, for that they attribute children unto the Merciful, whereas it is not meet for God to have children. Verily there is none in heaven or on earth but shall approach the Merciful as His servant. He encompasseth them."

But the inspired Preacher whose mission it is to proclaim the Truth does not confound the good with the bad. "Yet they are not all alike; there are of those who have received the Scriptures, upright people; they meditate on the signs of God in the night season, and worship; they believe in God and the last day, and command that which is just; and forbid that which is unjust, and zealously strive to excel in good works; these are of the righteous."

The mutual and burning hatred of Jew and Christian, the savage wars of Nestorian and Monophysite, the meaningless wrangle of the sects, the heartless and heart-rending logomachy of the Byzantine clergy, ever and anon bring down denunciations like the following:

"To Jesus and other apostles we gave manifest signs; and if God had pleased, their followers would not have fallen into these disputes. But God doeth what He will!" "Mankind was but one people, and God sent them prophets of warning and glad tidings, and the Book of Truth to settle all disputes. Yet none disputed like those to whom the Book had been sent for they were filled with jealousy of each other." "O people of the Book, why wrangle about Abraham? Why content about that whereof ye know nothing?"

The primary aim of the new Dispensation was to infuse o

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1 Sura iii. 78  
2 Sura xix. 91-94.  
3 Sura iii. 112 113.
revive in the heart of humanity a living perception of truth in the common relations of life. "The moral ideal of the new gospel," to use the phraseology of an eminent writer, "was set in the common sense of duty and the familiar instances of love."

"Verily, those people I have now passed away; they have the reward of their deeds; and ye shall have the meed of yours; of their doings ye shall not be questioned." 2 "Every soul shall bear the good and the evil for which it has laboured; and God will burden none beyond its power." "Blessed is he who giveth away his substance that he may become pure, and who offereth not favours to any one for the sake of recompense... but only as seeking the approval of his Lord the Most High." 3

"They are the blest who, though longing for it themselves, bestowed their food on the poor and the orphan and the captive [saying], 'We feed you for the sake of God. we seek from you neither recompense nor thanks.'" 4

"Worship God alone; be kind to kindred and servants, orphans and the poor; speak righteous to men, pray, and pay alms." "Defer humbly to your parents; with humility and tenderness say, O Lord, be merciful to them, even as they brought me up when I was helpless." "Abandon the old barbarities, blood-vengeance, and child-murder, and be united as one flesh." "Do thy alms openly or in secret, for both are well." Give of that which hath been given you before the day cometh when there shall be no trafficking, nor friendship, nor intercession." "Wouldst thou be taught the steep [path]? It is to ransom the captive, to feed the hungry, the kindred, the orphan, and him whose mouth is in the dust." "Be of those who enjoin steadfastness and compassion on others." 5 "Woe to them that make show of piety, and refuse help to the needy." "Make not your alms void by reproaches or injury." "Forgiveness and kind speech are better than favours with annoyance." "Abandon usury." "He who spendeth his substance to be seen of men, is like a

1 *I.e.* Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac, and the tribes
2 Sura ii 128
3 Sura xci 18, 20
4 Sura lxvi 8, 9
5 Sura xc 12-17.
rock with thin soil over it, whereon the rain falleth and leaveth it hard. But they who expend their substance to please God and establish their souls, are like a garden on a hill, on which the rain falleth and it yieldeth its fruits twofold; and even if the rain doth not fall, yet is there a dew.”

“Judge between men with truth, and follow not thy passions, lest they cause thee to err from the way of God.”

“Covet not another’s gifts from God.”

“There is no piety in turning the face east or west, but in believing in God only and doing good.”

“Make the best of all things; enjoin justice and avoid the foolish; and if Satan stir thee to evil, take refuge in God.”

“Touch not the goods of the orphan.”

Perform your covenant, and walk not proudly on the earth.”

“The birth of a daughter brings dark shadows on a man’s face.”

“Kill not your children for fear of want, for them and for you will We provide. Verily the killing them is a great wickedness.”

“God hath given you wives that ye may put love and tenderness between you.”

“Reverence the wombs that bear you.”

“Commit not adultery, for it is a foul thing and an evil way.”

“Let the believer restrain his eyes from lust; let women make no display of ornaments, save to their own kindred.”

“Know ye that this world’s life is a cheat, the multiplying of riches and children is like the plants that spring up after rain, rejoicing the husbandman, then turn yellow and wither away. In the next life is severe chastisement, or else pardon from God and His peace.”

“Abandon the semblance of wickedness and wickedness itself. They, verily, whose only acquirement is iniquity, shall be rewarded for what they shall have gained.”

Those who abstain from vanities and the indulgence of their passions, give alms, offer prayers, and tend well their trusts and their covenants, these shall be the heirs of eternal happiness.”

“Show kindness to your parents, whether one or both of them attain to old age with thee; and say not to them ‘Fie!’ neither reproach them, but speak to them both with respectful speech and tender affection.”

1 Sura xxxviii. 25
2 Sura xvii. 37.
3 Sura xvii. 33.
4 Sura xvii. 32.
5 Sura vi. 121.
6 Sura xxiii. 8.
7 Sura xvii. 23
"And to him who is of kin render his due, and also to the poor and to the wayfarer; yet waste not wastefully." ¹

"And let not thy hand be tied up to thy neck; nor yet open it with all openness, lest thou sit thee down in rebuke in beggary." ² "Enjom my servants to speak in kindly sort." ³ "Turn aside evil with that which is better." ⁴ "Just balances will We set up for the day of the Resurrection, neither shall any soul be wronged in aught; though were a work but the weight of a grain of mustard seed, We would bring it forth to be weighed, and Our reckoning will suffice." ⁵ "Seek pardon of your Lord and be turned unto Him verily, my Lord is merciful, loving." ⁶

"And your Lord saith, 'Call upon me, I will hearken unto you.' ⁷ "Say  O my servants who have transgressed to your own injury, despair not of God's mercy, for all sins doth God forgive. Gracious, merciful is He!' ⁸ "The good word riseth up to Him, and the righteous deed will He exalt." ⁹

"Truly my Lord hath forbidden filthy actions, whether open or secret, and miquity, and unjust violence." ¹⁰

"Call upon your Lord with lowliness and in secret, for He loveth not transgressors. And commut not disorders on the well-ordered earth after it hath been well ordered; and call on Him with fear and longing desire. Verily the mercy of God is nigh unto the righteous." ¹¹ "Moreover, We have enjoined on man to show kindness to his parents. With pain his mother beareth him; with pain she bringeth him forth, and he saith, 'O my Lord! stir me up to be grateful for Thy favours wherewith Thou hast favoured me and my parents, and to good works which shall please Thee, and prosper me in my offspring for to Thee am I turned, and am resigned to Thy will.'" ¹² "For them is a dwelling of peace with their Lord; and in recompense for their works shall He be their protector." ¹³ "Lost are they who, in their ignorance, have foolishly slain their children, and have forbidden that which

¹ Sura xvii. 26
² Sura xvii. 29
³ Sura xxi. 47.
⁴ Sura xxxix. 53.
⁵ Sura vii. 33.
⁶ Sura xvi. 15.
God hath given them for food, devising an untruth against God! Now have they erred; and they were not rightly guided."

"The likeness of those who expend their wealth for the cause of God, is that of a grain of corn which produceth seven ears, and in each ear a hundred grains; they who expend their wealth for the cause of God, and never follow what they have laid out with reproaches or harm, shall have their reward with their Lord; no fear shall come upon them, neither shall they be put to grief. A kind speech and forgiveness is better than alms followed by injury." 2

"God will not burden any soul beyond its power. It shall enjoy the good which it hath acquired, and shall bear the evil for the acquirement of which it laboured."... "O Lord, punish us not if we forget, or fall into sin, O our Lord! and lay not on us a load like that which Thou hast laid on those who have been before us, O our Lord! And lay not on us that for which we have not strength, but blot out our sins and forgive us and have pity on us." 3 "The patient and the truthful the lowly and the charitable, they who seek pardon at each daybreak". 4... "Who give alms, alike in prosperity and in success, and who master their anger, and forgive others: God loveth the doers of good"; 5 [their a goodly home with their Lord] "O our Lord! forgive us then our sin, and hide away from us our evil deeds, and cause us to die with the righteous". 6... "And their Lord answereth them, 'I will not suffer the work of him among you that worketh, whether of male or female, to be lost, the one of you is the issue of the other.'" 7 "And fear ye God, in whose name ye ask favours of each other—and respect women." 8

"And marry not women whom your fathers have married: for this is a shame, and hateful, and an evil way." 9

"Covet not the gifts by which God hath raised some of you above others." 10

1 Sura vi 141. 2 Sura ii. 261-263
3 Sura ii 286 4 Sura iii 16
6 Sura iii 192 7 Sura iii 194
9 Sura iv 22 10 Sura iv 32.
5 Sura iii 128. 8 Sura iv. 1.
to the poor, and to a neighbour, whether kinsman or newcomer, and to a fellow-traveller, and to the wayfarer, and to the slaves whom your right hands hold; verily, God loveth not the proud, the vain boaster." 1 "He who shall mediate between men for a good purpose shall be the gainer by it. But he who shall mediate with an evil mediation shall reap the fruit of it. And God keepeth watch over everything." 2 "O ye Moslems! stand fast to justice, when ye bear witness before God, though it be against yourselves, or your parents or your kindred, whether the party be rich or poor. God is nearer than you to both. Therefore follow not passion, lest ye swerve from truth." 3

Do the preachings of this desert-born Prophet, addressing a larger world and a more advanced humanity, in the nobility of their love, in their strivings and yearnings for the true, the pure, and the holy, fall short of the warnings of Isaiah or "the tender appeals of Jesus?"

The poor and the orphan, the humble dweller of the earth "with his mouth in the dust," the unfortunate being bereft in early life of parental care, are ever the objects of his tenderest solicitude. Ever and again he announces that the path which leads to God is the helping of the orphan, the relieving of the poor, and the ransoming of the captive. His pity and love were not confined to his fellow-beings, the brute creation shared with them his sympathy and tenderness.

"A man once came to him with a bundle, and said: 'O Prophet, I passed through a wood and heard the voice of the young of birds, and I took them and put them in my carpet, and their mother came fluttering round my head.' And the Prophet said: 'Put them down', and when he had put them down the mother joined the young. And the Prophet said: 'Do you wonder at the affection of the mother towards her young? I swear by Him who has 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.' " 'Fear God with regard to animals," said Mohammed, "ride them when they are fit to be ridden, and get off when they are tired. Verily, there are

1 Sura iv. 36  
2 Sura iv. 85  
3 Sura iv. 13.
rewards for our doing good to dumb animals, and giving them water to drink.”

In the Koran, animal life stands on the same footing as human life in the sight of the Creator. “There is no beast on earth,” says the Koran, “nor bird which flieth with its wings, but the same is a people like unto you—unto the Lord shall they return.” It took centuries for Christendom to awaken to a sense of duty towards the animal creation. Long before the Christian nations ever dreamt of extending towards animals tenderness and humanity, Mohammed proclaimed in impressive words the duty of mankind towards their dumb and humble servitors. These precepts of tenderness so lovingly embalmed in the creed are faithfully rendered into a common duty of everyday life in the world of Islâm.
CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT OF ISLĀM

For the conservation of a true religious spirit, Mohammed attached to his precepts certain practical duties, of which the following are the principal: (1) prayer, (2) fasting, (3) alms-giving, and (4) pilgrimage.

Man's consciousness of a supreme, all-pervading Power; his helplessness in the eternal conflict of nature; his sense of
benefaction,—all lead him to pour out the overflowing sentiments of his heart in words of gratitude and love, or repentance and solicitation, to One who is every-wakeful and merciful. Prayers are only the utterance of the sentiments which fill the human heart. All these emotions, however, are the result of a superior development. The savage, if supplications do not answer his purpose, resorts to the castigation of his fetish. But every religious system possessing any organic element has recognised, in some shape, the efficacy of prayer. In most, however, the theurgic character predominates over the moral; in some, the moral idea is entirely wanting.

The early Hindu worship consisted of two sets of acts—oblations and sacrifice accompanied with invocations. In the infancy of religious thought the gods are supposed to possess the same appetites and passions as human beings; and thus whilst man needs maternal benefits, the gods require offerings and propitiation. This idea often finds expression in the old hymns of the Rg Veda. With the development of religious conceptions, it is probable that, among at least the more advanced or thoughtful minds, the significance attached to oblations and sacrifice underwent considerable modification. But as the hold of the priestly caste, which claimed the possession of a "secret virtue" transmissible only through the blood, strengthened on the minds of the masses, Brahmanism crystallised into a literally sacrificial cult. The sacrifice could be performed only by the priest according to rigid and unalterable formulae, whilst he recited the mantras and went through the rites in a mechanical spirit, without religious feeling or enthusiasm, the worshipper stood by, a passive spectator of the worship which was performed on his behalf. The smallest mistake undid the efficacy of the observances. The devotional spirit, however, could not have been entirely wanting, or the Bhagavad Gita could not have been composed. But for the people as a whole, their worship had become a vast system of sacrifice, the value of which depended not so much upon the moral conduct of the individual worshipper as upon the qualification of the officiating priest. The former had only to believe in the efficacy of the rite and be in a state of legal purity at the time.
The Mago-Zoroastrian and the Sabæan lived in an atmosphere of prayer. The Zoroastrian prayed when he sneezed, when he cut his nails or hair, while preparing meals, day and night, at the lighting of lamps, etc. Ormuzd was first invoked, and then not only heaven, earth, the elements and stars, but trees, especially the moon-plant,¹ and beasts. The formulae were often to be repeated as many as twelve hundred times.² The moral idea, however pure with the few, would be perfectly eliminated from the minds of the common people. But even the sort of spiritual life enjoyed by exceptional minds was monopolised by the ministers of religion. The barriers of special holiness which divided the priesthood from the laity, shut out the latter from all spiritual enjoyments of a nobler type. The Magians, like the Ophæi, had two forms of worship, or rather, two modes of understanding the objects of worship: one esoteric, especially reserved for the priestly classes; the other exoteric, in which alone the vulgar could participate.³

The Mosaic law contained no ordinances respecting prayers; only on the payment of tithes to the priests, and the domestic solemnity of the presentation of the firstlings, was there a prescribed formula of a prayer and acknowledgment, when the father of the house, on the strength of his having obediently performed the behests of the law, supplicated blessings from Jehovah on Israel, "even as He had sworn unto their fathers."⁴ But, with the rise of a more spiritual idea of the Deity among the people and the teachers, and the decline of an uncompromising anthropomorphism, the real nature of prayer, as the medium of intercommunication between God and man, began to be understood. Tradition and custom, in default of any express regulation by the law, made the Jews at last, as Dollinger says, a people of prayer.⁵ Three hours daily were consecrated to devotional exercises, viz. nine, twelve, and three o'clock. The necessity, however, for the service of priests, combined

¹ Called Soma by the Sanscritic, and Homa or Huoma by the Zend races
³ Reland, Dissertationes Miscellaneae, part i p. 191. Shahristan
⁴ Deut. xxvi: 12-15
⁵ Dollinger, vol. ii p. 372
with the absence of any positive precedent coming down from the Lawgiver himself, tended to make prayer, in the majority of cases, merely mechanical. Phylacteries were in use in the time of Jesus, and the Koran reproaches the Jews in bitter terms for "selling the signs of God."  

The teachings of Jesus, representing a later development of the religious faculty in man, recognised the true character of prayer. He consecrated the practice by his own example. The early disciples, in the spirit of their Master, laid great stress on the habit of devotion and thanksgiving to God. But the want of some definite rule for the guidance of the masses, in process of time, left them completely adrift in all that regarded the practice of devotion, and under subjection to the priests, who monopolised the office of regulating the number, length, and the terminology of prayers. Hence missals, liturgies, councils, and convocations to settle articles of faith and matters of conscience; hence also, the mechanical worship of droning monks, and the hebdomadal flocking into churches and chapels on one day in the week to make up for the deficiency of spiritual food during the other six; hence also the "presbyter," who, merely a "servant" at first, came to regard himself as "the Lord of the spiritual heritage" bequeathed by Jesus.

All these evils had culminated to a point in the seventh century, when the Prophet of Arabia began to preach a reformed religion. In instituting prayers, Mohammed recognised the yearning of the human soul to pour out its love and gratitude to God, and by making the practice of devotion periodic, he impressed that disciplinary character on the observance of prayer which keeps the thoughts from wandering into the regions of the material. The formulæ, consecrated by his example and practice, whilst sparing the Islāmic world the evils of contests regarding liturgies, leave to the individual worshipper the amplest scope for the most heartfelt outpouring of devotion and humility before the Almighty Presence.

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1 Sura ii 42  
2 Luke ix 1-4  
3 Eph. vi 18, Col 1 12 et seq  
4 Moscow, vol 1 99 et seq  
5 Comp. Oelsner, Les Effets de la Religion de Mohammed, p. 6.
The value of prayer as the means of moral elevation and the purification of the heart, has been clearly set forth in the Koran:

"Rehearse that which hath been revealed unto thee of the Book, and be constant at prayer, for prayer preserveth from crimes and from that which is blameable, and the remembering of God is surely a most sacred duty." 1

The forms of the supplicatory hymns, consecrated by the example of the Prophet, evince the beauty of the moral element in the teachings of Islam

"O Lord! I supplicate Thee for firmness in faith and direction towards rectitude, and to assist me in being grateful to Thee, and in adoring Thee in every good way; and I supplicate Thee for an innocent heart, which shall not incline to wickedness; and I supplicate Thee for a true tongue, and for that virtue which Thou knowest, and I pray Thee to defend me from that vice which Thou knowest, and for forgiveness of those faults which Thou knowest. O my Defender! assist me in remembering Thee and being grateful to Thee, and in worshipping Thee with the excess of my strength. O Lord! I have injured my own soul, and no one can pardon the faults of Thy servants but Thou; forgive me out of Thy loving-kindness, and have mercy on me, for verily Thou art the forgiver of offences and the bestower of blessings on Thy servants." 2

Another traditional prayer, called the prayer of David, runs thus: "O Lord, grant to me the love of Thee, grant that I may love those that love Thee, grant that I may do the deeds that may win Thy love; make Thy love to be dearer to me than self, family or than wealth." 3

The two following prayers of Ali (the Caliph) evince the highest devotional spirit

"Thanks be to my Lord; He the Adorable, and only to be adored. My Lord, the Eternal, the Ever-existing, the Cherisher, the True Sovereign whose mercy and might overshadow the universe; the Regulator of the world, and Light of the creation. His is our worship, to Him belongs all worship. He existed before all things, and will exist after all that is living has

1 Koran xxix 45. 2 Mishkat, bk iv chap 18, parts 2, 3
3 Tafṣīr-Jalālīn, p. 288.
ceased. Thou art the adored, my Lord; Thou art the Master, the Loving and Forgiving; Thou bestowest power and might on whom Thou pleasest; him whom Thou hast exalted none can lower; and him whom Thou hast lowered none can exalt. Thou, my Lord, art the Eternal, the Creator of all, All-wise Sovereign Mighty, Thy knowledge knows everything; Thy benevolence is all-pervading; Thy forgiveness and mercy are all-embracing. O my Lord, Thou art the Helper of the afflicted, the Reliever of all distress, the Consoler of the broken-hearted; Thou art present everywhere to help Thy servants. Thou knowest all secrets, all thoughts, art present in every assembly, Fulfiller of all our needs, Bestower of all blessings. Thou art the Friend of the poor and bereaved; my Lord, Thou art my Fortress, a Castle for all who seek Thy help, Thou art the Refuge of the weak, the Helper of the pure and true. O my Lord, Thou art my Supporter, my Helper, the Helper of all who seek Thy help. O my Lord, Thou art the Creator, I am only created, Thou art my Sovereign, I am only Thy servant; Thou art the Helper, I am the beseecher; Thou, my Lord, art my Refuge, Thou art the Forgiver, I am the sinner; Thou, my Lord, art the Merciful, All-knowing, All-loving, I am groping in the dark; I seek Thy knowledge and love. Bestow, my Lord, all Thy knowledge and love and mercy; forgive my sins, O my Lord, and let me approach Thee, my Lord.

"O my Lord, Thou the Ever-praised, the Eternal, Thou art the Ever-present, Ever-existing, the Ever-near, the All-knowing. Thou livest in every heart, in every soul, all-pervading; Thy knowledge is ingrained in every mind." "He bears no similitude, has no equal, One, the Eternal; thanks be to the Lord whose mercy extends to every sinner, who provides for even those who deny Him. To Him belong the beginning and the end, all knowledge and the most hidden secret of the heart. He never slumbers, the Ever-just, the Ever-wakeful. He forgiveth in His mercy our greatest sins,—loveth all creation. I testify to the goodness of my Lord, to the truth of His Messenger's message, blessings on him and his descendants and his companions." 

1 Sahiṣṭā-Kāmilā.
"It is one of the glories of Islâm," says an English writer, "that its temples are not made with hands, and that its ceremonies can be performed anywhere upon God's earth or under His heaven." 1 Every place in which the Almighty is faithfully worshipped is equally pure. The Moslem, whether he be at home or abroad, when the hour of prayer arrives, pours forth his soul in a brief but earnest supplicatory address; his attention is not wearied by the length of his prayers, the theme of which is always self-humiliation, the glorification of the Giver of all good, and reliance on His mercy. 2 The intensity of the devotional spirit embalmed in the church of Mohammed has hardly been realised by Christendom. Tradition, that faithful chronicler of the past, with its hundred corroborative witnesses, records how the Prophet wept during his prayers with the fervour of his emotions; how his noble cousin and son-in-law became so absorbed in his devotions that his body grew benumbed.

The Islâm of Mohammed recognises no caste of priesthood, allows no monopoly of spiritual knowledge or special holiness to intervene between man and his God. Each soul rises to its Creator without the intervention of priest or hierophant. No sacrifice, 3 no ceremonial, invented by vested interests, is needed to bring the anxious heart nearer to its Comforter. Each human being is his own priest; in the Islâm of Mohammed no one man is higher than the other.

European rationalists have complained of the complex character of the Moslem prayers, but the ritual of the Koran is astonishing in its simplicity and soberness. It includes the necessary acts of faith, the recital of the creed, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage, but lays down scarcely any rules as to how they are to be performed. "Observe the prayers and the mid-day prayer, and stand ye attent before God; seek aid from patience and prayer. Venly, God is with the patient;" but nothing is said regarding the manner in which the prayers should be offered. "When ye journey

1 Hunter, Our Indian Musalmans, p. 170
2 Sura ii 127, 239, etc., vii 294, 295, xvii 79, xx 130, xxx 16, 17, etc etc
See the Kitâb ul-Mustatir.
3 The annual sacrifice at the Hajj and the Bâram is a mere memorial observance.
about the earth,” says the Koran, “it is no crime to you that ye come short in prayer if ye fear that those that disbelieve will set upon you. God pardons everything except associating aught with Him.”

The practice of the Prophet has, however, attached certain rites and ceremonies to the due observance of prayers. At the same time it is pointed out in unmistakeable terms that it is to the devotional state of the mind the Searcher of the spirit looks. “It is not the flesh or the blood of that which ye sacrifice which is acceptable to God it is your piety which is acceptable to the Lord.”¹ “It is not righteousness,” continues the Koran, “that ye turn your faces in prayer towards the east or the west; but righteousness is of him who believeth in God; . . . who giveth money for God’s sake unto his kindred, and unto orphans, and the needy, and the stranger, and those who ask, and for the redemption of captives; who is constant at prayers and giveth alms; and of those who perform their covenant, when they have covenanted; and who behave themselves patiently in hardship and adversity, and in times of violence; these are they who are true.”² . . .

It was declared that prayer without “the presence of the heart” was of no avail, and that God’s words which were addressed to all mankind and not to one people, should be studied with the heart and lips in absolute accord. And the Caliph Abu held that devotion offered without understanding was useless and brought no blessing.³ The celebrated Imam al-Ghazzali⁴ has pronounced that in reading the sacred book of heart and intelligence must work together, the lips only utter the words, intelligence helps in the due apprehension of their meaning; the heart, in paying obedience to the dictates of duty.⁵ “It is not a sixth nor a tenth of a man’s devotion,” said the Prophet, “which is acceptable to God, but only such portion thereof as he offers with understanding and true devotional spirit.”⁶

The practice of baptism in the Christian Church, even the

¹ Sura xxvii, 37 ² Sura ii, 177
³ Ghurar wa’d Durrar ⁴ See post, chap xx
⁵ The Koran ⁶ The Kitâb al-Mustatraf, chap. 1.
⁷ From Muâz ibn Jabal, reported by Abû Dâ’d and Nisân
Illustrations, which the Egyptians, the Jews, or the hierophants of the heathen religions in the East and the West, required as preliminary to the performance of devotional or religious exercises, show the peculiar sanctity which was attached to external purifications. Mohammed, by his example, consecrated this ancient and beneficent custom. He required cleanliness as a necessary preliminary to the worship and adoration of God. At the same time, he especially inculcated that mere external, or rather physical, purity does not imply true devotion. He distinctly laid down that the Almighty can only be approached in purity and humility of spirit. Imâm al-Ghazzâh expressly says, as against those who are only solicitous about external purifications, and have their hearts full of pride and hypocrisy, that the Prophet of God declared the most important purification to be the cleansing of the heart from all blameable inclinations and frailties, and the mind from all vicious ideas, and from all thoughts which distract attention from God.

In order to keep alive in the Moslem world the memory of the birthplace of Islam, Mohammed directed that during prayers the Moslem should turn his face towards Mecca, as the glorious centre which saw the first glimmerings of the light of regenerated truth. With the true instinct of a prophet he perceived the consolidating effect of fixing a central spot round which, through all time, should gather the religious feelings of his followers; and he accordingly ordained that everywhere throughout the world the Moslem should pray looking towards the Kaaba. "Mecca is to the Moslem what Jerusalem is to the Jew. It bears with it all the influence of centuries of associations. It carries the Moslem back to the cradle of his faith, the childhood of his Prophet, it reminds him of the struggle between the old faith and the new, of the overthrow of the idols, and the establishment of the worship of the one

1 Sura v. 6
The Koran, in its universality, speaks of ablutions, but where water is not available it allows any cleansing substitute for lavation, but nowhere lays down the details of the Wâzi'â. As usual, the manner of performing the lavations or ablutions, derived from the practice of the Prophet, has given rise to considerable discussions and difference among the theologians.

2 Sura vii. 206
3 Compare the Kitâb ul-Mustawah, chap i, sec. i.
4 Sura ii. 139, 144, etc.
God; and, most of all, it bids him remember that all his brother Moslems are worshipping towards the same sacred spot, that he is one of a great company of believers, united by one faith, filled with the same hopes, reverencing the same things, worshipping the same God. Mohammed showed his knowledge of the religious emotions in man when he preserved the sanctity of the temple of Islam. But that this rule is not an essential requisite for devotion, is evident from the passage of the Koran quoted above.

The institution of fasting has existed more or less among all nations. But it may be said that throughout the ancient world the idea attached to it was, without exception, more of penitence than of abstinence. Even in Judaism the notion of fasting as an exercise of self-castigation or self-abnegation was of later growth. The Essenes (from their connection with the Pythagoreans, and, through them, with the asceticism of the further East) were the first among the Jews to grasp this moral element in the principle of fasting; and Jesus probably derived this idea, like other conceptions, from them.

The example of Jesus consecrated the custom in the Church. But the predominating idea in Christianity, with respect to fasts generally, is one of penitence or expiation, and partially, of precedent. Voluntary corporal mortifications have been as frequent in the Christian Church as in other Churches; but the tendency of such mortifications has invariably been the destruction of mental and bodily energies, and the fostering of a morbid asceticism. The institution of fasting in Islam, on the contrary, has the legitimate object of restraining the passions, by diurnal abstinence for a limited and definite

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1 Stanley Lane Poole, Introil to the Selections from the Koran, p. lxxxv.
2 See ante, p. 196.
3 Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 131. Mosheim distinctly says that fasting came early to be regarded as the most effectual means of repelling the force, and discouraging the stratagems of evil spirits, and of appeasing the anger of an offended deity. Vol. 1, p. 398.
4 "The weekly and yearly fetes of the Christians," says Neander, "originated in the same fundamental idea, the idea of imitating Christ, the crucified and risen Saviour." And, again, "by the Christians who were fond of comparing their calling to a warfare, a bitter Christ; such fasts, united with prayers, were named stularies, as if they constituted the watches of the soldiers of Christ (the militis Christi)." Neander, Church Hist. vol. 1, pp. 408, 409.
period, from all the gratifications of the senses, and directing the overflow of the animal spirits into a healthy channel. Useless and unnecessary mortification of the flesh is discountenanced, nay, condemned. Fasting is prescribed to the able-bodied and the strong, as a means of chastening the spirit by imposing a restraint on the body. For the weak, the sickly, the traveller, the student (who is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge—the *jihād-ul-Akbar*), the soldier doing God’s battle against the assailants of the faith, and women in their ailments, it is disallowed. Those who bear in mind the gluttony of the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, and the pre-Islāmite Arabs, their excesses in their pleasures as well as their vices, will appreciate the value of the regulation, and comprehend how wonderfully adapted it is for keeping in check the animal propensities of man, especially among semi-civilised races.

Mark the wisdom of the rule as given in the Koran: “O ye that have believed, a fast is ordained to you... that ye may practise piety, a fast of a computed number of days. But he among you who shall be ailing, or on a journey, (shall fast) an equal number of other days; and they that are able to keep it (and do not), shall make atonement by maintaining a poor man... But if ye fast, it will be better for you if ye comprehend... God willeth that which is easy for you.”

This rule of abstinence is restricted to the day, in the night, in the intervals of prayer and devotion, the Moslem is allowed, perhaps indeed, is bound, to refresh the system by partaking in moderation of food and drink, and otherwise enjoying himself lawfully. In the true spirit of the Teacher, the legislators invariably laid down the rule that, during the fast, abstinence of mind from all base thoughts is as incumbent as the abstinence of the body.

No religion of the world prior to Islām had consecrated charity, the support of the widow, the orphan, and the helpless poor, by enrolling its principles among the positive enactments of the system.

The *agāpa*, or feasts of charity among the early Christians, depended on the will of individuals; then influence, therefore,
could only be irregular and spasmodic. It is a matter of history that this very irregularity led to the suppression of the "feasts of charity or love-feasts" only a short time after their introduction.¹

By the laws of Islâm every individual is bound to contribute a certain part of his substance towards the help and assistance of his poorer neighbours. This portion is usually one part of forty, or 2½ per cent., on the value of all goods, chattels, emblements, on profits of trade, mercantile business, etc. But alms are due only when the property amounts to a certain value,² and has been in the possession of a person for one whole year; nor are any due from cattle employed in agriculture or in the carrying of burdens. Besides, at the end of the month of Ramazân (the month of fasting), and on the day of the Id-ul-Fitr, the festival which celebrates the close of the Moslem Lent, each head of a family has to give away in alms, for himself and for every member of his household, and for each guest who breaks his fast and sleeps in his house during the month, a measure of wheat, barley, dates, raisins, rice, or any other grain, or the value of the same.

The rightful recipients of the alms, as pointed out by the practice of Mohammed and his disciples, are (1) the poor and the indigent; (2) those who help in the collection and distribution of the obligatory alms, (3) slaves, who wish to buy their freedom and have not the means for so doing; (4) debtors, who cannot pay their debts; (5) travellers and strangers.³ General charity is inculcated by the Koran in the most forcible terms.⁴ But the glory of Islâm consists in having embodied the beautiful sentiment of Jesus⁵ into definite laws.

¹ Neander, vol. 1, p. 450 et seq., Mosheim, vol. 1, p. 56. I do not mean to say that this was the only form in which Christian charity expressed itself. The support of the widow, the poor, and orphan was as much insisted upon in Christianity as in Islâm. But even this divine charity taught by Jesus received an impress of exclusiveness from the disciples, in whose hands he left his work. The widow, in order to claim the benefits of charity, was required to be "threescore years of age, to have been the wife of one man, to have brought up children," etc. Compare throughout Blunt’s History of the Christian Church, p. 27 et seq.

² For example, no alms are due from a man unless he own twenty camels.

³ jámaa ul Fitr, chapter on “Alms-giving.” jámaa Abbâs, Querry, Droit Musulman. Comp also the Mabsût.

⁴ Sura ii 267, 270, 271, etc., ix. 60, etc.

⁵ Matt. xxv. 35, 36.
The wisdom which incorporated into Islam the time-honoured custom of annual pilgrimage to Mecca and to the shrine of the Kaaba, has breathed into Mohammed's religion a freemasonry and brotherhood of faith in spite of sectarian divisions. The eyes of the whole Moslem world fixed on that central spot, keep alive in the bosom of each some spark of the celestial fire which lighted up the earth in that century of darkness. Here, again, the wisdom of the inspired Lawgiver shines forth in the negative part of the enactment, in the conditions necessary to make the injunction obligatory: (1) ripeness of intelligence and discernment; (2) perfect freedom and liberty; (3) possession of the means of transport and subsistence during the journey; (4) possession of means sufficient to support the pilgrim's family during his absence; (5) the possibility and practicability of the voyage.

Owing to the minute regulations, almost Brahminical in their strictness, in force among the heathen Arabs regarding the lawful or unlawful character of various kinds of food, the Teacher of Islam had frequently to admonish his followers that, with certain exceptions, all food was lawful. "And eat of what God hath given you for food that which is lawful and wholesome, and fear God, in whom ye believe." 2 "Say," says the Koran, "I find not in what hath been revealed to me aught forbidden to the eater to eat, except it be that which dieth of itself, or blood poured forth, or swine's flesh, for that is an abomination, and meat which hath been slain in the name of other than God [idols]." This is amplified in the fifth sura, which is also directed against various savage and idolatrous practices of the pagan Arabs. "That which dieth of itself, and blood, and swine's flesh, and all that hath been sacrificed under the invocation of any other name than that of God, and the strangulated, and the killed by a blow or by a fall, or by goring, and that which hath been eaten by beasts of prey,"

1 Radd-ul-muhîrîr, chapter on Ḥajj. Querry, Droit Musulman, vol. i.; the Mabsât.
2 Sura v. 98
3 The heathen Arabs, when killing any animal for food, used to consecrate it by invoking the names of their gods and goddesses.
4 The idolatrous Arabs had different savage methods of killing animals. This prohibition has reference to the brutal processes employed by them.
unless ye give the death-stroke yourselves, and that which hath been sacrificed on the blocks of stone, is forbidden to you: and to make division of the slain by consulting the arrows, is impiety in you"  

"Eat ye of the good things wherewith we have provided you and give thanks to God."

Intoxication and gambling, the curse of Christian communities, and the bane of all uncultured and inferior natures, and excesses of all kinds, were rigorously prohibited.

Nothing can be simpler or more in accord with the advance of the human intellect than the teachings of the Arabian Prophet. The few rules for religious ceremonial which he prescribed were chiefly with the object of maintaining discipline and uniformity, so necessary in certain stages of society; but they were by no means of an inflexible character. He allowed them to be broken in cases of illness or other causes.

"God wishes to make things easy for you, for," says the Koran, "man was created weak." The legal principles which he enunciated were either delivered as answers to questions put to him as the Chief Magistrate of Medina, or to remove or correct patent evils. The Prophet's Islam recognised no

1 Sacrificial stones placed round the Kaaba or at the entrance of houses over which the offerings were made to the idols.

2 Sura v 3

3 Things by nature abhorrent to man, such as the flesh of carnivorous animals, birds of prey, snakes, etc., required no specific prohibition. The idea prevalent in India, borrowed from the Hindus, that Moslems should not partake of food with Christians, is entirely fallacious, and opposed to the precept contained in the following passage of the Koran (sura v 5) "Thus day things wholesome are legalised to you, and the meats of those who have received the Scriptures are allowed to you, as your meats are to them" With regard to the sumptuary regulations, precepts, and prohibitions of Mohammed, it must be remembered that they were called forth by the temporary circumstances of the times and people. With the disappearance of such circumstances, the need for these laws has also disappeared. To suppose, therefore, that every Islamite precept is necessarily immutable, is to do an injustice to history and the development of the human intellect. Ibn Khaldun's words are, in this connection, deserving of our serious consideration. "It is only by an attentive examination and well sustained application that we can discover the truth, and guard ourselves against errors and mistakes. In fact, if we were merely to satisfy ourselves by reproducing the records transmitted by tradition without consulting the rules furnished by experience, the fundamental principles of the art of government, the nature, even, of the particular civilisation, or the circumstances which characterise the human society, if we are not to judge of the wants which occurred in distant times by those which are occurring under our eyes, if we are not to compare the past with the present we can hardly escape from falling into errors and losing the way of truth." Prolegomenes d'Ibn Khaldoun, traduits par M de Slane, Première Partie, p. 13.
ritual likely to distract the mind from the thought of the one God; no law to keep enchained the conscience of advancing humanity.

The ethical code of Islam is thus summarised in the fourth Sura: "Come, I will rehearse what your Lord hath enjoined on you—that ye assign not to Him a partner; that ye be good to your parents; and that ye slay not your children because of poverty, for them and for you will We provide; and that ye come not near to pollutions, outward or inward; and that ye slay not a soul whom God hath forbidden, unless by right... and draw not nigh to the wealth of the orphan, save so as to better it... and when ye pronounce judgment then be just, though it be the affair of a kinsman. And God's compact fulfill ye; that is, what He hath ordained to you. Verily, this is my right way; follow it, then."¹ And again, "Blessed are they who believe and humbly offer their thanks-giving to their Lord... who are constant in their charity, and who guard their chastity, and who observe their trust and covenants... Verily, God bids you do justice and good, and give to kindred their due; and He forbids you to sin and to do wrong and oppress."

"Faith and charity," to use the words of the Christian historian, "are not incompatible with external rites and positive institutions, which, indeed, are necessary in this imperfect state to keep alive a sense of religion in the common mass."² And, accordingly, Mohammed had attached a few rites to his teachings in order to give a more tangible conception to the generality of mankind. Jesus himself had instituted two rites, baptism and the "Holy Supper".³ Probably, had he lived longer, he would have added more. But one thing is certain, that had a longer career been vouchsafed to him, he would have placed his teachings on a more systematic basis. This fundamental defect in Christianity has been, in fact, the real cause of the assembling of councils and convocations for the establishment of articles and dogmas, which snap asunder at every slight tension of reason and free thought. The work of Jesus was left unfinished. It was reserved for another Teacher to systematise the laws of morality.

¹ Sura iv. 155 et seq. ² Mosheim, vol 1 p 124. ³ Ibid.
Our relations with our Creator are matters of conscience; our relations with our fellow-beings must be matters of positive rules; and what higher sanction—to use a legal expression—can be attached to the enforcement of the relative duties of man to man than the sanction of religion. Religion is not to be regarded merely as a subject for unctuous declamations by "select preachers," or as some strange theory for the peculiar gratification of dreamy minds. Religion ought to mean the rule of life; its chief object ought to be the elevation of humanity towards that perfection which is the end of our existence. The religion, therefore, which places on a systematic basis the fundamental principles of morality, regulating social obligations and human duties, which brings us nearer and nearer, by its compatibility with the highest development of intellect, to the All-Perfect—that religion, we say, has the greatest claim to our consideration and respect. It is the distinctive characteristic of Islam, as taught by Mohammed, that it combines within itself the grandest and the most prominent features in all ethnic and catholic 1 religions compatible with the reason and moral intuition of man. It is not merely a system of positive moral rules, based on a true conception of human progress, but it is also "the establishment of certain principles, the enforcement of certain dispositions, the cultivation of a certain temper of mind, which the conscience is to apply to the ever-varying exigencies of time and place." The Teacher of Islam preached, in a thousand varied ways, universal love and brotherhood as the emblem of the love borne towards God. "How do you think God will know you when you are in His presence—by your love of your children, of your kin, of your neighbours, of your fellow-creatures?" 2 "Do you love your Creator? love your fellow-beings first." 3 "Do you wish to approach the Lord? love His creatures, love for them what you love yourself, reject for them what you reject for yourself, do unto them what you wish to be done unto you." He condemned in searing language the foulness of impurity, the meanness of hypocrisy, and the ungodliness of self-deceit.

1 For the use of these words see Clarke, Ten Great Religions, chap. i.
2 Mishkât, bk. xxii, xxiii, chaps. xv and xvi
3 Comp. Kastalâni's Commentary on the Sahîh of Bukhârî, pt. i, p. 70.
The Religious Spirit of Islam

He proclaimed, in unmistakable terms, the preciousness of truth, charity, and brotherly love.

The wonderful adaptability of Islamic precepts to all ages and nations; their entire concordance with the light of reason; the absence of all mysterious doctrines to cast a shade of sentimental ignorance round the primal truths implanted in the human breast,—all prove that Islam represents the latest development of the religious faculties of our being. Those who have ignored the historic significance of some of its precepts have deemed that their seeming harshness, or unadaptability to present modes of thought ought to exclude it from any claim to universality. But a little inquiry into the historic value of laws and precepts, a little more fairness in the examination of facts, would evince the temporary character of such rules as may appear scarcely consonant with the requirements or prejudices of modern times. The catholicity of Islam, its expansiveness, and its charity towards all moral creeds, has been utterly mistaken, perverted, or wilfully concealed by the bigotry of rival religions.

"Verily," says the Koran, "those who believe (the Moslems), and those who are Jews, Christians, or Sabaeans, whoever hath faith in God and the last day (future existence), and worketh that which is right and good,—for them shall be the reward with their Lord; there will come no fear on them; neither shall they be grieved." 1

The same sentiment is repeated in similar words in the fifth Sura; and a hundred other passages prove that Islam does not confine "salvation" to the followers of Mohammed alone:—"To every one have we given a law and a way. . . . And if God had pleased, He would have made you all (all mankind) one people (people of one religion) But He hath done otherwise, that He might try you in that which He hath severally given unto you: wherefore press forward in good works. Unto God shall ye return, and He will tell you that concerning which ye disagree." 2

Of all the religions of the world that have ruled the conscience

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1 Sura v. 69. Compare the spirit of these teachings with that of the Athanasian Creed.
2 Sura v. 48. Compare also xxix 46, xxxii 23, 24, xxxix 41, xl 13, etc.
of mankind, the Islâm of Mohammed alone combines both the conceptions which have in different ages furnished the main-spring of human conduct,—the consciousness of human dignity, so valued in the ancient philosophies, and the sense of human sinfulness, so dear to the Christian apologist. The belief that man will be judged by his work solely, throws the Moslem on the practice of self-denial and universal charity; the belief in Divine Providence, in the mercy, love, and omnipotence of God, leads him to self-humiliation before the Almighty, and to the practice of those heroic virtues which have given rise to the charge that the virtues of Islâm are stoical,¹ patience, resignation, and firmness in the trials of life. It leads him to interrogate his conscience with nervous anxiety, to study with scrupulous care the motives that actuate him,² to distrust his own strength, and to rely upon the assistance of an Almighty and All-Loving Power in the conflict between good and evil.

In some religions the precepts which inculcated duties have been so utterly devoid of practicability, so completely wanting in a knowledge of human nature, and partaking so much of the dreamy vagueness of enthusiasts, as to become in the real battles of life simply useless.³ The practical character of a religion, its abiding influence on the common relations of mankind, in the affairs of everyday life, its power on the masses, are the true criteria for judging of its universality. We do not look to exceptional minds to recognise the nature of a religion. We search among the masses to understand its true character. Does it exercise deep power over them? does it elevate them? does it regulate their conception of rights and duties? does it, if carried to the South Sea islander, or preached to the Caffrarians, improve or degrade them?—are the questions we naturally ask. In Islâm is joined a lofty idealism with the most rationalistic practicality. It did not ignore human nature; it never entangled itself in the tortuous pathways which lie outside the domains of the actual

¹ Clarke, Ten Great Religions, p. 184
² Compare the first Apologue in the Akhlâk (Ethics) of Husain Wâiz on Tkhâds
³ Compare M. Ernest Havet’s remarks in his valuable and learned work, Le Christianisme et ses Origines, Pref. p. xxxix
and the real. Its object, like that of other systems, was the elevation of humanity towards the absolute ideal of perfection; but it attained, or tries to attain, this object by grasping the truth that the nature of man is, in this existence, imperfect. If it did not say, "If thy brother smite thee on one cheek, turn thou the other also to him"; if it allowed the punishment of the wanton wrong-doer to the extent of the injury he had done, it also taught, in fervid words and varied strains, the practice of forgiveness and benevolence, and the return of good for evil—"Who speaketh better," says the Koran, "than he who inviteth unto God, and worketh good? Good and evil shall not be held equal. Turn away evil with that which is better." And again, speaking of paradise, it says, "It is prepared for the godly, who give alms in prosperity and adversity, who bridle their anger, and forgive men; for God loveth the beneficent"

The practice of these noble precepts does not lie enshrined in the limbo of false sentimentalism. With the true follower of the Prophet they form the active principles of life. History has preserved, for the admiration of wondering posterity, many examples of patience under suffering exhibited by the followers of other creeds. But the practice of the virtue of patient forgiveness is easier in adversity, when we have no power to punish the evil-doer, than in prosperity. It is related of Husain, the noble martyr of Kerbela, that a slave having once thrown the contents of a scalding dish over him, as he sat at dinner, fell on his knees and repeated the verse of the Koran, "Paradise is for those who bridle their anger." "I am not angry," answered Husain. "The slave proceeded, "and for those who forgive men." "I forgive you." The slave, however, finished the verse, adding, "for God loveth the beneficent." "I give you your liberty and four hundred pieces of silver," replied Husain.

1 Koran, sura viii. 39, 40. Thommen's remark, that Mohammed allowed the punishment of the willful wrong-doer for the purpose of preventing enormous evils, must always be borne in mind. I, Hist. du Droit Criminel des Peuples Anciens, vol ii, p 67.

2 Koran, sura xiii. 33, 34

3 Koran, sura xliii. 37

4 This anecdote has been told by Saadi in a note to the third chapter of his translation of the Koran, and also by Gibbon, but both have, by mistake,
The author of the *Kashshāf* thus sums up the essence of the Islāmic teachings: "Seek again him who drives you away; give to him who takes away from you; pardon him who injures you: 1 for God loveth that you should cast into the depth of your soul the roots of His perfections." 2

In the purity of its aspiration, can anything be more beautiful than the following: "The servants of the Merciful are they that walk upon the earth softly, and when the ignorant speak unto them, they reply, Peace 1 they that spend the night worshipping their Lord, prostrate, and standing, and resting: those that, when they spend, are neither profuse nor niggardly, but take a middle course: . . . those that invoke not with God any other God, and slay not a soul that God hath forbidden otherwise than by right; and commit not fornication: . . . they who bear not witness to that which is false; and when they pass by vain sport, they pass it by with dignity: who say, 'Oh, our Lord, grant us of our wives and children such as shall be a comfort unto us, and make us examples unto the pious,'—these shall be the rewarded, for that they persevered; and they shall be accosted in paradise with welcome and salutation:—For ever therein,—a fair abode and resting-place!" 3

This is the Islām of Mohammed. It is not "a mere creed; it is a life to be lived in the present"—a religion of right-doing, right-thinking, and right-speaking, founded on divine love, universal charity, and the equality of man in the sight of the Lord. However much the modern professors of Islām may have dimmed the glory of their Prophet (and a volume might also be written on the defects of modern Mohammedanism), the religion which enshrines righteousness and "justification by work" 4 deserves the recognition of the lovers of humanity.

 applied the episode to Hasan, the brother of Husain. See the *Tafsīr-Husaini*, Muṣaf Ed. p. 199

 1 Compare this with the precept of Mohammed reported by Abū Dardā, *Mishkāl*, bk iv chap 1 part ii, and the whole chapter on "Forgiveness" (chap xxxvi) in the *Mustaṭrafi*

 2 Zamakhshāri (the *Kashshāf*), Egypt Ed part 1 p 280

 3 Koran, sura xxv. 63-70

 4 Mr. Cotter Morrison, in his *Service of Man*, calls the other doctrine the most disastrous to human morality
The present life was the seed-ground of the future. To work in all humility of spirit for the human good, to strive with all energy to approach the perfection of the All-Perfect, is the essential principle of Islam. The true Moslem is a true Christian, in that he accepts the ministry of Jesus, and tries to work out the moral preached by him. Why should not the true Christian do honour to the Preacher who put the finishing stroke to the work of the earlier Masters? Did not he call back the wandering forces of the world into the channel of progress?

Excepting for the conception of the sonship of Jesus, there is no fundamental difference between Christianity and Islam. In their essence they are one and the same; both are the outcome of the same spiritual forces working in humanity. One was a protest against the heartless materialism of the Jews and the Romans, the other a revolt against the degrading idolatry of the Arabs, their ferocious customs and usages. Christianity, preached among a more settled and civilised people subject to an organised government, had to contend with comparatively milder evils. Islam, preached among warring tribes and clans, had to fight against all the instincts of self-interest and ancient superstition. Christianity, arrested in its progress towards the East by a man of cultured but bizarre character, who, though a Jew by birth, was by education an Alexandrian Greek, was carried to Greece and Rome, and there gathering up the pagan civilisation of centuries, gave
birth to new ideas and doctrines. Christianity ceased to be a Christian the moment it was transplanted from the home of its birth. It became the religion of Paul, and ceased to be that of Jesus. The pantheons of ancient paganism were tottering to their fall. Greek and Alexandrian philosophy had prepared the Roman world for the recognition of an incarnate God--a demiurgus, an Æon born in the bosom of eternity, and this conception imbedded itself in Pauline Christianity. Modern idealistic Christianity, which is more a philosophy than a positive religion, is the product of centuries of pre-Christian and post-Christian civilisation. Islam was preached among a people, among conditions social and moral, wholly divergent. Had it broken down the barrier which was raised against it by a degraded Christianity, and made its way among the higher races of the earth, its progress and its character would have presented a totally different aspect from what it now offers to the observer among the less cultured Moslem communities. Like rivers flowing through varied tracts, both these creeds have produced results in accordance with the nature of the soil through which they have found their course. The Mexican who castigates himself with cactus leaves, the idol-worshipping South American, the lower strata of Christian nations, are hardly in any sense Christians. There exists a wide gulf between them and the leaders of modern Christian thought. Islam, wherever it has found its way among culturable and progressive nations, has shown itself in complete accord with progressive tendencies, it has assisted civilisation, it has idealised religion.  

A religion has to be eminently positive in its “commandments and prohibitions” to exercise an abiding salutary influence on the ignorant and uncultured. The higher and more spiritualised minds are often able to forge on the anvils of their own hearts, lines of duty in relation to their fellow creatures without reference to outside directions. They are

1 The faith which could give birth to the heroic devotion of Ab, the gentleness of Ja’far (the Sádik), the piety and patience of Músá, the divine purity of Fátima, the saintliness of Kábir, the religion which could produce men like Ibn Sína, Al Berúní, Ibn Khaldún, Sádú, Jalál ud-dín Rúmí, Fáríd ud-dín (the Attár), Buráhím Adhami, and a host of others, surely contains every element of hopefulness.
in commune with God and are guided by the consciousness of right and wrong, of truth and purity which had grown up with their being. Plato and Aristotle, who had never received the light of the Semitic revelations, spoke to the world of the highest principles of morality in as distinct terms as the great prophets. They too had heard the voice of God, and were lifted up to Him by their own thoughts.

To the mass of mankind, however, sunk either in ignorance or barbarism, for the uncultured and the sodden, moral enunciations convey no meaning unless they are addressed in a positive form and formulated with the precision of enactments surrounded with definite sanctions. The ethical side of a religion does not appeal to their feelings or sentiments; and philosophical conceptions exercise no influence on their minds, their daily conduct or their lives.

They are swayed far more by authority and precedent than by sermons on abstract principles. They require definite prescriptions to regulate not only their relations towards their fellow-beings but also towards their Creator whom, in the absence of such rules, they are apt to forget.

The success of Islâm in the seventh century of the Christian era, and its rapid and marvellous diffusion over the surface of the globe, were due to the fact that it recognised this essential need of human nature. To a world of wrangling sects and creeds, to whom words were of far greater importance than practice, it spoke in terms of positive command from an Absolute Source. Amidst the moral and social wreck in which it found its birth, it aimed at the integration of the worship of a Personal Will, and thereby to recall humanity to the observance of duty which alone pointed to the path of spiritual development. And by its success in lifting up the lower races to a higher level of social morality it proved to the world the need of a positive system. It taught them sobriety, temperance, charity, justice and equality as the commandments of God. Its affirmation of the principle of equality of man and man and its almost socialistic tendency represented the same phase of thought that had found expression on the shores of Galilee. But even in his most exalted mood the great Teacher of Islâm did not forget the
THE SPIRIT OF ISLÂM

limitations imposed on individual capacity which occasion economic inequalities.

Alas for the latter-day professors of Islâm! The blight of patristicism has ruined the blossom of true religion and a true devotional spirit.

A Christian preacher has pointed out with great force the distinction between religion and theology, and the evils which have followed in his Church from the confusion of the two.¹ What has happened in Christianity has happened in Islâm. Practice has given way to the mockery of profession, ceremonialism has taken the place of earnest and faithful work,—doing good to mankind for the sake of doing good, and for the love of God. Enthusiasm has died out, and devotion to God and His Prophet are meaningless words. The earnestness without which human existence is no better than that of the brute creation, earnestness in right-doing and right-thinking, is absent. The Moslems of the present day have ignored the spirit in a hopeless love for the letter. Instead of living up to the ideal preached by the Master, instead of "striving to excel in good works," "of being righteous"; instead of loving God, and for the sake of His love loving His creatures,—they have made themselves the slaves of opportunism and outward observance. It was natural that in their reverence and admiration for the Teacher his early disciples should stereotype his ordinary mode of life, crystallise the passing incidents of a chequered career, imprint on the heart orders, rules, and regulations enunciated for the common exigencies of the day in an infant society. But to suppose that the greatest Reformer the world has ever produced, the greatest upholder of the sovereignty of Reason, the man who proclaimed that the universe was governed and guided by law and order, and that the law of nature meant progressive development, ever contemplated that even those injunctions which were called forth by the passing necessities of a semi-civilised people should become immutable to the end of the world, is doing an injustice to the Prophet of Islâm.

No one had a keener perception than he of the necessities of this world of progress with its ever-changing social and moral

¹ Professor Momere in his Defects of Modern Christianity.
phenomena, nor of the likelihood that the revelations vouchsafed to him might not meet all possible contingencies. When Mu'āz was appointed as governor of Yemen, he was asked by the Prophet by what rule he would be guided in his administration of that province. "By the law of the Koran," said Mu'āz. "But if you find no direction therein?" "Then I will act according to the example of the Prophet." "But if that fails?" "Then I will exercise my own judgment." The Prophet approved highly of the answer of his disciple, and commended it to the other delegates.

The great Teacher, who was fully conscious of the exigencies of his own times, and the requirements of the people with whom he had to deal,—people sunk in a slough of social and moral despond,—with his keen insight and breadth of views, perceived, and one may say foretold, that a time would come when the accidental and temporary regulations would have to be differentiated from the permanent and general. "Ye are in an age," he declared, "in which, if ye abandon one-tenth of what is ordered, ye will be ruined. After this, a time will come when he who shall observe one-tenth of what is now ordered will be redeemed." ¹

As we have already observed, the blight which has fallen on Musulman nations is not due to the teachings of the Master. No religion contained greater promise of development, no faith was purer, or more in conformity with the progressive demands of humanity.

The present stagnation of the Musulman communities is principally due to the notion which has fixed itself on the minds of the generality of Moslems, that the right to the exercise of private judgment ceased with the early legists,

¹ This authentic tradition is given in the Jāma' ut-Tirmizī and is to be found also in the Mishkāt.
that its exercise in modern times is sinful, and that a Moslem in order to be regarded as an orthodox follower of Mohammed should belong to one or the other of the schools established by the schoolmen of Islâm, and abandon his judgment absolutely to the interpretations of men who lived in the ninth century, and could have no conception of the necessities of the twentieth.

Among the Sunnis, it is the common belief that since the four Imáms, no doctor has arisen qualified to interpret the laws of the Prophet. No account is taken of the altered circumstances in which Moslems are now placed; the conclusions at which these learned legists arrived several centuries ago are held to be equally applicable to the present day. Among the Shiáhs, the Akhábári will not allow his judgment to travel beyond the dictates of "the expounders of the law." The Prophet had consecrated reason as the highest and noblest function of the human intellect. Our schoolmen and their servile followers have made its exercise a sin and a crime.

As among Christians, so among Moslems. The lives and conduct of a large number of Moslems at the present day are governed less by the precepts and teachings of the Master, and more by the theories and opinions of the mujtahids and imáms who have tried, each according to his light, to construe the revelations vouchsafed to the Teacher. Like men in a crowd listening to a preacher who from a lofty position addresses a large multitude and from his vantage ground overlooks a vast area, they observed only their immediate surroundings, and, without comprehending the wider meaning of his words or the nature of the audience whom he addressed, adapted his utterances to their own limited notions of human needs and human progress. Oblivious of the universality of the Master's teachings, unassisted by his spirit, devoid of his inspiration, they forgot that the Prophet, from the pinnacle of his genius, had spoken to all humanity. They mixed up the temporary with the permanent, the universal with the particular. Like many of the ecclesiastics of Christendom, not a few were the servants of sovereigns and despots whose demands were not consistent with the precepts of the Master. Canons were invented, theories started, traditions discovered, and glosses

1 Abu Hanifa, Sháfe'i, Málk, and Ibn Hanbal.
put upon his words utterly at variance with their spirit. And hence it is that most of the rules and regulations which govern now the conscience of so many professors of the faith are hardly derived from any express and positive declarations of the Koran, but for the most part from the lego-religious books with which the Islâmic world was flooded in the later centuries. "Just as the Hebrews deposed their Pentateuch in favour of the Talmud," justly observes an English writer, "so the Moslems have abolished the Koran in favour of the traditions and decisions of the learned" "We do not mean to say," he adds most pertinently, "that any Mohammedan if asked what was the text-book of his religion, would answer anything but the 'Koran'; but we do mean that practically it is not the Koran that guides his belief or practice. In the Middle Ages of Christendom it was not the New Testament, but the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas, that decided questions of orthodoxy; and in the present day, does the orthodox churchman usually derive his creed from a personal investigation of the teaching of Christ in the Gospels? Probably, if he refers to a document at all, the Church Catechism contents him; or if he be of a peculiarly inquiring disposition, a perusal of the Thirty-nine Articles will resolve all doubts. Yet he too would say his religion was drawn from the Gospels, and would not confess to the medium through which it was filtered. In precisely the same way modern Mohammedanism is constructed, and a large part of what Moslems now believe and practise is not to be found in the Koran at all."

And yet each system, each school contains germs of improvement, and if development is now stopped, it is not even the fault of the lawyers. It is due to a want of apprehension of the spirit of the Master's enunciations, and even of those of the fathers of the Church.

In the Western world, the Reformation was ushered in by the Renaissance and the progress of Europe commenced when

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1 The Radd ul-Mukhtar of Mohammed Amin the Syrian, and the Malmu'ul-Anhur of the Shafii Zadeh are as much in advance of the Alteka and the Hedaya as the views of an Eldon or Mansfield upon those of a Coke or Blackstone. The opinions of Shafii Murtaza, in their liberal and liberating tendencies, are far above those of the narrow-minded self-opinionated Mohawk. But the servile Akhbar follows the latter in preference to the former.
it threw off the shackles of Ecclesiasticism. In Islâm also, enlightenment must precede reform; and, before there can be a renovation of religious life, the mind must first escape from the bondage which centuries of literal interpretation and the doctrine of "conformity" have imposed upon it. The formalism that does not appeal to the heart of the worshipper must be abandoned; externals must be subordinated to the inner feelings; and the lessons of ethics must be impressed on the plastic mind; then alone can we hope for that enthusiasm in the principles of duty taught by the Prophet of Islâm. The reformation of Islâm will begin when once it is recognised that divine words rendered into any language retain their divine character and that devotions offered in any tongue are acceptable to God. The Prophet himself had allowed his foreign disciples to say their prayers in their own tongue.\(^1\) He had expressly permitted others to recite the Koran in their respective dialects; and had declared that it was revealed in seven languages.

In the earhest ages of Islâm there was a consensus of opinion that devotion without understanding was useless. İmâmur Abû Hanifa considered the recitation of the namâz and also of the Khutba or sermon, lawful and valid in any language.\(^2\) The disciples of Abû Hanifa, Abû Yusuf and Mohammed, have accepted the doctrine of their master with a certain variation. They hold that when a person does not know Arabic, he may validly offer his devotions in any other language.\(^3\)

There is, however, one great and cogent reason why the practice of reciting prayers in Arabic should be maintained wherever it is possible and practicable. Not because it was the language of the Prophet, but because it has become the language of Islâm and maintains the unity of sentiment

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\(^1\) Salmân the Persian, whom Ali had saved from a lion, was the first to whom this permission was granted.

\(^2\) Jawâhir ul-Akhâli: Durr ul-Mukhtâr, Bâb us-Salât (Chapter on Prayer). This view is also given in the Tâmis. Tahtâwi states that the İmâm's opinion is authoritative and should be followed. The commentator of the Durr ul-Mukhtâr also recognises the validity of reciting prayers in Persian.

\(^3\) This is construed by the Ulemas of the present day to mean, when the worshipper is unable to pronounce Arabic words! The absurdity of the explanation is obvious.
throughout the Islâmic world. And wherein lies more strength than in unity?

**Note I.**

The sumptuary prohibitions of Mohammed may be divided into two classes, *qualitative* and *quantitative*. The prohibition against excess in eating and drinking and others of the like import belong to the latter class. They were called forth in part by the peculiar semi-barbarous epicureanism which was coming into fashion among the Arabs from their intercourse with the demoralised Syrians and Persians, and in part by circumstances of which only glimpses are afforded us in the Koran. The absolute prohibition of swine's flesh, which may be classed under the head of qualitative prohibitions, arose, as is evident, from hygienic reasons and this prohibition must remain unchanged as long as the nature of the animal and the diseases engendered by the eating of the flesh remain as at present. The prohibition against dancing was directed against the orgiastic dances with which the heathen Arabs used to celebrate the Syro-Phœnician worship of their Ashtoreth, Moloch and Baal.
CHAPTER III

THE IDEA OF FUTURE LIFE IN ISLĀM

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he idea of a future existence—of an existence after the separation of the living principle of our nature from the mortal part—is so generally shared by races of men, otherwise utterly distinct from each other, that it has led to the belief that it must be one of the first elementary constituents of our being. A more careful examination of facts, however, connected with the infancy of races and tribes, leads us to the conclusion that the conception of a future existence is also the result of the natural development of the human mind.

The wild savage has scarcely any idea of a life separate and distinct from that which he enjoys on earth. He looks upon death as the end of existence. Then comes a later stage when man has passed out of his savage state, his hopes and aspirations are bounded no more by an earthly death; he now anticipates another course of existence after the course here has been fulfilled. But even in this stage the conception of immortality does not rise out of the groove of daily life. Life after death is a mere continuation of life on earth. This idea of a continued life beyond the grave must have been developed from the yet unconscious longing of the human soul for a more extended

1 See translation at end of this chapter.
sphere, where the separation of dear friends, so painful to both savage and civilised man, should end in reunion.

The next stage is soon reached; man comes to believe that present happiness and misery are not, cannot be, the be-all and end-all of his existence; that there will be another life, or that there is another life after death, where he will be happy or miserable in proportion to his deserts.

Now we have reached a principle and a law.

The mind of man goes no further towards developing the idea of future existence. The nihilistic philosopher makes no discovery, asserts no new position. He is only treading in the footsteps of our savage ancestor, whose field of vision was restricted to this life alone.

It is a well-authenticated fact, however, that all those ideas which represent the various stages, from a subjective point of view, exist simultaneously not only among different nations but even in the same nation, in different combinations, according to the individual development.

The Egyptians are said to have been the first to recognise the doctrine of a future life, or, at least, to base the principles of human conduct on such a doctrine.1 With an idea of metempsychosis they joined an idea of future recompense and punishment. Man descended into the tomb only to rise again. After his resurrection he entered on a new life, in company with the sun, the principle of generation, the self-existent cause of all. The soul of man was considered immortal like the sun, and as accomplishing the same pilgrimages. All bodies descended into the lower world, but they were not all assured of resurrection. The deceased were judged by Osiris and his forty-two assessors. Annihilation was often believed to be the lot of those adjudged guilty. The righteous, purified from venal faults, entered into perfect happiness, and as the companions of Osiris, were fed by him with delicious food.2

We might naturally expect that the long stay of the Israelites in Egypt would introduce among them some conception of a

1 Rawlinson’s History of Ancient Egypt, vol ii p 423
future life with its concomitant idea of rewards and punishments. But pure Mosaism (or the teachings which pass under that name) does not recognise a state of existence differing from the present. The pivot on which the entire system of Mosaic legislation turns consists of tangible earthly rewards and punishments.¹ The vitality of the laws is confined within a very small compass. The doctrine of a resurrection, with the ideas arising from it, which appears in later Judaism,—especially in the writings of Daniel and Ezekiel,—is evidently a fruit of foreign growth derived from Zoroastrian sources. Even the descriptions of Sheol, the common sojourn of departed beings, equally of the just and unjust, which appear in comparatively early writings, do not seem of true Hebraic origin. In Sheol man can no longer praise God or remember His loving-kindness.² It is a shadow-realm, a Jewish counterpart of the heathen Hades, in which the souls lead a sad, lethargic, comfortless existence; knowing nothing of those who were dear to them on earth, mourning only over their own condition.³

But later Judaism is full of the strongest faith in a future life. Tradition reveals in the descriptions of the abodes of bliss, or of the horrors of the damned ⁴ Zoroastrianism thus acted on the Hebraic race in a double way. It not only developed in them a purer and more spiritual conception of a future existence, but later Mago-Zoroastrianism, itself a product of Chaldaism, strongly coloured the Rabbinical beliefs with materialistic ideas of punishments and rewards hereafter.⁵ It was, however, among the Aryan nations of the East that the doctrine of a future life after visible death was distinctly and vividly recognised. In one branch of the Aryan family, it took the shape either of an eternal metempsychosis, a ceaseless whirl of births and deaths, or of utter absorption after a prolonged probation in absolute infinity, or endless unfathomable space,

¹ Comp Alger, History of the Doctrine of a Future Life, p 157, also Milman’s Christianity, vol 1 pp 21, 25, 75, etc
² Ps vi 5
³ Job xiv 22 Comp Dollinger, vol u p 380, and Alger, History of the Doctrine of a Future Life, pp 151, 152 et seq
⁴ See Milman, History of Christianity, vol 1 p 242, notes
⁵ See the chapter of Alger, tracing the influence of the Persian system on later Judaism, p 165 et seq
or nothing. ¹ In the other branch, this doctrine was clothed in the shape of a graduated scale of rewards and punishments, in the sense in which human accountability is understood by the modern Christian or Moslem. Whether the Mago-Zoroastrians from the beginning believed in a corporeal resurrection is a question on which scholars are divided. Döllinger, with Burnouf and others, believes that this notion was not really Zoroastric, and that it is of later growth, if not derived from Hebrews. ²

However this be, about the time of the Prophet of Arabia, the Persians had a strong and developed conception of future life. The remains of the Zend-Avesta which have come down to us expressly recognise a belief in future rewards and punishments. The Zoroastrianism of the Vendidad and the Bundehesh, enlarging upon the beliefs of the Avesta, holds that after a man’s death the demons take possession of his body, yet on the third day consciousness returns. Souls that in their lifetime have yielded to the seductions of evil cannot pass the terrible bridge Chinevad, to which they are conducted on the day following the third night after their death. The good successfully pass it, conducted by the Yazatas (in modern Persian, Izad), and, entering the realms of bliss, join Ormuzd and the Amshaspands in their abode, where seated on thrones of gold, they enjoy the society of beautiful famres (Hoordani-Behisht) and all manner of delights. The wicked fall over the bridge or are dragged down into the gulf of Duzakh where they are tormented by the Dzuras. The duration of this punishment is fixed by Ormuzd, and some are redeemed by the prayers and intercessions of their friends. Towards the end of the world a prophet is to arise, who is to rid the earth of injustice.

¹ And yet the Brahmanical priests painted the horrors of hell and the pleasures of heaven with the vividness of a thoroughly morbid imagination. The Arabic scholar is referred to the appreciative account of the Buddhist doctrines (not so much regarding future life as generally) in Shahristani, p. 446.

² Alger has furnished us with strong reasons for supposing that the early Zoroastrians believed in a bodily resurrection. The extreme repugnance with which the Maga-Zoroastrians regarded corpses is no reason for discarding this conclusion, as most probably this repugnance arose under Menehuan influences; see Alger, p. 108 et seq. Apropos of the repugnance with which the Persians in Mohammed’s time looked upon corpses, consult Döllinger, vol ii p. 409.
and wickedness, and usher in a reign of happiness—the Zoroastrian millennium,Ormuzd’s kingdom of heaven.\footnote{Shahrîstânî calls this prophet Ushizerbeká (Cureton’s ed p 188); but according to Western authors his name is said to be Sosiosch, who is to be preceded by two other prophets, called Oscheder Bami and Oschedermah (Dollinger x ii p 401). De Sacy calls him Pashount (Sur Dyn Ant de la Perse, p 95).}

After this, a universal resurrection will take place; and friends and relatives will meet again. After the joys of recognition there will follow a separation of the good from the bad. The torments of the unrighteous will be fearful. Ahriman will run up and down Chinevad overwhelmed with anguish. A blazing comet, falling on the earth, will ignite the world. Mountains will melt and flow together like liquid metal. All mankind, good and bad alike, will pass through this glowing flood, and come out purified.\footnote{It is not necessary, as Alger supposes, that because the Jews looked forward to the reappearance of Elijah or some other prophet among them for these national purposes, we must conclude that they believed in transmigration.} Even Ahriman will be changed and Duzakh purified. Evil thenceforth will be annihilated, and all mankind will live in the enjoyment of ineffable delights.

Such is the summary of a religion which has influenced the Semitic faiths in an unmistakable manner, and especially the eclectic faith of Mohammed.

About the time when Jesus of Nazareth made his appearance, the Phenicians and Assyrians had passed away. The hellenised Roman ruled the world, checked in the East, however, by triumphant and revived Mago-Zoroastrianism.

The Jew had lost his independence for ever. A miserable sycophant occupied the throne of David. A mightier power than that of the Seleucidæ kept in subjection his spirit of unruliness. Like every nation animated by a fierce love of their country, creed, and individuality, the Jews, as their fate grew darker and darker, became more and more inspired with the hope that some heaven-commissioned ministrant, like Gideon or Maccabees, would restore their original glory, and enable them to plant their foot on the necks of their many oppressors. The appearance of a Messiah portrayed in vivid colours by all their patriotic seers, the Jewish bards, was founded on one grand aspiration: the restoration of the
kingdom of Israel. Under the influences of the Mago-Zoroastrians and Chaldaeans in the East, and the Grecian schools of philosophy in the West, among some classes of society (especially among those whom the hellenising tendencies of Herod had withdrawn from the bosom of Israel), the belief in a personal Messiah was either faint and indistinct, or a mere echo from the vulgar masses. But, as Milman beautifully observes, the Palestinian Jews had about this time moulded out of various elements a splendid though confused vision of the appearance of the Messiah, the simultaneous regeneration of all things, the resurrection of the dead, and the reign of Messiah upon earth. All these events were to take place at once, or to follow close upon each other. The Messiah was to descend from the line of David, he was to assemble all the scattered descendants of the tribes, and to expel and destroy their hateful alien enemies. Under the Messiah a resurrection would take place, but would be confined to the righteous of their race.

Amidst all this enthusiasm and these vague aspirations, the hopes of eternal life and future bliss were strangely mingled. The extremes of despair and enthusiastic expectation of external relief always tend to the development of such a state of mind among the people. One section appears to look forward to an unearthly kingdom, a reign of peace and law under divine agency, as an escape from the galling yoke of brute force; the other looks forward to the same or cognate means for securing the kingdom of heaven by the blood of aliens and heathens.

The traditions which record the sayings of Jesus have gone

1 Milman, History of Christianity, vol. i p. 76

2 The similarity between the Zoroastrian idea of a deliverer and restorer of religion and order on earth, and the Messianic conception among the Jews, is, to say the least, wonderful. The Jews, it is certain, derived this conception from the Zoroastrians, and in their misfortunes developed it in more vivid terms. But I am strongly disposed to think that the idea of a Sosiosch, whatever its prophetic significance, arose among the Persians also when labouring under a foreign yoke—whether of the Semitic Assyrians or the Greek Macedonians it is difficult to say. The very country in which the scene of his appearance is laid Kagnudez in Khorasan, according to De Sacy, Cansoya, according to Dollinger’s authorities—shows that the Persians, in their misfortunes, looked to the East, especially to the “Land of the Sun,” for assistance and deliverance.

3 Like the modern, though obscure, sect of Christadelphians.
through such a process of elimination and selection, that it is hardly possible at the present moment to say which are really his own words and which are not. But taking them as they stand, and on the same footing as we regard other religious documents (without ignoring their real spirit, yet without trying to find mysterious meanings like the faithful believer), we see that throughout these traditional records the notion of an immediate advent of a new order of things, "of a kingdom of heaven," is so predominant in the mind of Jesus as to overshadow all other ideas. The Son of Man has appeared, the kingdom of God is at hand; such is the burden of every hopeful word. This kingdom was to replace the society and government which the Prophet of Nazareth found so imperfect and evil. At times his words led the disciples to conclude that the new Teacher was born to lead only the poor and the famished to glory and happiness; that under the hoped-for theocratic régime these alone would be "the blessed," and would constitute the predominating element, for "woe" is denounced in awful terms against the rich and the well-fed. At other times, the realm of God is understood to mean the literal fulfilment of the apocalyptic visions or dreams connected with the appearance of the Messiah. Sometimes, however, the kingdom of God is a realm of souls, and the approaching deliverance is merely a spiritual deliverance from the bondage

1 Milman himself admits that the traditions regarding the acts and sayings of Jesus, which were floating about among the Christian communities, were not cast into their present shape till almost the close of the first half of the second century (History of Christianity, vol. 1 p. 126). Necessarily, therefore, the ancient collectors and modelers of the Christian Gospels, or as Milman regards them, rude and untutored historians, must have exercised a discretionary latitude in the reception of the traditions. They must have decided everything on dogmatic grounds. "If a narrative or scripture was, in its tone and substance, agreeable to their (preconceived) views, they looked upon defective external evidence as complete; if it was not agreeable, the most sufficient was explained away as a misunderstanding." Hence a great many additions were made, though unconsciously, to the sayings and doings of Jesus. On this point the testimony of Celsus, with every allowance for exaggeration, must be regarded as conclusive when he says the Christians were in the habit of adding and dwelling upon their traditional accounts (Origen ad Celsus, i 27). And this on the principle laid down by Sir W. Mun in Canon III, p. 189, vol. 1 (Life of Mahomet).

2 Matt iv 17, x 7, eto.

3 Luke vii 26 et seq. In Matthew "the poor in spirit" are mentioned. But the simpler statement of Luke, from a comparison of all the circumstances, seems more authentic.
of this mundane existence. All these conceptions appear at one period to have existed in the mind of Jesus simultaneously. But the fierceness and bigotry of the dominant party and the power of the Roman eagle made any immediate social change impossible. As every hope of present amelioration died away, hopes and aspirations of a brighter future took possession of the heart. Jesus felt the present state could not last long; that the time of the regeneration of mankind was at hand, when he himself would appear in the clouds of heaven, clothed in divine garments, seated on a throne, surrounded by angels and his chosen disciples. The dead would rise from their graves, and the Messiah would sit in judgment. The angels would be the executors of his sentence. He would send the elect to a delightful abode prepared from the beginning of the world, and the unrighteous into “everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The chosen, not numerically large, would be taken into an illuminated mansion, where they would partake of banquets presided over by the father of the race of Israel, the patriarchs, and the prophets, and in which Jesus himself will share.

1 Renan, Vie de Jesus, p. 282.
2 Matt. xix. 18.
3 There can be no doubt that Jesus himself believed in a corporeal resurrection, and in tangible rewards and punishments in a future life. He often spoke of “the blessed” in his kingdom eating and drinking at his table. But whilst in the early traditions passing under the name of the four apostles, the accounts, owing to careful pruning, are meagre enough, later traditions enlarge upon the descriptions of paradise and hell, and revel in the most gorgeous fantasies, which go under the name of revelation. AAGR Rev. xxi. 8-21, xxii. 1, 2. In piety even the Christian traditionists do not fall short of the followers of other creeds. The tradition handed down by Irenæus on the authority of John declares Jesus to have said, “Days shall come in which there shall be vines, which shall have each ten thousand branches, and every one of these branches shall have ten thousand lesser branches, and every one of these branches shall have ten thousand twigs; and every one of these twigs shall have ten thousand clusters of grapes, and in every one of these clusters there shall be ten thousand grapes, and every one of these grapes being pressed shall yield two hundred and seventy five gallons of wine; and when a man shall take hold of one of these sacred bunches, another bunch shall cry out, I am a better bunch, take me, and bless the Lord by me,” etc.
4 Matt. xvi. 27, xxiv. 30, 31, xxv. 31 et seq. etc.
5 Rev. xx. 12, 13. Compare these notions with the Zoroastrian belief.
6 Matt. xxv. 41.
9 Matt. xxvi. 20.
That the inauguration of the new régime with the second advent of Jesus and the resurrection of the human race was considered not to be distant, is apparent from the words of the Master himself, when he impressed upon his hearers the approach of the kingdom of God, and the utter futility of every provision for the occupations and exigencies of the present life.¹

The words of the Teacher, acting in unison with the state of mind engendered by the circumstances of the age,² had sunk deep into the hearts of his disciples, and all looked forward, with a vividness of expectation hardly surpassed in the annals of human beliefs, to the literal fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the millennium.

"If the first generation of the Christians had a profound and constant belief, it was that the world was approaching its end, and that the great 'revelation' of Christ was to happen soon."³

It is only when the Christian Church becomes a regular organisation that the followers of Jesus expand their views beyond the restricted horizon of the Judaic world, and, forgetting their millenarian dream, they pass into the Greek and Roman system, and extend the empire of their creed over untold legions of barbarians fresh from their forests, who looked upon Jesus and his mother as the counterparts of their own Odin and Freya worshipped in their primeval homes.

But ever and anon the Christian world has been agitated in moments of convulsions and disasters by the millenary excitement and fierce expectation of the apocalyptic appearance of the great Prophet of Nazareth. The idea, however, of the realm of God has, with the lapse of ages and the progress of thought, taken either a spiritual shape or utterly faded away from the mind, or, where it has been retained, derives its character from the surroundings of the individual believers. The Jew, the Mago-Zoroastrian, and the Christian all believed in a bodily resurrection. The crude notions of primitive Mosaism had made way for more definite ideas derived chiefly

¹ Matt x 23, Mark xiii 30; Luke xiii 35; Matt vi 25-34, viii 22.
² Mark the bitter term which Jesus applies to his generation.
³ Renan, Vie de Jesus, p 287; Comp also Milman’s History of Christianity, vol. i. p. 378.
from the Chaldæo-Zoroastrian doctrines. We know how among the Persians the old worship of the mountains, the simple teachings of the early teachers, had grown, under the magic wands of the Babylonian wizards, into a complex system of graduated rewards and punishments,—how Chaldæan philosophy had permeated Mago-Zoroastrianism to its innermost core. Primitive Christianity, with its vivid belief in the immediate advent of the material kingdom of Christ, had imbibed notions from Chaldæan, Mago-Zoroastrian, and Alexandrian sources which had considerably altered the old conceptions. Jew, Christian, and Zoroastrian all looked, more or less, to material rewards and punishments in a future existence.

The popular Christian notion, fostered by ecclesiasticism, that Mohammed denied souls to women, is by this time, we believe, exploded. It was a calumny concocted to create an aversion against Islam. But the idea that the Arabian Prophet promised his followers a sensual paradise with hooirs, and a graduated scale of delights, still lingers. It is a sign alike of ignorance and ancient bigotry. There is no doubt that in the Suras of the intermediate period, before the mind of the Teacher had attained the full development of religious consciousness, and when it was necessary to formulate in language intelligible to the common folk of the desert, the realistic descriptions of heaven and hell, borrowed from the floating fancies of Zoroastrian, Sabæan, and the Talmudical Jew, attract the attention as a side picture, and then comes the real essence—the adoration of God in humility and love. The hooirs are creatures of Zoroastrian origin, so is paradise, whilst hell in the severity of its punishment is Talmudic. The descriptions are realistic, in some places almost sensuous; but to say that they are sensual, or that Mohammed, or any of his followers, even the ultra-literalists accepted them as such, is a calumny. The wine "that does not mebrate" and the attendants "that come not nigh," can hardly be said to represent sensual pleasures. The chief and predominating idea in Islâm respecting a future life is founded upon the belief that, in a state of existence hereafter, every human being will have to render an account of his

1 In Persian, firdous
or her actions on earth, and that the happiness or misery of individuals will depend upon the manner in which they have performed the behests of their Creator. His mercy and grace are nevertheless unbounded, and will be bestowed alike upon His creatures. This is the pivot on which the whole doctrine of future life in Islam turns, and this is the only doctrinal point one is required to believe and accept. All the other elements, caught up and syncretised from the floating traditions of the races and peoples of the time, are mere accessories. Setting aside from our consideration the question of subjectivity involved in all ideas of future rewards and punishments, we may say, in all ideas of a life-after-death, we must bear in mind that these ideas have furnished to the moral teachers of the world the most powerful instrument for influencing the conduct of individuals and nations. But though every religion, more or less, contains the germ of this principle of future accountability in another state, all have failed thoroughly to realise its nature as a continuous agency for the elevation of the masses. Virtue, for its own sake, can only be grasped by minds of superior development; for the average intellect, and for the uneducated, sanctions, more or less comprehensible, will always be necessary.

To turn now to the nature of these sanctions, it must be remembered that it is scarcely ever possible to convey an idea of spiritual pleasure or spiritual pain to the apprehensions of the generality of mankind without clothing the expressions in the garb of tangible personalities, or introducing sensible objects into the description of such pleasure or pain. Philosophy has wrangled over abstract expressions, not dressed in tangible phraseology. Such expressions and conceptions have seen their day, have flourished, and have died without making themselves felt beyond a restricted circle of dreamers, who lived in the indefinable vagueness of their own thoughts.

Mohammed was addressing himself not only to the advanced minds of a few idealistic thinkers who happened to be then living, but to the wide world around him engrossed in materialism of every type. He had to adapt himself to the comprehensions of all. To the wild famished Arab, what more grateful, or what more consonant to his ideas of paradise than
rivers of unsullied incorruptible water, or of milk and honey; or anything more acceptable than unlimited fruit, luxuriant vegetation, inexhaustible fertility? He could conceive of no bliss unaccompanied with these sensuous pleasures. This is the contention of that portion of the Moslem world which, like Sanâî and Ghazzâlî, holds that behind the descriptions of material happiness portrayed in objects like trees, rivers, and beautiful mansions with fairy attendants, lies a deeper meaning; and that the joy of joys is to consist in the beatific visions of the soul in the presence of the Almighty, when the veil which divides man from his Creator will be rent, and heavenly glory revealed to the mind untrammelled by its corporeal, earthly habiliments. In this they are upheld by the words of the Koran as well as the authentic sayings of the Prophet. “The most favoured of God,” said Mohammed, “will be he who shall see his Lord’s face (glory) night and morning, a felicity which will surpass all the pleasures of the body, as the ocean surpasses a drop of sweat.” One day, talking to his friend, Abû Hurâra, the Prophet said, “God has prepared for His good people what no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of anyone,” and then recited the following verse of the Koran: “No soul knoweth the joy which is secretly prepared for it as a reward for that it may have wrought” 1 Another tradition 2 reports that Mohammed declared the good will enjoy the beatific vision of God, to which reference, he said, is made in the following verse of the Koran: “And God inviteth unto the dwelling of peace. For those who do good there is excellent reward and superabundant addition” 3.

As to the parabolical nature of the Koranic expressions, this school of thinkers bases its convictions on the following passage of the inspired Book: “It is He who hath sent down unto thee the Book.” Some of the signs (verses) are firm (i.e. perspicuous or clear to understand)—these are the basis (or fundamental part) of the book—and others are figurative.” 4

1 Koran xxxii 17, Mishkhât, bk xxm chap xiii pt 1  
2 Koran x 26. Consult here Zamâkhshâri (the Kashshâf), Egyp Ed., pt 1 p. 244; he gives the fullest references to the opinions of the different theologians and schools, and especially mentions the doctrines of the Mushâbbâthehâs and the Sahâriâs  
3 From Subhaib.  
4 Koran iii 5
Another section looks upon the joys and pains of the Hereafter as entirely subjective. It holds that as extreme mental pain is far more agonising than physical pain, so is mental pleasure of the higher type far more rapturous than any sensuous pleasure; that as, after physical death, the individual soul "returns," to use the Koranic expression, to the Universal Soul, all the joys and pains, portrayed in vivid colours by the inspired Teacher to enable the masses to grasp the truth, will be mental and subjective. This section includes within its bosom some of the greatest philosophers and mystics of the Moslem world.

Another, and by far perhaps the larger class, however, believe in the literal fulfilment of all the word-paintings of the Koran.

Without venturing to pass any opinion on these different notions, we may take this occasion to state our own belief with regard to the Koranic conception of future rewards and punishments.

A careful study of the Koran makes it evident that the mind of Mohammed went through the same process of development which marked the religious consciousness of Jesus. Mohammed and Jesus are the only two historic Teachers of the world, and for this reason we take them together. How great this development was in Jesus is apparent, not only from the idealised conception towards the end of his earthly career regarding the Kingdom of Heaven, but also from the change of tone towards the non-Israelites. Thoroughly exclusive at first,¹ with a more developed religious consciousness wider sympathies awaken in the heart.²

As with Jesus so with Mohammed.

The various chapters of the Koran which contain the ornate descriptions of paradise, whether figurative or literal, were delivered wholly or in part at Mecca. Probably in the infancy of his religious consciousness, Mohammed himself believed in some or other of the traditions which floated around him. But with a wider awakening of the soul, a deeper communion with the Creator of the Universe, thoughts, which bore a material

¹Matt. x 5. xv 22-26
²Matt. xxvii: 19, etc., comp throughout Strauss, New Life of Jesus (1865), vol. 1, p. 296 et seq
aspect at first, became spiritualised. The mind of the Teacher progressed not only with the march of time and the development of his religious consciousness, but also with the progress of his disciples in apprehending spiritual conceptions. Hence, in the later suras we observe a merging of the material in the spiritual, of the body in the soul. The gardens "watered by rivers," perpetual shade,¹ plenty and harmony, so agreeable to the famished denizen of the parched, shadeless, and waterless desert, at perpetual discord with himself and all around him,—these still form the groundwork of beautiful imageries; but the happiness of the blessed is shown to consist in eternal peace and goodwill in the presence of their Creator. "But those," says the Koran, "who are pious shall dwell in gardens, amidst fountains; they shall say unto them, 'Enter ye therein in peace and security,' and all rancour will we remove from their bosoms; they shall sit as brethren, face to face,² on couches; weariness shall not affect them therein, neither shall they be repelled thence for ever".³

What can be nobler or grander in its conception or imagery, or give a better idea of the belief in the Prophet's mind when conveying his final message concerning the nature of the present and future life, than the following passage: "It is He who enableth you to travel by land and by sea; so that ye go on board of ships, which sail on with them, with favourable breeze, and they rejoice therein. But if a tempestuous wind overtake, and the waves come on them from every side, and they think they are encompassed therewith, they call on God, professing unto Him sincere religion; (saying) wouldst Thou but rescue us from this, then we will ever be indeed of the thankful. But when We have rescued them, Behold! they commit unrighteous excesses on the earth. O men! verily the excesses ye commit to the injury of your own souls are only for the enjoyment of this earthly life; soon shall ye return to Us, and We will declare unto you that which ye have done. Verily, the likeness of this present life is not otherwise than the water which We send down from heaven; and the productions of the earth, of which men and cattle eat,

¹ Koran xiii 34, xlvii. 16, 17 Comp. also chaps ix, x, and xiv
² I.e. with peace and goodwill in their hearts
³ Koran xv 48.
are mixed therewith, till the earth has received its beautiful raiment, and is decked out, and they who inhabit it imagine they have power over it. (But) Our behest cometh unto it by night or by day, and We make it as if it had been mown, as though it had not teemed (with fertility) only yesterday. Thus do we make our signs clear unto those who consider. And God inviteth unto the abodes of peace, and guideth whom He pleaseth into the right way. For those who do good is excellent reward and superabundant addition of it; neither blackness nor shame shall cover their faces. These are the inhabitants of paradise; therein do they abide for ever. But those who have wrought evil shall receive the reward of evil equal thereunto, and shame shall cover them (for there will be none to protect them against God) as though their faces were covered with a piece of the night of profound darkness.

Then again, what can be purer in its aspirations than the following

"Who fulfil the covenant of God and break not their compact, and who join together what God hath bidden to be joined, and who fear their Lord and dread an ill-reckoning; and who, from a sincere desire to please their Lord, are constant amid trials, and observe prayers and give alms, in secret and openly, out of what We have bestowed on them, and turn aside evil with good for them there is the recompense of that abode, gardens of eternal habitation, unto which they shall enter, together with such as shall have acted rightly from among their fathers, their wives, and their posterity; and the angels shall go in unto them by every portal, (saying) 'Peace be with you! because ye have endured with patience.' Excellent is the reward in that abode!"

Enough has been said to show the utter falsehood of the theory that Mohammed’s pictures of future life were all

1 Barzâwi explains the expression “whom He pleaseth,” as “those who repent” (p. 67, n. 1, chap iv). Compare Zamakhshari (the Kashshâf).

2 Observe the reward of virtue will not be confined to an exact measure of man’s works, it will far exceed his deserts; but the recompense of evil will be strictly proportioned to what one has done.

3 Koran x 23 27

4 This may also be translated as “from a desire to see the face (glory) of their Lord.”

5 Koran xiii 20 24 Compare throughout Zamakhshari (the Kashshâf).
sensuous. We will conclude this chapter with the following passage from the Koran to show the depth of spirituality in Islam, and the purity of the hopes and aspirations on which it bases its rule of life: “O thou soul which art at rest, return unto thy Lord, pleased and pleasing Him, enter thou among my servants, and enter thou my garden of felicity.”

1 Koran lxxxix 27-30.
CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH MILITANT OF ISLĀM

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HE extraordinary rapidity with which the religion of the Arabian Prophet spread over the surface of the globe is one of the most wonderful phenomena in the history of religions. For centuries Christianity had hidden itself in byways and corners; not until it had largely absorbed and assimilated paganism, not until a half-pagan monarch had come to its assistance with edicts and orders, was it able to rear its head among the creeds of the world. Islām, within thirty years of the death of its Teacher, found its way into the hearts of millions of people. And before a century was well over the voice of the Recluse of Hira had rolled across three continents. The legions of the Cæsars and the Chosroes, who endeavoured to stop the onrush of the new democracy preached in Arabia, were shattered to pieces by the children of the desert. Its remarkable success and marvellous effect upon the minds of men have given rise to the charge that, as a religion of the sword, Islām was propagated

\[1\] Sura \(n\) 291. "Let there be no compulsion in religion."

\[2\] Sura \(v\) 69. see p. 175 Compare this with the thunders of the Athanasian Creed.
by the sword and upheld by the sword. We propose, therefore, carefully to examine the circumstances and facts connected with the rise of Islâm, to see whether there is any truth in the statement.

At the time of the Prophet’s advent into Medina, the two tribes of Aus and Khazraj, who had been engaged in deadly conflict for years, had just ended their strife by a hollow peace. There was every prospect of the war breaking out again with fiercer animosity. The Jews, who after the onslaught of Jabala had accepted the clientage of the Medinite Arabs, were fast recovering their strength and were openly threatening their pagan compatriots with the vengeance of the Messiah, whose appearance was hourly expected. The surrounding tribes, among whom the influence of the Koreish was supreme, were arrayed in all their desert ferocity against Medina. The moment Mohammed appeared among the Medinites the elements of danger which threatened the new religion became apparent. The Meccan disciples who had braved death, and now faced destitution and exile for their Master and the light which he had brought to their hearts, were few and weak. His Medinite followers were not many; they were divided amongst themselves, actuated by tribal jealousies. An important faction, headed by an influential chieftain, an aspirant to the throne of Medina, worked in the city on the side of the heathens ¹

The Jews, compact and united, jealously and relentlessly, with poison and with treachery, opposed him in every direction. But the heart, which did not fail when the Koreish threatened him with death, was not daunted when the existence of others depended on him. He at once set himself to the task of organising into a social entity the varied elements which had gathered round him as the minister of God. He substituted referees for the old tribal vendetta; he abolished the distinction of Aus and Khazraj, he comprehended the Jews and Christians in his little commonwealth, and planted germs of cordial relations among all believers; he proclaimed that a Jew, Sabæan, or Christian, whoever believed in God and future life and acted righteously, “on him shall come no fear.” To a people wedded to the worst type of heathenism, to a race with

¹ See ante, p. 57.
the influence of Jesus remained confined to a small body of followers, taken chiefly from the lower and uneducated ranks. He fell a victim to the passions he had evoked by his scathing denunciations of the lifeless sacerdotalism of the priestly classes—to the undying hatred of a relentless race—before his followers had become either numerous or influential enough to require practical rules for their guidance, or before they could form an organisation, either for purposes of spiritual teaching, or as a safeguard against the persecutions of the dominant creed. Drawn from among a people with settled laws, the observance of which was guaranteed by the suzerain power, the followers of Jesus had no occasion to constitute themselves into an organised body, nor had the Teacher any need to frame rules of practical positive morality. The want was felt when the community became more extensive, and the genius of a scholar, well-versed in the Neo-Platonic lore, destroyed the individuality and simplicity of the teachings of the Master.

Mohammed, like Jesus, was followed from the commence ment of his career as a preacher and reformer by the hostility and opposition of his people. His followers also, in the beginning, were few and insignificant. He also was preceded by men who had shaken off the bondage of idolatry, and had listened to the springs of the life within. He, too, preached gentleness, charity, and love.

But Mohammed appeared among a nation steeped in barbarous usages, who looked upon war as the object of life,—a nation far removed from the materialising, degrading influences of the Greeks and the Romans, yet likewise far from their humanising influences. At first his enunciations evoked scorn, and then vengeful passions. His followers, however, increased in number and strength until at last the invitation of the Medinites crowned his glorious work with success. From the moment he accepted the asylum so nobly proffered, from the moment he was called upon to become their chief magistrate as well as

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1 I write according to the generally received opinion among Western scholars: that Mohammed, in accordance with the traditions current in his time, believed that Jesus miraculously disappeared, there is no doubt. In spite of this so-called apocryphal Gnostic tradition being opposed to the general body of Christian traditions, there is as much historic probability on one side as the other.
neir spiritual teacher, his fate became involved in theirs; from that time the hostilities of the idolaters and their allies required an unslipping vigilance on the part of the Moslems. A single city had to make head against the combined attacks of the multitudinous tribes of Arabia. Under these circumstances, energetic measures were often necessary to sustain the existence of the Moslem commonwealth. When persuasion failed, pressure was required.

The same instinct of self-preservation which spoke so warmly within the bosom of the great Prophet of Nazareth,¹ when he advised his disciples to look to the instruments of defence, caused the persecuted Moslems to take up arms when attacked by their relentless enemies.

Gradually, by gentle kindness and energy, all the disjointed fragments of the Arabian tribes were brought together to the worship of the true God, and then peace settled upon the land. Born among a people the most fiery of the earth, then as now vehement and impulsive by nature, and possessed of passions as burning as the sun of their desert, Mohammed impressed on them habits of self-control and self-denial such as have never before been revealed in the pages of history.

At the time of Mohammed’s advent international obligations were unknown. When nations or tribes made war upon each other, the result usually was the massacre of the able-bodied, the slavery of the innocent, and plunder of the household penates.

The Romans, who took thirteen centuries to evolve a system of laws which was as comprehensive as it was elevated in conception,² could never realise the duties of international morality or of humanity. They waged war for the sole purpose of subjugating the surrounding nations. Where they succeeded, they imposed their will on the people absolutely. The sacredness of treaties was unknown; pacts were made and broken, just as convenience dictated. The liberty of other nations was never of the slightest importance in their estimation.³

¹ Luke xxii. 256.
² In justice to the Semitic races, I must say that almost all the great jurists of Rome were Semites—Phoenicians, Syrtes, or Carthaginians.
³ Compare Dollinger, The Gentile and the Jew, throughout on this subject.
introduction of Christianity made little or no change in the views entertained by its professors concerning international obligations. War was as inhuman and as exterminating as before; people were led into slavery without compunction on the part of the captors; treaties were entered into and broken just as suited the purpose of some designing chieftain. Christianity did not profess to deal with international morality, and so left its followers groping in the dark.

Modern thinkers, instead of admitting this to be a real deficiency in the Christian system, natural to the unfinished state in which it was left, have tried to justify it. A strange perversion of the human intellect! Hence, what is right in the individual comes to be considered wrong in the nation, and vice versa. Religion and morality, two convertible terms, are kept apart from the domain of law. Religion, which claims to regulate the ties of individual men, ignores the reciprocal relations of the various aggregates of humanity. Religion is thus reduced into mere sentimentalism, an object of gushing effusion, or mutual laudation at debating societies, albeit sometimes rising to the dignity of philosophical morality.

The basis of international obligations consists in the recognition of nations as individuals, and of the fact that there is not one standard for individuals and another for nations; for as individuals compose a nation, so nations compose humanity; and the rights of nations and their obligations to each other in nowise differ from those existing between individuals.¹

True it is, that the rise of the Latin Church in the West, and the necessary augmentation of the power of the bishops of Rome, introduced in the Latin Christian world a certain degree of international responsibility. But this was absolutely confined to the adherents of the Church of Rome, or was occasionally extended as a favour to Greek Christianity. The rest of the world was unconditionally excluded from the benefits of such responsibility. "The name of religion served as the plea and justification of aggression upon weaker nations; it led to their spoliation and enslavement." Every act of violation was sanctified by the Church, and, in case of extreme iniquity,

¹ Comp. David Urewhart’s essay on the "Effects of the Contempt of International Law," reprinted from The East and West, Feb. 1867.
absolution paved the criminal’s way to heaven. From the first slaughters of Charlemagne, with the full sanction of the Church, to the massacre and enslavement of the unoffending races of America, there is an unbroken series of the infringement of international duties and the claims of humanity. This utter disregard of the first principles of charity led also to the persecution of those followers of Jesus who ventured to think differently from the Church.

The rise of Protestantism made no difference. The wars and mutual persecutions of the several religious factions form a history in themselves. “Persecution,” says Hallam, “is the deadly original sin of the Reformed Church, that which cools every honest man’s zeal for their cause, in proportion as his reading becomes more expansive.”

But, however much the various new-born Churches disagreed among themselves, or from the Church of Rome, regarding doctrinal and theological points, they were in perfect accord with each other in denying all community of interests and rights to nations outside the pale of Christendom.

The spirit of Islam, on the contrary, is opposed to isolation and exclusiveness. In a comparatively rude age, when the world was immersed in darkness, moral and social, Mohammed preached those principles of equality which are only half-realised in other creeds, and promulgated laws which, for their expansiveness and nobility of conception, would bear comparison with the records of any faith. “Islam,” says an able writer, “offered its religion, but never enforced it; and the acceptance of that religion conferred co-equal rights with the conquering body, and emancipated the vanquished States from the conditions which every conqueror, since the world existed up to the period of Mohammed, had invariably imposed.”

1 Compare Milman, Latin Christianity, vol 1 p 354, and Lecky, History of Rationalism in Europe, chap on “Persecution.”

2 Hallam’s Const Hist of England, vol 1 chap 11 p 62. When Calvin burnt Servetus for his opinions regarding the Trinity, his act was applauded, says Lecky, by all sections of Protestants. Melanchthon, Bullinger, and Parel wrote to express their warm approbation of the crime. Lecky defended it in an elaborate treatise. Lecky, Hist of Rationalism, vol 1 p 49. A study of the penal laws of England against the Catholics, Dissenters, and non-Conformists is enough to shock any candid mind.

3 Grotius, the founder, perhaps, of international law in Europe. Formally excepted the Moslems from all community of rights with the European nations.
By the laws of Islâm, liberty of conscience and freedom of worship were allowed and guaranteed to the followers of every other creed under Moslem dominion. The passage in the Koran, "Let there be no compulsion in religion,"\(^1\) testifies to the principle of toleration and charity inculcated by Islâm. "If thy Lord had pleased, verily all who are in the world would have believed together." "Wilt thou then force men to believe when belief can come only from God?"—"Adhere to those who forsake you; speak truth to your own heart; do good to every one that does ill to you." these are the precepts of a Teacher who has been accused of fanaticism and intolerance. Let it be remembered that these are the utterances, not of a powerless enthusiast or philosophical dreamer paralysed by the weight of opposing forces. These are the utterances of a man in the plenitude of his power, of the head of a sufficiently strong and well-organised State, able to enforce his doctrines with the edge of his reputed sword.

In religion, as in politics, individuals and sects have preached toleration, and insisted upon its practice only so long as they have been powerless and feeble. The moment they have acquired strength enough to battle with the forces which they wish to supersede, tolerance gives way to persecution. With the accession of Constantine to the throne of the Cæsars, Christianity was safe from molestation. But from that period commenced a system of religious persecution in its atrocity paralleled only by that of the Jews. "From the very moment," says Lecky, "the Church obtained civil power under Constantine, the general principle of coercion was admitted and acted on, both against the Jews, the heretics, and pagans."\(^2\) They were tortured with every refinement of cruelty; they were burnt at a slow-consuming fire to enable them to think of the charity and humanity of the church of Christ. Father after father wrote about the holiness of persecution. One of the greatest saints of the Church, "a saint of the most tender and exquisite piety"—supplied arguments for the most atrocious persecution. Except during the titanic struggles in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Christian

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1 Sura ii 257 (a Medina sura).
church, purporting to derive its authority from the Apostles, has never hesitated to encourage war,—or to give its sanction, in the name of religion and "the glory of Christ," to exterminating enterprises against heretics and heathens. These had no claims on Christian humanity or the law of nations; nor have the poor black races now! In the fifteenth century, the Pope granted a special charter by which the non-Christian world was allotted to the Portuguese and Spaniards in equal shares with absolute power to convert the inhabitants in any way they chose! History records how liberally they construed the permission. And all the atrocious doctrines relating to persecution and the treatment of non-Christians are unjustly based upon the words of Jesus himself. Did not the Master say, "Compel them to come in"?

In the hour of his greatest triumph, when the Arabian Prophet entered the old shrine of Mecca and broke down the idols, it was not in wrath or religious rage, but in pity, that he said—"Truth is come, darkness departeth," announcing amnesty almost universal, commanding protection to the weak and poor, and freeing fugitive slaves.

Mohammed did not merely preach toleration; he embodied it into a law. To all conquered nations he offered liberty of worship. A nominal tribute was the only compensation they were required to pay for the observance and enjoyment of their faith. Once the tax or tribute was agreed upon, every interference with their religion or the liberty of conscience was regarded as a direct contravention of the laws of Islām. Could so much be said of other creeds? Proselytism by the sword was wholly contrary to the instincts of Mohammed, and wrangling over creeds his abhorrence. Repeatedly he exclaims, "Why wrangle over that which you know not; try to excel in good works; when you shall return to God, He will tell you about that in which you have differed"

We must now return to our examination of the wars of the Prophet. We have seen that the various conflicts of the

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1 In the colossal and devastating struggle of the twentieth century, in which all the great nations of Christendom were engaged, the ministers of religion on both sides took vehement part in fostering the warlike spirit.

2 See chapter on The Political Spirit of Islām.
Moslems under Mohammed with the surrounding tribes were occasioned by the aggressive and unrelenting hostility of the idolaters, and were necessary for self-defence.

The battle of Mûta and the campaign of Tabûk, the earliest demonstrations against a foreign State, arose out of the assassination of an envoy by the Greeks. Probably we should not have heard of the promulgation of Islâm by the sword had the Moslems not punished the eastern Christians for this murder. The battle of Mûta was indecisive, and the campaign of Tabûk, which was entirely defensive in its nature (being undertaken to repulse the gathering of the forces of Heraclius), left this international crime unpunished during the lifetime of the Prophet, but his successors did not forget it, and a heavy penalty was exacted.

The extent of the Greek empire brought the Moslems into a state of belligerency with the greatest portion of Christendom. Besides, the anomalous position occupied by the governors of the provinces under the waning suzerainty of the Byzantine emperors rendered it impossible for the Moslem Chiefs to put an end to this condition of affairs by means of treaty-stipulations with any one of them. Before one could be subdued and brought to terms another committed some act of hostility, and compelled the Moslems to punish him. Hence the career once entered upon, they were placed in just warfare with nearly the whole of Christendom.

Religion has often furnished to designing chieftains, among Moslems as among Christians, a pretext for the gratification of ambition. The Moslem casuists, like the Christian jurists and divines, have divided the world into two regions—the Dâr

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1 See Urquhart's Islâm as a Political System. I do not mean to assert that the Moslems were never actuated by the spirit of aggression or by cupidity. It would be showing extreme ignorance of human nature to make such an assertion. It was hardly possible, that after the unprecedented progress they had made against their enemies and assailants, and after becoming aware of the weakness of the surrounding nations, they should still retain their moderation, and keep within the bounds of the law. Nor do I shut my eyes to the fact that there have been wars among the followers of Mohammed perhaps as cruelly waged as among the Christians. But these wars have been invariably dynastic. The persecutions to which certain sects have been subjected have arisen also, for the most part, from the same cause. The persecution of the descendants of Mohammed, the children of Ab and Fâtimah, by the Omeyyades, found its origin in the old hatred of the Koreish to Mohammed and the Hâshims, as I shall show hereafter.
ul-Harb and the Dār ul-Islām, the counterparts of Heathendom and Christendom. An examination, however, of the principles upon which the relations of Moslem states with non-Moslem countries were based, shows a far greater degree of liberality than has been evinced by Christian writers on international law. It is only in recent times, and under stress of circumstances that non-Christian states have been admitted into the "comity of nations." The Moslem jurists, on the other hand, differentiate between the condition of belligerency and that of peace. The expression, Dār ul-Harb,\(^1\) thus includes countries with which the Moslems are at war; whilst the States with which they are at peace are the Dār ul-Amān.\(^2\) The harbi, the inhabitants of the Dār ul-Harb, is an alien, pure and simple. He has no right to enter Islāmic States without express permission. But once he receives the amān or guarantee of safety from even the poorest Moslem, he is perfectly secure from molestation for the space of one year. On the expiration of that period, he is bound to depart. The inhabitant of the Dār ul-Amān is a mustāmin.\(^3\) The amān may be for ever or for a limited duration, but so long as it lasts, the mustāmin's treatment is regulated in strict accordance with the terms of the treaty with his country.\(^3\) The mustāmins were governed by their own laws, were exempt from taxation and enjoyed other privileges.

The spirit of aggression never breathed itself into that code which formally incorporated the Law of Nations with the religion; and the followers of Mohammed, in the plenitude of their power, were always ready to say to their enemies, "Cease all hostility to us, and be our allies, and we shall be faithful to you; or pay tribute, and we will secure and protect you in all your rights; or adopt our religion, and you shall enjoy every privilege we ourselves possess."

The principal directions of Mohammed, on which the Moslem laws of war are founded, show the wisdom and humanity which animated the Islāmic system. "And fight for the religion of God against those who fight against you, but

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\(^1\) Lit. The country of war.

\(^2\) The country of peace.

\(^3\) These Amāns formed the origin of the Captulations which have proved the ruin of Turkish resources.
transgress not (by attacking them first), for God loveth not the transgressors; . . . if they attack you, slay them; . . . but if they desist, let there be no hostility, except against the ungodly”

In turning their arms against Persia the Moslems were led on by circumstances. The Munzirs, a dynasty of semi-Arab kings who reigned under the shadow of the Persian monarchy, though politically hostile, were allied to the Byzantines by ties of faith and community of interests. The first conflicts of the Moslems with the Greeks naturally re-acted on the Hirites, the subjects of the Munzirs. The Hirite territories comprehended a large tract of country, from the banks of the Euphrates westward, overlapping the desert of Irâk, and almost reaching the pasturage of the Ghassânide Arabs, who owned allegiance to the Byzantines.

The position of Hira under the Persians was similar to that of Judæa under Augustus or Tiberias. About the time of the Moslem conquest a Persian nominee ruled this principality; but the jealousy of the Chosroes associated a marzbân, or satrap, with the successor of the Munzirs, whose subjects, as impatient of control then as their descendants now, engaged in predatory raids on the neighbouring tribes, and became involved in hostilities with the Moslems. A strong government under the guidance of a single ruler, whose power had become doubly consolidated after the suppression of the revolts of the nomads on the death of the Prophet, was little inclined to brook quietly the insults of the petty dependency of a tottering empire. A Moslem army marched upon Hira; the marzbân fled to Madâm (Ctesiphon), the capital of the Persian empire, and the Arab chief submitted, almost without a struggle, to the Moslems under Khâlid bin-Walid.

The conquest of Hira brought the Moslems to the threshold of the dominions of the Chosroes. Persia had, after a long period of internecine conflict, signalized by revolting murders and atrocities, succeeded in obtaining an energetic ruler, in the person of Yezdîjard. Under the directions of this sovereign, the Persian general brought an imposing force to bear on the Moslems. The great Omar who now ruled at Medina, before

1 Sura xii 186, compare ver. 257
taking up the challenge, offered to Yezdjard, through his deputies, the usual terms by which war might be avoided. These terms were, the profession of Islâm, which meant the reform of the political abuses that had brought the Sasanian empire so low; the reduction of all those heavy taxes and perquisites,¹ which sucked out the life-blood of the nation; and the administration of justice by the code of Mohammed, which held all men, without distinction of rank or office, equal in the eye of the law. The alternative offer was the payment of tribute in return for protection. These terms were disdainfully refused by the Persian monarch and the days of Kâdesia followed. After the conquest of Madâin (Ctesiphon), the Caliph promulgated peremptory orders that under no circumstance should the Moslems cross the Tigris towards the East, and that that river should for ever form the boundary between the Persian and the Saracenic empires. Upon this basis a peace was concluded. But Irân chafed under the loss of Mesopotamia; and the successive breaches of faith by the Persians led to Nehâvend. The Kesrâ's power was irretrievably shattered; many of his nobles and the chiefs of the priesthood, whose interest it was to keep up the reign of disorder and oppression, were cut off, and he himself became a fugitive like another Darius. The nation at large hailed the Moslems as their deliverers.² The advance of the Saracens from the Tigris to the Elburz and from the Elburz to Transoxiana was not different from that of the British in India and due to similar causes.

The general conversion of the Persians to the religion of Mohammed is often taken as a proof of the intolerant character of Islâm. But, in the blindness of bigotry, even scholars forget the circumstances under which the Moslems entered the country. Every trace of religious life was extinct among the people; the masses were ground down by the worst of all evils, a degenerate priesthood and a licentious oligarchy. The Mazdakian and Manichæan heresies had loosened every rivet

¹ Save the tenth on landed property, and 2½ per cent of every man's means for the poor, the distribution of which would have been left to himself and his officers

² Yezdjard, like Darius, was assassinated by his own people. See The Short History of the Saracens (Macmillan, 1921), p 32
in the social fabric. Kesrā Anūshirvān had only postponed for a time the general disruption of society.

The consequence was, that as soon as the Moslems entered the country as the precursors of law and order, a general conversion took place, and Persia became for ever attached to Islam.¹

An impartial analyst of facts will now be able to judge for himself how much truth there is in the following remark of Muir: "It was essential to the permanence of Islām that its aggressive course should be continuously pursued, and that its claim to an universal acceptance, or, at the least, to an universal supremacy, should be enforced at the point of the sword."² Every religion, in some stage of its career, has, from the tendencies of its professors, been aggressive. Such also has been the case with Islām; but that it ever aims at proselytism by force, or that it has been more aggressive than other religions, must be entirely denied.³

Islām seized the sword in self-defence, and held it in self-defence, as it will ever do. But Islām never interfered with the dogmas of any moral faith, never persecuted, never established an Inquisition it never invented the rack or the stake for stifling difference of opinion, or strangling the human conscience, or exterminating heresy. No one who has a competent knowledge of history can deny that the Church of Christ, when it pretended to be most infallible, "shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind"; whilst the fate of the man or woman who forsook the Church, or even expressed a preference for any other creed, was no less cruel.⁴ In 1521, death and confiscation of property was decreed by Charles V. against all heretics. Burnings and hangings, and tearing out and twisting of tongues

¹ As a testimony to the spirit which animated the Moslems, we quote the following from Gibbon: "The administration of Persia was regulated by an actual survey of the people, the cattle, and the fruits of the earth; and this monument, which attests the vigour of the Caliphs, might have instructed the philosophers of every age."—Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol v, p. 97. See also Suyūṭī, Ta’rikh ul Khulafā’ (History of the Caliphs)
² Muir, Life of Mahomet, vol iii, p 251
³ Compare Niebuhr’s remarks in his Description de l’Arabie
⁴ In the seventeenth century a young man was hanged for having said, it is stated, that he did not think Mohammed was a bad man
were the usual penalties of refusal to adopt the orthodox communion. In England, after it became Protestant, the Presbyterians, through a long succession of reigns, were imprisoned, branded, mutilated, scourged, and exposed in the pillory. In Scotland, they were hunted like criminals over the mountains; their ears were torn from the roots; they were branded with hot irons; their fingers were wrenched asunder by thumbkins; the bones of their legs were shattered in the boots. Women were scourged publicly through the streets. The Catholics were tortured and hanged. Anabaptists and Arians were burnt alive. But as regards non-Christians, Catholics and Protestants, orthodox and un-orthodox, were in perfect accord. Muslims and Jews were beyond the pale of Christendom. In England, the Jews were tortured and hanged. In Spain, the Moslems were burnt. Marriages between Christians and Jews, and Christians and "infidels," were null and void, in fact prohibited under terrible and revolting penalties. Even now, Christian America burns alive a Christian negro marrying a Christian white woman! Such has been the effect produced by Christianity.

To this day, wherever scientific thought has not unfused a new soul, wherever true culture has not gained a foothold, the old spirit of exclusiveness and intolerance, the old ecclesiastical hatred of Islām, displays itself in writings, in newspaper attacks, in private conversations, in public speeches. The spirit of persecution is not dead in Christianity; it is lying dormant, ready to burst into flame at the touch of the first bigot.

Let us turn from this picture to the world of Islām. Whilst orthodox Christianity persecuted with equal ferocity the Jews and Nestorians,—the descendants of the men who were supposed to have crucified its Incarnate God, and the men who refused to adore his mother,—Islām afforded them both shelter and protection. Whilst Christian Europe was burning witches and heretics, and massacring Jews and "infidels," the Moslem sovereigns were treating their non-Moslem subjects with consideration and tolerance. They were the trusted subjects of the State, councillors of the empire. Every secular office was open to them along with the Moslems. The Teacher
himself had declared it lawful for a Moslem to intermarry with a Christian, Hebrew, or Zoroastrian. The converse was not allowed, for obvious political reasons. Moslem Turkey and Persia entrust their foreign interests to the charge of their Christian subjects. In Christendom, difference of faith has been a crime; in Islâm it is an accident. "To Christians," says Urquhart, "a difference of religion was indeed a ground for war, and that not merely in dark times and amongst fanatics." From the massacres, in the name of religion, of the Saxons, the Frisians and other Germanic tribes by Charlemagne; from the burning to death of the thousands of innocent men and women; from the frightful slaughters of the Arians, the Paulicians, the Albigenses and the Huguenots, from the horrors of the sacks of Magdeburg and Rome, from the sanguinary scenes of the Thirty Years' War, down to the cruel persecutions of Calvinistic Scotland and Lutheran England, there is an uninterrupted chain of intolerance, bigotry, and fanaticism. Can anything be more heart-rending than the wholesale extermination of the unoffending races of America in the name of Christ?

It has been said that a warlike spirit was infused into mediæval Christianity by aggressive Islâm! The massacres of Justinian and the fearful wars of Christian Clovis in the name of religion, occurred long before the time of Mohammed.

Compare, again, the conduct of the Christian Crusaders with that of the Moslems. "When the Khalif Omar took Jerusalem, A.D. 637, he rode into the city by the side of the Patriarch Sophronius, conversing with him on its antiquities. At the hour of prayer, he declined to perform his devotions in the Church of the Resurrection, in which he chanced to be, but prayed on the steps of the Church of Constantine; for, said he to the Patriarch, 'had I done so, the Musulmans in a future age might have infringed the treaty, under colour of imitating my example.' But in the capture by the Crusaders, the brains of young children were dashed out against the walls; infants were pitched over the battlements; men were roasted at fires; some were ripped up, to see if they had swallowed gold; the Jews were driven into their synagogue, and there burnt; a massacre of nearly 70,000 persons took place; and the pope's
Necate was seen partaking in the triumph!" 1 When Saladin recaptured the city, he released all Christians, gave them money and food, and allowed them to depart with a safe-conduct.2

Islam "grasped the sword" in self-defence; Christianity grasped it in order to stifle freedom of thought and liberty of belief. With the conversion of Constantine, Christianity had become the dominant religion of the Western world. It had thenceforth nothing to fear from its enemies; but from the moment it obtained the mastery, it developed its true character of isolation and exclusiveness. Wherever Christianity prevailed, no other religion could be followed without molestation. The Moslems, on the other hand, required from others a simple guarantee of peace and amity, tribute in return for protection, or perfect equality,—the possession of equal rights and privileges,—on condition of the acceptance of Islam.

2 For a full account, see The Short History of the Saracens, p 356.
CHAPTER V

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLÂM

In certain stages of social development, polygamy, or more properly speaking, polygyny,—the union of one man with several women,—is an unavoidable circumstance. The frequent tribal wars and the consequent decimation of the male population, the numerical superiority of women, combined with the absolute power possessed by the chiefs, originated the custom which, in our advanced times, is justly regarded as an unendurable evil.

Among all Eastern nations of antiquity, polygamy was a recognised institution. Its practice by royalty, which everywhere bore the insignia of divinity, sanctified its observance to the people. Among the Hindus, polygamy, in both its aspects, prevailed from the earliest times. There was, apparently, as among the ancient Medes, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Persians, no restriction as to the number of wives a man might have. A high caste Brahman, even in modern times, is privileged to marry as many wives as he chooses. Polygamy existed among the Israelites before the time of Moses, who continued the institution without imposing any limit on the number of marriages which a Hebrew husband might contract. In later times, the Talmud of Jerusalem restricted the number by the ability of the husband to maintain the wives properly; and though the Rabbins counselled that a man should not take more than four wives, the Karaites

1 "Paradise is at the foot of the mother;" the Prophet.
differed from them, and did not recognise the validity of any limitation.

To the Persians, religion offered a premium on the plurality of wives.¹

Among the Syro-Phoenician races, whom the Israelites displaced, conquered, or destroyed, polygamy was degraded into bestiality.²

Among the Thracians, Lydians, and the Pelasgian races settled in various parts of Europe and Western Asia, the custom of plurality of marriages prevailed to an inordinate extent, and dwarfs all comparison with the practice prevailing elsewhere.³

Among the Athenians, the most civilised and most cultured of all the nations of antiquity, the wife was a mere chattel marketable and transferable to others, and a subject of testamentary disposition. She was regarded in the light of an evil, indispensable for the ordering of a household and procreation of children. An Athenian was allowed to have any number of wives; and Demosthenes gloried in the possession by his people of three classes of women, two of which furnished the legal and semi-legal wives.⁴

Among the Spartans, though the men were not allowed, unless under especial circumstances, to have more than one wife, the women could have, and almost always had, more than one husband.⁵

The peculiar circumstances under which the Roman State was originally constituted probably prevented the introduction of legal polygamy at the commencement of its existence. Whatever the historical truth of the Rape of the Sabines, the very existence of the tradition testifies to the causes which helped to form the primitive laws of the Romans on the subject of matrimony. In the surrounding states generally, and especially among the Etruscans, plurality of marriage was a privileged custom. The contact, for centuries, with the other

¹ Dollinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*, pp. 405, 406
² Lev xviii 24
nations of Italy, the wars and conquests of ages, conjoined with the luxurious habits which success engendered, at last resulted in making the sanctity of marriage a mere by-word amongst the Romans. Polygamy was not indeed legalised, but "after the Punic triumphs the matrons of Rome aspired to the common benefits of a free and opulent republic, and their wishes were gratified by the indulgence of fathers and lovers."¹ Marriage soon became a simple practice of promiscuous concubinage. Concubinage recognised by the laws of the State acquired the force of a privileged institution. The freedom of women, the looseness of the tie which bound them to men, the frequency with which wives were changed or transferred, betoken in fact the prevalence of polygamy, only under a different name.

In the meantime, the doctrines of primitive Christianity preached on the shores of Galilee began to irradiate the whole Roman world. The influence of the Essenes, which is reflected visibly in the teachings of Jesus, combined with an earnest anticipation of the Kingdom of Heaven, had led the Prophet of Nazareth to depreciate matrimony in general, although he never interdicted or expressly forbade its practice in any shape.

Polygamy flourished in a more or less pronounced form until forbidden by the laws of Justinian. But the prohibition contained in the civil law effected no change in the moral ideas of the people, and polygamy continued to be practised until condemned by the opinion of modern society. The wives, with the exception of the one first married, laboured under severe disabilities. Without rights, without any of the safeguards which the law threw around the favoured first one, they were the slaves of every caprice and whim of their husbands. Their children were stigmatised as bastards, precluded from all share in the inheritance of their father, and treated as outcasts from society.

Morganatic and left-handed marriages were not confined to the aristocracy. Even the clergy, frequently forgetting their vows of celibacy, contracted more than one legal or illegal union. History proves conclusively that, until very recent

¹ Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol ii. p. 206.
times, polygamy was not considered so reprehensible as it is now. St. Augustine himself seems to have observed in it no intrinsic immorality or sinfulness, and declared that polygamy was not a crime where it was the legal institution of a country. The German reformers, as Hallam points out, even so late as the sixteenth century, admitted the validity of a second or a third marriage contemporaneously with the first, in default of issue and other similar causes.

Some scholars, whilst admitting that there is no intrinsic immorality in a plurality of wives, and that Jesus did not absolutely or expressly forbid the custom, hold that the present monogamous practice, in one sense general throughout Europe, arose from the engrafting of either Germanic or Hellenic-Roman notions on Christianity. The latter view is distinctly opposed to fact and history and deserves no credit. As regards the Germans, the proof of their monogamous habits and customs rests upon the uncorroborated testimony of one or two Romans, of all men the most untrustworthy witnesses to facts when it was to their interest to suppress them. Besides, we must remember the object with which Tacitus wrote his Manners of the Germans. It was a distinct attack upon the licentiousness of his own people, and, by contrasting the laxity of the Romans with the imaginary virtues of barbarians, was intended to introduce better ideas into Rome. Again, supposing that Tacitus is right, to what cause should we ascribe the polygamous habits of the higher classes of the Germans, even up to the nineteenth century?

Whatever may have been the custom of the Romans in early times, it is evident that in the latter days of the republic and the commencement of the empire, polygamy must have been accepted as an institution, or, at least, not regarded as illegal. Its existence is assumed, and its practice recognised, by the edict which interfered with its universality. How far the Traétorian Edict succeeded in remedying the evil, or diverting the current of public opinion, appears from the rescript of

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1 St Augustine, lib ii cont Faust, ch xlvii.
2 M. Barthelemy St Hilaire appears to hold the opinion that monogamy was engrafted upon Christianity from Hellenic and Roman sources.
3 Comp Encyclopédie Universelle, art Mariage.
the Emperors Honorius and Arcadius towards the end of the fourth century, and the practice of Constantine and his son, both of whom had several wives. The Emperor Valentinian II., by an edict, allowed all the subjects of the empire, if they pleased, to marry several wives; nor does it appear from the ecclesiastical history of those times that the bishops and the heads of the Christian Churches made any objection to this law.\(^1\) Far from it, all the succeeding emperors practised polygamy, and the people generally were not remiss in following their example.

This state of the laws continued until the time of Justinian, when the concentrated wisdom and experience of thirteen centuries of progress and development in the arts of life resulted in the proclamation of the laws which have shed a factitious lustre on his infamous reign. But these laws owed little to Christianity, at least directly. The greatest adviser of Justinian was an atheist and a pagan. Even the prohibition of polygamy by Justinian failed to check the tendency of the age. The law represented the advancement of thought; its influence was confined to a few thinkers, but to the mass it was a perfectly dead letter.

In the western parts of Europe, the tremendous upheaval of the barbarians, the intermingling of their moral ideas with those of the people among whom they settled, tended to degrade the relations between man and wife. Some of the barbaric codes attempted to deal with polygamy,\(^2\) but example was stronger than precept, and the monarchs, setting the fashion of plurality of wives, were quickly imitated by the people.\(^3\) Even the clergy, in spite of the recommendation to perpetual celibacy held out to them by the Church, availed themselves of the custom of keeping several left-handed wives by a simple licence obtained from the bishop or the head of their diocese.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Comp. Encyclopédie Universelle, art. Mariage and Davenport, Apology for Mahomet.

\(^2\) Like the laws of Theodoric. But they were based on advanced Byzantine notions.

\(^3\) For polygamy among the Merovingian and Carolingian sovereigns, see The Short History of the Saracens, p. 626.

\(^4\) Comp. Hallam's Constitutional History of England, vol. i, p. 87, and note; Middle Ages, p. 353 (2 vol. ed.).
The greatest and most reprehensible mistake committed by Christian writers is to suppose that Mohammed either adopted or legalised polygamy. The old idea of his having introduced it, a sign only of the ignorance of those who entertained that notion, is by this time exploded; but the opinion that he adopted and legalised the custom is still maintained by the common masses, as well as by many of the learned in Christendom. No belief can be more false.

Mohammed found polygamy practised, not only among his own people, but amongst the people of the neighbouring countries, where it assumed some of its most degrading aspects. The laws of the Christian empire had indeed tried to correct the evil, but without avail. Polygamy continued to flourish unchecked, and the wretched women, with the exception of the first wife, selected according to priority of time, laboured under severe disabilities.

The corruptness of morals in Persia about the time of the Prophet was deplorable. There was no recognised law of marriage, or, if any existed, it was completely ignored. In the absence of any fixed rule in the Zend-Avesta as to the number of wives a man might possess, the Persians indulged in a multitude of regular matrimonial connections, besides having a number of concubines.

Among the ancient Arabs and the Jews there existed, besides the system of plurality of wives, the custom of entering into conditional, as well as temporary contracts of marriage. These loose notions of morality exercised a disastrous influence on the constitution of society within the peninsula.

The reforms instituted by Mohammed effected a vast and marked improvement in the position of women. Both among the Jews and the non-nomadic Arabs the condition of women was degraded in the extreme. The Hebrew maiden, even in her father's house, stood in the position of a servant; her father could sell her if a minor. In case of his death, the sons could dispose of her at their will and pleasure. The daughter inherited nothing, except when there were no male heirs.

Among the settled pagan Arabs, who were mostly influenced

2 Num xxxi 17.
by the corrupt and effete civilisation of the neighbouring
empires, a woman was considered a mere chattel; she formed
an integral part of the estate of her husband or her father;
and the widows of a man descended to his son or sons by right
of inheritance, as any other portion of his patrimony. Hence
the frequent unions between step-sons and step-mothers which,
when subsequently forbidden by Islam, were branded under
the name of Nikāh ul-Mekāt ("shameful or odious marriages").
Even polyandry was practised by the half-Jewish, half-Sabæan
tribes of Yemen.\footnote{Lenormant, *Ancient History of the East*, vol. II, p. 318}

The pre-Islamic Arabs carried their aversion to women so
far as to destroy, by burying alive, many of their female
children. This fearful custom, which was most prevalent
among the tribes of Koreish and Kindah, was denounced in
burning terms by Mohammed and was prohibited under severe
penalties, along with the inhuman practice, which they, in
common with other nations of antiquity, observed, of sacrific-
ing children to their gods.

In both the empires, the Persian and the Byzantine, women
occupied a very low position in the social scale. Fanatical
enthusiasts, whom Christendom in later times cannonised as
saints, preached against them and denounced their enormities,
forgetting that the evils they perceived in women were the
reflections of their own jaundiced minds. It was at this time,
when the social fabric was falling to pieces on all sides, when all
that had hitherto kept it together was giving way, when the
cry had gone forth that all the older systems had been weighed
in the scale of experience and found wanting, that Mohammed
introduced his reforms.

The Prophet of Islam enforced as one of the essential teach-
ings of his creed, "respect for women." And his followers, in
their love and reverence for his celebrated daughter, proclaimed
her "the Lady of Paradise," as the representative of her sex.
"Our Lady of Light"\footnote{Khâtûn-i-jinnat, Fâtima't-ar-zohrâ} is the embodiment of all that is divine
in womanhood,--of all that is pure and true and holy in her
sex,—the noblest ideal of human conception. And she has
been followed by a long succession of women, who have
consecrated their sex by their virtues. Who has not heard of the saintly Râbi‘a and a thousand others her equals?

In the laws which the Arabian Prophet promulgated he strictly prohibited the custom of conditional marriages, and though at first temporary marriages were tacitly allowed, in the third year of the Hegira even these were forbidden. Mohammed secured to women, in his system, rights which they had not before possessed; he allowed them privileges the value of which will be more fully appreciated as time advances. He placed them on a footing of perfect equality with men in the exercise of all legal powers and functions. He restrained polygamy by limiting the maximum number of contemporaneous marriages, and by making absolute equity towards all obligatory on the man. It is worthy of note that the clause in the Koran which contains the permission to contract four contemporaneous marriages, is immediately followed by a sentence which cuts down the significance of the preceding passage to its normal and legitimate dimensions. The passage runs thus, "You may marry two, three, or four wives, but not more." The subsequent lines declare, "but if you cannot deal equitably and justly with all you shall marry only one." The extreme importance of this proviso, bearing especially in mind the meaning which is attached to the word "equity" (‘adl) in the Koranic teachings, has not been lost sight of by the great thinkers of the Moslem world. ‘Adl signifies not merely equality of treatment in the matter of lodgment, clothing and other domestic requisites, but also complete equity in love, affection and esteem. As absolute justice in matters of feeling is impossible, the Koranic prescription amounted in reality to a prohibition. This view was propounded as early as the third century of the Hegira.

In the reign of al-Mâmûn, the first Mu’tazilite doctors taught that the developed Koranic laws

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1 A section of the Shâias still regard temporary marriages as lawful. But with all deference to the Muthahds, who have expounded that view, I cannot help considering that it was put forward to suit the tastes of the times, or of the sovereigns under whom those lawyers flourished. In many of their doctrines one cannot fail to perceive the influence of personal inclinations.

2 The Radd al-Muhtâr distinctly says "some doctors [the Muttazils] hold that ‘adl includes equality in love and affection, but our masters differ from this view and confine it to equal treatment in the matter of najâh, which in the language of law, signifies food, clothing and lodgment."
inculcated monogamy. And though the cruel persecution of the mad bigot, Mutawakkil, prevented the general diffusion of their teachings, the conviction is gradually forcing itself on all sides, in all advanced Moslem communities, that polygamy is as much opposed to the teachings of Mohammed as it is to the general progress of civilised society and true culture.¹

The fact must be borne in mind, that the existence of polygamy depends on circumstances. Certain times, certain conditions of society, make its practice absolutely needful, for the preservation of women from starvation or utter destitution. If reports and statistics speak true, the greatest proportion of the mass of immorality prevalent in the centres of civilisation in the West arises from absolute destitution. Abbé Huc and Lady Duff Gordon have both remarked that in the generality of cases sheer force of circumstances drives people to polygamy in the East.

With the progress of thought, with the ever-changing conditions of this world, the necessity for polygamy disappears, and its practice is tacitly abandoned or expressly forbidden. And hence it is, that in those Moslem countries where the circumstances which made its existence at first necessary are disappearing, plurality of wives has come to be regarded as an evil, and as an institution opposed to the teachings of the Prophet; while in those countries where the conditions of society are different, where the means which, in advanced communities, enable women to help themselves are absent or wanting, polygamy must necessarily continue to exist. Perhaps the objection may be raised, that as the freedom of construction leaves room for casuistical distinctions, the total extinction of polygamy will be a task of considerable difficulty. We admit the force of this objection, which deserves the serious consideration of all Moslems desirous of freeing the Islāmic teachings from the blame which has hitherto been attached to them, and of moving with advancing civilisation. But it must be remembered that the elasticity of laws is the greatest test of their beneficence and usefulness. And this is the merit of the Koranic provision: it is adapted alike for the acceptance

¹ Compare the remarks on this subject of Moulvi Churāgh Ali in his able work called Are Reforms possible in Mohammedan States?
of the most cultured society and the requirements of the least
civilised. It ignores not the needs of progressive humanity,
or forgets that there are races and communities on the earth
among whom monogamy may prove a dire evil. The task of
abolishing polygamy, however, is not so difficult as is imagined.
The blight that has fallen on the Moslem nations is due to the
patristic doctrine which has prohibited the exercise of indi-
vidual judgment (Ijtiḥād). The day is not far distant when an
appeal to the Teacher’s own words will settle the question
whether the Moslems will follow Mohammed or the Fathers of
the Church, who have misused the Master’s name to satisfy
their own whimsicalities, or the capricious dictates of Caliphs
and Sultans, whose obsequious servants they were. Europe
has gone through the same process herself, and instead of
hurling anathemas at the Church of Mohammed, ought to
watch, with patience and sympathy, the efforts of regenerated
Islam to free itself from patristic bondage. When once the
freedom from the enthrallment of old ideas is achieved, it will
be easy for the jurists of each particular Moslem State to
abolish, by an authoritative dictum, polygamy within that
State. But such a consummation can only result from a
general progress in the conception of facts, and a proper under-
standing of the Prophet’s teachings. Polygamy is disappearing,
or will soon disappear, under the new light in which his words
are being studied.

As remarked already, the compatibility of Mohammed’s
system with every stage of progress shows their Founder’s
wisdom. Among unadvanced communities, polygamy, hedged
by all the safeguards imposed by the Prophet, is by no means
an evil to be deplored. At least it is preferable to those
polyandrous customs and habits and modes of life which
betoken an utter abandonment of all moral self-restraint. As
culture advances, the mischief resulting from polygamy are
better appreciated, and the meaning of the prohibition better
comprehended. We are by no means prepared to say that the
Musulmans of India have benefited greatly by their inter-
mixture with the Brahmanical races, among whom prostitution
was a legalised custom. Their moral ideas have become lax;
the conception of human dignity and spiritual purity has
become degraded; the class of *hetairai* has become as popular among them as among their non-Moslem neighbours. And yet there are signs visible which bid us hope that God's light, which lit up Arabia in the seventh century, will fall on their hearts and bring them out of the darkness in which they are now plunged. The Mu'tazila is, by conviction, a strict monogamist; according to him the law forbids a second union during the subsistence of a prior contract. In other words, a Mu'tazila marriage fulfils in every respect the requirements of an essentially monogamous marriage as a "voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others."

Even among the archaic sects, a large and influential body hold polygamy to be unlawful, the circumstances which rendered it permissible in primitive times having either passed away or not existing in the present day.

As a matter of fact, the feeling against polygamy is becoming a strong social, if not a moral, conviction, and many extraneous circumstances in combination with this growing feeling, are tending to root out the custom from among the Indian Muslims. It has been customary among all classes of the community to insert in the marriage-deed a clause, by which the intending husband formally renounces his supposed right to contract a second union during the continuance of the first marriage. Among the Indian Muslims ninety-five men out of every hundred are at the present moment, either by conviction or necessity, monogamists. Among the educated classes, versed in the history of their ancestors, and able to compare it with the records of other nations, the custom is regarded with disapprobation. In Persia, only a small fraction of the population enjoy the questionable luxury of plurality of wives.\(^1\) It is earnestly to be hoped that, before long, a general synod of Moslem doctors will authoritatively declare that polygamy, like slavery, is abhorrent to the laws of Islâm.

We now turn to the subject of Mohammed's marriages, which to many minds not cognisant of the facts, or not honest enough to appreciate them, seem to offer a fair ground of reproach against the Prophet of Islâm. His Christian

\(^1\) Only two per cent., according to Col. Macgregor.
assailants maintain that in his own person by frequent marriages he assumed a privilege not granted by the laws, and that he displayed in this manner a weakness of character little compatible with the office of Prophet. True, knowledge of history, and a more correct appreciation of facts, instead of proving him to be a self-indulgent libertine, would conclusively establish that the man, poor and without resource himself, when he undertook the burden of supporting the women whom he married in strict accordance with the old patriarchal institution, was undergoing a self-sacrifice of no light a character. And we believe that a thorough analysis of motives from the standpoint of humanity will demonstrate the falsehood and uncharitableness of the charges levelled at "the Great Arabian." When Mohammed was only twenty-five years of age, in the prime of life, he married Khadija, much his senior in years. For twenty-five years his life with her was an uninterrupted sunshine of faithfulness and happiness. Through every contumely and outrage heaped on him by the idolaters, through every persecution, Khadija was his sole companion and helper. At the time of Khadija's death Mohammed was in the fifty-first year of his age. His enemies cannot deny, but are forced to admit, that during the whole of this long period they find not a single flaw in his moral character. During the lifetime of Khadija, the Prophet married no other wife, notwithstanding that public opinion among his people would have allowed him to do so had he chosen.

Several months after Khadija's death and on his return, helpless and persecuted, from Tayef, he married Sauda, the widow of one Sakrân, who had embraced Islâm, and had been forced to fly into Abyssinia to escape the persecution of the idolaters. Sakrân had died in exile, and left his wife utterly destitute. According to the customs of the country, marriage was the only means by which the Teacher could protect and help the widow of his faithful disciple. Every principle of generosity and humanity would impel Mohammed to offer her his hand. Her husband had given his life in the cause of the new religion; he had left home and country for the sake of his faith; his wife had shared his exile, and now had returned to Mecca destitute. As the only means of assisting the poor
woman, Mohammed, though straitened for the very means of daily subsistence, married Sauda.

Abdullah, the son of Osmân Abû Kuhâfa, known afterwards in history as Abû Bakr, was one of the most devoted followers of Mohammed. He was one of the earliest converts to the faith of the Prophet; and in his sincere, earnest and unvarying attachment to Mohammed he might almost be compared with Ali.

Abû Bakr, as by anticipation we may well call him, had a little daughter named Âyesha, and it was the desire of his life to cement the attachment which existed between himself and the Prophet, who had led him out from the darkness of scepticism, by giving Mohammed his daughter in marriage. The child was only seven years of age, but the manners of the country recognised such alliances. At the earnest solicitation of the disciple, the little maiden became the wife of the Prophet.

Some time after the arrival of the fugitives at Medina there occurred an incident which throws considerable light on the conditions of life among the Arabs of the time. Those who know the peculiarities of the Arab character—"pride, pugnacity, a peculiar point of honour, and a vindictiveness of wonderful force and patience"—will be able to appreciate the full bearing of the story. Even now "words often pass lightly between individuals," says Burton, "which suffice to cause a blood-feud amongst Bedouins." Omar Ibn ul-Khattâb, who afterwards became the second Caliph of Islâm, had a daughter of the name of Hafsa. This good lady had lost her husband at the battle of Badr, and being blessed with a temper as fiery as that of her father, had remained ever since without a husband. The disciples bent upon matrimony fought shy of her. It was almost a reflection on the father; and Omar, in order to get rid of the scandal, offered his daughter's hand to Abû Bakr, and, upon his declining the honour, to Osmân. He also met the offer with a refusal. This was little less than a direct insult, and Omar proceeded in a towering rage to Mohammed to lay his complaint before the Prophet. The point of honour must, anyhow, be settled in his favour. But neither Abû Bakr nor Osmân would undertake the burden of Hafsa's...
temper:—a dispute, ludicrous in its origin from our point of view, but sufficiently serious then to throw into commotion the small body of the Faithful. In this extremity the chief of the Moslems appeased the enraged father by marrying the daughter. And public opinion not only approved, but was jubilant over it.\(^1\)

Hind Umm Salmâ, Umm Habîba, and Zainab Umm ul-Masâkin,\(^2\) three other wives of the Prophet, had also been widows, whom the animosity of the idolaters had bereft of their natural protectors, and whom their relations were either unable or unwilling to support.

Mohammed had married his devoted friend and freedman, Zaid, to a high-born lady of the name of Zainab, descended from two of the noblest families of Arabia. Proud of her birth, and perhaps also of her beauty, her marriage with a freedman rankled in her breast. Mutual aversion at last culminated in disgust. Probably this disgust on the husband's part was enhanced by the frequent repetition, in a manner which women only know how to adopt, of a few words which had fallen from the lips of Mohammed on once seeing Zainab. He had occasion to visit the house of Zaid, and upon seeing Zainab's unveiled face, had exclaimed, as a Moslem would say at the present day when admiring a beautiful picture or statue, "Praise be to God, the ruler of hearts!"

The words, uttered in natural admiration, were often

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\(^1\) The story told by Mann, Sprenger, and Osborn, with some amount of gloating, of the domestic squabble between Hafsâ and Mohammed, concerning Mary, the Coptic girl presented to the Prophet's household by the Negus, is absolutely false and malicious. A tradition, which is repudiated by all the respectable commentators of the Koran, and which must have been invented in the time of some Ommeyyade or Abbaside sensualist, founded on the weakest authority, has been seized with avidity by these critics for the vilification of the Prophet. The verse in the Koran which has been supposed to refer to this story, refers, in truth, to a wholly different circumstance. Mohammed, in his boyhood, when he tended the flocks of his uncle, had acquired a fondness for honey, which was often supplied by Zainab. Hafsâ and Ayesha set to work to make him give up honey, and they succeeded in inducing him to vow he would never touch it. But after he had made the vow to her came the thought that he was making something unlawful in which there was nothing unlawful, simply to please his wives. His conscience smote him as to his weakness, and then came the verse, "O Prophet, why holdest thou that to be prohibited which God has made lawful, seeking to please thy wives?"—(Zamakh-hari.)

\(^2\) "Mother of the poor," so called from her charity and benevolence.
repeated by Zainab to her husband to show how even the Prophet praised her beauty, and naturally added to his displeasure. At last he came to the decision not to live any longer with her, and with this determination he went to the Prophet and expressed his intention of being divorced. "Why," demanded Mohammed, "hast thou found any fault in her?" "No," replied Zaid, "but I can no longer live with her." The Prophet then peremptorily said, "Go and guard thy wife; treat her well and fear God, for God has said 'Take care of your wives, and fear the Lord!'") But Zaid was not moved from his purpose, and in spite of the command of the Prophet he divorced Zainab. Mohammed was grieved at the conduct of Zaid, more especially as it was he who had arranged the marriage of these two uncongenial spirits.

After Zainab had succeeded in obtaining a divorce from Zaid, she commenced importuning Mohammed to marry her, and was not satisfied until she had won for herself the honour of being one of the wives of the Prophet.¹

Another wife of Mohammed was called Juwairiya. She was the daughter of Hārith, the chief of the Bani Mustalik, and was taken prisoner by a Moslem in an expedition undertaken to repress their revolt. She had made an agreement with her captor to purchase her freedom for a stipulated sum. She petitioned Mohammed for the amount, which he immediately gave her. In recognition of this kindness, and in gratitude for her liberty, she offered her hand to Mohammed, and they were married. As soon as the Moslems heard of this alliance, they said amongst themselves the Banu Mustalik are now connections of the Prophet, and we must treat them as such. Each victor thereupon hastened to release the captives he had made in the expedition, and a hundred families, thus

¹ Tabari (Zotenberg's translation), vol 11 p 58 This marriage created a sensation amongst the idolaters, who, whilst marrying their step-mothers and mothers-in-law, looked upon the marriage of the divorced wife of an adopted son (as Zaid at one time was regarded by Mohammed) by the adoptive father as culpable. To disabuse the people of the notion that adoption creates any such tie as real consanguinity, some verses of chap xxxiii were delivered, which destroyed the pagan custom of forbidding or making sacred the person of a wife or husband, or intended wife or husband, by merely calling her mother, sister, father, or brother—much less by her or him being first allied to an adopted son or daughter. One of the greatest tests of the Prophet's purity is that Zaid never swerved from his devotion to his master.
regaining their liberty, blessed the marriage of Juwairiya with Mohammed.¹

Safiya, a Jewess, had also been taken prisoner by a Moslem in the expedition against Khairar. Her, too, Mohammed generously liberated, and elevated to the position of his wife at her request.

Maimūna, whom Mohammed married in Mecca, was his kinswoman, and was already above fifty. Her marriage with Mohammed, besides providing for a poor relation the means of support, gained over to the cause of Islam two famous men, Ibn-Abbās and Khālid ibn-Walid, the leader of the Koreish cavalry in the disastrous battle of Ohod, and in later times the conqueror of the Greeks.

Such was the nature of the marriages of Mohammed. Some of them may possibly have arisen from a desire for male offspring, for he was not a god, and may have felt the natural wish to leave sons behind him. He may have wished also to escape from the nickname which the bitterness of his enemies attached to him.² But taking the facts as they stand, we see that even these marriages tended in their results to unite the warring tribes, and bring them into some degree of harmony.

The practice of Thār (vendetta) prevailed among the heathen Arabs; blood-feuds decimated tribes. There was not a family without its blood-feud, in which the men were frequently murdered, and the women and children reduced to slavery. Moses had found the practice of Thār existing among his people (as it exists among all people in a certain stage of development); but failing to abolish it, had legalised it by the institution of sanctuaries. Mohammed, with a deeper conception of the remedies to be applied, connected various rival families and

¹ Ibn-Hishâm, p 729
² With savage bitterness the enemies of the Prophet applied to him the nickname of al-ābṭar on the death of his last son. This word literally means 'one whose tail has been cut off.' Among the ancient Arabs, as among the Hindoos, a male issue was regarded as the continuation of the blessings of the gods, and the man who left no male issue behind was looked upon as particularly unfortunate. Hence the bitter word applied to the Prophet; Koran, chap cvii (see the Kashshāf). Hence, also, the idolatrous Arabs used to bury alive their female offspring, which Mohammed denounced and reprehended in burning terms, comp. Koran xvii 34, etc.
powerful tribes to each other and to himself by marriage ties. Towards the close of his mission, standing on the Mount of Arafat, he proclaimed that from that time all blood-feuds should cease.

The malevolence of unfair and uncandid enemies has distorted the motives which, under the sanction of the great patriarchs of ancient times, led Mohammed to have a plurality of wives, and so provide helpless or widowed women with subsistence in the lack of all other means. By taking them into his family, Mohammed provided for them in the only way which the circumstances of the age and the people rendered possible.

People in the West are apt to regard polygamy as intrinsically evil, and its practice not only illegal, but the result of licentiousness and immorality. They forget that all such institutions are the offspring of the circumstances and necessities of the times. They forget that the great patriarchs of the Hebraic race, who are regarded by the followers of all Semitic creeds as exemplars of moral grandeur, practised polygamy to an extent which, to our modern ideas, seems the culmination of legalised immorality. We cannot perhaps allow their practice or conduct to pass unquestioned, in spite of the sanctity which time-honoured legend has cast around them. But in the case of the Prophet of Arabia, it is essential we should bear in mind the historic value and significance of the acts.

Probably it will be said that no necessity should have induced the Prophet either to practise or to allow such an evil custom as polygamy, and that he ought to have forbidden it absolutely, Jesus having overlooked it. But this custom, like many others, is not absolutely evil. Evil is a relative term. An act or usage may be primarily quite in accordance with the moral conceptions of societies and individuals, but progress of ideas and changes in the condition of a people may make it evil in its tendency, and, in process of time, it may be made by the State, illegal. That ideas are progressive is a truism; but that usages and customs depend on the progress of ideas, and are good or evil according to circumstances, or as they are or are not in accordance with conscience,—"the spirit of the time"—is a fact much ignored by superficial thinkers.

One of the most remarkable features in the history of early
Christianity is its depreciation of marriage. Matrimony was regarded as a condition of inferiority, and the birth of children an evil. Monasticism had withdrawn from the world the most vigorous minds; the lay-clergy were either not allowed to marry, or to marry but once. This morbid feature was partly due to the example of the Master, and partly the resultant of a variety of circumstances which pressed upon the early Christian organisation.

The Nazarene Prophet's intimate connection with the Essene ascetics, his vivid anticipation of the immediate advent of a kingdom of God, where all social relations would be at an end, and the early cessation of his ministry, all explain his depreciation of matrimony, and we may add, perhaps, his never entering the married state. His association with the Baptist, himself an Essene, throws light upon the history of a short but most pathetic life. The strong and inexplicable antipathy of Paul towards the female sex, joined to the words of the Master, strengthened in the Church the Essene conception that the union of man and woman in the holiest of ties was an act of sinfulness, an evil to be avoided as far as possible. Marriage was regarded as having for its sole object the procreation of children and the gratification of "man's carnal lusts," and the marriage services of most of the Christian Churches bear to this day the impress of this primitive notion. It was under these influences, the idea engrafted itself upon Christianity, which still retains its hold where not displaced by humanitarian science, that a person who has never married is a far superior being to one who has contaminated himself by marriage. The ash-covered Yogis of India, the matted-locked ascetics of the East generally, the priests of Buddha, were celibates. According to them, "knowledge was unattainable without sundering all the loving ties of home and family, and infinitely impossible of realisation without leading a life of singleness." Celibacy passed into Christianity through many hands from Eastern Gnosticism and Asceticism. The "sinlessness" of Jesus has been regarded by some as a proof of his divinity, by others as an indication of his unmeasurable superiority over the rest of the teachers of the world. To our mind, the comparison or contrast which is so falsely instituted between Jesus and
Mohammed appears wholly misconceived, and founded upon a wrong estimate of moral ideals. If never marrying constitutes a man an ideal being, then all the ascetics, the hermits, the dervishes are perfect. A perfect life would then imply a total abandonment of all domestic relations. Surely this view would be a perversion of nature, and end in disastrous consequences to humanity. But if it be not so, then why this disparagement of the Prophet, who fulfilled the work of Jesus? Is it because he married more wives than one? We have shown what these marriages meant; we have at least endeavoured to show that in those very deeds which have been used to calumniate him, he was undergoing a sacrifice.

But let us look for a moment at his marriages from an abstract point of view. Why did Moses marry more than one wife? Was he a moral, or a sensual man for doing so? Why did David, "the man after God's heart," indulge in unlimited polygamy? The answer is plain—each age has its own standard. What is suited for one time is not suited for the other, and we must not judge of the past by the standard of the present. Our ideals do not lose their greatness or their sublimity by having acted truthfully and honestly up to the standard of their age. Would we be justified in calling Jesus a vain, ambitious, impractical dreamer, or Moses and David sanguinary sensualists, because the mind of one was filled with vague imaginings of expected sovereignty, and the lives of the others were so objectionable from the twentieth century point of view? In both cases we would be entirely wrong; the aspirations of the one, the achievements of the others, were all historical facts, in accord with their times. It is the truest mark of the Prophet that, in his most exalted mood, he does not lose sight of the living in his anticipation of the yet unborn. In his person he represents the growth and development of humanity. Neither Jesus nor Mohammed could at once efface existing society, or obliterate all national and political institutions. Like Jesus, Mohammed contented himself, except where ordinances were necessary, to meet the requirements of the moment, "with planting principles in the hearts of his followers which would, when the time was ripe for it, work out their abolition."
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As regards the statement that Mohammed assumed to himself a privilege which he denied to his followers, only thus much need be said, that it is founded on a misconception resulting from ignorance. The limitation on polygamy was enunciated at Medina some years after the exile, and the provision regarding himself, instead of being a privilege assumed by a libertine, was a burden consciously imposed on a self-conscious, self-examining soul. All his marriages were contracted before the revelation came restricting polygamy, and with that came the other which took away from him all privileges. Whilst his followers were free (subject to the conditions imposed by the law), to marry to the limit of four, and by the use of the power of divorce, which, in spite of the Prophet's denunciations, they still exercised, could enter into fresh alliances, he could neither put away any of his wives, whose support he had undertaken, nor could he marry any other. Was this the assumption of a "privilege," or was it not a humane provision for those already allied to him and to himself, a revelation of perfect self-abnegation in his prophetic task?

The subject of divorce has proved a fruitful source of misconception and controversy, but there can be no question that the Koranic laws concerning the treatment of women in divorce are of "better humanity and regard for justice than those of any other scripture."

Among all the nations of antiquity, the power of divorce has been regarded as a necessary corollary to the law of marriage, but this right, with a few exceptions, was exclusively reserved for the benefit of the stronger sex; the wife was under no circumstance entitled to claim a divorce.

The progress of civilisation and the advancement of ideas led to a partial amelioration in the condition of women. They, too, acquired a qualified right of divorce, which they were never backward in exercising freely, until the facility with which marriages were contracted and dissolved under the Roman emperors passed into a by-word.

Under the ancient Hebraic Law, a husband could divorce his wife for any cause which made her disagreeable to him, and there were few or no checks to an arbitrary and capricious use
of his power. Women were not allowed to demand a divorce from their husbands for any reason whatsoever.1

In later times, the Shammaites, to some extent, modified the custom of divorce by imposing certain restrictions on its exercise, but the school of Hillel upheld the law in its primitive strictness.

At the time of the Prophet’s appearance, the Hillelite doctrines were chiefly in force among the Jewish tribes of Arabia, and repudiations by the husbands were as common among them as among the pagan Arabs.

Among the Athenians the husband’s right to repudiate the wife was as unrestricted as among the ancient Israelites.

Among the Romans, the legality of the practice of divorce was recognised from the earliest times. The laws of the Twelve Tables admitted divorce. And if the Romans, as is stated by their admirers, did not take advantage of this law until five hundred years after the foundation of their city, it was not because they were more exemplary than other nations, but because the husband possessed the power of summarily putting his wife to death for acts like poisoning, drinking, and the substitution of a spurious child. But the wife had no right to sue for a divorce, 2 and if she solicited separation, her temerity made her liable to punishment. But in the later Republic, the frequency of divorce was at once the sign, the cause, and the consequence of the rapid depravation of morals.

We have selected the two most prominent nations of antiquity whose modes of thought have acted powerfully on modern ways of thinking and modern life and manners. The laws of the Romans regarding divorce were marked by a progressive spirit, tending to the melioration of the condition of women, and to their elevation to an equality with men. This was the result of the advancement of human ideas, as much as of any extraneous cause.


can demand." 1 We may well suppose that at the time Jesus uttered the words, "What God has joined, let not man put asunder," he had no other idea than that of stemming the torrent of moral depravity, and he did not stop to consider the ultimate tendency of his words. The subsequent rule, which makes fornication 2 (using the translated word) the only ground of valid divorce, shows abundantly that Jesus was alive to the emergency. 3 But the "wisdom" of subsequent legislators has not confined itself to a blind adherence to a rule laid down probably to suit the requirement of an embryonic community, and delivered verbally. The rule may be regarded as inculcating a noble sentiment; but that it should be considered as the typical law of divorce is sufficiently controverted by the multititudinous provisions of successive ages in Christian countries.

Among the Arabs, the power of divorce possessed by the husband was unlimited. They recognised no rule of humanity or justice in the treatment of their wives. Mohammed looked upon the custom of divorce with extreme disapproval, and regarded its practice as calculated to undermine the foundations of society. 4 He repeatedly declared that nothing pleased God more than the emancipation of slaves, and nothing more displeased Him than divorce. It was impossible, however, under the existing conditions of society to abolish the custom entirely. He was to mould the mind of an uncultured and semi-barbarous community to a higher development so that in the fulness of time his spiritual lessons might blossom in the hearts of mankind. The custom was not an unmixed evil;

1 Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. IV. (2nd Ed.) p 209.
2 Matt. xxix 6
3 Two of the Christian Gospels make no mention of the reason for which Jesus allowed his followers 1 to put away 2 their wives (Mark x 11 and Luke xvi 18). If the traditions recorded by these two Gospels be considered of higher authority than those passing under the name of Matthew, then our contention is that Jesus, whilst preaching noble sentiments, and inculcating high principles of morality, did not intend his words should be considered as an immutable and positive law, nor had he any other idea than that of stemming the rising tide of immorality and irreligion. Selden thinks that by an evasive answer, Jesus wanted to avoid giving offence either to the school of Shammar or that of Hillel. Ueber Hebräer, I iii c 18 22, 28, 31 Compare Gibbon's valuable note on the interpretation of the Greek word ταπείνα, rendered "fornication" in the English version, vol. IV. (2nd Ed.) p 209.
4 Koran, sura ii 226
and accordingly he allowed the exercise of the power of divorce to husbands under certain conditions. He permitted to divorced parties three distinct and separate periods within which they might endeavour to become reconciled and resume their conjugal relationship; but should all attempts at reconciliation prove unsuccessful, then the third period in which the final separation was declared to have arrived, supervened. In case of conjugal disputes, he advised settlement by means of arbiters chosen by the two disputants.

M. Sédillot, than whom no Western writer has analysed the laws of Mohammed better, has the following passage on the subject:

"Divorce was permitted, but subject to formalities which allowed (and, we will add, recommended), a revocation of a hurried or not well-considered resolution. Three successive declarations, at a month's interval, were necessary in order to make it irrevocable."

The reforms of Mohammed marked a new departure in the history of Eastern legislation. He restrained the power of divorce possessed by the husbands; he gave to the women the right of obtaining a separation on reasonable grounds; and towards the end of his life he went so far as practically to forbid its exercise by the men without the intervention of arbiters or a judge. He pronounced "talâk to be the most detestable before God of all permitted things," for it prevented conjugal happiness and interfered with the proper bringing up of children. The permission, therefore, in the Koran though it gave a certain countenance to the old customs, has to be read with the light of the Lawgiver's own enunciations. When it is borne in mind how intimately law and religion are connected in the Islamic system, it will be easy to understand the bearing of his words on the institution of divorce.

Naturally, great divergence exists among the various schools regarding the exercise of the power of divorce by the husband of his own motion and without the intervention of the judge. A large and influential body of jurists regard talâk emanating from the husband as really prohibited, except for necessity, such as the adultery of the wife. Another section, consisting

1 Sédillot, Histoire des Arabes, vol 1 p. 83
chiefly of the Mu'tazilas, consider talâk as not permissible or lawful without the sanction of the Ilâkim ush-shara'. They hold that any such case as may justify separation and remove talâk from the category of being forbidden, should be tested by an unbiased judge; and, in support of their doctrine, they refer to the words of the Prophet already cited, and to his direction that in case of disputes between the married parties, arbiters should be appointed for the settlement of their differences.

The Hanafis, the Mâlikîs, the Shâfe'is and the bulk of the Shâias hold talâk to be permitted, though they regard the exercise of the power without any cause to be unlawful.

The Radd ul-Muhtâr, after stating the arguments against the proposition that talâk is unlawful, proceeds to say, "no doubt, it is forbidden, but it becomes mubah (permitted) for certain outside reasons, and this is the meaning of those jurists who hold that it is really forbidden."

Although "the Fathers of the Church" have taken up the temporary permission as the positive rule, and ignored many of the principles of equity inculcated by the Master, the rules laid down by the legists are far more humane and just towards women than those of the most perfect Roman law developed in the bosom of the Church. According to the legists, the wife also is entitled to demand a separation on the ground of ill-usage, want of proper maintenance, and various other causes; but unless she showed very good and solid grounds for demanding the separation, she lost her "settlement" or dowry. In every case, when the divorce originated with the husband (except in cases of open infidelity), he had to give up to her everything he settled upon her at her marriage.

1 See post.


3 M. Sédillot also speaks of the condition which (according to the Sunnite doctrines) requires that in such cases of complete separation, prior to the husband and wife coming together again, the latter should marry another and be divorced anew,—as a very wise measure which rendered separation more rare. Muir censures Mohammend for making such a condition necessary (vol. 1 p. 306). He ignores, that, among a proud, jealous, and sensitive race like the Arabs, such a condition was one of the strongest antidotes for the evil. The very proverb he quotes ought to have shown the disgrace which was attached to the man who would make his wife go through such "a disgusting ordeal." I am afraid, in his dislike towards Mohammad, Sir W. Muir forgot that this condition was intended as a check on that other
The frequent admonitions in the Koran against separations, the repeated recommendation to heal quarrels by private reconciliation, show the extreme sacredness of the marriage tie in the eyes of the Arab Legislator.

"If a woman fear ill-usage or aversion from her husband, it shall not be blameworthy in them if they agree with mutual agreement, for reconciliation (or agreement) is best (Men's) souls are prone to avarice, but if ye act kindly and deal piously, verily God is well acquainted with what ye do. And ye will not have it at all in your power to treat your wives alike with equity, even though you fain wanted to do so; yet yield not to your inclinations ever so much as to leave her in suspense, and if ye agree and act piously, then, verily, God is forgiving and merciful." 3

And, again, in a preceding verse, it is declared:

"And if ye fear a breach between them (man and wife), then send a judge chosen from his family and a judge chosen from her family, if they desire a reconciliation, God will cause them to agree, verily, God is knowing and apprised of all." 4

The sanctity attached to the institution of marriage in the Islamic system has either not been apprehended or sufficiently appreciated by outsiders. "Marriage," says the Ashbâh w'an-Nazîr, "is an institution ordained for the protection of...

"revolting" practice rife both among the Jews and the heathen Arabs, and by example also among the Christians, of repudiating a wife on every slight occasion, at every outburst of senseless passion or caprice. This check was intended to control one of the most sensitive nations of the earth, by acting on the strongest feeling of their nature, the sense of honour (compare Sale, Preliminary Discourse, p 134). Sir W Muir also forgot that many of the Shite doctors do not recognise the obligation or validity of the wife's being married to a third person, prior to her being taken back (compare Malcolm, History of Persia, vol ii p 241, and the Mubassîl, in loco).

For my part, I believe in the correctness of the construction, namely, that the verse which says, "When ye divorce women, and the time for sending them away is come, send them away with generosity, but retain them not by constraint so as to be unjust towards them," abrogates the preceding verse, which requires the intervention of a third person.

1 The Arabic expression implies "it will be commendable," etc.

2 This furnishes another argument against those Mohammedans who hold that the developed laws of Islam allow plurality of wives. It being declared that "equity" is beyond human power to observe, we must naturally infer that the Legislator had in view the merging of the lower in the higher principle, and the abolition of a custom which though necessary in some state of society, is opposed to the later development of thought and morals.

3 Koran, sura iv. 128, 129

4 Koran, sura iv. 35.
society, and in order that human beings may guard themselves from foulness and unchastity." "Marriage is a sacrament, insomuch that in this world it is an act of 'ibādāt or worship, for it preserves mankind free from pollution." . . . "It is instituted by divine command among members of the human species." "Marriage when treated as a contract is a permanent relationship based on mutual consent on the part of a man and a woman between whom there is no bar to a lawful union."

It has been frequently said that Mohammed allowed his followers, besides the four legitimate wives, to take to themselves any number of female slaves. A simple statement of the regulation on this point will show at once how opposed this notion is to the true precepts of Islam. "Whoso among you hath not the means to marry a free believing woman, then let him marry such of your maid-servants whom your right hands possess and who are believers. This is allowed unto him among you who is afraid of committing sin, but if ye abstain from allying yourself with slaves, it will be better for you."

On this slender basis, and perhaps on some temporary and accidental circumstances connected with the early rise of the Moslem commonwealth, have our legislators based the usage of holding (jārias) female slaves. And thus, though opposed to the spirit of the Master's precepts, has given rise to some of the strongest animadversions of rival religiousists.

Concubinage, the union of people standing to each other in the relation of master and slave, without the sanction of matrimony, existed among the Arabs, the Jews, the Christians, and all the neighbouring nations. The Prophet did not in the beginning denounce the custom, but towards the end of his career he expressly forbade it.

"And you are permitted to marry virtuous women who are believers, and virtuous women of those who have been given the Scriptures before you, when you have provided them their portions, living chastely with them without fornication, and not taking concubines." \(^1\)

Compare the spirit of the first part of this commandment with the exclusiveness of Christian ecclesiasticism, which

\(^1\) Sura v 5
refused to recognise as valid or lawful the union of a Christian with a non-Christian. The stake frequently was the lot of the "infidel" who indulged in the temerity of marrying a Christian. Mohammed's rule was a distinct advance in humanity.

The prohibition directed against Moslem women entering into marriage with non-Moslems, which has furnished a handle for attacks, was founded upon reasons of policy and the necessities of the early commonwealth.

It cannot be denied that several institutions which the Musulmans borrowed from the pre-Islamic period, "the Days of Ignorance" and which exist simply as so many survivals of an older growth, have had the tendency to retard the advancement of Mohammedan nations. Among them the system of the seclusion of women is one. It had been in practice among most of the nations of antiquity from the earliest times. The *gynaikonos* was a familiar institution among the Athenians; and the inmates of an Athenian *harem* were as jealously guarded from the public gaze as the members of a Persian household then, or of an Indian household now. The *gynaikonos*, like their Oriental counterpart, were the faithful warders of female privacy, and rigorously watched over the ladies of Athens. The seclusion of women naturally gave birth to the caste of *H tauria*, various members of whom played such an important part in Athenian history. Were it not for the extraordinary and almost inexplicable spectacle presented by the Byzantine empire and modern Europe and America, we should have said that in every society, at all advanced in the arts of civilised life, the growth of the unhappy class of beings whose existence is alike a reproach to humanity and a disgrace to civilisation, was due to the withdrawal of women from the legitimate exercise of their ennobling, purifying, and humanising influence over the minds of men. The human mind, when it does not perceive the pure, hankers after the impure. The Babylonians, the Etruscans, the Athenians and the pre-Islamic Meccans furnish the best exemplification of this view in ancient times. The enormity of the social canker eating into the heart and poisoning the life-blood of nations in modern times is due, however, to the spread of a godless materialism covered
with a thin veneer of religion, be it Christianity, be it Mohammedanism, or any other form of creed. Mohammed had, in early life, observed with pain and sorrow the depravity prevailing among the Meccans, and he took the most effective step suited to the age and the people to stamp out the evil. "By his severe laws at first," to use the expressive language of Mr. Bosworth Smith, "and by the strong moral sentiment aroused by these laws afterwards, he has succeeded, down to this very day, and to a greater extent than has ever been the case elsewhere, in freeing all Mohammedan countries"—where they are not overgrown by foreign excrescences "from those provisional outcasts who live by their own misery, and, by their existence as a recognised class, are a standing reproach to every member of the society of which they form a part."

The system of female seclusion undoubtedly possesses many advantages in the social well-being of unsettled and uncultured communities; and even in countries, where the diversity of culture and moral conceptions is great, a modified form of seclusion is not absolutely to be deprecated. It prevails at the present moment, in forms more or less strict, among nations far removed from Moslem influences, to which is ascribed the existence of the custom in India and other Oriental countries. In Corea, female seclusion is carried to the height of absurdity. In China and among the Spanish colonies of South America, which are not within the immediate ambit of the European social code, the Purdah is still observed. The Prophet of Islam found it existing among the Persians and other Oriental communities, he perceived its advantages, and it is possible that, in view of the widespread laxity of morals among all classes of people, he recommended to the women-folk the observance of privacy. But to suppose that he ever intended his recommendation should assume its present inelastic form, or that he ever allowed or enjoined the seclusion of women, is wholly opposed to the spirit of his reforms. The Koran itself affords no warrant for holding that the seclusion of women is a part of the new gospel.

"O Prophet! speak to thy wives and to thy daughters, and to the wives of the Faithful, that they let their wrappers fall
low. Thus will they more easily be known, and they will not be affronted. God is indulgent, merciful.”

“... And speak to the believing women, that they refrain their looks and observe continence; and that they display not their ornaments except those which are external, and that they draw their kerchiefs over their bosoms.”

Directions easy to understand in the midst of the social and moral chaos from which he was endeavouring, under God’s Guidance, to evolve order—wise and beneficent injunctions having for their object the promotion of decency among women, the improvement of their dress and demeanour, and their protection from insult. It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose there is anything in the law which tends to the perpetuation of the custom. Considerable light is thrown on the Lawgiver’s recommendation for female privacy, by the remarkable immunity from restraint or seclusion which the members of his family always enjoyed. ‘Ayesha, the daughter of Abû Bakr, who was married to Mohammed on Khadija’s death, personally conducted the insurrectionary movement against Ali. She commanded her own troops at the famous “Battle of the Camel.” Fâtima, the daughter of the Prophet, often took part in the discussions regarding the succession to the Caliphate. The grand-daughter of Mohammed, Zainab the sister of Husain, shielded her youthful nephew from the Onmeyyades after the butchery of Kerbela. Her indomitable spirit awed equally the ferocious Obaidullah ibn Zayâd and the pitiless Yezid.

The depravity of morals, which had sapped the foundations

1 Sura xxxiii. 59
2 Sura xxiv. 31.

Those who have travelled in Europe and in the Levant will understand how necessary these directions must have been in those times.

‘Hamilton, the translator of the Hedâya, in his preliminary discourse dealing with the Book of Abominations, has the following: “A subject which involves a vast variety of frivolous matter, and must be considered chiefly in the light of a treatise upon propriety and decorum. In it is particularly exhibited the scrupulous attention paid to female modesty, and the avoidance of every act which may tend to violate it, even in thought. It is remarkable, however, that this does not amount to that absolute seclusion of women supposed by some writers. In fact, this seclusion is a result of jealousy or pride, and not of any legal injunction, as appears in this and several other parts of the Hedâya. Neither is it a custom universally prevalent in Medinan countries.” Masden, in his Travels, says “The Arab settlers in Java never observed the custom, and the Javanese Mussulman women enjoy the same amount of freedom as their Dutch sisters.”
of society among the pre-Islamic Arabs, as well as among the Jews and the Christians, urgently needed some correction. The Prophet's counsel regarding the privacy of women served undoubtedly to stem the tide of immorality, and to prevent the diffusion among his followers of the custom of disguised polyandry, which had evidently, until then, existed among the pagan Arabs.

According to von Hammer, "the harem is a sanctuary: it is prohibited to strangers, not because women are considered unworthy of confidence, but on account of the sacredness with which custom and manners invest them. The degree of reverence which is accorded to women throughout higher Asia and Europe (among Mohammedan communities) is a matter capable of the clearest demonstration."

The idealisation of womanhood is a natural characteristic of all the highest natures. But national pride and religious bigotry have given rise to two divergent theories regarding the social exaltation of women among the cultured classes in modern Christendom. The one attributes it to Manolattty, the other to Medieval chivalry, alleged to be the offspring of Teutonic institutions. Of Christianity, in its relation to womankind, the less said the better. In the early ages, when the religion of the people, high and low, the ignorant and educated, consisted only of the adoration of the mother of Jesus, the Church of Christ had placed the sex under a ban. Father after father had written upon the enormities of women, their evil tendencies, their inconceivable malignity. Tertullian represented the general feeling in a book in which he described women as "the devil's gateway, the unsealer of the forbidden tree, the deserter of the divine law, the destroyer of God's image—man." Another authority declared with a revolting cynicism, "among women he sought for chastity but found none." Chrysostom, who is recognised as a saunt of high merit, "interpreted the general opinion of the Fathers," says Lecky, "when he pronounced women to be a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, a painted ill." The orthodox Church excluded women from the exercise of all religious functions excepting the lowest. They were excluded absolutely from
society; they were prohibited from appearing in public, from going to feasts or banquets. They were directed to remain in seclusion, to observe silence, to obey their husbands, and to apply themselves to weaving and spinning and cooking. If they ever went out they were to be clothed from head to foot. Such was the position of women in Christianity when Mariolatry was recognised and practised by all classes. In later times, and in the gloomy interval which elapsed between the overthrow of the Western empire and the rise of modern society in Europe, a period which has been described as one of "rapine, falsehood, tyranny, lust, and violence," Christianity, by introducing convents and nunneries, served, in some respects, to improve the lot of women. This questionable amelioration, however, was only suited for an age when the abduction of women was an everyday occurrence, and the dissoluteness of morals was such as to defy description. But the convents were not always the haunts of virtue, nor the inculcation of celibacy the surest safeguard of chastity. The Registrum Visitationem, or the diary of the pastoral visits of Archbishop Rigaud, throws a peculiar light upon the state of morality and the position of the sex during the most glorious epoch of the Age of Faith. The rise of Protestantism made no difference in the social conditions or in the conception of lawyers regarding the status of women. Jesus had treated woman with humanity; his followers excluded her from justice.

The other theory to which we have adverted is in vogue among the romanceurs of Europe. They have represented each historical figure in the Middle Ages to be a Bayard or a Crichton. The age of chivalry is generally supposed to extend from the beginning of the eighth to the close of the fourteenth century—a period, be it noted, almost synchronous with the Saracenic domination in Spain. But, during this period, in spite of the halo which poetry and romance have cast around the conditions of society, women were the frequent subjects of violence. Force and fraud were the distinguishing characteristics of the golden age of Christian chivalry. Roland and Arthur were myths until the West came in contact with the civilisation and culture of the East. Chivalry was not the product of the wilds of Scandinavia or of the gloomy forests of Germany;—
prophecy and chivalry alike were the children of the desert. From the desert issued Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed; from the desert issued 'Antar, Hamza, and Ali.

The condition of women among the Arabs settled in the cities and villages, who had adopted the loose notions of morality prevalent among the Syrians, Persians, and Romans, was, as we have already stated, degraded in the extreme. Among some of the nomads, however, they enjoyed great freedom, and exercised much influence over the fortunes of their tribes. "They were not, as among the Greeks," says Perron, "the creatures of misery." They accompanied the warriors to battle, and inspired them to heroism; the cavaliers rushed into the fights singing the praises of sister, wife, or lady-love. The guerdon of their loves was the highest prize of their prowess. Valour and generosity were the greatest virtues of the men, and chastity that of the women. An insult offered to a woman of a tribe would set in flame the desert tribes from end to end of the peninsula. The "Sacrilegious Wars," which lasted for forty years, and were put an end to by the Prophet, had their origin in an insult offered to a young girl at one of the fairs of Okâz.

Mohammed rendered a fitful custom into a permanent creed, and embodied respect for women in his revelations. With many directions, which reflect the rude and patriarchal simplicity of the age, his regulations breathe a more chivalrous spirit towards the sex than is to be found in the teachings of the older masters. Islâm, like Christianity, is different with different individuals and in different ages, but on the whole, true chivalry is more intimately associated with true Islâm than with any other form of positive faith or social institution.

The hero of Islâm, the true disciple of the founder of the Hilf-ul-Fuzul, was as ready with lance and sword to do battle with God's enemies as to redress the wrongs of the weak and oppressed. Whether on the plains of Irâk or nearer home, the cry of distress never failed to bring the mailed knight to the succour of the helpless and suffering. His deeds translated into legends, and carried from the tent to the palace, have served to influence the prowess of succeeding ages. The caliph in his banqueting-hall puts down the half-tasted bowl on being told that an Arab maiden, carried into captivity by the Romans,
had cried out, "Why does not Abd ul-Malik come to my help?"—he vows that no wine or water shall wet his lips until he has released the maiden from bondage. Forthwith he marches his troops upon the Roman caitiffs, and only when the maiden has attained her liberty is he freed from his vow. A Mogul emperor,¹ sore pressed by relentless foes, is marching towards the frontiers when he receives the bracelet of an alien queen—the token of brotherhood and call for succour. He abandons his own necessities, retraces his steps, defeats her foes, and then resumes his march.

Oelsner calls ‘Antar "the father of chivalry."' Ali was its beau-ideal—an impersonation of gallantry, of bravery, of generosity, pure, gentle, and learned, "without fear and without reproach," he set the world the noblest example of chivalrous grandeur of character. His spirit, a pure reflection of that of the Master, overshadowed the Islâmic world, and formed the animating genius of succeeding ages. The wars of the Crusades brought barbarian Europe into contact with the civilisation of the Islâmic East, and opened its eyes to the magnificence and refinement of the Moslems, but it was especially the influences of Mohammedan Andalusia on the neighbouring Christian provinces which led to the introduction of chivalry into Europe. The troubadours, the trouvères of Southern France, and the minnesingers of Germany, who sang of love and honour in war, were the immediate disciples of the romanceurs of Cordova, Granada, and Malaga. Petrarch and Boccaccio, even Tasso and Chaucer, derived their inspiration from the Islâmic fountam-head. But the coarse habits and thoughts of the barbarian hordes of Europe communicated a character of grossness to pure chivalry.

In the early centuries of Islâm, almost until the extinction of the Saracenic empire in the East, women continued to occupy as exalted a position as in modern society. Zubaida, the wife of Hârûn, plays a conspicuous part in the history of the age, and by her virtues, as well as by her accomplishments, leaves an honoured name to posterity. Humâida, the wife of Fârûk, a

¹ The Emperor Humâyûn, pursued by the Afghans, received, on his march to Cabul, the bracelet from the Jodhpur queen, and at once came to her help. I have mentioned two instances of Moslem chivalry, which might be multiplied by hundreds.
THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLÂM

Medinite citizen, left for many years the sole guardian of her minor son, educates him to become one of the most distinguished jurists of the day. Sukaina, or Sakina, the daughter of Husain, and the grand-daughter of Ali, was the most brilliant, most accomplished, and most virtuous woman of her time,—"la dame des dames de son temps, la plus belle, la plus gracieuse, la plus brillante de qualités," as Perron calls her. Herself no mean scholar, she prized the converse of learned and pious people. The ladies of the Prophet's family were noted for their learning, their virtues, and their strength of character. Bûrán, the wife of the Caliph Mâmûn, Umm-ul-Fazl, Mâmûn's sister, married to the eighth Imam of the house of Ah, Umm ul-Habib, Mâmûn's daughter, were all famous for their scholarship. In the fifth century of the Hegira, the Shu'ka Shuhida, designated Fakhru nisa ("the glory of women"), lectured publicly, at the Cathedral Mosque of Bagdad, to large audiences on literature, rhetoric, and poetry. She occupies in the annals of Islâm a position of equality with the most distinguished ulama. What would have befallen this lady had she flourished among the fellow-religionists of St Cyril can be judged by the fate of Hypatia. Possibly she would not have been torn to pieces by enthusiastic Christians, but she would, to a certainty, have been burnt as a witch. Zat ul-Hemma, corrupted into Zemma, "the lion-heart," the heroine of many battles, fought side by side with the bravest knights.

The improvement effected in the position of women by the Prophet of Arabia has been acknowledged by all unprejudiced writers, though it is still the fashion with bigoted controversialists to say the Islâmic system lowered the status of women. No falser calumny has been levelled at the great Prophet. Nineteen centuries of progressive development working with the legacy of a prior civilization, under the most favourable racial and climatic conditions, have tended to place

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1 Fârûk was away for twenty seven years engaged in wars in Khorâsân. His son's name is Rabîya ar-Ray
2 Husain was married to one of the daughters of Yazdjak, the last Sasaman king of Persia
3 For a full account of the distinguished women who have flourished in Islâm, see the article in the May number of the Nineteeth Century for 1899 and The Short History of the Saracens (Macmillan)
women, in most countries of Christendom, on a higher social level than the men,—have given birth to a code of etiquette which, at least ostensibly, recognises the right of women to higher social respect. But what is their legal position even in the most advanced communities of Christendom? Until very recently, even in England, a married woman possessed no rights independently of her husband. If the Moslem woman does not attain in another hundred years, the social position of her European sister, there will be time enough to declaim against Islâm as a system and a dispensation. But the Teacher who in an age when no country, no system, no community gave any right to woman, maiden or married, mother or wife, who, in a country where the birth of a daughter was considered a calamity, secured to the sex rights which are only unwillingly and under pressure being conceded to them by the civilised nations in the twentieth century, deserves the gratitude of humanity. If Mohammed had done nothing more, his claim to be a benefactor of mankind would have been indisputable. Even under the laws as they stand at present in the pages of the legislators, the legal position of Moslem females may be said to compare favourably with that of European women. We have dealt in another place at length with this subject. We shall do no more here than glance at the provisions of the Moslem codes relating to women. As long as she is unmarried she remains under the parental roof, and until she attains her majority she is, to some extent, under the control of the father or his representative. As soon, however, as she is of age, the law vests in her all the rights which belong to her as an independent human being. She is entitled to share in the inheritance of her parents along with her brothers, and though the proportion is different, the distinction is founded on the relative position of brother and sister. A woman who is sui iuris can under no circumstances be married without her own express consent, "not even by the sultan." 1 On her marriage she does not lose her individuality. She does not cease to be a separate member of society.

1 Centuries after the principle was laid down by the Moslem jurists, the sovereigns and chief officials of Christendom were in the habit of forcibly marrying women to their subjects.
An ante-nuptial settlement by the husband in favour of the wife is a necessary condition, and on his failure to make a settlement the law presumes one in accordance with the social position of the wife. A Moslem marriage is a civil act, needing no priest, requiring no ceremonial. The contract of marriage gives the man no power over the woman's person, beyond what the law defines, and none whatever upon her goods and property. Her rights as a mother do not depend for their recognition upon the idiosyncrasies of individual judges. Her earnings acquired by her own exertions cannot be wasted by a prodigal husband, nor can she be ill-treated with impunity by one who is brutal. She acts, if su juris, in all matters which relate to herself and her property in her own individual right, without the intervention of husband or father. She can sue her debtors in the open courts, without the necessity of joining a next friend, or under cover of her husband's name. She continues to exercise, after she has passed from her father's house into her husband's home, all the rights which the law gives to men. All the privileges which belong to her as a woman and a wife are secured to her, not by the courtesies which "come and go," but by the actual text in the book of law. Taken as a whole, her status is not more unfavourable than that of many European women, whilst in many respects she occupies a decidedly better position. Her comparatively backward condition is the result of a want of culture among the community generally, rather than of any special feature in the laws of the fathers.