

# ISLAM

*A Companion Book*

*Compiled by  
Khaled Fahmy*



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Khaled Fahmy

*Revised and edited*

Caren Knight (Kareema)



*In the Name of God The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

*And We have sent you [O' Muhammad] Not but as a mercy for the  
'Alamin [Mankind, jinn and all that exists].*

*[Surat Al 'Anbya' 21: 107]*

The customary and most respectful  
salutation on the Prophet,  
“Peace and blessings of God be upon him”  
which is made after each mention of his name  
within this work has been omitted for ease of reading;  
however the reader is kindly requested  
to observe this Muslim tradition.

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Likewise, I owe a heavy debt of gratitude to the late Sheikh Abdel Wahab Yahia; who suggested printing this book, and for his valuable and continuous support during his lifetime, and who demonstrated himself to be an invaluable adviser and a friend.

## A Foreword

Praise be to the Lord of the universe who gives the best reward to the God-fearing and the great loss to the transgressor. I bear witness that there is no God but Allāh; He has no partner and possesses real Sovereignty. I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger; the seal of the prophets and the leader of the God-fearing. May God bless him, his family, his companions, and those who follow them till the Day of Judgement.

I owe a heavy debt of gratitude to Sheikh Ahmed Ghalwash, who first introduced me to the art of writing and the presentation of ideas and notions through his rational peaceful approach to dialogue, throughout his eminent book “The Religion of Islam... a Standard Book”. The book was published by Al-Azhar University Magazine, and was first published in two volumes in 1936. The book is, if truth be told, a standard book, and a concise introduction to Islam, it deals with almost every aspect of Islamic knowledge.

It is a regrettable fact that if a non-Muslim wants to acquire knowledge about Islam, he or she is compelled to consult the media, the internet and the works of non-Muslim authors, who are never tired of reviling the Prophet and misinterpreting the doctrines of Islam. According to these media and authors, Islam represents all that is evil in human nature, and legalises the worst forms of brutality, moral corruption, ignorance, backwardness and lust.

The Muslim world is badly in need of media and written works which may counteract these misrepresentations and show Islam as it is “without justifying anything or setting down anything whatever in malice”.

This long felt desire, in spite of all the existing English books written on Islam in the last 75 years, still Dr. Galwash’s “Religion of Islam”, among other great works; strongly and genuinely expose the deliberate misrepresentations of Qu’ranic teachings, the Sunnah and the traditions of the Prophet by the non-Muslim

opponents of Islam, who use wrong thoughts as the basis of their conclusions of a deceptive logic.

*Islam: A Companion Book*; is based mainly on Dr. Galwash's book; "Religion of Islam", along with other devout works of scholarly authors, which are beneficial to every non-Muslim and Muslim in understanding his or her religion and guiding his or her footsteps along the right path according to the injunctions of the Qu'ran and the Sunnah of the Messenger of God.

"*Islam: a Companion Book*" is a factual book about Islam and its doctrines, it is distinctive in its approach, and it is determined enough to deal with the old new misrepresentations about Islam. It is straightforward to read through by native English readers, but it is also easy to benefit from by the contemporary non-native English readers of the world. To maximise the benefits drawn from this book; *Islam: a Companion Book*, the need necessitated and the reason urged the abridgements and editions of Dr. Galwash's book and many other works written on Islam, meanwhile inserting new chapters, illustrating some topics, adding details and omitting others that might facilitate and assist in reaching the impact desired by this work.

The purpose of this book is to give the English contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim readers a brief fair history of the Prophet Muhammad and to present an accurate and authentic account of the religion of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad taught a religion which has become the faith of 1.6 billion people throughout the world.

Apparently writers of the Christian persuasion who dealt with Islam, seem either to have obtained their knowledge of this religion haphazardly from untrustworthy sources, or to have allowed their judgment to have been biased by their own Christian outlook; and this partiality has, consciously or otherwise changed them from honest historians to critics – and at times malignant critics.

In compiling this book, I have set before me a high ideal; to be a true historian and a conscientious writer, to obtain not only from eulogy and partisanship, but also from ridiculing and misplaced criticism.

This book is a comprehensive and extensive compilation in relation to the *Deen* of Islam, providing both a holistic and in-depth view of not only the foundational aspects of the religion in terms of belief and prayer, but also extends into the deeper facets of the *Deen*, and defines how Islam encompasses every aspect of a Muslim's life including marriage, jurisprudence and trade among many other pertinent subjects, and also includes a summarised biography of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, which demonstrates how his exemplary life and teachings, as revealed by God, influences the very characteristics of Muslims in terms of worship, ethics and morals. This compilation aims to provide the reader with a deeper intellectual knowledge and understanding of the intricacies of Islam as a complete way of life.

My single endeavour is to give the reader a true account of the life of the Prophet Muhammad and a fair exposition of Islam.

## Introduction

The dissemination of knowledge all-over the world and the spread of civilisation through modern technologies have very largely lessened the differences and gaps between one nation and another and have almost subdued the flames of animosity kindled in men's bosoms by blind fanaticism evoked by religion or creed.

Today, however, men are largely imbued with the spirit of toleration and love of truth. The more enlightened do respect the doctrines and principles of their fellow men, however widely they differ from their own. The followers of different religions make earnest endeavours to spread their own faith and to plant their standards and ideals even further a-field. It is left to reason to examine and judge the respective merits of each. From time to time, we read of some distinguished person who has abandoned the religion of his forefathers to adopt a different persuasion, which, in the light of reason he has found more acceptable. Further the spirit of intellectual curiosity has been so fully developed in human beings by education, that books, periodicals, media, newspapers and websites on the internet are eagerly read which deal with the dogmas and tenets of different nations. The widest possible knowledge of these is sought and at this time an attachment to new beliefs is not hidden, nor a readiness to adopt them.

On the other hand, the more highly a nation is civilised, the more it is inclined to make known its customs, habits and national or religious character. Although some vague knowledge of the laws and tenets of Islam may be obtained from treatises and books which have been composed by certain Westerners, yet he who desires to thoroughly comprehend their spirit must trace them within their Islamic authentic resources. For he who is desirous of gaining the esteem and affection of those with whom he converses, will be careful not to offend against their religious precepts and notions of right and wrong, with which precepts and notions he can become acquainted by consulting their own records.

Furthermore, it behoves those ministers and missionaries of the Christian faith whose zeal leads them to labour in the propagation of their own doctrines and in attempts to refute the tenets and precepts of other religions, to be well acquainted with those things which they undertake to be hold responsible. The learned Roland <sup>[1]</sup> has shown that “Christian writers of no small eminence in point of learning and reputation have offensively misrepresented the doctrines of Islamic faith, and bestowed much useless labour, in confuting opinions which the followers of the Prophet never maintained, thus exposing themselves to the charge of ignorance and the disrespect of their opponents and injuring the cause they had undertaken to defend, by making it appear to stand in need of false allegations for its support”.

Indeed, it is misrepresentation and misinformation, from which Muslims chiefly suffer. They have had imputed to them that which has no existence whatever in their teachings and policy; baseless charges have been advanced against Islam; nay, the very beauties which Muslims account amongst their exclusive possessions have been denied them, and the very evils which Islam came to eradicate and did succeed in so doing are ascribed to it. It is certainly a great pity that, with all this outpouring of learning and literature, very little real effort has been made to clear away the clouds of misrepresentation and defective knowledge which still envelop Islam in the non-Muslim world.

Islam, is a *Deen* [a way of life] which at present is a powerful factor in humanising millions, previously living in ignorance barbarity should come through any adulterated channels and from the writings and works of propagandists hostile to Islam. Undoubtedly a true knowledge of the life of the Prophet and of his principal teachings is full of interest to those who desire to increase their general information. Indeed the doctrines of Islam tend in general to promote the welfare and prosperity of

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<sup>[1]</sup> De Relig. Mohamammedica L II.

mankind, in as much as they cultivate charity and good will to all people.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Prophet said: “None of you will have faith till he wishes for his brother what he likes for himself.” [*Al-Bukhari vol 13, book 2, Hadith No. 6*]

That Islam was admittedly the torch-bearer of light and learning in the West when Europe was enshrouded in ignorance and darkness, and that the Muslims were undoubtedly among the very few factors creating the conditions leading to the present culture and advancement, are in themselves convincing reasons to justify an appeal to the Westerner’s sense of duty, reason and justice in judging Islam and Muslims.

An honest student of the tenets of Islam and the labours of Muslims for the regeneration and edification of mankind, especially of Europe, cannot fail to find much for which Islam should be thanked. I quote Major Arthur Glyn Leonard in this relation:

“Never to this day has Europe acknowledged in an honest and wholehearted manner the great and everlasting debt she owes to Islamic culture and civilisation. Only in a lukewarm and perfunctory way has she recognised that when, during the dark ages, her people were sunk in feudalism and ignorance, Muslim civilisation under the Arabs reached a high standard of social and scientific splendour that kept the flickering embers of European society from utter decadence.

“Do not we, who consider ourselves on the topmost peak ever reached by culture and civilisation, recognise that, had it not been for the high culture, the civilisation and intellectual, as well as the social splendours of Arabs and soundness of their school system, Europe would to this day have remained sunk in the darkness of ignorance? Have we forgotten that the Muslim maxim was that “the real learning of man is of more public importance than any

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[1] Bosworth Smith: “Mohamed and Muhammadanism”.



particular religious opinion he may entertain”, that Muslim liberality was in striking contrast with the then intolerant state of Europe? Does the magnificent great bravery of the Arabs, inspired as it was by atheism as lofty as it was pure, not appeal to us? Does not the moderation and comparative toleration shown by them to the conquered not with standing the fierce and burning great enthusiasm to regenerate mankind that encouraged them onward to conquest also appeal to us? Does it not all the more appeal to us when we contrast this with the bitterness of the attitude of the Christian sects towards one another? Especially when we consider that in Christendom, as it was then constituted, extortion, tyranny and imperial centralisation, combining with ecclesiastical dictatorship and persecution, had practically extinguished loyalty, by substituting in its place schismatic and degenerate Church?” Further the same writer continues to say:-

“Is it possible that Europe is unmindful of, and has the ingratitude to ignore, the splendid services of the scientists and philosophers of Arabic? Are the names of Assamh, Abu Othman, Alberuni, Alberithar Abu Ali Ibn Sina [Avicenna] the great physician and philosopher, Ibn Rushd [Averroes] of Cordova, the chief commentator of Aristotle, Ibn Bajja [Anempace] besides a host of others but dead letters? Is the great work that they have done and the fame they have left behind them in their books to be consigned to the limbo of oblivion, by an ungrateful but antipathetic Europe?

“It cannot be that already we have lost sight of the amazing intellectual activity of the Muslim world during the earlier part of the “Abbaside period more especially. It cannot be that we have quite forgotten the irrecoverable loss that was inflicted on Arabian literature, and on the world at large, by the went on destruction of thousands of books that was promoted by Christian prejudice and fanaticism.”, “It cannot be surely said of Christian Europe that for centuries now she has done her best to hide her obligation to the Arabs; yet most assuredly obligations

such as these are far too sacred to lie much longer hidden. <sup>[1]</sup> For further explanation as to the far-reaching beneficial effects of Islam I quote Bosworth Smith, M.A., Asst. master in Harrow School and late fellow of Trinity College, Oxford:

“Nor does Islam lack other claims on our attention. Its ultimate acceptance by the Arabs, the new direction given to it by the later revelations to Muhammad, its rapid conquests, the literature and civilisation it brought in its train, the way in which it crumpled up the Roman Empire on one side and the Persian on the other, how it drove Christianity before it on the West and North and fire worship on the East and South; how it crushed the false prophets that always follow in the wake of a true one, as the jackals do the trail of a lion, how it spread over two continents, and how it settled in a third and at one time all but overwhelmed the whole....all this is matter of history, at which I can only glance.

“And what is the position now?

“It numbers at this day more than one thousand and two hundreds millions, probably one thousand and three hundreds millions of believers as sincere, as devout, as true to their creed, as are the believers in any creed whatever. It still has its grip on three continents extending from Morocco to the Malay Peninsula, from Zanzibar to the Kirghis horde...

“... Africa which had yielded so early to Christianity, nay, which had given birth to Latin Christianity itself, the Africa of Cyprian and Tertullian, of Antony and Augustine yielded still more readily to Muhammad; and from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Isthmus of Suez may still be heard the cry which with them is no vain repetition of “Allâhu Akbar”, God is Great, there is no god but Allâh and Muhammad is His Messenger.

“And if it be said, as it often is, that Islam has gained nothing since the first flame or religious enthusiasm fanned, as it then often was, by the lust of conquest has died out, I answer that this

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<sup>[1]</sup> “Islam” Her Moral and Spiritual Value” By Major Arthur Glyn Leonard.

is far from the truth. “In the extreme East, Islam has since then won and maintained for centuries a moral supremacy in the important Chinese province of Yun-Nan, and has thus actually succeeded in thrusting a wedge between the two great Buddhist empires of Burma and of China... “Throughout the Chinese Empire there are scattered Muslim communities who have higher hopes than Buddhism or Confucianism, and a purer morality than Taoism can supply.

“Nay, even beyond, in the East Indian Archipelago, beyond the straits of Malacca if I may venture just now so to call them, in Java and Sumatra, in Borneo and Celebes, ISLAM has raised many of the natives above their former selves and has long been the dominant faith...”

“It cannot of course, be supposed that among races so low in the scale of humanity as are most of the Indian islanders, Islam would be able to do what it did originally for the Arabs or for the Turkish hordes’ but it has done something even for them. It was propagated by missionaries who cared very much for the souls they could win, and nothing for the plunder they could carry off. They conciliated the natives learned their language, intermarried with them and in larger islands their success was rapid and, so far as nature would allow, complete. <sup>[1]</sup>

“The Philippines and the Molaccas, with were conquered by Spain and Portugal respectively did not become Muslim, for they had to surrender at once their liberty and their religion. It is no wonder that the religion known to the natives chiefly through the unblushing greed of the Dutch has not extended itself beyond the reach of their swords. Here, as elsewhere in the East, the most fatal hindrance to the spread of Christianity has been the lives of Christians: <sup>[2]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> Crawford’s “Indian Archipelago” II, 275 and 315

<sup>[2]</sup> For the cruelties of the Portuguese, see Craford, II, 403 and for the Dutch see especially II, 425 and 441. For some startling facts as to the comparative morality of some native and Christian communities in India,

In Africa again Islam is spreading itself by giant strides almost year by year. Everyone knows that within half a century of the Prophet's death, the richest states of Africa, and those most accessible to Christianity and to European Civilisation, were torn away from both, by the armies of the faithful, with hardly a struggle or a regret; but few except those who have studied the subject, are aware that even since then Islam has been gradually spreading over the northern half of the continent.

“Starting from the north west corner, it first marched southwards from Morocco, and by the time of the Norman Conquest had reached the neighbourhood of Timbuctoo, and had got firm hold of the Mandingoes, thence it spread southwards again to the Foulahs, and then eastward by the thirteenth century to Lake Chad, where finally the Arab missionaries from the West joined hands with those from the East in the very heart of Africa...

“We hear of whole tribes laying aside their devil worship or immemorial Fetish and springing at a bound, as it were from the very lowest to one of the highest forms of religious belief. Christian travellers with every wish to think otherwise, have remarked that the Negro, who accepts Islam, acquires at once a sense of the dignity of human nature not commonly found even among those who have been brought to accept Christianity.

“It is also relevant to observe here, that such progress as any large part of the Negro race has hitherto made, is in exact proportion to the time that has elapsed, or the degree of fervour, with which they originally embraced, or have since clung to Islam. The Mandingoes and the Foulahs are significant instances of this; their unquestionable superiority to other Negro tribes is as unquestionably owing to the early hold that Islam got upon them, and to the civilisation and culture that it has always encouraged. The Government Blue Books on our West African settlements, and the reports of missionary societies themselves, are quite at

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see a paper by Rev. J.N. Thoburn in the Report for the Allahabad Missionary Conference, held in 1872-73 p. 467-470.

one on this head. The Governor of our West African Colonies, Mr. Pope Hennesay, remarks that the liberated Africans are always handed over to Christian missionaries for instruction, and that their children are baptized and brought up at the public expense in Christian schools, and are, therefore, in a sense ready made converts, yet the total number of professing Christians 35.000 out of a population of 513.000, very few even of these, as the Governor says, and as we can unfortunately well believe from our experience in countries that are not African, being practical Christians – falls far short of the original number of liberated Africans and their descendents.<sup>[1]</sup> On the other hand the Rev. James Johnson, a native clergyman, and a man of remarkable energy and intelligence, as well as of very Catholic spirit, deplors the fact that of the total number of Muslims to be found in Sierra Leone and its neighbourhood *three fourths* were not born Muslims, but have become so by *conversion*, whether from a nominal Christianity or from Paganism. <sup>[2]</sup>

“We are assured on all hands that the Muslim population has an almost passionate desire for education, and those in the neighbourhood of our colonies would through our schools, first if the practical education given was worth having, and secondly, if the teachers would refrain from needlessly attacking their cherished and often harmless customs. Wherever Muslims are numerous, they establish schools themselves, and there are not a

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<sup>[1]</sup> Papers relating to Her Majesty’s Colonial Possessions Part. II 1873 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, p.14.

<sup>[2]</sup> Papers relating to Her Majesty’s Colonial Possessions Part. II 1873 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, p.15. “As Mr. Pope Hennessy’s Report has been much criticized, chiefly on the ground that he is a Roman Catholic, and as I have based some statements upon it, it may be worth mentioning that I have had a conversation with Mr. Johnson, who is a strong protestant himself, and that he bore testimony to the bona fides of the Report and to its accuracy even on some points which have been most questioned. He told me that Islam was introduced into Sierra Leone not many years ago, by three zealous missionaries who came from a great distance. It seems now to be rapidly gaining the ascendancy, in spite of all the European influence at work.

few who travel extraordinary distances to secure the best possible education. Mr. Pope Hennessy mentions the case of one young Muslim Negro who is in the habit of purchasing costly books from Trubner in London and who went to Foulah, two hundred and fifty miles away, to obtain an education better than he could find in Sierra Leone itself. Not is it an uncommon thing for newly converted Muslims to make their way right across the desert from Bornu or from Lake Chad, or down the Nile from Darfour or Wadi, a journey of over one thousand miles that they may carry on their studies in El-Azhar, the great collegiate Mosque at Cairo, and they may thence bring back the results of their studying to their native country, and form so many centres of Muslim teaching and example.

“Nor as to the effects of Islam when first embraced by a Negro tribe can there be any reasonable doubt. Polytheism disappears almost instantaneously, sorcery with it attendant evils, gradually dies away; human sacrifice becomes a thing of the past. The general moral elevation is most marked; the native begins for the first time in their history to dress and that neatly. Neglected filth is replaced by a scrupulous cleanliness; in hospitality becomes a comparatively rare exception. Though polygamy is allowed by the Qu’ran, it is not common in practice; and, beyond the limits laid down by the Prophet, incontinence is rare; chastity is looked upon as one of the highest and becomes in fact one of the commoner virtues. It is idleness henceforward that degrades, instead of the reverse. Offences are henceforward measured by a written code instead of the arbitrary caprice of a tribal chief – a step, as everyone will admit, of vast importance in the progress of a tribe. The Mosque gives an idea at all events higher than any the Negro has yet had. A thirst for literature is created, and that for works of science and philosophy, as well as for commentaries on the Qu’ran. There are whole tribes, as the Jalofs on the river Gambia and the Haussas, whose manly qualities we have had occasions to test in Ashantee, which have become to a man Muslim, and have raised themselves infinitely in the process; and the very name salt-water-Muslims given to those tribes along the coast, who, from

admixture with European settlers, have relaxed the severity of the Prophet's laws is a striking proof of the extent, to which the stricter form of the faith prevails in the far interior.

“It is melancholy to contrast with these wide spread beneficial influences of Islam, the little that has been done for Africa till very lately by the Christian nations that have settled in it, and the still narrower limits within which it has been confined. Till a few years ago the good effects produced beyond the immediate territories occupied by them were absolutely nothing...

“The message that European traders have carried for centuries to Africa has been one of rapacity, of cruelty and of bad faith. It is a remark of Dr. Livingstone's <sup>[1]</sup> that the only art that the nations of Africa have acquired from their 500 years' acquaintance with the Portuguese, has been the art of distilling spirits from a gun-barrel; and that the only permanent belief they owe to them, is the belief that man may sell his brother man; for this, he says emphatically, is not a native benefit to Africa; but if we except the small number of converts made within the limits of their settlements, it has been the only benefit conferred by Europeans.

“Truly if the question must be put, whether it is Muslim or Christian nations that have as yet done most for Africa, the answer must be that it is not the Christian...<sup>[2]</sup>

I think I can occupy no more space in this introduction by making further quotations to discuss the relation of Islam to modern civilisation and the position which it holds among the recognized religions of the world. It is a matter of pure history that Islam has been beneficial to humanity in general and that it had, and still has, an everlasting influence on the development of human character.

The Muslim School embraces all branches of human knowledge and research: - theology, medicine, history, astronomy, grammar,

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<sup>[1]</sup> Livingstone's "Expedition to the Zambesi" page 240.

<sup>[2]</sup> R. Bosworth Smith "Mohamed and Mohammedanism".

economics, physics, philosophy, psychology and ethics. It is an important educator on all systems of purely human origin, and its creed most sublime loftiest and divine expression, never to be found in the ceremonies of other religions. The Islamic conception of God is that He is “Allâh” and there is no deity beside Him; He alone is to be worshipped. He begets not and He is not begotten. He was before time began its race. He is “Allâh” Who has raised different Prophets of men throughout the ages. His Greatness is immeasurable. This is but a fractional part of the Muslim Creed – a creed that strictly forbids the worship of images and the artistic representation of anything that resembles the human form.

Yet in Christian literature periodicals and other publications Muslims have been alluded to, and spoken of, as pagans, idolaters, polygamists, sun-worshippers and what not. Our sacred edifice has been characterized as the Mosque of swords, our heaven as a heaven of sensual bliss, and that after death we sink into space soul-less and have no account to give. In the romance of “Trpin” quoted by Renan, Muhammad, the dedicated destroyer of all idolatry, is turned himself into an idol of gold and under the name of Mawment, is reported to be the object of worship at Cadiz. In the song of Roland, the National Epic of France, “Muhammad” appears with the chief of the pagan gods on one side of him and the chief of the Devils on the other. Human sacrifices are supposed to have been offered to him, in imagination and assertions of Christian writers of the tenth and eleventh centuries under the various names of Bafum, or Maphomet, or Mawment, Malaterra, in his history of Sicily describes that island as being, when under Saracenic rule, and land wholly given up to idolatry.

[<sup>1</sup>] With the leaders of the Reformation, Mohammed “the greatest of Reformers” [<sup>2</sup>] meets with little sympathy, and their hatred of

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[<sup>1</sup>] “Which people were the great idolaters, any candid reader of the Italian annalists of this time, collected by Muratori, can say” Bosworth – “Mohammed and Mohammedanism”

[<sup>2</sup>] Bosworth Smith.



him, as perhaps was natural, seems to be proportionate with their knowledge Luther doubts whether he is not worse than Leo; Melancthon believes him to be either Gog or Maggog and Probably both. [1]

In the imagination of the Biblical commentators, the Prophet divides with the Pope the credit or discredit, of being the subject of special prophecy in the books of Daniel and the Revelation. "He is Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the Little Horn" and I know not what besides; nor do I think that a single writer, till towards the middle of the eighteenth century, treats of him as otherwise than a rank impostor and false prophet. [2]

England and France were the first to take a different view and to have begun that critical study of Arabian history or literature which in the hands of Gibbon and of Muir, of Caussin de Perceval and of St. Hilaire, of Weil and of Springer has provided some material for a comparatively fair and unbiased judgment within the reach of everyone. But most other writers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century such as Dean Prideaux and the Abbe Maracci, Boulainvilliers and Voltaire have approached the subject only to prove a thesis. With them the Prophet was to be either a hero or an impostor. "From them is learnt much that has been said about Mohammed, but comparatively little of Mohammed himself." [3]

Gagnier has then proceeded to write a history of the Prophet claimed to have been based on the work of Abul Feda. Gagnier's history was still not free from wrong inferences and erroneous allusions.[4] Then followed the translations of the "Qu'ran" by Sale and Savary into English and French respectively. Gibbon has then written his "three masterpieces of biography": Athansaius, Juian, and Mohammed. Gibbon's treatment of Islam is considered to be generally fair and philosophic, "in spite of

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[1] See "Quarterly Review" Art. Islam, by Detsch, No. 254, p.296.

[2] Bosworth Smith.

[3] *ibid.*

[4] *ibid.*

occasional uncalled for sarcasms and characteristic innuendoes. [1] It seems that Gibbon's so called unfair treatment of Christianity prevented the Christian world from doing justice to his generally fair treatment of Islam: and consequently most Englishmen "who do not condemn the Prophet unheard, derive what favourable notions of him they have not from Gibbon, but from Carlyle." [2]

It was really a great surprise and an epoch in English intellectual and religious life, as Bosworth Smith has rightly observed, when it was found that Carlyle chose for his "Hero as Prophet" "not Moses or Elijah or Isaiah, but the so called impostor Mohammed" [3]

Now it is time to conclude this introduction. The reader will see and judge for himself the extent to which European writers of various reputations and in various ages have, in their different treatment of the Prophet Muhammad and of Islam, been either misleading or themselves misled.

In conclusion in my human endeavours I humbly implore the Almighty God, the God of all mankind, to grant that my labour may serve as a basis for mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims and forbearance, for sympathy and respect.

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[1] *ibid.*

[2] Bosworth Smith.

[3] *ibid.*

## The History of Arabs

### A Summary

Arabia is the great Western peninsula of Asia. Its area is about 1,230,000 square miles, i.e. about one third of Europe. The name is said to be derived from "Araba", a small district in the south east of the province of Tehama, to which Yarab the son of Kahtan [The Biblical "Joktna"], the father of the ancient Arabs gave his name, and where some ages after dwelt Ismail, the son of Abraham and Hagar.

The chief province in connection with the history of Islam is known as the Hidjaz, which occupies the Western strip of Arabia to the east of the Red Sea and contains the famous cities of Makkah and Al-Madienah. The former of these claims the distinction of being the birthplace of the Prophet and possesses the celebrated sanctuary of the Ka'bah, and the second was home of the Prophet for the last ten years of his life, and there he was laid to rest.

The Ka'bah is stated to have been originally built by Abraham and Ismail for the worship of the true God, but in after times it became the common pantheon of pagan Arabia. The Arabian Peninsula has always been inhabited by two – classes – town dwellers and those who live in tents. The former live by tillage, the cultivation of palm-trees, cattle breeding, and the exercise of trades, and even in the time of Jacob, were famous as merchants. The members of Quraish tribe, the wealthiest and most distinguished of Arabian tribes, were especially engaged in commerce, and Muhammad in his youth was brought up as a trader, as it was the Arabian custom for sons to carry on the business of their fathers. The Arabs who dwelt in tents were occupied with the pasturing of their flocks, varied by the raiding of caravans and looting of travellers. They lived chiefly on milk, dates and camel flesh; they changed their habitation as the convenience of water and of pasture required staying no longer in one place when these failed.

Whether townsmen or tent-dwellers, the Arabs have always been divided into tribes and clans, each having its own habits, customs, mental outlook and peculiarities and being more or less distinct from the other in mode of worship, in culture and development. This diversity of culture was mainly due to diversity of origin. Various races had inhabited the peninsula in various ages. Many of these had passed away, but their failure or success to add glory to the Arab race was ever fresh in the memory of successive generations, and on this tradition the early history of the nation was based.

The most famous tribes of the ancient Arab were those of Aad, Thamoud and Amalik. The destruction of the first two tribes by God for refusing to acknowledge the missions of His prophets to them or to obey them, is frequently referred to in the Qu'ran as instances of God's Judgment on obstinate unbelievers and a warning to the Quraishites, the tribe of Muhammad, who were his most powerful and inveterate enemies.

According to tradition, the Adites appeared at one time to have been powerful and conquering people. They are said to have invaded Babylonia 2000 years B.C. <sup>[1]</sup> The Thamudites were people who lived in houses carved in the rock. The ruins of these habitations are described in Sir Henry Layard's "Early Travels". The tribe of Amalik rendered itself so powerful that before the time of the Prophet Youssof [Joseph] it conquered the middle of Lower Egypt and furnished several of her Kings, known to history as the "Shepherd Kings." <sup>[2]</sup> After they had possessed the throne of Egypt for some generations, they were expelled by the inhabitants and finally were destroyed utterly by the Israelites. <sup>[3]</sup>

The Arabs of today are descended from two stocks, Kahtan [Biblical Joktan], son of Eber and Adnan, descended in a direct line from Ismail [Ishmael], the son of Ibrahim [Abraham] and

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<sup>[1]</sup> George Sale's translation of the Quran, preliminary Discourse.

<sup>[2]</sup> Sir. Henry Layard's "Early Travels".

<sup>[3]</sup> G. Sale.

Hagar. The former are considered as pure Arabs, the latter as naturalized Arabs. The descendants of Ismail had intermarried and settled among the Kahtanic Arabs and had become amalgamated with them into one nation. The Arabians were for some centuries governed by descendants of Kahtan, Yarab one of his sons, founding the kingdoms of Yemen in the south and Jorham, another that of Hidjaz in the north.

The descendants of Yarab known as the kings of Himyar continued to reign undisturbed over Yemen until the time of Alexander the Great. The first great calamity that befell the tribes who settled there, was the flood of Arem which happened about 340 B.C., one of the leading events in the history of Arabia.

Many tribes had to abandon their dwellings on this occasion, and from the scattered tribes rose two other kingdoms, known as Ghassan and Hira. According to the story of the flood referred to above. Abd Shams, surnamed Saba, one of the famous kings of Himyar tribe of having built the city of Saba [first named after him and afterwards called Marat], constructed a vast reservoir to store up fast-moving mountain water for the use of inhabitants in years of drought. The dam was so firmly built that there seemed no probability of its bursting. The water rose to the height of twenty fathoms and was kept in on every side by stonework so solid that many of the province inhabitants had their houses built on its walls. Each family had a certain share of this water distributed by aqueducts. But at last [according to tradition], God being highly displeased at their great pride and disrespect, and resolving to humble and disperse them, caused a mighty flood to break down by night and carry away the whole city, with the neighbouring towns and people. <sup>[1]</sup>

The tribes which remained in Yemen after this terrible incidence still continued under the rule of the original princes till about 70 years before the birth of Muhammad, when the King of Ethiopia sent over forces to assist the Christians of Yemen against the

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<sup>[1]</sup> Abulfeda.

cruel persecution of their King Zul Nowas, a prejudiced Jew. They attacked him so closely that he forced his horse into the sea, and so lost his life, and the country was then governed by four Ethiopian Princes in turn till Seif Ibn Zi Yazan, of the tribe of Himyar, having obtained assistance from Khosrou Anushirwan, King of Persia, assistance which had been denied him by the Emperor Heraclius, recovered the throne and drove out the Ethiopians, but was himself murdered by some of the enemy who had been left behind.

Persians appointed succeeding princes till Yemen fell into the hands of the Prophet Muhammad, to whom Bazan, the last of them, submitted embracing Islam at the same time. <sup>[1]</sup> The kingdom of the Himyarites is said to have lasted 2000 years.

It has already been observed that two kingdoms were founded by those who left their country on account of the flood of Arem. They were neither from Arabia properly so called. One was the kingdom of Ghassan. The founders of this kingdom were of the tribe of Azd, settled in Syria Damascena, near a spring called Ghassan, where they took their name. This kingdom, according to Abulfeda, lasted 600 years, until the Khalifa Omar subjugated the whole of Syria to the rule of Islam.

The other kingdom was that of Hira which was founded in Chaldea of Iraq. This kingdom was better known as the kingdom of Mondhirs of the tribe of Lakhm. These princes retained their throne [except for a short period during which the Persians held the reins of government] till the time of the Khalifa, Abu Bakr, when al-Mondhir el-Maghrour, the last of them, lost his throne and life in battle with Khaled Ibn el Waleed the Muslim conqueror of Syria. This kingdom lasted 620 years.

The dominion of Hidjaz as already observed was founded by Jorham, the son of Kahtan, and remained in the hands of this family until the time of Ismail. The latter married the daughter of Modar, one of the Jorhamite kings, and she bore him twelve sons,

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ed. Pocock.

one of whom, Kidar by name, inherited the crown from his uncle. The descendants of Kidar expelled the Jorhamite tribe who, retiring to Johainah, was after various fortunes at last destroyed by a flood. <sup>[1]</sup> Finally the government of Hidjaz was shared by the heads of tribes.

Makkah was in the hands of an aristocracy that controlled affairs of state until the time of the Prophet Muhammad, to whose tribe the custody of the famous Ka'bah was transferred.

Thus have the Arabs preserved their liberty and independence, of which few nations can show so glorious and unbroken a record, even from the very Deluge; for though great armies have been sent against them, all attempts to subdue them have failed.

Neither the Assyrian nor the Median Empires ever found a footing in Arabia, and the Persian rulers never succeeded in subjecting her and were so far from being her masters that Combyses, on his expedition against Egypt, was obliged to ask permission to pass through her territories.

When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, the Arabs held him in so little awe that alone of all the neighbouring nations, sent no ambassadors to him at any time. This want of respect and the desire of possessing so rich a country, made him form a plan against it, and had he not died before he could put it into execution, this people might possible have convinced him that he was not unbeatable. <sup>[2]</sup>

### Their Religion

The religion of the Arabs before Islam was in the main gross idolatry, the Sabian religion or idolatry being the most widely extended among the whole nation, though there were also considerable numbers of Christians, Jews and Magians among them. The Sabians believed in God however, they worshipped also stars and planets and angels as well as images; they honoured

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<sup>[1]</sup> Pocock, p. 74

<sup>[2]</sup> G. Sale.

them as deities and they begged for their intercession with God. They did not consider the idols to be direct agents, though they offered sacrifices and offerings to them, as well as to God, who was often put off with the lesser portion. Thus when they planted fruit trees, or sowed a field, they divided their cultivation by a line into two parts, setting aside one part for their idols and the other for God; if any of the fruits happened to fall from the idols' parts, into God's they made restitution, but if from God's part into the idols' they made no restitution. Also when they watered the idol's land, if the water broke over the channels made for that purpose, and ran on God's part, they dammed it up again, but if the water ran into the idol's part they let it run on, saying they [the idols] wanted what was God's but he wanted nothing. In the same manner, if the offering designed for God happened to be better than that designed for the idols; they made an exchange, but not otherwise. It was from this gross idolatry or worship of inferior deities or "the companions of God" as the Arabs used to call them, that the Prophet Muhammad reclaimed his nation by establishing among them the undivided worship of the true God.<sup>[1]</sup>

There were seen celebrated temples, dedicated to the seven planets, adored by the whole nation, though each tribe had chosen one planet as the peculiar object of its worship. The tribe of Himyar worshipped in general the sun, the tribe of Misam the Bull's eye, the tribes of Lakhm and Joham, Jupiter, the tribe of Keis, Sirius or the Dog star, that of Assad, Mercury, the tribe of Tay worshipped Canopus, while the Ka'bah of Makkah was dedicated to Saturn. For the worship of angels and intelligences there were other celebrated, peculiar idols, ten of which are mentioned in the Qu'ran; they are: Al Lat, Al-Uzza and Manata which were called 'Goddesses' and 'Daughters of God. Al Lat was the idol of the tribe of Thakif, Al-Uzza was the deity of Ghatfan; Manata was the favourite idol of Khuza'ah and Huzail. There were two other celebrated idols, namely Al Jibt and Taghout

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[1] G. Sale.



which are also referred to in the Qu'ran. They were of the chief idols of the tribe of Quraish. Special mention is also made in the Qu'ran of five idols, namely Wadd, Suwaa, Yagoutha, Yauka and Nassra. These were common idols among the pagan Arabians besides the idols referred to above the Arabs worshipped a great number of other. Almost every housekeeper had his household god. There was a famous idol called Hobbal, which was supposed by the Arabs to supply them with rain, a very important consideration in their dry land. Therefore, it was an object of common worship among them. It had by accident lost a hand, which the Quraish repaired with one of gold.

A great number of idols were no more than large rude stones, when they increased in number and the territory of Makkah grew too narrow for them, large numbers of them emigrated to other localities. It was usual for them on such emigrations to take with them some of the stones of the Sacred Land of Makkah, and to set them up in their new dwellings and to pay them devotion. But this devotion ended at last in rank idolatry; the Ishmaelites forgetting the religion of their fathers so far as to pay divine worship to rude pieces of stone. As to the worship of the stars, the Arabs might be easily led into it from their observing the changes of weather happening at the rising and setting of certain of them which after a long course of experience induced them to ascribe a divine power to those stars, and to think themselves indebted to them for their rain; they used to say that their rain came from such or such a star. The Qu'ran particularly takes notices of this superstition.

“Moreover, they used to have a deep conviction in the tidings of soothsayers, diviners and astrologers. A soothsayer used to traffic in the business of foretelling future events and claim knowledge of private secrets and having jinn subordinates who would communicate the news to him. Some soothsayers claimed that they could uncover the unknown by means of a granted power, while other diviners boasted they could reveal the secrets through a cause-and-effect-inductive process that would lead to detecting

a stolen commodity, location of a theft, a stray animal, and the like. The astrologer belonged to a third category who used to observe the stars and calculate their movements and orbits whereby he would foretell the future. Lending credibility to this news constituted a clue to their conviction that attached special significance to the movements of particular stars with regard to rainfall.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Magianism was also popular among the Arabs living in the neighbourhood of Persia, Iraq, Bahrain, Al-Ahsâ’ and some areas on the Arabian Gulf coast. Some Yemenis are also reported to have professed Magianism during the Persian occupation.

As for Sabianism, excavations in Iraq revealed that it had been popular amongst Kaldanian folks, the Syrians and Yemenis. With the advent of Judaism and Christianity, however, Sabianism began to give way to the new religions, although it retained some followers mixed or adjacent to the Magians in Iraq and the Arabian Gulf.

“Judaism was introduced among the idolatrous Arabs by the Jews who fled in great numbers from Palestine to Arabia passed through two phases: first, as a result of the pressure to which they were exposed, the destruction of their temple, and taking most of them as captives to Babylon, at the hand of the King Bukhtanassar. In the year B.C. 587 some Jews left Palestine for Hidjaz and settled in the northern areas whereof. The second phase started with the Roman occupation of Palestine under the leadership of Roman Buts in 70 A.D. This resulted in a tidal wave of Jewish migration into Hidjaz, Yathrib, Khaibar and Taima’ in particular. Here, they made converts of several tribes, built forts and castles, and lived in villages. Judaism managed to play an important role in the pre-Islam political life. When Islam dawned on that land, there had already been several famous Jewish tribes

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Sealed Nectar, Biography of the noble Prophet, by Safi-ur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri.

“Khabeer, An-Nadeer, Quraizah and Qainuqa”. In some versions, the Jewish tribes counted as many as twenty.”<sup>[1]</sup>

“Judaism was introduced into Yemen found a fertile soil there to propagate and gain adherents. They made converts among several tribes and in time became very powerful, and possessed of several towns and fortresses in the Arabian Peninsula. But over a century at least before, the Jewish religion was not unknown to the Arabs. Asaad Abu Carb who was king of Yemen about 700 years before Islam, is said to have introduced Judaism among the idolatrous Himyarties. His successors also embraced the same religion, his son, Youssef, Zul Nowas, was remarkable for his zeal and terrible persecution of all who would not turn Jew, he attacked the Christian community in Najran and ordered them to embrace Judaism. When they refused, he put them to death by various tortures; he ordered a pit of fire to be dug and all the Christians indiscriminately be dropped to burn therein. Estimates say that between 20-40 thousand Christians were killed in that human massacre. The Qu’ran related part of that story in Al-Buruj [zodiacal signs] Chapter.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Christianity had likewise made some progress among the Arabs before Islam. The persecutions and disorders which darkened the Eastern Church soon after the beginning of the third century obliged great numbers of Christians to seek shelter in Arabia, that country of liberty. These were for the most part of the Jacobite community, a sect that was widely distributed throughout Egypt, Arabia and Mesopotamia. Christianity had first made its appearance in Arabia following the entry of the Abyssinian [Ethiopian] and Roman colonists into that country. The Abyssinian colonization forces in league with Christian missions entered Yemen as a retaliatory reaction for the iniquities of Dhu Nawas, and started vehemently to propagate their faith ardently. They even built a church and called it Yemeni Ka’bah with the aim of directing the Arab pilgrimage caravans towards Yemen,

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<sup>[1]</sup> ibid.

<sup>[2]</sup> ibid.

and then made an attempt to demolish the Sacred Ka'bah in Makkah.

A Christian missionary called Fimion, known for his ascetic behaviour and working miracles had likewise infiltrated into Najran. There he called people to Christianity, and by virtue of his honesty and truthful devotion, he managed to persuade them to respond positively to his invitation and embrace Christianity. The principal tribes that embraced Christianity were Ghassan, Taghlib, Tai' and some Himyarite kings as well as other tribes living on the borders of the Roman Empire.

The above mentioned were the principal religions that prevailed among the Arabs, though the chief religion was gross idolatry. Some of the pagan Arabs believed neither in a creation of Divine origin nor in a resurrection, attributing the existence of things and their dissolution to nature.

Some believed that when the soul separated itself from the body, it took the shape of a bird, called 'Hama' or 'Sada'. If the deceased person was the victim of violent death, the bird remained hovering over the grave crying 'Iskouni' i.e., "Give me drink", till his death was avenged and then it flew away. This belief was forbidden by the Qu'ran.

"Belief in Spirits and Fairies and Oracles rendered by their idols whom they consulted by means of headless arrows which they called 'Azlam' was another divinatory tradition among the Arabs, [i.e. featherless arrows which were of three kinds: one showing 'yes', another 'no' and a third was blank] which they used to rely upon in case of serious matters like travel, marriage and the like. If the lot showed 'yes', they would do, if 'no', they would delay for the next year. Other kinds of Azlam were cast for water, blood-money or showed 'from you', 'not from you', or 'Mulsaq' [consociated]. In cases of doubt in filiations they would resort to the idol of Hubal, with a hundred-camel gift, for the arrow caster. Only the arrows would then decide the sort of relationship. If the arrow showed [from you], then it was decided that the child

belonged to the tribe; if it showed [from others], he would then be regarded as an ally, but if [consociated] appeared, the person would retain his position but with no lineage or alliance contract.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Each tribe had its particular idols and particular temples. The hierarchy attending these temples received rich offerings from the devotees and often there arose bloody conflicts among the worshippers of different temples. But the celebrated Al-Ka‘bah at Makkah of Abraham and Ismael, was considered sacred by all. The Jews and Sabians sent offerings there. The custody of Al-Ka‘bah was the object of great jealousy among the tribes, as it bestowed on the custodians the most honourable functions and privileges. At the time of the birth of Muhammad the custody of Al-Ka‘bah was in the hands of his family, the Hashimites.

“As for the Christian religion at the advent of Muhammad, though it flourished and had a large number of followers among the Arabs, its true and pure doctrines were exceedingly and abominably corrupted.” <sup>[2]</sup> “Some of the Christians believed the soul died with the body, and was to be raised again with it on the last day. Others substituted the Virgin Mary for God or worshipped her as such. These who believed in the divinity of the Virgin Mary were named the Mariamites. <sup>[3]</sup> This conception is condemned in the Qu’ran.”

### The Arabs Character and Manners

Arabia during the pre-Islamic days was in a very low state of civilisation. Awful superstition and idolatry prevailed every-where. Gross immorality was indulged in. Crimes of infanticide and human sacrifices were common. The various tribes were in constant and perpetual warfare with each other.” <sup>[4]</sup> “The absence of any stable government had led to the prevalence of anarchism

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Sealed Nectar.

<sup>[2]</sup> Sale, Prelim. Disc.

<sup>[3]</sup> Epiphon.

<sup>[4]</sup> G. Sale.

and criminal excesses. The whole peninsula was in a pitiful state of chaos, sin, impurity and wickedness.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The sacred Ka’bah erected by their ancestor Abraham and Ishmael for the worship of the One God, the Almighty, was converted into a temple containing over three hundred and sixty idols representing superstitious gods and goddesses. The great and divine religions, which the Prophets of yore had brought down from Heaven, had lost their originality, trustworthiness and purity. Opposition, persecution and even brutal force were every day’s occurrences. It seems that the reign of Islam alone with its teachings and morals was revealed at a time, when need for guidance was most felt, as will be dealt with later in this book.

“The Arabian Society presented a social mixture, with different and heterogeneous social strata. The status of woman among nobility recorded an advanced degree of esteem. Woman enjoyed a considerable portion of free will, and her decision would most often be enforced. She was so highly cherished that blood would be easily shed in defense of her honour. In fact, she was the most decisive key to bloody fight or friendly peace. These privileges notwithstanding, the family system in Arabia was wholly patriarchal. The marriage contract rested completely in the hands of the woman’s legal guardian whose words with regard to her marital status could never be questioned.”<sup>[2]</sup>

“On the other hand, there were other social strata where prostitution and indecency were rampant and in full operation. Women always accompanied men in their wars. The winners would freely have sexual intercourse with such women, but disgrace would follow the children conceived in this way all their lives. Pre-Islam Arabs had no limited number of wives. They could marry two sisters at the same time, or even the wives of

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<sup>[1]</sup> Abu Feda. Ibn Athir. Sale, Muir etc.

<sup>[2]</sup> The Sealed Nectar.

their fathers if divorced or widowed, divorce was in the power of the husband.”<sup>[1]</sup>

“The obscenity of adultery prevailed almost among all social classes except few men and women whose self-dignity prevented them from committing such an act. Free women were in much better conditions than the female slaves who constituted the greatest calamity. It seemed that the greatest majority of pre-Islam Arabs did not feel ashamed of committing this obscenity.”

“With respect to the pre-Islam Arab’s relation with his offspring, we see that life in Arabia was paradoxical and presented a gloomy picture of contrasts. Whilst some Arabs held children dear to their hearts and cherished them greatly, others buried their female children alive because an illusory fear of poverty and shame weighed heavily on them. The practice of infanticide cannot, however, be seen as irrevocably rampant because of their desperate need for male children to guard themselves against their enemies.”

“Another aspect of the Arabs’ life which deserves mention is the bedouin’s deep-seated emotional attachment to his clan. Family, or perhaps tribal-pride, was one of the strongest passions with him. The doctrine of unity of blood as the principle that bound the Arabs into a social unity was formed and supported by tribal-pride.”

“Avarice for leadership, and keen sense of emulation often resulted in bitter tribal warfare despite descendent from one common ancestor. Inter-tribal relationships were fragile and weak due to continual inter-tribal wars of attrition. In other cases, there were the motives of, and respect for, alliance, loyalty and dependency which could successfully bring about a spirit of rapport, and abort groundless bases of dispute. A time-honoured custom of suspending hostilities during the prohibited months [Muharram, Rajab, Dhul-Qa’dah, and Dhul-Hijjah] functioned

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<sup>[1]</sup> *ibid.*

favourably and provided an opportunity for them to earn their living and coexist in peace.”<sup>[1]</sup>

“Trade was the most common means of providing their needs of life. Trade journeys could not be fulfilled unless security of caravan routes and inter-tribal peaceful co-existence were provided – two imperative exigencies unfortunately lacking in Arabia except during the prohibited months within which the Arabs held their assemblies of ‘Ukaz, Dhil-Majaz, Mijannah and others.”

“Pre-Islam Arabs had surprise-provoking existence of highly praiseworthy virtues; hospitality as they used to emulate one another at hospitality and take utmost pride in it. In the context of hospitality, there springs up their common habits of drinking wine which was regarded as a channel branching out of generosity and showing hospitality. Wine drinking was a genuine source of pride for the Arabs of the pre-Islamic period. The great poets of that era never forgot to include their suspending odes the most ornate lines pregnant with boasting and praise of drinking orgies. Keeping a covenant is another virtue, for the Arab, to make a promise was to run into debt. He would never grudge the death of his children or destruction of his household just to uphold the deep-rooted tradition of covenant-keeping. The literature of that period is rich in stories highlighting this merit.”

“Sense of honour and repudiation of injustice this attribute stemmed mainly from excess courage, keen sense of self-esteem and impetuosity. The Arab was always in revolt against the least allusion to humiliation or slackness. He would never hesitate to sacrifice himself to maintain his ever alert sense of self-respect. Firm will and determination, as an Arab would never desist an avenue conducive to an object of pride or a standing of honour, even if it were at the expense of his life.”

“Forbearance, perseverance and mildness the Arab regarded these traits with great admiration, no wonder, his impetuosity and

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<sup>[1]</sup> *ibid.*



courage-based life was sadly wanting in them. Pure and simple bedouin life, still untarnished with accessories of deceptive urban appearances, was a driving reason to his nature of truthfulness and honesty, and detachment from intrigue and treachery.”

“Such priceless ethics coupled with a favourable geographical position of Arabia were in fact the factors that lay behind selecting the Arabs to undertake the burden of communicating the Message [of Islam] and leading mankind down a new course of life. In this regard, these ethics per se, though detrimental in some areas, and in need of rectification in certain aspects, were greatly invaluable to the ultimate welfare of the human community and Islam has did it completely. The most priceless ethics, next to covenant-keeping, were no doubt their sense of self-esteem and strong determination, two human traits indispensable in combating evil and eliminating moral corruption on the one hand, and establishing a good and justice-orientated society, on the other.”

“Actually, the life of the Arabs in the pre-Islamic period was rich in other countless virtues we do not need to enumerate for the time being.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### The City of Makkah

Makkah is the chief city of Arabia. It derives its wealth from the remarkable gathering of people who assemble there yearly as pilgrims from all parts of the world where Islam flourishes.

Advantage is taken of this to hold a great fair for all kinds of merchandise. The possession of Al-Ka'bah gave Makkah special sanctity and predominance over all the other cities of the peninsula. The soil about Makkah is so infertile that it produces nothing but what grows in the desert. Having, therefore, no corn or grain of their own growing, the Makkahns are obliged to bring it from other places, and Hashim, Muhammad's great grandfather, then prince of his tribe, in order to secure adequate supply of

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<sup>[1]</sup> *ibid.*

provisions for his tribe, appointed two caravans to set out yearly for that purpose, one in summer and the other in winter.

These caravans of purveyors are referred to in the Qu'ran. This Makkah from the earliest time was the centre, not only of the religious associations of pagan Arabia, but also of its commercial activity.

During the period prior to the birth of Muhammad, the government of Makkah was an oligarchy composed of the leading members of the house of Kossay, the Prophet's ancestor. The governing body consisted of ten senators who were styled Sheriffs. They occupied the first place in the state, and their offices were inherited in favour of the eldest member of each family. "Kossay however enjoyed the following privileges of leadership and honour:

- 1) Guardianship of the keys of Al-Ka'bah and the door keeping of Al-Ka'bah: He was the only one eligible to open its gate, and was responsible for its service and protection.
- 2) Administration of water supplied by wells in Makkah and its neighbourhood, providing water for the Pilgrims; this means that he used to fill basins sweetened by dates and raisins for the pilgrims to drink.
- 3) Civil and criminal magistracy.
- 4) Control of foreign affairs.
- 5) Custody of the standard he monopolized in his hand, issues relevant to war launching under which the nation marched against its enemies.
- 6) Administration of the poor-tax derived from the alms of the nation and employed in providing food for the poor pilgrims.
- 7) Presidency of the national assembly, presiding over An-Nadwa House meetings where consultations relating to serious issues were conducted, and marriage contracts were announced.

- 8) Guardianship of the council chamber which office conferred upon its holders the right of convoking the assembly.
- 9) Administration of the public finances and
- 10) Guardianship of the divining arrows, by which the judgment of the gods and goddesses was obtained. At the same time, it was an established custom that the oldest member exercised the greatest influence, and bore the title of chief and lord par excellence. At the time of the Prophet, his uncle Abbas was the senior member of these Senators.”<sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Sealed Nectar.

## Life of Prophet Muhammad

### Birth and Early Years

Muhammad, literally, the highly praised, is the chief name of the great Prophet and founder of the religion of Islam, wrongly called after him Mohammedanism. The birth of Muhammad is stated to have been attended by many remarkable signs.<sup>[1]</sup> “Muhammad was born in Bani Hashim lane in Makkah on Monday morning, the ninth of Rabi’ Al-Awwal, the same year of the Elephant Event, and forty years of the reign of Kisra [Khosru Nushirwan], i.e. the twentieth or twenty-second of April, 571 A.D. His mother immediately sent someone to inform his grandfather ‘Abdul-Muttalib of the happy event. Happily he came to her, carried him to Al-Ka’bah, prayed to God and thanked Him. ‘Abdul-Muttalib called the baby Muhammad, a name not then common among the Arabs. He circumcised him on his seventh day as was the custom of the Arabs.”<sup>[2]</sup>

‘Abdullah: the father of the Prophet Muhammad, ‘Abdullah was the smartest of ‘Abdul-Muttalib’s sons, the most charming and the most loved. He was also the son whom the divination arrows pointed at to be slaughtered as a sacrifice to Al-Ka’bah. When ‘Abdul-Muttalib had ten sons and they reached maturity, he revealed to them his secret vow in which they silently and obediently accepted. Their names were written on divination arrows and given to the guardian of their most beloved god, Hubal. The arrows were shuffled and drawn. An arrow showed that it was ‘Abdullah to be sacrificed. ‘Abdul-Muttalib then took the boy to Al-Ka’bah with a razor to slaughter the boy. Quraish, his uncles from Makhzum tribe and his brother Abu Talib, however, tried to discourage him from executing his purpose. He then sought their advice as regards his vow. They suggested that he summon a she-diviner to judge where about. She ordered that the divination arrows should be drawn with respect to ‘Abdullah

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ibn Athir, Ibn Hisham etc.

<sup>[2]</sup> The Sealed Nectar.

as well as ten camels. She added that drawing the lots should be repeated with ten more camels every time the arrow showed ‘Abdullah. The operation was thus repeated until the number of the camels amounted to one hundred. At this point the arrow showed the camels; consequently they were all slaughtered [to the satisfaction of Hubal] instead of his son. The slaughtered camels were left for three days for anyone to eat from, human or animal.

This incident produced a change in the amount of blood-money usually accepted in Arabia. It had been ten camels, but after this event it was increased to a hundred. Islam, later on, approved of this. Another thing closely relevant to the above issue goes to the effect that the Prophet once said: “I am the offspring of the slaughtered two,” meaning Ishmael and ‘Abdullah.” [*Ibn Hisham* 1/151-155; *Rahmat-ul-lil alameen* 2/89, 90]

‘Abdul-Muttalib chose Amnah, daughter of Wahab bin ‘Abd Munaf bin Zohra bin Kilab, as a wife for his son, ‘Abdullah. She thus, in the light of this ancestral lineage, stood eminent in respect of nobility of position and descent. Her father was the chief of Bani Zohra to whom great honour was attributed. They were married in Makkah, and soon after ‘Abdullah was sent by his father to buy dates in Medina where he died. He was twenty-five years old when he died. Most historians state that his death was two months before the birth of Muhammad. When Amnah was informed of her husband’s death, she celebrated his memory in a most heart-touching elegy. ‘Abdullah left very little wealth —five camels, a small number of goats, a she-servant, called Barakah – Umm Aiman – who would later serve as the Prophet’s nursemaid.

It was the general custom of the Arabs living in towns to send their children away to bedouin wet nurses, so that they might grow up in the free and healthy surroundings of the desert, whereby they would develop a robust frame and acquire the pure speech and manners of the bedouins, who were noted both for chastity of their language and for being free from those vices which usually develop in sedentary societies. The Prophet was later entrusted to Haleemah bint Abi Zu’aib from Bani Sa’d bin

Bakr. She used to nurse the Prophet and Hamzah bin ‘Abdul-Muttalib, the Prophet’s uncle, in the country of the clan of Sa’d, they found the scales of fortune turned in their favour. The barren land sprouted forth luxuriant grass and flocks of animals came back to them satisfied and full of milk. Muhammad stayed with Haleemah for four years until he was weaned.

Haleemah returned the boy to his mother with whom he stayed until he was six. Before the child completed the 6<sup>th</sup> year of his age, his mother died and the doubly orphaned Muhammad was under the charge of his grandfather ‘Abdul Muttalib who took the most tender care of him. ‘Abdul-Muttalib brought the boy to Makkah. He had warm passions towards the boy, his orphan grandson, whose recent disaster [his mother’s death] added more to the pains of the past. ‘Abdul-Muttalib was more passionate with his grandson than with his own children. He never left the boy a prey to loneliness, but always preferred him to his own children. “But the old chief died two years afterwards. On his death-bed he confided to his son Abu Talib who was the brother of the Prophet’s father the charge of the orphan. Abu Talib took the charge of his nephew in the best way. He put him with his children and preferred him to them. He singled the boy out with great respect and high esteem.”<sup>[1]</sup>

When Muhammad was twelve years old, he accompanied his uncle Abu Talib on a business journey to Syria and they proceeded as far as Busra. The journey lasted for some months. It was at Busra that the Christian monk Bahira met Muhammad and he is related to have said to Abu Talib: “Return with this boy and guard him against the hatred of the Jews, for a great career awaits with your nephew.” After this travel, the youth of Muhammad seems to have been passed uneventfully, but all authorities agree in ascribing to him such correctness of manners and purity of morals as were rare among the people of Makkah. The fair character and the honourable bearing of the unobtrusive youth

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Sealed Nectar.

won the admiration of the citizens of Makkah, and by common consent he received the title of '*Al Amin*', the faithful. [1]

In his early years, Muhammad was not free from the cares of life. He had to watch the flocks of his uncle, who like the rest of the Hashimites, had lost the greater part of his riches.

From youth to manhood he led an almost solitary life. The lawlessness, widespread among the Makkahns, the sudden outbursts of causeless and murderous fights among the tribes frequenting the fair of Okaz [the Arabian Olympia], the immorality and scepticism of the Quraishites naturally caused feelings of pity and sorrow in the heart of the sensitive youth. Such were to him scenes of social misery and religious degradation characteristic of an immoral age.

When Muhammad was 25 years old, he travelled once more to Syria as the agent of a noble and rich Quraishite widow named Khadija, and having proved himself faithful in the commercial interests of that lady, was soon rewarded with her hand in marriage. This marriage proved fortunate and exceptionally happy. Khadija was much the senior of her husband, but in spite of the disparity of age between them, the loving heart of a woman who was ever ready to console him in his despair and to keep alive within him the feeble, flickering flame of hope when no man believed in him- not even himself and the world appeared gloomy in his eyes. [2]

“Till he reached the 30<sup>th</sup> year of his age, Muhammad was almost a stranger to the outside world. Since the death of his grandfather, authority in Makkah was divided among the ten senators who constituted the governing body of the Arabian Commonwealth. There was no such agreement among them as to ensure the safety of individual rights and property. Though family relations afforded some degree of protection to citizens, yet strangers were frequently exposed to persecution and oppression. In many cases,

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[1] Hugh's Dictionary of Islam, pp. 368 – 369.

[2] Hugh's Dictionary of Islam

they were robbed, not only of their goods, but even of their wives and daughters. At the instigation of the faithful Muhammad, an old league, called the Federation of *'fudul'*, i.e. favours, was revived with the aim of repressing lawlessness and defending every weak individual, whether Makkahn or stranger, free or slave, against any wrong or oppression, to which he might be the victim, within the territories of Makkah.

“When Muhammad reached the 35<sup>th</sup> year of his age, he settled by his judgment a critical dispute, which almost threatened to throw the whole of Arabia into a fresh series of her ever-recurring wars. In rebuilding the sacred Ka'bah, in 605 A.D., the question arose as to who should have the honour of raising the black stone, the most holy relic of that Shrine, into its proper place. Each tribe claimed that honour. The senior citizen advised the disputants to accept for their arbitrator in this difficulty the man who would be the first to enter from a certain gate. The proposal was agreed upon, and the first man who entered the gate, was Muhammad, “*The Ameen*” Muhammad gave them an advice, which served to satisfy all the opposing parties. He ordered the stone to be placed on a piece of cloth, and each tribe to share the honour of lifting it up, by taking hold of a part of the cloth. The stone was thus deposited in its place, and the rebuilding of the Ka'bah was completed without further interruption.” [1]

“These are nearly all the public acts related by historians, in which Muhammad had taken part within the 15<sup>th</sup> years after his marriage with Khadija. As for his private life he is described to have been ever helpful to the needy and the helpless. His uncle Abu Talib had fallen into distress through his endeavours to maintain the old position of his family, and Muhammad, being rather rich at his time by his alliance with Khadija, tried to discharge part of the debt of gratitude and obligation which he owed to his uncle, by undertaking the bringing up and education of his son Ali; and a year later he adopted Akil, another of his uncle's sons.”

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[1] Sale.



“Khadija had born Muhammad three sons and four daughters, all of the males died in childhood, but in loving Ali he found much consolation.

About this time, Muhammad set a good example of humanity which created a beneficial effect upon his people. His wife Khadija, to gratify her husband, made him a present of a young slave, named ‘Zaid son of Haritha’ who had been brought as a captive to Makkah and sold to Khadija. When Haritha heard that Muhammad possessed Zaid, he came to Makkah and offered a large sum for his ransom, whereupon Muhammad said, ‘Let Zaid come here, and if he chooses to go with you’ addressing the boy’s father, “take him without ransom; but if it be his choice to stay with me, why should I not keep him? And Zaid, being brought into Muhammad’s presence, declared that he would stay with his master who treated him, as if he were his only son. Muhammad no sooner heard this, than he took Zaid by the hand and led him to the black stone of Al-Ka‘bah where he public adopted him as his son and constituted him his heir, to which the father accepted, and he then returned home well satisfied. Henceforward Zaid was called the son of Muhammad.” [1]

Muhammad was now approaching his 40<sup>th</sup> year and his mind was ever engaged in profound meditation and reflection. “Before him lay his country, bleeding and torn by fratricidal wars and intolerable conflicts; his people, sunk in barbarism, addicted to the observation of rites and superstitions, were, with all their desert virtues, lawless and cruel. His two visits to Syria had opened to him a scene of unutterable moral and social desolation, rival creeds and sects tearing each other to pieces, wrangling over the body of the God they pretended to worship carrying their hatred to the valleys and deserts of Hidjaz and rending the townships of Arabia with their quarrels and bitterness.

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[1] *ibid.*

## Beginning of Revelation upon Muhammad

Sir William Muir, in his "Life of Mahomet" remarks: The idolatry and moral degradation of his people, pressed heavily upon him and the dim and imperfect shadows of Judaism and Christianity excited doubts without satisfying them; and his mind was perplexed with uncertainty as to what was the true religion.

Renowned narrators of authentic traditions of Islam agree in the following account of the first revelations received by the Prophet: Mohammed had been accustomed, for years after his marriage, to seclude himself in a cave in Mount Hira, a few miles from Makkah. To this cave he used to betake himself for prayer and meditation, sometimes alone and at others with his family.

There he often spent whole nights in deep thought and meditation of the unseen. It was in true dreams that Muhammad received the first revelations. Narrated 'Aisha: (the mother of the faithful believers) "The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allâh's Apostle was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright day light, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allâh alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the journey food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food like-wise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet replied, "I do not know how to read."

The Prophet added, "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released

me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists) has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.' [96: 1-3] Then Allâh's Apostle returned with the Inspiration and with his heart beating severely. Then he went to Khadija bint Khuwailid and said, "Cover me! Cover me!" They covered him till his fear was over and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadija replied, "Never! By Allâh, Allâh will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your Kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones."

Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufal bin Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza, who, during the PreIslamic Period became a Christian and used to write the writing with Hebrew letters. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allâh wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqa asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen?" Allâh's Apostle described whatever he had seen. Waraqa said, "This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allâh had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out." Allâh's Apostle asked, "Will they drive me out?" Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqa died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while.

Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah Al-Ansari while talking about the period of pause in revelation reporting the speech of the Prophet "While I was walking, all of a sudden I heard a voice from the sky. I looked up and saw the same angel who had visited me at the cave of Hira' sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. I got afraid of him and came back home and said, 'Wrap me (in

blankets).’ And then Allâh revealed the following Glorious Verses (of Quran): ‘O thou (i.e. Muhammad)! Enveloped in thy cloak’ Arise and warn! (The people against Allâh’s Punishment)... up to ‘and desert the idols.’ [74.1-5]. after this, the revelation started coming strongly, frequently and regularly.” [*Sahib Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 1, Hadeeth number 3*]

And he arose and engaged himself in the work to which he was called. Khadija was the first to accept his mission. She was to believe in the revelation, to abandon the idolatry of her people and to join him in purity of heart in offering up prayers to the Almighty God.

“Some details pertinent to the successive stages of Revelation, I would like to get my readers acquainted with the stages of the Revelation which constituted the main source of the Message and the subject-matter of the Call. Ibn Al-Qayyim, mentioning the stages of the Revelation, said:

- 1) The period of true vision. It was the starting point of the Revelation to the Messenger of God.
- 2) What the Angel invisibly cast in the Prophet’s mind and heart.
- 3) The Angel used to visit the Messenger of God in the form of a human being and would speak to him directly. This would enable him to fully understand what the Angel said. The Angel was sometimes seen in this form by the Prophet’s companions.
- 4) The Angel came to him like the toll of a bell and this was the most difficult form because the Angel used to seize him tightly and sweat would stream from his forehead even on the coldest day. If the Prophet was on his camel, the camel would not withstand the weight, so it would immediately kneel down on the ground.
- 5) The Prophet saw the Angel in his actual form. The Angel would reveal to him what God had ordered him to reveal. This, as mentioned in [Qur’ân], in [Chapter 53 - The Star] happened twice.

- 6) What God Himself revealed to him in heaven i.e. when he ascended to heaven and received God's behest of *Salât* [prayer].
- 7) God's Words to His Messenger at first hand without the mediation of an angel. It was a privilege granted to Moses - Peace be upon him - and clearly attested in the Qur'ân, as it is attested to the Prophet in the [Chapter 17 - The Journey by Night] of the Noble Qur'ân." [1]

### Muhammad's Mission

At the beginning of his mission, Muhammad, [hereinafter called the Prophet], opened his soul only to those who were attached to him and tried to free them from the gross practices of their forefathers. After Khadija, Ali his cousin was the next disciple. The Prophet used often to go into the desert around Makkah with his wife and young cousin, that they might together offer their heart-felt thanks to God of all nations for His manifold blessings. Once they were surprised by Abu Talib, the father of Ali. And he said to the Prophet: "O son of my brother, what is this religion you are following?" "It is the religion of God, of His Angels, of His Apostles and our ancestor Abraham," answered the Prophet. "God has sent me to His servants, to direct them towards the truth and you, O my uncle, are the most worthy of all. It is appropriate that I should thus call upon you and it is appropriate that you should accept the truth and help in spreading it." "Son of my brother," replied Abu Talib, I cannot renounce the religion of my fathers; but by the Supreme God, whilst I am alive, none shall dare to harm you." Then turning towards Ali, his son, the respected chief asked what religion was his. "O father," answered Ali, "I believed in God and His Prophet and go with him." "Well my son" said Abu Talib, "He will not call you to anything, save what is good, wherefore You are free to cling to him." [*Al-Imam ibn Kathir – Stories of the Prophets*]

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[1] The Sealed Nectar.

After Ali, Zaid, Muhammad's adopted son, became a convert to the new faith. He was followed by Abu Bakr, a leading member of the Quraish tribe and an honest wealthy merchant who enjoyed great consideration among his fellow citizens. He was but two years younger than the Prophet. His adoption of the new faith was of great moral effect. Soon after, five notables presented themselves before the Prophet and accepted Islam. Several converts also came from lower classes of the Arabs to adopt the new religion. For three weary long years, the Prophet laboured very quietly to deliver his people from the worship of idols. Polytheism was deeply rooted among the people. It offered attractions, which the new faith in its purity did not possess. The Quraishites had personal material interests in the old worship; and their prestige was dependent upon its maintenance; the Prophet had to control with the idolatrous worship of its followers and to oppose the ruling oligarchy, which governed its destinies.

After three years of constant but quiet struggle, only thirty followers were secured. An important change now occurred in the relations of the Prophet with the citizens of Makkah. His compatriots had begun to doubt his sanity, thought him crazy or possessed by an evil spirit. Hitherto he had preached quietly and unobtrusively. He now determined to appeal publicly to the Makkahns to abandon their idolatry. For this he arranged a gathering on a neighbouring hill, and there spoke to them of their folly in the sight of God, in offering worship to pieces of stone which they called their gods. He invited them to abandon their old impious worship and adopt the faith of Islam. He warned them of the fate that had overtaken in the past, races who had not heeded the preaching of former prophets. But the gathering had departed without listening to the warning given to them by the Prophet. Having thus failed to persuade his fellow-citizens to listen to him, he turned his attention to the strangers arriving at the city on business or pilgrimage. But the Quraishites made attempts to frustrate his efforts. They hastened themselves to first meet the strangers on the different routes, to warn them against

holding any communication with the Prophet whom they represented as a dangerous magician.

When the pilgrims or traders returned to their homes, they carried with them the news of the advent of the bold preacher who was inviting the Arabs loudly – at the risk of his own life – to abandon the worship of their dear idols. Now the Prophet and his followers became subject to some persecution and humiliation. The hostile Quraishites prevented the Prophet from offering his prayers at the sacred Ka'bah; they pursued him wherever he went; they covered him and his disciples with dirt and filth, when engaged in their prayers. They scattered thorns in the places which he frequented for prayers and meditation. Amidst all these trials the Prophet did not waver. He was full of confidence in his mission. On several occasions he was put in imminent danger of losing his life. <sup>[1]</sup> At this time Hamza, the youngest son of Abdul Muttalib adopted Islam. Hamza was a man of distinguished bravery, and courageous warrior, generous and true, whose heroism earned for him the title of the “Lion of God.” He became a devoted adherent of Islam and eventually laid down his life in the cause.

The Prophet continued his preachings to the Arabs in a most gentle and reasonable manner. He called the nation, so accustomed to iniquity and wrong doings, to abandon their abominations. In burning words, which excited the hearts of his hearers, he warned them of the punishment, which God had inflicted upon the ancient tribes of Aad and Thamud <sup>[2]</sup> who obstinately disobeyed the teachings of His messengers to them. He adjured them by the wonderful sights of nature, by the noon day brightness, by the night when it spreads her veil, by the day when it appears in glory, to listen to his warning before a similar destruction befell them. He spoke to the day of reckoning, when their deeds in this world shall be weighed before the Eternal

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<sup>[1]</sup> Sir William Muir's Life of Muhammad.

<sup>[2]</sup> Vide Book I of this Volume

Judge, when the children who had been buried alive shall be asked, for what crime they were put to death. <sup>[1]</sup>

As the number of believers increased and the cause of the Prophet was strengthened by the conversion of many powerful citizens, the Prophet's preaching aroused a serious revolutionary movement. He condemned the idols the Arabs worshipped and taught the unity of God. The Quraishites were now alarmed. Their power and prestige were at danger. They were the custodians of the idols, which the Prophet had threatened to destroy; they were the ministers of the worship which he denounced; in fact their existence and living wholly depended upon the maintenance of the old institutions. He taught that in the sight of his Lord all beings were equal, the only distinction, recognised among them being the weight of their piety. <sup>[2]</sup>

“The Quraishites would have non-of this levelling of distinctions, as it reflected upon their long inherited privileges. Accordingly, they organized a system of persecution in order to suppress the movement before it became firmly established. They decided that each family should take upon itself the task of stamping out the new faith on the spot. Each household tortured its own members or adherents or slaves who were supposed to have connected themselves with the new religion. With the exception of the Prophet who was protected by Abu Talib and his kinsmen, Abu Bakr and a few others who were either distinguished by their rank or possessed some influence among the Quraishites, all other

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<sup>[1]</sup> It was the Custom of heathen Arabs to bury their children alive from fear of want. This custom was forbidden by the Quran: “Nor take life - which Allâh has made sacred - except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given His heir authority [to demand lawful retribution [qisas] or to forgive]; but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped [by the Law].” [17:33].

<sup>[2]</sup> “O Mankind! We created you from a single [pair] of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other [not that you may despise each other]. Verily the most honoured of you In the sight of God is [he who is] the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted [with all things].” [49:13].



converts were subjected to different sorts of torture. Some of them were thrown into prison, starved and then flogged. The hill of Ramada the place called Bata became thus scenes of cruel torture.”<sup>[1]</sup>

In the light of these inhuman persecutions, the Prophet deemed it wise to advise his followers to conceal their conversion, in both word and deed. He took the decision to meet them secretly lest Quraish should get to know of his designs, and so take measures that might foil his goals. He also had in mind to avoid any sort of open confrontation with the polytheists because such a thing at this early stage would not be in the interest of the newly-born Call, still vulnerable and not fully fledged. Once, in the fourth year of Prophethood, the Muslims were on their way to the hillocks of Makkah to hold a secret meeting with the Prophet, when a group of polytheists did observe their suspicious movement and began to abuse and fight them. Sa’d bin Abi Waqqas beat a polytheist and shed his blood and thus recorded the first instance of bloodshed in the history of Islam.

“The Prophet, on the other hand, used to proclaim the Faith of Islam and preach it openly with deep devotion and serious pursuit, but for the general welfare of the new converts and in consideration of the strategic interest of Islam, he took Dar Al-Arqam, in As-Safa mountain, in the fifth year of his mission, as a temporary centre to meet his followers secretly and instruct them in the Qu’ran and in Islam.” <sup>[2]</sup>

One day the Quraishites sought to approach the Prophet to persuade him to discontinue his teachings of the new religion, which had sown discord among their people. Otba, son of Rabia, was delegated to see the Prophet and speak to him. “O son of my brother,” said Otba on meeting the Prophet, “You are distinguished by your qualities; yet you have sown discord among our people and cast dissension in our families; you denounced our

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<sup>[1]</sup> Sir William Muir.

<sup>[2]</sup> The Sealed Nectar.

gods and goddesses and you charge our ancestors with impiety. Now we are come to make a proposition to you and ask you to think well before you reject it.” “I am listening to you, O father of Walid” said the Prophet, “O son of my brother”, began Otba, If by this affair you intend to acquire riches, honour and dignity, we are willing to collect for you a fortune larger than is possessed by any one of us; we shall make you our chief and will do naught without you; if you desire power we shall make you our king, and if the demon which possesses you cannot be subdued, we will bring you doctors and give them riches till they cure you. “When Otba had finished his discourse, the Prophet said: “Now listen to me, O father of Walid.” “I listen,” he replied. The Prophet recited to him the first eight verses of the Qu’ran which may be interpreted as follows: “In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful; Here is a revelation from the Merciful, a book, the verses whereof are distinctly; an Arabic Qu’ran, for the instruction of a people who understand, it is a herald of good tidings and a Warner, but most of those who hear it, turn aside, so that they hear not, and they say [to the Prophet]: our hearts are veiled from the doctrine to which you invite us; and there is a heaviness in our ears and a curtain hangs between us and you; wherefore you act as you shall think fit, for we shall act according to our own sentiments. Say, verily I am only a mortal like you. It is revealed unto me, that your God is One God; therefore, take the right way to Him, and ask His forgiveness, and woe be to the idolaters, who give not the appointed alms and believe not in the life to come.<sup>[1]</sup> But as to those who believe and do good, they shall receive an everlasting reward.”<sup>[2]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Arabs used to regard hospitality as a virtue, but alms-giving was considered a weakness among them. A Future life was generally considered a mere fable.

<sup>[2]</sup> Quran: 1. Ha Mim: 2. A Revelation from [God], Most Gracious, Most Merciful; 3. A Book, whereof the verses are explained in detail; a Qur'an in Arabic, for people who understand. 4. Giving good news and admonition: yet most of them turn away, and so they do not hear. 5. They say: "Our hearts are under veils, [concealed] from that to which you invite us, and in

When the Prophet had finished his recitation, he said to Otba: "This is my reply to your proposition; now take what course you find best." [1]

Persecution by the Quraishites grew fiercer and fiercer every day and the sufferings of the Prophet's followers became unbearable. He had heard of the righteousness, tolerance and hospitality of the neighbouring Christian king of Abyssinia. He recommended such of his followers who were without protection, to seek refuge in the kingdom of that pious king, Al-Nagashi [Negus]. Some of the unprotected adherents of Islam, to the number of 15, promptly availed themselves of the advice and sailed to Abyssinia. Here they met with a very kind reception from the Negus. This is called the first flight in the history of Islam and occurred in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Prophet Muhammad's mission [615 A.C]. These emigrants were soon followed by many more of their fellow sufferers, until the number reached eighty-three men and eighteen women. [2]

The hostile Quraishites, furious at the escape of their victims, sent deputies to the king of Abyssinia to request him to deliver the refugees, that they might be put to death, as they had renounced their old religion and embraced a new one. The king summoned the poor fugitives and enquired of them what was the religion, which they had adopted, in preference to their old faith. Jaafar son of Abi Talib and brother of Ali acted as spokesman for the exiles. He spoke thus:

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our ears is a deafness, and between us and you is a screen: so you do [what you will]; for us, we shall do [what we will]" 6. You say: "I am but a man like you: it is revealed to me, that your God is One God: so stand true to him, and ask for His forgiveness." And woe to those who associate gods with God, 7. Those who do not practise regular charity, and who even deny the Hereafter. 8. For those who believe and work deeds of righteousness is a reward that will never fail. [41: 1-8].

[1] Ibn Hisham.

[2] G. Sale.

“O king, we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism, we adored idols, we lived in unchastely, we ate dead bodies and we spoke abominations; we disregarded every feeling of humanity and any sense of duty towards our neighbours, and we knew no law, but that of the strong, when God raised among us a man, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were aware, and he called us to profess the unity of God and taught us to associate nothing with him; he forbade us the worship of idols and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of neighbourhood, he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans, he ordered us to fly from vice and to abstain from evil, to offer prayers, to give alms, to observe the fast. We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his commands to worship God alone and to associate naught with Him. Hence our people have persecuted us, trying to make us to forego the worship of God and return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us until, finding no safety among them, we have come to your kingdom; trusting you will give us protection against their persecution. [1]

After hearing the above speech, the hospitable king ordered the deputies to return to their people in safety and not to interfere with their fugitives. Thus the emigrants passed the period of exile in peace and comfort. Whilst the followers of the Prophet sought safety in foreign lands against the persecution of their people, he continued his warnings to the Quraishites more persistently than ever. Again they came to him with offers of riches and honour which he firmly and utterly refused. “I am neither,” said the Prophet, “desirous of riches or ambitious of dignity or power. I am a Messenger of God to give you good tidings and to give you a warning. If you accept the message I bring you, God will be favourable to you, both in this world and in the next; if you reject my warnings, I shall be patient and will let God judge between

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[1] 121 Ibn Hisham, as-Seerat an-Nabawiyyah, Vol. I, pp. 334—338

us". But they mocked at him and urged him for miracles to prove his mission. "God has not sent me" he used to answer, "to work wonders, he has sent me to preach to you".

Thus disclaiming all power of wonder, "Listen", he used to address them; "I bring you a revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful God: a book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qu'ran for a people who understand: a herald of good news and a Warner; but most of you turn aside, so you hear not". On other occasions he used to address the polytheists thus: You say: "I am but a mortal like you: it is revealed to me, that your Deity is One: therefore worship Him alone, and ask His Forgiveness; and woe to those who associate false deities with God." [41:6]

Despite all the exhortations of the Prophet, the Quraishities persisted in asking him for a sign. They insisted that unless some sign be sent down to him from his Lord, they would not believe. "Why," the infidels used to ask, "Had not Muhammad been sent with miracles, like previous prophets?" "Because", replied the Prophet, "miracles had proved inadequate to convince. Noah had been sent with signs, and with what effect? Where was the lost tribe of Thamud? They had refused to receive the preaching of the Prophet Saleh, unless he showed them a sign and caused the rock to bring forth a living she camel. He did what they asked. In disrespect they had cut the camel's feet and then daring the prophet to fulfil his threats of judgment, were found dead in their beds next morning, stricken by the angel of the Lord." There are some seventeen places in the Qu'ran, in which the Prophet is challenged to work a sign and he gave them all to the same answer. The Qu'ran, the Prophet used to assert to the infidels, is a book whose blessings shall be intercepted, a warning for the whole world; it is a collection of all that is best in any other religion and all that is best in sacred books, it is a complete guidance and explains everything necessary; it is a reminder of what is imprinted on human nature and is free from every discrepancy and from error and falsehood. It is a book of true

guidance and light to all. Again when the Prophet was urged for a sign, he used to address the idolaters thus:

“O you men, you are they, who stand in need of God, and God is He Who is Self-sufficient, the Praised One; If He please, He will take you off and bring a new generation. And this is not difficult for Him to do. A burdened soul cannot bear the burden of another.” Qu’ran [35:15-18].

In another instance the Prophet used to appeal to the unbelievers’ sense of judgment by reciting to them other passages of the Word of God. “Surely God is the knower of what is unseen in the heavens and the earth; surely He is Cognisant of what is in all hearts. He, it is who made you free creatures of the earth, therefore whoever disbelieves will bear the risk of his unbelief. [11: 123]”.

“Those who remain unbelievers will gain nothing by their stubbornness, except the hatred of their Lord. Have you considered your false deities whom you worship beside God? Show me what thing on earth they have created; or have they any share in the heaven? Surely I am sent to you with truth, to bear you good news and give you warning; and there is not a people, but a Warner from God was sent to them. If you give the lie to my message, it is no wonder that you do so; other nations before you have also given the lie to their respective apostles, though they brought them clear arguments, scripture and illuminating books.” [35: 38-39]

“As to God, the True Deity, know you that it is He Who made for you the night, that you may rest therein, and the day to see; most surely God is Gracious to men but most men, are ungrateful. God, your Lord is the Creator of every thing; there is no Deity but He; why are you then turned away? God is He who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven and horizon, and He formed you, then made goodly your forms, and He furnished you with wholesome provisions; that is God, your Lord; blessed then is God, the Lord of the Worlds. I am

forbidden to worship those idols whom you adore besides God, because clear arguments have come to me from my Lord, and I am commanded to submit to Him alone, the Lord of the Universe. [40:61-65].

He, it is Who created you from dust, then from a minute life-germ, then from a clot, then He brings you forth as a child, then He causes you to attain maturity and some of you may get old and some are caused to die young, so that all of you will reach a pre-appointed age. Do you now understand? God is He Who gives life and brings death, so when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, Be and it is.” [40:67].

### The Pagan Arabs Sacred Idols

As to the idols, so much honoured and respected by the pagan Arabs, the Prophet openly declared that “they are naught but empty names which you [the idolaters] and your fathers have invented.” [53:23]

From beginning to end, the Prophet in all his recitations of the Qu’ran, God never spoke respectfully of the invented gods or goddesses adopted by the heathen Arabs. There is nothing in all the trustworthy sources of Islam to confirm the allegations made by Western biographers to the contrary.

When the Prophet thus spoke reproachfully of the sacred gods of the Quraishites, the latter redoubled their persecution. But the Prophet however, continued his preaching, unconcerned by the hostility of his enemies, or by their bitter persecution of him. And despite all opposition and increased persecution the new faith gained ground. The national fair at Okaz near Makkah attracted many a wild Arab of the desert and many a trading citizen of distant towns. These listened to the teachings of the Prophet, to his warnings and to his denunciations of their sacred idols and of their superstitions. They carried back all that they had heard to their distant homes and thus the advent of the Prophet was made known to almost all parts of the Peninsula.

The Makkahns, however, were more than ever furious at the Prophet's increasing preaching against their religion. They asked his uncle Abu Talib, to stop him. But Abu Talib could not do anything, except that he re-assured them. At length, as the Prophet persisted in his enthusiastic denunciations against their ungodliness and impiety they turned him from Al-Ka'bah where he latterly used to sit to preach and subsequently went in a body to Abu Talib. They urged the old respected chief to prevent his nephew from abusing their gods any longer or uttering any ill words against their ancestors. They warned Abu Talib that if he would not do that he would be excluded from the communication of his people and driven to side with Muhammad, and the matter would be settled by fight, until one of the two parties were exterminated.<sup>[1]</sup> Abu Talib neither wished to separate himself from his people, nor forsake his nephew, for the idolaters to revenge themselves upon. He spoke to the Prophet very softly and begged of him to abandon his affair. To this suggestion the Prophet firmly replied: "O my uncle, if they placed the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to cause me to renounce my task, verily I would not cease there from, until God made manifest His cause, or I perished in the attempt."<sup>[2]</sup>

The Prophet overcome by the thought that his uncle and protector was willing to desert him, turned to depart. But Abu Talib called him loudly to come back, and he came. "Say whatever you please; for the Lord I shall not desert you, no, never." The Quraishites again attempted in vain to cause Abu Talib to abandon his nephew. The respected chief declared his intention to protect his nephew against any threat or violence. He appealed to the sense of honour of the two families of the sons of Hashim and the sons of Muttalib, both families being kinsmen of the Prophet, to protect their member from falling a victim to the hatred of rival parties. All the members of the two families nobly

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<sup>[1]</sup> Abul Fida; Ibn Athir.

<sup>[2]</sup> Sale, W. Muir, Abul Fida etc.



responded to the appeal of Abu Talib, except Abu Lahab one of the Prophet's uncles, who took part with the persecutors.

At this period, Omar, son of Al-Khattab adopted Islam. In him the new faith gained a valuable adherent and an important factor in the future development and spread of Islam.

Previously, Omar had been a violent opposer of the Prophet and a bitter enemy of Islam. His conversion is said to have been worked by the unexplained effect on his mind of a chapter of the Qu'ran which his sister was reading in her house, where he had gone with the intention of killing her on account of her adoption of Islam.<sup>[1]</sup> The party of the Prophet had been strengthened by the conversion of his uncle, Hamza a man of great bravery and merit, and of Abu Bakr and Omar, both men of great energy and reputation. The Muslims now ventured to perform their devotions in public.

Alarmed at the courageous part which the Prophet and his followers were now able to assume, and roused by the return of the deputies from Abyssinia and the announcement of their unsuccessful mission, the Quraishites determined to check by a decisive blow any further progress of Islam. Towards this end, in the seventh year of the prophet's mission, they made a serious league or covenant against the descendants of Hashim and Muttalib, engaging themselves to contract no marriage with any of them, and to have no communication with them. Upon this, the Quraishites became divided into two factions, and the two families of Hashim and Muttalib all repaired to Abu Talib as their chief; except only Abu Lahab the Prophet's uncle, who, out of his inveterate hatred against his nephew and his doctrine, went over to the opposite party whose chief was Abu Sofian Ibn Harb, of the family of Omayia. The persecuted party, Muslims as well as idolaters betook themselves to a valley on the eastern edges of Makkah. They lived in this defensive position for three years the provisions which they had carried with them, were soon

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ibn Hisham, Sir W. Muir.

exhausted. Probably they would have entirely perished, but for the sympathy and occasional help they received from their less prejudiced fellow citizens.

Towards the beginning of the tenth year of the prophet's mission a reconciliation was concluded between the Quraishites and the two families of Hashim and Abdul Muttalib through the intermediation of Hashim, son of Amr, and Zobeir, son of Abu Omayia. Thus, the alliance against the two families was abolished, and they were able to return to Makkah.

During the period the Prophet and his kinspeople passed in their defensive position, Islam made no progress outside; but in the sacred months, when violence was considered sacrilege, the Prophet used to come out of his temporary prison to preach Islam to the pilgrims. In the following year, both Abu Talib and Khadija died. Thus, the Prophet lost in Abu Talib the kind guardian of his youth who had previously protected him against his enemies; and in Khadija his most encouraging companion. She was ever his angel of hope and consolation. The Prophet weighed down by the loss of his amiable protector and his beloved wife without hope of turning the Quraishites from idolatry, with a saddened heart, yet full of trust, resolved to exercise his ministry in some other field, and he chose Tayef, a town about sixty miles east of Makkah whither he went accompanied by his faithful servant Zaid. The tribe of Thakif, who were the inhabitants of Tayef, received Muhammad very coldly. However, he stayed therefore one month. Though the more considerate and better sort of men treated him with a little respect, the slaves and common people refused to listen to his teachings; they were outraged at his invitation to abandon the gods they worshipped with such freedom of morals and lightness of heart; at length they rose against him, and bringing him to the wall of the city, obliged him to depart and return to Makkah.

This repulse greatly discouraged his followers; however, the Prophet was not wanting to himself, but boldly continued to

preach to the public assemblies at the pilgrimage <sup>[1]</sup>, and gained several new converts, among whom were six of the city of Yathrib of the tribe of Khazraj. When these Yathribnites returned home, they spread the news among their people that a prophet had arisen among the Arabs who was to call them to God, and put an end to their iniquities.

It was in the twelfth year of his mission, that the prophet gave out that he had made his night journey from Makkah to Jerusalem, from there to Heaven. All Muslims must believe respecting this journey is that the Prophet himself, and transported from Makkah to Jerusalem, he really beheld some of the greatest signs of his Lord, this journey, known in history as Miraj [ascension], was a miraculously real bodily one. <sup>[2]</sup>

[An eminent writer, commenting on the ascension remarks; “It may, I think, be fairly asked, why Christians who believe in the boldly resurrection and bodily ascension of Jesus and of Elijah should look upon those Muslims who believe in the bodily ascension of Muhammad as less rational than themselves?”]

In this year twelve men of Yathrib, of whom ten were of the tribe of Khazraj and the other two of Aws, came to Makkah, and took an oath of allegiance of the Prophet at Akaba, a hill on the north of that city. This oath was as follows: “We will not associate anything with God; will not steal nor commit adultery or fornication, nor kill our children, nor forge calumnies; we will obey the Prophet in everything that is reasonable, and we will be faithful to him in prosperity and sorrow.” [*Ishaq: 198/Tabari VI: 125*]

When they had seriously engaged to do all this, the Prophet sent one of his disciples, Mossa’ab Ibn Omair, home with them, to teach them the religion basic doctrines and worshippings. Mossa’ab, having arrived at Yathrib, by the assistance of those who had been formerly converted, gained several converts,

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<sup>[1]</sup> Sir W. Muir.

<sup>[2]</sup> Ibn Hisham; Al Tabari; Ibn Athir etc.

particularly Osaïd Ibn Khodeir, a chief man of the city, and Saad Ibn Moaz, prince of the tribe of Aws, Islam has now spread so fast, that there was scarcely a house wherein there not some who had embraced it.

The next year, being the thirteenth of the mission [622 A.D.], Mossa'ab returned from Yathrib, accompanied by seventy three men and two women of that city, who had adopted Islam besides other who were as yet unbelievers. On their arrival these Yatheribites immediately sent to the Prophet and invited him to their city. The Prophet was now in great need of such an assistance, for his opponents had by this time grown so powerful in Makkah, that he could not stay there much longer without imminent danger. He, therefore accepted their proposal, and met them one night by appointment at Al-Akaba, mentioned before, attended by his uncle Al-Abbas, who though he was not then a convert, wished his nephew well. Al-Abbas made a speech to those of Yathrib wherein he told them that, as the Prophet Muhammad was obliged to quit his native city and seek shelter elsewhere, and they had offered him their protection, they would do well not to deceive, him; and that if they were not firmly resolved to defend and not to betray him, they had better declare their minds, and let him provide for his safety in some other manner. Upon their professing their sincerity, the Prophet swore to be faithful to them, on condition that they should worship none but God, observe the precepts of Islam, obey the Prophet in all that was right and protect him against all offences as heartily as they would their wives and families. They then asked him what would be their return, if they should happen to be killed in the cause of God; he answered: "Paradise." Whereupon they pledged their faith to him and to his cause. The Prophet then selected twelve men out of their number to act as his delegates. Thus was concluded the second covenant of Al-Akaba. The Yatheribites returned home, leaving the Prophet to arrange for his journey to their city. The Prophet directed his followers to seek immediate safety at Yathrib; which they accordingly did. About one hundred families silently disappeared from Makkah and proceeded to

Yathrib, where they were received with enthusiasm and much hospitality. All the disciples had gone to Yathrib. The Prophet alone remained at Makkah, keeping with him only his young cousin Ali, and his devoted friend, Abu Bakr.

The Makkahns, fearing the consequence of this new alliance, began to think seriously of preventing Muhammad from escaping to Yathrib. They met in all haste at the town-hall. After several measures had been rejected, they decided, that he should be killed.

They agreed that one man should be chosen out of every tribe for the execution of this plan, and that each man should strike a blow at him with his sword, so that the responsibility of the guilt might rest equally on all tribes, to whose united power the Hashimites, Muhammad's own tribe were much inferior, and therefore would not be able to revenge their kinsman's death.

A number of noble youths were selected for the bloodstained deed. As the night advanced, the assassins posted themselves round the Prophet's dwelling. They watched all night long, waiting to murder "Muhammad" when he should leave his house at the early dawn. By some means <sup>[1]</sup> the Prophet had been warned of the danger. In order to keep the attention of the assassins fixed upon the bed which they had been watching through a hole in the door, the Prophet directed Ali to lie down in his place and wrap himself up in his green cloak; which he did whereas the Prophet miraculously escaped through the window. He went to the house of Abu Bakr, unperceived by the conspirators who had already assembled at the Prophet's door. These, in the meantime looking through the gap and seeing Ali whom they mistook for 'Muhammad' himself asleep, continued watching there till morning, when Ali arose, and they found themselves deceived. The fury of the Quraishites was now unbounded. The news that they would be assassins had returned

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<sup>[1]</sup> It is believed that it was by inspiration that Muhammad was so warned, vide Ibn Hisham, Al Wakidi, etc.

unsuccessful, and that “Muhammad” had escaped aroused their whole energy. A price of a hundred camels was set upon Muhammad’s head.

From Abu Bakr’s house, the Prophet and he went to a cave in Mount Thor, to the south east of Makkah, accompanied only by Abu Bakr’s servant, and an idolater whom they had hired for a guide. In this cave they lay hidden for three days to avoid the search of their enemies whom they very narrowly escaped. Abu Bakr, seeing the Prophet in such imminent danger, became very sorrowful, whereupon the Prophet comforted him with these words, recorded in the Qu’ran: “Be not grieved, for God is with us.” [9:40], their persecutor having retired, they left the cave and set out for Yathrib by a secondary road. Having miraculously escaped some horsemen who were sent to pursue them, the fugitives continued their journey, without disturbance.

After three day’s journey they reached the territories of Yathrib. Here they were joined by Ali who had been severely maltreated by the idolaters after their disappointment at Muhammad’s escape. The prophet and his companions then proceeded to Yathrib, attended by a great number of his disciples who met them at Quba. They entered the city on the morning of Friday, the 16<sup>th</sup> Rabi 1 [corresponding to the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of July 622]. Thus was accomplished the Hijrah, or the flight of Muhammad as called in European records, from which the Islamic calendar dates.

### The Prophet at Al-Madienah

Then the Prophet Muhammad and his companions settled at Yathrib, this city changed its name, and henceforth was called “Al-Medienah Al-Munawara,” the illuminated city, or more shortly Al-Madienah, the city. It is situated about an eleven day journey to the north of Makkah. At the time it was ruled by two Kahtanite tribes, namely Aws and Khazraj. These two tribes, however, were constantly quarrelling among themselves. It was only about the time when the Prophet announced his mission at Makkah that these tribes, after long years of continuous warfare,

entered on a period of comparative peace. When the Prophet settled at Al-Madienah, the tribes of Aws and Khazraj forgetting entirely their old feuds were united together in the bond of Islam. Their old divisions were soon wiped out, and the ‘Ansar’, the helpers of the Prophet, became the common title of all Medinites who had helped the Prophet in his cause. Those who emigrated with him from Makkah received the title of “Muhajereen” or “The Emigrants”. The Prophet, in order to unite both classes in closer bonds, established between them a brotherhood, which linked them together as children of the same parents, with the Prophet as their guardian.

The first step the Prophet took, after his settlement at Al-Madienah, was to build a mosque for the worship of God, according to principles of Islam. Also houses for the accommodation of the emigrants were soon erected.

Al-Madienah and its suburbs being at this time inhabited by three distinct parties, the Emigrants, the Helpers and the Jews, the Prophet in order to weld them together into an orderly federation, granted a charter to the people clearly defining their rights and obligations. This charter represented the framework of the first Ummah organised by the Prophet, and dwelt chiefly on precepts of Islam. It started thus:

“In the name of God the most Merciful and Compassionate, this Charter is given by Muhammad, the Apostle of God, to all believers, whether of Quraish or Al-Madienah, and all individuals of whatever origin who have made common cause with them, who shall all constitute one nation.” The following are some extracts from the Charter: “The state of peace and war shall be common to all Muslims; no one among them shall have the right of concluding peace with, or declaring war against, the enemies of his co-religionists. The Jews who attach themselves to our Ummah, shall be protected from all offences and annoyances; they an equal right with our own people, to our assistance and good duties, the Jews of the various branches, and all others lived in Al-Madienah shall form with the Muslims one composite

nation; they shall practice their religion as freely as the Muslims. The allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom. The guilty shall be pursued and punished. The Jews shall join the Muslims in defending Al-Madienah against all enemies. The internal of Al-Madienah shall be a sacred place for all who accept this charter. All true Muslims shall hold in abhorrence every man guilty of crime, injustice or disorder; no one shall uphold the blameworthy, though he be his nearest kin.”<sup>[1]</sup> After dealing with the interior management of the State, the charter concluded as follows: “All future disputes arising among those who accept this charter, shall be referred, under God, to the Prophet.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Thus this charter put an end to the state of anarchy that prevailed among the Arabs. It constituted the Prophet Muhammad as chief magistrate of the nation. The party of the Ansars or helpers included some non-enthusiastic converts who retained an ill-concealed fondness for idolatry. These were headed by Abdullah Ibn Obay, a man with some claims to distinction. They apparently joined Islam, but in secret were disaffected. They often were a source of considerable danger to the new-born Ummah and required unceasing watchfulness on the part of the Prophet. Towards them he always showed the greatest patience and forbearance, hoping in the end to win them over to the faith, which expectations were fully justified by the result. With the death of Abdullah Ibn Obay, his party which were known as the party of the ‘Munafiqin’ [the hypocrites] disappeared.

The Jews who constituted the third party of the Medinites were however, the most serious element of danger. No kindness or generous treatment, on the part of the Prophet, would seem to satisfy them. They soon broke off, and ranged themselves with the enemies of the new faith. They did not hesitate to declare openly, that they preferred idolatry, with its attendant evils, to the faith of Islam. Thus, the Prophet had to keep an eye on his

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<sup>[1]</sup> Sir W. Muir G. Sale.

<sup>[2]</sup> *ibid.*



enemies outside Al-Madienah, on the one hand, and those within the city on the other. The Makkahns, who had sworn Muhammad's death, were well acquainted, thanks to the party of the hypocrites and of the Jews at Al-Madienah, with the real forces of Muslims. They also knew that the Jews had accepted Muhammad's alliance only from motives of temporary expediency, and that they would break away from him to join the idolaters, as soon as the latter showed themselves in the surrounding area of Al-Madienah. The safety of the State required the proscription of the traitors who were executed for high treason of this nature.

Towards the second year of the "Hijrah," the infidels of Makkah began a series of hostile acts against the Muslims of Al-Madienah. They sent men in parties, to execute raids on the fruit-trees of the Muslims of Al-Madienah and to carry away their flocks. Now came the moment of severest trial to Islam. It became the duty of the Prophet, to take serious measures to guard against any plot rising from within or a sudden attack from without. He put Al-Madienah in a state of military discipline. He had to send frequent reconnoitring parties, to guard against any sudden attack. No sooner did the Prophet organise his state, than a large well-equipped army of the Makkahns was a-field. A force consisting of one thousand men, marched under Abu Gahl, a great enemy of Islam, towards Al-Madienah, to attack the city. The Muslims received timely notice of their enemies' intention. A body of three hundred adherents, of whom two thirds were citizens of Al-Madienah, were gathered, to forestall the idolaters from occupying the Valley of Badr, situated near the sea between Makkah and Al-Madienah. When the Prophet saw the army of the infidels approaching the valley, he prayed that the little band of Muslims might not be destroyed.

The army of the Makkahns advanced into the open space, which separated the Muslims from the idolaters. According to Arab usage, the battle was begun by single combats. The engagement then became general. The battle result was that Makkahns were

driven back with great loss. Several of their chiefs were slain; and Abu Gahl fell victim. A large number of idolaters remained prisoners in the hands of the Muslims. They were, contrary to all usage and traditions of the Arabs, treated with the greatest humanity. The Prophet gave strict orders, that sympathy should be shown them in their misfortune, and that they should be treated with kindness. [1] These instructions were faithfully obeyed by the Muslims, to whose care the prisoners were confided. Dealing with this event, Sir William Muir quotes one of the prisoners saying: "Blessing be on the men of Al-Madienah: they made us ride, while they themselves walked; they gave us wheaten bread to eat, when here was little of it, contenting themselves with dates. [2]

The remarkable circumstances, which led to the victory of Badr, and the results, which followed it, made a deep impression on the minds of the Muslims. They firmly believed that the angels of heaven had battled on their side against their enemies. The division of the spoils created some disagreement between the Muslim warriors. For the moment, the Prophet divided it equally amongst all. Subsequently, a Qu'ran revelation laid down a rule for future division of the spoils. According to this rule, a fifth was reserved for the public treasury for the support of the poor and needy; and the distribution of the remaining four fifths was left to the judgment of the Chief of the State.

The next battle between the Quraishites and the Muslims was the battle of Ohod, a hill about four miles to the north of Al-Madienah. The idolaters, to revenge their loss at Badr, made tremendous preparations, for a new attack upon the Muslims. The next year, they collected an army 3000 strong, of whom 700 were armed with coats of mail, and 200 horses. These forces advanced under the command of Abu Sofian, and encamped at a village, six miles from Al-Madienah, where they gave themselves up to

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[1] Al Wakidi, Ibn Hisham, Ibn Athir, etc.

[2] Sir William. Muir: The Life of Mohamed

spoiling the fields and flocks of the Medinites. The Prophet being much inferior to his enemies in number, at first determined to keep himself within the town and receive them there; but afterwards, the advice of some of his companions prevailing, he marched out against them, at the head of 1000 men, of whom 100 were armed with coats of mail: but he had no more than one horse, besides his own, in his whole army. With these forces he halted at Mount Ohod. He was soon abandoned by Abdullah Ibn Obay, the leader of the hypocrites, with 300 of his followers. Thus, the small force of the Prophet was reduced to 700. At Mount Ohod the Muslim troops passed the night, and in the morning, after offering their prayers, they advanced into the plain. The Prophet planned to have the hill at his back, and the better to secure his men from being surrounded; he placed fifty archers on the height in the rear, behind the troops and gave them strict orders, not to leave their posts whatever might happen. When they came to engage, the Prophet had superiority at first, but afterward, through the fault of his archers, who left their position for the sake of plunder, and suffered the enemies' horsemen to surround the Muslims and to attack them in the rear; he lost the day, and was very near losing his life. He was struck down by a shower of stones, and wounded in the face by two arrows, and one of his front teeth was broken. Of the Muslims 70 men were killed, among whom was Hamza the Prophet's uncle; of the infidels 22 men were lost. <sup>[1]</sup>

The Quraishites were too exhausted to follow up their advantage, either by attacking Al-Madienah or by driving the Muslims from the heights of Ohod. They retreated from the Medinite territories, after barbarously mutilating the corpses of their dead enemies.

The moral effect of this disastrous battle was such as to encourage some neighbouring nomad tribes, to make sudden raids upon the Medinite territories; but most of these were repressed.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ibn Hisham

The Jews also were not slow to involve in trouble the Prophet and his followers. They tried to create hostility among his people, and defamed him and his adherents. They mispronounced the words of the Qu'ran, so to give them an offensive meaning. They also caused their poets who were superior in culture and intelligence, to use their influence to spread rebellion among the Muslims. One of their distinguished poets, called Kaab, of the tribe of Nadeer, spared no efforts in publicly condemn the ill-success of the idolaters, after their defeat at Badr. By his satires against the Prophet and his disciples, and his elegies on the Makkahns who had fallen at Badr, he succeeded in exciting the Quraishites to that frenzy of revenge which broke out at Ohod. He then returned to Al-Madienah, where he continued to attack the Prophet and the Muslims, men and women, in terms of the most offensive nature. Though he belonged to the tribe of Nadeer, which had entered into the covenant with the Muslims and pledged itself both for the internal and external safety of the State, he openly directed his acts against the Commonwealth of which he was a member. Another Jew Sallam by name of the same tribe, behave equally fiercely and bitterly the Muslims, as did Kaab. He lived with a party of his tribe at Khaibar, a village five day's journey northwest of Al-Madienah. He made every effort to excite the neighbouring Arab tribes against the Muslims. The Muslim Ummah with the object of securing safety among the community passed a sentence of outlawry upon Kaab and Sallam.

The members of another Jewish tribe, namely Bani Quaynouqa, were sentenced to expulsion from the Medinite territory, for having openly and knowingly violated the terms of the charter. It was necessary to put an end to their hostile actions, for the sake of maintaining peace and security. The Prophet had to go to their headquarters, where he required them to enter definitively into the Muslim Ummah by embracing Islam, or to leave Al-Madienah. To this they replied in the most offensive terms; "You have had a quarrel with men, ignorant of the art of war. If you are desirous of having any dealings with us, we shall show you that

we are the men.”<sup>[1]</sup> They then shut themselves up in their fortress and set the Prophet and his authority at disobedience. The Muslims decided to reduce them, and siege was accordingly laid to their fortress without loss of time. After fifteen days they surrendered. Though the Muslims at first intended to inflict some server punishment on them, they contented themselves with banishing the Bani Quaynouqa. The tribe of Nadeer had now behaved in the same way as Quaynouqa. They had likewise, knowingly and publicly, disregarded the terms of the Charter. The Prophet sent them a message similar to that which was sent to their brethren, the Quaynouqa. They, relying on the assistance of the hypocrites’ party, returned a disobedient reply. After a siege of fifteen days, they sued for terms. The Muslims renewed their previous offer; and the Jews of Nadeer chose to evacuate Al-Madienah. They were allowed to take with them all their movable property, with the exception of their arms. Before leaving Al-Madienah, they destroyed all their dwellings, in order to prevent the Muslims from occupying them.<sup>[2]</sup> Their immovable property, warlike material, etc, which they could not carry away with them, were distributed by the Prophet with the consent of the Helpers among the Refugees. A principle was henceforth adopted that any acquisition, not made in actual warfare, should belong to the state, and that its disposal should be left to the judgment of the ruling authorities.<sup>[3]</sup>

Certain prejudiced Western historians wrongly accused the Muslims of having treated these Jews of Nadeer with the utmost cruelty. For instance Dr. Prideaux in his “Life of Mahamet”, falsely charged them with overtaking the Jews who fled to Syria and putting them all to death.

G. Sale has already saved us “the Muslims” the trouble of refuting such erroneous statements: “The expulsion of the Nadeers took place in the fourth year of the “Hijra”. The remaining portion of

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ibn Hisham.; Ibn Athir.

<sup>[2]</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>[3]</sup> Vide “Droits Musulman” by M. Query, p. 337,

this year, and the early part of the next were passed in repressing the hostile attempts of the nomadic tribes against the Muslims and inflicting punishment for various murderous forays on the Medinite territories. Of this nature was the expedition against the Christian Arabs of Dumat el Gandal, [a place about a seven day journey to the south of Damascus] who had stopped the Medinite traffic with Syria, and even threatened a raid upon Al-Madienah; these raiders, however, fled on Muslims approach, and the Prophet returned to Al-Madienah, after concluding a treaty with a neighbouring chief, to whom he granted permission of pasturage in the Medinite territories.”<sup>[1]</sup>

In the same year, the enemies of Islam made every possible attempt to stir up the tribes against Muslims. The Jews also took an active, if hidden, part in those manoeuvrings. An army of ten thousand men, well equipped, marched towards Al-Medina, under the command of Abu Sofian. They encamped near Mount Ohod, a few miles from the city. The Muslims could gather only a much smaller army of three thousand men. Seeing their inferiority in numbers on one hand, and the instability of Hypocrites within the town on the other, they preferred to remain on the defensive. They dug a deep moat round the unprotected quarters of Al-Medina and encamped outside the city with a trench in front of them. They relied for safety of the other side upon their allies, Banu Quraiza, who possessed several fortresses at a short distance towards the south and were bound by the covenant to assist Muslims against any raiders. These Jews, however, were encouraged by idolaters to violate their pledge and join the Quraishites. As these Jews were acquainted with the neighbourhood and could materially assist raiders; and as, on the other hand the Hypocrites within the city walls were waiting for an opportunity to play their part, the situation of Muslims was most dangerous. The siege had already lasted for twenty days. The enemy made great efforts to cross the trench, but every attempt was fiercely repulsed by the small Muslim force. Disunion was

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<sup>[1]</sup> C. de Perceval, Vol. 3; Tabari, Vol. 3.

now widespread in the midst of the besieging army. Their horses were freezing fast, and provisions were becoming less every day. During the night–time a storm of wind and rain caused their tents to be overthrown and their lights extinguished. Abu Sofian and the majority of his army fled away and the rest took refuge with Banu Quraiza. [1]

Muslims, though were satisfied with their enemies failure, could not help thinking that victory was unsatisfactory so long as Banu Quraiza, who had violated their sworn pledge, remained so near. The Jews might at any time surprise Al-Medina from their side. Muslims felt it their duty to demand an explanation of the pledge violation. This was completely refused. Consequently, the Jews were besieged, and compelled to surrender at discretion. They only asked that their punishment should be left to the judgment of Saad Ibn Moaz, the tribe prince of Aws, he gave judgment that the fighting men should be put to death, and women and children should become slaves of Muslims. The sentence was carried into execution.

Commenting on the harshness of the sentence, Mr. Stanley Lane Poole in the introduction of his “Selections from the Qu’ran” writes as follows: “It was a harsh, bloody sentence, worthy of the Episcopal generals of the army against the Albigenses, or of the deeds of the Augustan age of Puritanism; but it must be remembered that the crime of these men was high treason against the State during time of siege; and those who have read how Wellington’s march could be traced by the bodies of the deserters and pillagers hanging from the trees, need not be surprised at the summary execution of a traitorous clan.” [2]

It was about this time that the Prophet granted to the monks of St. Catherine monastery, near Mount Sinai his liberal Charter by which they secured for the Christians noble and generous privileges and immunities. They were not to be unfairly taxed: no

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[1] Ibn el Athir; Ibn Hisham, etc.

[2] Vide Stanley Lane Poole, Selections from the Quran.

bishop was to be driven out from his dioceses; no Christian was to be forced to reject his religion; no monk was to be expelled from his monastery; no pilgrim was to be stopped from his pilgrimage, nor were the Christian churches to be pulled down for the sake building mosques or houses for the Muslims. Christian women married to Muslims were to enjoy their own religion, and not to be subjected to compulsion or annoyance of any kind. No Christian resident among the Muslims should be treated with contempt on account of his creed. The Prophet declared that any Muslim violating any article of the Charter should be regarded as a transgressor of God's orders. [1]

### The Reconciliation of Hudeibiya

Six years had already passed since the Prophet and his Makkahn followers fled from their birthplace. Their hearts began to yearn for their homes and Al-Ka'bah. The season of pilgrimage approached. The Prophet announced his intention to perform pilgrimage. Numerous voices of his disciples responded to the call. Preparations were soon made for the journey to Makkah. The Prophet accompanied by seven or eight hundred Muslims, refugees and helpers, all totally unarmed, set out for pilgrimage. Quraishites who were still full of animosity towards Muslims gathered a large army to prevent the true believers from entering Makkah. They maltreated the envoy whom the Prophet had sent to ask their permission to visit the sacred places. After much difficulty a treaty was concluded by which it was agreed that all hostilities should stop for ten years' that any one coming from Quraishites to the Prophet without permission of his guardian or chief, should be given back to idolaters; that any Muslim persons going over to Makkahns should not be surrendered; that any tribe desirous of entering into alliance, either with Quraishites or with Muslims should be at liberty to do so without disputes; that Muslims should go back to Al-Madienah on the present occasion and stop advancing further; that they should be permitted in the

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[1] Abul Fedai; Ibn Athir; Al Wakidi etc.



following year to visit Makkah, and to remain therefore three days with the arms they used on journeys, namely, their swords in covers. The treaty thus ended, the Prophet returned with his people to Al-Madienah.<sup>[1]</sup>

About this time it was revealed to the Prophet that his mission should be universal. "Say: "O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of God, to Whom belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: it is He that giveth both life and death. So believe in God and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believed in God and His Words: follow him that [so] ye may be guided." [7:158], consequently, he dispatched several representatives to invite the neighbouring sovereigns to Islam. The embassy to the king of Persia, Chosroes Parvis, was received with disdain and contumely. He was arrogantly amazed at the boldness of Makkahn fugitive in addressing him on terms of equality. He was so enraged that he tore into pieces the Prophet's letter of invitation to Islam and dismissed the envoy from his presence with great contempt. When the Prophet received information of this treatment, he calmly observed; "Thus will Chosroes Empire be torn to pieces."<sup>[2]</sup>

The embassy to Heraclius, the Emperor of the Romans was received much more politely and reverentially. He treated the ambassador with great respect and sent the Prophet a gracious reply to his message.

Another envoy was sent to an Arab prince of the Ghassanite tribe a Christian feudatory of Heraclius. This prince instead of receiving the envoy with any respect cruelly murdered him. This act caused great anxiety among the Muslims who considered it as an outrage of international obligations.

In the same year in Moharram, 7 A.H, the Jews of Khaibar, a strongly fortified territory studded with castles and farms, lying at

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<sup>[1]</sup> That is without fulfilling their proposed pilgrimage.

<sup>[2]</sup> Ibn Hisham, Vol. VII.

a distance of five days' journey or 60-80 miles north of Al-Madienah, showed pitiless hatred towards the Muslims. After Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, the major party of the anti-Islam tripartite coalition, Quraish, the bedouin horde of Najd tribes and the Jews was neutralized, therefore, the Prophet deemed it an appropriate time to settle his affairs with the other two wings — the Jews and the Najd tribes — Khaibar itself had always remained a hotbed of intrigue and conspiracy, and the Jews had always constituted it a source of military provocations and war instigation centre. The Jews of Khaibar had united by an ancient alliance with the Confederates, triggered Banu Quraiza to practise treachery, maintained contacts with Ghatfan and the Arabians and they even devised an attempt at the Prophet's life.

In fact, the continual afflictions that the Muslims had sustained were primarily attributable to the Jews. Envoys were repeatedly sent to them for peaceful settlement, but all in vain. Consequently the Prophet came to the conclusion that a military campaign was a must in order to forestall their hostilities. Several branches of "Nadeer" and "Quraiza" took refuge at Khaibar which contributed to increase the feeling of animosity on part of their brethren towards the Prophet and his followers. The Prophet and his adherents were apprised of this movement.

Immediate measures had to be taken in order to repress any new attack upon Al-Madienah. An expedition of 1400 men was soon prepared to march against Khaibar. The Jews allies left them to face the war with the Muslims all alone. The Jews firmly resisted the attacks of the Muslims but eventually all their fortresses had to be surrendered, one after the other to their enemies. They prayed for forgiveness, which was accorded them on certain conditions. Their lands and immovable property were secured to them, together with the free practice of their religion. <sup>[1]</sup>

No sooner had the Prophet discharged the affair of Khaibar than he started a fresh move towards Wadi Al-Qura, another Jewish

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ibn Athir, Ibn Hisham, Caussin de Perceval, etc.

colony in Arabia. Prior to fighting, he invited the Jews to embrace Islam but all his words and exhortations fell on deaf ears. Fighting went on ceaselessly for approximately two days and resulted in full surrender of the Jews. Their land was conquered, and a lot of booty fell in the hands of the Muslims.

The Jews of Taima', hearing beforehand about the successive victories of the Muslim army and the defeats that their brethren, the Jews, had sustained, showed no resistance when the Prophet reached their habitation. On the contrary, they took the initiative and offered to sign a reconciliation treaty to the effect that they receive protection but pay tribute in return. Having achieved his objective and subdued the Jews completely, the Prophet and the Muslims returned to Al-Madienah in safety.

Before the end of the year, it being the seventh year of the Hijra, the Prophet and his adherents availed themselves of their armistice with the Quraishites to accomplish their desire of visiting Al-Ka'bah. The Prophet accompanied by 2000 Muslims went on his journey to Makkah to perform the pilgrimage rites. On this occasion Quraishites evacuated the city during the three days on which the ceremonies lasted.

Muir in his *Life of Muhammad* Vol. 3, comments on the incident as follows: "It was surely a strange sight which at this time presented itself at the valley of Makkah, a sight unique in the history of the world. The ancient city is for three days evacuated by all its inhabitants, high and low, every house deserted, and, as they retire, the exiled converts, many years banished from their birth-place, approach in a great body accompanied by their allies, revisit the empty homes of their childhood, and within the short allotted space, fulfil the rites of pilgrimage. The outside inhabitants, climbing the heights around take refuge under tents or other shelter among the hills and valleys; and watch the visitors movements beneath, as with the Prophet at their head, they make the circuit of the Ka'bah and the procession between Es-safa and Marwah, and anxiously scan every figure, if by chance they may recognise among the worshippers some long-lost friend or

relative. It was a scene rendered possible only by the throes which gave birth to Islam.”

In accordance with the treaty terms, the Muslims left Makkah at the end of three days’ visit. This peaceful visit was followed by important conversions among the Quraishites. Khaled Ibn el-Walid, known as the Sword of God, who, before this, had been a bitter enemy of Islam and who commanded the Quraishites cavalry at Ohod; and Amr Ibn el-Aas, another important character and warrior adopted the new faith.

When the Prophet and his followers returned to Al-Madienah, they arranged an expedition to exact revenge from the Ghassnite Prince who killed the Muslim representative. A force of 3000 men, under the Prophet’s adopted son Zaid was sent to take compensation from the offending tribe, Khaled Ibn el-Walid was one of the warriors participating in the expedition. When they reached the neighbourhood of Muta, a village to the south-east of the Dead Sea, they met an overwhelming force of Arabs and Romans who were assembled to oppose them. The Muslims, however, resolved resolutely to push forward. Their courage was of no avail and they suffered great losses. In this battle Zaid, Jaafar, a cousin of the Prophet and Ibn Rawaha and several other notables were killed. Khaled Ibn el-Walid, by a series of manoeuvres, succeeded in drawing off the army, and conducting it without further losses to Al-Medina. A month later however, Amr Ibn el-Aas marched unopposed through the lands of the hostile tribes, received their submission and restored the status of Islam on the Syrian frontier. <sup>[1]</sup>

### The Conquest of Makkah

About the end of seventh year of Hijra, the Quraishites and their allies, Bani Bakr violated the terms of peace concluded at Hudeibiya by attacking Bani Khuzaah who were in alliance with Muslims. Bani Khuzaab of whom a number of men were

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ch. Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam.

massacred appealed to the Prophet for help and protection. The Prophet determined to make a stop to the reign of injustice and oppression, which had lasted long at Makkah. He immediately gathered ten thousand men to march against the idolaters. On January 1<sup>st</sup> 630, the Prophet began his march. After eight days the Muslims Army stopped and alighted at Marwat el Zahran a day's journey from Makkah. On the night of his arrival, Abu Sufian, who was delegated by the Quraishites to ask the Prophet to abandon his project, presented himself and besought an interview. On the next day it was granted: "Woe to you, Abu Sufyan, isn't it time that you recognize that I am God's apostle?" He answered, "As to that I still have some doubt." I (Abbas) said to him, "Submit and testify that there is no God but Allâh and that Muhammad is the apostle of God before you lose your head." [*Ibn Isbaq, Sirat Rasul Allâh, p. 547*] Abu Sofian after hesitating for a while pronounced the prescribed formula of belief <sup>[1]</sup>, and adopted Islam. He was then sent back to prepare the city for the Prophet's approach. With the exception of a slight resistance by certain clans headed by Ikrima and Safwan, in which some Muslims were killed, the Prophet entered Makkah almost unopposed.

The city which had treated him so cruelly, driven him and his faithful band for refuge amongst strangers, the city which had sworn his life and the lives of his devoted adherents, now lay at his mercy. His old persecutors were now completely at his feet. The Prophet entered Makkah on his favourite camel "Al Kaswa," having Abu Bakr on his right hand, Usaid on his left, and Usama walking behind him. On his way he recited a chapter of the Qu'ran, number 110, known as the chapter of the victory.

The Muslim army entered the city humbly and peacefully. No house was robbed; no man or woman was insulted. The Prophet granted a general amnesty to the entire population of Makkah. Only four criminals, whom justice condemned, were proscribed.

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<sup>[1]</sup> "No Deity save God and Muhammad is his Messenger".

He, however, ordered the destruction of all idols and pagan images of worship, upon which the 360 idols which the Ka'bah contained were thrown down. The Prophet himself destroyed a wooden pigeon from the roof which was regarded as one of the deities of the Quraishites. During the downfall of the images and idols he was heard to cry aloud. "God is great. God is great." Truth has come and falsehood has vanished; verily falsehood is evanescent." [*Sahib Al-Bukhari 2478, book 46, hadith 39*]. The old idolaters observed thought-fully the destruction of their gods, which were utterly powerless. After the Prophet had abolished these pagan idols and very pagan rite, he delivered a sermon to the assembled people. He dwelt upon the natural brotherhood of man in the words of the Qu'ran: "Verily the true believers are brethren; wherefore make peace among your brethren; and fear God, that you may obtain mercy." [49:10]

Now great multitudes came to adopt Islam and take the oath of allegiance to the Prophet. For this purpose an assembly was held at mount el Safa. Omar acting as the Prophet's deputy administered the oath, whereby the people bound themselves not to worship any deity but God, to obey the Prophet, to abstain from theft, adultery, infanticide, lying and backbiting. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy embodied in the chapter of Victory in the Qu'ran.<sup>[1]</sup>

During his stay at Makkah, the Prophet dispatched his principal disciples in every direction to preach Islam among the wild tribes of the desert and call them to the true religion of God. He sent small detachments of his troops into the suburbs to destroy the temples of Al Uzza, Suwaa and Manat, the three famous idols in the neighbouring tribes. The Prophet gave strict orders that these expeditions should be carried out in a peaceful manner.<sup>[2]</sup> These

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[1] When victory and triumph are come from Allâh and thou seest hosts of people embrace the religion of Allâh, you will then praise the glory of your Lord and implore His pardon, as He is ever ready to welcome penitence." [110: 1-3]

[2] T. P. Hughes – 'Dictionary of Islam'.

orders were obeyed in all cases, with one exception. The troops under Khaled Ibn el-Walid, the newly-converted warrior, killed a few of the Banu Jazima.

When the news of this needless bloodshed reached the Prophet he was deeply grieved, and exclaimed, "Oh my Lord I am innocent of what Khaled has done, and he dispatched a large sum of money for the widows and orphans of the slain and severely reproach Khaled.<sup>[1]</sup> At this time the tribes of Hawazin and Thakif showed unwillingness to render obedience to the Muslims without resistance. They formed a league with the intention of attacking the Prophet. But he was cautious enough to discourage their plan.

A big battle was fought with this new enemy of Islam near Hunein, a deep and narrow valley nine miles to the north east of Makkah. The idolaters were completely defeated. One enemy group consisting chiefly of Thakif tribe took refuge in their fortified city of Tayef, which, as the reader may remember, eight or nine years before had dismissed the Prophet from within its walls with injuries and insults. The remainder of the defeated force, consisting principally of Hawazin, sought refuge at a camp in the valley of Autas. This camp was raided by the Muslim troops. The families of the Hawazin, their flocks and herds with all their other effects were captured by the troops of the Prophet. Tayef was then besieged for a few days only, after which the Prophet raised the siege, well knowing that the people of Tayef would soon be forced by circumstances to submit without bloodshed.

Returning to his camp where the prisoners of Hawazin were left for safety, the Prophet found a deputation from this hostile tribe who begged him to set free their families. The Prophet replied that he was willing to give back his own share of the captives and that of the children of Abdul Muttalib, but that he could not force his followers to abandon the fruits of their victory. The disciples

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<sup>[1]</sup> *ibid.*

followed the generous example of their teacher and about six thousand people were in a moment set free.<sup>[1]</sup> The spirit of liberty influenced the hearts of several members of the Thaḳīf tribe who offered their allegiance and soon became earnest Muslims.

The Prophet now returned to Al-Madienah fully satisfied with the achievements of his mission.

The ninth year of the Hijra is known as the years of embassies, as being the year in which the various tribes of Arabia submitted to the claim of the Prophet and sent embassies to render homage to him. Previously these tribes had been awaiting the issue of the war between Muhammad and the Quraishites; but as soon as that tribe –the principal of whole nation, and descendants of Ismail, whose prerogatives none offered to dispute– had submitted, they were satisfied that it was not in their power to oppose Muhammad.<sup>[2]</sup> Hence their embassies flocked into Al-Madienah to make their submission to him. The conquest of Makkah decided the fate of idolatry in Arabia. Now deputations began to arrive from all sides to render the adherence to Islam of various tribes. Among the rest, five Princes of the tribe of Himyar professed Islam and sent ambassadors to notify the same. These were the Princes of Yemen, Mahra, Oman and Yamama.<sup>[3]</sup>

The idolaters of Tayef, the very people who had driven the Preacher of Islam from their midst with violence and contempt now sent a deputation to pray forgiveness and ask to be numbered amongst his followers. They begged, however, for temporary preservation of their idols. As a last appeal they begged for one month's grace only. But this even was not approved. The Prophet said Islam and the idols could not exist together. They then begged for exemption from the daily prayers. The Prophet replied that without devotion religion would be nothing. At last they submitted to all that was required of them. They, however,

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<sup>[1]</sup> Cf. Tabari, Vol. III, Ibn Hisham; Ibn el Athir, Vol. II.

<sup>[2]</sup> G. Sale, Introd. To Quran.

<sup>[3]</sup> cf. Abul Fedā, G. Sale; Introd. To Quran.



asked to be exempted from destroying the idols with their own hands, this was granted. The Prophet selected Abu Sufian and Mughira to destroy the Tayefites idols, the chief of which being the notorious idol of Allat. This was carried out amidst cries of despair and grief from the old women of Tayef.

The conversion of this tribe of Tayef is worthy of notice. This tribe which previously had proved hostile to the new faith was noted among the Arabs for its idolatrous priesthood. A small detachment under Ali was sent to reduce them to obedience and to destroy their idols. The prince of the tribe was Adi, the son of the famous Hatim, whose generosity was spoken of all over the peninsula of Arabia. On the approach of the Muslim force, Adi fled to Syria leaving his sister with some of his principal clansmen, to fall into the hands of the Muslims. These were conducted by Ali with every sign of respect and sympathy to Al-Madienah. When the daughter of Hatim came before the Prophet she addressed him in the following words: "O: Apostle of God, my father is dead; my brother, my only relation has fled into the mountains, on the approach of Muslims. I cannot ransom myself; I count on your generosity for my deliverance. My father was an illustrious man, the prince of his tribe; a man who ransomed prisoners protected the honour of women fed the poor consoled the afflicted and was deaf to no appeal". "Your father", answered the Prophet, "had the virtues of a true Muslim: if it were permitted to invoke the Mercy of God on any whose life was passed in idolatry, I would pray to God for mercy for the soul of Hatim." Then, addressing the Muslims around him, he said; "The daughter of Hatim is free her father was a generous; God loves and rewards the merciful" With the daughter of Hatim, all her people were set at liberty. She proceeded to Syria, and related to her brother the generosity of Muhammad", Adi, touched by gratitude, hastened to Al-Madienah where he was kindly received by the Prophet. He professed Islam and returned to his people

and persuaded them to abandon idolatry. They all submitted and became devoted Muslims.<sup>[1]</sup>

Hitherto no prohibition had been enforced against idolaters entering the Ka'bah or performing their offensive rite within the sacred boundaries. Towards the end of the ninth years of the Hijra, during the month of pilgrimage Ali was delegated by the Prophet to read a proclamation that ran as follows: That the male should cover from the navel to the knee and the female all her body except her face, hands and feet. (Tran.) Abu Hurairah reported: "During the Hajj for which Abu Bakr was appointed the leader by Allâh's Messenger (peace be upon him), before the Farewell Hajj, Abu Bakr sent me (Ali) with a group to announce the Day of Nahr - the 10th of Zhul-Hijjah - and to proclaim: "No idolater nor any naked person shall be allowed to perform tawaf of the Ka'bah after this year." [*Al-Bukhari Volume 2, Book 26, Number 689*] [such a disgraceful custom was practiced by the heathen Arabs], any treaty with the Prophet shall continue in force, but four months are allowed to every man to return to his territories; after that there will be no obligation on the Prophet except towards those with whom treaties have been concluded.<sup>[2]</sup>

The vast multitude who had listened to the above declaration returned to their homes and before the following year was over the majority of them were Muslims.

During the tenth year of the Hijra as in the preceding one, numerous embassies continued to pour into Al-Madienah from all parts of Arabia to testify to the adhesion of their chiefs and their tribes. Teachers were sent by the Prophets into the different provinces to teach the new converts the principles and precepts of Islam. These teachers were consistently given the following injunctions when they were about to depart on their mission: "Deal gently with people and be not harsh; cheer them, and do not look down upon them with disrespect. You will meet with

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<sup>[1]</sup> cf. Ibn Hisham; Ibn Athir Vol., II.

<sup>[2]</sup> Abul Feda, Ibn Athir; Ibn Hisham.

many believers in the Holy Scriptures, <sup>[1]</sup> who will ask you “What is the key to heaven?” Answer them that it [the key to heaven] is to bear witness to Divine truth and to do good.” <sup>[2]</sup>

Thus, the mission of the Prophet Muhammad was now accomplished; the whole work was achieved during his lifetime. Idolatry with its nameless abominations was entirely destroyed. The people who were sunk in superstition, cruelty and vice, in regions where spiritual life was utterly unknown, were now united in one bond of faith. The tribes which had been, from time immemorial, engaged in perpetual wars were now united together by the ties of brotherhood. Henceforth, their aims are not confined to this earth alone; but there is something beyond the grave—much higher, purer and diviner—calling them to the practice of their faith, charity, goodness, and justice. They could now perceive that God was not that which they had carved out of wood or stone, but the Almighty, the Loving, the Merciful the Creator of the Universe.

On the return of the sacred month of the pilgrimage, the Prophet under the feeling of his approaching end, determined to make a farewell pilgrimage to Makkah. In February 632, he left Al-Madienah with a very considerable gathering of Muslims. It is stated that from 90.000 to 140.000 persons accompanied the Prophet.<sup>[3]</sup> On his arrival at the holy places, from which every trace of the old superstition had been removed, and which in accordance with his orders of the previous year, no idolater was to visit unless he assumed the pilgrim clothing. Before completion all pilgrimage rites, he addressed the assembled multitude from the top of Arafat Mount, in the following words:

“You people! Listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be awarded to me after this year to find myself amongst you. Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable

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<sup>[1]</sup> i.e. Jews or Christians.

<sup>[2]</sup> Ibn Hisham.

<sup>[3]</sup> Ibn Hisham, Ibn Athir Vol. 2.

amongst one another until you appear before the Lord, as this day and this month is sacred for all; and remember; you shall have to appear before your Lord Who shall demand from you an account for all your actions. You people, you have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you... Verily you have taken them on the security of God and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God. And your slaves see that you feed them with such food as you eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff you wear, and if they commit a fault which you are not inclined to forgive, then part with them; for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be harshly treated. You people listen to my words and understand them. Know that all Muslims are brothers. You are one brotherhood; but no man shall take aught from his brother, unless by his free consent. Keep yourselves from injustice. Let him who is present tell this to him who is absent. It may be, that he who is told this afterwards may remember better than he who has now heard it.”

The Prophet concluded his sermon by exclaiming, “O Lord I have fulfilled my message and accomplished my work” The assembled multitude all in one voice cried, “Yea verily thou hast,” The Prophet again exclaimed, “O Lord I beseech thee, bear witness unto it.”

Having carefully performed all the pilgrimage ceremonies that his example might be followed by all Muslims for all succeeding ages, the Prophet returned with his followers to Al-Madienah.

The eleventh year of the Hijra being the last year of Muhammad's life, was spent at Al-Madienah. There he settled the organisation of the provincial and tribal communities which had adopted Islam and become the component parts of the Muslim federation, more officers had to be deputed to the interior provinces for the purpose of teaching their inhabitants the precepts of the religion, administering justice, and collecting Zakat. Muaz Ibn Jabal was sent to Yemen. On his departure to that distant province, the Prophet enjoined him to use his own discretion, in the event of his being unable to find express authority in the Qu'ran or the

Sunnah [acts of the Prophet]. Ali was deputed to Yamama in the south-east of the Peninsula. To them the Prophet said: "Never decide between any two parties who come to you for justice unless you first hear both of them."

A force was now being prepared under Osama, the son of Zaid, who was killed at Muta, against the Byzantines, to exact the long delayed reparation for the murder of the envoy in Syria, as the news of the Prophet's sickness and failing health had caused that expedition to be stopped. This news was soon noised abroad and produced disorder in some districts. Three pretenders had arisen who gave themselves out as prophets, and tried by all kinds of imposture to win over their tribes. The most dangerous of these pretenders was known as Al- Aswad. He was a chief of Yemen and a man of great wealth and rationality, and a clever conjurer. He soon succeeded in gaining over his tribesmen, and with their help reduced to subjection many of the neighbouring towns. He killed Shahr whom the Prophet had appointed as Governor of Sanna in the place of his father, Bazan who had just died. Bazan had been the viceroy of Yemen, under Chosrores of Persia, and after he had adopted Islam, was allowed by the Prophet to remain as Governor of Yemen. He was able to convert to Islam all the Persian colony in that province.

Al Aswad, the conjurer, had now killed Shahr but, soon after, he was massacred by the Persians of Yemen. The other two pretenders, Tulayha and Haroun by name were not suppressed until after the death of the Prophet, during the reign of Abu Bakr. Haroun, better known as Mussaylamah, addressed to the Prophet a letter which ran as follows; "From Mussaylamah, the Prophet of God to Muhammad the Prophet of God. Peace be to you. I am your partner. Let the exercise of authority be divided between us. Half the earth will be mine, and half will belong to your Quraish. But the Quraishites are too greedy to be satisfied with a just division". To this letter the Prophet replied as follows: "From Muhammad, the Apostle of God, to Mussaylamah, the liar. Peace be to those who follow the right path. The earth belongs to God.

It is He Who makes to reign whomsoever He pleases. Only those will prosper who fear the Lord”.

The health of the Prophet grew worse. His last days were remarkable for the calmness and peacefulness of his mind. He was able, though weak and feeble, to lead the public prayers, until within three days of his death. He requested that he might be permitted to stay at Ayesha’s house, close to the mosque, during his illness, an arrangement to which his other wives assented. As long his strength lasted, he took part in the public prayers. The last time he appeared in the mosque, he addressed the congregation, after the usual prayers were over, in the following words: “O Muslims! If I have wronged anyone of you, here I am to answer for it; if I owe aught to anyone; all I may happen to possess belongs to you. A man in the crowd rose and claimed three Dirhams, which he had given to a poor man at the request of the Prophet. They were immediately paid back with these words: “Better to blush in this world than in the next.” The Prophet then prayed and implored God’s mercy for those who had fallen in the persecution of their enemies. He recommended to all his followers the observance of religious duties. He concluded his advice with the following verse of the Qu’ran: “The future mansion [of paradise] We will give unto them who do not seek to exalt themselves on earth or to do wrong; for a happy issue shall attend the pious.” [28:83]

Then he spoke with emotion, and with a voice still so powerful as to reach beyond the outer doors of the mosque: “By the Lord in Whose hand lies the soul of Muhammad,” he said, “as to myself no man can lay hold on me in any matter; I have not made lawful anything excepting what God has made lawful; nor have I prohibited aught, but that which God in His Book has prohibited.” Then turning to the women who sat close by, he exclaimed: “O Fatima, my daughter, and Safia, my aunt, work you both that which shall procure you acceptance with the Lord; for

verily I have no power to save you in any wise.” He then rose and re-entered the house of Ayesha.<sup>[1]</sup>

After this, the Prophet never appeared at public prayers. A few hours after he returned from the mosque, the Prophet died whilst laying his head on the bosom of Ayesha. As soon as the Prophet's death was announced a crowd of people gathered at the door of the house of Ayesha, exclaiming, “How can our apostle be dead?” “No,” said Omar, “He is not dead, he will be restored to us, and those are traitors to the cause of Islam who say he is dead. If they say so let them be cut in pieces, but Abu Bakr entered the house at this moment, and after he had touched the body of the prophet with demonstration of profound affection, he appeared at the door and addressed the crowd with the following speech:

“O Muslims, if any of you has been worshipping Muhammad, then let me tell you that Muhammad is dead. But if you really do worship God, then know you that God is living and will never die. Do you forget the verse in the Qu’ran; “Muhammad is but an apostle, before whom other apostles have already passed?” and also the other verse: “You shall surely die [O Muhammad] and they also shall die? “Upon hearing this speech of Abu Bakr, Omar acknowledged his error and the crowd was satisfied and disseminated.

Al Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, supervised the preparation for the burial, and the body was duly washed and perfumed.

There was some dispute between the Quraishites and the Ansars as to the place of burial; but Abu Bakr settled the dispute by affirming that he had heard the Prophet say, that a prophet should be buried at the very spot where he died. A grave was accordingly dug in the ground within the house of Ayesha, and under the bed on which the Prophet died. In this grave the body was buried, and the usual rites were performed by those who were present. Thus the glorious life of the Prophet Muhammad ended. The Arabs, being then united in one faith and under one banner

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ibn Hisham; Al Wakidi; Ibn Athir.

and one prince found themselves in a position to make those conquests which extended the faith of Islam over so great a part of the world. [1]

“By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Muhammad is a threefold founder of a nation, of an empire and of a religion. Illiterate himself, scarcely able to read or write,[2] he brought a book which is a code of laws, a book of Common Prayer is revered to this day by a sixth of the whole of the human race, as a miracle of purity of style, of wisdom and of truth. It was the one miracle claimed by Muhammad – his standing miracle he called it and a miracle indeed it is. But looking at the circumstances of the time, at the unbounded reverence of his followers, and comparing him with the fathers of the church or with mediaeval saints, to my mind the most miraculous thing about Muhammad is that he never claimed the power of working miracles. Whatever he had said he could do, his disciples would straightway have seen him do. They could not help attributing to him miraculous acts, which he never did, and which he always denied he could do. What more crowning proof of his sincerity is needed? Muhammad to the end of his life claimed for himself that title only, with which he had begun, and which the highest philosophy and the truest Christianity will one day, I venture to believe agree in yielding to him, that of a Prophet, a very Prophet of God.” [3]

Muhammad treated even the most insignificant of his followers. Modesty and kindliness, patience, self-denial and generosity pervaded his conduct and riveted the affections of all around him. He disliked to say, “No”. If unable to answer a petitioner in the affirmative he preferred silence. “He was more bashful,” says his

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[1] G. Sale in his Preliminary Discourse to his translation of the Quran.

[2] All trustworthy commentators and Moslem Historians agree in that the Prophet Muhammad was absolutely illiterate. He could never read and write. [Cf. Ibn Athir; Ibn Hisham; Al Wakidi; G. Sale; Sir Wm Muir; The Quran].

[3] Vide “The Life of Mohammad” by Sir Wm. Muir.



wife Ayesha, “than a veiled virgin; and if anything displeased him, it was rather from his face, than by his words, that we discovered it; he never smote anyone, but in the service of God, not even a woman or a servant”. He was not known ever to refuse an invitation to the house even of the meanest, nor to decline a proffered present, however small. When seated by a friend, he did not haughtily advance his knees toward him. He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that he was the favoured guest. If he met any one rejoicing at success, he would seize him eagerly and cordially by the hand. With the bereaved and afflicted, he sympathized tenderly. Gentle and indulgent towards little children, he would not disdain to accost a group of them at play, with the salutation of peace. He shared his food, even in time of scarcity, with others; and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of every one about him. A kindly and benevolent disposition pervades all these illustrations of his character.”

## The Person and Character of the Prophet Muhammad

It is only right that, before bringing the biography of the Prophet to a conclusion, I should give illustration of his chief traits and character, as already brought to light and passed as authentic by distinguished European critics. Sir William Muir writes. [1]

### The Prophet Personal Appearance and Gait

“His form, though little above mean height, was stately and commanding. The depth of feeling in his dark black eyes and the winning expression of a face otherwise attractive gained the confidence and love of strangers, even at the first sight. His features often turn into a smile full of grace”...“He was” say his contemporary biographers, “the handsomest and bravest, the brightest faced and most generous of men.” Yet when anger kindled in his piercing glance, the object of his displeasure might well quail before it. His stern frown was a sign of death to many a trembling captive. In later years, the erect figure began to stoop but the step was still firm and quick. His hail has been likened to that of one descending rapidly a hill. When he made haste, it was with difficulty that one kept pace with him. He never turned, even if his mantle was caught in a thorny bush, so that these attendants talked and laughed freely behind him, secure of being unobserved.”

### His Habits:

“Through and complete in all his actions, he took in hand no work without bringing it to a close. The same habit pervaded his manner in social intercourse. If he turned in conversation towards a friend, he turned not partially, but with his full face and his whole body. In shaking hand he was not the first to withdraw his own; nor was he the first break off in converse with a stranger, nor to turn away his ear”

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[1] Vide “The Life of Mohammad” by Sir Wm. Muir.

## Simplicity of His Life:

“...simplicity pervaded his life. His custom was to do everything for himself. If he gave alms, he would place it with his own hand in that of petitioner. He aided his wives in the household duties, mended his clothes, tied up the goats, and even cobbled his sandals. His ordinary dress was of plain white cotton stuff, made like his neighbours; but on high and festive occasions he wore garments of fine linen, striped or dyed in red. He never reclined at meals. He ate with his fingers; and when he had finished, he would lick them before he wiped his hands. He lived with his wives in a row of low and homely cottages, built of unbaked bricks, the apartments separated by walls of palm branches, rudely daubed with mud, while curtains of leather, or of black haircloth, supplied the place of doors and windows. He was to all easy of access -‘even as the river’s bank to him that draw water from it’- yet he maintained the state and dignity of real power. No approach was suffered to familiarity of action or of speech. The Prophet must be addressed in subdued accents and in a reverential style. His word was absolute; his bidding law. Embassies and deputations were received with the utmost courtesy and consideration. In the issue of precepts, bearing on their representations, or in other matters of state, the Prophet displayed all the qualifications of an able and experienced ruler, as the reader <sup>[1]</sup> will have observed from the numerous examples given. And what renders this the more strange, is that he was never known himself to write.”

## Courtesy and Kindness of Disposition:

“A remarkable feature was the courtesy and consideration, with which Muhammad treated even the most insignificant of his followers. Modesty and kindness, patience, self-denial and generosity pervaded his conduct and riveted the affections of all around him. He disliked to say, “No” If unable to answer a petitioner in the affirmative he preferred silence. “He was more

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<sup>[1]</sup> i.e. the reader of Sir Wm. Muir’s ‘Life of Mohammad’.

bashful,” says his wife Ayesha, “than a veiled virgin; and if anything displeased him, it was rather from his face, than by his words, that we discovered it; he never smote anyone, but in the service of God, not even a woman or a servant”. He was not known ever to refuse an invitation to the house even of the meanest, nor to decline a proffered present, however small. When seated by a friend, he did not haughtily advance his knees toward him. He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that he was the favoured guest. If he met any one rejoicing at success, he would seize him eagerly and cordially by the hand. With the bereaved and afflicted, he sympathized tenderly. Gentle and indulgent towards little children, he would not disdain to accost a group of them at play, with the salutation of peace. He shared his food, even in time of scarcity, with others; and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of every one about him. A kindly and benevolent disposition pervades all these illustrations of his character.”

#### Friendship:

“Muhammad was also a faithful friend. He loved Abu Bakr with the close affection of a brother; Ali, with the fond partiality of a father. Zaid, the slave of his wife Khadija, was so strongly won by the kindness of the Prophet that he preferred to remain at Makkah, rather than return home with his own father: “I will not leave you,” he said, clinging to his patron, “for you have been a father and a mother to me.” The friendship of Muhammad survived the death of Zaid and his son Osama was treated by him with distinguished favour for the father’s sake. Othman and Omar were also the objects of his special attachment; and the enthusiasm with which at Al Hodeibiya, the Prophet entered into “the Pledge of the Tree”, and swore that he would defend his beleaguered son-in-law even to death, was a signal proof of faithful friendship. Numerous other instances of Muhammad’s ardent and unwavering regard might be adduced. And his affections were in no instance misplaced; they were ever reciprocated by a warm and self-sacrificing love.”

## Moderation and Magnanimity:

“In the exercise of an autocratic power Muhammad was just and temperate. Nor was he wanting in moderation towards his enemies, when once they had cheerfully submitted to his claims. The long and obstinate struggle against his mission, maintained by the inhabitants of Makkah, might have induced its conqueror to mark his indignation in indelible traces of fire and blood. But Muhammad, excepting a few criminals, granted a universal pardon; and nobly casting into oblivion the memory of the past, with all its mockery, its affronts and persecution, treated even the foremost of his opponents with gracious and even friendly consideration. Not less marked was the forbearance shown to Abdallâh and the disaffected citizens of Medina, who for so many years persistently thwarted his designs and resisted his authority, nor the clemency, with which he received the submissive advances of tribes that before had been the most hostile, even in the hour of victory.” [1]

However, as one instance of the false charge of cruelty, brought against the Prophet or his followers without foundation, I quote a statement on the subject by Mr. George Sale: - “Dr. Prideaux, speaking of Muhammad’s obliging those of Al Nadir to quit their settlements, says that a party of his men pursued those who fled into Syria, and having overtaken them, put them all to the sword, excepting only one man that escaped. “With such cruelty,” continues he, did those barbarians first set up to fight for that imposture they had been deluded into.” [2] But a learned gentleman has already observed that this is all grounded on a mistake which the doctor was led into by an imperfection in the printed edition of Elmacians; where after mention of the expulsion of the Nadirites, are inserted some incoherent words, relating to another action which happened the month before, and wherein seventy Moslems, instead of putting others to the sword,

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[1] Vide Sir William Muir’s “The Life of Mohammad”

[2] Prideaux, Life of Mah. P. 82.

were supervised and put to the sword themselves, together with their leader Al Mondar Ebn Omar, Caab Ebn Zeid alone escaping. [*Vide Gagnier, not in Abulf. Vit Mob. P.72*].”<sup>[1]</sup> Sir William Muir continues his remarks on the person and character of the Prophet as follows:

#### Domestic Life:

“In domestic life, the conduct of Muhammad was exemplary. As husband his fondness and devotion were entire. As a father he was loving and tender. In his youth, he lived a virtuous life; and at the age of twenty-five he married a widow, forty years old, during whose lifetime, for five and twenty years, he was a faithful husband to her alone. Yet it is remarkable that during this period were composed most of those passages of the Qu’ran, in which the black eyed “Houries” reserved for Believers in Paradise, are depicted in such glowing colours.”

Sir William Muir, following the example of other Christian writers, has attributed the Prophet’s polygamy to ‘unchecked range of his uxorious inclinations’ and when viewing the social and domestic life of Muhammad, ‘fairly and impartially’, he saw it to be chequered by light and shade; and that, ‘while there is much to form the subject of nearly *‘unqualified’* praise, there is likewise much cannot be spoken of but in terms of reprobation.’

Sir William Muir himself, as quoted above, states that in his youth the Prophet lived a virtuous life; and at the age of twenty five married a widow, forty years old, during whose life time, for five and twenty years, he was a faithful husband to her alone. It is obviously absurd, to think that a man whose character was such, could have any ‘range of uxorious inclinations’.

Sir William Muir asserts, that it was not until the mature age of fifty-four, that the Prophet made the “Trials of Polygamy”. It is obviously a contradiction, unworthy of a fair and impartial critic, to think for a moment that at such an advanced age, a man who

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<sup>[1]</sup> G. Sale, Trans of Al Qu’ran P. 405, Fred. Warne & Co.

had 'lived in his youth a virtuous life', and who, at the age of twenty five, married a widow, forty years old, during whose life time, for five and twenty years, he was a faithful husband to her alone,' should have sexual inclinations. To any really impartial biographer and also to any thoughtful reader, this is quite impossible.

But the marriages of the Prophet have furnished his critics with their chief weapons of attack, and the interested missionary has gone so far as to call him a voluptuary, although some of his own revered spiritual leaders and Prophets were chronicled to possess even as many as a few hundred wives. <sup>[1]</sup> For this reason I give here a few particulars regarding the Prophet's marriages.

His first marriage was contracted when he was twenty five years of age, and the widow, Khadija whom he married was forty years old, that is fifteen years his senior. It was with her alone, that he passed all the years of his youth and manhood, until she died three years before the Hijra or emigration to Medina, when he was already an old man of fifty. This circumstance alone is sufficient to give the lie to those who would belittle him and call him a voluptuary. After her death, while still at Makkah, he married Sauda and Ayesha, the latter of whom was his only virgin wife, and she was the daughter of his intimate and illustrious friend and helper Abu Bakr. Then followed the emigration to Medina, and subsequent to be emigration, he had to fight many battles with his enemies, the Quraish, or such sided with the Quraish and persecuted the Muslims. The result of these battles, was a great discrepancy between the number of males and females, and his favourite followers fell in the field of battle, fighting his enemies, the care of their families devolved upon the Prophet and his surviving companions. In the battle of Badr fell Khunais, son of Huaifa, and the faithful Omar's daughter Hafsa

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<sup>[1]</sup> David had six wives and numerous concubines, [2 Sam. v. 13. 1 Chron, iii 1-9; xiv 3] Solomon had as many as 700 wives and as many as 300 concubines, [Kings xi: 3] Rehoboams had 18 wives and sixty concubines [2 Chron, xi 21].

was left a widow. Omar offered her to Othman and Abu Bakr in turn, and she at last was married to the Prophet in the third year of the Hijra.

Obaida, son of Harith, fell a martyr at Badr, and his widow Zainab, daughter of Khuzaima, was taken in marriage by the Prophet in the same year. In the next year, Abu Salma died, and his widow Um-i-Salma was taken to wife by the Prophet. As Christian criticism lays too much stress upon the Prophet's marriage with Zainab daughter of Jahsh, a full explanation of the events in connection with this marriage is necessary: Zainab was the daughter of the Prophet's own aunt; she was one of the early converts to Islam, and the Prophet proposed to her brother that she should be given in marriage to Zaid, his adopted son and freedman. Both brother and sister were averse to this match, and only yielded under pressure from the Prophet. It is related, that they both desired that the Prophet himself should marry Zainab<sup>[1]</sup> but the Prophet insisted that she should accept Zaid.

The marriage was, however, not a happy one. Zainab was harsh of temper, and she never liked Zaid, on account of the stigma of slavery which attached to his name. Differences arose, and Zaid expressed a desire to the Prophet of divorcing Zainab. The news was grievous to the Prophet, for it was he who had insisted upon the marriage, and he therefore advised Zaid not to divorce her. He feared that people would object that a marriage which had been arranged by the Prophet was unsuccessful. It is to this circumstance, that the verse in Qu'ran refers; "And, you feared men, and God had a greater right that you should fear Him." [33:37]. Let us now revert to Sir William Muir's views of the character of the Prophet.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Al Razi; Abul Fida; Ibn Athir etc.



## Conviction of Special Providence:

“Proceeding now to consider the religious and prophetic character of Muhammad, the first point which strikes the biographer is his constant and vivid sense of a special and all pervading Providence. This conviction moulded his thoughts and designs, from the minutest actions in private and social life to the grand conception, that he was destined to be the reformer of his people and of all Arabia. He never entered a company but he sat down and rose up with the mention of the Lord. When the first fruits of the season were brought to him, he would kiss them, place them upon his eyes and say: “Lord as You have shown us the first, show unto us likewise the last.”

In trouble and affliction, as well as in prosperity and joy, he ever saw and humbly acknowledged the hand of God. A fixed persuasion that ever incident, small and great, is ordained by the divine will, led to the strong expressions of predestination which abound in the Qu’ran. It is the Lord Who turns the hearts of mankind; and alike faith in the believer, and unbelief in the infidel, is the result of the divine fate. The hour and place of everyman’s death, as all other events in his life, are established by the same decree; and the timid believer might in vain seek to avert the stroke by shunning the field of battle. But this persuasion was far removed from the belief in a blind and inexorable fate; for Muhammad held the progress of events in the divine hand to be amenable to the influence of prayer. He was not slow to attribute the conversion of a scoffer, like Omar, or the removal of an impending misfortune [as the deliverance of Medina from the Confederate hosts], to the effect of his own earnest petitions to the Lord.”

## Unwavering Steadfastness at Makkah:

“The growth in the mind of Muhammad of the conviction, that he was appointed to be the Prophet and Reformer, is intimately connected with his belief in a special Providence embracing the spiritual as well as the material world; and out of that conviction

arose the confidence that the Almighty would crown his mission with success. While still at Makkah, there is no reason to doubt that the questionings and aspirations of his inner soul were regarded by him as proceeding directly from God. The light which gradually illuminated his mind with a knowledge of the divine unity and perfections, and of the duties and destiny of man, -light amidst gross darkness, -must have emanated from the same source; and He Who in His own good pleasure had thus begun the work, would surely carry it through to a successful ending. What was Muhammad himself, but an instrument in the hand of the Great Worker? Such, no doubt, were the thoughts which strengthened him, alone and unsupported, to brave for many weary years the taunts and persecutions of a whole people.

“It may be doubted whether he ever engaged personality in active conflict on the battlefields. Though he often accompanied his forces, he never himself led them into action, or exposed his person to avoidable danger. Yet even so, it only brings out in higher relief the singular display of moral daring. Let us for a moment look to the period when a ban was proclaimed at Makkah against all citizens, whether professed converts or not, who espoused his cause or ventured to protect him; and when along with these, he was shut up in the ‘Shi’b’, or quarter of Abu Talib, and these for three years, without prospect or relief endured want and hardship. Strong and steadfast must have been the motives which enabled him, amidst such opposition and apparent hopelessness of success to maintain his principles unshaken. No sooner had he been released from this restraint than, despairing of his native city, he went forth solitary and unaided to At-Taif, and there summoned its rulers and inhabitants to repentance, with the message which he said he had from his Lord; on the third day was driven out of the town with humiliation, while blood flowed from wounds inflicted on him by the common people.

Retiring to a little distance, he poured forth his complaint to God, and then returned to Makkah, there to resume the same outwardly

hopeless cause, with the same high confidence in its ultimate success. We search in vain through the pages of profane history for a parallel to the struggle, in which for thirteen years the Prophet of Arabia, in the face of discouragement and threats, rejection and persecution, retained thus his faith unwavering, preached repentance, and denounced God's wrath against his godless fellow-citizens. Surrounded by a little band of faithful men and women, he met insults, threats, and danger with a lofty and patient trust in the future. And when at last the promise of safety came from a distant quarter, he calmly waited until his followers had all departed, and then disappeared from amongst ungrateful and rebellious people.

“Not less marked was the firm front and unchanging faith in eventual victory which at Medina bore him through seven years of mortal conflict with his native city; and enabled him, sometimes even under defeat, and while his influence and authority were yet limited and insecure, even in the city of his adoption, to speak and to act in the constant and undoubted expectation of victory.”

#### Earnestness and Honesty of Muhammad at Makkah:

“As he was himself subject to convictions thus deep and powerful, it will readily be conceived that his exhortations were distinguished by a corresponding strength and clear thought. Master of eloquence, his language was cast in the purest and most persuasive style of Arabian oratory. His genius exhausted the imagery of nature in the illustration of spiritual truths; and a vivid imagination enabled him to bring before his people the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, the joys of believers, in Paradise, and the agonies of lost spirits in Hell, as close and impending realities. In ordinary address, his speech was slow, distinct, and emphatic; but when he preached, his eyes would redden, his voice rise high and loud, and his whole frame agitate with passion, even as if he were warning the people of an enemy, about to fall on them the next morning or that very night”.

## His Disposition

“When Ayesha was questioned about Muhammad, she used to say: “He was a man just such as yourselves; he laughed often and smiled much: If he had the choice between two matters, he would always choose the easier, so that no sin accrued therefrom. He never took revenge, excepting where the honour of God was concerned. When angry with any person, he would say: “What has taken such a one that he should soil his forehead in the dust.”

## Humility:

“His humility was shown by his riding upon asses, by his accepting the invitation even of slaves, and when mounted, by his taking another behind him. He would say: “I sit at meals as a servant does, and I eat like a servant, for I really am a servant”, and he would sit as one that was ready to rise. He discouraged supererogatory fasting, and works of mortification. He hated nothing more than lying; and whenever he knew that any of his followers had erred in this respect, he would hold himself aloof from them, until he was assured of their repentance.”

## Attitude at Prayers:

“He used to stand for such a length of time at prayer that his legs would swell. When remonstrated with, he said, “What shall I not behave as a thankful servant should? He never yawned at prayer. When he sneezed, he did so with a subdued voice, covering his face. At funerals he never rode; he would remain silent on such occasions, as if conversing with himself so that the people used to think he was holding communication with the dead.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The following are abstracts of Washington Irving’s account of the characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>[2]</sup>

His intellectual qualities were undoubtedly of an extraordinary kind. He had a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, a vivid

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<sup>[1]</sup> Sir William Muir’s ‘The Life of Mohammad’.

<sup>[2]</sup> ‘Life of Mahomet by Washington Irving [Bell & Daldy, London 1864]

imagination, and an inventive genius. His ordinary discourse was grave and sententious, abounding with those aphorisms and epilogues, so popular among the Arabs; at times, he was excited and eloquent, and his eloquence was aided by a voice musical sonorous.

He was sober and abstemious in his diet, and a rigorous observer of fasts. He indulged in no magnificence of apparel, the ostentation of a petty mind; neither was his simplicity in dress affected, but the result of a real disregard to distinction from so trivial a source. His garments were sometimes of wool, sometimes of the striped cotton of Yemen, and were often patched. He forbade the wearing of clothes entirely of silk; but permitted a mixture of thread and silk.

He was scrupulous as to personal cleanliness, and observed frequent ablutions. In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability, with which he received them, and listened to their complaints. In the self-indulgent intercourse of domestic life, he was kind and tolerant. "I served him from the time I was eight years old," said his servant Anas, 'and he never scolded me for anything, though things were spoiled by me."

### The Social Changes Brought about by the Prophet

Dealing with the social changes brought about by the Prophet, Dr. Noldeke <sup>[1]</sup> states: "One fact among others by which we can estimate the striking impression the Prophet produced upon the Arabs, is that as each tribe submitted, or adopted his religion, it renounced the right of revenge for the bloodshed in the struggle. Under other circumstances, this abandonment of blood revenge, at least, would have seemed to the Arab the lowest depth of humiliation. This was, indeed so striking a feature of the new brotherhood that it could not fail to make a silent but deep

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<sup>[1]</sup> Dr. Noldeke's Book on Islam.

impression upon the unbelieving multitude who now began to feel the new religion power.

“To those who seek miracles, this glorious result, achieved in less than a decade, constitute a real and splendid miracle of Islam, which alone gives it the title, to be ranked as a great religion and a wonderful civilising agency. In an exquisitely beautiful passage, full of grace and wisdom, the Glorious Qu’ran draws a contrast between the life and manners of the Arabs in the shade of Islam and those in pre-Islamic times; and urges upon the true believers a true union of hearts, and dwells on the real purpose of the advent of the new religion. Here is a translation of the verses:

‘O you believers, fear God as He deserves to be feared; and die not but as true Muslims. And hold you fast by the cord of God, all of you, and do not scatter yourselves, and remember God’s goodness towards you, how that when you were enemies. He united your hearts, and through His grace, you became brethren, and when you were on the brink of the pit of fire, He drew you back from it; thus clearly God shows His signs, that you may be guided. And let there be among you a people who invite to the good, and enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong; and these are they who shall succeed. And be you not like those who have broken into divisions and fallen into disagreement, after the clear proofs have come to them; and for those there waits a terrible punishment”. [3:102-105]

## The Political Organisation Shaped By the Advent of Islam

Islam writes Mr. Stanley Lane Poole, “is a form of a pure theism, simpler and more strict than the theism of most forms of modern Christianity,<sup>[1]</sup> lofty in the conception of the relation of man to God, and noble in its doctrine of the duty of man to the lower creatures. There is little in it of superstition, <sup>[2]</sup> less of complexity of dogmas: it is an exacting religion without the repulsiveness of asceticism: strict but not merciless.

“Nothing in fact is more hateful, according to the doctrines of Islam, than the self-inflicted torments and voluntary self-punishment of the ascetics. It always recommends the cultivation of the social virtues and the practice of those qualities which form the graces of a corporate life. Islam laid the foundations of a social system which breathes the spirit of charity, friendship, and mutual trust among its members. So impressively did the Prophet bring these high lessons home to the Arabs mind, both by teaching and example, that the tribal jealousies of centuries soon became dead, the old spirit of revenge, inherent in the nation, died away, and the hearts of the true believers were knit together in the closest bond of sympathy and brotherhood. They now felt themselves as the brethren of one and the same faith and citizens of the same commonwealth, enjoying equal rights and privileges.

“Islam penetrated into the very hearts of the Arab people, and the old spirit of jealousy and revenge, of hostility and ill-will, yielded place to a happy consciousness, of the power of love, sympathy and fellow-feeling; the very character of the Arab mind was changed, and many of the evils rooted in the nation were fast eradicated. Within the Islamic commonwealth the internecine wars, which were cause of much unjustifiable bloodshed, soon became a thing of the past; and hostile tribes were united in faith

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<sup>[1]</sup> In fact there is not to be found such a pure theism in any other religion than Islam.

<sup>[2]</sup> There is not the slightest superstition in Islam.

and obedience; and the bravery which had been carelessly spent in domestic quarrels, was energetically directed against a foreign enemy.” [1]

### Political System of Islam

When the Prophet settled at Al-Madienah, he established an Ummah [nation] based not upon the old basis of the common origin of their ancestors, but upon Religion, with the Prophet himself as the chief magistrate. The spirit of blood-revenge derived from the Arabs fiery and sensitive temper which was responsible for long protracted blood feuds between clan and clan, disappeared, and in its place there grew up in each member of the new Ummah a genuine, earnest desire to see community peace and unity maintained. Sense of tribal pride and superiority lost much of its keenness; kindred bond was greatly relaxed. They were taught to respect the new institution, planted through the Prophet, by God Himself, and to sink their tribal disagreements in the common welfare of the brotherhood of faith:

“O men, verily, we have created you of one male and one female; and we have divided you into peoples and tribes, that you might have knowledge one of another. Truly, the most worthy of honour in the sight of God is he who fears Him most. Verily, God is knowing and Cognisant.” [49:13]

The equality of rights was thus distinguishing feature of the Muslim *Ummah*. A convert from a humbler clan enjoyed the same rights and privileges as one who belonged to the noblest Quraish. Even a slave was admitted as a brother from the very moment of his conversion, and the highest public figure in state thought it no dishonour, to take part in reminding him of his past. Nor in the place of worship were suffered artificial differences between man and man; the high and the low, the prince and the peasant, the rich merchant of Makkah and the roaming bedouin of the desert, stood shoulder to shoulder in the presence of their common

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[1] Stanley Lane Pool's 'Lectures on Islam.'



Deity. This equality and fraternity was, and is even today, though much weakened, the key-note of Islam and the secret of its power as a world-religion. [1]

This levelling principle, underlying the tenets of the new faith, proved a genuine blessing to the Arabs in particular. Tribes and races, previously at war with one another, were, in the embracing fold of Islam, welded into one Ummah, inspired with common ideas, common aims and aspirations, and devoted to a common cause. Conflicting interests were harmonised from a loyal desire to advance the public good.

The Glorious Qu'ran laid down certain principal laws, intended to govern their new relations as members of state, to extinguish the fire of old tribal jealousy, and to affect a union of hearts unknown before. The laws soon succeeded in bringing order out of chaos and confusion and made civic life possible for the first time in Arabia, "*O believers.*" So run the fine verses of the Qu'ran:

"If any wicked man comes to you with news, make a thorough inquiry, lest through ignorance you harm a people and have to repent on the morrow of what you have done; and know that an apostle of God is among you. Should he submit to you in most matters you would certainly fall into difficulty. But God has endeared the faith to you, and has given it favour in your hearts, and has made unbelief and wickedness and disobedience hateful to you. Such are they who pursue a right path, a bounty from God and a grace: and God is Knowing and Wise. If two bodies of the believers are at war, then make you peace between them with fairness and do justice: God loves those who are just. Those who believe are brethren; wherefore make peace between your brethren; and fear God, that you may obtain mercy. O believers, let not a people laugh another people to scorn who haply may be better than themselves; neither let women laugh women to scorn who haply may be better than themselves. Neither defame one another, nor call one another by bad names. Wickedness is such a

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[1] T. W. Arnold, 'The Preaching of Islam'.

bad quality to adopt, after becoming true believers, and whose who repent not [of this] are wrongdoers. O believers, avoid frequent suspicions; verily some suspicions are a crime, and pry not into others' secrets, neither let the one of you traduce another in his absence. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you would loathe it. And fear you God, for God is ready to forgive, and He is Merciful. O men, verily We have made you of one male, and one female, and We have made you peoples and tribes that you might know one another. Truly, the most worthy of the honour before God is he who fears Him most. Verily God is knowing, and Cognisant". [49: 6-13]

Such were the principles, on which the political system of Islam was grounded. "It recognised individual and public liberty, secured the person and property of the subjects, and fostered the growth of all civic virtues. It communicated all the privileges of the conquering class to those of the conquered who conformed to its religion, and all the protection of citizenship to those who did not. It put an end to old customs that were of immoral and criminal character. It abolished the inhuman custom of burying the infant daughters alive, and took effective measures for the suppression of the slave-traffic, it prohibited adultery and incestuous relationship; and on the other hand, inculcated purity of heart, cleanliness of body, and sobriety of life." [1]

### The Social Organisation of Islam

The Prophet Muhammad did not only spread a religion, but he also laid down a complete social system, containing minute regulations for a man's conduct in all circumstances of life, with due remarks and penalties, according to his fulfilment or otherwise of these rules. The social and the religious parts of Islam are so inseparably bound up that it is impossible to cut off the one from the other without destroying both.

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[1] Bosworth Smith, 'Mohamed and Muhammadanism'

Religion according to Islam should not only lay down the law of relation of man to God, but should also regulate and distinctly define the proper relation between man and his fellow-creatures.

The Glorious Qu'ran inculcates the softer virtues, such as friendliness, good temper, affability of manners, hospitality, forgiveness, fairness in dealing, regard for superiors, kind treatment of inferiors, respect for women, care of orphans, tending the sick, helping the helpless and the destitute, with a force and persuasion which it is difficult to find elsewhere. The critics of Islam have for most part expressed their unstained admiration for the heroic, or sterner virtues, to wit: patient endurance, fortitude, love of truth under personal risk, courage and manly independence, which Islam has always dignified and in practice of which the Prophet himself and the early Muslims were so marvellously distinguished; but these critics often forget that Islam enjoins with equal emphasis the cultivation of gentler virtues too. Lessons of modesty, benevolence and charity have been so often repeated in the Qu'ran; and again, these virtues form so conspicuous an element in the life and conduct of the Prophet and his companions, that Islam can justly claim to be ranked as a Religion of Love. Every chapter of the Glorious Qu'ran begins with the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The Prophet of Islam has been denominated in the Qu'ran as “the tender, the compassionate,” and ‘the mercy for the universe.’ Himself the tenderest and the most loving of men, he was never tired of preaching to his followers the brotherhood of man and humanity to all God’s creatures. He displayed the greatest consideration for the feelings and sensibilities of others. He loved his wives, and was kind to his servants. He was particularly fond of little children and discouraged the use of the rod for their correction. He enjoined humanity to dumb animals.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Stanley Lane Poole.

Such being the Qu'ran ethics and Apostle of Islam teachings, it is easy to form some idea of the exact nature and extent of the change shaped the Arabs life and thought. Some of the first few converts to Islam, unable to bear persecutions at the idolaters hands sought refuge in Abyssinia. As mentioned previously, when asked by the Negus as to the reason why they had left country, Jaafar, a cousin of the Prophet, spoke thus as the mouthpiece of the small band of refugees: "O King, we lived in ignorance, idolatry and unchastity; the strong oppressed the weak, we spoke untruth; we violated the duties of hospitality. Then a prophet arose, one whom we know from our youth, with whose descent and conduct and good faith we are all acquainted. He told us to worship one God, to keep good faith to, assist our relatives, to fulfil the rights of hospitality, and to abstain from all things impure ungodly, unrighteous. And he ordered us to perform prayers, give alms, and to fast. We believed in him; we followed him. But our countrymen persecuted us, tortured us and tried to cause us to forsake our religion; and now we throw ourselves upon your protection. Will you not protect us?"

Dealing with this great spiritual revolution, Sir William Muir observes as follows: "Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep, had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life...Thirteen years before the "Hijra", Makkah lay lifeless in its debased state. What a change had those thirteen years now produced. A band of several hundred persons had rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of one God, and surrendered themselves completely to the guidance of what they believed a Revelation from Him; praying to the Almighty with frequency and dedication, looking for pardon through His Mercy and striving to follow after good works, alms-giving, purity and justice. They now lived under the constant sense of the omnipotent power of God and of His providential care over the minutest of their concerns. In all the gifts of nature, in every relation of life, at each turn of their affairs, individual or public, they saw His hand. Muhammad was preacher of life to them, the

source under God of their new hopes, and to Him they yielded an unquestioned or reserved submission.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### Status of Women in Islam

It has been said that Islam, as a social system, had been a total failure, because “It has misunderstood the relations of sexes... and by degrading women, has degraded each successive generation of their children down an increasing scale of disgrace and corruption until it seems almost impossible to reach a lower depth of vice.” This is certainly strong language and calls for an investigation, as to whether Islam has really misunderstood relations of sexes and whether it has really degraded women.

Very few of the critics make an effort to determine exactly what are actually the teachings of Islam are in this respect as embodied in the Glorious Qu’ran; and fewer still is the number of those who care to study the Prophet life, which is the most authentic commentary on the Qu’ran text. It is therefore most regrettable that misconception should have arisen about the status of women in Islam a point on which the attitude of Islam is clear and unmistakable. I am afraid many in Europe and in the USA form such strange opinions from a study of the tales or romance or books of travelling, written by professional globe-trotters. They see in the ‘harem’, which is by the way, a name in the East for the ladies ‘apartment’ a home, of gross sensuality and voluptuous pleasures. Such ideas have unfortunately prevailed in the West for a very long time; and are supported by the wrong interpretations that have been put, from time to time, on certain Qu’ran verses and certain sayings of the Prophet of Islam, and they have a firm hold on the imagination of the Western critics.

One of the verses of exquisite beauty which have been subject to misunderstanding in certain quarters, is: “...They [the wives] are a garment for you and you are a garment for them....” Qu’ran [2:187]. It is garment that hides one’s nakedness; so do husband

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<sup>[1]</sup> Sir William Muir’s “Life of Muhammad.”

and wife, by entering into marriage relations secure each other's chastity. The garment gives comfort to the body; as does the husband find comfort in his wife's company, as she in his. The garment is the grace, the beauty, the embellishment of the body, so too are wives to their husbands, as the husbands to them.

Another verse which has been similarly misunderstood is the verse which the Rev. Rodwell translates thus:- "Men are superior to women on account of the qualities, with which God has gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them. Virtuous women are obedient, careful during the husband's absence, because God has of them been careful" [4:34].

From this verse several critics have drawn the erroneous conclusion that in Islam woman holds a very subordinate position, and that she has been placed under man's tyrannical control, she having no choice but to submit to his arbitrary dictates and self-willed decrees. Even accepting Rev. Rowlell's translation of the verse as correct, the verse sense appears to be nothing more than this: that man should treat his wife with love and affection and provide for her from his abundance, while woman should preserve her honour, attend to domestic duties and look up to him as her friend and guide. Understood thus, the verse has nothing revolting to our feelings, and describes the relationship between husband and wife as it naturally ought to be. There is nothing in the verse to imply that the wife's judgment is in any way tied that she is simply the slave of her husband's desires or that she is at best an 'ornamental article of furniture'. Neither, according to respectable commentators of the Qu'ran, does the verse admit of the meaning which superficial critics have wilfully put upon it. These commentators understand the verse to point out a man's right to exercise a certain control over his wife, and his duty to provide for her security and sustenance. The man's superiority over woman rests on certain innate qualities which man generally possesses in greater proportion, in regard to knowledge and power. In power of endurance, in boldness and

courage, man has a decided advantage over woman. Prophets, apostles, distinguished philosophers and commanders of armies have all been men, not women.

Lecky, himself undoubtedly a clear thinker and discerning critic, while discoursing on the distinctive difference between sexes observers thus: "Physically, men have the indisputable superiority in strength, and women in beauty. Intellectually, a certain inferiority of the female sex can hardly be denied, when we remember how almost exclusively the foremost places in every department of science, literature and art have been occupied by man...It is impossible to find a female Raphael, or a female Handel, or a female Shakespeare, Newton." Lecky, however, thinks and perhaps rightly enough, that morally the general superiority of women over men is unquestionable. Be that as it may when once we admit the physical and intellectual superiority of man over woman, we cannot deny that woman has to depend upon, and take advantage of, the intellectual resources and superior strength of the opposite sex; and this is precisely what Muslim scholars hold to be the important and significance of the verse under consideration.

Close acquaintance with the teachings of Islam repudiates the false charge, that the Prophet is responsible for the degradation of woman. The Prophet saw the weak points of woman's character, as well as its strong points. He regarded woman as physically and intellectually inferior to man in general, but richer in nobler emotions of the heart, in tenderness and delicacy of feeling. Allâh said: "and live with them honourably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allâh brings through it a great deal of good." [4:19]

The Prophet neither desired that woman should be bond-slave of her husband, nor did he tolerate the idea, that woman should be so far free as to overstep her proper limits and encroach upon the sphere of her husband.

On the principle of division of labour, Islam assigns to each a particular scope of work, on the faithful discharge of which depends the happiness of family life and home. Woman, in her capacity of a good mother and a devoted wife, is the queen of her home, while the husband is to protect her from all danger and temptation, earn his bread by the sweat of his brow in the open world, and provide for the maintenance of the family. In connection with this setting apart of scopes of work with regard to the nature constitution mental habitude and position of the person concerned, the Prophet of Islam said: "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The ameer (ruler) who governs the people is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. A man is the shepherd of the members of his household and is responsible for them. A woman is the shepherd of her husband's house and children and is responsible for them. A slave is the shepherd of his master's wealth and is responsible for it. Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock." [*Al-Bukhari, 7138; Muslim, 1829*]

The ruling idea in the teachings of Islam with regard to man and woman, is that the husband and the wife should supplement each other, call into play the distinctive excellence of their respective character, in mutual confidence, strive to work out their united happiness. Woman is to exercise her beneficent, humanizing influence over husband, soften the hardness of his nature and level down stiffness of his character; while man, for his part, is to educate her mind and help her to realize those womanly qualities, in which she by her very nature excels. This is wifehood conception which the Prophet of Islam favoured, as is inferred from his teaching. "A woman is married for four reasons." said he, "either in consideration of her wealth, or her noble parentage, or her beauty, or her piety. Succeed then in getting a woman of piety for your wife, for she is to her husband a helper in life and she remains content with little." [*Sabih Muslim 3457*]

Once again, he was heard praising women of Quraish, 'because', said he, "they are the kindest to their children while they are



infants, and because they keep a careful watch over their husbands belongings.”

In another instance the Prophet of Islam said: “There are four things, such that if a person is endowed with any one of these, it is as if the blessings of both worlds were showered upon him: first, a heart that is grateful; second a tongue that utters constantly the name of God; third, a mind that is patient and calm amid troubles; fourth, a wife that is never guilty of a breach of trust either in respect of her own person or in respect of her husband’s property.”

I will now give some further sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, on the question under discussion, which I hope will shed more light on the position assigned to women in Islam.

- 1) “The best among you is he who is the kindest to his wife, and I am the kindest of you all to my wives.” [*Sabeeh Al-Tirmidhi, 3895*]
- 2) “What are the rights that a wife has over her husband?” asked Moawiyah; and the Prophet forthwith replied: “That you should feed her when you feed yourself, clothe her when you clothe yourself, you should not hit her on the face, you should not curse her and you should not forsake her except in the house.” [*Abu Dawood 2142*]
- 3) “Verily of the believers he has the most perfect faith who has the best manners, and shows the greatest kindness to his wife and children.” [*Sunan Abu Dawood*]
- 4) “O People, it is true that you have certain rights over your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allâh’s trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Treat your women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and

committed helpers.” [*Hafiz Ibn Hibban reported in al-Sahih 11/203/4862*]

- 5) Once the Prophet portrayed an ideal wife in the following words: “She is the ideal wife who pleases you when you look at her, obeys you when you give her direction; and protects her honour and your property when you are away.” [*Al-Tirmidhi 278*]
- 6) “The world is full of provision, and the best provision is a righteous woman”. [*Sahih Muslim 1467*]
- 7) “Seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim” [*Ibn Majah*]

## 1. Purpose of Marriage

The purpose of marriage was defined by the Prophet in clear unambiguous words. It was never meant to be a means of satisfying sensual appetite; but on the other hand, it was instituted, primarily, as a safeguard against lewdness and self-control, and secondly, as a means of procreation. It is on these and similar grounds, that he always encouraged a married life in preference to a life of celibacy, and laid so much stress on piety and fruitfulness of women. “Whoever marries a woman solely for her power and position,” said the Prophet “God but increases his humiliation; whoever marries a woman solely for her wealth, God but increases his poverty; whoever marries a woman solely for her beauty. God but increases his ugliness; but whoever marries a woman, in order that he may restrain his eyes, observe continence, and treat his relations kindly, God puts a blessedness in her for him, and in him for her.” [*Al-Tabarani*]

Thus piety and chastity are uppermost in the conception of Islam, as the prime motive of marriage. This is clear enough in another saying of the Prophet. “There are three persons,” said he, “whom the Almighty Himself as undertaken to help—first, he who seeks to buy his freedom’ second, he who marries with a view to secure

his chastity; and third, he who fights in the cause of God”. [*At-Tirmidhi*]

Another saying of the Prophet is equally clear on this point: “He, who marries, completes half his religion: it now rests with him to complete the other half by leading a virtuous life in constant fear of God”. [*Al-Tirmidhi 3096*] That Islam viewed marriage as means of procreation, and not for gratification of sensual desires, is clear from a short saying of the Prophet: “Marry women who love their husbands and be very prolific, for I wish you to be more numerous than any other people”. [*Mishkatu 'l-Masabih, book 13*]. The Prophet advised great care in bride selection, and even permitted that intended bride be seen, before her marriage by him who seeks her hand, lest a blunder in choice or an error of judgment should defeat the very end of marriage.

## 2. Marriage and Divorce

The laws of marriage and divorce were so framed by the Prophet that they may ensure the permanence of marriage relations, without impairing individual freedom. These laws display a wonderful insight into human nature, inasmuch as they never lose sight of exceptional circumstances, requiring special treatment. In the formulation of the laws of marriage and divorce, extremes have been avoided in favour of a golden mean. If, under certain circumstances, more than one wife is permitted, or dissolution of marriage is favoured, it is because of the operation of the same principle of flexibility that governs the entire body of the Islamic laws.

It is certain that the Islamic laws of marriage and divorce have been abused; and sometimes ridiculed in certain Muslim lands; but the laws themselves are not responsible for the delinquencies of individuals. The Islamic laws have recognised women as free and responsible members of society and have assigned to them a convenient position. A Muslim woman is entitled to a share in the inheritance, along with her brothers, and although the proportion is different, the distinction is founded on a just appreciation of

the relative position of brother and sister. No male member of the family, not even her husband, can manipulate her property which during the marriage remains absolutely her own and quite at her disposal. The eligible portion of stipulated dower is payable to her on demand, as soon as the status of marriage is established, and the postponed portion on termination of the marital relation, unless the woman is guilty of a manifest wrong.

Under the Muslim law, the dower settled upon the wife, is an obligation imposed by the law on the husband, as a mark of respect for the wife, the non- specification of which, at the time of marriage, does not affect the validity of marriage. In the event of dissolution of marriage, the husband can retain no part of the wife's property, including her ante-nuptial settlement; and if the administration of the wife's estate was entrusted to him, he must render the wife an account of such administration. Her property is in fact jealously guarded on all sides, and no restrictions are placed on the individual right she has in her belongings. She possesses the right of dividing and alienating her property, and this right of alienation is in regard, not only to her husband but also to every body else. She can sue her husband, as she can sue her other debtors, in open court. She does not require her husband or father, to represent her at law. She can act as an executive and can enter into any contract independently. A Muslim wife retains her distinct individuality even after marriage, and she never assumes her husband's name. Marriage under Islam is but a civil contract, and not a sacrament, in the sense that those who are once joined in wed-lock can never be separated. It may be controlled, and under certain circumstances, dissolved by the will of the parties concerned. Public declaration is no doubt necessary, but it is not a condition of the validity of the marriage. Nor is any religious ceremony deemed absolutely essential. Two witnesses are required to attest the contract has been concluded.

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[1] The whole History of the Christian Laws of Marriage and divorce, furnishes a very interesting and instructive reading to a Moslem jurist: for,

### 3. The Guardian and the Consent of the Bride

Though the Islamic Laws recognise the consent of a woman as an indispensable element of a valid marriage; they recommend the consent of her guardian be also taken. Muslim jurists are, no doubt, divided in their opinions, as to whether the consent of the bride's guardian is essential but they all agree in holding that 'a woman can under no circumstances be married without her own express consent.' According to the Hanfi Islamic School of Law, the capacity of a woman who is adult and of sound mind, to contract herself in marriage is absolute. The same school explicitly lays down that 'a woman who is adult and of sound mind may be married by virtue of her own consent, although the contract may not have been made or acceded to by her guardian and this whether she be a virgin, or a "Thayyiba'.<sup>[1]</sup> On the same principle, marriage of an adult woman under compulsion has been held to be invalid. It is related on good authority, that an adult woman

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he perceives, perhaps not without a feeling of just pride, that his Christian brethren are coming nearer to Islam, at least in their conception of marriage and the relations to which it gives rise. In all European countries, the laws relating to marriage and divorce have been revised and recast, and the changes introduced, when examined will be found to exhibit in some of their board features, a very close analogy to the Islamic Laws, framed several centuries before. Thus, in Germany, for instance, the code 1900 recognises civil marriages alone. 'It is affected, by the declaration of the parties before a Registrar, in the presence of each other, of their intention to be married. Two witnesses of full age must be present. The Registrar asks each of the parties whether he or she will marry the other, and on their answer in the affirmative, declares them duly married, and enters them in the register. The marriage must be preceded by a public notice. Dissolution of marriage has long been recognized in Germany and the United States of America. In England, divorces were very rare till 1857, when the powers exercised in matrimonial matters by the house of Lords, the Ecclesiastical Courts of Common Law were transferred to a lay court termed 'The Court for Divorce and matrimonial Causes,' and constituted for the administration of all matters connected with divorce. In France, a similar change came about in the year 1884.

<sup>[1]</sup> Namely, a woman who is not a virgin; a widow or a divorced woman.

who was married by her father to a man against her will, came and spoke about it to the Prophet who declared the marriage void.

It is clear, then, that under the Hanafi School of law, a marriage can be contracted with or without a guardian, provided the girl is adult and has given her consent to the contract.

The Shafie and the Maleki School of law, on the other hand, maintain that a maiden cannot personally consent to marriage. According to them, the Wali's [the guardian's] consent, in the case of a maiden, is one of the essential factors of marriage, though not in the case of a *thayyiba*. The distinction seems to have been derived from the idea that a *thayyiba*'s judgment is naturally more reliable than a virgin's and that she is expected to understand better the nature of the marriage contract. In support of their view they refer to the tradition, related by Ayesha, that the Prophet said that the contract of marriage is absolutely void, if a woman enters into such without the consent of her guardian.

The great majority of the girls being quite innocent of the nature of the contract, it is therefore necessary that the guardian of the girl should intervene and protect her from being duped by interested persons, or from the evil consequences likely to flow from the choice of the girl, when injudicious or against her own interest.

#### 4. The Inequality of the Two Sexes with Regard to Divorce

Marriage being regarded as a civil contract and as such not indissoluble, the Islamic law naturally recognises the right in both the parties to dissolve the contract under certain given circumstances. Divorce, then, is a natural consequence to the conception of marriage as a contract, and it is regrettable that it should have furnished European critics a handle for attack. Even Sale, that eminent scholar has fallen into the same error; for he too seems to entertain the view, that the Islamic law permits a

man to repudiate his wife “even on the slightest disgust!” [1] Whether the law permits, or favours, repudiation on the slightest disgust, we shall presently see, but as to the other point raised by the same learned critic, namely; the inequality of the two sexes in regard to the right of obtaining a divorce, one has to remember that this inequality is more seeing than real. The theory of marriage, no doubt, points to a subordination of the wife to her husband, because of her comparative inferiority in discretionary powers; but in practice the hands of the husbands are fettered in more ways than one. The theoretical discretion must not be understood as giving a tacit sanction to the excesses of a brutal husband; on the other hand it is intended to guard against the possible dangers of an imperfect judgment. Relations between the members of the opposite sexes which marriage legalises are, however, so subtle and delicate, and require such constant adjustment, involving the fate and well-being of the future generations, that in their regulation the law considers it expedient to allow the voice of one partner, more or less, predominance over that of the other. [2]

Perhaps it is here worthy of notice that in Europe the two sexes are not placed on an equal footing in respect of the right of the divorce. Lord Helier, P.C., K., C.B., who was President of the Probate Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice, 1892–1905, observes on this point: “Much comment has been made on the different grounds, on which divorce is allowed to a husband and to a wife – it being necessary to prove infidelity in both cases, but a wife being compelled to show either an aggravation of that offence or an addition to it. Opinions probably will always differ whether the two sexes should be placed in equality in this respect, abstract justice being invoked, and the idea of marriage as a mere contract, pointing in one direction, and social considerations in the other. But the reason of the legislature for making the distinction is clear. It is that the wife

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[1] G. Sale’s Prelim. Disc. To his translation of the Quran Sec. VI.

[2] Mohammadan Jurisprudence, page 327.

is entitled to an absolute divorce only if her reconciliation with her husband is neither to be expected nor desired. This was no doubt the view taken by the House of Lords.”<sup>[1]</sup>

## 5. Limitations of Divorce

A Muslim is not free to exercise the right of divorce “on the slightest disgust.” The law has put many limitations upon the exercise of this power. Then, again, the example and precepts of the Prophet in this particular have rendered divorce, most repellent to the Muslim mind. A Muslim is permitted to have recourse to divorce provided there be sufficient justification for such an extreme measure. The whole Qu’ran expressly forbids a man to seek pretexts for divorcing his wife, so long as she remains faithful and obedient to him, “If they [namely, women] obey you, then do not seek a way against them.”<sup>[2]</sup> The law gives to the man primarily the faculty of dissolving the marriage, if the wife by her offensiveness or her bad character, renders the married life unhappy; but in the absence of serious reasons, no Muslim can justify a divorce either in the eyes of religion or the law. If he abandons his wife or puts her away from simple caprice, he draws upon himself the divine anger, for ‘the curse of God’ said the Prophet, ‘rests on him who repudiates his wife capriciously’. [*Abmad*]

Essentially, divorce is an evil, and must be regarded as such, wherever there is the least respect for the law of God and the precepts of the Prophet. The pagan Arab, before the time of the Prophet, was absolutely free to repudiate his wife or wives, whenever it suited his whim or purpose. He was not bound to offer any reasons for the exercise of the power of divorce. The mere expression of his will was enough to effect a separation. The

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Review of Religion, April, 1913.

<sup>[2]</sup> Quran [4:34]. Obedience here signifies obedience to man only in matters recommended by the law of God. This significance is made clear by a comparison with Quran, [33:31], [33:35] and [66:5]. This verse holds to mean “Seek not a pretext for separation.”



wife was a mere plaything. Sometimes the husband would revoke the divorce and again divorce her, and again take her back, to divorce her again, and so on indefinitely. Sometimes, again she was divorced, but she was not free to marry. Women under such circumstances were in a perpetual state of suspense, as it were. At last the Prophet, the Mercy for the Universe, came. He declared divorce to be ‘the most disliked of lawful things in the sight of God. He was indeed never tired of expressing his abhorrence of divorce. Once he said: “God created not anything on the face of the earth which He loves more than the act of manumission, nor did He create anything on the face of the earth which He detests more than the act of divorce. On another occasion he said: Forbidden is the fragrance of paradise to her who demands divorce from her husband without unavoidable reasons. Nor is this all; The Prophet actually imposed many conditions on the exercise of the power of divorce, and so passionately did he protect women against the tyranny of their husbands, that there soon grew up a general feeling among women of the time, that the Prophet would defend their cause, whether it be just or unjust, and that his decision would be consistently in their favour. His defence of the cause of women, and of orphans and of children, had in fact passed into an excellent example.

In the Glorious Qu’ran, there is a most informative verse which is generally overlooked. “Associate with the wives”, so runs the verse, “with goodness; and if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and God may put abundant good in it.” [4:19]. Thus Qu’ran enjoins forbearance, even with a wife one does not like. One really wonders at the boldness of the critics who say that the law of Islam permits divorce “even on the slightest disgust.”

Many and various are the saying of the Prophet of Islam that teach love, untiring patience, a forgiving disposition and, above all, fear of God in the treatment of women. “O’ my people! You have certain rights over your wives and so have your wives over you. They are the trust of Allâh in your hands, so you must treat them with all kindness.” [*Muslim 15:19*]

A great Muslim commentator observes that divorce is allowable when the object is not to trouble the wife by divorcing her without just grounds, as refractory or unseemly behaviour on her part, or extreme necessity on the part of the husband.

It is clear thus, Islam discourages divorce in principle, and permits it only when it has become altogether impossible for the parties, to live together in peace and harmony. It avoids, therefore greater evil by choosing the lesser one, and opens a way for the parties to seek agreeable companions and, thus, to accommodate themselves more comfortably in their new homes. For, under Islam, a divorced woman, like the husband who divorces her, acquires the right of marrying any person she or he likes, the moment the separation is recognised by the law. <sup>[1]</sup>

Fully recognizing the arise from divorce, the Prophet of Islam took very cautious steps in framing the laws; and the ruling idea seems to be, that divorce should be permitted only when marriage fails in its effects, and the parties cease to fulfil the duties that spring from the marriage relation. There is in fact no justification for permanently yoking together two hostile souls, who might make themselves quite comfortable in new homes, if they were permitted to effect a separation. To compel them to live together “in pursuance of a most vexatious law under an oppression of the heaviest slavery, -for such is marriage without love- would indeed be a hardship more cruel than any divorce whatever. God, therefore, gave laws of divorce, in their proper use, must equitable and humane.” <sup>[2]</sup>

For, most dreadful consequences sometimes follow, unless divorce is permitted where it is desirable. Justinian, the great Roman emperor, had to repeal the prohibition of his predecessor on divorce by mutual consent, despite of the clergy opposition,

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<sup>[1]</sup> With Christians the case is not so: Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” Matt. V: 32.

<sup>[2]</sup> A Treatise on Christian Doctrine by J. Milton.

and the ground stated by the enactment was, that it was difficult “to reconcile those who once came to hate each other and who, if compelled to live together, frequently attempted each other’s lives” “He yielded” writes Gibbon, “to the prayers of his unhappy subjects, and restored the liberty of divorce by mutual consent, the civilians were unanimous, the theologians were divided, and the ambiguous word <sup>[1]</sup> which contains the precepts of Christ, is flexible to any interpretation that the wisdom of a legislature can demand.”

## 6. Islam Recommends Reconciliation

A careful study of the laws of the Qu’ran which relate to marriage and divorce will show that the spirit of the verses unmistakably points to a prevention of divorce, and that everywhere a reconciliation is recommended in the most appealing terms. Before the parties proceed to the extremity of divorce for unavoidable reasons, it is expressly laid down, that all lawful means be adopted for avoiding a breach; and it is only in the event of their failure that a separation is permitted, of course, as a last recourse. Under such extreme circumstances, divorce is not merely permissibly, but has been held quite expedient, and recourse to it is recommended, in spite of deterrents, like poverty. It is believed. God Himself opens out many a way for those whose intentions are honest: “And if they separate, God will make them richer out of His abundance, for God is extensive and wise.” [4:129]. It is interesting to note that nearly the same idea is expressed in the Qu’ran where those who are single are exhorted to marry.

“Marry those who are single among you, and such as are honest of your menservants and your maid servants, if they be poor, God will enrich them of His abundance.” [24:32]. It follows, then, that according to the Islamic laws, divorce, under certain circumstances, is as necessary as marriage.

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<sup>[1]</sup> St. Matt. V.32

The Qu'ran directions in respect of the adoption of the courses that tend to make reconciliation possible, are as explicit as they are full of wisdom. Thus, in the chapter on women, we read: "Virtuous women are obedient, careful during the husband's absence, because God has of them been careful. But those, for whose refractoriness you have cause to fear, chide; remove them into beds apart; and chastise them, but if they are obedient to you, then seek not occasion against them: verily God is High and Great. And if you fear a breach between husband and wife, send a judge out of his family, and a judge out of her family: if they are desirous of agreement, God will effect reconciliation between them; for God is Knowing and Apprised of all." [4:33-34]

If woman is chaste and mindful of her duties as wife, the Islamic law makes it obligatory upon the husband to associate with her on the best of terms, and with kindness and courtesy. But, if she proves refractory in her behaviour, the law grants on the husband the power of correction if exercised in moderation."<sup>[1]</sup>

The flow and tone of the verses quoted above, point to the desirability of exercising the power of correction in three degrees. He may begin with a reproach, if her conduct calls for such. Then, if she still remains rebellious, he may banish her from his bed for a few days. If this also proves unavailing, he may next beat his wife, but not so as to cause her permanent injury, for he is not allowed to use violence, even under extreme provocation."<sup>[2]</sup> In the event of failure of all these measures, divorce need not follow, but a resort to arbitrators is advised, each party being represented by a member of his or her family. Arbitrators after

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<sup>[1]</sup> The law of England similarly vested in the husband the right of chastising his wife for levity of conduct, "and the husband in quite recent times, was allowed to restrain her personal liberty, but his right so to do was first expressly negated by decision of the Court of Appeal in the year 1891." Holland's Jurisprudence, "page 240."

<sup>[2]</sup> "The Mohammadan Law," stated the Lord of the Privy Council, on a question of what is legal cruelty between man and wife, "would probably not differ materially from our own" [Abdul Kader 1886.]

hearing both sides, shall attempt by all possible means, to bring about a reconciliation, if their efforts prove unsuccessful, they may grant a repudiation, when empowered by both parties to do so. The Prophet, who no doubt understood importance of Qu'ranic verses better than anybody else, is reported on good authority to have said: "Feed your wife as you feed yourself, clothe her as you clothe yourself, 'strike her not on her face, separate not from her, except within the house; but if she persists in her refractoriness...begin with admonitions, and awaken in her the fear of God the Most High; if she does not submit, banish her from your bed, and converse not with her for three days; if she still refuses to mend her manners, beat her but not so as to leave any mark on her person, as would be the case if a rod were used: for the object is to correct her, and not to destroy her. Should this course fail to mend matters, let the case be referred to two Muslim arbitrators, free and just, one chosen from the family of each of the parties; and they shall see whether in that particular case reconciliation or separation is desirable; and their decision shall be binding upon them both."<sup>[1]</sup>

When, however, the cause of disagreement proceeds from the husband, the wife is certainly not given the power of correction, but then, she is empowered by the Islamic law to obtain a divorce, if she so desires. Before the advent of Islam, neither the Jews nor the Arabs recognised the right of divorce for women: and it was the Qu'ran that, for the first time in the history of Arabia, gave this great privilege to women.

I give below some of the verses of the Qu'ran, and the reader will see how they ask us to make allowance for the frailties, to which our human nature is prone, and in what manner reconciliation is recommended. It is impossible to read the verses without being impressed with their appealing tone and graceful simplicity. "And if a woman", so runs the fine verse: - "Fears ill usage or aversion, on the part of her husband, it shall be no fault in them, if they can

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<sup>[1]</sup> "Ghunyat et Talibeen ch: Manners of Marriage."

agree with mutual agreement; for agreement is best. <sup>[1]</sup> Souls are prone to avarice <sup>[2]</sup>, but if you act kindly and fear God, then verily your actions are not unnoticed by God. And you will not have it at all in your power to treat your wives alike, even though you fain would do so; but yield not wholly to disinclination, so that you leave one of them, as it were, in suspense; but if you come to an understanding, and fear God, verily God is Forgiving and Merciful; but if they separate, God can compensate both out of His abundance, for God is Vast and Wise.” [4:127-129]

We have seen, then that divorce is permissible in Islam only in cases of extreme emergency. When all efforts for effecting a reconciliation have failed, the parties may proceed to a dissolution of the marriage by “Talaq” or by “Kholaa”.<sup>[3]</sup> When the proposal of divorce proceeds from the husband, it is called “Talaq”, and when it takes effect at the instance of the wife it is called “Kholaa”.

Under many law systems, divorce was certainly permitted, but it could not be revoked. But Islam legislator, while he permitted divorce, recognised under certain circumstances, the right of return in the husband. This privilege, in Islam early years was indefinitely exercised, and often abused to the disadvantage of women, until the Prophet received revelations, setting limits to

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<sup>[1]</sup> To wit, agreement is better than separation, better than ill-usage and better than aversion. [Razi Commentary]

<sup>[2]</sup> “Avarice” here implies whatever is an impediment to reconciliation. On the part of the wife it takes the form of an uncompromising attitude and a tenacious insistence on her rights which may prevent a meeting half-way, and as applied to the husband, it means unwillingness to associate with the wife for ugliness of her features or old age, or other like causes. [Razi Commentary]

<sup>[3]</sup> There is a third way, also called “Mubarat,” which is divorce by Mutual consent. Again: “Men used to divorce wives, and take them back, not because they intended to retain them, but because they wanted to tease their wives by putting off the divorce indefinitely; so God revealed the verse: “Retain them not by constraint etc.” [Malik’s Mowattaa].

the divorce act, and forbidding unjustifiable cruelty to wives, by keeping them in suspense for an indefinite period. [1]

“You may divorce your wives, and then either retain them with humanity, or dismiss them with kindness.” [2:229]

“When you divorce women, and the time for sending them is come either retain them with generosity, or put them away with generosity; but retain them not by constraint so as to be unjust toward them. He who doth so indeed injures himself.” [2:231]

### 7. The Form and Review of Separation

The Prophet imposed certain such conditions on the exercise of the power of divorce that while, on the one hand, they served as a powerful check on the injudicious and arbitrary use of this power, they afforded, on the other hand, many opportunities to the parties for an amicable agreement, if they so desired. Of the several forms of divorce recognised by Islamic law, the one that bears the impress of the Prophet’s sanction and approval is “*Absan*” type of “*Talaq*”. This form of repudiation involves the following conditions, each of which being intended to prevent a permanent breach.

- A. The husband, in the first place, must pronounce only one repudiation, the object of this limitation being, that he may subsequently, when better sense prevails, revoke the repudiation—if he has pronounced it from caprice or in a moment of excitement— within the period of the wife’s retirement consequent upon that repudiation and that he may re-marry her, if the period expires without the right of return having been exercised by the husband. [2]

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[1] “A man divorced his wife, took her back, when the period of retirement was coming to an end, again divorced her, saying-by God, I will neither accept you, nor allow you freedom to marry another. So God revealed the verse: “You may divorce your wives etc.” [Malik’s Mowattaa].

[2] Fatawi Moughiri.

- B. The repudiation must be pronounced when the wife is in a state of purity, and there is no bar to sexual intercourse, it being declared unlawful to pronounce repudiation when the wife is in menses, or when she is pure, but has already been approached.
- C. The husband must abstain from connubial intercourse with his wife after pronouncing repudiation for the period of three months.”<sup>[1]</sup>

There is a tradition of accepted authenticity that throws considerable light on the wisdom underlying the last two restrictions. Abdullah Ibn Omar divorced his wife while she was in her menses; and the matter was reported to the Prophet who, much exasperated at the levity of his conduct, said: “Let him take her back and retain her; till she be pure and again have her courses and again gets pure. Then, if he thinks it prudent, let him divorce her, but he should do so when she is clean and has not been approached: and this is the period of retirement [*iddat*] which God has ordered for divorce.”

Some learned commentators observe in connection with this tradition that the purpose of this condition is, to avoid a rash and hasty procedure on the part of the husband, through aversion arising from the wife’s impurity, and by fixing a long period of abstinence to give him opportunities to reconsider his decision about the divorce, so that perhaps he may repent, and exercise the right of return before the expiry of the term.

During this period of probation, the marriage subsists between the parties, and the husband retains his marital authority over his wife. He may, therefore, have access to the wife even without her permission, and can treat her as his wife, but this would actually amount to his exercising the right of return. During ‘*iddat*’, the

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<sup>[1]</sup> These three months constitute the ‘iddat’ period which is obligatory on such wives with whom the marriage has been consummated. “The women who are divorced shall wait concerning themselves until they have their courses thrice,” Quran [2:228].



husband is under legal obligation to lodge the wife in his house, though in a separate apartment, and maintain her. The Qu'ran laws are quite clear on this point:- "O Prophet, when you divorce women, divorce them at their appointed time and compute the term exactly, and fear God your Lord. Oblige them not to go out of their apartments, nor allow them to depart, unless they be guilty of manifest uncleanness." [65:1]

"House the divorced as you house yourselves, according to your means, and distress them not, by reducing them to straits. And if they are pregnant, then be at charges for them, till they are delivered of their burden; and if they suckle your children, then pay them their hire and consult among yourselves, and act generously." [2:232]

"And if he has divorced her [for the third time], then she is not lawful to him afterward until [after] she marries a husband other than him. And if the latter husband divorces her [or dies], there is no blame upon the woman and her former husband for returning to each other if they think that they can keep [within] the limits of God. These are the limits of God, which He makes clear to a people who know." [2:230]

It is obvious, that the very spirit of the prescribed traditional form of repudiation is towards a revocation of the divorce and a reconciliation between the parties concerned. If, however, the parties fail to take advantage of the prescribed interim, and are determined to break from each other, the husband may pronounce the repudiation for the third time and thus dissolve the marriage definitely. The divorced wife immediately turns into unlawful to him and he cannot remarry her, unless the wife marries first another person by a valid and binding contract, is divorced by this person, after an authentic consummation of marriage and completes the period of 'iddat' consequent upon such repudiation.<sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> *ibid.*

This severe condition has been subject of much comment by the critics; but they forget that the very existence of such a condition demonstrates most strongly that the principles of Islam are entirely opposed to the alleged facility of divorce. The object of laying down such a rule was to prevent a definite dissolution of marriage, by appealing to the sense of honour of the people.

Sir W. Muir erroneously thinks that Islam positively sanctions the hiring of a temporary husband, to legalise re-marriage with a thrice-divorced wife. <sup>[1]</sup> The idea of getting the divorced wife married to a third person, on an express understanding that he would divorce her in favour of her former husband, was condemned by the Prophet in the most emphatic terms.

In the other form of divorce, three repudiations are pronounced in the period of purity, either on one occasion or on three separate occasions. This divorce is valid, but is an act of sin. This form of divorce is called "*Talaq Bid-a*," i.e. and is not in conformity with pious practice.

It is to be remembered that the abuses, likely to arise from laxity of the laws, may conveniently be counteracted by other lawful impositions. The wife or her guardian for instance, may specify, at the time of marriage, against the arbitrary exercise of the power of divorce by the husband. The right of dissolution of the contract may be stipulated to be with the wife, instead of with the husband, if necessary. The same object may also be achieved indirectly, by fixing a dower at a large sum, beyond husband resources to liquidate. The wife may also, by condition reserve to herself the power of dissolving the marriage under certain legitimate circumstances, for example, if the husband marries a second wife.

In the event of a divorce the Islamic laws are very particular in providing for the protection of the wife's property against the avarice of the husband: If the divorce is due to a cause imputable to the husband; he has to make over to her all her property, and

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<sup>[1]</sup> Sir William. Muir's 'Life of Mahomet.' Vol. III. p.349.

pay off the dower that had been settled upon her. If, however, the divorce has been restored to at the request of the wife, without any justifiable cause, she has simply to abandon her claim to the dower. "The wife thus occupies a decidedly more advantageous position than the husband."

#### 8. "Kholaa Divorce"

*Kholaa* divorce is defined thus: When married parties disagree and are apprehensive that they cannot observe the bounds prescribed by the divine laws, -that is, they cannot perform the duties imposed on them by the conjugal relationship – the woman can release herself from the tie, by giving up some property in return, in consideration of which the husband is to give her a "*Kholaa*", and when they have done this, an irreversible divorce would take place".

"*Kholaa*" is therefore a repudiation with consent, and at the request of the wife, in which she agrees to give a compensation to the husband for her release from the marriage tie. But if the wife fails to pay the compensation, there is yet another means to dissolve the marriage, namely, "*Mubarat*," according to which no compensation has to be paid, and a complete separation is effected, merely by mutual consent of the parties. If, however, the husband gives a "*Kholaa*" to his wife without any compensation, the respective claims of husband and wife are not cancelled immediately, and they are quite competent to sue each other for the payment of any debts which may be due.

Compensation is a matter of arrangement between the husband and wife. The wife may return the whole, or a portion of the dower, if it has been paid; or she may simply surrender her dower or other rights, such as the right to maintenance and lodging during the "*iddat*" period, or she may make any other agreement for the benefit of the husband such as for instance, to nurse their child during its two years of suckling, or to keep and maintain the child for a fixed period at her own expense after having weaned it.

It should be remembered that the distinction between “*talaq*” and “*Kholaa*” is real and not merely technical. If the cause of disagreement proceeds from the husband or if he alone wishes for a “*talaq*”, he must pay off the settlement debt to the wife. But, in case the proposal for a divorce comes from the wife because of her aversion to the husband, and her consequent failure to perform her duties as a wife, or if she alone wishes for a “*Kholaa*,” she has to surrender her dower or abandon some of her rights, as compensation.

If the wife be so unfortunate as to be subject to abuse by a brutal husband who may wish her either to sacrifice the whole of her dower, or live with him, she need not surrender the whole of her dower. Let her only go to the judge, prefer a complaint against her husband and demand a formal separation by the Court decree. If her allegations are true, the judge will call upon the husband to repudiate her. In case he refuses to do so, the judge himself pronounces a repudiation which will operate as a valid repudiation and the husband will be liable for the whole of the deferred dower. This procedure is known as “*tafriq*” or legal separation, in the Islamic law, and is based on the words of the Prophet: “If a woman be prejudiced by a marriage, let it be broken off.” [1]

The first “*Kholaa*” case in Islam is quoted by Bukhari in the following words: The wife of Thabit Ibn Qais came to the Prophet and said “O messenger of God, I am not angry with Thabet for his temper or religion; but I am afraid that something may happen to me contrary to Islam, on which account I wish to be separated from him. The Prophet said: “Will you give back to Thabit the garden which he gave to you as your settlement? She said, “Yes.” Then the Prophet said to Thabit. “Take your garden and divorce her at once” [2]

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[1] Al-Al-Bukhari’s Commentary.

[2] Al-Al-Bukhari is the greatest commentary of Islamic orthodox traditions.

This tradition clearly tells us that Thabit was blameless, and that the proposal for separation originated from the wife who feared she would not be able to observe the bounds set by God namely not to perform her duties as a wife. The Prophet here permitted the woman to release herself by returning to husband the ante-nuptial settlement, as compensation for the release granted to her.

In the “*Kholaa*” from the basic principle of repudiation is, that the husband is lawfully entitled to compensation, only when he is not at all responsible for the breach –neither wholly nor in part- but when the wife is alone responsible, as in the tradition quoted above. Muslim jurists are all agreed that the compensation extorted from an innocent wife is unlawful. Compensation is absolutely unlawful for the husband, even when the wife happens to be partly responsible for the disagreement. The religion of Islam is the only one that can produce a set of laws which jealously protects the properly and person of a wife against her “husband’s” greed and tyranny.”

I now refer to a Qu’ran passage in which expressly forbids the husband to resort to cruelty or other violent means, with a view to compel a woman to enter into “*Kholaa*” and to give up her dowry. “O believers, it is not allowed you to be heirs of your wives against their will; nor to imprison them, <sup>[1]</sup> in order to take from them a part of the dowry you gave them, unless they have been guilty of manifest crime; but associate kindly with them; for, if you are estranged from them, haply you are estranged from that in which God has placed abundant good. And if you be desirous to ex-change one wife for another, and have given one of them a talent, make no deduction from it. Would you take it by slandering her and with manifest wrong? How, moreover, could you take it, when one of you has gone in unto the other, and they [the wives] have received from you a strict bond of union.” [4:18]

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[1] Sometimes the phrase is translated, ‘Do not hinder them from marrying others.’

It is impossible to think of a more appealing and forcible exhortation to a husband, to deal kindly with his wife, even if she happens to be a woman of inappropriate manners. It is forbidden in the strongest terms, to lay hold on her property in the event of a separation.

Before these verses were revealed, brutal husbands used to maltreat their wives, and even to imprison and torture them until, unable to bear their sufferings, they were forced to give up the dowry settled upon them at marriage; and this property they used to endow their new wives with. This was expressly forbidden by the verses quoted above. According to the Maliki School of law, -if a husband has forced his wife to enter into a "*keholaa*," the wife is entitled to get back the dowry, but the separation will be valid in law. I have already made mention of the procedure known as "*Tafriq*" which legally means dissolution of the status of marriage by a judicial decree. I give here some of the causes for which a wife can demand a divorce by authority of the Court. It must be remembered that, where the wife has the right to prefer a claim of "*tafriq*" the husband is entitled to no compensation, as he is so entitled in "*keholaa*". A divorce may be granted by the Court for: -

- 1) Wife habitual ill-treatment.
- 2) Non-fulfilment of the terms of the marriage contract.
- 3) Insanity.
- 4) Incurable in competency.
- 5) Quitting the conjugal domicile without making provision for the wife.
- 6) Any other similar causes which in the opinion of the Court justify a divorce.

We have seen, then, the position of woman and her legal status in Islam. To sum up: "Her legal status is decidedly superior to that of European women. The social immunities she enjoys allow the fullest exercise, on her part, of the powers and privileges which the law gives to her. She acts independently in all matters which relate to herself and to her own property, in her own individual

right, without the intervention of husband or father. She appoints her own attorney, and delegates to him all the powers she herself possesses. She enters into valid contracts with her husband and her male relations, on a footing of equality. If she is ill-treated, she has the right to have the marriage tie dissolved. She is entitled to pledge the credit of her husband for the maintenance of herself and her children. She is able, even if holding a creed different to that of her husband, to claim the free and unfettered exercise of her own religious observances. Her ante-nuptial settlement is her own by absolute right, and she can deal with it according to her own will and pleasure. To become entitled to its enjoyment, she requires no intermediates, trustees or next of kin. When she is aggrieved by her husband, she has the right to sue him in her individual capacity.”

It is both interesting and instructive to compare this extract with another, from the writings of J.S. Mill which gives us an idea of the corresponding position of women in Christianity: “We are continually told” says he, “that civilisation and Christianity have restored to woman her just rights. Meanwhile the wife is the actual bond- servant of her husband; no less so, as far as legal obligation goes, than slaves commonly so called. She vows a lifelong obedience to him at the altar, and is held to it all through her life by law. Casuists may say that the obligation of obedience stops short of participation in crime, but it certainly extends to everything else. She can do no act whatever, but by his permission, at least, tacit. She can acquire no property, but for him; the instant it becomes hers, even if by inheritance, it becomes ipso facto his. In this respect the wife’s position under the Common Law of England is worse than that of slaves in the laws of many countries; by the Roman Law for example, a slave might have speculum which to a certain extent, the law guaranteed him for his exclusive use.”<sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup>The Review of Religions, May 1913. Evidently J.S. Mill wrote prior to the Married Women’s Property Act of 1882.

## 9. Female Seclusion

The Islamic laws regulating the social intercourse of Muslims have often given rise to needless criticism in Europe. In their enthusiasm for social liberty, the Western critics say that these laws are degrading to Muslim women, and are responsible for the low state of morality among Muslims. However, the true fact is that these laws, strict as they are, had for their very aim the preservation of good morals in society. Indeed, preservation of good morals –and not unrestricted freedom of social intercourse among men and women, such as is widespread today in Christian Europe– is the intention of the Islamic laws. Female seclusion is misunderstood in many quarters in foreign countries, for the apparent reason that sanctions of religion and usage have not been kept apart, as they ought to have been but have been grossly mixed one with another. Failing to distinguish between the two, our Western critics have fallen into the very serious fault of disseminating a false notion among their countrymen that Islam is responsible for the seclusion of females, and for all the evils that flow there from.

I will dwell on the subject a little and make an attempt to show whether the religion of Islam actually sanctions the seclusion of women, as is misunderstood by European critics.

The following verse occurs in the Qu’ran, which touch on our present subject:- “Speak unto the female believers that they restrain their eyes, and keep themselves from immodest actions; and that they display not their charms and ornaments, except to their husbands or their fathers, or their husband’s fathers, or their sons or their husbands’ sons, or their brothers, or their brother’s sons or their sisters’ sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male domestics who have no natural force, or to children who distinguish not women’s nakedness. And let them not strike their feet together, so as to discover their hidden ornaments. And be you all turned to God, O you believers, that it may be well with you.” [24:31]



The chief object of these verses is to secure greater purity of heart and increasing chastity of mind; and hence the believers are here reminded that God is well aware of what they do, and that it shall be well for them, if they constantly turn to him. To attain this moral purity, the believing man is first directed to retrain his eyes and observe continence. Then the believing woman is likewise directed to cover her person and ornaments from public view, to restrain her eyes and observe continence. A Muslim woman is at liberty to go out of her house, if necessary, after she has obtained permission from her husband or guardians. Only, she has to take good care to dress herself properly, so as to cover her person from head to foot, and to walk in the street with downcast eyes.

It is needless to point out, that the injunction with respect to looking down, is useless and uncalled for, if the women are never to walk abroad. Likewise the reference to external ornaments too becomes pointless, if women are to appear only before persons mentioned in the verses quoted above. It is allowable for a woman to uncover part of her face, fingers of her hands, soles of her feet, when she feels the necessity of going out. The rest of the body must be concealed before strangers, but before the persons listed in the verses, it is enough that the part from breast to knee remains covered. It is clear then, that the verses quoted above deal with propriety of dress, and forbid women to flirt, in order to gain admirers. On the other hand, they enjoin upon the faithful women modesty of manner, purity of heart and fear of God.

It can be confidently declared that the excellent teachings upon chastity, together with the remedies for incontinence, as contained in Qu'ran, are a peculiarity of Islam. One particular point deserves especial attention. The natural inclination of man is to sexual desire, over which he cannot have full control except by undergoing a thorough transformation. The divine injunction in this respect is, therefore, not that we may look at strange women and their beauty and ornaments, or their gait and dancing, so long as we do it with pure looks, nor that it is lawful for us to listen to their sweet songs, or to the stories of their love and

beauty, provided it is done with a pure heart; but that it is never lawful for us, to cast glances at them, whether to lust or otherwise and to listen to their voices, whether with a pure or an impure heart. We are forbidden to do an act, in the doing of which we are not treading upon sure ground. If the eyes are accustomed to look after strange women, there is a fear, lest this practice should, some time, lead to dangerous consequences. That World of God; as revealed in the Glorious Qu'ran, therefore, restrains the carnal desires of man and enjoins upon him, to avoid the occasions, where there is danger of the excitement of the evil passions.

We now advert to another passage in the Qu'ran, where the 'mothers of the faithful' are addressed:- "O Wives of the Prophet, you are not as other women. If you fear God, be not too complaisant of speech, lest the man of unhealthy heart should lust after you, but speak with discreet speech. And abide still in your houses, and go not in public, decked as was common in the days of ignorance, but observe prayer and give alms, and obey God and the Apostle: God but desireth to put away all impurity from you. O you the household of the Prophet, and purify you thoroughly. And study what is rehearsed to you in your houses, of the Book of God, and of Wisdom: God is Keen-sighted and Congnisant of all." [33:32-34]

The wives of the Prophet, who were destined to be patterns for all faithful women, are here given positive injunctions, to fear God, purify their hearts, observe prayer, give alms, obey the Prophet and read constantly the Glorious Qu'ran, - in short to lead a life of purity, devotion and piety. In the sublimity of their thoughts, these noble women were not unmindful of the humbler duties of domestic life. The great lesson which their noble husband taught was that woman's proper sphere is her house, and the claims of domestic duties should receive her first and best consideration. He set up an ideal before his wives, and through them, to all believing women: it was the ideal of plain living and high thinking.

It is to be remembered, that the wives of the Prophet were all accessible to religious inquiries. Ayesha was, as it were the repository of traditions, and was frequently consulted on matters of religion and rituals. Men came from distant parts of the country and straightway saw the Prophet's wives, and all of these visitors were certainly not of blameless character. It was quite natural, that the Prophet's wives should have received guidance with regard to general deportment and propriety of speech. By "discreet speech", in the above quoted verse, is meant that the Prophet's wives should speak to these religious inquirers as mothers would do to their sons. The next verse, to which we would like to mention, is called the veil verse, and it occurs further on in the same chapter: "And when you would ask any gift of his wives ask it from behind a veil. Purer will this be for your hearts and for theirs." [33:53]

According to some commentators, strangers may approach the Prophet's wives, and talk to them, if they are veiled; and presumably this applies to generality of Muslim women as well. Aiming, as it does, at the heart purification; the verse only forbids too familiar an intercourse between strangers and the Prophet wives. It does not permit the conclusion, that Qu'ran laws are responsible for the fair sex imprisonment.

The occasion of this verse, in accordance with one version, also lends support to the view, that the verse was intended for the Prophet's wives alone. Omar, who afterwards was elevated to the Caliphate, once happened to come upon the Prophet's wives, who were still sitting in a mosque in company with many other women. Such a sight was not to Omar's liking for he was always in favour of the Prophet's wives seclusion. He there and then exclaimed— "What a happy thing it would have been, if the 'mothers of the faithful' had been under veils." [1]

In studying these verses, many forget to take into account the circumstances and conditions that prevailed in those times in

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[1] Thus were the wives of the Prophet termed in the Quran.

Arab Society. A sort of chivalrous spirit doubtless existed; but it existed in Arab poetry, rather than in actual life of the people. Women were no better than cattle and furniture. Free women, as well as, slave women, freely walked in the open, with their heads bare, and often with scanty clothing. The houses were not large enough, and the rooms were narrow and few in number. In most cases, one and the same room served many different purposes. It is easy to see, therefore, that amid such conditions; it was very difficult to maintain privacy. Indeed violation of privacy, and even of decency, was an every day occurrence. It was to put a stop to such an undesirable state of things, that the following teachings were revealed:- "O you who believe, enter not into other houses than your own, until you have asked leave, and have saluted the family thereof; this is better for you: haply you will bear this in mind. And if you find no one therein, then enter it not, till leave be given you; and if it be said unto you, 'Go you back; then go you back. This will be more pure for you, and God knows what you do. There shall be no harm in your entering houses, in which no one dwells. God knows that which you discover and that which you conceal." [24:27-29]

Commentators mention a significant tradition about a person who, after the revelation of these verses, inquired of the Prophet, if it were necessary for him to get permission even from his mother, before entering into her chamber, "Yes," said the Prophet. But she has none to attend to her, except myself," put in the Arab inquirer. "Do you like to see your mother naked?" observed the Prophet. "Certainly not." Replied the man. "Ask her permission then," said the Prophet emphatically. [*Abu Dawood*]

Likewise, we find that, at certain times of the day, even domestics and children should not come into our presence without notice. Here is the instruction bearing on the occasion: "O you who believe, let your slaves and those of you who have not come of age ask leave of you, three times a day, before they come into your presence; before morning prayer, and when you lay aside your garments at mid-day, and after the evening prayer. These are

three times of privacy. No blame shall attach to you or them, if after these times, when you go your rounds of attendance on one another [they come in without permission]. Thus doth God make clear to you His signs: and God is All Knowing, Wise. And when your children come of age, let them ask leave to come into your presence, as they who were before them, asked it.” [24: 57-58]

Under such circumstances and conditions Arab society grew. The influence of Islam was a blessing to the Arabs. It was Islam that awakened respect for women in the Arab mind, and a high sense of decency, and social good manners. It was only an extension of the laws of decency and social politeness, when too close intercourse between strangers and the Prophet’s wives was forbidden, as we have seen in the veil verse. It is really to be much regretted, that the critics of Islam will not see all this, and should obstinately ascribe the framing of all these healthy rules, to motives of selfish jealousy.

There is one more verse, in the same chapter, to which reference may be made in this connection:- “O Prophet, speak unto thy wives and thy daughters, and the wives of the true believers, that they cast their outer garment over them [when they walk abroad]; this [will be] more proper, that they may be known [to be matrons of reputation], and may not be affronted [by unseemly words or actions] God is Gracious [and] Merciful.” [33:59]

The significance of this verse is quite clear, and requires no clarification. The Prophet’s wives, as well as the wives of the faithful, are permitted to go out, if necessary, and they are required to cover themselves with large wrappers. The object of this qualification, as briefly indicated in the verse, may be best understood by a reference of the fact, that before the revelation of this verse, both the free women, as well as the slave women, used to go out, without any wrappers on and with their heads bare; and wicked men very often insulted them in the streets. If in the case of a free woman, any altercation ensued, these men were ready with their explanation that they took them for slave women. The free women were, therefore, commanded by this verse, to

cover themselves with wrappers, when they walked out of doors, so that they might easily be distinguished from slave women, and thus be safe from the insolence of street-men. Nor was the wrapper, a mere mark of their social states – it was a mark of their chastity as well. For, by using large wrappers, and thereby covering the bodies, including the faces which it is not at all obligatory to cover, they bore a silent, but strong testimony to their moral purity, and inspired fear, even in contaminated hearts of wicked people.

The Qu’ranic verses are very clear on this point, and leave little room for doubt. Leaving aside the difference of interpretation, two facts stand out in bold relief: That the purpose of the verses is to secure chastity of heart and mind, and purity of looks for men and women.

- 1) That the verses actually forbid an unrestrained and immoral mingling of both sexes which is in the interest of good morals and social well-being.

Islam does not compel a woman to remain within her house under all circumstances. It permits her to go out, whenever there arises any legitimate necessity for her to go out. It is certain that she has to take permission; either expressed or understood, from her husband. There are, however, occasions when husband cannot deny his wife such a permission, as for example, when she intends to acquaint herself with the opinion of the learned on any matter affecting herself, or to visit her sick parents, etc.

As regards attending public prayers, there is nothing to prevent women from doing so under certain reservations, but it is preferable that they should pray at home. “It is more meritorious” said the Prophet, “that a woman should say her prayers in the courtyard of her house, rather than in the mosque; it is more meritorious that she should say her prayers within the house, rather than in the courtyard; and better still, in her closet, rather than in her house; and all this with a view to conceal her from public view.”

I hope that I have succeeded in presenting the correct teachings in accordance with the Islamic laws, in regard to the question of female seclusion.

It can be emphatically asserted, that Islam never favours woman's seclusion in any extravagant form. Seclusion or the Islamic veil system is defined as throwing a wrapper over the body from head to feet, and it is clear, that in this sense, it is not incompatible with a woman's stepping beyond the doorstep of the house, particularly when occasion demands, and when she obtains her husband or guardian consent. Certain restrictions have, doubtless, been imposed on the freedom of her movements, as we have shown above. But this is due as much to moral considerations as to the fact, which has been so often ignored that woman's proper sphere of action and influence is her own house. Man, to go out with a view to earn a living for himself, his wife, and children, - and woman, free from such cares, to remain at home, in order to watch over the trust committed to her, and to discharge her own responsibilities, as a mother and a wife such is the Islamic conception of the relation between the two sexes.

#### 10- Islam and Polygamy

Islam enjoins marriage, whether monogamous or polygynous, as the conditions of life necessitate, with due regard to piety, so that there may be no violence to human nature; and the desire for sexual intercourse, like other cravings of nature, being duly gratified, may lead to the perfect safety and the complete security of social morality. Thus the Islamic system of marriage, harmonising with the practical need and the requirement of mankind, gains fresh lustre when brought under the search light of unbiased criticism. The Prophet's example in the matter of marriage is specially striking. It refutes the commonplace objection of ignorant people that it is impossible to deal fairly with more than one wife. The example of the Prophet is vividly before us. He had as many as nine wives, but how lovingly and fairly he behaved towards them, the love he bore to each individual wife, and the skilful spirit of good will that

characterised the mutual relation of the Prophet and his wives, is above the possibility of suspicion. We have the absolutely credible evidence of the wives themselves. They state him to be the embodiment of love and justice. <sup>[1]</sup> Never was there any real grievance on the part of the wives against his treatment. The Prophet with his perfect example has proved completely, that it is quite possible for a polygynous husband to maintain justice and equality of treatment among his wives. It was also intended to show the Muslims how it was within the range of possibility, to deal kindly and justly with a plurality of wives. He left no room for discussion. It is only when we fail to live up to the standard of the Prophet's perfect manners, that we fail to secure a peaceful and loving attitude towards a plurality of wives, nay even towards a single wife. The Bible did not condemn polygamy. To the contrary, the Old Testament and Rabbinic writings frequently attest to the legality of polygamy.

King Solomon is said to have had 700 wives and 300 concubines [1 Kings 11:3] Also, King David is said to have had many wives and concubines [2 Samuel 5:13] The Old Testament does have some injunctions on how to distribute the property of a man among his sons from different wives [Deut. 22:7]. The only restriction on polygamy is a ban on taking a wife's sister as a rival wife [Lev. 18:18]. The Talmud advises a maximum of four wives. <sup>[2]</sup> European Jews continued to practice polygamy until the sixteenth century. Oriental Jews regularly practised polygamy until they arrived in Israel where it is forbidden under civil law. However, under religious law which overrides civil law in such cases, it is permissible. <sup>[3]</sup>

What about the New Testament? According to Father Eugene Hillman in his insightful book, *Polygamy Reconsidered*,

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<sup>[1]</sup> Ibn Athir, Abul Feda, Sir W. Muir, etc.

<sup>[2]</sup> Leonard J. Swidler, *Women in Judaism: the Status of Women in Formative Judaism* [Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1976], pp. 144-148.

<sup>[3]</sup> Lesley Hazleton, *Israeli Women The Reality Behind the Myths* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977] pp. 41-45.



“Nowhere in the New Testament is there any explicit commandment that marriage should be monogamous or any explicit commandment forbidding polygamy.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Moreover, Jesus has not spoken against polygamy though it was practiced by the Jews of his society. Father Hillman stresses the fact that the Church in Rome banned polygamy in order to conform to the Greco-Roman culture [which prescribed only one legal wife while tolerating concubinage and prostitution]. He cited St. Augustine, “Now indeed in our time, and in keeping with Roman custom, it is no longer allowed to take another wife.”<sup>[2]</sup>

African churches and African Christians often remind their European brothers that the Church’s ban on polygamy is a cultural tradition and not an authentic Christian injunction.

The Qu’ran, too, allowed polygamy, but not without restrictions:- “If you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one” [Qur’an 4:3].

The Qu’ran, contrary to the Bible, limited the maximum number of wives to four under the strict condition of treating the wives equally and justly. It should not be understood that the Qu’ran is exhorting the believers to practice polygamy, or that polygamy is considered as an ideal. In other words, the Qu’ran has “tolerated” or “allowed” polygamy and no more. Why is polygamy permissible? The answer is simple: there are places and times in which there are compelling social and moral reasons for polygamy. As the above Qu’ranic verse indicates, the issue of polygamy in Islam cannot be understood apart from community obligations towards orphans and widows. Islam as a universal religion suitable for all places and all times could not ignore these compelling obligations.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Eugene Hillman, *Polygamy Reconsidered: African Plural Marriage and the Christian Churches* [New York: Orbis Books, 1975] p. 140.

<sup>[2]</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17

In most human societies, females outnumber males. In the U.S. there are, at least, eight million more women than men. In a country like Guinea there are 122 females for every 100 males. In Tanzania, there are 95.1 males per 100 females. <sup>[1]</sup>

The writer takes this opportunity to point out that our critics have no cause to lose their temper at the mention of polygamy. Islam does not enforce polygamy. It enjoins marriage where no disabilities stand in the way. Monogamy is the general rule; polygamy is a provision for urgent emergencies. It is unwise to question the general wisdom of an institution in exceptional cases. If a man can be content with one wife, Islam does not compel him to resort to polygamy. If Christian critics find that their way of living prevents the necessity of a plurality of wives, they are not bound to have recourse to polygamy. Let them live with one wife and refrain from insulting Islam, as Islam does not make polygamy obligatory. If they clearly understand the problem of polygamy, I hope they will come to entertain better feeling towards the law of Islam simply permits polygamy, if one cannot live in happiness and piety with one wife or if necessity in an emergency arises. But if Christians can live piously and happily with one wife, Islam does not interfere. Islam is as much monogamous as Christianity, the difference, being that the former makes a provision for urgent needs, with due regard to the rights of the wife, whereas the latter does not, should a man fail to find any emergency calling for a plurality.

#### ii. Polygamy is not essential in Islam.

To consider polygamy as essential in Islam would be an unpardonable mistake. In fact, the teaching of the Qu'ran is to the contrary, and strongly recommends monogamy, as already shown. Islam claims to be a universal religion. It was not revealed to meet a particular race requirements or age; with its worldwide mission, Islam had to look to the requirements of all ages, countries, and civilisations. Besides the substantial laws, the code of Islam, as

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<sup>[1]</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 88-93.

every wise legislation must do, provides certain ordinances which may be looked upon as auxiliary or remedial laws, with a flexibility to meet the contingencies of place and time. It minimises their abuses, and lays down proper restrictions as to their use.

The events of the world sometimes give rise to circumstances which cause considerable scarcity in the number of men. Inter-tribal or international wars often lead to the same result; and leave numberless members of women without home or protection. The World Wars [1914-18] and [1939-45] are quite examples of international calamity that caused an unimaginable decrease in the number of males leaving hundreds of thousands of females without guardians or protectors. With all our refined ideas of chivalry and broadmindedness, no other institution than marriage can safely come to save the situation. To maintain strict chastity and piety in society, Islam would not recommend any woman to seek refuge under the roof of any man who does not stand in marital, or within the prohibited degree of relation to her. Polygamy; Islamic policy in this respect, is the only specific remedy to meet the need. But woman has not been left without her own choice in the matter. To secure her peace, comfort, and happiness, if she needs no other help or protection, no Muslim would compel her to marry a man who is already the husband of another woman.

In the United States today, there is a severe gender crisis in the black community. One out of every twenty young black males may die before reaching the age of 21. For those between 20 and 35 years of age, homicide is the leading cause of death.<sup>[1]</sup> Besides, many young black males are unemployed, in jail, or on dope.<sup>[2]</sup>

As a result, one in four black women, at age 40, has never married, as compared with one in ten white women.<sup>[3]</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>[1]</sup> Nathan Hare and Julie Hare, ed., *Crisis in Black Sexual Politics* [San Francisco: Black Think Tank, 1989] p. 25.

<sup>[2]</sup> *ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>[3]</sup> Philip L. Kilbride, *Plural Marriage For Our Times* [Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1994] p. 94.

many young black females become single mothers before the age of 20 and find themselves in need of providers. The end result of these tragic circumstances is that an increasing number of black women are engaged in what is called 'man-sharing'.<sup>[1]</sup> That is, many of these hapless single black women are involved in affairs with married men. The wives are often unaware of the fact that other women are 'sharing' their husbands with them. Some observers of the crisis of mansharing in the African American community strongly recommend consensual polygamy as a temporary answer to the shortage of black males until more comprehensive reforms in the American society at large are undertaken.<sup>[2]</sup>

By consensual polygamy they mean a polygamy that is sanctioned by the community and to which all the parties involved have agreed, as opposed to the usually secret man-sharing which is detrimental both to the wife and to the community in general. The problem of man-sharing in the African American community was the topic of a panel discussion held at Temple University in Philadelphia on January 27, 1993.<sup>[3]</sup>

Some of the speakers recommended polygamy as one potential remedy for the crisis. They also suggested that polygamy should not be banned by law, particularly in a society that tolerates prostitution and mistresses. The comment of one woman from the audience that African Americans needed to learn from Africa where polygamy was responsibly practiced elicited enthusiastic applause.

Philip Kilbride, an American anthropologist of Roman Catholic heritage, in his provocative book, *Plural marriage for our time*, proposes polygamy as a solution to some of the ills of the American society at large. He argues that plural marriage may serve as a potential alternative for divorce in many cases in order

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<sup>[1]</sup> *ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>[2]</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>[3]</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 95-99.

to obviate the damaging impact of divorce on many children. He maintains that many divorces are caused by the rampant extramarital affairs in the American society. According to Kilbride, ending an extramarital affair in a polygynous marriage, rather than in a divorce, is better for the children, "Children would be better served if family augmentation rather than only separation and dissolution were seen as options." Moreover, he suggests that other groups will also benefit from plural marriage such as: elderly women who face a chronic shortage of men and the African Americans who are involved in man-sharing. <sup>[1]</sup>

In 1987, a poll conducted by the student newspaper at the University of California at Berkeley asked the students whether they agreed that men should be allowed by law to have more than one wife in response to a perceived shortage of male marriage candidates in California. Almost all of the students polled approved of the idea. One female student even stated that a polygynous marriage would fulfil her emotional and physical needs while giving her greater freedom than a monogamous union. <sup>[2]</sup>

Thus polygamy, as said before, is a sort of remedial law in Islam which may come into operation when opportunity arises, and should not be resorted to when there is no occasion for it. It is not only for connubial purposes, that equality of number in men and women is a necessity. If similar calamities cause the dearth of men? The only two solutions left are either to encourage adultery or adopt polygamy.

Marriage after all is only a union of man and woman which under specified formalities received the sanction of society. Therefore, if the special circumstances of an age do demand the multiplication of units in a nation, why not legalise what has already received the sanction of practice and usage, and save thousands and thousands

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<sup>[1]</sup> *ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>[2]</sup> For example, see Jeffrey Lang, *Struggling to Surrender*, [Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1994] p. 167.

of souls from the humiliation of being called 'bastard' sons or daughters, and thus give them the right to inherit from these who gave them their body? It would tend to improve morality, and enhance the sacredness of nuptial rights. Thus, polygamy sometimes becomes a national necessity. The verse of the Qu'ran which is held to authorize polygamy:- "Then marry that seems good to you of women, two, three or four [wives]; but if you fear that you shall not act equitably, then one [wife] only." [4:3]

In this verse the license given to polygamy is curtailed by the condition which enjoins strict equity and justice towards all wives as obligatory on man. In case a man feared that he could not act equitably and justly between his wives, he was directed to be content with one wife only. The word 'fear' in the verse deserves special notice; that is to say, if a man is afraid that he will not be able to comply with the condition, he must not go beyond one wife. And it need hardly be pointed out, how difficult it is to give every one his [or her] own just due; nor is every one able to do it. Nay, the Qu'ran itself admits in another verse the inability of man, to observe the required equality of treatment in every respect to all of his wives, and this emphasises the desirability of having only one wife; but suggests, at the same time, a very wise course to those who under unavoidable circumstances have been compelled to have more than one wife. The verse is as follows:

"And you can never act equitably between women, although you covet [it]; but turn not with all partiality [towards one of them] nor leave the other like one who is in suspense; but if you be reconciled, and fear [to do wrong], verily God is Forgiving, and Compassionate. And if a wife fears ill-usage or aversion from her husband, it shall be no crime in them both that they should be reconciled among themselves with some reconciliation; for reconciliation is best. And souls are prone to avarice; but if you be good and God-fearing, verily God knows what you do." [4:129-130]

It will thus be clear from the above instructions that when a man has married two wives in the belief that he is able to treat them

equitably, and he then finds that he is inclined towards the one to a degree amounting of dislike against the other, and is prepared to divorce one of his wives, the above verses lay down directions for the guidance of both man and wife, namely, that they should come to an understanding between themselves and be reconciled the wife by forgoing some of her rights, and the man by self-control. This would save each of them the troubles attendant upon a divorce.

But the best remedy to avoid future unpleasantness lies in the hand of the woman in Islam, where marriage is a *civil contract* and can be arranged with adequate conditions, to violate which would in itself bring marriage to invalidation.

Thus, a woman who fears the possibility of a second marriage on the part of her engaged can make provisions against its unpleasant effects, before she is married. She may get such special damages as are provided in the contract of marriage, when the contingency arises; she may have the option of living separately from her husband with a suitable maintenance; or get herself divorced and lead an independent life, and recover damages as well. But this should all be provided for in the contract of marriage. "Polygamy, in a word, in Islam, is a remedy. It has uses and abuses. Islam guards against the latter, and allows the former under restrictions and within strict limits. More knowledge of human needs and demands would enlighten the world and enable it to see the necessity of allowing an institution, like polygamy, with its rare and limited use as in Islam. <sup>[1]</sup>

## 12. Polygamy is not an Institution Originated by Islam.

Muhammad put strict limitations on the unbounded licence of Eastern polygamy, and the facility of Eastern divorce. If the social touch stone of a religion is the way, in which it regards the poor and the oppressed, Muhammad's religion can stand the test. He

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<sup>[1]</sup> H. H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum Sahiba, Ruler of Bhopal, India.

improved the condition of women by freeing them from the arbitrary patriarchal power of the parents or the heirs of the husbands, by inculcating just and kind treatment of them by their husbands themselves, by giving them legal rights in case of unfair treatment, and by absolutely prohibiting the incestuous marriages which were widespread in the times of ignorance, and the still more horrible practice of the burying alive of female infants. Nor was this all, for besides imposing restrictions on polygamy, by this severe laws at first, 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 Muhammadan countries from those professional outcasts who live by their own misery, and by their existence as a recognized class, are a standing reproach to every member of the society, of which they form part. <sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> Bosworth Smith: "Mohamed and Muhammadanism" pp. 174-176.



## Exposition of Islam

### Muslim's Belief

The Muslims demands faith in the following:

Our creed is to believe in Allâh, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Day of Judgement, and Fate whether good or bad. Belief in Allâh's Lordship, Oneness, and Attributes:

We believe in Allâh's divinity; that is He is the Lord, the Creator, the Sovereign, and the Manager of all affairs. We believe in Allâh's God-ship; that is, He is the true God and every other so-called deity is false. We believe in His names and attributes, that is He has the most magnificent names and the sublime perfect attributes. We believe in His Oneness in all of this, that is, He has no associate in His divinity, His God-ship, His names, or His attributes. Allâh says in the Qu'ran:

“He is the Lord of the heavens and the Earth and all that is in between them, so worship Him and be patient in His worship; do you know any equal to Him?” [19:65].

We believe that He is: “Allâh there is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber does not seize Him, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the Earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the Earth, the preservation of them does not burden Him; He is the High, the Great” [2:255].

We believe that “He is Allâh, there is no god but He, the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible. He is the Most Gracious, Most Merciful. He is Allâh, there is no god but He, the King, the Holy One, the Source of Peace, the Keeper of Faith, the Guardian, the Almighty, the Subduer, the Sublime. Glory be to Allâh above what they associate with Him. He is Allâh, the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. His are the most beautiful Names. All that is

in the heavens and the Earth glorifies Him. He is the Almighty, the Wise” [59:22-4].

We believe that to Him belongs the Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth: “He creates what He pleases. He gives, to whom He wills, females, and He gives, to whom He wills, males, or He couples them, males and females; and He makes whom He wills barren. Surely, He is the Knowing, the Powerful” [42:49-50].

We believe that: “there is nothing whatever like unto Him, He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing. To Him belong the keys of the Heavens and the Earth. He enlarges and restricts provisions to whom He wills. Surely He has knowledge of everything” [42:11-12].

We believe that: “there is no creature that moves on the Earth but its provision depends on Allâh. He knows its dwelling and its resting-place. All is recorded in a clear book” [11:6].

We believe that: “with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them but He. He knows what is in land and sea; not a leaf falls, but He knows it. Not a grain in the deep darkness of the Earth, not a thing green or dry but it is in a clear Book” [6: 59].

We believe that: “Allâh alone has the knowledge of the Hour, sends down rain, and knows what is in the wombs. No soul knows what it shall earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it shall die. Surely, Allâh is All-knowing, All-aware” [31:34].

We believe that Allâh speaks whatever He pleases whenever He pleases: “And Allâh spoke to Moses directly” [4:164];

“And when Moses came at Our appointed place, and his Lord spoke to him” [7:143]; “We called to him from the right side of the Mount [Sinai], and We brought him near in communion” [19:52].

We believe that “if the ocean became ink for the words of my Lord, the ocean would be finished before the words of my Lord came to an end” [18:109]; “And if all the trees that are in the earth were pens, and the ocean [were ink], with seven oceans swelling it

therefore, the words of Allâh would not be exhausted. Surely, Allâh is Mighty, Wise” [31:27].

We believe that Allâh’s words are the most truthful in conveying information, the most just in ruling, and the fairest in conversation. He said: “The word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and justice” [6:115]; “And who is more truthful in his word than Allâh?” [4:87].

We believe that the Qu’ran is Allâh’s word. He literally spoke it to Gabriel, who conveyed it to the Prophet, peace be upon him: “Say [O Muhammad] ‘the Holy Spirit has brought it down from your Lord in truth” [16:102]; “Truly it is the revelation of the Lord of the world brought down upon your heart by the Faithful Spirit so that you may be one of the warners, in a clear Arabic tongue” [26:192-95].

We believe that Allâh is well above His creatures in His Person and His Attributes, because He says: “He is the High, the Great” [2:22]; “He is Supreme over His servants, and He is the Wise, the All-aware” [6:18].

We believe that He “created the Heavens and the Earth in six days, then He settled Himself on the throne; He manages everything” [10:3]. His “settling on the throne” means that He is sitting in person on His throne in a way that is becoming to His majesty and greatness. Nobody except He knows exactly how He is sitting.

We believe that He is with His creatures while He is still on His throne. He knows their conditions, hears their sayings, sees their deeds, and manages their affairs. He provides for the poor and the broken. He gives sovereignty to whom He pleases and takes away sovereignty from whom He pleases; He exalts whom He wills and He abases whom He wills. In His hand is all good and He is powerful over everything. Whoever possesses these qualities is literally with His creatures even if He is literally above them on His throne. “There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him; He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing” [42:11]. We do not say, as do the

Incarnationists among the others, that Allâh is living with His creatures on Earth. We consider whoever says this a non-believer or one who has strayed, for he attributed to Allâh that which does not become Him of defects.

We believe in what His Messenger told us, that He descends to the near sky before the last third of every night and says: “Who prays to Me and I will answer his prayers? Who asks Me and I will give him? Who asks My forgiveness and I will forgive him?” [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

We believe that He will come on the Day of Judgement to judge among His people because He said: “No indeed! When the Earth is crushed to powder, and your Lord comes down with the angels in rows after rows, and Hell is brought out that day. On that day man will remember, but what will remembrance avail him?” [89:21-23]. We believe that he is the Doer of what He wills.

**Allâh’s Will: Universal and Legal:**

We believe that His will is of two kinds:

a) Universal will, through which His intention is carried out. It is not necessary that what is carried out is liked by Him. This type of will means permission, as Allâh said: “Had Allâh willed, they would not have fought one against the other, but Allâh does whatever He desires,” [2:253] and “If Allâh desires to lead you astray, He is your Lord” [11:34], and

b) Legal will, which does not necessarily entail the execution of His desire. His will, in this case, cannot be but what He likes, as He said: “Allâh wants to forgive you” [4:27].

We believe that His universal and legal wills are part of His wisdom. Every thing He performs in the universe or requires legally from His creatures is for a good reason and according to His wisdom, whether we grasp it or not: “Is not Allâh the best of Judges?” [95:8]; “And who is better than Allâh in judgement for a people who have firm faith” [5:50].

We believe that Allâh loves His select servants and that they love Him: “Say if you love Allâh, follow me and Allâh will love you” [3:31]; “Allâh will bring a people whom He will love and who will love Him” [5:54]; “Allâh loves the steadfast” [3:146]; “And act justly, surely, Allâh loves the just” [49:9]; and “Do good; Allâh loves those who do good” [5:93].

We believe that Allâh likes what He prescribed of good deeds and sayings and He dislikes what He prohibited of bad deeds and sayings: “If you disbelieve, surely Allâh does not need you, yet He does not like disbelief for His servants; if you are thankful, this pleases Him” [39:7]; and “But Allâh disliked their marching forth. So He kept them back, and it was said to them: ‘Stay with the weaklings’” [9: 46].

We believe that Allâh is pleased with those who believe in Him and do good deeds: “Allâh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord” [98:8].

We believe that Allâh is angry with those who deserve His anger among the non-believers and others: “And those who think evil thoughts of Allâh, against them shall be the evil turn of fortune. Allâh is angry with them” [48:6]; “But whoever opens his heart to disbelief, on them is Allâh’s wrath and they shall have a severe punishment” [16:106].

More of Allâh’s Attributes: We believe that Allâh has a glorious and dignified face: “There will remain the face of your Lord, majestic and splendid” [55:27].

We believe that Allâh has two generous hands: “No, both His hands are wide open; He spends how He pleases” [5:64]; “They do not esteem Allâh with the esteem that is due to Him. The whole Earth will be His handful on the Day of Resurrection, and the Heavens will be rolled up in His right hand. Glory be to Him and exalted is He above that which they associate with Him” [39:67].

We believe that Allâh possesses two real eyes, because He said: “And build the ark under Our eyes as We reveal” [11:37]. The

Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “His veil is light. Had He removed it, the sublimity of His countenance would have burnt all that His sight reached” [Muslim and Ibn Majah]. The Sunnites unanimously have agreed that He has two eyes. This is supported by the Prophet’s saying about the Dajjal [the anti-Christ] that “he is one-eyed and your Lord is not one-eyed” [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

We believe that “vision cannot perceive Him, but He perceives all vision. He is the Incomprehensible, the All-aware” [6:103]. We believe that the believers will see their Lord on the Day of Resurrection: “Upon that day some faces shall be radiant, gazing upon their Lord” [75:22-3].

We believe that Allâh has no equal because His Attributes are perfect: “There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him. He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing” [42:11].

We believe that “no slumber or sleep seizes Him” [2:255], because His life is perfect and eternal. We believe that He does not do injustice to anybody, because His fairness is perfect. We believe that He is not unaware of his servants’ deeds, because He has perfect supervision and comprehensive knowledge.

We believe that He is capable of doing anything in the Heavens or in the Earth, because of His perfect knowledge and power: “Indeed His command, when He desires a thing, is only to say to it ‘Be’ and it is” [36: 82].

We believe that He is free from weariness and weakness, because of His infinite power: “Surely, We created the Heavens and the Earth and all that is between them in six days and no weariness touched Us” [50: 38].

#### Describing Allâh by His Revelation:

We believe in all that He assigned to Himself or what His Messenger described Him with, of names and attributes. However, we reject two concepts:

1] To say or believe that Allâh's attributes are similar to those of his creatures; and

2] To say or believe that Allâh's attributes are like such and such. We negate all what He negated about Himself or what His Messenger negated about Him. We believe that negation implies the affirmation of its perfect opposite. We do not discuss what He or His Messenger did not mention about Him.

We believe that following this approach is a must, because what Allâh affirmed or negated concerning Himself is a statement He made about Himself. He knows Himself best. His words are most just and trustful, and people cannot know everything about Him. What Allâh's Messenger affirmed or negated about Him is a statement that he made about Allâh. Besides knowing Allâh better than anyone, he is the most truthful, sincere, and eloquent among people. Thus, in what Allâh said and what His Prophet said concerning His names and attributes is the truth, knowledge, and clarification. Therefore, we have no excuse to reject or even hesitate in accepting it.

### Qu'ran and Sunnah

Sources of His Attributes: All that we have mentioned about Allâh's attributes, whether briefly or in detail and affirmatively or negatively, is based on the book of our Lord [the Qu'ran] and the traditions of our Prophet. It also agrees with the practice of the previous generations of Muslims and the rightly guided scholars who came after them.

We believe it is obligatory to take the texts of the Qu'ran and the prophetic traditions conceding Allâh's attributes at their face value and to interpret them in a way that is suitable to Almighty Allâh. We reject the practice of those who twist the meanings of these texts and understand them in a way that was not intended by Allâh and His messenger.

We also reject the practice of those who make them devoid of their meanings as conveyed by Allâh and His Messenger. Finally,

we reject the approach of those who exaggerate, who gave them a physical interpretation that makes Allâh similar to some of His creatures.

#### Free from Contradictions:

We know for sure that what is revealed in Allâh's book and in the traditions of His Messenger is the truth. It does not contain any contradiction: "Do they not ponder over the Qu'ran? If it had been from other than Allâh, surely they would have found in it a lot of differences" [4:82]. Contradictions in statements falsify them. It is impossible for there to be a contradiction in any statement revealed by Allâh and said by His Messenger, peace be upon him. Whoever claims that there are contradictions in the Qu'ran, the prophetic traditions, or between the two must have wicked intentions and a misguided heart. He should repent and quit his sin. If someone imagines that there are some contradictions in the Qu'ran, the sayings of the Prophet, or between these two, this must be a result of his little knowledge, inadequate understanding, or lack of deep thinking. Therefore, he should seek knowledge and do his best to reflect upon matters until the truth is clear to him. If, after all of these efforts, the truth is not clear to him, he should leave the whole matter to the One who knows it and should quit his imagination. He should say, as do those who are firmly rooted in knowledge: "We believe in it, all is from our Lord" [3:7]. He must know that there are neither contradictions nor differences in the Qu'ran, the Sunnah, or between the two.

#### Belief in Angels:

We believe in the existence of the angels of Allâh and that they are honoured servants. "They do not speak before He does, and they act only by His command" [21:26]. Allâh created them, and they worship and obey Him. "Those who are in His presence do not disdain to worship Him, nor do they weary" [21:19]. Angels are concealed from us, so we cannot see them. Allâh may show them to some of His servants. The Prophet Muhammad saw



Gabriel in his real shape with six hundred wings that covered the horizons [Bukhari and Muslim]. Gabriel took the form of a handsome human being who met Mary and engaged in conversation with her. He came to the Prophet while he was among his Companions in the appearance of an unknown man who did not show any trace of long travel, with very white clothes, and very black hair. He sat facing the Prophet, his knees to the Prophet's knees, peace be upon him, and his palms on the Prophet's thighs and talked with the Prophet. The Prophet later told his Companions that the man they saw was Gabriel [Bukhari and Muslim].

### Angels' Functions:

We believe that the angels are assigned certain functions. Among the angels is Gabriel, who is entrusted with revelation. He brings it down from Allâh to whomever He wishes among His prophets and messengers. Among them is Michael, who is in charge of rain and the growth of plants; Israfil, who is in charge of blowing the horn at the time of thunder-bolting and the resurrection; the Angel of Death, who takes away people's souls at the time of death. Among the angels is the one who is in charge of mountains; and Malik, the keeper of Hell.

Some angels are in charge of embryos in wombs, others are responsible for protecting human beings, and others are busy recording men's deeds: there are two angels for every person, "when the two angels receive [his deeds], one sitting on the right and one on the left, not a word he utters but by him is an observer ready" [50:18]. Some other angels are in charge of questioning the dead after he is placed in his last abode. Two angels come to him and ask him about his Lord, his religion, and his prophet. There "Allâh confirms those who believe with the firm saying, in the present life and the hereafter, and Allâh leads astray the evildoers and Allâh does what He wills" [14:27]. Some angels are in charge of the dwellers of Paradise: "The angels enter to them from every gate, saying: 'Peace be upon you for that you were patient. How excellent is your final home'" [13:24]. The

Prophet, peace be upon him, told us that “seventy thousand angels enter or pray in the populous house in heaven every day. They never come back to it as long as they live” [because their turn will never come] [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

### Belief in Allâh’s Books:

We believe that Allâh revealed books to His messengers as proof against mankind and a guidance for the righteous workers. They purified and taught them wisdom by these books.

We believe that Allâh sent down a book with every messenger, because He says: “Indeed We sent down Our messengers with the clear signs, and We sent down with them the book and the balance, so that people may uphold justice” [57:25].

### Books Known:

Among the books that were revealed, we know:

- 1) The Torah, which was revealed to Moses, peace be upon him. It is the greatest among the Israelites’ books: “Surely, We sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light; by its laws the Jews have been judged by the prophets who surrendered themselves to Allâh, the rabbis and the doctors of law, because they were entrusted the protection of Allâh’s book and were witnesses thereto” [5:44].
- 2) The Gospel, which Allâh revealed to Jesus, peace be upon him. It is a confirmation of the Torah and a complement to it: “And we gave him the Gospel, wherein is guidance and light and confirming the Torah before it, as a guidance and an admonition to the God-fearing” [5:46]; “And to make lawful to you certain things that, before, were forbidden to you” [3:50].
- 3) The Psalms, which Allâh gave to David, peace be upon him.
- 4) The Tablets of Abraham and Moses, peace be upon them.

- 5) The Glorious Qu’ran, which was revealed to His Prophet Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets. It is “A guidance to the people and clear signs of guidance and the criterion between right and wrong” [2:185]. The Qu’ran Is Protected from Change: The Qu’ran is “confirming the scripture that was before it and stands as a guardian over it.” Thus, by means of the Qu’ran, Allâh abrogated all the previous revealed books. Allâh has also guaranteed its protection from any play or mischievous distortion: “Indeed, We sent down the message and We will guard it” [15:9], for the Qu’ran is a proof against mankind till the Day of Judgement.

#### Previous Scriptures Altered:

The previous scriptures were meant for a limited period. Their use ended with the revelation of the Qu’ran, which abrogated them and exposed their distortions and changes. That is why they were not protected from corruption. They underwent distortion, addition, and omission: “Some of the Jews pervert words from their meanings” [4:46]; “So woe to those who write the Book with their hands, and then say: ‘This is from Allâh,’ that they may sell it for a little price. So woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for their earnings” [2:79]; “Say, who sent down the Book that Moses brought as a light and a guidance to people? You put it into sheets of paper showing some of them and concealing much” [6:91]; “And there is a group among them who twist their tongues with the Book, that you may think it is a part of the Book but it is not part of the Book. And they say ‘It is from Allâh,’ yet it is not from Allâh, and they tell a lie against Allâh and they know it. It is not for any human being to whom Allâh has given the Book, the Wisdom and the Prophethood to say to men ‘Worship me instead of Allâh’” [3:79]; “People of the Book! Our Messenger has come to you, making clear to you many things you have been concealing of the Book and forgiving you of much. A light has come to you from Allâh and a glorious Book, with which He will guide whoever follows His pleasure in the way

of peace, and brings them forth from darkness into the light by His will” [5:15-16].

### Belief in Messengers:

We believe that Allâh has sent to His people messengers who were “bringing good tidings and warning, so that mankind might have no argument against Allâh after the Messengers. Allâh is All-Mighty, All-Wise” [4:165].

### The First and Last Messengers:

We believe that the first among the messengers is Noah and the last is Muhammad, peace be upon them all: “We revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him” [4:163]; and “Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of Allâh and the Seal of the Prophets” [33:40].

### The Most Excellent Messengers:

We believe that the most excellent among the messengers is Muhammad, then Abraham, Moses, Noah, and Jesus, son of Mary. It is they who are meant by the following Qu’ranic verse: “And when We took a covenant from the prophets, and from you, and from Noah, and Abraham, then Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant” [33:7].

We believe that Muhammad’s message, peace be upon him, includes all the merits of the messages of those dignified messengers, because Allâh says: “He ordained for you what He enjoined on Noah and what He revealed to you and what He enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus; namely, establish this faith and be united in it” [42:13].

### Messengers are Human Beings:

We believe that all messengers are created human beings who have none of the divine qualities of Allâh. Allâh, the Exalted, said about Noah, who was the first among them: “I do not say to you, ‘I possess the treasures of Allâh.’ I do not know the unseen, and I do not say ‘I am an angel’” [11:31] Allâh directed Muhammad,

who is the last among them, to say: “I do not say to you I possess the treasures of Allâh, nor do I know the unseen, and I do not say to you I am an angel” [6:50]; and to say that “I have no power to bring profit or hurt for myself, but only as Allâh wills” [7:188]; and: “I have no power to hurt or benefit you. Say none can protect me from Allâh, nor can I find any refuge besides Him” [72:91-2].

We believe that the messengers are among Allâh’s servants. He blessed them with the message and described them as servants, in the context of praising and honouring them. He says about Noah, the first among them: “You are the descendants of those whom We carried with Noah, he was a truly thankful servant” [17:3]. Allâh said about the last among them, Muhammad, peace be upon him: “Blessed be He who sent down the Qu’ran to His servant, that he may warn mankind” [25:1].

As for some other messengers, he said: “And mention Our servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, men of might and vision” [38:45]; “And remember Our servant David, who was a mighty and penitent man” [38: 17]; “And to David, We gave Solomon, he was an excellent and penitent servant” [38:30]. Allâh said about Jesus, son of Mary: “He is only a servant whom We blessed and We made him an example to the children of Israel” [43: 59].

We believe that Allâh concluded all messages with the message of Muhammad, peace be upon him, to all people, because He said: “Say, ‘O mankind, I am Allâh’s Messenger to you all. To him belongs the Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth; there is no god but He. He ordains life and death. So believe in Allâh and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet who believes in Allâh and His words. Follow him so that you may be rightly guided” [7:158].

**Islam: The Universal and Final Message:**

We believe that the Shari’ah of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the religion of Islam, which Allâh has chosen for His servants. He does not accept any other religion from anyone, for He, the Exalted, said: “Surely, the true religion in Allâh’s sight is

Islam” [3:19], “Today I have perfected your religion for you and I have completed My favour upon you, and I have chosen Islam to be your religion” [5:3], and “Whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from Him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers” [3:85]. It is our opinion that whoever claims that any religion other than Islam is acceptable, such as Judaism, Christianity and so forth, is a non believer. He should be asked to repent.

It is also our opinion that whoever rejects the universal message of Muhammad, peace be upon him, rejects the message of all messengers, even if he claims that he believes and follows His Messenger. Allâh, the Exalted, said: “Noah’s people rejected the Messengers” [26:105]. Thus, Allâh considered them as rejecting all of the messengers despite the fact that there was no messenger before Noah. This is also clear from the following verses: “Those who disbelieve in Allâh and His Messengers, and wish to make division between Allâh and His Messengers, and say: ‘We believe in some and disbelieve in others,’ wishing to take a midway course. Those indeed are the unbelievers, and We have prepared for the unbelievers a humiliating punishment” [4:150-51].

We believe that there is no prophet after Muhammad, Allâh’s Messenger, peace be upon him. Whoever claims prophet hood after him, or believes in anyone claiming it, is a disbeliever and one who rejects Allâh, His Messenger, and the Muslims’ consensus.

### The Rightly Guided Caliphs:

We believe that the Prophet, peace be upon him, has rightly guided successors who carried out his *Sunnah* in spreading knowledge calling to Islam, and managing the Muslims’ affairs. We believe that the best among them and the most entitled to the caliphate was Abu Bakr as Siddiq, then ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab, then ‘Uthman Ibn Affan and then ‘Alī Ibn Abi Talīb, may Allâh be pleased with them all. Thus their succession to the caliphate was according to their virtues. Allâh, the Exalted, who possesses

infinite wisdom, would not appoint a ruler over the best of generations unless he was the most superior among them and had the best claim to caliphate.

We believe that the inferior among those rightly guided companions can be superior in a specific virtue to those who were better than him but that he does not deserve absolute superiority, for the elements constituting superiority are varied and numerous.

We believe that the Muslim Ummah is the best among nations, and Allâh, the Dignified and Exalted, has blessed it, because He said: “You are the best nation ever brought forth for mankind, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allâh” [3:110] The Prophet’s Companions: We believe that the best among the Muslim Ummah are the Prophet’s Companions, then their followers, and then those who followed them.

We also believe that a group of this Ummah will always remain victorious on the right path, unharmed by those who let them down or those who oppose them, until the Day of Judgement.

We believe that the disputes that took place among the Prophet’s Companions were the result of sincere interpretations that they worked hard to reach. Whoever was right among them will be rewarded twice, and whoever was wrong among them will be rewarded once and his mistake will be forgiven.

It is our opinion that we should stop talking about their mistakes and mention what they deserve of beautiful praise. We should purify our hearts from hatred and malice against any of them, because Allâh said about them: “They are not equal: those among you who spent and who fought before the conquest of Makkah. Those are higher in rank than those who spent and fought afterwards. But to all Allâh has promised a great reward” [57:10]. And Allâh said about us: “And those who came after them say: ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith, and do not put in our hearts any malice against those who have

believed. Our Lord, You are the most Kind, Most Merciful” [59:10].

### Belief in the Day of Judgement:

We believe in the Final Day, which is the Day of Judgement, when people will be resurrected and then told to remain in the abode of enjoyment or in the abode of severe punishment.

### Resurrection:

We believe in the resurrection, which is Allâh’s bringing to life all those who have died, and when Israfil shall blow the horn for the second time: “And the trumpet shall be blown, and all who are in the heavens and who are in the Earth shall fall down fainting, except those that Allâh shall spare. Then, it shall be blown again and they shall rise gazing around them” [39:68]. People will arise from their graves, answering the call of the Lord of the universe. They will be barefooted, naked, and uncircumcised: “As We started the first creation, so We shall bring it back again. This is a promise from Us, so We shall assuredly fulfil it” [21: 104].

### Records and Scales:

We believe in the records of deeds that will be given to people in their right hands or behind their backs, in the left hands: “As for him who is given his book in his right hand, he shall surely receive an easy reckoning and he will return to his family rejoicing. But as for him who is given his book behind his back, he shall call for destruction on himself and will burn in a blazing fire” [84:7-12]; “Every man’s work We have fastened on his own neck, and on the Day of Judgement We shall bring out for him a book which he will see spread open, saying: ‘Read your own book! Enough for you this day that your own soul should call you to account’” [17:13-14].

We believe that scales of deeds will be set up on the Day of Judgement, and that no soul shall be wronged: “Whoever has done an atom’s weight of good shall see it” [99:7-8]; “Those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful; but those whose



scales are light, they are the ones who have lost their souls in Hell dwelling forever. The fire will burn their faces, and there they will be gloomy with lips displaced” [23: 102-4]; and “He that does a good deed shall be rewarded ten times the like of it, and he that does evil shall only be rewarded the like of it, and they shall not be wronged” [6:160].

#### The Prophet’s Intercession:

We believe in the special great intercession of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. He will plead with Allâh, after His permission and on behalf of mankind, to judge among His servants when they suffer from worries and troubles that they cannot bear. They will go to Adam, then to Noah, then to Abraham, then to Moses, then to Jesus, and finally to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

We believe in the intercession concerns some believers who were to be taken out from the fire. This mediation is granted to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and to others among the prophets, the believers, and the angels.

We believe also that Allâh will save from hell some of the believers without the intercession of any one, but by His grace and mercy.

#### The Prophet’s Pool:

We believe in the pool of the Prophet, peace be upon him, the water of which is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey and better in fragrance than musk. Each of its length and width is the distance of a month’s travel. Its glasses are as stars in beauty and number. The believers among the Prophet’s followers come to take from this great cistern a drink after which they will never be thirsty.

#### The Straight Path:

We believe in the straight path [sirat] set up over hell. People pass over it according to their deeds: the first of them as fast as

lighting, then as fast as wind, then as fast as birds, and then as fast as a running man. The Prophet will be standing on the path, saying: “Lord, Save! Save!” as some people’s deeds will fall short. Some of them will come crawling. At both sides of the path there are hooks designed to take whom Allâh wills: some are saved but bruised; others are thrown into hell. [*Bukhari and Muslim*].

We believe in all that is mentioned in the Qu’ran or the prophetic sayings concerning that day and its horrors, may Allâh save us from them. We believe in the intercession [Shafa’ah] of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, for the people of paradise to enter therein. This intercession is exclusively limited to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

### Paradise and Hell:

We believe in paradise and hell. Paradise is the abode of enjoyment which Allâh, the Exalted, prepared for the righteous. No eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard of, and no human being has ever thought of the blessings that they will enjoy there:- “No soul knows what comfort is kept hidden for them, as a reward for their deeds” [32:17].

Hell is the abode of punishment that Allâh has prepared for the unbelievers and the evildoers. The torture and horror in it cannot be imagined:- “Surely, We have prepared for the evildoers a fire, whose pavilion encompasses them. If they call for help, they will be helped with water like molten copper, which will scald their faces. How dreadful a drink and how evil a resting place!” [18:29].

Both paradise and hell exist now and will never perish:- “Whoever believes in Allâh and does righteousness, He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever. Allâh had indeed made for him an excellent provision” [65-11]; “Certainly, Allâh has cursed the unbelievers and prepared for them a blazing fire to dwell therein forever, they shall find neither protector nor helper. On the day when their faces are turned about in the fire they shall say: ‘Would that we had obeyed Allâh and obeyed the Messenger!’” [33: 64-6].

We confirm paradise to whom it is confirmed in the Qu'ran or the prophetic traditions either by name or description. Among those who are granted paradise and mentioned by name are Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'All and others who were specified by the Prophet, peace be upon him [Bukhari and Muslim]. Among those whom we confirm to enter paradise because they fit the description are the faithful and the pious.

We likewise confirm hell to whom it is confirmed in the Qu'ran and the sayings of the Prophet, whether in name or description. Among those who are mentioned by name to be in hell are Abu Lahab, 'Amr Ibn Luhai al-Khuza'i, and others [Bukhari and Muslim]. Confirmation of hell that is based on description includes every unbeliever, polytheist, or hypocrite.

### What Happens in Grave?

We believe in the Trial of the Grave, which involves questioning the deceased person in his grave about his Lord, his religion, and his prophet. There "Allâh confirms those who believe with a firm saying, in the present life and the hereafter" [14:27]. The believer will say: "Allâh is my Lord, Islam is my religion, and Muhammad is my prophet." The unbeliever or the hypocrite will say: "I do not know. I heard the people saying something and I said it."

We believe in the comfort of the grave for the believers: "Those whose lives the angels take in state of purity, saying 'peace be on you; enter paradise for what you were doing' [16:32].

We believe in the punishment of the grave for the transgressing unbelievers: "If you could only see when the evildoers are in the agonies of death and the angels are stretching out their hands, saying, 'Give up your souls! Today you shall be rewarded with the punishment of humiliation for what you used to say untrue about Allâh, and for scornfully rejecting His signs'" [6:93]. The sayings of the Prophet are numerous and well-known in this area. A Muslim must believe in all that is reported in the Qu'ran and the prophetic traditions concerning the unseen matters. He should not contradict it by his worldly experience, because the affairs of

the hereafter cannot be measured by the affairs of this life. The difference between them is very great. Allâh is the source of help.

### Fate and Divine Decree

#### Belief:

We believe in Fate, whether good or bad, which Allâh has measured and ordained for all creatures according to His previous knowledge and as deemed suitable by His wisdom.

#### Levels of Belief:

Belief in Fate has four levels:

1] **Knowledge:** We believe that Allâh, may He be Exalted, knows everything. He knows what has happened and what will happen and how it will happen. His knowledge is eternal. He does not acquire a new knowledge nor does he forget what He knows.

2] **Recording:** We believe that Allâh has recorded in the secured tablet [*al Lawh al Mahfuz*] whatever is going to happen until the Day of Judgement: “Did you not know that Allâh knows all that is in heaven and Earth? Surely that is in a book. Surely that for Allâh is an easy matter” [22:70].

3] **Will:** We believe that Allâh has willed everything in heaven and Earth. Nothing happens except by His will. Whatever He wills will take place, and whatever He does not, will not take place.

4] **Creation:** We believe that “Allâh is the Creator of all things; He is the Guardian over all things, and to Him belong the keys of the heavens and the Earth” [39:62-3]. This level includes whatever Allâh Himself does and whatever His creatures do. Thus each saying, deed, or omission of the people is known to Allâh, Who has recorded, willed, and created them: “To those among you who will to be upright. But you shall not will except as Allâh wills, the Lord of the Worlds” [81:28-29]; “And had Allâh willed they would not have fought one against the other; but Allâh does

whatever He desires” [2:253]; “Had Allâh willed, they would not have done so, but leave them alone and their false inventions” [6:137]; and “And Allâh created you and what you do” [37:96].

### Man’s Free Will:

We believe, however, that Allâh has granted man a power and a free will by which he performs his actions. That man’s deeds are done by his power and free will can be proven by the following points:

1] Allâh says: “So approach your fields [wives] when and how you will” [2:223]; and “Had they desired to go forth, they would have made some preparation for it” [9:46]. In these verses, Allâh affirmed for man “a going forth” by his will and “a preparation” by his desire.

2] Directing man to do or not to do. If man has no free will and power, these directions mean that Allâh is asking man to do that which he cannot do. This proposition is rejected by Allâh’s wisdom, mercy and truthful statement: “Allâh does not charge a soul beyond its capacity” [2:286].

3] Praising the virtuous for his deeds and blaming the evildoer for his actions and rewarding each of them with what he deserves. If the action is not done by the individual’s free will, then praising the virtuous is a joke and punishing the evildoer is an injustice, and Allâh is, of course, far from joking and being unjust.

4] Allâh has sent messengers who are “bearing good tidings, and warning, so that mankind might have no argument against Allâh after the messengers” [4:165]. If the individual’s action is not performed by his free will, his argument is not invalidated by the sending of messengers.

5] Every doer of actions feels that he does or does not do a thing without any coercion. He stands up and sits, comes in and goes out, travels and stays by his own free will without feeling anybody forcing him to be any of these actions. In fact, he clearly distinguishes between doing something of his own free will and

someone else forcing him to do that action. The Islamic law also wisely distinguishes between these states of affairs. It does not punish a wrongdoer for an action done under compulsion.

#### NO EXCUSE FOR SINNERS:

We believe that the sinner has no excuse in Allâh's divine decree, because he commits his sin by his free will, without knowing that Allâh has decreed for him, for no one knows Allâh's decree before it takes place: "No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow" [31:34]. How can it be possible, then, to present an excuse that is not known to the person who is advancing it when he commits his offence? Allâh invalidated this type of argument by saying: "The idolaters will say 'Had Allâh willed, we would not have been idolaters, neither our fathers, nor would we have forbidden anything.' So did the people before them cry lies until they tasted Our Might. Say: 'Have you any proofs that you can show Us? You follow nothing but assumption, and you are lying'" [6:148]. We say to the sinner who is using divine decree as an excuse: 'Why did you not perform deeds of obedience, assuming that Allâh has decreed them upon you, since you did not know the difference between good deeds and sins? That is why, when Prophet Muhammad told his Companions that everyone's position in paradise or hell has been assigned, they said: 'Should not we rely on this and stop working?' He said: 'No, work and everyone will be directed to what he is created for'" [*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*].

We say to the sinner who is trying to find an excuse in the divine decree: "Suppose you want to travel to Makkah. There are two roads that may take you there. You are told by a truthful person that one of these roads is dangerous and difficult; the other is easy and safe. You will take the second one. You will not take the first road and say it is decreed upon me. If you did, people would consider you crazy."

We may also say to him: "If you are offered two jobs, one of which has a higher salary, you will certainly take the one with the

higher salary. Why do you choose what is lower in the hereafter and use the divine decree as an excuse?”

We may further say to him: “We see you when you are afflicted with a disease, you knock at every physician’s door looking for treatment and bearing whatever pain that may result from surgical operations and the bitterness of medicine. Why do not you do the same when your heart is spiritually sick with sins?”

### Evil not attributed to Allâh:

We believe that evil should not be attributed to Allâh, due to His perfect mercy and wisdom. The Prophet said: “And evil is not attributable to You” [*Muslim*]. Thus Allâh’s decree by itself has no evil whatsoever, because it is coming from mercy and wisdom. Evil may, however, result from some of His decrees, because the Prophet said in the supplication for gunut which he taught to al-Hasan: “And protect us from the evil of what You decreed” [*Tirmidhi and others*]. Here, the Prophet attributed evil to what He decreed. Despite this, evil in His decree is not pure evil. It is rather evil in one respect and good in another, or it is evil in one case and good in another. Thus corruption in the land resulting from drought, disease, poverty, and fear is evil, but it is good in another respect. Allâh, the Exalted said: “Corruption has appeared on the land and sea for what men’s hands have earned. Allâh has ordained this for men, so that they may taste some of what they have done, in order that they may turn back [from evil]” [30:41]. Cutting off the thief’s hand or stoning the adulterer is an evil thing for the thief and the adulterer, but it is good for them in one respect, because it is a purification for them so that the punishment of this life and the hereafter are not combined for them. These punishments are good in another respect: their application protects property, honour, and relationships.

### Benefits

This sublime belief, which includes those great principles, bears numerous and useful types of fruits for whoever believes in it.

### Virtues of Belief in Allâh:

Belief in Allâh, His names, and His attributes instils in the individual the love and glorification of Allâh that result in his performing Allâh's instructions and avoiding His prohibitions. These are the means of achieving ultimate happiness in this life and the hereafter for both the individual and the society: "Whoever, male or female, does righteous deed, while believing, We shall assuredly grant him a goodly life, and We shall reward them according to the best of their deeds" [16:97].

### Virtues of Belief in Angels:

Appreciating the dignity of Allâh, His might, and His sovereignty. Gratitude toward Allâh because He puts some of the angels in charge of His servants, recording their deeds and other things that benefit them. Love and admiration for the angels because of what they are doing, namely, worshipping Allâh in the best possible manner and praying for the believers.

### Virtues of Belief in the Books:

Appreciating Allâh's mercy and care for His people in that He sent down a book to every nation for its guidance. Appreciating Allâh's wisdom, for He revealed in these books to every nation that which suits them. The glorious Qu'ran is the final book and it is suitable to all people at all times until the Day of Judgement. Showing gratitude for Allâh's mercy in revealing these books.

### Virtues of Belief in the Messengers:

Appreciating Allâh's mercy and care for His people for sending them those great messengers to guide them to the straight path. Thanking Allâh for this great favour. Loving and respecting the prophets and praising them in what they deserve, because they are Allâh's messengers and His choice among His people. They worshipped Allâh according to the best of their ability, conveyed His message to mankind, gave sincere advice to the people, and bore patiently whatever hurt they received.



## Virtues of Belief in the Day of Judgement:

Endeavour to obey Allâh to get the reward of that day and to avoid any disobedience to him for fear of His punishment. A consolation for the believer for whatever he misses of worldly enjoyment by what he hopes to gain of blessings and reward of the hereafter.

## Virtues of Belief in Fate and the Divine Decree:

Dependence on Allâh when doing any action, because both the cause and effect are the result of Allâh's decree. Ease of mind and comfort, because when the individual knows that everything is by Allâh's decree and that mishaps are going to take place anyway, his soul will be at ease and his heart will be satisfied with Allâh's decree. No one has a more comfortable life, worry-free soul, and stronger confidence than a believer in fate. Freedom from arrogance when a goal is achieved, because this is a blessing from Allâh through what He decreed of the causes of good and success. The individual should thank Allâh for that and free himself from arrogance.

Freedom from worry and boredom in case of failure or mishap, because that is by Allâh's decree, the One who possesses the Heavens and the Earth. Since that is going to happen anyway, the individual should be patient and hope for the reward from Allâh. Allâh points to the last two virtues in the following verse: "No misfortune can happen on earth or in yourselves but is recorded in a decree before. We bring it into existence, that is really easy for Allâh; that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor rejoice in what has come to you. Allâh does not love any vainglorious boaster" [57:22-3].

We pray to Allâh, the Exalted, to reward us for this belief, to realise for us its fruits, to increase our blessings, to keep us on the right path to which He has guided us, and to bestow on us a blessing from Him. He is indeed the Giver. Praise and gratitude be to Allâh, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be

on Prophet Muhammad, his family, his Companions, and those who rightly follow them.

### The Qu'ran

As to the Qu'ran, it consists exclusively of the revelation or commands which the Prophet professed, to have received from time to time, as a message direct from God; and which, under divine direction, the Prophet delivered to those about him.

Every syllable of the Qu'ran is of divine origin, eternal and 'uncreated' as the Deity Himself. It is one of the Islamic arguments against the Jewish and Christian Scriptures that they are not exclusively oracles professing to proceed from God.

The Prophet himself neither read nor wrote. His being an illiterate man enhances the marvel of his revelation. <sup>[1]</sup> At the moment of inspiration or shortly after, each passage was recited by the Prophet in the presence of friends or followers, and was generally committed to writing by someone amongst them, at the time or afterwards upon palm-leaves, leather, stones, or such other rude material as conveniently came to hand. These divine messages continued throughout the twenty-three years of his prophetic life, so that the last portion was not received till near the time of his death.

The Qu'ran, being the divine revelation and the corner stone of Islam, the recital of a passage from it formed an essential part of daily prayer, public and private; and its perusal and repetition were considered to be a great privilege. The preservation of the various chapters, during the life-time of the Prophet, was not altogether dependent on their being committed to writing. The Qu'ran was committed to memory by almost every adherent of Islam, and the extent, to which it could be recited, was one of the chief sources of distinction, in the early stages of Islam. Amongst a crowd of warrior martyrs, he who had been the most versed in the Qu'ran was honoured with the first burial. The person who in any

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<sup>[1]</sup> Sir W. Muir. Life of Mohammad.

company could most faithfully repeat the Qu'ran, was ipso facto entitled to conduct the public prayers, and in certain cases to financial rewards.

The retentive faculty of the early Arabs favoured the task; and it was applied with all the ardour of an awakened spirit, to the Qu'ran. Several of the Prophet's followers could during his life-time repeat with scrupulous accuracy, the whole as then in use. Four or five such persons are named; and several others also who could very nearly repeat the whole before the Prophet's death. [1]

“However retentive the Arab memory, remarks Sir William Muir, we should still have regarded with distrust a transcript made entirely from that source. But there is good reason for believing, that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole Qu'ran, or nearly the whole were during his life-time made by the Prophet's followers.

“Such as the condition of the next during Muhammad's life-time, and such it remained for about a year after his death, imprinted upon the hearts of his people, and fragmentary transcripts increasing daily” [2]

Further the same writer states: “The contents and arrangement of the Qu'ran speak forcibly for its authenticity. All the fragments have, with artless simplicity, been joined together...Even the frailties of the Prophet, as noticed by the Deity, have with evident faithfulness, been entered in the Qu'ran...In fine, we possess every internal guarantee of confidence [namely in the authenticity of the Qu'ran, as it exists in the present copies]. .... There is otherwise every security, internal and external, that we possess that text which Muhammad himself gave forth and used.

So carefully, indeed, has it been preserved that there are no variations of importance— we might almost say no variations at all— to be found in the innumerable copies scattered throughout

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[1] Sir W. Muir. Life of Mohammad.

[2] Sir W. Muir. Life of Mohammad.

the vast bound of the Empire of Islam. Yet, but One Qu’ran has been current amongst them; and the consentaneous use by all of the same Scripture, in every age to the present day, is an irrefragable proof, that we have now before us the very text prepared by command of the Caliph Othman who was murdered some time after the compilation of the Qu’ran. [1]

There is probably in the world no other work, which has remained twelve centuries [1861], with so pure a text.<sup>[2]</sup> This is only because the various revelations in the Qu’ran, regarding its divine nature, and its remaining forever free from corruption or contradistinction, are rightly confirmed. Here are a few verses bearing on this point: “We have surely sent down the Qu’ran; and we will certainly preserve the same from corruption.” [15:9]

“This Qu’ran could not have been composed by any, except God; but it is a confirmation of that which was revealed before it, and an explanation of the scripture; there is no doubt therefore; sent down from the Lord of all creatures. Will they say, [Muhammad] has forged it? Answer, Bring therefore a chapter like unto it; and call whom you may [to your assistance] besides God, if you speak truth.” [10:38]

“Say, Verily if men and genie were purposely assembled, that they might produce [a book] like this Qu’ran, they could not produce one like unto it, although they assisted each other. And we have variously propounded unto men in this Qu’ran, every kind of figurative argument; but the greater part of men refuse to receive it, merely out of infidelity.” [17:88]

The Rev. Rodwell states: “It must be acknowledged too, that the Qu’ran deserves the highest praise for its conception of the divine nature, in reference the attributes of Power, Knowledge and Universal Providence and Unity- that its belief and trust in the One God of Heaven and Earth, is deep and fervent.”

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[1] *ibid.*

[2] Rodwell’s *Life of Muhammad.*

“The simple shepherds and wandering bedouins of Arabia, are transformed, into the founders of empires, the builders of cities, the collectors of more libraries, than they at first destroyed, while cities like Fostat, Baghdad, Cordova and Dehli, attest the power. And thus, while the Qu’ran, which underlies this vast energy and contains the principles which are its springs of actions, reflects to a great extent its merit as a code of laws, and as a system of religious teaching, must always be estimated by the changes which it introduced into the customs and beliefs of those who willingly embraced it. In the suppression of their idolatries, in the substitution of the worship of God for that of the powers of nature and genii with Him, in the abolition of child murder, in the extinction of manifold superstitious usages, in the reduction of the number of wives to a fixed standard it was to the Arabs an unquestionable blessing, and an accession, it must not be forgotten that Europe, in the middle ages, owed much of her knowledge of dialectic philosophy, of medicine and architecture to Arabia writers, and that Muslims formed the connecting link between the West and the East for the importation of numerous articles of luxury and use.”

“For if he [Muhammad] was indeed the illiterate person the Muslims represent him to have been, then it will be hard to escape their inference, that the Qu’ran is, as they assert it to be, a standing miracle.”

### The Qu’ran; the Last Scripture from God

Let us now make a swift survey of the Qu’ran. I shall content myself with a number of quotations of what was written on the Qu’ran by the pen of non-Muslim critics, as giving a sufficiently true picture of the Qu’ran. However, it must ever be remembered that, as miraculously Divine Book, the Qu’ran, when translated into a foreign language, necessarily loses a great deal of its elegance and purity of style.

Mr. Sale addresses the reader of his English version—praiseworthy as it is—in the following words:

“... Though he [the reader] must not imagine the translation to come up to the original, notwithstanding my endeavours to do it justice” In another place, the same writer comments on the Qu’ran as follows: “The Qu’ran is universally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity of language in the dialect of the tribe of the Quraish, the most noble and polite of all the Arabians; but with some mixture though very rarely, of other dialects. It is confessedly the standard of the Arabian tongue and as the more conservative believe and are taught by the book itself, inimitable by any human pen, and therefore insisted on as a permanent miracle, greater than that of raising the dead, and alone sufficient to convince the world of its origin.

“And to this miracle Muhammad himself chiefly appealed for the confirmation of his mission, publicly challenging the most eloquent men in Arabia which was at the same time stocked with thousands whose sole study and ambition it was, to excel in elegance of style and composition; to produce even a single chapter that might be compared with it I will mention but one instance out of several, to show that this book was really admired for the beauty of its composition by those who must be allowed to have been competent judges.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Von Goethe renowned German author, speaking of the Qu’ran in his West Oestlicher Divan, states: “However often we turn to it, [the Qu’ran], at first disgusting us each time afresh, it soon attracts, astounds and in the end enforces our reverence.... Its style, in accordance with its contents and aim, is stern, grand, terrible, ever and anon truly sublime...thus this book will go on exercising, through all ages, a most potent influence.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Dr. Steingass, the learned compiler of an English Arabic and Arabic English Dictionary [*W.H. Allen and Co.*] has recorded his

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<sup>[1]</sup> See Sale’s Prelim Discourse.

<sup>[2]</sup> See Goeth’s West-Qesticher Divan. These words of Goethe were placed by Mr. Rodwell by way of motto on the reverse of the title page of his translation of the Quran.

opinion on the Qu’ran in Dr. Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam. After referring to the above words of Goethe Dr. Steingass writes: “These words seem to me so much the more weighty and worthy of attention, as they are uttered by one who, whatever his merits or demerits in other respects may be deemed to be, indisputable belongs to the greatest masters of language of all times, and stands foremost as a leader of modern thought and the intellectual culture of modern times;” [Here Dr. Steingass quotes the words of Goethe and then says]. “A work then which calls forth so powerful and seemingly incompatible emotions, even in the distant reader – distant as to time and still more so, as to mental development a work which not only conquers repugnance with which he may begin its perusal, but changes this adverse feeling into astonishment and admiration. It is indeed, a problem of the highest interest to every thoughtful observer of the destinies of mankind. Much has been said, in the preceding pages, to acknowledge, to appreciate, and to explain the literary excellences of the Qu’ran, and a more or less distinct admission, that Buffon’s much-quoted saying: “Le style est l’homme”, is here more justified than ever, underlies all these verdicts. We may well say, the Qu’ran is one of the grandest books ever written because it faithfully reflects the character and life of one of the greatest men that ever breathed. “Sincerity writes Carlyle, ‘sincerity, in all senses, seems to me the merit of the Qu’ran.’ This same sincerity, this ardour and earnestness in the search for truth, this never – flagging perseverance in trying to impress it, when partly found, again and again upon his unwilling hearers, appears to me as the real and undeniable ‘seal of prophecy’ in Muhammad...” [1]

But the approaches to truth are many, and he who devoted all his powers and energies, with untiring patience and self-denial, to the task of leading a whole nation by one of these approaches, from a rude idolatry, to the worship of the living God, has certainly a strong claim to our warmest sympathies, as a faithful servant and noble champion of truth.

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[1] See Von Goethe’s West-Qestlicher Divan.

Dealing with the opinion, expressed on the Qu'ran by some European authors who dwell upon the pretended inferiority of the later portions of the Qu'ran in comparison with the earlier chapters, Dr. Steingass ably remarks as follows:

“Not being an Arabic scholar himself [Goethe], he knew the Qu'ran only through the translations existing at the time which follow throughout the order of the received text...Those critics, on the other hand, who view the Qu'ran with regard to the chronological order of its constituents, follow the descending scale in their estimate. But if we consider the variety and heterogeneousness of the topics, on which the Qu'ran touches, uniformity of style and diction can scarcely be expected; on the contrary, it would appear to be strangely out of place. Let us not forget that in the book, as Muhammad's newest biographer. Ludolf Krehl [*Das Leben des Muhammad. Leipzig 1884*] express it, 'there is given a complete code of creed and morals, as well as of the law based thereupon. There are also the foundations laid for every institution of an extensive commonwealth, for instruction, for the administration of justice, for military organization, for finance, for a most careful legislation for the poor: 'all built up on the belief in the one God Who holds man's destiny in His hand.' Where so many important objects are concerned, the standard of excellence, by which we have to gauge the composition of the Qu'ran as a whole, must needs vary with the matter treated upon in each particular case. Sublime, and chaste, where the supreme truth of God's unity is to be proclaimed; appealing in high-pitched strains to the imagination of a poetically-gifted people, where the eternal consequences of man's submission of God's holy will, or of rebellion against it, are pictured; touching in its simple, almost crude earnestness, when it seeks again and again encouragement or consolation for God's Messenger, and a solemn warning for those, to whom he has been sent, in the histories of the prophets of old: the language of the Qu'ran adapts itself to the demands of everyday life, when this everyday life, in its private and public bearings, is to be brought in to harmony with the fundamental principles of the new dispensation.



“Here therefore, its merits, as a literary production should, perhaps, not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad’s contemporaries and fellow-countrymen.

If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers, as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well-organized body, animated by ideas, far beyond these which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilised nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history.

“When a long period of conquests scattered the Arabs to the farthest East and to the farthest West, their spoke language might deviate from its perfect purity, slurring over unaccented syllables and dropping terminations. But the fine idiom of their forefathers, as deposited in the Qu’ran, remained the language of their prayer and their pious meditation, and thus lived on with them, as a bond of unity, an object of national love and admiration, and a source of literary development for all times.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Qu’ran, therefore, is the last Scripture from God, which has superseded by its new dispensation all preceding Scriptures, containing all comprehensible instructions and laws, all matters concerning the relation between the Creator and His creature, and between man and man. It is a miraculous book, a code of laws bearing on every, institution of an extensive common-wealth, on instruction, on the administration of justice, on military organisation, on finance, on a most careful legislation for the poor; and a complete code of beliefs and morals: all built up on the perfected belief in One God Who holds man’s destiny in His Hand. It embodies a correct summary of the true religion which former prophets from the time of Adam had taught to their respective countries, and a solemn warning to all mankind, to whom the “Seal of Prophets” had been sent to reclaim and to

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[1] Vide Dr. Hughes’ Dist. of Islam pp. 526-530.

reform. It exposes and refutes the pretensions and incorrect interpretations of rabbis and priests who had misled their people. These later were often called upon, in the Qu'ran to come to a reasoning with the followers of the new faith and, then, to judge for themselves, as to whether Islam was to be rejected by pure reason cleared of every grain of partiality. But the high voice from Heaven was not adheared to and differences of a religious nature still continue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The Qu'ran is a Divine Book which from the day of its revelation through the message of the Prophet and Apostle of God, up to this moment, has undergone no alteration whatever.<sup>1</sup> It is the Sacred Book that continues to reign over the hearts of its hearers, to convince them, through their own conscience and spiritual nature of its Divine origin. No human pen, however powerful, can venture to imitate it. The miraculous nature of the Qu'ran has, long ago, been solemnly confirmed by those who were the most competent judges. The Arabians could boast of no other literature than witty poems of eloquence in their own language, - though as they paid due honour to any distinguished poem by their famous poets- were struck with infinite admiration, when they heard the Prophet of God reciting certain portions of God's new Book to them. Their own celebrated *Rabiaa*, whose poem was attached to the Sacred Pantheon of the *Ka'bah*, could without much trouble or hesitation, judge that the Qu'ran was rightly a Divine Book, and that the illiterate orphan was the true messenger of God. From the perusal of the concise, but accurate history of the Prophet, in part II of this essay, it is clear enough, how the obstinate minded Arabs of the Desert received the Book with adoration and perfect respect. Again the contents of the Qu'ran most readily answer all questions that may be raised on religious or civil matters. I will quote here some translated passages from the Qu'ran, as examples of the rest, and leave them to recommend themselves:

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<sup>[1]</sup> See Sir Muir's Life of Mohammad; Dr. Hughes' Dict. of Islam

1- Calling the Jews and Christians to come to agreement <sup>[1]</sup> with Muslims:

“Say. O you who have received the Scripture [Jews and Christians] come to a just determination between us and you; that we worship not any except God, and associate no creature with Him; and that the one of us takes no other for Lord<sup>2</sup>, beside God. But if they turn back, say; bear witness that we are true believers.” [3:64]

2- Ordering the Prophet to Praise God:

“Say. O God possessor of the Kingdom, Thou givest dominion, to whom Thou wilt, and Thou takes away Kingdom from whom Thou wilt: Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou humblest who, Thou wilt, in Thy hand is good, and Thou art the Almighty: Thou causest the night to succeed the day, and Thou causest the day to succeed the night: Thou bringest forth the living out of the dead and Thou bringest forth the dead out of the living, and Thou art the provider of substance, to whomsoever Thou wilt, without measure.” [3:26-27]

3- Right and Wrong:

“Say, whether you conceal that which is in you hearts, or whether you show it God knoweth it: He knoweth whatever is in heaven and whatever is on earth: and He is the Almighty. On the Day of Judgment, every soul shall find present the good which it wrought. And the evil which it wrought, will cause it such a disgrace, that it shall wish that there was a vast distance between itself and that evil.” [3:29-30]

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[1] That is to come to such terms of agreement as are indispensably consonant to the doctrine of all the prophets and scriptures, and therefore cannot be reasonably rejected.

[2] The Jews and Christians used to pay rather blind obedience to their priests and monks who took upon them to pronounce what things were lawful and what were unlawful, and to dispense with the laws of God. [Sale].

#### 4. Belief of the Faithful

“The Apostle [Muhammad] believeth in that which has been sent down unto him from his Lord, as do the faithful [also]. Every one [of them] believeth in God and His angels, and His Scriptures, and His Apostles: We make no distinction between any of His Apostles. And they say “We have listened, and so we obey. Thy mercy, O Lord, for unto Thee [O Lord] must we return.”, “God will not burden any soul beyond its power. It shall enjoy the good which it has gained, and shall bear the evil which it has wrought. O Lord punish us not, if we forget or fall into sin; O Lord, lay not on us a burden, like that which Thou hast laid on those who have been before us, neither make us, O Lord, to bear what we have no strength to bear, but be favourable unto us, and spare us and be merciful unto us. Thou art our patron; help us therefore against the unbelieving people.” [2:285-286]

#### The Qu’ranic Conception of Man

The Glorious Qu’ran represents man as a free and responsible being, gifted with the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong. Then according to the Qu’ran, man is capable of obeying the law of God. He needs nobody to atone for his sins, but himself; for the Lord is merciful and will forgive him his sins. The Glorious Book of Islam mentions no original sin, which we inherit at our birth. It does not represent man as coming into the world with a load of sin on his back. On the contrary, it represents him as an unconscious Muslim at the moment of creation. The Prophet of Islam says: “Every child is born with a Muslim heart”, and it is the external influences that make it what it becomes afterwards in life. If bad influences happen to be at work, the child generally surrenders to such influences, unless God Himself undertakes to care for the little soul. When the child grows into manhood, he may use God gifted faculty of discrimination and may become what he chooses in life. Indeed, God gives him many a chance in life, that he may recover himself from sin and iniquity. He may make or ruin his fortune even in the spiritual sense. If in him, Faith asserts its power, if true

repentance places him in the right attitude towards God, if God impels him to do virtuous deeds, if he feels the hand of God working in the smallest concerns of his life, and, above all, if he accepts death with a smiling face, why this is sufficient atonement in the sight of the Lord, whose pre-eminent attribute is Mercy.

To understand the Qu'ranic conception of man, a reference to the following verses is necessary: "Of goodliest fabric We created man, then brought him down to be the lowest of the low; save who believe and do things that are right, for theirs shall be a reward that faileth not" [95:4-8]. These verses indicate that man, at the moment of his creation, is perfectly sinless. It is afterwards, that sin tries to assert itself and bring him down to the level of the brutes. But he has also the divine in him, - the power to offer if he so wills, a stubborn resistance; and by the help of this power, he may "grow up to a pious believer". Although his own force is feeble, there is the support of God which will cooperate with him in this work of self-regeneration only if he shows genuine desire to turn to God, to believe and to do things that are right. The Glorious Qu'ran is very clear on this point. It does not ask to believe in the doctrine of original sin; and so atonement, in a Christian sense, has no place in the Islamic Scripture. What God wants of us, is this that we for our part, should make the utmost endeavour to secure His obedience and grace while He for His part, undertakes to direct us into His ways. "And whoso maketh his utmost endeavour towards Us, We will surely direct him into Our ways," says the Qu'ran [29:69].

This utmost endeavour on our part to reach God, involves the idea of personal atonement and sacrifice which the Muslim is required to offer. We find the same thought clearly expressed elsewhere in the Word of God. "They who set their face with resignation God-ward, and do what is right, their reward is with their Lord; nor fear shall come on them, neither shall they be grieved." [2:112] The Muslim is taught the high truth, that "the good drives away the evil in man", and so he requires not anyone to take the burden of his sin and to undergo punishment as his

‘substitute’. He develops his faculties, and tries his very best, to make use of them in doing good deeds and working out the will of his Maker; and hopes that his little will be accepted as much by the Most Merciful Lord.

Everywhere, in the Glorious Qu’ran, man is represented as the crown and glory of creation. He is the central figure of this beautiful universe. In Adam, he is God’s vicegerent on earth. Out of love, God has created man. And he has created for him the heavens and the earth, and sendeth down water from the heaven, and so bringeth forth the fruits for his food and to him He has subjected the ships, so that by His command they pass through the sea; and to him He has subjected the sun and the moon in their constant courses; and to him He has subjected the day and the night; of everything which he may ask Him, giveth He to him; and if he would reckon up the favours of God, he can never count them.

“And the cattle, for you He created them; from them you have warm garments, and they are useful in many ways; and of them you eat; and they obey you well when you fetch them home and when you drive them forth to pasture: and they carry your burdens to lands which you could not else reach, but with travail of soul: truly, your Lord is full of Goodness, and Merciful: And He has given you horses, mules and asses, that you may ride them, and for your pleasure: And things, of which you have no knowledge, has He created. Of God it is, to point out the way. Some [of you] turn aside from it; but had He pleased, He had guided you all aright.” [16:5-9]

According to the Qu’ran, God has endowed us with the power of self-government which is an almost incredible trust. This earth is put into our hands, to make what we will of it and ourselves, and its inhabitants. It is stored with all possible helps to us, in natural forces and materials; we are given intelligence, to find them out and to use them for the enrichment and comfort of our lives; we are given a complete code of regulations, to guide us as to what is right and what is wrong; we are drawn towards well-doing, in

accord with this code of regulations, we are trusted with the freedom to do with all this what we will. The outcome, good or evil, is what we and our fellows of the human race, past and future, are helping, or have helped, or will help to make it in the future.

### The Weaknesses of Human Nature

The Qu'ran also dwells on the weaknesses, to which the flesh is heir, and constantly reminds man of his inconstancy, injustice and ingratitude. "Man is created weak." "Surely man is unjust and ungrateful". "Man is hasty." "Man is covetous", "Verily, man is created extremely impatient" "Verily, man is ungrateful unto his Lord." It must, however, not be inferred from verses like these, that man stands condemned before his Creator, as deserving only death and loss of soul. These verses rather breathe a noble sympathy for the man weakness and the flesh infirmities. They contain in them promises of God's grace and forgiveness. In reminding man of the infirmities of his nature, God desires that he should realise his weakness and powerlessness, bow down his head before the Lord, turn to Him for strength and assistance, and pray constantly, that He may guide him into the right, straight path. Indeed, the Muslim is enjoined to throw himself in this attitude towards his Maker, and to offer such prayers repeatedly through the day and night.

He is taught to say: "Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds; the Compassionate, the Merciful, King of the day of Reckoning. Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. Guide Thou us in the right path, the path of those unto whom Thou hast been gracious; - and not of those with whom Thou art angry, and neither of those, who go astray." [1:1-7]

As will be seen, this human prayer is full of sympathy towards the weakness of man. In it the Lord teaches His servant, to beg of Him divine blessings. In it He indirectly asks them not sink in despair and indirectly promises, to guide them into the path of piety and to give them strength, to bear the yoke of His law. What

an uplifting hope is breathed into our hearts, when He tells us, that He was gracious in the past, unto those who sought Him, and even so today He is ready to be gracious unto us, if we only turn to Him and look up to His Grace, as our true Saviour.

But, as Shakespeare said: "The course of true love never did run smooth". With equal truth it may be said of divine love, that its course never runs smooth. Trials and tribulations are bound to come. Many a trial the seeker after God has to undergo, before he can expect to receive the grace of God. "Think you," says the Lord, to enter Paradise, when no such things have come upon you, as no those who flourished before you? Ills and troubles tried them; and so afflicted were they by trials that the Apostle and they, who shared his faith, said "When will the help of God come? Is not the help of God nigh?" [2:210] Even the Prophet Abraham, was tried by God, when He commanded him to leave his home and country, and to offer his beloved son as a sacrifice.

No doubt, it is rather a difficult task, to secure the blessing of God, and to perform the divine laws. But, let not man walk unsteadily under the difficulty of the task that lies before him. Let him take courage, and with a firm trust in God and a cheerful heart, undertake the performance; and above all fear the Lord; for it is God's promise, that "He will make His command easy to him who fears Him", it should always be remembered that God: "He is gracious unto His servants." Elsewhere, we read a surpassingly comforting verse, which comes as a message of hope to each and all of us. "God desireth, to be gracious unto you... God desireth to make your burden light: for man has been created weak." [4:28]

Again we read; "God wisheth you ease and never wisheth you discomfort." [2:185] A world of mercy and forgiveness is surely concealed behind, and breathed out by these verses. God is offering His grace; we have only to throw ourselves in the right attitude of Faith, and give ourselves up to God and His Hand will lead us to His blessings. We have but to confess out weakness and ask from our Lord power, strength, and His mercy will descend upon us.



There is another remarkable passage in the Glorious Qu'ran which presents to us a just, but at the same time a merciful God, and then gives a most beautiful prayer, so comforting to the helpless man who, toiling up the spiritual heights sits down totally unnerved, looking up to God for strength and support, "God will not burden any soul beyond its power," so run the words of God, "It shall enjoy the good which it has acquired and shall bear the evil, for the acquirement of which it laboured. Our Lord punish us not if we forget, or fall into sin; Our Lord lay not on us a burden, like that which Thou hast laid on those who have been before us; neither make us, O Lord, to bear what we have not the strength to bear; but blot out our sins, and forgive us, and have pity on us. Thou art our Patron; help us, therefore, against those who do not believe." [2: 286]

### The Qu'ran and the Doctrine of Personal Piety

Islam has taken due awareness of the frailties of human nature, and this constitutes its chief excellence as a system of religion. Thus, the laws of Islam exhibit elasticity, which is a proof of their beneficence and usefulness. Though Islam, no doubt, points to a lofty idealism, it is, at the same time, thoroughly practical. The merit of Islam, as a religion, consists in a happy harmonious blending of the ideal and the practical. It favours no form of asceticism, and never asks any man, to do what he has not the power to do. There is, however, one thing, on which it lays the greatest emphasis. It is personal piety and purity of heart. It is the grand purpose, for which the Prophet was sent down, as it appears from the prayer of Abraham: "Our Lord, raise up among them an apostle who may rehearse Thy signs unto them, and teach them the Book and Wisdom, and purify them." [2:129]

The reader will observe that the verse gradually ascends to a climax; Purification of men being put last as the most important part of the functions of the Prophet of Islam. Again, after mentioning the blessings of heavenly life, the Glorious Qu'ran adds: "And this shall be the reward of him who shall be pure." [2:123] That a very important place is given to purity of mind and

personal piety, will be seen from another verse, where sinners are threatened with the punishment, that God shall neither speak unto them nor shall He purify them.” “Moreover, they who conceal any part of the scripture which God has sent down unto them ...God shall not speak unto them, on the day of resurrection, neither shall He purify them, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment.” [2:175]. It is clear, then that communion with the Deity and personal piety are the keynote of Islam.

But even here, man is not held responsible for the evil thoughts that in spite of himself, pass through his mind, like flashes of lightning. To render man responsible for such passing fancies, over which he has little control, would be complete injustice. Commission of a wrong act, without previous intention and deliberation does not make one guilty, far less a passing thought that rises like a bubble only to die and disappear the next moment. Adam ate of the forbidden tree and thereby committed a mistake as all men are liable to commit mistakes; but he was never guilty of committing sin, and the Glorious Qu’ran clears him of the false accusation, just as it has cleared other prophets, like Moses and Jesus of similar charges. For it says: “We heretofore gave a command to Adam, and *he forgot it* and We found *no intention* in him [to disobey our command]” [20:115]

This is, indeed, an important principle, and it has important bearings on the doctrine of sin, as presented by the Glorious Qu’ran, for elsewhere we read: “God will not punish you for an inconsiderate word in your oaths; but He will punish you for that which your hearts have assented unto.” [2:225]. This verse clearly lays down, that a wrong act, or an evil thought, is a sin, if it is deliberate. Shorn of intention and deliberation, a wrong act or an impure thought is a mere accident which, however deplorable, cannot prove the doer a guilty sinner in the sight of God.

But, if the element of intention is present, even the faintest thought is enough, to render a man guilty before his Maker, not to speak of a deed which is manifestly wrong. God forbids both kinds of sin –open and secret– equally in the same verse: “Draw

not near unto sin neither open nor secret,” [6:151] “Leave both—the outside of iniquity and the inside thereof.” [16:38] Again: “Say, verily, my Lord has forbidden sins, whether open or secret and iniquity and unjust violence.” [7:34]

These verses sufficiently establish the doctrine of personal piety in Islam; but to crush the objection of the critics absolutely, we give one more verse which shows, that not only the eyes and the ears, but also the heart, will be required to give evidence on the Day Judgment, if any sin has been committed through them. And the verse is this: “And follow not that, whereof thou hast no knowledge; for the hearing and the sight and the heart – each of these shall be examined.” [17:38]

Personal piety, it must be remembered depends largely on a thorough belief in the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God by His Knowledge. And nothing is more striking to the reader of the Glorious Qu’ran, than the force, with which it impresses upon us these two attributes of the Deity. The belief, that the Supreme Being sees our actions and knows even the innermost secrets of our hearts, is a most powerful check upon the tendency to commit sin. So long as a man realizes, that he works and moves under the great Task master’s eyes he keeps himself from vice: but whenever this consciousness in him grows dim, and he thinks he is not watched by God, he exposes himself to constant danger.

## Practical Devotions

“Islam; a companion book,” now presents the embodying practical devotions, legal transactions, punishments, moralities, foundations of Islamic jurisprudence and theology, together with an exposition of piety and code of morals and spiritual aspect in Islam.

Before giving an account of the present volume contents, it may be proper to give some explanation about Islamic law. The Islamic Law proceeds in its determinations upon two grounds: the text of the Qu’ran and the *Sunnah*, the Prophet Traditions or the Oral Law.

- 1) The Qu’ran is considered by Muslims as the basis of their law; and is therefore, when applied to judicial matters, entitled by way of distinction “*Al-Shari’a*” or the Law. The precepts of the Qu’ran are of two prescriptions: prohibitory and injunctive. In their application, they are always considered as unquestionable and irrefutable.
- 2) As regards the *Sunnah*, it literally signifies custom, regulation or institution. The *Sunnah* stands next to the Qu’ran in point of authority, being considered as a commentary to the Qu’ran. It forms the body of what is termed the Oral Law, because it was not committed to writing by the scribes of the Prophet, it being deduced solely from his traditionary precepts, sayings and practice preserved from mouth to mouth by authorized persons.

After the Prophet’s death, the institutions of the *Sunnah* were at first quoted by his companions merely to settle occasional disputes or to restrain men from certain actions which the Prophet had prohibited: and thus in the process of time, they became a standard of judicial determinations. The *Sunnah* applies to many points of both devotional and temporal natures.

Prof. Bosworth Smith remarks: “As to the Pagan Arabs the nice distinctions of property were imperfectly understood; each tribe

was governed by its own law and disputed causes were either referred to the determination of the chief or [more frequently] decided by an appeal to the sword.

“Private revenge was not merely tolerated, but encouraged, and the justice and necessity of it inculcated. Hence every dissension was the occasion either of single combat or of civil war, and tradition furnishes us with accounts of above 1,500 battles fought before the introduction of the Islamic system.

“Indeed, half pagan and half Christian, half civilised and half barbarian it was given to Mohammed in a marvellous degree to unite the peculiar excellences of the one with the peculiar excellence of the other.

“Head of the state as well as of the Church, he [Mohammed] was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope’s pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar. Without standing army, without a fixed revenue, if ever a man had the right to say that he ruled by a right divine, it was Mohammed, for he had all the power without its instruments” [1].

Dealing with the social changes brought by the Prophet, Dr. Noldeke states: “One fact among others, by which we can estimate the striking impression the Prophet produced upon the Arabs, is that each tribe once submitted, or adopted his religion, it renounced the right of retaliation for the bloodshed in the struggle. Under other circumstances, this renunciation of blood-revenge, or of wergild at least, would have seemed to the Arab the lowest depth of humiliation. This was, indeed, so striking a feature of the new brotherhood that it could not fail to make a silent but deep impression upon the unbelieving multitude who now began to feel the power of the new religion.

“To those who seek miracles, this glorious result, achieved in less than a decade, constitutes a real and splendid miracle of Islam,

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[1] cf. Prof. Bosworth Smith in his “Mohamed and Mohammedanism,” P. 340.

which alone gives it the title, to be ranked as a great religion and wonderful civilising agency” [1]

In an exquisitely beautiful passage full of grace and wisdom, the Glorious Qu’ran, draws a contrast between the life and manners of Arabs in the shade of Islam and those in pre-Islamic times; and urges upon the true believers a true union of hearts, and dwells on the real purpose of the advent of the new religion. Here is a rendering of the verses:

“O ye believers, fear God as He deserves to be feared; and die not but as true Muslims and hold ye fast by the Cord of God, all of you, and do not scatter yourselves, and remember God’s goodness towards you, and how that when you were enemies. He united your hearts, and through His grace, ye became brethren, and while ye were on the brink of the pit of fire, He saved you from it; thus clearly God shows His signs, that ye may be guided. And let there be among you some people who invite to the good, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong; and these are they who shall prosper.” [3:102-103].

The reader shall find in this volume the numerous rules, regulations, directions, institutions and guidances which have been the basis upon which the Empire of Islam was built. The Prophet Mohammed did not only promulgate a religion, but he also laid down a complete social system, containing minute regulations for a man’s conduct in all circumstances of life, with due rewards and penalties, according to his fulfillment or otherwise of these rulings. The social and the religious parts of Islam are so inseparably bound up that it is impossible to cut off the one from the other without destroying both. Religion according to Islam should not only lay down the law of relation of man to God, but should also regulate and distinctly define the proper relation between man and his fellow-beings.

It is also to be rightly hoped that they will contribute to a fuller knowledge of the great cultural heritage of Islam, for only

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[1] Dr. Noldeke’s in his book on “Islam,” p. 126.

through real understanding will the West be able to appreciate the underlying problems and aspirations of the Muslim world today. A deeper knowledge of the great ideals and lofty doctrines underlying Islam will help toward a revival of that true spirit of charity which neither despises nor fears the notions and teachings of another creed.

This modest endeavour, hopefully, will serve in some degree to remove misconceptions as to the precept of the message of Islam, particularly with respect to tolerance in Islam and the status of woman.

It is relevant to point out to the reader who will come across my interpretation of several verses of the Qu'ran, that it must be remembered that as a miraculous Divine Book, the Qu'ran, when translated, literally, into any foreign language, necessarily loses a great deal of its supernatural elegance and purity of style.

George Sale himself addresses the reader of his so-called translation of the Qu'ran in the following words.

“...Though the reader must not imagine the translation to come up to the original, notwithstanding my endeavours to do it justice.”

Hence my having to render into English exclusively the *meaning* of the verses, while avoiding any literal translation for the sake of the above argument. My interpretation as set forth in this book is simply according to my personal understanding of the meaning of the verses, notwithstanding my endeavours to do it justice.

For further illumination, of the subject I quote Mr. Bosworth Smith's opinion of the Qu'ran: “Illiterate himself [i.e. the Prophet Mohammed] yet brought forth a book which is a code of law, a book of common prayer, and a bible in one, and is reverence to this day by a sixth of the whole of the human race, as a miracle of purity of style of wisdom of truth. It was the one miracle claimed

by Mohammed, his standing miracle he called it, and a miracle indeed it is.”<sup>[1]</sup>

## Prayers

Pronouncing the Formula of the Faith: – After heartedly believing that God is one, having no partner, or son, and that Muhammad is His Prophet and Messenger to announce God’s word to mankind, it is the religious duty of every faithful embracing Islam to exercise the practical devotions of the religion.

- 1) The first and foremost of these is to pronounce publicly the formula of the faith as follows: “I bear witness that there is no deity save God, and that Muhammad is His servant and his Apostle.”
- 2) Next comes the duty of exercising the stated prayers, as given in detail, though only summarized hereinafter.

Prayers to God, according to Islam, are the essence of man’s duties to God. It is an outpouring of the heart’s sentiments, a devout supplication to God, and a reverential expression of the soul’s sincerest desires to its Maker. Prayers according to the Qu’ran are the only way to communicate with God. The word of God in the Qu’ran teaches thus:-

“Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book [the Qu’ran] and establish the prayer, for prayer precludes indecency and wrongdoing, while remembrance of God is greater still.” [29:45].

Islam, therefore, enjoins prayers as a means of the moral elevation of man. But if prayer is said carelessly or with an absent heart, it degenerates into a mere ritual, into a lifeless and dull ceremony gone through with insincerity of heart. This is not the sort of prayer accepted by Islam. Such a prayer is denounced by the Qu’ran which gives the warning: - So woe to the worshippers, who are neglectful of their prayers, those who [want but] to be seen [of men].” [107:4-6]

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<sup>[1]</sup> Vide Mohd. And Mohamedanism I. Page 34.



Whilst the rite of *Salât*, [i.e. saying the enjoined prayers] is being performed one concentrates internally to God, while the reflections of meaning and reason of the verses one reads, stir and exalt one's soul to everything that is supreme, lofty and good. This *Salât* is, so to say, a form of exercise and training. But it is not enough to practice merely its various movements of standing, bending, prostrating and sitting such movements as will be fully described later. The real spirit of *Salât* is to be in constant communication with, and worship of, God. The *Fâtîba* – the Opening Chapter of the Qu'ran – forms an essential part of every prayer, so that no prayer, according to a teaching of the Prophet of Islam, is complete without the *Fâtîba*, which is really a wonder in sense and meaning. Its translation is as follows:

“All praise is due to God the Lord of all Worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the King of the day of reckoning. You only do we worship, and from You only do we seek for help. Guide us to the straight path, the path of those to whom You has been gracious, not of those who are condemned nor those who are misguided.”  
[1:1-7]

The *Fâtîba* is rightly described as a wonder in sense and meaning. Honestly speaking, the prayer contained in the *Fâtîba* is the subliming of all prayers that exist in any religion. It is composed of seven verses, the first three of which speak of the Divine attributes of Providence, Beneficence, Mercy and Requit; the last three verses lay open before the Creator of the Universe the earnest desire of man's soul to walk in righteousness without stumbling on either side, while the middle verse is expressive of man's entire dependence on God. The attributes referred to are those which disclose God's overwhelming beneficence and care, the ideal to which a human soul is made to aspire is the highest to which man can rise, namely the path of righteousness, the path of grace in which there is no stumbling.

On one hand, God has His providence for all human beings, nay for the creatures that exist in the world; He has given nourishment and perfection of the creatures long before they

came into existence. On the other hand, there is the high aspiration of the soul for an unbounded religious rise without the least consideration of care of the body which craves for the “daily bread”.

The Prophet of Islam attached great importance to the human body as well as to the soul, and to the preservation of its cleanliness and purity. He taught that faith is the spring of cleanliness. Islam considers the human body as something entrusted to man by God, and, therefore, obliges him to take care of it. Islam enjoins upon its followers to keep it clean and pure, morally as well as materially.

### Prayer – A Principle of Action

We now take the practical side of the faith of Islam. As already said, sayings and actions in Islam are an essentially component part of the religion as belief. In this respect, Islam occupies a middle position between religions which have ignored the practical side altogether and those which bind their followers to a very minute ritual. Islam sees the necessity of developing the faculties of man by giving general directions, and then leaves sufficient scope for the individual to exercise influence on the individual practical life.

The precepts of Islam which inculcate duties towards God and duties towards man are based on that deep knowledge of the human nature, which cannot be possessed but by the Creator of that nature. They cover the whole range of the different grades of the development of man and are thus wonderfully adapted to the requirements of different peoples. In the Qu’ran— are found guiding rules for the ordinary man of the world as well as the scholar, and for communities in the lowest grade of civilization as well as the highly civilized nations of the world. Practicality is the keynote of its precepts, and thus the same universality which marks its principles of faith is met within its practical ordinances, suiting as they do the requirements of all ages and nations.

Prayer is the second of the five fundamental principles or pillars of practical devotion in Islam. It is a devotional exercise which every Muslim is required to render to God five times a day, namely in the early morning before sunrise, at midday, in the afternoon, in the evening after sunset, and fifthly at night.

The general duty is frequently enjoined in the Qu'ran, while the appointed times as well as the mode of rendering prayers were prescribed distinctly by the Prophet both by his personal practice and by his teaching.

The hints and orders met within the Qu'ran as regards the enjoiment of *Salât* are rendered as follows: "And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the Day and at the approaches of the night: for those things, that are good remove those that are Evil: be that the word of remembrance to those who remember [their Lord]" [11:114].

"Glorify God [by rendering prayers to Him] when it is evening and in the morning – praise be to Him in the heavens and the earth – and in the afternoon and at noontide" [30:17, 18].

"Put up then with what they say; and celebrate the praise of your Lord before sunrise, and before sun setting, and during the night do you praise Him, and in the extreme of the day, so that you may be well-pleased" [20:130].

"Observe prayers at sunset until the first darkening of the night and observe reading [the Qu'ran] at daybreak. Lo! The recital of the Qu'ran [that is rendering prayers] is ever witnessed. And some part of the night awake for it, a largess for you. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a praised state" [17:78-79]. "Take aid by observing patience and prayers" [2:45].

"When you have fulfilled your prayer, remember God, standing and sitting and lying on your sides. And when you are in safety then be steadfast in prayer. Verily prayer is a timed ordinance on the believers" [4:103].

It is absolutely necessary that the *Salât* should be performed in Arabic, the clothes and body of the worshipper must be clean, and the praying-place be free from all impurity. It may be said either privately or in company, or in a mosque—although prayers in a mosque are more meritorious.

The stated prayers are always preceded by the ablution of the face, head, hands and feet, as will be fully described later. The *Salât*, is thus one of the most prominent features of the religion of Islam, and very numerous are the injunctions regarding it, which have been handed down in the traditions of the Prophet. The following are a few quotations: “Between a man and shirk and kufr there stands his neglect of the prayer.” [*Muslim - Kitaab al-Eemaan -Imam Ahmad (Al-Sharh al-Mumti’ ‘ala Zaad al-Mustanqi’, 2/26]*

“God accepts not the prayers of a woman arrived at puberty unless she covers her head as well as the whole body, excepting her hands and feet. [*Al-Bukhari – At Trimidhi – Hasan]*, “The five stated prayers erase the sins which have been committed during the intervals between them, if they have not been major sins”. [*Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Ibn Maajah and al-Tirmidhi]*

“The prayers of a person will not be accepted who has broken his ablution until he completes another ablution”. [*Al-Bukhari - Volume 1, Book 4, Number 137]*, “Tell me if any one of you had a rivulet before his door and bathed five times a day therein whether any dirt would remain on his body? The companions said. ‘Nothing would remain’. The Prophet said, ‘In this manner will the five daily prayers as ordered by God erase sins.” [*Sahib Muslim 668]*

### Time of the Five Stated Prayers

The Prophet taught that “the time for *zubr* [noon] prayer begins from the inclination of the sun to the west and closes at the time when the shadow of a person shall be the length of his own stature, which time marks the beginning of the’ *asr* [afternoon] prayer. The time of the ‘*asr* prayer is from that time till the sun

assumes a yellow appearance. The time of *maghrib* [sunset] prayer is from sunset as long as the red appearance in the horizon remains. The time of the *'isha* [night] prayer is from that time till near daybreak. And the time for the *fajr* [daybreak or morning] prayer is from the break of day till the sun rises.” When the sun has just arisen, a Muslim must wait to recite his morning prayers [if not already recited] until the sun has well arisen.

### Aim of the Prayers

The prayer is a type of worship consisting of specific statements and actions. It is begun by pronouncing the greatness of God, and is concluded with salutations of peace. As prayer is the essence of Islam, we will discuss it here in detail. To state it simply, prayer must exist, for without it Islam can not stand.<sup>[1]</sup> The aim of the prayers enjoined upon Muslims is to worship and think of God, to have a pure heart, to take care of the body and clothes, to overcome evil desires, and to be a good-natured, decent person in all respects. The prayers recited by an immoral person are not acceptable. Good character comes before everything else.

Considering that modern life obliges us to do hard and tiring work, one may say that there would be no time to perform *Salât* five times a day. But the case is quite contrary; by performing the stated prayers, the body will be kept clean and at ease in virtue of the repeated ablution or washing which is a preparatory practice to performing prayers. By *Salât*, the stiffness of the organs will be enlivened and will regain their natural liveliness. Thus no better means than the two rites of ablution and *Salât* can be suggested to remove the laziness and exhaustion caused by the tiresome work of the day. In other words, the practice of *Salât* ensures us moral, spiritual and material advantages.

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[1] Sayed Sabiq, Figh Al-Sunnah.

## Muslim Prayer

To the Muslim, the prayer is his spiritual diet, of which he partakes five times a day. Those who think that prayer is too prescribed should remember that how many times a day they require food for their physical bodies. Thus, is not the spiritual growth much more essential than the physical growth.

The following is the translation of the *azān*:-

“God is Greater, God is Greater. God is Greater, God is Greater. I do testify that there is no deity save God. I do testify that there is no deity save God. I do testify that Muhammad is God’s messenger. I do testify that Muhammad is God’s messenger. Come to prayer. Come to prayer. Come to prosperity, come to prosperity. God is Greater. God is Greater. There is no deity save God.”

This is what a Muslim hears from the mosque five times a day, the call from the mosque reminds him that he shall not serve the inner man by living by bread alone, but God is the greatest, and all other concerns are small. God alone is to be served first. And if man is keen for prosperity, true prosperity shall come to him through prayer, which is to live on words that he/she recites and revealed from God.

One would naturally ask whether the stroke of the church bell has any comparison to make with that soul-edifying Muslim *azān*. The answer is best given by Pastor Mogola Agbebi, D.D., Lagos, Director of the Niger Delta Mission, in his paper contributed to the First Universal Races Congress held in London: “Five times a day from the turrets and minarets Islam’s call to prayer startles Africa, demanding attention from dawn to dark; and Christianity in its best form, whatever that may be has never presented a formula more rousing than:

Rise ye believers.  
Prayer is better than sleep.  
Prayer is better than sleep.

## Description of the Muslim Prayers

There are certain minor differences amongst the various schools of Islam regarding the formula, but its main features are alike in all Muslim countries. We shall describe prayer according to *the Hanafi School of Sunni Muslims*. The stated prayers are always preceded by the ablution of one's face, hands, arms, head and feet with water.

### Ablution [*wudu*]

Ablution [Arabic *wudu*] is described by the Prophet as the key of prayer, and is founded on the authority of the Qu'ran:- "O believers, when you prepare yourselves for prayer, wash your faces and hands up to the elbows and wipe your heads and [wash] your feet to the ankles." [5:6].

And on the authority of the Sunnah: - Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of God said, "God does not accept the prayer of one who nullified his ablution until he performs it again." [Related by *Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and at-Tirmizhi*.]

These ablutions are absolutely necessary as a preparation for the prayer, and are performed as follows:-

- 1) The worshipper washes his/her hands first,
- 2) Then he rinses his/her mouth, throwing the water into it with the right hand. He/She then throws water, up his/her nostrils, snuffing it up at the same time, and then blows it out, compressing his/her nostrils with the thumb of the left hand.
- 3) He/She then washes his/her face with both hands.
- 4) He/She next washes his/her right hand and arm, as high as the elbow, causing the water to run along the arm from the palm of the hand to the elbow, and in the same manner, he/she washes the left.

- 5) Afterwards he/she draws his/her wetted right hand over the upper part of his/her head. If he has a beard, he then combs it with the wetted fingers of his right hand.
- 6) After that he puts the tips of his forefingers wetted with water into his ears and twists them round, passing his thumbs at the same time round the back of the ears from the bottom upwards.
- 7) Next, he wipes his neck with the fingers of both hands, making the ends of his fingers meet behind his neck, and then drawing them forward.
- 8) Lastly, he washes his feet, as high as the ankles, and passes his fingers between the toes, ensuring thereby their cleanness.

Before Ablution the worshipper usually mentions the Name of God: "In the name of God, the Merciful and Beneficent."

The ablution needs not be performed before each of the five stated prayers, when the person is conscious, since the last performance of the ablution, of having not been asleep or having avoided every kind of impurity, particularly urination, defecation or breaking wind. The private parts of the body must also be purified when answering a call of nature.

When water cannot be procured, or would be injurious to health, the ablution may be performed with pure dust or sand. This is called *tayamoum*. The permission to use sand for this purpose, when water cannot be obtained, is granted in the Qu'ran:- "If ye cannot find water, then take fine surface pure sand and wipe your faces and your hands therewith. God does not wish to make any hindrance to you, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you, so that you may be grateful." [5:6]

It is related in the tradition [*Hadith*] that the Prophet said: - "The whole earth is fit to serve as a mosque for Muslims to worship on; and the very dust of the earth is fit for purification when water cannot be obtained."



*Tayamoum* or purification by sand or clean dust is allowable under the following circumstances:

[a] When water cannot be procured except at a great distance [about two miles];

[b] In case of sickness;

[c] When the use of water is infeasible because of incurring danger from an enemy, a beast or a reptile; and

[d] When, on the occasion of the prayers of a feast day or at a funeral, the worshipper is late and has no time to perform the *wudu*. On ordinary days or normal conditions, this substitution of *tayamoum* is not allowable.

The washing of the whole body to absolve it from uncleanness and to prepare it for the performance of prayer is absolutely necessary after the following acts: wet dreams, menstruation, sexual intercourse, and after the puerperal period.

Washing the whole body is highly recommended [by *Sunnab* or practice and teaching of the Prophet] on Friday before going to the mosque for the Friday prayer, on the festivals and after washing the dead.

### Purification

Water which may be used for Purification: – The following kinds of water are lawful for purification: rain, sea, river, fountain, well, and snow water. All kinds of water are fit for purification, provided always that the normal colour, smell and taste are not changed, or when the water is not used before.

Rubbing the socks with water in substitution for washing the feet in ablution is legally allowed, provided that the socks have been put on after performing a regular ablution, including washing the feet. This legality is permitted for twenty-four hours from the time of the regular ablution, after which period the feet must be washed as well as the face and hands.

## How the Prayer is Performed

At the time of public prayer, as stated before, the *muezzin* or caller ascends the minaret or stands at the side of the mosque nearest to the public thoroughfare, and gives the *azân* or the call to prayer, as follows:-

- 1) God is Greater [*twice*].
- 2) I bear witness that there is no deity but God [*twice*].
- 3) I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God [*twice*].
- 4) Come to prayer [O ye Muslims] [*twice*].
- 5) Come to salvation and prosperity [*twice*].
- 6) God is Greater [*twice*].
- 7) There is no deity but God.

In the early morning, the following “call” is added:

“Prayers are better than sleep” [*twice*].

When the prayers are performed privately, in a congregation or in the mosque, they begin with the *iqâma*, which is the second call to the *Salât*, with the addition of the sentence “Prayers are now ready [*twice*]”. The regular form of prayer then begins with the *niyya*, i.e. the worshipper’s intention, expressed [better by heart] that he purposes to offer up to God such *rak’âts* <sup>[1]</sup> as the case may be, while standing up with the face *Qibla*-wards, i.e. towards Makkah. The Arabic expression is as follows [*see Fig. 1*]:-

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[1] “*Rak’â*” literally means a bending.



Fig.1. The *niyya* posture      Fig.2. The *takbirât el-ibrâm* posture

1- Then follow the words of “*takbirât-el-ibrâm*”: *Allâhu Akbar* “God is Greater”, uttered with the thumbs touching the lobules of the ears and the open hands on each side of the face, as shown in [Fig. 2].

2- Then comes the *qiyâm* position: The right hand is placed upon the left over the breast while the standing position is maintained, the eyes looking to the ground in self-abasement [see Fig. 3].

During this posture, the worshipper recites the following *tasbih* or supplication:-

*“Subhânaka Allâhumma wa be hamdika wa tabâraka ismuka wa ta’âla judduke wa lâ Ilâha ghayruk. A’ôzu billâhi minashsbaytânir-rajîm.”*  
[Transliteration]

“Glory to You O God and Thine is the praise, and blessed is Your name and exalted is Your majesty; there is no deity to be worshipped but You. I seek God’s protection against the cursed Satan” [temptation]. [Translation]



Fig. 3. – Qiyâm position

After this, the *Fâtiha* [the Opening Chapter of the Qu’ran] is recited in the same position. It runs as follows:-

*“Bismillâbir-rahmânir-rahim, al hamdu lilâbi-rabbil-‘âlamîn, ar-rahmânir-rahim, mâlîki-yawmiddîn, iyyâka na’bodû we iyyâka nast’in, ibdinassirâtal-mustaqîm sirâtal-lazîna an’amta’alayhim ghayril-maghdubi ‘alayhim walad-dâllîn. Amen”* [Transliteration]

“In the name of God the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to God, the Lord of all Worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, King of the day of reckoning. You only do we worship, and from You only do we seek for help. Guide us to the straight path, the path of those to whom You has been gracious, not of those who are condemned nor those who are misguided.” Amen. *i.e.* be it so! [Translation]

Then any portion of the Qu’ran which the worshipper may have learnt by heart is recited. Generally one of the shorter chapters of the Qu’ran is repeated. The chapter termed *Al-Ikhlâsô* [sincerity] is recommended for those who are unacquainted further with the Qu’ran. It runs as follows:-

*“Qul huwallâhu abad Allâbus-samad lam yalid wa lam yûlad wa lam yakun labu kufwan abad.”* [Transliteration]

“Say: He [God] is one, God is the Eternal Refuge. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and none is like unto Him.” [Translation]

3- then, saying *Allâhu akbar* [God is Greater], the worshipper lowers his head down, so that the palms of the hands reach the knees. In this position, which is called *ruku*, that is bending [see Fig. 4]. Words expressive of the Divine glory and majesty are repeated three times. They are the following:-

“*Subâna Rabbiyal-‘azem wa bihamdih.*”

“Glory to my Lord the Great and Praiseworthy”.

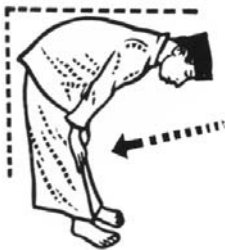


Fig. 4. – Ruku' posture.



Fig. 5. – Resumed standing position.

4- After this posture the standing position is resumed [see Fig. 5], but unlike the *qiyâm* position, the hands being placed on either side, with the following words: “*Sami’a Allâhu-liman hamida Allâhumma wa lakal-hamd.*” [Transliteration] “God accepts him who praises Him. O our Lord, Yours is all praise.” [Translation].

5- Then the worshipper prostrates himself, the fingers of both feet, both knees, the nose and the forehead should be touching and resting on the ground, while the following words expressing Divine greatness are uttered three times [see Fig. 6]:- “*Subbâna Rabbiyal-a’la wa bi-hamdih.*” [Transliteration], “Glory and praise be to

my Lord, the Highest”. [Translation] The following words are added: - “*Allâhumma ighfirli,*” i.e. O God! Grant me Your forgiveness. This is called the first *sajda* [first prostration] [see Fig. 6].

6- Then, raising his hands and body and sinking backward upon his heels, and placing his hands upon his thighs, he says the *takbir*, i.e. *Allâhu akbar* [God is Greater]. This is called the first *jalsa*, i.e. the first sitting [see Fig. 7].

7- Then the worshipper performs another *sajda* [see Fig. 8], the same as the first, as described before, with the repetition of the same expression also three times: “*Sabbâna Rabbiya-a’lâ wa bihamdih*” [Glory and praise be to my Lord, the Highest]. At the close of one *rak’u*, the worshipper should repeat the *takbir* while standing; but at the end of two *rak’ûts* and at the close of the prayer, he repeats it sitting: “*Allâhu akbar*” [God is Greater], as in Fig. 7.

8- Here ends one *rak’u*. The worshipper then rises, and assumes a standing position for the second *rak’u*, which is finished in the same manner as the first, but instead of assuming a standing position after the second *rak’u* he sits down in reverential position [see Fig. 9]. At the close of each two *rak’ûts*, the worshipper sits down to recite the *tahiyât* or the glorification of God [see Fig. 9], and utters the *tashah-hud*, or bearing witness. Both *tahiyât* and *tashah-hud* run as follows:-



Fig. 6 – The first *sajda*



Fig. 7. – The first *jalsa*

“*At-tahiyātu lillābi, wassala-wātu wattayibātu, Assalāmu ‘alayka ayyuhan-nabiyu wa rahmatullābi wa barakātuh. Assalāmu ‘alaynā wa ‘alā ‘ibādillābis-sālihīn. Ash-hadu an-lā Ilāha-illallāhu wa ash-hadu anna Mohammeden-‘abduhu wa Rasūlub.*” [Transliteration]

“All prayer and worship, rendered through words, actions, and good deeds, are due to God. Peace be to you, O my Prophet, and the mercy of God and His blessings may be showered upon you. Peace be to us [to those attending this prayer] and to the righteous servants of God. I confess that there is no deity but God and that Muhammad is His servant and His Apostle.” [Translation].



Fig. 8 – The second *sajda*



Fig. 9–*Tabiyât and Tasabbud* posture.

9- If the worshipper intends to perform more than two *ral’âts*, he then stands up, but if he has to say prayer only for two *rak’âts*, he repeats also the following prayer of blessings for the Prophet: -  
 “*Allāhumma sallī ‘alā Mubammad wa ‘alā âli Mubammad kamâ sallayta ‘alā Ibrâhīm, wa ‘alā âli Ibrâhīm, innaka hamīdon majīd. Allāhumma bârik ‘alā Mubammad wa ‘alā âli-Mubammad kamâ bârakta ‘alā Ibrâhīm wa ‘alā âli Ibrâhīm innaka hamīdon majīd.*” [Transliteration]

“O my Lord! Kindly magnify your favour upon Muhammad and the family <sup>[1]</sup> of Muhammad as You did magnify Your blessings upon Abraham and the family of Abraham. O my Lord! Kindly bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You did bless

[1] Family” also means those believes who are dutiful to God

Abraham and the family of Abraham, for surely You are the most Laudable and Glorious.” [Translation]

The following supplication is recommended to be also added to the above:- “*Rabbij’alnî muqîm-assalâti wa min zurriyatî, Rabbana wa taqabbal du’a-î; Rabbanaqhfirl wa li wâ-lidayya wa limu’minîna yawma yayûmal-hisâb.*” [Transliteration]

“O my Lord Make me to keep up prayer to You and grant that my offspring keep up prayer, too. O my Lord! Kindly accept my supplication. O my Lord! Forgive my sins and those of my parents and those of the faithful when the day of reckoning shall come.” [Translation]

10- This closes to two *rak’âts’* prayer which ends by the *salâm* or the greeting thus: Turning the head round to the right [see Fig. 10] the worshipper says, addressing any visible or invisible creature of God on his right:-



Fig. 10 – First *salâm*

“*Assaâlmû ‘alayqom wa rahmatul-lâhi wa barakâtuh.*” [Transliteration]

“Peace and mercy of God be upon you”. [Translation]

Then, turning the head round to the left, the worshipper repeats the *salâm* with the same intention as above [see Fig. 11].

At the close of the whole set of the stated prayers, the worshipper raises his hands and offers up some *munâjât* or supplication. This usually consists of prayers selected from the Qu’ran or traditions



of the Prophet. If possible they ought to be said in Arabic; or, if not, in the native language speech.

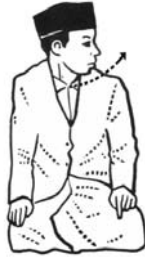


Fig. 11 – Second *salâm*

Such supplications were highly commended by the Prophet, who was related to have said, “*Supplication is the core of worship.*” And he also said:- “Verily your Lord will not admit that His servants when they raise their hands in supplication should return them empty,” *i.e. without the supplication being accepted from the righteous.*

The following is a table showing number of rak'ats:

No.	Prescribed Period	Name of Prayer's Time	Number of Rak'ats			
<b>THE FIVE ENJOINED OR OBLIGATORY PRAYERS</b>						
1	From dawn till sunrise	Fajr or morning	<i>Fard</i> 2	<i>Sunab</i> 2	<i>Witr</i>	<i>Remarks</i> Before the <i>Fard</i>
2	From inclination of the sun to the west; and close.	<i>Zubr</i> or noon	4	2		Before the <i>Fard</i>
	When the shadow of a person shall be in the length of his own stature.			2		After the <i>Fard</i>
3	From that time till the sun assumes a yellow appearance.	<i>Asr</i> or afternoon	4	4		Before the <i>Fard</i>
4	From sunset till the above appearance in the horizon disappears.	<i>Maghrib</i> or sunset	3	2		After the <i>Fard</i>
5	From that time till some moment before dawn	<i>Tsha</i> or night	4	2	[+] 3	After the <i>Sunnab</i>
<b>THE THREE VOLUNTARY PERIODS</b>						
1	When the sun has well arisen.	<i>Shrooq</i> or sunrise			4	
2	From that time till about midday	<i>Douba</i> or sunshine			4	
3	After midnight	Tahâjjud			8	

## The Stated Daily Prayers

The daily prayers are either *Fard*, *Sunnah*, *nafl* or *witr*. *Fard* prayers are those *rak'âts*, as are enjoined by God and which are obligatory. *Sunnah*, those founded on the practice of the Prophet; although they are desirable, they are not obligatory. *Nafl* prayers are the voluntary performances of two *rak'âts*, or more, which may be omitted without sin. *Witr* prayers are an odd number of *rak'âts* either one or three, side after the *'isha* or night prayer. These divisions of prayer are entirely distinct from each other. They each begin with the *niyya* [intention].

The five stated times of prayers are known as *zûhr*, *'asr*, *maghrib*, *'isha* and *fajir*. There are also three voluntary periods called *shrooq*, *douba* and *tahâjjud*. The following table in the preceding page shows the exact number of *rak'âts* to be performed at each prayer:-

### Table General Notes

- 1) A fresh ablution is necessary only when a man has answered a call of nature or has fallen asleep.
- 2) If there are socks on, and they have been put on after performing an ablution, it is not necessary to take them off: the wet hands may be passed over them. The same practice may be resorted to in case the boots are on, but it would be more decent to take off the boots when going into a mosque. It is, however, necessary that the socks be taken off and the feet washed about once every twenty-four hours.
- 3) The *takbîr*, i.e. the utterance of the expression *Allâhu akbar* [God is the Greater] is to be repeated on assuming every form of the *rak'a* as explained previously. This repetition is deemed necessary to serve as a reminder to the worshipper to keep alive to his prayer by presenting his inner man and consciousness throughout the period of the prayers concerned.
- 4) *Ghusl*, or washing the whole body. Is a religious act of bathing the body after a legal impurity. It is founded upon the express

injunction of the Qu'ran [5:6] which may be rendered in English as follows: "If you, *i.e.* the faithful and believers, are polluted then purify yourselves". The traditions and the sayings of the Prophet relate the occasions on which the Prophet performed the ceremony of *ghusl* or bathing. The Muslim teachers of all sects are unanimous in prescribing the washing of the whole body after the following acts, which render the body *junub* or impure:

- a) *hayd* [menses];
  - b) *nifās* [puerperium];
  - c) *jimā'* [sexual intercourse];
  - d) *ihtilām* [pollutio nocturna, wet dream]. It is absolutely necessary that every part of the body should be washed, otherwise the *ghusl* ceremony is rendered incomplete.
- 5) *Ghusl masnūn* or washing is meritorious, such washings are founded on the precept and practice of the Prophet, although they are not supposed to be obligatory. They are four in number: -
- a. Upon the admission of a convert to Islam.
  - b. Before going to mosque to perform Friday prayer, and on the great two religious festivals, *i.e.* the two *Bairams*, the one occurring after the close of the fasting month of *Ramadan*, and the other on the day following that on which the pilgrims perform their pilgrimage.
  - c. After washing the dead.
  - d. After blood-letting.
- 6) The Friday Prayers.
- 7) The *qunūt*.

### The Friday Prayer

The Friday prayer is held at the time of *zubr* [noon], and it substitutes the stated *zubr* prayer. The four *rak'āts* said in the *zubr* are reduced to two *rak'āts* preceded by a *khutba* [sermon], given by the *imām* [prayer leader of the mosque], exhorting the Muslims to goodness and to be dutiful to God, and showing them the means

of their moral elevation and dwelling upon their national and communal welfare.

*Salât ej-jum'a* or Friday prayer is enjoined on Muslims by Divine command in the Qu'ran [62:9-11], where the believers are required, when the call is made to prayer on Friday:

“to hasten to the remembrance of God and leave off traffic for the time being; and when the prayer is ended they can disperse in the land to rejoin their material and physical activities.” [62:10]

The Friday prayer for Muslim men must be said in a mosque, if any. Or in a congregation, but not performed in private. Ibn al-Mundhir (may Allaah have mercy on him) says in *al-Ijmaa'* (no. 52):

They are unanimously agreed that Jumu'ah is not obligatory for women. End quote.

The evidence for that is the hadeeth of Taariq ibn Shihaab (may Allaah be pleased with him) according to which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Jumu'ah is a duty that is required of every Muslim in congregation, except four: a slave, a woman, a child or one who is sick.” [Narrated by *Abu Dawood* 91067]. *Al-Nawawi* said in *al-Majmoo'* (4/482): *its isnaad is saheeb according to the conditions of the two Shaykhs [al-Bukhaari and Muslim]. Ibn Rajab* said in *Fath al-Baari* (5/327): *its isnaad is saheeb. Ibn Katheer* said in *Irshaad al-Faqeeh* (1/190): *its isnaad is jayyid. It was also classed as saheeb by al-Albaani in Saheeb al-Jaami'* (3111).

If a Muslim man cannot join the public Friday prayer for any lawful reason, he has to reform by performing the normal *zubr* [noon] prayer of four *rak'ats*. The reasons exempting a Muslim of attending the public Friday prayer are either sickness or heavy rainfall causing great difficulty in going to the mosque. For a Muslim woman it is not obligatory to pray the Friday prayer in a mosque, instead she perform the normal *Zubr* prayer of four *rak'ats*.

## The Qunút

The *qunút* is a supplication recited at the close of the ‘*isha* [night] stated prayer, while the worshipper is still assuming his standing position [see Fig. 4] at the third *rak‘a* of the *witr* posture. The most well-known *qunút* is the following: -

*Allāhumma ih-dina fi-man hadayta, wa a’fina fi-man a’fayta, wa tawallana fi-man tawal-layta, wa bârik lanâ fi mâ a’tayta wa qina sbar-ra mâ qadyta fa-in-naka taqdi wa la yuqda ‘alayka wa in-na-hu lâ yaẓillu man wal-layta wa lâ-ya-‘izzu man qâdayta, nastaghfi-ruka wa natûbu ilayka wa sallal-lâhu ‘alâ nabiyinâ Muhammad wa ‘alâ âlihi wa sabbihî wa sallam.*  
[Transliteration]

“O God! Guide us among those whom You have guided aright, and preserve us among those whom You have preserved in good health and befriend us among those whom You have befriended, and bless us in all You have granted to us; and protect us from the evil of all You have judged as evil; for surely You are the only judge, and none can judge against Your judgment. O God! We invoke your increasing blessings and favours upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family and upon his companions.”  
[Translation]

*Another Recommended Style of Qunút.*

The following supplication of *Qunút* is also commonly adopted:-  
*Allāhmuma innâ nasta’înu-bika wa nastaghfiruka wa nu’minu bika wa natawakkalu ‘alayka wa nuthni ‘alaykal-khayra wa nashkuruka wa lâ nakfuruka wa nakhla’u wa natruku man yafjuruka. Allāhumma iyyâka n’abudu wa laka nusalli wa nasjud wa ilayka nas’a wa nahmid wa narjû rahmatâka wa nakhâfu ‘azâbâka inna ‘azâbâka bilkuffâri mublik.*  
[Transliteration]

“O God! We beseech Your help and Your forgiveness as we are faithful to You and depend wholly upon Your Divinity. We laud You in the best. We thank You and shall never forget Your favours. We cast off and forsake him who is unmindful to You. O God! We worship none but You. To You we pray and make

obeisance and to You do we flee promptly. We hope for Your mercy and we fear Your punishment for surely Your punishment overtakes the infidel.” [Translation]

### Special Prayers

In addition to the stated daily prayers and the Friday prayer, there are special prayers for special occasions as given below: -

- 1) *Salâtul-Musâfir* [Prayers of the Traveller]. Two *rak'âts* instead of the usual number of the meridian, afternoon, and night prayers; *maghrib* [evening prayer] always remaining the same, *i.e.* three *rak'âts*.
- 2) *Salâtul-khauf* [Prayers of Fear]. – This is said in war-time. They are two *rak'âts* recited first by one regiment or company and then by the other.
- 3) *Salâtul-Tarawih*. – Eight *rak'âts* are performed every evening during Ramadan, the fasting month, immediately after the fifth daily prayer, the *'isha*, or before the dawn.
- 4) *Salâtul-Istikhâra* [Prayers for Guidance]. The person who is about to undertake any special affair or business performs two *rak'âts* for which he seeks guidance.
- 5) *Salâtul-Janâzab* [Prayers at a funeral for the dead]. – This special prayer is founded upon very minute instructions given by the Prophet, which are recorded in the *hadîth* [traditions]. The Muslim funeral prayer is not recited in the graveyard, but either in a mosque or in some open space near the dwelling of the deceased person or the graveyard. The nearest relative is the proper person to lead the prayer, but it is usually conducted by the family *imâm*, or by a learned man.
- 6) The following is the order of the prayer: Someone present calls out: Here begin the prayers for the dead.”

Then those present arrange themselves in one, two or three rows or more, as the case permits, opposite the corpse, with their faces Qibla-wards [*i.e.* towards Makkah]. The *imâm* or leader stands in

front of the ranks opposite the head of the corpse if the deceased is a man, and in middle of the corpse if the deceased is a woman.

The whole attendants having taken the standing position, the *imâm* open the prayer by saying:- “I purpose to perform for this dead person prayers to God consisting of four *takbîrs*.”

Then, placing his hands to the lobes of his ears, he recites the first *takber*: God is Greater. Afterwards, he folds his hands below his breast, and recites the *tasbîh* or glorification to God, thus:

<i>Subhanakal-lahumma</i>	“Glory be to You O God!
<i>Wabi hamdika wa</i>	And to You be praise!
<i>Tabarakas-muka</i>	Blessed is Your name.
<i>Wa la ilaha ghairûk.</i>	High is Your greatness.
	There is no deity but You.”

Next, he recites the *fâtîha*, [the Opening Chapter of the Qu’ran]. Here ends the first *takbîr*. Then follows the second *takbîr*: *God is Greater*. The *imâm* recites, thereafter, the *salatu-‘ala-Nabi* [prayer for the Prophet], thus: “O God, we invoke your increasing blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his family, as You did bestow your blessings and peace upon the Prophet Ibrahim [*Abraham*] and his family; O God, You are praised and You are great.”

Here ends the second *takbîr*: then follows the third *takbîr*: *God is Greater*, after which the following prayer is recited: -

“O God, we beseech you to forgive the sins of this dead person and have mercy upon him/her. He/she was faithful to Islam, he/she believed in Your Oneness and in the Message of Your Prophet.”

Here ends the third *takbîr*. Then follows the fourth *takbîr*: *God is Greater*, after which the following prayer is recited: “O God, forgive our living and our dead and those of us who are present and those who are absent. O God, those whom You do keep alive



amongst us, keep alive in Islam, and those whom You cause to die, let them die in the Faith of Islam.

Turning the head round to the right, the *imâm* says the *salâm*. Peace and mercy be to You. Turning the head round to the left, he repeats the *salâm*. Peace and mercy be to You.

The *takbîrs* are recited by him aloud, but the *tasbîh*, the *salâm*, and the prayers are recited by him and by the people attending the funeral in a low voice.

The attendants then raise their hands in silent supplication [*Dua'a*] on behalf of the deceased person, and afterwards, addressing the relatives, they say: "Verily, to God belongs what He has taken, and to Him belongs what He has given. For everything He has set a term. So be patient and be content', may God increase your reward, give you the best consolation, and forgive your deceased beloved", to which the chief mourner replies: "I am pleased with the will of God."

Those who wish to return to their own business may do this at that time, and the rest proceed to the grave, lastly the corpse is placed on its back in the grave, with the head to the north and feet to the south, the face being turned towards the *Qibla* [Makkah]. The persons who place the corps in grave repeat the following sentence: "We commit you in the name of God and on the religion of the Messenger of God."

The bands of the shroud having been loosened, the recess, which is called *lahd*, is closed in with unburnt bricks and the grave filled in with earth, then throwing three handfuls of earth into the grave."

## Zakat or Legal Alms

Every religion of the world has preached the giving of charity. Islam makes charity obligatory and binding upon all those who embrace Islam. Here we have a brotherhood into which the rich man cannot enter unless, and until, he is willing to give part of his possessions for the support of the poor and the needy members of the community.

In its primary sense, the word *zakât* means purification, where it is also used to express a portion of the remainder to the proprietor. It is an institution of Islam founded upon an express command in the Qu'ran, as one of the five foundations of practical religion.

It is an obligatory religious duty upon any person who is free, sane, adult and a Muslim, provided that he is possessed in full property of such estate or effects as are termed, in the language of the Law, *nisab*, i.e. fixed amount of property, and that he has been in possession of the same for the period of one complete year. The *nisab* or fixed amount of property upon which *zakât* is due varies with reference to the different kinds of property in possession, as is detailed in the present article. The one complete year in which the property is held in possession is termed in the Law as *hawlul-hawl*, i.e. the return of duration.

*Zakât* is not obligatory upon a man, against whom there are debts equal or exceeding the amount of his whole property, nor it is due upon the necessities of life, such as dwelling-houses, articles of clothing, household furniture, cattle kept for immediate use, war prisoners employed as actual servants, armour and weapons designed for present use, or upon books of science or law used by scholars, or upon tools used by craftsmen. *Zakât* is obligatory upon the *nisab* of the following possessions: -

[a] Camels. [b] Bulls, cows and buffaloes. [c] Sheep and goats. [d] Horses. [e] Silver. [f] Gold and silver ornaments. [g] Cash, Bank-notes, etc. [h] Articles of merchandise. [i] Mines or buried treasures. [j] Fruits of the earth.

The following is the *nisab* or proportionate property, upon which *zakât* is due on the above various possessions: -

### Zakat

#### [A] Camels

*Zakât* is not due upon less than five camels; and upon five camels it is one goat or sheep, provided that they subsist upon pasture throughout the year; because *zakât* is due only upon such camels living on pasture and not upon those which are fed in the home of the forage. One goat or sheep is due upon any number of camels from five to nine; two goats for any number of camels from ten to fourteen; three goats for any number from twenty to twenty-four. Upon any number of camels from twenty-five to thirty-five, the *zakât* is a *bintmakâd*, or a yearling female camel; from thirty-six to forty-five, a *bint-labûn*, or a two-year old female camel; from forty-six to sixty, a *hoqqa*, or a three-year-old female camel; from sixty-one to seventy-four, a *jaz'a'a*, or four-year-old female camel; from seventy-five to ninety, two female two-year-old colts. When the number of camels exceeds one hundred and twenty, the *zakât* is calculated by the afore-said rule.

#### [B] Bulls, Cows and Buffaloes

No *zakât* is due upon fewer than thirty cattle. Upon thirty cattle which are fed on pasture for the greater part of the year, there is due at the end of the year a *jazu'a*, or one year-old calf; and upon thirty is due a *musinna*, or a calf of two year old; and where the number exceeds forty, the *zakât* is to be calculated according to this rule. For example, upon sixty, the *zakât* is a two yearling calves upon seventy, one *tabi'a* and one *musinna*; upon ninety, three *tabi'as* and one *musinna*; and thus upon every ten heads of cattle a *musinna* and a *tabi'a* alternately. Upon one hundred and nine, the *zakât* is two *musinna* and one *tabia*; and upon one hundred and twenty, four *tabi'as*. The usual method, however, of calculating the *zakât* upon large herds of cattle is by dividing them into thirties and forties, imposing upon every thirty-one: a *tabi'a*, or upon every forty-one: a *musinna*.

## [C] Sheep and Goats

No *zakât* is due upon less than forty which have fed the greater part of the year on pasture, upon which is due one goat or sheep, until the number reaches one hundred and twenty; for one hundred and twenty-one to two hundred, it is two goats or sheep, and above this, one for every hundred.

## [D] Horses

When horses and mares are kept indiscriminately together, feeding for the great part of the year on pasture, it is the option of the proprietor to give one *dînar* [a *dînar* is worth about 13 grams gold, or its currency equivalent] per head of the whole, or to estimate the whole and give five per cent upon the total value. No *zakât* is due upon droves of horses consisting entirely of males, or entirely of mares. There is no *zakât* due upon horses or mules, unless they are articles of merchandise; nor it is due upon war horses, or upon beasts of burden, or upon cattle kept for drawing ploughs and so forth.

## [E] Silver

It is not due upon silver of value less than two hundred *dirhams* [one *dirham* is equivalent to 3.12 grams], but if one be possessed of this sum for a whole year, the *zakât* due upon it is five *dirhams* till such excess amounts to forty, on which the *zakât* is one *dirham*, and for every succeeding forty-one *dirhams*. These *dirhams* on which silver predominates are to be accounted silver, and the laws respecting silver, apply to them, although they should contain some alloy; and the same rule holds with regard to all articles falling under the denomination of plate such as cups and drinking bowls.

## [F] Gold and Silver Ornaments:

No *zakât* is due upon gold under the value of twenty *misqâls* <sup>[1]</sup>, and the *zakât* due upon twenty is half a *misqâl*. When the quantity

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[1] A "misqal" is equivalent to 4.680 grams.

of gold exceeds twenty *misqâls*, on every four *misqâls* above twenty are due two *qirâts* <sup>[1]</sup>, and so on in proportion. *Zakât* is due upon gold and silver bars and upon all gold and silver ornaments and utensils.

#### [G] Cash, Bank-Notes, Etc.

No *zakât* is due upon notes, etc., the value of which does not exceed eighty nine grams of gold, twenty one carat or its equivalent of foreign currency. And the *zakât* due upon a value of eighty nine grams of gold, twenty one kirate and upwards is two and half per cent of the total money remaining idle in possession for the duration of one year.

#### [H] Articles of Merchandise

Articles of merchandise should be valued, and a *zakât* of two and a half per cent is paid upon the value if it exceeds two hundred *dirhams* of silver in value.

#### [I] Mines or Buried Treasures

Mines of gold, silver, iron, lead or copper are subject of a *zakât* of one-fifth, but if the mine is discovered within the grounds of a person's own home, nothing is due. And if a person finds a deposit of buried treasures, one-fifth is due upon it. No *zakât* is due upon precious stones.

#### [J] Fruits of the Earth

Upon everything produced from the ground, there is one-tenth whether the soil be watered by the overflow of rivers, or by periodical rains, excepting the articles of wood, bamboo, and grass, which are not subject to the tithe. If the soil is watered by means of buckets, machinery, or watering camels, etc., the *zakât* is one twentieth.

Honey and fruits collected in the wilderness are subject to tithe.

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<sup>[1]</sup> A "qirat" equals one-sixteenth of a "dirham," or 0.195 grams.

The *zakât* is received by collectors duly appointed by the State, although it is lawful for the possessor to distribute his alms himself. If a person comes to the collector and makes a declaration upon oath as to the amount of his property or as to his having himself distributed the alms due, his statement is to be credited.

### Expenditure of Income from Zakat

As regards the expenditure of income from *zakât*, eight heads are mentioned in the Glorious Qu'ran:- "Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the [funds]; for those whose hearts have been [recently] reconciled [to the truth]; for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of God; and for the wayfarer: [thus is it] ordained by God, and God is full of knowledge and wisdom." [9:60]

- 1) The poor.
- 2) The needy.
- 3) The officials appointed in connection with the collection of *zakât*.
- 4) Those whose hearts are to be reconciled by material support.
- 5) Ransoming of captives [prisoners of war]
- 6) Those in debt.
- 7) In the cause of God.
- 8) The wayfarer.

A few words may be added to explain the above: -

- 1) The poor are those who are unable physically or otherwise to earn their living.
- 2) The needy are those who may be able to earn their livelihood but lack the means as implements, etc.
- 3) By those in debt are meant persons who may be able to support themselves, but if they are in debt, their debts may be paid off from the *zakât* fund.

- 4) The captives are those who are taken prisoners in war. A portion of the *zakât* fund must go for their release.
- 5) The wayfarer is a traveller who, though in well-to do circumstances, stands in need of help in a strange place or country; hence a part of the *zakât* income must be spent on such a person.
- 6) The officials who collect *zakât* are members of the staff appointed officially to manage its collection as well as the management of its expenditure; hence their wages are also to be paid out of the *zakât* fund.
- 7) Those whose hearts are to be harmonized and the way of God, refer to the propagation of the Faith. With respect to the preaching of a religion, there is always a class of people who are ready to listen and ready to embrace Islam when they are preached, but who, in the meantime, have to forego material advantages which it is very difficult for them to relinquish. These persons are spoken of in the Qu'ran as those whose hearts are to be harmonized or united by giving them such a portion of the *zakât* fund to reassure them.
- 8) By the cause of God is meant the advancement of the cause of Islam or the defence thereof. Under this head, therefore, *zakât* may be spent for the propagation of the religion of Islam and to meet the objections advanced against it.

The above laws covering the institution of *zakât* principle in Islam are detailed according to the *Hanafi* School of Muslim Jurisprudence, but the differences amongst the teachings of the *Sunni* Schools of Muslims are but small and even insignificant.

However, the recognition of paying the wages of the staff employed in connection with the poor-tax [*zakât*] from that revenue is clear in order to denote that the institution is meant for raising a public fund, of which the management should entirely be in the hands of a public body, although it is lawful for the

possessor to distribute his alms himself; and if he makes declaration on oath to this effect, his statement is to be credited.

### Supplementary Notes

#### (1) Zakât is Not a State Tax

As already mentioned in the foregoing chapter, the scope of *zakât* is clearly set forth in the Glorious Qu'ran, and, therefore, must not be confused with other forms of compulsory taxes imposed by the State on its Muslim and non-Muslim citizens alike.

In the first place, *zakât* is not a tax imposed by the State. Nor is *zakât* a tax destined to the State as such. The very nature of the institution of *zakât* requires that the part, which the State is to play in the function there of, is merely one of "Supervision" and not of full control, as is the case where government taxes are concerned.

The difference between supervision and full control is that the latter would imply the right to increase or modify the tax, to extend or limit its scope, to suspend the imposition thereof, or even to abrogate it altogether, whereas, in its role of supervision, the right of the State is only to enforce observance of the Divine Law as directed by the precepts of the Qu'ran and the instructions of the Prophet.

#### (2) Practical Application of Zakât

*Zakât* attaches exclusively to productive wealth; that is wealth represented by: -

- 1) Agricultural produce.
- 2) Pasturing domestic animals.
- 3) Things constituting ready medium of exchange, such as silver, gold, and money invested [in trade capital, in cash, and articles of merchandise] or kept as savings.

The law of *zakât* considers the productivity of wealth as either potential or actual, the former, existing in such wealth as silver,



gold, and money kept as savings, and the latter is actual productivity existing in such wealth as agricultural produce, pasturing domestic animals and invested money, i.e. trade capital in cash and articles of trade.

### (3) Cause and Object of Zakât Act

The cause of *Zakât* act is the productivity of wealth existing in a quantity, number, or value, equal to or above the established minimum taxable limits. The object of *Zakât* is the profession of Islam by the legitimate owner of wealth under taxation.

### (4) Responsibility For Zakât Payment

*Zakât* is an act of worship; it being an obligatory impost on Muslim-owned wealth, the *zakât* must be discharged regardless of age or state of mind. Where adult Muslims are concerned, the responsibility devolves directly upon the legitimate owner of the wealth; where minors or insane persons are concerned, it lies with the legal guardian or custodian thereof, as the case may be. Where the *zakât* of wealth belonging to minor children is concerned [as, for example, in the case of wealth inherited from the mother], the responsibility for the payment of dues rests with the person entrusted with the care and administration thereof [*i.e.* the child's father, or any other responsible person] until the child comes to full age. The same ruling applies to Muslim orphaned children or insane Muslim men or women, where the responsibility of payment of *zakât* rests with the legal guardian or custodian as the case may be.

Trade capital, that is to say both the reserve and working capital [*i.e.* money and articles of trade] belonging to individuals or companies, is also subject to the payment of *zakât*, wherever its value is equal to or above the minimum taxable limit.

Where private ownership of business concerns is involved, responsibility for the payment of dues rests with the owner or owners; where endowments are concerned, such responsibility

rests with the individual or committee entrusted with the administration of the establishment or concern in question.

#### (5) Exempt From Zakât Dues

It is one of the fundamental doctrines of Islam that the needy and poor citizens of any Muslim community have an inherent right in the wealth of *every* Muslim of means, and nowhere in the Qu'ranic text is any justification to be found for exempting the wealth owned even by minors, orphans or persons of unsound mind.

However, all establishments privately owned or endowed, which are either totally devoted to charitable purposes [*i.e.* hospitals, orphanages, homes for the poor, disabled and old people, etc.], or to the service of humanity [*i.e.* scientific research, free educational institutions], are naturally exempt from the obligation of paying *zakât*, as by their very nature they fulfil the purpose to which the proceeds of *zakât* are dedicated. Likewise wealth which has been purposely set aside to cover the expenses of a first pilgrimage to the *Ka'ba* is exempt from *zakât*, regardless of the period of time during which it remains suspended. Subsequent pilgrimages being purely optional, wealth set aside to cover expenses of the same is considered as savings, and, therefore, it is subject to *zakât* where the quantity or value is equal to or above the minimum taxable limit.

#### (6) Factors of Responsibility

The person subject to *zakât* must be:

- a) An avowed Muslim [non-Muslims being exempt from such *zakât*].
- b) Of sound mind.
- c) A person enjoying full freedom of action. If for any reason, he/she be under any kind of constraint, his or her responsibility remains suspended until full freedom of action is recovered.

## Fastings

Fasting is one of those religious institutions which; though universally recognized; in Islam; fasting is enjoined for the moral elevation of man and for his spiritual development. This objective is made clear in the Glorious Qu'ran itself, where fasting is enjoined upon Muslims. Verse [2:183], of the Qu'ran is interpreted as follows: "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed to those before you, so that you may guard against evil doings."

The Glorious Qu'ran teaches man the ways by walking in which the tendency to evil in him can be suppressed and the tendency to good improved. Fasting is one of these means. Hence fasting in Islam does not simply mean abstaining from food and drink, but also from every kind of evil and indulgence. Fasting is actually like a sort of training of man's faculties, for as every faculty of man requires training to attain its full force, the faculty of submission to the Divine Will should also require to be trained. Fasting is one of the means by which this is achieved.

In addition to that specified training, fasting has its physical advantages. It not only prepares man to bear hunger and thirst and thus to accustom himself to a life of hardship and frugality, so that he may not be too much given over to ease, but also exercises a very good effect upon health in general. It is a well known teaching of the Prophet of Islam that hunger is the best cure to many diseases; this is a fact proved and defended nowadays by recent medical authorities. The injunction of fasting as a religious institution and a devotional practice in Islam is dealt with in the Qu'ran as follows:

"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed to those before you, so that you may guard against evil doings." [2:183], thereof teaches that fasting is a religious institution almost as universal as prayer; and in Islam it is one of the four fundamental practical ordinances, the other three being prayer [*Salât*], poor-tax [*zakât*] and pilgrimage, [*hâj*]. The Qu'ran

teaches that fasting was enjoined on all nations by prophets who passed before the Prophet Muhammad.

But Islam has introduced quite a new meaning into the institution of fasting before Islam. Fasting meant the suffering of some privation in times of mourning and sorrow; in Islam, it becomes an institution for the improvement of the moral spiritual character of man. This is plainly stated in the concluding words of the verse of the Qu'ran bearing on the privileges of the enjoined, viz. "So that you may guard against evil doings." The objective is that man may learn how he can shun evil. As already stated all the institutions of Islam are actually practical steps leading to perfect purification of the soul. But along with moral elevation, which is aimed at in fasting, another objective is hinted at. In fact, the twofold objective is that Muslims may be able to guard themselves:

- a) Morally and spiritually, against evil, for he who is able to renounce the lawful satisfaction of his desires in obedience to Divine Commandments, certainly acquires the power to renounce unlawful gratification; and
- b) Physically against the opponents of the Muslims by habituating themselves to suffer tribulations which they must suffer in defence of the cause of Islam.

The number of days of fasting is definitely stated in verses 184, 185 and 186 of Chapter two of the Qu'ran namely twenty-nine or thirty days of the month of Ramadan; The ninth month of the lunar calendar. But, whoever is temporarily sick or on a journey during the month of Ramadan, he shall fast a like number of other days. As regards those who cannot keep the fast on account of persistent or long-standing disease or who are too old or weak, including in this class the woman who is with child or who gives to suck, the practice is to give away the measure of one man's food to a poor man every day during the whole month. It is relevant to observe here that doing good to others [charity or otherwise] is enjoined in addition to fasting during the month of

Ramadan. We are told that the Prophet who was universally recognized for his charity was most charitable during the month of Ramadan.

Lunar months are not always the same with regard to their number of days. As to the duration of each day of the fast, it is from dawn to sunset. Nothing whatsoever is allowed to be eaten or drunk within that duration. Sexual intercourse is also strictly forbidden. But it is made lawful to go to the wives during the night of the fast.

It is meritorious to cut oneself from worldly connections during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, passing day and night in a mosque. This practice is known as *I'tikâf*, i.e. seclusion. It is, however, voluntary and not obligatory.

An important question arises regarding such countries in which the day are sometimes very long---from dawn to sunset where it would be beyond the ability of ordinary men to abstain from food from the breaking of dawn to sunset. In this case a Muslim is allowed to keep the fast only for such hours of fasting as they are kept in ordinary countries. However, in cases of extraordinary difficulties, Muslims may postpone the fast to days of shorter length.

## Pilgrimage

### Pilgrimage as a Fundamental Institution

Pilgrimage to Makkah is performed in the month of *Zul Hija*, the twelfth month of the Islamic year. It is the fifth pillar of Islam and an obligatory religious duty, to be performed once during life-time. It is founded upon express injunctions in the Qu'ran. It is a divine institution and has the following interpreted authority in the Qu'ran for its due observance: - "And proclaim to the people a pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on every fleet camel coming from remote defile." [22:27]

"The rites of pilgrimage are performed in the well-known months, so whoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage therein, let him not transgress by intercouring with women, or by making unlawful dispute or any wrangling, and whatever good you may do, God certainly knows it. And make provision [for you journey]; but the best provision is the fear of God. So fear Me, O you people of understanding." [2:198]

"It shall be no sin with you in seeking bounty <sup>[1]</sup> from your Lord, so when you hasten on from Arafat then remember God, Who has guided you, though, before, you were certainly going astray." [2:198], "When you have performed your sacred rites, then praise <sup>[2]</sup> God as you do your own fathers, or with a yet more intense lauding. But there are some people who say, Our Lord, give us [our portion] in this world: but such shall have no portion in the Hereafter." [2:200].

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<sup>[1]</sup> Bounty here stands for trading. What is meant is that there is no harm in seeking an increase of wealth by trading in Makkah in the pilgrimage season. Before the advent of Islam, fairs were held for trading purposes in the pilgrimage season. The Muslims thought it a sin to take part in this, and they are told that trade was not forbidden to them even in these days.

<sup>[2]</sup> In the days of ignorance, i.e. before the advent of Islam, the Arabs used to boast among themselves of the greatness of their fathers or forefathers after they had performed their pilgrimage. They were now bidden to laud God who would make them much greater than their forefathers.

“And some other people who say, Our Lord, grant us good in this world and good in the next and safeguard us from the chastisement of the fire.” [2:201]. “These shall be allotted of what they have earned: God is swift at reckoning.” [2:202]. “The first House [mosque] established for mankind was that at Bakka [Makkah], a place of blessing and a guidance for all beings.” [3:96], “... pilgrimage to the House is a duty, due to God, upon all mankind who is able to undertake the journey” [3:97]

### Certain Rites of the Institution

*Preparatory:* Pilgrimage is a fundamental ordinance of practical devotion in Islam; and it represents the last stage in the spiritual progress in this life.

Of the principal requirements of the pilgrimage is what is called *ibrâm*, which represents the severance of all worldly connections. All these costly and fashionable dresses, in which the inner self is so often mistaken for the outward appearance, are cast off, and the pilgrim has only two seamless wrappers to cover himself, and thus shows that in his obedience to his creator, he is ready to cast off all lower connections. The other important requirement is making circuits round the *kâba*. called *tawâf*, and running between two appointed small hills known as *Al-Safa* and *Al-Marwa*, called *sâay*. Of the rites to be observed in connection with the institution of pilgrimage is the kissing of a monumental “Black Stone”; when making certain appointed circuits round the *kâba*.

### The Way of Performing the Pilgrimage

The following is a complete summary of the principal rites in connection with the institution of the pilgrimage as observed by the *Sunni* Muslims:

Upon the pilgrim’s arrival at the last stage near Makkah, he bathes himself, and performs two *rak`âts* and then strips off himself of his clothes to put on the pilgrim’s garment, which is called *ibrâm*. This garment consists of two seamless wrappers, one being wrapped round the waist and the other thrown loosely over the

shoulder, the head being always left uncovered, but women must always keep their heads covered. Sandals may be also worn, but not boots or shoes. After having assumed the pilgrim's garb, he must not cover his head, shave any part of his body, cut his nails, nor wear any other than the *ibrām*. The pilgrim, having now entered upon the pilgrimage institution, faces Makkah and makes the *nīyya* [intention] by saying: "O God, I purpose to perform the pilgrimage; make this devotion easy to me and accept it from me." He then proceeds on his journey to the sacred city and on his way, as well as different periods during the pilgrimage he recites, alone or with the company of his fellow pilgrims, in a loud voice, the pilgrim's supplication called the *talbiya* [a word signifying waiting or keeping stand for orders]. In Arabic it runs thus:

*Labbayka, Allāhumma labbayka.*  
*Labbayka ; lâ sharika lak, labbayka.*  
*Innal-hamda wan-ni`-mata lak.*  
*Wal-mulko lak*  
*Lâ sharika lak."*

Which may be rendered in English as follow: -

"I stand up for Your Service, O God. I stand up.

"I stand up. There is no partner with You.

"I stand up. Verily Your is the praise, the blessing and the Kingdom.

"There is no partner with You."

Immediately on his arrival at Makkah the pilgrim performs legal ablution in the *Masjidul-Harâm* [the sacred Mosque of Makkah] and then kisses the Black Stone. He then encompasses the *kâba* seven times; three times at a quick stop or run, and four times at a slow pace. These acts are called *tawâf* or the circuit, and are performed by commencing on the right and leaving the *kâba* on the left. Each time as the pilgrim passes round the *kâba*, he touches the *Ruknul-Yamani* or the Yemen corner, and kisses the Black Stone. He then proceeds to the *Maqâmu-Ibrâhîm*, or the seat



of Abraham, where he recites the verse [2:125] of the Qu'ran: "Wattakhizû min maqâ Ibrânhim Mu-ssallâ, i.e. "Take ye the station or seat of Abraham for a place of prayer," and performs prayers of two *rak'ats*. He then goes to the gate of the Sacred Mosque leading to Mount *Al-Safa*, and from it he ascends the hill, reciting in a loud voice the verse 158 of the second Chapter of the Qu'ran: "*In-nas-Safâ wal Marwâ min Sh'â-ir-il-Lâh*", i.e. "*Verily Al-Safa and Al-Marawa are counted as Divine rites of God.*" Having arrived at the summit of the hill turning towards the *kâba*, he recites the following; "*Lâ il-lal-Lâh, Lâ ilâha-il-al-Lâh wabdah; lâ sharika lah; sadaqa wa`dah wa nasara abdah; wa hazamal-abzâba wabdah, la ilaha illal-Lah*" i.e.

"There is no deity save God [Allâh]. There is no deity but Allâh alone. He has no partner. He has executed His promise, and has given victory to his servant [Muhammad], and He has alone defeated the hosts of infidels. There is no deity save God." These words are recited thrice. He then runs from the top of Mount *Al-safa* to the summit of Mount *Al-Marwa* seven times, repeating the aforesaid supplication or prayer.

This is the sixth day, the evening of which is spent at Makkah, where he again encompasses the *kâba* once.

On the seventh day he listens to the *khutba*, or oration, in the Sacred Mosque, on the excellence of the pilgrimage and the necessary duties required of all true Muslims. On the following day, which is called the day of *tarviya* <sup>[1]</sup> [satisfying thirst], he proceeds with his fellow-pilgrims to a place called *Mina*, where he spends the night, performing the Muslim usual rites.

On the next day, it being the ninth of the month, all pilgrims proceed to Mount *Arafat* where they spend the whole day, performing the midday and afternoon stated prayers, and hearing the sermon and spending the time in reciting the Qu'ran or making humble-suppliations to God, asking His favour of

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[1] The 8<sup>th</sup> day of the pilgrimage is so called because the pilgrims, in old times, happen to give drinking water to their camels.

forgiveness of their sins and soliciting His guidance to a virtuous life, etc. Before sunset the pilgrim leaves Arafat for a stage called *Al-Muẓdalifa*, a place between *Mina* and *Arafat*, where he should arrive for the sunset and night prayers.

The next day, it being the tenth of the month and known all through the Muslim world as *Yawmul-nabri*, or the day of sacrifice and celebrated as the “*Eid-el-ad-hâ*”, or the great feast known in the West as *Qurban Bairam*. Early in the morning, having said their prayers at *Al-Muẓdalifa*, the pilgrims proceed in a body to three monumental pillars at *Mina*. The pilgrim casts seven small stones or pebbles at each of these pillars, this ceremony being called *ram-yol-jumâr*, or throwing of the pebbles. Holding the pebbles [which he can easily pick up from the sand at the locality], between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, the pilgrim throws it at a distance of some fifteen feet, and says: “*Allâhu akbar*,” “God is Greater.” The remaining pebbles are thrown in the same way at each of the other pillars.

The pilgrim then returns to *Mina* and performs the sacrifice, the victim may be a sheep, a goat, a cow, or even a camel, according to the means of the pilgrim. When slaughtering the animal, the pilgrim says in a loud voice: “*Allâhu akbar*,” “God is Greater.” “O God, accept this sacrifice from me.”

This ceremony concludes the pilgrimage; and there the pilgrim then gets himself shaved, his nails pared, and the *ihram*, or pilgrim’s garment is taken off and replaced by the usual dress. Although the pilgrimage rites are over by this time, he should have rest at Makkah for the following three days, which are known as *ayyâmul-tashriq*.

Before leaving Makkah for good, the pilgrim should once more perform the circuits round the *Ka’ba* and throw stones at monumental pillar at *Mina* seven times. He must also drink of the water of the famous well near the *Ka’ba*, known as *Zamzam* well.

The throwing of these stones or pebbles against the aforesaid monumental pillar represents a deeply rooted hearty intention on

the part of the pilgrim, that he will never again follow the footsteps of wicked, mischievous or impious company or to listen to evil suggestions, usually known as the path of the devil or Satan. This practice can by no means be mistaken for an idolatry presentation. It is rather a meritorious act of self-suggestion. Most Muslims then go to Al-Medina to visit the mosque of their Prophet.

From the time the pilgrim has assumed the *ihram* until he takes it off, he must abstain from worldly affairs and devote himself entirely to the duties of pilgrimage. He is not allowed to hunt or kill game. He is prohibited to unite in sexual intercourse, make vain dispute, commit any unlawful act, or to use bad language or insulting words.

The pilgrimage can only be performed on the appointed days of the month of *Zul Hijjah*. But a visit can be meritoriously made to the Sacred Mosque at Makkah [the house of God at Makkah] at any time of the year; and in this case it is not called pilgrimage, but it takes the name of "*umra*", meaning visit to the Sacred Mosque.

If the pilgrim happens to arrive at Makkah as late as the ninth day of the month, he can still perform his dutiful pilgrimage legally if he can join the pilgrims when at Mount *Arafat* on that day. The Pilgrimage cannot be performed by proxy according to the *Sunni* School of Law. But if a Muslim on his death-bed leaves a sum of money to be paid to a certain person in order to perform the pilgrimage by proxy, this is considered as satisfying the claims of the Muslim Law. If a Muslim has the means of performing the pilgrimage, and omits to do so, he is considered to have committed a great sin.

According to the sayings of the Prophet, the merits of a pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque are very great: "He who make a pilgrimage for God's sake, and does not talk loosely, not act wickedly, shall return from it as pure from sin as the day on which he was born." Verily pilgrimage and 'umra [visit to the Sacred

Mosque] put away poverty and sin like the fire of a forge which removes dross'. "When you see a pilgrim, salute and embrace him, and request him to ask pardon of God for you, for his sins have been forgiven and his supplications may be accepted."

### Summary of Pilgrimage Fundamental Enjoinments

The principal rites to be observed in connection with the institution of the pilgrimage are:-

- 1) *Ibrâm*, that is entering the sacred land in a state of *ibrâm* in which the ordinary clothes are put off and all pilgrims wear one kind of apparel, consisting to two seamless sheets, leaving the head uncovered, except in case of women pilgrims who cover their heads.
- 2) *Tawâf*, or making circuits round the *Ka'ba* seven times.
- 3) *Sa'y*, or running seven times between two small hills neighbouring the *Ka'ba*, known as *Al-Safa* and *Al-Marwa*.
- 4) Staying in the plain of Mount Arafat on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the month of pilgrimage [*Zul Hijja*], where the noon and afternoon prayers shall be said.

It will be seen that the state of *ibrâm* makes all men and women stand upon one plane of equality, all wearing the same very simple dress and living in the same conditions. All distinctions of rank and colour, of wealth and nationality, disappear; and the prince is now indistinguishable from the peasant. The whole of humanity assumes one aspect, one attitude, before the Creator. Thus the greatest and noblest sight of human equality is witnessed in that wonderful desert plain called "*Arafat*" which makes man obtain a better knowledge of his Creator, the word "*Arafat*" being derived from *arafa*, meaning he came to acquire knowledge [of something]. The whole of the world is unable to present so noble a picture of real brotherhood and equality.

The condition of pilgrim and the different movements connected with the pilgrimage, the making of circuits and running to and fro, in fact represent the stage in which the worshipper is imbued with the spirit of true submission to the Creator. That submission to God which is so much talked of in other religions becomes here a reality. The lower connections have been cut off, and all the comforts of this world have lost their attraction for the Lord. The pilgrim, indeed, represents the last stage of spiritual advancement, and by his outward condition and his movements the pilgrim only announces to the whole world how all the lower connections must be cut off to reach the great goal of human perfection and nearness to God, which can only be attained by holding true submission to the Unseen Creator.

## Transactions

### Marriage

The third section of the Muslim Law concerns transaction, [Arabic: *Mu'âmalât*]. Transactions are subdivided into marriage; inheritance; contracts; sale; barter and agency.

Marriage is enjoined by the Prophet upon every Muslim, while celibacy is frequently condemned by him. It is related in the traditions that the Prophet said: "When a man marries he has fulfilled half of the religion; so let him fear Allâh regarding the remaining half." [*Al-Tirmidhi-3096*]

The following are some of the saying of the Prophet on the subject of marriage:- "The best wedding is that upon which the least trouble and expense are bestowed." [*Mishkat al-Masabih*]

"The worst kind of food is the wedding feast to which the rich are invited and the poor are ignored. He who does not come to the feast, he in fact disobeys Allâh and His Messenger (may peace be upon him)." [*Sabih Muslim, Hadîth 3349*]

"Marry women who love their husbands and be very prolific, for I wish you to be more numerous than any other people'... [*Mishkat al-Masabih, book 13*]

"If there comes to you with an offer of marriage (for your daughter, sister, etc.) one with whose religious commitment and character you are pleased, then marry (your daughter, sister, etc, to) him. If you do not do so, there will be mischief on earth and widespread corruption." [*al-Tirmidhi, 1004; hasan in Sabeeh al-Jaami', 270*], "A woman may be married for four reasons: for her property, her status. her beauty and her religion, so try to get one who is religious, may your hand be besmeared with dust." [*Sabeeh Muslim-3457*], "All young men who have arrived at the age of puberty should marry, for marriage protect them against intemperance." [*Muslim – Book 8, Hadîth 3231*], "The best of mahrs is the simplest (or most affordable)." [*Narrated by al-Haakim and al-Bayhaqi, sabih - Sabeeh al-Jaami', 3279*].

“If one of you proposes marriage to a woman, if he can look at her to see that which will encourage him to go ahead and marry her, then let him do so...” [*Abi Dawood, 1832-1834*].

“A virgin cannot be married until her consent has been sought and a previously-married woman cannot be married until she has been consulted.” They said, “O Messenger of Allâh, what is her consent?” He said, “If she remains silent.” [*Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 5136; Muslim, 1419*]

From the above-mentioned teachings of the Prophet, it is clear that Islam encourages marriage and condemns celibacy. Men and women must marry, not once in their lives, but so long as they have the strength and can afford to support each other.

During the pre-Islamic period of the Arabs, there was no limit to the number of wives a man could take. But Islam limited the number to one, with permission to marry, if necessary, two or three or even four, *provided that* one can treat them with justice and equality in one’s relation with them as husband, which is extremely difficult. Hence the tendency of Islamic Law is towards monogamy, though it does not definitely bind a man to take only one wife. In other words, monogamy is the rule, and polygamy is an exception, it being a remedial course to be resorted to certain cases and under certain conditions.

In the early days of Islam, wars of conquests ended in the capture of a large number of women, some of whom were supported by the conquerors. Polygamy then became a necessity and offered a ready solution to social problems. The same solution might be resorted to if similar social conditions would suggest themselves. A number of the faithful followers of the Prophet were being killed in religious warfare. Public policy and morals required that their widows and grown-up daughters should be adequately provided for and given protecting shelter. It was, within the limit of *four wives* prescribed by the law, the believers took in marriage the widows and daughters of their friends, who had sacrificed themselves in the cause of their religion. The greatest sacrifice in

this respect was made by the Prophet himself, whose additional object in having as many as nine wives – all of whom [except ‘A’isha] were elderly women – was to propagate the teachings of Islam through them among the women of Arabia. It was through the Prophet’s wives that the Arab women, who embraced Islam, came to know what the institutions of the new religion – as envisaged by the daily life of the Prophet – really were.

### Marriage – A Civil Contract

In Islam, marriage is a civil contract made by mutual consent between man and woman. What is necessary among the *Sunni* Muslims to conclude a match is the presence of two male witnesses and a dower. A woman who has reached the age of puberty is free to choose, to accept, or to refuse an offer, although such a conduct may be against the declared wishes of her parents or guardian.

Although the parents are recommended to find a suitable match for their daughter, they cannot legally force her to agree to it. Her consent in any case is necessary. She can make her own terms before the marriage, as to the amount of dower to be paid to her, the dissolution of marriage in case her husband leaves the locality and goes to some other country, or in regard to any other matter such as the husband taking another wife, etc.. All terms, conditions and stipulations agreed to mutually must be recorded in the contract of marriage by the registrar and would be binding to the husband.

In the case of impotence, insanity or extreme poverty which renders it impossible for the husband to support his wife, or should he be imprisoned for such a length of time that the wife should suffer lack of sustenance, she has the right to divorce him by a verdict of the judge.

A man may see his bride, nay he is encouraged by the law to do so before the completion of marriage. A man may divorce and re-marry the divorced wife, but if he pronounces divorce on three occasions, she cannot return to him, unless after having married



another man and lived with him as his wife for a length of time. She may be divorced by the second husband, and then she may be re-married to the first. The object of this law is that the husband who has divorced his wife should feel ashamed and disgraced to take her back after she has re-married and lived as wife of another man. Divorce is condemned by the Prophet and is not to be resorted to except in unavoidable circumstances, such as infidelity of the wife, or other similar serious causes.

### Kinds of Divorce

Divorce in Islam is of two kinds:

Revocable, and Irrevocable.

A husband has the right to divorce his wife; but this right is not effective until the period of *'iddat*, i.e. probation is over. This period is three menstrual courses or three month, and during this time the right of the husband to revoke the divorce is available. Should the wife survive her husband, the period of *'iddat* or probation is prolonged to four months and ten days; before this period is ended, the widow cannot legally get married to a new husband. If a woman is pregnant and divorce has to be resorted to, the *'iddat* period continues until the delivery takes place. In this case, the wife has the right to reside in her husband's house and be maintained by him.

### Different Forms Of Divorce

The following are the different forms of divorce current among the *Sunnis*:

Besides impotence on the part of the husband, a verdict of divorce may be pronounced by the competent judge on the demand of the wife in the following cases:

- 1) Unequality of status of man and woman.
- 2) Insufficient dower.
- 3) If the Muslim husband embraces any religion other than Islam.

- 4) If a husband charges his wife with adultery, even though she swears that she is innocent and the former insists that she is not.
- 5) If the husband is imprisoned for such a length of time that she suffers from want of living.
- 6) *Kbul'a* divorce, which means a result of continuous disagreement between husband and wife, when the latter is willing to forego some of her own privileges or make a certain ransom to free herself from her husband.

### Prohibited Marriages

One of the fundamental principles of Islam is that neither a Muslim can marry an idolatress nor a Muslim woman can marry an idolater.

The direct result of such prohibited marriages would be to introduce no idolatry in Islam, which it had strenuously striven to eradicate. Otherwise, Islam is quite tolerant in this respect, as it permits Muslim men to marry virtuous women among the Christians or the Jews. However, the Islamic Law, does not allow a Muslim woman to marry a Christian or a Jew.

### Suggested Reconciliation

In case there is fear of breach between wife and husband, reconciliation is recommended to be sought through the mediation of two arbitrators: one chose from the husband's family and the other from the wife's family; if they are desirous of agreement, maybe God through His Mercy effects a reconciliation between them.

### Prohibited Marriage Relations in Islam

These prohibitions are detailed in verses 22, 23 and 24, Chapter 4, of the Qu'ran, which are interpreted as follows: "And marry not those women whom your fathers married, except what hath already happened (of that nature) in the past. Lo! it was ever lewdness and abomination, and an evil way." [4:22]

“Forbidden unto you are your mothers, and your daughters, and your sisters, and your father's sisters, and your mother's sisters, and your brother's daughters and your sister's daughters, and your foster-mothers, and your foster-sisters, and your mothers-in-law, and your step-daughters who are under your protection (born) of your women unto whom ye have gone in - but if ye have not gone in unto them, then it is no sin for you (to marry their daughters) - and the wives of your sons who (spring) from your own loins. And (it is forbidden unto you) that ye should have two sisters together, except what hath already happened (of that nature) in the past. Lo! Allâh is ever Forgiving, Merciful.” [4:23]

“And all married women (are forbidden unto you) save those (captives) whom your right hands possess. It is a decree of Allâh for you. Lawful unto you are all beyond those mentioned, so that ye seek them with your wealth in honest wedlock, not debauchery. And those of whom ye seek content (by marrying them), give unto them their portions as a duty. And there is no sin for you in what ye do by mutual agreement after the duty (hath been done). Lo! Allâh is ever Knower, Wise.” [4:24]

### Religious Ceremony on the Occasion of Marriage

The Islamic Law appoints no specific religious ceremony, nor any religious rites necessary for the contraction of a valid marriage.

Legally a marriage contracted between two persons passing the capacity to enter into the contract is valid and binding, if entered into by mutual consent in the presence of witnesses. In all cases, the religious ceremony is left entirely to the discretion of the qualified registrar known as the *ma'zûn*, that is the representative of the court parties. Below is given, in *detail*, the nuptial sermon, universally preached on the occasion of marriage, in imitation of the Prophet: “O ye believers, fear God as He deserved to be feared, and die not without having become true Muslims. O men, fear your Lord Who hath created you of one progenitor, and of the same species He created his wife and from these twain hath spread abroad so many men and women. And fear ye God, in

whose name ye ask mutual favour, and reverence the wombs that bore you. Verily God is watching over you. O believers, fear God and speak with well-guided speech, that God may bless your doings for you and forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys God and His Apostle with great bliss he surely shall be blessed.”

The sermon is a collection of Qu’ranic verses and their repetition at each and every wedding is meant to remind the Muslim men and women of their duties and obligations. It opens with a commandment to fear God, and the selfsame commandment is repeated quite a number of times in the course of the ceremony, showing that the whole of the ceremony is to be carried through with fear of God, so that from beginning to end it may be a pure, moral binding and that no selfish equivocation or hypocritical prevarication may mar the sanctity of the sacred rite.

The registrar – having recited the above verses with certain sayings of the Prophet bearing on the benefits of marriage, and the bridegroom and the bride’s agent [usually the father, uncle or elder brother] and the witnesses having assembled in some convenient place [commonly the bride’s home] and arrangements having previously been made as to the amount of dower payable to the bride—begins to request the bridegroom to ask God forgiveness for his sins and to declare his belief in the unity of God and the Prophethood of His Messenger Muhammad . The registrar then asks the bridegroom whether he accepts to be wedded to ...[mentioning the name of the bride] against such and such a dower payable to her and on the law principles stated in the Qu’ran and in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. The bridegroom answering in the affirmative, the registrar announces the consummation of the marriage contract. The ceremony being over, the bridegroom shakes hands with the friends and those of the relatives who happen to be present and receives their congratulations.

## Inequality of the Two Sexes Regarding Divorce

Marriage being regarded as a civil contract and as such not indissoluble, the Islamic Law naturally recognizes the right of both parties to dissolve the contract under certain given circumstances. Divorce, then, is a naturally corollary to the conception of marriage as a contract, and it is regrettable that it may have furnished European critics with a handle for attack. They seem to entertain the view that the Islamic Law permits a man to repudiate his wife “even on the slightest disgust.” Whether the law permits or favours repudiation on the slightest disgust, we shall presently see. But there is another point raised by these critics, namely the inequality of the two sexes in regard to the right of obtaining a divorce, which inequality is in fact more seeming than real. The theory of marriage, no doubt, points to a subordination of the wife to her husband, because of her comparative inferiority in discretionary powers; but in practice the hands of the husband are fettered in more ways than one. The theoretical discretion must not be understood as given a tacit sanction to the excesses of a brutal husband; on the other hand, it is intended to guard against the possible dangers of an imperfect judgment. The relation between the members of the opposite sex which marriage legalises are, however, so subtle and delicate and require such constant adjustment, involving the fate and well-being of the future generations, that in their regulation the law considers it expedient to allow the voice of one partner, more or less, predominance over that of the other.

Perhaps it is here worthy of notice that in Europe the two sexes are not placed on the equal footing in respect of the right of divorce. Lord Helier, P.C., K.C.B., who was president of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice, 1892-1905, observes on this point thus: “Much comment has been made on the different grounds, on which divorce is allowed to a husband and to a wife – it being necessary to prove infidelity in both cases, but a wife being compelled to show either an aggravation of that offence or addition to it. Opinions

probably will always differ whether the two sexes should be placed *on an equality in this respect*, abstract justice being invoked, and the idea of marriage as a mere contract, pointing in one direction, and social consideration in the other. But the reason of the legislature for making the distinction is clear. It is that the wife is entitled to an absolute divorce only if her reconciliation with her husband is neither to be expected nor desired. This was no doubt the view taken by the House of Lords”<sup>[1]</sup>

### Limitation of Divorce

A Muslim is not free to exercise the right divorce on “the slightest disgust.” The law has put many limitations upon the exercise of this power. Then again the example and precepts of the Prophet in this particular have rendered divorce most repellent to the Muslim mind. A Muslim is permitted to have recourse to divorce, provided that there is adequate justification for such an extreme measure. The Qu’ran expressly forbids a man to seek pretexts for divorcing his wife, so long as she remain faithful and obedient to him in matters recommended by the law:

“If women obey you [i.e. in lawful matters], then do not seek a way against them,” that is seek not a pretext for separation.

The law gives man, primarily, the faculty of dissolving the marriage, if the wife, by her offensiveness or her bad character, renders the married life unhappy, but in the absence of serious reasons, no Muslim can justify a divorce either in the eyes of religion or the law. If he abandons his wife or puts her away from simple caprice, he draws upon himself the divine anger, for “the curse of God.” Said the Prophet, “rests on him who repudiates his wife capriciously.”

In the Qu’ran, there is most edifying verse which is generally overlooked by the critics of Islam: “Associate with your wives,” so runs the verse, “with goodness; and if ye dislike them, it may

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<sup>[1]</sup> Cp. Review of Religions, April 1913.

be that ye dislike a thing and God may put abundant good in it.” [4:19].

Thus the Qu’ran enjoins forbearance, even with a wife the husband does not like. One really wonders at the boldness of the critic is who presume that the Islamic Law permits divorce on “even on the slightest disgust.”

Many and various are the sayings of the Prophet of Islam that teach love, untiring patience, forgiving disposition and, above all, fear of God in the treatment of women.

“It is to be rightly observed that divorce in Islam is allowable only when the object is not to trouble the wife by divorcing her without just grounds, such as refractory or unseemly behaviour on her part, or extreme necessity on the part of the husband.

Islam discourages divorce in principle, and permits it only when it has become altogether impossible for the parties to live together in peace and harmony. It avoids, therefore, greater evil by choosing the lesser one, and opens a way for the parties to seek agreeable companions and, thus, to accommodate them-selves more comfortably in their new homes.

If a woman is chaste and mindful of her duties as wife, the Islamic Law makes it obligatory upon the husband to associate with her on the best terms, and with kindness and courtesy. But if she proves refractory in her behaviours, the law confers on the husband the power of correction if exercised in moderation. <sup>[1]</sup>

Finally, it is to be remembered that the abuse likely to arise from the laxity of the laws, may conveniently be contracted by other lawful impositions. The wife or her guardian or attorney may stipulate, at the time of marriage, against the arbitrary exercise of the power of divorce by the husband. The right of dissolution of the marriage contract, which is in all cases a civil contract, may be stipulated to be with the wife, instead of with the husband, if

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<sup>[1]</sup> The law of England similarly vested in the husband the right of chastising his wife for levity of conduct [vide Holland’s Jurisprudence, p. 240].

necessary. The same object may also be achieved indirectly, by fixing the dowry at a large sum payable to the wife in case of a divorce by the husband, such as may be beyond the means of the husband to liquidate. The wife may also, by stipulation, reserve to herself the power of dissolving the marriage under certain legitimate circumstances, for example, if the husband marries a second wife.

Again, in the event of a divorce, the Islamic Law is very particular in providing for the protection of the wife's property against the greed of the husband: if the divorce is due to a cause related to the husband, he has to make over to her all her property, and pay off the dower that had been settled upon her. If, however, the divorce has been resorted to at the instance of the wife, without any justifiable cause, she has simply to abandon her claim to the dower. The wife thus occupies a decidedly more advantageous position than the husband.

The Islamic Law institutes also a procedure known as *tafriq*, which legally means dissolution of the status of marriage by a judicial verdict. Here are some causes for which the wife can demand a divorce by authority of the court: -

- 1) Habitual ill-treatment of the wife.
- 2) Non-fulfillment of the terms of marriage contract.
- 3) Insanity.
- 4) Incurable Incompetency.
- 5) Quitting the conjugal domicile without making provision for
- 6) the wife.
- 7) Any other causes which in the opinion of the court would justify a divorce.

### Islamic Legal Status of a Married Woman

To sum up, the Islamic legal status of a married woman is decidedly superior to that of a European woman. The former enjoys social immunities which allow the fullest exercise on her part of the powers and privileges given to her by the law. She acts,



in all matters which relate to herself and to her property, in her own individual right, without the intervention of husband or father. She never loses her own identity on becoming wedded, by remaining related to her father's family. She appoints her own attorney, and delegates to him all the powers she herself possesses. She enters into valid contracts with her husband and her made relations on a footing of equality. If she is ill-treated, she has the right to have the marriage tie dissolved. She is entitled to pledge the credit of her husband for the maintenance of herself and her children. She is able, even if holding a creed different to that of her husband, to claim the free and unfettered exercise of her own religious observance. To enjoy all her rights of action, she requires no intermediaries, trustees or next of kin. When she is aggrieved by her husband she has the right to sue him in her own capacity.

It is both interesting and instructive to compare the above summary with another, from the writing of J.S. Mill, which gives us an idea of the corresponding position of women under the usages of Church Christianity: - "We are continually told", says he, "that civilisation and Christianity have restored to woman her just rights. Meanwhile, the wife is the actual bond-servant of her husband; no less so, as far as legal obligation goes, than slave commonly so-called. She vows a life-long obedience to him at the altar, and is hold to it all through her life by law. It may be said that the obligation of obedience stops short of participation in crime, but it certainly extends to everything else. She cannot act whatever but by his permission, at least tacit. She can acquire no property but for him; the instant it becomes hers even if by inheritance, it becomes *ipso facto* his. In this respect the wife's position, even under the common law of England, is worse than that of slaves in the laws of olden day in other countries. By the Roman Law, for example, a slave might have peculium which, to a certain extent, the law guaranteed him for his exclusive use."<sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> "The Review of Religions, "May 1913, states: Evidently J.S. Mill wrote this prior to the present Married Women's Property Act; but the same

## Inheritance

The law of inheritance is called '*Ilmil-farâ'yied, or Ilmil-mirâth*' – i.e. science of obligations of inheritance. The verses in the Qu'ran upon which the law of inheritance is founded begin at the 11<sup>th</sup> verse of Chapter 4 of the Qu'ran. They are rendered as follows: -

“With regard to your children, God commands you to give the male the portion of two females, and if they be females more than two, then they shall have two-thirds of that which their father hath left: but if she be an only daughter, she shall have the half; and the father and mother of the deceased shall each of them have a sixth part of what he hath left, if he has a child; but if he has no child, and his parents be his heirs, then his mother shall have the third; and if he has brethren, his mother shall have the sixth, after paying the bequests he shall have bequeathed and his debts. As to your fathers or your children, ye know not which of them is the most advantageous to you. This is the law of God. Verily God is Knowing and Wise.”

“Half of what your wives leave shall be yours if they have no issue; but if they have issue, then a fourth of what they have shall be yours, after paying the bequests and debts.”

“And your wives shall have a fourth part of what ye leave if ye have no issue, but if ye have issue, then they shall have an eighth part of what ye leave, after paying the bequests and debts, if any.”

“If a man or woman makes a distant relation their heir, and he or she has a brother or a sister each of these two shall have a sixth : but if there are more than this, then shall they be sharers in a third after payment of the bequests and debts.”

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position of married women as illustrated by him is still prevalent to this day under the usages of the Catholic and other Christian churches.

“Without loss to any one. This is the ordinance of God, and God is Knowing and Gracious.” [4:11], The foregoing general rules of inheritance are detailed in the following <sup>[1]</sup>

The property of a deceased Muslim is applicable, in the first place, to the payment of his funeral expenses; secondly to the discharge of his debts; and thirdly, to the payment of legacies as far as one-third of the residue. The remaining two-thirds with so much of the one-third as is not absorbed by legacies are the patrimony of the heirs. A Muslim is, therefore, disabled from disposing of more than one-third of his property by will. <sup>[1]</sup>

The clear residue of the state descends to the heirs; and among these the first are persons for whom the law has provided certain specific shares or portions and who are from there denominated the sharers or *Za-nul-farâd* in Arabic.

In most cases, there must be a residue after the shares have been satisfied; and this passes to another class of persons who, under that circumstance, are termed residuaries or *‘asaba* in Arabic.

It can seldom happen that the deceased should have no individual connected with him who would fall under these two classes; but to guard against this possible contingency, the law had provided another class of persons who, by reason of their remote position with respect to the inheritance, have been denominated “distant kindred” *Zawul Arhâm* in Arabic.

### Gifts and Donations

During his lifetime a Muslim has absolute power over his property. He may dispose of it in whatever way he likes. But such dispositions, in order to be valid and effective, are required to have operation given to them during the lifetime of the owner. If a gift be made, the subject of the gift must be made over to the donee during the lifetime of the donor; he must, in fact, divest

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<sup>[1]</sup> *“Al-Sirajiyah”* by Sirajud-din Mohammad, based on the Traditions of the Prophet on the subject, as collected by Zaid ibn Thabit, one of the earliest companions.

himself of all proprietary rights in it and place the donee in possession. To make the operation of the gift dependent upon the donor's death would invalidate the donations. So also in the case of endowments for charitable or religious purposes. A disposition in favour of a charity, in order to be valid, should be accompanied by the complete divestment of all proprietary right. As regards testament dispositions, the power is limited to one-third of the property, provided that it is not in favour of one who is entitled to share in the inheritance. For example, the proprietor may devise by will one-third of his property to a stranger; should the devise, however, relate to more than one-third, or should it be in favour of a legal heir, it would be invalid.

### Points of Contact

A Muslim upon his death may leave behind him a numerous body of relations. In the absence of certain determinate rules, it would be extremely difficult to distinguish between the inheriting and the non-inheriting relations. In order to prevent this difficulty and to render it easy to distinguish between the two classes, it is the general rule and one capable of universal application, that when a deceased Muslim leaves behind him two relations, one of whom is connected with him through the other, the former shall not succeed while the intermediate person is alive. For example, if a person on his death leaves behind him a son son's son, this latter will not succeed to his grandfather's estate while his father is alive.

Again if a person dies leaving behind him a brother's son and a brother's grandson and his own daughter's son, the brother's son, being a male descended through the male line and nearer to the deceased than the brother's grandson, takes the inheritance in preference to the others.

The law of inheritance is a science acknowledged even by Muslim scholars to be an exceedingly difficult object of study.

Although it is not easy to follow it out in all its intricacies, a carefully drawn table on the *Sunni* law of inheritance is given hereinafter: -

## A. – Legal Heirs And Sharers

### 1. Father

As mere sharer, when there is a son or a son's son, how low soever, he takes  $1/6$ . As mere residuary, when no successor but himself, he takes the whole: or with a sharer, not a child or son's child, how low soever, he takes what is left by such sharer. As sharer and residuary, as when there are daughters and son's daughter but no son or son's son, he, as sharer, takes  $1/6$ ; daughter takes  $1/2$ , or two or more daughters  $2/3$ ; son's daughter  $1/6$ ; and father the remainder.

### 2. True Grandfather

Father's father, his father and so forth, into whose line of relationship to the deceased no mother enters, is excluded by father and excludes brothers and sisters; he comes into father's place when no father; but does not, like father, reduce mother's share to  $1/3$  of residue, nor entirely exclude paternal grandmother.

### 3. Half Brothers by Same Mother

They take, in the absence of children or son's descendants and father and true grandfather one  $1/6$ , two or more between them  $1/3$ , being those who benefit by the "return".

### 4. Daughters

When there are no sons, daughters take on  $1/2$  two or more  $2/3$  between them; with sons they become residuaries and take each half a son's share, being in this case of those who benefit by the "return".

### 5. Son's Daughters

They take as daughters when there is no child; take nothing when there is a son or more daughters than one; take  $1/6$  when only one daughter; they are made residuaries of male cousin, how low soever.

## 6. Mother

The mother takes  $1/6$  when there is a child or son's child, how low soever, or two more brothers or sisters of whole or half blood; she takes  $1/3$  when none of these: when husband or wife and both parents, she takes  $1/3$  of the remainder after deducing their shares, the residue going to father: if no father but grandfather, she takes  $1/3$  of the whole.

## 7. True Grandmother

Father's or mother's mother, how high soever; when no mother, she takes  $1/6$ ; ! if more than one,  $1/6$  between them. Paternal grandmother is excluded by both father and mother; maternal grandmother by mother only.

## 8. Full Sisters

These take as daughters when no children, son's children how low soever, father, true grandfather or full brother; with full brother, they take half share of male; when daughters or son's daughters, how low soever, but neither sons, nor father, nor true grandfather, nor brothers, the full sisters take as residuaries what remains after daughter or son's daughter has had her share.

## 9. Half Sisters by Same Father

They take as full sisters, when there are none; with one full sister they take  $1/6$ ; when two full sisters, they take nothing, unless they have a brother who makes them residuaries and then they take half a male's share.

## 10. Half Sisters by Mother Only

When there are no children or son's children, how low soever, or father or true grandfather, they take one  $1/6$ ; two or more  $1/3$  between them.

11. Husband

If no child or son's child, how low soever, he takes  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; otherwise  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

12. Wife

If no child or son's child how low soever, she takes  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; if otherwise,  $\frac{1}{8}$ . Several widows share equally.

Corollary

All brothers and sisters are excluded by son, son's son, how low soever, father or true grandfather. Half brothers and sisters on father's side are excluded by these and also by full brother. Half brothers and sisters on mother's side are excluded by any child or son's child, by father and true grandfather.

B. – Residuaries

I – *Residuaries* in their own right, being *males* into whose line of relationship to the deceased no *female enters*.

## Sale And Usury

Sale in the language of the Muslim Law signifies an exchange of property with the mutual consent of the parties. In its ordinary acceptance, sale is a transfer of property in consideration of a price in money. The word has a comprehensive meaning in the law, and is applied to every exchange of property for property with mutual consent. It, therefore, includes barter as well as sale and also loan, when the articles lent are intended to be consumed and replaced to the lender by a similar quantity of the same kind. This transaction which is truly an exchange of property for property is termed as *qard* in the law, *i.e.* loan.

According to the Muslim Laws of contracted transaction of sale and barter, etc., things are divided into: [a] Similar; and [b] Dissimilar.

Similar things are those which are sold by weighing and measuring; and dissimilar things which are different in quality but sold in exchange, such as wheat for its price in coin. In the case of similar things as wheat for rice, when sold after being measured or weighed delivery should take place at once. When these are sold unconditionally, the buyer has no right to choose the best part of it from the whole, unless the seller consents and desires to please him. Things sold or exchanged cannot remain undelivered or unadjusted on the mere responsibility of the parties. But if a thing is sold against its value in money, time is allowed in receiving money. Among similar things, there are similars of capacity weight and sale. The seller must express clearly the quantity and quality of the thing exactly as it is, so that any doubt or misunderstanding may not arise in regard to it later on. He must fix the price and say that he is willing to sell to so and so such a thing of so much value and on such terms and conditions [if there be any]; the buyer must accept the offer in clear language. If the seller himself cannot do this, he must appoint an agent, with sufficient authority to dispose of his goods. If a contract takes place through a broker, it must be ratified by the actual buyer. Option is allowed to the buyer and seller for three days [in



case a thing is not removed from the seller's premises] to avoid the transaction. If a thing is purchased without inspection or examination and afterwards a difference is found in the quantity or the quality specified by the seller, or asked for by the purchaser the latter may refuse to take delivery of it. Of the various kinds of recognized kinds of sale, the following are the most important:

- 1) Sale of a specific thing for a price or by way of barter.
- 2) Sale of silver for silver or gold for gold or banking in which the exchange of coins, either silver or gold, must be exact in weight or quality, so that there may be no chance of resorting to usury.
- 3) Sale in advance when the price is deposited before taking delivery of goods.
- 4) Loan, etc.

The quality of the thing, when lent, is specified and the thing to be given back should be of the same quality.

One can mortgage his property, but here also usury is avoided. The scholars have permitted only such bargains in which a lender of money can be benefited without transgressing the law, e.g. by the use of a thing or property which has been mortgaged; or make a condition precedent that if, with a specified time, the money is not repaid, delivery of possession of the property mortgaged will be given to the lender, etc. *Riba* or usury is strictly prohibited under Islamic Law. It means taking advantage of an individual in distress by giving him momentary relief, with the intention of bringing more misery upon him. One is forced to ask for a loan on the condition that it would be repaid, as agreed, to the lender; often much more has to be paid to the lender than he has actually paid. In some cases it may be deemed harmless, but often it brings ruin to whole families, of which the lender is conscious. Such exaction is against the spirit of Islam. The lender may intentionally lend money to possess the property of one who may, owing to hard circumstances, be forced to seek his help.

Each individual has the right to possess what is his own property and to enjoy what is his own wealth, but only to the extent that by that he does not injure others' happiness or interests. He may amass wealth, but the surplus wealth, of which he is not in need of immediate use, must be used for helping those who are badly in need thereof.

## Usury

Usury, as an illegal transaction, is occasioned, by *rate*, united with *species*, and it includes all gain upon loans, whether from the loan of money, or goods or property of any kind.

The teaching of the Qu'ran on the subject is given in [2:275] of which the following is a translation:

“Those who swallow usury cannot rise up save as he ariseth whom the devil hath prostrated by (his) touch. That is because they say: Trade is just like usury; whereas Allâh permitteth trading and forbiddeth usury. He unto whom an admonition from his Lord cometh, and (he) refraineth (in obedience thereto), he shall keep (the profits of) that which is past, and his affair (henceforth) is with Allâh. As for him who returneth (to usury) - Such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein.”

The Prophet said: “Cursed the receiver and the payer of *riba*, the one who records it and the two witnesses to the transaction and said: “They are all alike [in guilt].” [*Sahib al-Muslim, Sahib Al-Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Bahiqi and Musnad Ahmad*]

*Riba*, i.e. usury, in the language of the law, signifies “an excess,” according to a legal standard of *measurement* or *weight* in one of two *homogeneous* articles [of weight or measurement of capacity] opposed to each in a contract of exchange, and in which such excess is stipulated as an obligatory condition on one of the parties, without any return, i.e. without anything being opposed to it. The sale, therefore, of two loads of barley, for instance, in exchange for one load of wheat does not constitute usury, since these articles are not *homogeneous*; and, on the other hand, the sale of ten yards of cloth in exchange for five yards of another cloth is not usury, since although these articles be homogeneous, they are not estimable by *weight*, or *measurement* of capacity.

Usury, then, as an illegal transaction is occasioned [according to most distinguished scholars] by *rate* united with *species*, where, however, it must be observed that *rate*, in the law of Islam, applies

only to articles of weight and measurement of capacity, and *not* to articles of *longitudinal* measurement, such as cloth, etc., or of tale such as eggs, dates, walnuts, etc., when exchanged from hand to hand. Where the quality of being weighable or measurable by capacity, and correspondence of species [being the causes of usury] *both* exist, the stipulation of *inequality* or suspension of payment to a future period, are both usurious. Thus it is usurious to sell either one measure of wheat in exchange for two measures, or one measure of wheat for one measure deliverable at a future period. If, on the contrary, *neither* of these circumstances exists [as in the sale of wheat for money], it is lawful, either to stipulate a superiority of rate or the payment at a future period. If, on the other hand, *one* of these circumstances only exists [as in the sale of wheat for barley], then a superiority of the rate may legally be stipulated, but not a suspension in the payment. Thus one measure of wheat may lawfully be sold for two measures of barley; but it is not lawful to sell one measure of wheat for one measure of barley, payable at a future period.

Similar of weight and capacity are distinguished from all other description of property in a very remarkable way. When one article of weight or one of measure is sold or exchanged for another of measure, the delivery of both must be immediate from hand to hand, and any delay of delivery in one of them is unlawful and prohibited. Where again, the articles exchanged are also of the same kind, as when wheat is sold for wheat, or silver for silver, there must not only be reciprocal and immediate delivery of both before the separation of the parties, but also absolute equality of weight or measure, according as to whether the articles are weighable or measurable; any excess of either side is also unlawful and prohibited. These two prohibitions constitute in brief the doctrine of *riba* [usury], which is a marked characteristic of the Islamic Law of sale. The word *riba* [in Arabic] properly signifies “excess,” and there are no terms in the Islamic Law which correspond to the words “interest” and “usury” in the sense attached to them in the English language; but it was expressly prohibited by the Prophet to his followers to derive any

advantage from loans, and that particular kind of advantage which is called by Westerners “interest” and which consists in the receiving back from the borrower a quantity larger than is actually lent to him, was effectually prevented by the two rules above mentioned.

### Lawful Transactions

Similar of weight and capacity have a common feature of commodities, and marks with further peculiarity their treatment in the Islamic Law. There are aggregates of minute parts, which are either exactly alike or so nearly resemble each other, that the difference between them may be safely disregarded. For this reason they are usually dealt with in bulk, regard being had only to the whole of a stipulated quantity, and not to the individual parts of which it is composed. When sold in this manner, they are said to be indeterminate. They may, however, be rendered specific in several ways. Actual delivery, or production with distinct reference at the time of contract, is sufficient for that purpose in all cases. But something short of this would suffice for all similars, excepting money. Thus flour, or any kind of grain, may be rendered specific by being enclosed in a sack, or oil, or any liquid, by being put into casks or jars; and though the vessels are not actually produced at the time of contract, their contents may be sufficiently particularized by description of the vessels and their locality. Money is not susceptible of being thus particularized. Hence, money is said to be always indeterminate. Other similars, including similars of tale [number], are sometimes specific and sometimes indeterminate. non-similar, including those of tale, are always specific.

When similars are sold indeterminately, the purchaser has no right to any specific portion of them until it be separated from a general mass, and marked and identified as the subject of the contract. From the moment of offer till actual delivery, he has nothing to rely upon but the seller’s obligation, which may, therefore, be considered the direct subject of the contract. Similars taken indeterminately are accordingly termed *dayn* or

obligation in the Islamic Law. When taken specifically, they are classed with non-similar under the general term of '*ayn*'. The literal meaning of this term is "substance or thing"; but when opposed to *dayn* it means something determinate or specific. The subject or traffic may thus be divided into two classes: specific and indeterminate; or if we substitute for the latter the word "obligation" and omit the word "specific" as unnecessary when not opposed to "indeterminate," these classes may according to the view of Islamic lawyers, be described as thing and obligation.

It is a general principle of the Islamic Law of sale that credit cannot be opposed to credit, namely that both the things exchanged cannot be allowed to remain on the responsibility of the parties. Hence it is only with regard to one of them that any stipulation for delay in delivery is lawful. Price admits of being left on responsibility, and accordingly a stipulation for delay in the payment of the price is quite lawful and valid. It follows that a stipulation for delay in the delivery of the things sold cannot be lawful. And this is the case, with the exception of a particular kind of sale, hereafter to be noticed, in which the things to be sold is always indeterminate, and the price is made in advance. It may, therefore, be said of all specific things when it is a subject of sale, that a stipulation for delay in their delivery is illegal, and would invalidate a sale. The object of this rule may have been to prevent any change of the thing sold before delivery, and the disputes which may in consequence arise between the parties.

There is kind of sale known as *salam* in the Islamic Law. This word literally means an "advance"; and in a *salam* sale the price is immediately advanced for the goods to be delivered at a future fixed time. It is only things of the class of similar that can be sold in this way, and as they most necessarily be indeterminate, the proper subject of sale is an obligation, while, on the other hand, as the price must be actually paid or delivered at the time of the contract, before the separation of the parties, and must, therefore, even in the case of its being money, be produced, and in consequence be particularized or specified; a *salam* sale is strictly

and properly the sale of an obligation for a thing, as defined before. Until actual payment or delivery of the price, however, it retains its character of an obligation, and for this reason the price and the goods are both termed “debts,” and are adduced as examples of the principles that the sale of a debt, *i.e.* of the money or goods which a person is under engagement to pay or deliver before possession, is invalid.

There is another transaction which comes within the definition of sale; it is that which is called *qard* in Arabic and “loan” in English. The borrower acquires an absolute right of property in the things lent; and comes under an engagement to return an equal quantity of things of the same kind. The transaction is, therefore, necessarily limited to similars, whether of weight, capacity, or tale, and the things lent and repaid being of the same kind, the two rules mentioned for the prevention of *riba* or usury must be strictly observed. Hence it follows that any stipulation on the part of the borrower for delay or forbearance by the lender, or any stipulation by the latter for interest to be paid by the former are alike unlawful.

Notwithstanding the stringency of the rules for preventing usury, or the taking of any interest on the loan of money, methods were found for evading them, while still keeping within the letter of the law. It had always been considered lawful to take a pledge to secure the repayment of a debt. Pledges were ordinarily of movable property; when given as security for a debt, and the pledge happened to perish in the hands of the pawnee, the debt was held to be released to the extent of the value of the pledge. Land, though scarcely liable to this incident, was sometimes made the subject of pledge, and devices were adopted for enabling the lender to derive some advantage from its possessions while in the state of pledge. If repayments were made at the assigned term, the lender was obliged to recovery; but if not, the property would remain his own, and the difference between its value and the price of sum lent might have been made a sufficient compensation for the loss

of interest. This form of sale which is called *bay-ulwafa'i*, in Arabic is a term given to a sale of something that may be reconveyed by the seller on repayment at a fixed period of the price or sum given. This form of sale seems to be strictly legal according to the most approved authorities, though held to be what the law calls abominable, as a device for obtaining what it prohibits.

In constituting sale, there is no material difference between the Islamic and other system of law. The offer and acceptance which is expressed or implied in all cases, must be so connected as to obviate any doubt in one being intended to apply to the other. For this purpose, the Islamic Law requires that both shall be interchanged at the same meeting of the parties, and that no other business shall be suffered to intervene between an offer and its acceptance. A very slight interruption is sufficient to break the continuity of a negotiation, and to terminate the meeting in a technical sense, though the parties should still remain in personal communication. An acceptance after the interruption of an offer made before it would be insufficient to constitute a sale. As personal communication may be inconvenient in some cases, and impossible in other, the integrity of the meeting is held to be sufficiently preserved when a party who receives an offer by message or letter declares his acceptance of it on receiving the communication and apprehending its contents. When a sale is lawfully contracted, the property of the things exchanged passes immediately from and to the parties respectively.

In a legal sense, delivery and possession are not necessary for this purpose. Until possession is taken, however, the purchaser is not liable for accidental loss, and the seller has a lien for the price on the thing sold. Delivery by one party is in general tantamount to possession taken by the other. It is, therefore, sometimes of great importance to ascertain when there is a sufficient delivery; and many cases real or imaginary, on the subject, are inserted in the books of detailed theology <sup>[1]</sup> . It sometimes happens that a

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<sup>[1]</sup> VIDE Yaj-el-ʿArus Arabic Lexicon.



person purchases a thing of which he is already in possession, and it then becomes important to determine in what cases his previous possession is convertible into a possession under the purchase. Unless so converted, it would be held that there is no delivery under the sale, and the seller would of course retain his lien and remain liable for accidental loss.

Though possession is not necessary to complete the transfer of property under a legal sale, the case is different where the contract is illegal; for here property does not pass till possession is taken. The sale, however, though so far effectual, is still invalid, and liable to be set aside by a judge, at the instance to the fact of the person complaining being able to come before him with what in legal phraseology is termed "clean hands." A Muslim judge is obliged by his law to interfere for the sake of the law itself, or, as it is more solemnly termed, for the right of God, which is the duty of the judge to vindicate, though by so doing he may afford assistance to a party who personally may have no just claim to his interference.

### Qur'an Enjoinments Relating to Trade and Usury

They [the unbelievers] say that trading is just like usury, [tell them that] God allows trade and forbids usury." [2:275]

"God does not bless usury but He blesses charity and makes it fruitful." [2:276]

"When ye contract a debt for a fixed time record it in writing; let a scribe record it between you [two parties] in term of equity. But if a debtor is a minor, weak [in brain] or unable to dictate, call two men to witness; if not, one man and two women .. Do not be averse in writing the contract whether small or great and record the term." [2:282], [This in case of extreme poverty and inability on the part of a debtor who instead of persecution and imprisonment deserves sympathy and help].

"If ye are on journey and cannot find a scribe a pledge with possession may serve the purpose and if one of you deposits a

thing on trust with another; let the trustee faithfully discharge his trust.” [2:283]

“When measuring, make the measure perfect and weigh with a right balance.” [17:35]

“Keep up the balance with equity and never make the measure deficient.” [55:9]

“Woe to the defrauders who when they take they demand in full measure, but when they give they measure less.” [83:1-2]

## Ownership

### Types and Divisions of Property Ownership

Termed *milkkiya*, in Arabic, is of two kinds:

Things in common or joint use, such as public roads, gardens, water, pasture, light and fire lighted in a desert to which any man has a right of warming himself.

Private concerns, limited to the ownership of an individual. These may be classified under the following headings:

- a) *Milkul-raqaba*, in Arabic, which literally means “possession of the neck,” or right of the proprietor to a thing.
- b) *Milkul-yadd* or right of being in possession.
- c) *Milkul-tasarruf* or right of disposition.

Property is divided into:

1. *Movable* property, which is subdivided into the following:
  - a) That which is *measured*, such as rice, etc.
  - b) That which is *weighed*, such as silver, etc.
  - c) That which is measured by a linear measure, such as cloth, etc.
  - d) That which may be counted, such as animals, etc.
  - e) Articles of furniture and miscellaneous things.
2. *Immovable property*, such as *buildings, land, etc.*

A man may not be the owner of a property, but may have a share in its income, through hard labour, or skill, in which case, he is not concerned with the loss. But a full owner or a member of a company is affected both in the loss and the profit. As part owners in property, each part-owner is co-owner and bears the responsibility of sharing in the responsibility of maintaining it, repairing it, etc. At the same time, each co-owner enjoys the right of demanding his or her share and resolving to separate his or her own share of it from the joint ownership.

There are partial or temporary right, such as the right of *murur* or passing through another's land, and the right of *shufe* or pre-emption, which means that a co-partner in a certain property must be given preference in the matter of its purchase before the property is sought to be sold to a stranger, and next to him to a neighbour [if the property is immovable, such as a building or land]. If there are more partners than one, the preference is to be given according to the proportion of the share, or of the need, as between the parties, or on other considerations. But if the sharer or sharers do not assert their claim at the proper time, their claim lapses. Therefore, when the judge announces the sale of such property, he fixes a timer for the exercise of the right. Waste land belonging to the State may become private property by cultivation after permission from the authorities concerned. Land belonging to an individual cannot, however, be acquired through cultivation or effecting other improvements on it. The Islamic Law prevents an individual from becoming a nuisance or a source of annoyance to others in exercising one's own right of ownership. For instance, a man may not build his house so close to his neighbour's as to prevent the access of light and air to them; nor can he discharge rain or waste water on his neighbour's property, etc. Possession is transferred by '*aqd*, which means a "tie," by the original possessor proposing its transfer on certain terms or unconditionally and the receiver accepting the same. This is called – in the law – *ijab* [proposal], and *qabul* [acceptance]. Offers and acceptance of transfers of this kind are classified as follows:

- 1) *Hiba* or gift – a transfer of property without any exchange. This is effected by a decree of the court [judge].
- 2) *Ba-y'* or sale, which is a transfer of property in exchange of something else. This may be effected by: [*a*] payment of cash; [*b*] barter; [*c*] banking, in which the transaction is cash for cash; [*d*] sale by payment in advance, so that the goods sought to be bought may be delivered on a future date; and [*e*] sale in advance, which occurs when goods

are made only on receiving an order, its value being paid, in whole or in part, in advance.

- 3) Mortgage.
- 4) Rent.
- 5) Bequest of property which takes effect after the death of its owner. The testator has the full right of bequest in one-third of his or her property for private and charitable purposes, after paying the debts [if any] and funeral expenses incurred, the remaining two-thirds being distributed according to the law among his heirs. If he or she desires to bequest more than one-third of his or her property for charitable purposes, he or she must take the consent of the future heirs. A testator must not be insolvent at the time he or she leaves the property in question or in debt to an extent exceeding the value of the property. He or she must be adult at the time the bequest is made. The bequest can be made in writing or verbally in the presence of two males or one male and two female witnesses. An executor after accepting the responsibility cannot decline to discharge it. He must administer the property in case the heirs are minors and distribute the property among them according to the will on their attaining majority. He may sell, pledge, or let the land or house for absolute advantage or for meeting a necessity. But he cannot trade with it unless specifically permitted by the will. A bequest made must be accepted by the legatee. It may be in favour of one or more persons of his own family or to outsiders, who may be Muslims or non-Muslims.

Duties of an Executor: – Besides generally administering the property, the duties of an executor are:

- (a) Paying the funeral expenses.
- (b) Discharging all debts due, if any.

- (c) Collecting all dues and debts owing to the testator.
- (d) Acting according to the intention of the testator.

A bequest may be revoked during the lifetime of the testator, and all changes he desires may be effected by him in regard to it.

- 1) *Waqf* or endowments. *Waqf*, literally means suspension or standing. It is a word used in the sense of transferring an individual's property and its income for some charitable purpose. Endowments among Muslims are made for the erection and maintenance of the following:
  - (a) Mosques.
  - (b) Hospitals.
  - (c) Free schools.
  - (d) Benefit of the poor.
  - (e) Maintaining reservoirs, waterworks, etc.
  - (f) Carrying out caravans services, hostels, cemeteries.
  - (g) Supporting a family [whole or poorer members].

The idea of public charity of this kind began as early as the time of the Prophet; but it developed and took a definite and legal form about the end of the first or the beginning of the second century of the *Hijra*. Its motive from the very start was the promotion of charity and encouragement of learning, particularly religious learning. Accordingly, the Islamic Law forbids such endowments for purposes opposed to Islamic teachings.

A non-Muslim is permitted to make endowments under the same conditions as a Muslim can. The donor of *waqf* must be in full possession of the property. He must be '*aqil*, a possessor of understanding, *i.e.* sane; *baligh*, of age; *hurr*, free, and of good health at the time he makes the endowment. He must not be in

debt for an amount affecting too much the value of his property. The object of the endowment must be of a permanent nature and the property must yield some profit, *i.e.* it must be productive or beneficial in some other way, as for instance, endowment of a library by presenting number of books, which though they may not yield an income, may be studied for a very long time.

Endowments may take the form of immovable property, such as land, buildings, etc., but certain kinds of movable property may also be accepted, such as animals for the milk they may yield.

### Division of Waqfs

*Waqfs* may be divided into:

- 1) *Khayri*, *i.e.* charitable such as for the benefit of mosques, hospitals, etc.
- 2) *Ahli*, that is intended to support a family in which the object aimed at is the perpetuation of a family in good circumstances, by affording it the support of an income of an estate.

A *waqf* needs not necessarily be executed in writing, but in case it is not writing the donor must expressly declare it before witnesses, *i.e.* state specifically before them:

- a) His intention to make the endowment.
- b) Description of the nature of the endowment, its income, etc.
- c) He must provide for its coming into force immediately the declaration is made.

A *waqf* can be made of one-third part of the donor's property, the remaining two-thirds being left to his heirs, but the donor may increase the quantity by making a gift during his lifetime. Once a *waqf* is properly made and comes into force, it cannot be revoked even by the donor.

In case a mosque is erected, it becomes public property as soon as any man makes his prayer in it. A *Waqf* is administered, according to the terms of its endowment, by one or more trustees. A single person supervising the administration is called *Nazir*, i.e. manager or administrator; he is paid for his services from the income of the estate to the extent of one tenth of the net income. The founder himself can become the *Nazir* during his lifetime, if he so provided, and be succeeded by one of his family. But in case another is appointed under the terms of the endowment, the founder or his descendants cannot interfere with the management, so long as it is administered according to the terms and conditions laid down in the endowment. If a *Nazir* fails to carry out his duties honestly, or if he is proved incompetent, it is left to the magistrate [*qadi*] to dismiss him and to appoint a competent man. If an endowment is not utilized for the intended purpose, it becomes the property of the donor or his heirs.

The endowed property must be free from the claim of creditors. A man cannot make an endowment of his property in favour of or of his children if he is in heavy debt, and if his object is to escape payment of his lawful debts.

### Penal Laws [‘Uqubat or Punishments] Criminal Intentional Injury

The third division of the Islamic Law is ‘*uqubat* or punishments for intentional injury to the following:

- 1) Human body, such as murder or causing wound.
- 2) Human property, by usurpation, theft or damage.
- 3) Human honour, such as by slander.
- 4) Breach of public peace, such as rioting, highway robbery, etc.
- 5) Offences against religion. Such as non-attendance at prayers, or non-paying *zakat* [legal alms], etc.



- 6) Offences against decency, such as adultery, use of intoxicants, and gambling.
- 7) Offences against the established government, which means rebellion.

The extent of punishment for the above-mentioned crimes extends from administering a warning, or the infliction of a fine, or bodily punishment by means of stripes, to imprisonment, deportation, cutting off of hands, feet, and lastly putting to death.

Guilt is proved when a man acts intentionally to cause injury to another man. If a man is hurt, but the doer never intends to injure him, he is not held responsible for the injury. For example, when a man keeps a dog in his house and a stranger without warning or permission enters it, and is bitten by the dog, its owner is not responsible for the consequences. But when a man leaves his horse on the public road and the horse kicks a passer-by and hurts him, the owner is punished for the same. In the case of murder which is called *qisas* [in Arabic] or retaliation, though the murderer must be put to death, the Islamic Law does not insist on such punishment. On the other hand, it recommends the relatives of the murdered to accept compensation.

Punishment by way of *qisas*, or the like of a similar injury, is not permitted in doubtful cases. For example, when a man causes fracture in the bone of another, he cannot be punished by inflicting on him the same kind of injury. Thus, the doctrine of *qisas* is limited to certain specified cases. The Islamic Law, however, punishes, in milder manner, the guilty in cases of such nature by administering admonition or scorn, by imposing imprisonment, whipping and finally by taking the life of the criminal. It depends upon the nature of the offence and the circumstances, under which the offence has been committed, the intention of the person and his age. All these are left to the consideration of the *qadi* [magistrate whose discretion of judgment is depended upon].

His guide in these matters is the Qu'ran, the *sunnab*. [Traditions and acts of the Prophet] and the legal codes as arranged by eminent scholars learned in the law. Levity may be shown in the infliction of punishment, but once it is pronounced there can be no levity in regard to its being carried out. For instance, the magistrate may show leniency in ordering twenty stripes, instead of fifty, but the twenty ordered stripes must be real hard blows. As the Qu'ran orders: "And let not pity detain you in the matter of! God's commandments."

## Crime of Murder

### Murder

A murderer must either be put to death by order of the magistrate or if the relations of the murdered man or woman are willing in certain cases to forgive the murderer and forego their claim, the guilty party may be made to pay compensations as ordered by the court with mutual consent of the relatives of the murdered man and the murdered. This is prescribed in the Qu'ran, verses [2:178-179], which may be rendered as follows:

"O, you believe retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain, the free for the free, and the slave for the slave and the female for the female, but if any remission is made to anyone by his [injured] brother, then prosecution [for the blood wit] should be made according to usage, and payment should be made to him in a good manner; this [ordinance] is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy".

"And there is life for you in the law of retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may guard yourselves."

The meaning is that preservation of life is dependent upon making the law of retaliation work; generally speaking, life cannot be safe unless those who are guilty of homicide are liable to be sentenced to capital punishment.

## Qatl [In Arabic], I.E. Homicide

Homicide is classified into the following:

- 1) **Intentional murder:** in this case, the offender is to be punished both in this life and in the next. “Whosoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell.” [3:93]
- 2) **Analogous cases of murder,** i.e. cases when the intention to kill may be inferred. For example, when a man strikes another with a stick, but he may or may not have intended the strike to result in death. If it causes the death of the other, the punishment is that if the intention to kill him is not brought home, then he is fined heavily, but not put to death.
- 3) **Murder by mistake:** Murder may be committed under a mistake of fact or intention. The former occurs when a man strikes something else but hits the slain man; the latter, when a man has no intention to kill, but his act accidentally causes the death of a person. The following verse bears on this point. It may be interpreted as follows: “And it does not behave a believer to kill a believer except by mistake, and whoever kills a believer by mistake he should free a believing captive [Or war prisoner] and blood-money should be paid to his people unless they remit it as a charity... But if he cannot find a captive to emancipate, he should fast for two months successively, a penance from God, and God is Knowing and Wise” [5:92].
- 4) **Murder indirectly causing death:** For example, if a man digs a well outside his compound, on a public road, or where there is possibility of people having to cross, and a passer-by falls in it and dies, the man is held liable and made to pay a fine. But if this act *per se* is not illegal, the dead man having taken the risk, there is no liability for reparation [*payment for harm or damage*] to be made for his death.

- 5) According to Islamic Law, the man who kills is alone held responsible for his guilt. It excludes his relatives from retaliation by the relatives of the murdered man, as was the custom among the pre-Islamic Arabs.

## Adultery

### Adultery or Fornication

Muslim jurists recommend that an eyewitness in a case of this sort should satisfy the court of the truth of the charge by proving what he saw with his own eyes. If he fails to satisfy the court, he is liable to punishment with eighty stripes. Therefore, it is that the task of becoming a witness is onerous under the Islamic Law. The object is to discourage such charges, which may arise from suspicion, wrong notion, jealousy or other similar causes and which, even if true, have an effect that is not likely to prove healthy on society. Adultery is either committed with an unmarried or a married person. In the former case the punishment is not so severe, but in the latter the punishment is stoning the guilty to death.

A husband may slay his wife, if he finds her with her lover in the act of sexual union. In other cases, an alleged act of adultery, if brought forward by any person, must be proved by four witnesses, whose statement should not differ or appear doubtful. If the charge is proved in accordance with the injunctions of the law, the punishment for fornication [or an unmarried person] is one hundred stripes, inflicted on a man while standing, and on a woman while sitting. The following is an English translation of the text in the Qu'ran relating to adultery: "As to the adulteress and the, adulterer scourge each one of them [with a hundred stripes] and let not pity for them detain you in the matter .and let a party of believers witness their chastisement" <sup>[1]</sup> [24:2]

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<sup>[1]</sup> Chastity, as a virtue, is not given the first place in modern civilized society, and hence, while fornication is not a criminal offence, even adultery is not considered as sufficiently serious one to subject the guilty party to any

## Punishment for Slander

In the case of slander, one who accuses a woman of adultery must produce the evidence of four witnesses, who must clearly state the crime or else the slanderer himself is to be punished, as enjoined upon him by the Qu'ran:

“And those who accuse free women and cannot bring four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes, and do not admit any evidence from them ever” [24:4]

“And as for those whose accuse their wives and have no witnesses except themselves, the evidence of one of these should be taken four times, bearing God to witness that he [the husband] most surely says the truth” <sup>[2]</sup> “And the fifth [time] that the curse of God be on him if he told lies” [24: 6-7]<sup>[3]</sup>. “And the fifth [time] that the wrath of God be on her if he said the truth” [24: 8-9].

“And it shall avert the chastisement from her [the wife] if she testifies four times, bearing God to witness, that he is most surely a liar.” [24:8]

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punishment except the payment of damages to the injured husband. This, indeed, is a very low view of sexual morality. Materialism has taken such a strong hold of the civilised mind that even chastity, the most precious jewel in a woman's crown of virtue, can be compensated by a few pounds. Hence the Islamic Law seems to be too severe to an easy-going Westerner. The breach of the greatest trust which can be imposed in a man or a woman, the breach which ruins families and destroys household peace, is not looked upon except as the breach of a trust of a few pounds.

<sup>[2]</sup> This is an effectual restraint against slander and gossip, which so often bring disaster upon the heads of innocent women. Unless there is the clearest evidence of adultery against a woman—the evidence of four witnesses – the slanderer himself is to be punished.

<sup>[3]</sup> The ordinance relates to the case of husbands who accuse their wives of adultery and have no evidence. In such a case a divorce is effected the husband not being punishable for the accusation, though he cannot produce witness, and the wife not being punishable for adultery if she denies the charge in the manner stated.

## Theft and Robbery

### Crime of Theft and Highway Robbery

According to the following text of the Qu’ran, the magistrate may inflict any moderate or severe kind of punishment. It is left to his discretion and depends upon his interpretation of the text and his judgment: “The punishment for those fight against God and his apostle and cause disaster in the land [by highway robbery] is: [1] to be slain; [2] crucified; [3] have their hands and feet cut off crossways; [4] or to be banished from the land – unless he or they repent and reform before falling into the hands of the court.” [5:33], “And as for the man or woman, who steals, cut off their hands as a punishment from God.” [5:38]

The judge, according to Muslim jurists, may pass the following sentence:

- 1) If the crime consists in making public highways unsafe for travellers and trade caravans, the punishment is deportation from the country.
- 2) If anything has been robbed, the guilty parties may be punished by cutting off right hands and on return the left foot.
- 3) If, besides interrupting caravans, public highways are made unsafe and those who are guilty are also held to have killed any man or woman, those adjudged guilty may be put to death or crucified, such a sentence being considered a preventative one. But if those guilty repent before being brought before the officers of the law, they may be forgiven, provided that they restore the stolen property; and if they have killed any one, they pay the *diyya* [in Arabic], that is the amount of money judged by the magistrate having made sure of its being imperative as compensation to be given to the heirs of the murdered.

The Islamic Law defines theft in the sense of stealing a thing considered as the property of another man kept in his shop, etc.,

or in any other safe place such as a house, or left in the guard of some guardian. Many things are not considered property, such as:

- 1) Things which may decay or be wasted as milk, fruits, grain, [not reaped] grass, fish, garden stuff, etc..
- 2) Intoxicants which a thief may excuse himself by saying he wanted to split it.
- 3) Trifling things, such as fowls, etc.
- 4) Books including copies of the Qu'ran.
- 5) The public treasure, or *bait-el-mal* [in Arabic] being a property common to all Muslims, the idea being that an individual Muslim cannot be punished by amputation for an offence of this kind, because, a Muslim, he is entitled when in distress to some share in it.

A creditor may take up to the limit of his claim from a bad debtor without transgression.

In case of theft is proved and the magistrate passes the judgment of cutting off the hand of the thief, it is cut at the joint of the wrist.

This punishment is exacted nowadays in Saudia Arabia and Afghanistan. Only a very few hands were cut for the charge of robbery or theft during the past twenty years. The punishment is so severe that it proved stringent against such transgressions. In Hijaz no case of theft or robbery whatever had been recorded or judged for the last ten years [1957].

Intoxicants, gambling, etc., are forbidden by the Qu'ran and the punishment to be inflicted is whipping, as many stripes as may be ordered by the trying magistrate. The testimony of a gambler or a drunkard is not to be accepted by the court: the Qu'ran's text is rendered thus:

“Intoxicants and games of chance [gambling] and sacrificing to idols and divining by arrows – so runs the interpretation of the

Qu’ran text – are only an abomination, and the devil’s work, shun it therefore that ye may prosper.” [5:90]

“It is the devil who requires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of God and from saying your prayers, therefore abstain from them” [5:91]

The punishment for drinking wine or any intoxicating liquor is whipping, which may consist of as many as eighty stripes. [1]

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[1] It is pertinent to note here that temperance is one of the fundamental principles in the Muslim law. Wine of any kind – is strictly forbidden, no distinction is made in the punishment of a wine drinker and a drunkard; by wine is meant any intoxicating liquor. If a Muslim drink wine and two witnesses testify to his having done so or if his breath smells of wine, or if he shall himself confess to having taken wine, or if he found in state of intoxication he shall be beaten with eighty stripes. On every page of the great volume of the past the student may find traces of the evils arising from the use of intoxicating liquors and the beneficial influence and power resultant upon the practice of total abstinence from intoxicants and have reaped a rich and blessed harvest. We have full experience coming down through the ages that intoxicants are not only harmful but degrading and destructive and that total abstinence is self-protective, beneficial, and elevating. According to the proceedings of the 19<sup>th</sup> International Congress against Alcoholism held in 1928 in Belgium and attended by the writer on behalf of Egypt, the evils of the traffic in drink are of three kinds: a] moral evils including a probable average of two thirds of the criminal offences throughout those countries of the world where intoxicating drinks are generally used, and the less of hundreds of thousands of lives each year; b] economic evils aggregating a wastage of almost incalculable millions in money each year; c] political evils, having a vital bearing on the most important civic problems of the day. Moreover the great congress considered the questionable pleasure and profits conferred upon the few by the traffic are in striking disproportion to the evils it inflicts upon the many. The above argument evidently asserts the wisdom of the Islamic law in totally forbidding the use the sale or barter, the manufacture, the possession of, and the traffic in any intoxicating liquor or drug. While the principle of temperance was greatly extended in Europe only of late during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the principle in the Muslim world took its birth as early as one thousand year before the discovery of America.



## Divisions of Punishment

Punishment is divided into three classes:

1. *Hadd*.            2. *Qisas*.            3. *Ta'zir*.

1. *Hadd* [pl. *hudud*] [*literally* that which is defined] is that punishment, the limits of which have been defined in the Qu'ran and *hadith* [the Traditions of the Prophet]. The following belong to this class:

- a) Adultery, for which the adulterer must be stoned.
- b) Fornication, for which the guilty persons must receive one hundred stripes.
- c) The false accusation of a chaste person or a virtuous man or woman with adultery, for which the offender must receive eighty stripes.
- d) Apostasy which is punishable with death.
- e) Drinking intoxicating liquor, for which the offender must receive eighty lashes.
- f) Theft, which is punished by cutting off the right hand.
- g) Highway robbery: For robbery only, the loss of hands and feet, and for robbery with murder, death, either by sword or crucifixion. This division of punishment has already been dealt with at length in the foregoing chapters.

2. *Qisas* [*literally* retaliation] is that punishment which, although fixed by the law, can be remitted by the person offended against, or in the case of murdered person, by his heirs. It is applicable to cases of murder and wounding.

3 *Ta'zir*, i.e. punishment which is left to the discretion of the judge. The following chapter presents a thorough explanation of the *ta'zir* [punishment].

## DISCRETIONARY CORRECTION OR TA'ZİR

*Ta'zır* [Arabic] from *'azr* [to censure or repel], is that discretionary correction administered for offences, for which *hadd* or fixed punishment has not been appointed. According to the *Sunni* Law, the following are the leading principles of *ta'zır*:

*Ta'zır* in the primitive sense means “prohibition” and also “instruction”; in the law it signifies an infliction undetermined in its degree by the law, on account of the right of God, or of the individual, and the occasion of it is any offence for which *hadd* or stated punishment has not been appointed, whether that offence consists in word or deed.

- 1) Chastisement is ordained by the law, the institution of it being established on the authority of the Qu'ran, which enjoins men to chastise their wives, for the purpose of correction or amendment, and the same also occurs in the traditions [examples of the Prophet]. It is recorded that the Prophet chastised a person, who had called another “perjurer,” and all the Companions agreed concerning this. Moreover both reason and analogy evince that chastisement had to be inflicted for acts of an offensive nature in such a manner that man may not become habituated to the commission of such acts, for, if they were, they might by degrees be led into the perpetration of others more atrocious. Though in chastisement nothing is fixed or determined, the degree of it is left to the discretion of the *Qadi*, [judge], because the design of it is correction, and the disposition of men with respect to it is different, some being sufficiently corrected by reprimands, whilst others, more obstinate, require confinement or even blows.
- 2) There are four degrees of chastisement:
- 3) First the chastisement proper to the most noble of the noble [or, in other words. The most eminent and men of learning], which consists merely in admonition, as if the *Qadi*

were to say to one of them: “I understand that you have done this or that,” so as to make him ashamed.

- 4) Secondly, the chastisement proper to the noble [namely commanders of armies and chiefs of armies and chiefs of districts] which may be performed in two ways, either by admonition [as stated above] or by *jarr* [Arabic], that is by dragging the offender to the door and exposing him to scorn.
- 5) Thirdly, the chastisement proper to the middle order [consisting of merchants and shopkeepers, etc.], which may be performed by *jarr* [as above] and also by imprisonment; and
- 6) Fourthly, the chastisement proper to the lowest order in the community, which may be performed by *jarr* or by imprisonment and also by blows. <sup>[1]</sup>
- 7) It is recorded that the ruler of a country may inflict chastisement by means of property that is by the exaction of a sum of money in the manner of a fine, proportioned to the offence.
- 8) Chastisement, which is incurred purely as the right of God, may be inflicted by any person what ever. Even though there be no magistrate present; the reason of this is that the chastisement in question is of the class of the removal of evil with the hand. The Prophet has authorized every Muslim to remove evil with the hand, if possible, as he has said; “Whoever among you see the evil, let him remedy it with his own hands; but if he be unable so to do, let him forbid it by his tongue.” Chastisement, therefore, is evidently species other than punishment, since authority to inflict the latter does not appertain to any but a magistrate or a judge. This species of chastisement is also different from the

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<sup>[1]</sup> The above degrees are in no way imperative upon the judge who is at liberty to inflict what punishment is destructed according to his own judgment the Muslim law makes no chastisement. [The Author].

chastisement which is incurred on account of the right of the individual [such as in cases of slander and so forth], since that depends upon the complaint of the injured party, whence no person can inflict it but the magistrate, even under a private arbitration where the plaintiff and defendant may have referred the decision of the matter to any third person.

- 9) Chastisement in any instance in which it is authorised by the law, is to be inflicted, where the *imam*, the legal ruler, sees it advisable.
- 10) If a person accuses of whoredom a male or female slave or an infidel, he is to be chastised, because this accusation is offensive, and punishment for slander is not incurred by it, as the condition of *Ihsan* [*i.e.* marriage of a free Muslim or woman in the sense which induces permittance for slander] is not attached to the accused; chastisement, therefore, is to be inflicted. And in the same manner, if any person accuses a Muslim of anything other than whoredom [*i.e.* abuses him by calling him a reprobate, a villain, an infidel, or a thief], chastisement is incurred, because he injures a Muslim and defames him; and punishment cannot be considered as due from analogy, since analogy has no concern with the necessity of punishment; chastisement, therefore, is to be inflicted. In the case of abusing a Muslim, the measure of the chastisement is left to the discretion of the magistrate, be it more or less, and whatever he sees proper, let him inflict it.
- 11) If a person abuses his brother-Muslim by calling him an ass or a hog, in this case chastisement is not incurred, because these expressions are in no respect defamatory of the person towards whom they are used, it being evident that he is neither an ass nor a hog. Some jurists assert that even in such occasions, in our time, chastisement may be inflicted, since in the modern acceptation, calling a man an ass or a hog is held to be abuse. Others, again, allege that it is esteemed as such, only where the person towards whom such expressions are

used happens to be of dignified rank [such as a noble man or a man of letters], in which case chastisement must be inflicted upon the abuser, as by so speaking he exposes that person of rank to contempt; but if he be only a common person, chastisement is not necessarily incurred, but the case is, however, left to the discretion of the *Qadi* and this is the most approved doctrine.

- 12) The greatest number of stripes in chastisement is thirty-nine, and the smallest number is three. This restriction is founded on a saying of the Prophet: “The man who shall inflict scourging to the amount of punishment, in a case where punishment is not established, shall be counted an aggravator” [meaning a wanton aggravator of punishment], from which saying it is to be inferred that the infliction of a number of stripes in chastisement equal to the same number as in punishment is unlawful. This being admitted, the Muslim jurists, in order to determinate the utmost extent of chastisement, consider what is the smallest punishment – and this is the punishment for slander with respect to a slave, which is forty stripes—and establish thirty-nine as the greatest number to be inflicted in chastisement. Abu Yusif, the eminent jurist and authority, on the other hand, considering the smallest punishment with respect to free men [as freedom is the original state of man], which is eighty stripes, he deducts five and establishes seventy-five as the greatest number to be inflicted in chastisement as aforesaid. This is because the same is recorded of *Imam* ‘Ali, the fourth *Khalifa*, whose example Abu Yusuf follows in this instance. The more modern scholars of divinity assert that the smallest degree of chastisement must be left to the judgment of the *Imam* or *Qadi*, who is to inflict whatever he may deem sufficient for chastisement, which is different with respect to different men. It is agreed that the degree thereof is in proportion to the degree of the offence; and it is also established that the chastisement for petty offences should be inflicted to a degree approaching to the punishment

allotted for offences of a similar nature; thus the chastisement for libidinous acts [such as kissing and touching] is to be inflicted to a degree approaching to the punishment for whoredom, and the chastisement for abusive language to a degree approaching to the punishment for slander.

- 13) If the *Qadi* [judge] deems it fit in chastisement to unite imprisonment with scourging, as in cases of most vicious offences [such as committing sodomy], it is lawful for him to do both, since imprisonment is of itself capable of constituting chastisement, and had been so employed, for the Prophet once imprisoned a person by way of chastising him. However, imprisonment is not lawful before the offence be proved, merely upon suspicion: contrary to offences which induce punishment, for there the accused may be lawfully imprisoned upon suspicion. It is also agreed that the *Qadi*, according to his discretion, may unite imprisonment with blows in offences deserving the same.
- 14) The severest blows or stripes may be used in chastisement, because levity is not to be regarded with respect to the nature of them, for otherwise the design would be defeated; and hence levity is not shown in chastisement by inflicting the blows or stripes upon different parts of the body. And next to chastisement, the severest blows or stripes are to be inflicted in punish. Whoredom, moreover, is a deadly sin, in so much that lapidation for it has been ordained by the law. And next to punishment for whoredom, the severest blows or stripes are to be inflicted in punishment for wine-drinking, as the occasion of punishment is there fully certified, and next to punishment for wine-drinking the severity of the blows or stripes is to be attended to in punishment for slander, because there is a doubt in respect to the occasion of the punishment [namely the accusation], as an accusation may be either false or true. And also because severity is here observed in disqualifying the slanderer from appearing as an

evidence; wherefore severity is not also to be observed in the nature of the blows or the stripes.

- 15) If the magistrate inflicts either punishment or chastisement upon a person, and the sufferer should die in consequence of such punishment or chastisement, his blood is *Hadar*, that is to say nothing whatever is due an act which is decreed is not restricted to the condition what he does is done by decree of the law; and an act which is decreed is not restricted to the condition of safety. This is analogous to a case of phlebotomy; that is to say if any person desires to be bled, and consequently dies, the operator is in no respect responsible for his death; and so here also. It is different, however, in the case of the a husband inflicting chastisement upon his wife, for his act is restricted to safety, as it is only allowed to a husband to chastise his wife. In the case of the fine of blood according to *Shafi'i* School of Jurisprudence, this is due from the public treasury [*bait-el-mal*]. Because although [where chastisement or punishment proves destructive] it is homicide by misadventure [as the intention is not the destruction, but the amendment of the sufferer], a fine is due from the public treasury, since the advantage of the act of the magistrate extends to the public at large, wherefore the atonement is due from their property, namely from the public treasury. On the other hand, according to the *Hanafi* School of Theology, whenever the magistrate inflicts a punishment ordained by God upon any person, and that person dies, it is the same as if he had died by the visitation of God, without any visible cause, wherefore there is no responsibility. In any case, the matter is left to the ruler to decide according to his discretion.

## Sinful Acts Classification

Sins are classified into:

1. *Kabira* or great.
2. *Saghira* or small.

This division is based upon the following interpreted text in the Glorious Qu'ran: "To those who avoid the great sins and scandals but commit only the lighter faults, verily the Lord will be diffused of mercy." [42:37]

According to Islam, a human being does not possess evil in his true nature or self but has the weakness of being tempted into evil. Therefore, evil is not a human disposition but an acquired habit. It is a mental disease and may be cured through right preaching and training. Satan, who is evil by nature, was the first to sin, *i.e.* to disobey the command of God. His sin was self-conceit and pride, enumerated among the heaviest sins. The evil tendency is the bidding of an animal soul. Joseph, the Prophet, is quoted in the Glorious Qu'ran to have said to himself:

"I do not declare myself free from [human] weakness; most surely it is the animal soul that commands evil [and hence man does evil] but God is so Merciful to forgive as He is the most Merciful." [12:53]

Therefore, if the carnal [animal] soul is brought under the control of true self, one may become free from evil.

Among the great sins are:

- 1) Associating any being with God.
- 2) Wilful murder.
- 3) Adultery.
- 4) Theft or Robbery.
- 5) Unnatural crime.
- 6) Drunkenness.
- 7) Telling lies.
- 8) Usury.
- 9) Disobedience to one's parents.



- 10) Charging illegally a Muslim woman with fornication.
- 11) False witness.
- 12) Defrauding orphans.
- 13) Despair of God's mercy under hard trials of destiny.
- 14) Cowardice in warfare.
- 15) Neglect of prayers or fasting without any justification.
- 16) Gambling.

Sincere repentance from any sin may bring God's mercy and salvation. If a non-Muslim embraces Islam, his past shortcomings are all forgiven. A Muslim, by committing a great sin, becomes a sinner, but not an infidel. According to "*Sunnis*," the Prophets, all of them, including those of the Old and the New Testaments, do not commit any great sin, but one liable for any slight imperfections in action. For example, in the case of Adam, his action in eating the forbidden fruit was not disobedience but weakness of the understanding, or rather forgetfulness of the divine commandment and not intentional disobedience thereof. Therefore, he is not to be treated as one who was disallowed from seeking pardon at the hands of God. Nor does seeking pardon of God necessarily mean committing any sin. It is only a sign of humility towards the Almighty God. It is admitted that human beings in any stage of human perfection are not perfect and that their imperfection is in itself sufficient reason to seek God's pardon, because an "*imperfect*" cannot act completely to the bidding of the "*Perfect*" [i.e. God]. There is a tradition that the Prophet said: "I ask pardon of God and repent towards Him so many times every day." Thus, "sin" is human imperfection, a weakness in being tempted, though the real self remains pure in its essence.

#### Suicide:-

Suicide is a great sin, because it is considered a willful act to kill oneself. According to the tradition of the Prophet, "Whoever kills

himself will suffer in hell.” In Islam, life is respected and its destruction, though it may be in one’s own care, is forbidden. Accordingly, cases of death by suicide are very rare in Muslim countries. A true Muslim must submit to the decrees of God and accept cheerfully all unavoidable events. According to the teachings of the Glorious Qu’ran, some of these happenings should be taken to be trials ordered by the Almighty God. The following is an English translation of the Qu’ranic text bearing on the subject:

“And He will most certainly try you with some fear, hunger, loss of property, lives and fruits [i.e. result of your strivings], and the Prophet is ordered to give good news to the patient in all such trials; they, who, when a misfortune or a loss of property or lives befalls them, should say nothing but that surely they are the belongings of God and to Him they shall return. Upon those patient the Almighty God will shower His blessings and mercy, whence they prove to be submissive and dutiful to their Lord.” [2:155]

From this point of view, a Muslim, in attempting to commit suicide, is really revolting against the *trials sent down to him by God in the form of misfortunes*.

### Permissible and Prohibited Food

Food is also divided in Islam into permissible and prohibited. Among the forbidden food are the following:

Quadrupeds that seize their prey with their paws and teeth or talons, such as cats, tigers, etc.; and among birds; crows, kites, eagles, etc. Besides these, the flesh of elephants; the flesh of any animal dying a natural death; the blood; the flesh of pigs; and the flesh of those animals over which names other than God’s name have been invoked when slaughtered. The following is an interpretation of the text in the Glorious Qu’ran bearing on the subject: “Forbidden to you is that which dies of it self; and blood and flesh of swine, and that on which any name other than that of God has been invoked [while the animal is being slaughtered] and

the strangled [animal], and that beaten to death and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter in the proper manner”<sup>[1]</sup> [3:3]

An animal to be fit for food must be slaughtered with a sharp knife; in using it care must be taken to avoid suffering to the animal as far as possible. *Before* killing, the name of God must be recited before using the knife [the formula *Allāhu akbar* –God is Greater– is usually said], signifying that it was God who allowed animals to be slaughtered for the nourishment of human beings.

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<sup>[1]</sup> The exception may apply to five classes related. The meaning is that if an animal partly eaten by wild beasts is found still alive and is slaughtered in the proper manner, its flesh is allowed..

## Muslim Jurisprudence

### Qu'ran and Jurisprudence

Islamic theology begins with the Prophet's acceptance to settle down at Al-Medina, which synchronized with an increase in the numbers of Muslims there and elsewhere. The Prophet was the spiritual as well as the temporal head of the community. His orders, revealed from God, were obeyed. Within the short space of ten years from that time, almost all the passages, with which future theology has been concerned, had been revealed. As the early Muslim led simple lives and their needs were few, the Islamic Laws were extremely simple. In certain cases the prohibition was introduced gradually. Beginning with a recommendation, it ended in an injunction, as in the case of the use of intoxicants and gambling. The following passages indicate the manner in which the recommendation eventually merges into prohibition.

**First Stage:** - Recommendation "They ask you [the prophet] concerning wine and games of chance. Say! in both are great evil and certain advantages to men, but their evil is greater than their advantages" [2:219].

**Second Stage:** - A first step towards prohibition: "O you believers! do not pray when you are intoxicated, so that you may know well what you say" [4:43].

**Third Stage:** - Total prohibition: "O Believers, intoxicants and games of chance and [sacrificing to] idols and divining arrows are abomination and the work of the devil; therefore, Shun them [5:90].

As the Qu'ranic passages relating to rituals, ceremonies and laws were brief, they needed further explanation, which was given by the Prophet. In this manner, the Prophet himself was the first commentator of the Qu'ran. His explanations may be divided into two parts:-

1. Reflection on passages occurring in the Qu'ran.

2. Answer to questions, or relation to some particular occasion.

The rise of the Muslim Arabs after the death of the Prophet was rapid. Within a period less than sixty years, they became masters of North Africa, including Spain. Syria and the whole of Iran; in fact, all central Asia as far as China in the East. A large number of non-Arabs also embraced Islam. They were quite ignorant of the Arabic language and hence were unable to understand the Qu'ran, and even when they learnt it, many words, sentences and passages in it were not clear to them. The inhabitants of Makkah and Al-Medina, particularly those who had served under the Prophet and had occasion to learn the Islamic doctrine directly from the prophet, came to be held as authorities on the subject of the religion. The regular development of theology might thus be said to begin with the subjugation of the countries mentioned above, its development was gradual. The period of that development may be divided as indicated below: -

- 1) The life of the Prophet after the prophetic announcement, which lasted from A.D. 608 to A.D. 632, i.e. about 25 years.
- 2) The reign of the first four Khalifas, from A.D. 632 to A.D. 661, i.e. about 30 years.
- 3) Umayyed Khalifas, from A.D. 661 to A.D. 750.
- 4) Abbaside Khalifas, from A.D. 750 to A.D. 1258.
- 5) Non-Arab period, from A.D. 1258 to the present time.

The first period is conterminous with the revelation of the Qu'ran itself and the instructions given by the Prophet in person. The second period is rendered noteworthy by the following: -

- 1) The earliest collection of the traditions or sayings of the Prophet.
- 2) The building-up of the system of Muslim Jurisprudence under the guidance of the first four Khalifas.
- 3) The arrangement of the Qu'ran into chapters as we have it now. Of these achievements, the last is perhaps most important.

## Qu'ran – First Source of Jurisprudence

The word “Qu’ran” is derived from the Arabic *kara'a*. i.e to read to recite. It is designated “*al-Furqan*” [the distinguisher], *Kalamullah* [the word of God], the *Kitab* [the book], Nur [the light] and *al-Huda* [the guidance]. It has a large number of other names, some mentioned in the Qu’ran itself and others were given by Muslims. The Qu’ran is held in the greatest respect by all sects of Islam. It is never touched without ablution performed beforehand. it is considered the eternal miracle of Islam, as the expounder of the most sublime truth; as superior to what was laid down by all past religions as the best guide for seeking God and for obtaining emancipation; the perfection of all moral codes; as the word of God, uncreated in its origin and existing before being conveyed to the Prophet; as noble and complete in itself. It has been revealed in parts at different times during a period of twenty-three years, as necessity demanded it. Some chapters were revealed in complete form; others in portions. It was divided into thirty parts, containing 114 chapters, known in Arabic as *Suras*, were very long and others very brief. The chapters were arranged under the personal direction of the Prophet, who used to ask the scribe present to insert revealed passage in a particular chapter and before or after a particular verse of the chapter. It was neither arranged in chronological order nor at random, but as commanded by the Prophet himself. The Order of Abu Bakr, a copy of the Sacred Book having been left in the custody of Hafsa, the widow of the Prophet and daughter of Omar, the second Khalifa. The third Khalifa, Osman, ordered the revision and comparison of the various fragments in the possession of different people with the original copy, and the arrangement of the whole -Sacred Book into its chapters under the supervision of the following experts: -

- 1) Zaid ibn Thabit, who also was the first compiler.
- 2) 'Abdullah ibn Zubair
- 3) Sa'id ibn Al-As.
- 4) 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Haris.

With the exception of the first, the other three belonged to the Quraishite tribe. The work was complete. The work of compilation was first undertaken by after careful scrutiny and comparison with other fragments and presented to the Khalifa who caused a number of copies of it to be made and sent to the different centres of Islam, and these became texts for all subsequent copies of the Glorious Qu'ran. The fragments in possession of different people were recovered and burnt. As a number of companions such as 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud; Salim: 'Ali [the fourth Khalifa]; Mu'az ibn Jabal; Ubayy ibn Ka'b; 'Abdullah ibn Omar, had committed the whole Qu'ran to memory and a large number had each got by heart a big portion of it, hardly any difficulty was experienced in the matter of securing a correct text or in arranging it as required. The Prophet used to encourage his companions to write and learn the text of the *Suras* by heart. The attachment of the Muslims to the Sacred Book is so great that it has retained its purity, without the least change, for the last one thousand, four hundred and thirty years. Its contents were revealed in the Makkahn dialect of the Koraish, and the object of 'Osman was to make people read it in this self-same dialect.

A Muslim believes in the Qu'ran as the word of God uttered in a manner which is unsurpassable in the beauty of its language and in the declaration of the truth of the doctrines inculcated by it. Non-Muslim writers and critics in Europe are unanimous in admitting its high literary merit. George Sale, whose translation of the Qu'ran is well known, writes: - "So strongly captivating to the minds of his audience that several of his opponents thought it to be the effect of witchcraft and enchantment."

Omar the second Khalifa, before embracing Islam, was an opponent of the Prophet; and once he left his place with the intention of killing him. On his way he met his own sister, who had embraced Islam, and found her reading some passages from the Qu'ran. He took these passages and read them, and was so much affected by them that he immediately became a Muslim.

In describing the great world Flood [Deluge], the passages in the

Qu'ran describing it became extremely figurative and sublime. According to Arab writers on rhetoric, the following few lines taken from these passages contain twenty-three figures or speech in them. These lines cannot, for obvious reasons, retain their original beauty in the translation offered here: -

“And the ark moved in with them amid waves like mountains. And Noah called out to his son [when] he was apart. 'O my child! Embark with us, and be not with unbelievers'. He said “I will betake myself to a mountain, that shall save me this day from God's decree, save him on whom he shall have mercy, and a wave passed between them and he [the son] was drowned and it was said [by God]; 'O Earth! Swallow down the water and O Heaven! Withhold thy rain; and the water abated and God's decree was fulfilled and the ark rested on al-Judi [a mountain]” [11:42-43].

Such is the style of the Qu'ran, most beautiful fluent, concise, persuasive, possessing great force of expression; in some instance composed for hearing rather than for reading; magnificent when describing the majesty and sublimity of God, encouraging to warriors, seekers of the truth and undetermined hearts. It is composed neither in poetry nor in simple prose. The sentences generally end in rhyme; words being well selected and beautifully placed. Each chapter has its own rhymed words, coming at the end of each sentence. Apart from the beauty of its composition, it contains original ideas especially in connection with the unity of existence or the Oneness of God.

### Divisions of the Qu'ran

The Chapters of the Qu'ran are divided into Makkahn and Medinite. The Makkahn chapter are usually in brief sentences, full of enthusiasm, poetical, lofty and brilliant; denouncing idol worship, promising paradise and threatening with the fire punishment of hell; describing the unity and majesty of God, the day of judgment with allusions to some of the earlier prophets and the events of their time; rich in eloquence, with appreciation of objects in nature; and with most of them beginning with one



or a number of oaths, very attractive to Arabs as in the following:

By the sun and his noonday brightness;  
By the moon when she followeth him;  
By the day when it revealeth him  
By the night when it enshroudeth him;  
By the heaven and Him who built it;  
By the earth and Him who spread it;

“By a soul and Him who perfected it, and inspired in it [with] what is wrong and what is right for it” [91-1-8].<sup>[1]</sup>

The Medinite Chapters narrate the same subjects but generally in greater details, the verses being more prosaic and the chapters much longer. They are chiefly noted for the addition of:-

- 1) civil and criminal laws;
- 2) directions and rituals, such as prayer fasting, giving alms, making the pilgrimage, etc.;
- 3) social reform;
- 4) moral regulations;
- 5) brief description of some of the important battles fought with the Koraishites and the Jews;
- 6) criticism and condemnation of hypocrites who professed Islam but worked against it;
- 7) exhortation to defend the cause of Islam; and

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<sup>[1]</sup> By the inspiration by God into the soul [with] what is right and what is wrong is meant that the Almighty God has gifted man with the faculty of distinguishing and the power of choosing between right and wrong; in other words. He pointed to man the two conspicuous ways. Commentators explain the *verse to* mean that God has perfected *man* by making him understand and know both ways - the wrong and the right. It is to be noted here that both Rodwell and Palmer are wrong in translating the verse as meaning: “and breathed Into it [the soul] its wickedness and is piety” [Palmer], for the statement in this form is not only contradicted by the whole of the Quran, but is also self-contradictory and meaningless, because the words would thus imply that when a man left evil and did good, it was God who breathed in him to do so, and when a man left good and did evil it was again God who taught him to do so, which is manifestly absurd.

- 8) a brief description of past Prophets, and events illustrating the fundamental principles of Islam.

## The Traditions Second Source of Jurisprudence

The traditions of the Prophet better known as *Sunnab* or *Hadith* is the second and undoubtedly secondary source from which the teachings of Islam are drawn. *Sunnab*, literally means a way or rule or manner or example of acting, or mode of life; and *hadith*, a saying conveyed to man either through hearing or through revelation, <sup>[1]</sup>. In *Sunnab* indicates the doings and *hadith* the sayings of the Prophet, but, in effect, both cover the same ground and are applicable to his actions, practices, and sayings, *hadith* being the narration record of the *Sunnab* but containing in addition, various prophetic and historical elements

There are three kinds of *Sunnab*:

- 1) it may be a saying of the Prophet which has a hearing on a religious object;
- 2) it may be an action or practice of his, or
- 3) it may be his silent approval of the action or practice of some person.

We shall now consider to what extent can teachings of Islam, its principles and its laws, be drawn from this source. The Qu'ran generally deals with the broad principles or essentials of religion going into details in care cases. The details were generally supplied by the Prophet himself, either by showing in his practice how an injunction shall be carried out, *or* by giving explanation in words.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Hence the Glorious Quran is also spoken of as "hadith" [18; 5; 39; 23]. The word "Sunnah" is used in the Glorious Quran as a general sense, meaning a way or rule. Thus 'sunnat al-Awwalin' [18; 38; 15; 13; 18; 55; 55; 43] means the way or example' of the former generations and is frequently used in the Glorious Quran as signifying God's way of dealing with people, which is also spoken of as 'sunnat-Allah' or God's way of dealing with people.

The *Sunnah* or *hadîth* of the Prophet was a *thing whereof* the need had been felt after his death and which was much needed *in* his lifetime. The two most important institutions of Islam for instance, are prayer and *zakat* [alms-giving]; yet when injunctions relating to prayer and *zakat* were delivered and they were repeatedly met with both in Makkah and Al-Medina revelations, no details were supplied “Keep up prayer” is the Qu’ranic injunction, and it was the Prophet himself *who* by his own action gave the details of the prayer. “Pay the alms is *again* an injunction frequently repeated in the Glorious Qu’ran, yet it was the Prophet who gave the rules and regulations for its payment and collection. These are but two examples; but since Islam covered the whole sphere of human activities; hundreds of points had to be explained by the Prophet by his example in action and word, while on the moral side, his was the pattern which every Muslim was required to follow. “Verily in the messenger of God you have a good example to follow’ [33:21]. The man, therefore, who embraced Islam stood in need of both the Glorious Qu’ran and the *Sunnah*.

#### Transmission of Hadîth in the Prophet's Lifetime

The transmission of the practices and sayings of the Prophet from one person to *another* became necessary during the Prophet's lifetime. In fact, the Prophet himself used to give instructions with regard to the transmission of what he taught. Thus, when a deputation of a certain tribe came to wait upon him in the early days of Al-Medina, the Prophet concluded his instructions to them with the words “Remember this and report it to those whom you have left behind” <sup>[1]</sup>

Similar were his instruction in other cases “Go back to your people and teach them these things.” <sup>[1]</sup>

There is another report according to which, on the occasion of a pilgrimage, the Prophet, after enjoining on the Muslims the duty

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<sup>[1]</sup> Al-Bukhari reports on “hadith”

of holding sacred each other's life, property, and honour, added: "He who is present here should carry this message to him who is absent".<sup>[1]</sup> Again there is adequate historical evidence that whenever a people embraced Islam, the Prophet used to send to them one or more of his missionaries, who not only taught them the Qu'ran but also explained to them how the injunctions of the Glorious Qu'ran were to be carried out in practice. It is also in record that people came to the Prophet and demanded teachers who could teach them the Qu'ran and the *Sunnah*, saying. "Send us men to teach us the Qu'ran and *Sunnah*." The companions of the Prophet knew full well that the injunctions and practices *were* to be followed, should no express direction be met with in the Qu'ran. It is related that when Mu'az ibn Jabal on being appointed governor of Yemen by the Prophet, was asked how he would judge cases, his reply was, "By the Book of God' again he was asked "What he would do if *he* did not find a direction in the Book of God" he replied, "By the *Sunnah* of the Prophet of God. The *Sunnah* was, therefore, recognised in the lifetime of the Prophet as affording guidance in religious matters. The popular idea in the West that the need for *Sunnah* was felt, and the force of law given to *hadith* after the death of the Prophet, is opposed *by the facts*.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Why Hadith Was Not Generally Written

It is, however, a fact that the sayings of the Prophet were not generally written, and memory was the chief means of their preservation.

The Prophet sometimes objected to the writing down of *hadith*.

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<sup>[1]</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>[2]</sup> Muir writes in his introduction to "The life of Mohamed":- "Scarcely was the Prophet buried when his followers resolved to adopt the custom [*Sunnah*] of Mohamet, that is his sayings and practices as supplementary of the Quran [page XXIX] And even a recent writer, Guillaume, writes in the "Tradition of Islam":- "While, the Prophet was alive he was the sole guide in all matters whether spiritual or secular. *Hadith* or tradition in the technical sense *may* be said to have begun at his death" [p. 13]

But this disapproval clearly shows nothing else but fear lest *hadith* be mixed up with the Glorious Qu'ran. There was nothing essentially wrong in writing down *hadith*, nor did the Prophet ever forbid its being done. Nor was memory an unreliable means for the preservation of *hadith*, for the Glorious Qu'ran itself was safely preserved in the memory of the disciples of the Prophet in addition to committing it to writing. In fact, had the Qu'ran been simply preserved in writing, it could not have been handed down intact to future generations. The aid of memory was invoked to make the purity of the text of the Qu'ran doubly sure.

The Arab had a wonderfully retentive memory and he had to store knowledge of countless things in his memory. Indeed, before Islam, writing was but rarely resorted to, and memory was chiefly relied upon in all important matters. Hundreds and even thousands of verses could be recited from memory by one man, and the reciters would also remember the names of the poets through whom these verses had been transmitted to them. It is recorded of a later renowned transmitter, Asma'i by name, that he learned twelve thousand verses by heart before he reached majority. Another transmitter was reported to have recited verses from a hundred poets in a single sitting. Sha'bi, a famous transmitter, proved that he could continue reciting verses which he knew by heart for a month; and these verses were the basis of the Arabic vocabulary and even of Arabic grammar.<sup>[1]</sup>

### The Qu'ran Is the Greatest Test for Judging Hadith

In addition to the above rules of criticism, which left little to be desired, there is another very important test whereby trustworthiness of *Hadith* may be judged, and it is a test that the application whereof was commanded by the Prophet himself.

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<sup>[1]</sup> It was in this safe custody [memory] that the beautiful poetry of the pre-Islamic days had been kept alive and intact.

As already stated, *hadīth* is but an explanation of the Qu’ran; and hence also the Qu’ran must have precedence over the *hadīth*. It is unquestionable that the Qu’ran had been handed down intact every word and every letter of it, while *hadīth* could not claim that purity, and it was chiefly the substance of sayings that was reported. Again the Qu’ran deals with the principles of the Islamic Law while *hadīth* deals with the details, so that only such details should be accepted as are in accordance with the principles.

The Sunni Muslim community are agreed on the principle that a *hadīth* may be unacceptable either on account of there being some defect in its transmitters or because its subject-matter is unacceptable. Thus, all trustworthy collectors of traditions of the Prophet are at one that among the most important reasons for which a *hadīth* may be rejected is its subject-matter. For instance, if a reported tradition contradicts the Glorious Qu’ran or the recognized *Sunnah* or the unanimous verdict of the Muslim community, it is not accepted.

The following saying of the Prophet will explain the position, which he intended to assign to the oral law of *hadīth* or *Sunnah*:

“I do not make a legal thing illegal, nor do I make an illegal thing legal, but by Allāh.” [*Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 53, 342*]

“Verily the best word is the word of God, and the best guidance of life is that delivered by His Prophet Mohammad.” [*Dictionary of Islam p. 369*], “I have left you two things and you will not stray as long as you hold them fast. The one is the Book of God and the other the Law (*Sunnah*) of his Prophet.” [*Mishkat 1:120, Volume 1, p 173*]

### The “Six Correct” Hadīth Books

There is some difference of opinion as to who first attempted to collect the traditions, and to compile them in a book. Some scholars say “Abdul-Malik ibn Jurajj of Makkah, who died in 150 A.H., whilst others assert that the collection, which is still extant

by the *Imâm* Mâlik ibn Anas, who died in 179 A.H., was the first collection. The work of the latter is still held in very great esteem, although it is not generally included among the standard *Six Sibaah* books, *i.e.* the “six correct” books received unanimously by *Sunni* Muslims. In a previous passage of this work the names of these six books were given; once more they are the collection of:

- 1) *Al-Imâm* Muhammad ibn Ismâ'il Al-Bukhâri, 256 A.H.
- 2) *Al-Imâm* Muslim ibn Al-Hâjjâj, 261 A.H.
- 3) *Al-Imâm* Abû-Dâwûd Solimân, 275 A.H.
- 4) *Al-Imâm* Muhammad ibn Isa Al-Tirmizi, 279 A.H.
- 5) *Al-Imâm* Ibn Mâja, abû-'Abdullâh Muhammad, 283 A.H.
- 6) *Al-Imâm* An-Nasâ'i, Abû-'Abdul-Rahmân, 303 A.H.

Besides these, the collections of *Imâm Al-Shâfi* [204 A.H.], Ibn Idris, *Imâm* Ahmed ibn Hanbal [241 A.H.], *Imâm* Mâlik ibn Anas [179 A.H.], are also considered authentic by *Sunni* Muslims. <sup>[1]</sup>

### The Four Great Imâmns

In the second century of Hijra arose the great four doctors of jurisprudence who codified the Islamic Law according to the needs of their time.

#### Imâm Abû-Hanûfa

The first of these scholars was Imâm Abû-Hanûfa Al-Nu'mân ibn Thâbit, born at Basra [80 A.H.] [A.D. 699] – died A.D. 767 – His centre of activity was at Kufa. The basis of his analogical reasoning, known by *qiyâs* [analogy] was the Glorious Qu'ran, and he accepted *hâdîth* only when he was fully satisfied as to its authenticity. The great collector of *hâdîth* had not yet commenced their work of collection, and Kûfa itself was not a great centre of the branch of learning. It was Imâm Abû-Hanûfa who first directed attention to the great value of *qiyâs* or analogical reasoning in legislation which was held by Muslims to be fourth

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<sup>[1]</sup> Vide “An Essay on Muhammadan Tradition”, by the honourable Syed Ahmad Khan of Bahasour. Cf. “Nukhbatul-Fakr”, by Sheikh Shahab-ed-Din Ahmad.

foundation of the Islamic jurisprudence after the source of *ijmâ'*. The principle of *qiyâs* will be dealt with later. Imâm Abâ Hanîfa had two renowned disciples, Imâm Muhammad Ibn Al-Hassan and Imâm Abû-Yûsuf, and it is mostly their view of the great master's teaching that now forms the basis of the Hanafi School system.

### Imâm Mâlik

Next comes Imâm Mâlik ibn Anas, the second great scholar. He was born at Medîna in the year 93 A.H. [A.D. 713], and worked and died there at the age of 82. He limited himself almost entirely to the *hadîth* which he found and collected at Al-Medina, relating more especially to the practice which prevailed there, and his system of jurisprudence is based entirely on the traditions and practices of the people of Al-Medina. His book, known as *Muwatta*, is the first collection of *hadîth* and one of the most authoritative books of tradition and *Sunnah*.

### Imâm Shâfi'i

The third of great scholar was Imâm Muhammad ibn Idris Alshâfi, he was born in Palestine in the year 150 A.H. [A.D. 767]. He passed his youth at Makkah but he worked for the most part in Egypt, where he died in 204 A.H. In his day, he was unrivalled for his knowledge of the Glorious Qu'ran, and took immense pains in studying the *Sunnah*, travelling from one place to another in search of information. His school was based chiefly on *Sunnah*. Over the Mâliki system, which is also based on *Sunnah*, the Shâfi'i system has the advantage that the *hadîth* made use of by Imâm Shâfi'i was more extensive, and was collected from different centres, while Imâm Mâlik contented himself only with what he found at Al-Medina.

### Imâm Ahmad Ibn Hanbal

Last of the four great Imâms was Imâm Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who was born at Baghdâd in the year 164 A.H. and died there in 241 A.H. he too made a very extensive study of *hadîth*. His famous



work on the subject is known as *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, containing thousands of *hadīths*. This monumental compilation is based on the material collected by the *Imām* himself. His collection of *hadīths* is not arranged according to subject matter but under the name of the companion to whom a *hadīth* is ultimately traced.

While the system of Abû-Hanîfa applied reasoning very freely and sought to deduce all questions from the Glorious Qu’ran by the help of reason, the system of Ibn Hanbal is distinguished by the fact that it makes reserved use of reason and judgment.

## Jihad

### Qur’anic Verses on Jihad

It is a sacred religious duty incumbent on the Muslim nation at large to set forth defensive war against unbelievers to repel their persecution upon the believers or aggression upon Muslim territories.

This divine duty of religious war is laid down in several verses of the Glorious Qu’ran as well as in the Tradition of the Prophet. The following are translated quotations from the Qu’ran bearing on the subject of religious wars. In Sura 4, verses 75-76, we have the following injunctions:

“Muslims are to fight in defence of the cause of their Lord and to redeem their weak Muslim brethren and sisters and children who are oppressed, who cry for help from God to save them from such oppression and to send them some champion to redeem them. Muslims are to fight to defend the cause of God, while the unbelievers do fight to defend the cause of the devil: surely the struggle of the devil is so weak.”

These verses explain what is meant by fighting for God. While most of the believers who had the means had escaped from Makkah, there remained those who were weak and unable to emigrate. These were still persecuted and oppressed by the Makkahn idolaters. The verses imply a prophecy that those who

are fighting for the devil shall be ultimately vanquished.

In Chapter 2, verse 214, the Muslims who emigrated to Al-Medina are addressed by the Qu'ran as follows:

“Do you think that you would enter Paradise, while yet the critical state of those who have passed away before you had not come upon you: Distress and affliction had befallen them and they were shaken violently, so that the Apostle of God and those who believed with him said: “When would the help of God come to us? . Now surely the help of God is well nigh.”

This verse clearly inculcates faith and perseverance under the hardest trials and is an indication of the Prophet's own unequalled endurance and faith. It refers not only to the great trials and hardships which were yet in store for them, and which they could clearly see in the masses of all forces that could be used to annihilate them. In Chapter 2, verse 216, we have the following injunctions:

“Fighting is enjoined on you [Muslims], though fighting is an object of dislike to you; and it may be that you may dislike something while it is good for you; and it may be that you may like something while it is evil for you. Now let it be known that God knows best what is good and what is evil while people know not.”

This verse shows that Muslims did not fight for the booty. They were too weak to carry out the struggle against the might forces of the idolaters that were bent upon their destruction, and also they disliked war. Foreign critics of the history of the advent of Islam are quite mistaken to pretend that the Prophet had now [at Al-Medina] to resort to the sword to accomplish what is preaching at Makkah had failed to do <sup>[1]</sup>.

It is to be borne in mind that not a single instance is recorded in the whole of the Prophet's history showing the conversion of an unbeliever under the pressure of the sword, not a single instance

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<sup>[1]</sup> Vide Wherry's Commentary.

is recorded of an expedition being undertaken to convert a people. If ever in the world's history a people were compelled to fight in defence of a grand cause, no nobler instance of it could be given than that of the Prophet Muhammad with his few faithful followers braving the whole of Arabia in the midst of enemies, who had taken the sword to annihilate them for no other reason than that they were holders of the cause of the Unity of God. The injunction upon Muslims to fight is but an injunction to fight to end persecution and to establish religious freedom and to save the houses of worship of every true religion from being ruined. This noble object is made quite clear by verse 40 of Chapter 22, of which the following is a rendering:

“Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: ‘Our Lord is God’. Certainly there would have been destroyed cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques where God’s name is much remembered should God had not enjoined upon the believers defensive war against the persecution of aggressive people and surely will God grant victory to those who defend His cause. Most surely God is Mighty and Powerful.”

This verse ought to remind those foreign malignant critics who charge Islam of being a religion of fanaticism that the religious freedom which was established by Islam in a country like idolatrous Arabia over fourteen hundred years ago has not yet been surpassed by the most civilized and tolerant of nations. It is noticeable that the lives of believers are to be sacrificed not only to stop their own persecution by their opponents and to save their own mosques, but to protect churches, synagogues and cloisters as well; in fact, to establish religious freedom against any persecution or oppression by infidels and idolaters. No other religious teacher had taught that noble principle. Muslims closely followed these directions, and every commander of any army had express orders to respect all houses where God was worshipped and even the cloisters of monks, along with their inmates.

In Chapter 9, verse 29, we read the following interpreted

injunction: "Fight those who believe not in God, nor in the day of judgment, nor do they prohibit what God and His Apostle have prohibited nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, among those who were given the Scriptures [Jews and Christians] until they pay the *jizya* with willing submission and feel themselves subdued."

"*jizya*" in Arabic stands for a poll-tax levied from those who were vanquished by the Muslim defensive forces and yet did not accept to embrace Islam, but were willing to live under the protection of the Muslims, and were thus tacitly willing to submit to the rulings of the Muslim state, saving only their personal liberty of conscience as regarded themselves. There was no account fixed for the *jizya*, and in any case it was merely a symbol, an acknowledgement that those whose religion was tolerated would in their turn not interfere with the preaching and progress of Islam.

*Imam Shafi* suggests one dinar a year for the poll-tax, about half a sovereign. The tax, however, varied in amount and there were exemptions for the poor, for females and children and for slaves, if any, and for monks and hermits. The *jizya*, being a tax on able-bodied males of military age, it was in a sense a commutation for military service. It was partly symbolic and partly a commutation for military service, but as the amount was insignificant and the exemptions numerous, in symbolic character predominated.

As to the directions given to the Muslims to fight the followers of the scriptures, the subject requires some explanation.

The last word on the wars with idolaters of Arabia having been said, the verse under consideration introduces the subject of fighting with the followers of the Book. Though the Jews had for a long time assisted the idolaters in their struggle to uproot Islam, the great Christian power of the Roman Empire had only just mobilized its forces for the subjection of the new religion, and the *Tabouk* [a place in the northern Arabia near Jordon now] expedition followed, which constitutes the subject-matter of a large portion of what follows in this Sura 9 of the Qu'ran. The

object of this Christian mobilization was simply the subjection of the Muslims.

The Qu'ran neither required the idolaters to be forced to accept Islam, nor did it require the Muslims to compel the Christians to embrace the new religion. They, on the other hand, had determined to compel the Muslims to give up Islam and to bring them under subjection. Therefore, the orders given to the Muslims to fight the people of the Scriptures, as mentioned in the above verse, was merely given with a view to save the religion from the threatening oppression of the Christian forces and to repel the latter. The followers of the Scripture are described in the verse as not believing in God and the day of resurrection as long as they do not follow the religion of Truth, because they do not attribute to God the perfect attribute of His Unity by ascribing to Him a son, and do not understand the real nature of life after death when every soul will be punished for any evil deed committed in this world. It may also be added that the permission or order to fight, as given to the Muslims, is subject always to the condition that the enemy should first take up the sword, "Fight for the cause of God with those who fight with you" [2:190].

The Prophet never overstepped this limit. He fought against the Arabs when they took up the sword to destroy the Muslims, and he led an expedition against the Christian when the Roman Empire had first mobilized its forces with the object of subjugating the Muslims. And so scrupulous was he that when he found that the enemy had not yet taken the initiative but desisted, he did not attack the Roman forces, but returned with his expedition without fighting. The following verse throws further light on the conviction that the Islamic Institution of religious wars is exclusively defensive, with the object of repelling any aggression, persecution and encroachment carried by the parties of unbelievers. Thus verse 39, 40 – Chapter 8, instructs the Muslims as follows:

"And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is all for Allâh. But if they cease, then lo! Allâh is Seer of what they do.

And if they turn away, then know that Allâh is your Befriender - a Transcendent Patron, a Transcendent Helper!"

Now we have to quote a few traditions of the Prophet on the subject of *Jihad* on which a whole chapter is dedicated in the authentic books of Hadîth, especially those collections of the Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The Prophet is recorded to have said: "The example of a Mujahid in Allâh's cause – and Allâh knows better who really strives in His Cause – is like a person who fasts and prays continuously and prays continuously. Allâh guarantees that He will admit the Muhahid in His Cause into Paradise if he is killed, otherwise He will return him to his home safely with rewards and booty." [*Al-Bukhari Book 52, Hadîth 24. English Translated version 1204, book 4, Hadîth 44, O.B.*]

"By Him in Whose Hands my life is! Were it not for some men amongst the believers who dislike to be left behind me and whom I cannot provide with means of conveyance, I would certainly never remain behind any Sariya' (army-unit) setting out in Allâh's Cause. By Him in Whose Hands my life is! I would love to be martyred in Allah's Cause and then get resurrected and then get martyred, and then get resurrected again and then get martyred and then get resurrected again and then get martyred." [*Al-Bukhari Volume 4, Book 52, Hadîth 54. Ibid Book 20 Hadîth 4626*].

"The Messenger said: 'Anybody who equips a warrior going to Fight in the Way of Allâh is like one who actually fights.'" [*Sahih Muslim, Book 20, hadîth 4668*]

"This religion [of Islam] will ever be established, even to the day of resurrection, as long as Muslims do fight in defence of it." [*Sahih Muslim*].

"He who dies and has not even said in his heart: "Would to God I were a champion that could die while defending the cause of God," is even as a hypocrite" [i.e. not an earnest believer]. [ibid: 3099]. "The Prophet said, 'A single endeavor of fighting in Allâh's Cause is better than the world and whatever is in it.'" [*Al-Bukhari,*

4:52, 50]. “Anyone whose feet get covered with dust in Allâh's Cause will not be touched by the Hell fire.” [*Al-Bukhari*, 4:52, 66]

“Religious war is permanently established until the day of judgment [meaning the ordinance respecting Jihad]”<sup>[1]</sup>

### Observance of Jihād

The sacred injunction concerning religious war “*jihad*” is sufficiently observed when it is carried on by any one party or tribe of Muslims, and it is then no longer of any force with respect to the rest. The observance in the degree above mentioned suffices, because war is not a positive injunction, as it is in its nature murderous and destructive, and is enjoined only for the purpose of repelling aggression or persecution started by non-believers against the due advancement of Islam or for crushing its message; and when this end of defending the cause is answered by any single tribe or party of Muslims making war, the obligation is no longer binding upon the rest, in the same manner as the prayers for the dead, when answered by some Muslims, they are no longer binding on the rest. If, however, no Muslims were to make war in defence of actual oppression against the cause of God, the whole of the Muslim community would incur the criminality of neglecting it.

### Misconception of the Duty of Jihād

A very great misconception prevails in the West with regard to the Islamic injunction of *jihad*. In a statement by Dr. A.B. Macdonald in the “*Encyclopaedia of Islam*” on the article of *jihad*, we find that the writer goes even as far as to begin his article thus:

“The spread of Islam by arms is a religious duty upon Muslims in general”; as if *Jihad* meant not only war but was undertaken for the propagation of Islam.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Vide “Authentic Collections of Traditions”, by Imams Al-Al-Bukhari, Muslim, etc., in Chapter on “Jihad”.

Another eminent Christian writer makes a similar statement. “*Jihad*” - he writes - “means the fighting against unbelievers with the object of either winning them over to Islam, or subduing and exterminating them in case they refuse to become Muslims; and the causing of Islam to spread and triumph over all religions is considered a sacred duty of the Muslim nation <sup>[1]</sup>”

It is really a great pity that such learned scholars had not taken the trouble to consult an ordinary dictionary of the Arabic language, so that they could have avoided such glaring misrepresentation. “*Jihad*” in Arabic means the exerting of one’s utmost power in repelling an enemy. It is of three kinds, *viz.* *the carrying on of struggle*:

- 1) against a visible enemy
- 2) against the temptation of the devil
- 3) against one’s own passions.

In language “*Jihad*” is far from being synonymous with war, while the meaning of war undertaken for the propagation of Islam which is supposed by Western writers to be the significance of *Jihad*, is unknown equally to the Arabic language and to the teachings of the Glorious Qu’ran. There is prevalent conception that “At Makkah the Glorious Qu’ran enjoined patience, but when at Medina [when the Muslims became somewhat in power] *Jihad* were two contradictory attitudes. The error of this view is clearly shown by verse 110 of Chapter 16 which was revealed at Makkah; it enjoins patience and *Jihad* in the same breath: “God the all-Merciful and Forgiving shall bless those who emigrate [from Makkah] after they are persecuted, then struggle hard [adopt *Jihad*] and are patient” It should be noted that the *Jihad* spoken of here is certainly not in connection with the fighting, for the verse was revealed at Makkah, when the believers began to emigrate to Al-Medina, so that they may not again be afflicted by the Makkahn idolaters.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Dr. Klein’s article on “*Jihad*” in the “Review of the Religion of Islam”



## Islam was not spread by Force

The propagation of Islam is no doubt a religious duty incumbent upon every true Muslim who must follow the example of the Prophet, but the spread of Islam by force is a thing of which no trace can be found either in the Glorious Qu'ran or in the traditions of the Prophet. Islam is against aggression, sanction is given for war only in self-defence: "Fight in defence of the cause of God against those who attack you begin ye no hostilities. Verily God loveth not the aggressors. And if they [the enemies of Islam] incline towards peace incline thou [the Prophet] also to peace, and have trust in God" [8:61]. There is not the least ground for the oft-repeated allegation that Islam is intolerant and was propagated by the sword. The Qu'ran states clearly: "There is no compulsion in religion," and the reason is added: "the right course is clearly distinct from the wrong one [2:256]. It was only when the Muslims' liberty and particularly their freedom of worship was threatened and actually attacked that Islam seized the sword in self-defence as it will ever do. But Islam never interfered with the dogmas of any moral faith. It never invented the rack or the stake for stifling difference of opinion, or strangling human conscience, or exterminating heresy.

### Payment of Tribute Called "Jizya"

Foreign writers on Islam have generally assumed that while the Qu'ran offered one of the alternatives, Islam or death, to other non-Muslims, the Jews and Christians were given a somewhat better position since they could save their lives by the payment of a tax known as *jizya*. This conception of *jizya*, as a kind of religious tax of which the payment entitled certain non-Muslims to security of life under the Muslim rule, is as entirely opposed to the fundamental teachings of Islam, as is the myth that the Muslims were required to carry on aggressive wars against all non-Muslims till they had accepted Islam. Tributes and taxes were levied before Islam, and had been levied to this day by Muslim and non-Muslim states, yet they had nothing to do with the religion of the people affected. All that happened in the time of the Prophet was that

certain small non-Muslim states were, when subjugated, given the right to administer their own affairs, but only if they would pay a small sum by way of tribute towards the maintenance of the central government at Al-Medina. It was an act of great magnanimity of the Prophet to confer complete autonomy on a people who raised war against the Muslims but were ultimately conquered by them, and a paltry sum of tribute [*jiz'ia*] in such conditions was not a hardship but a boon. There was no interference at all with their administration, their own laws, their customs and usages, or their religion and, for the tribute paid, the Muslim state undertook the responsibility of protecting these small states against all enemies.

There are cases on record in which the Muslim state returned the *jiz'ia*, when it was unable to afford protection to the people under its care. Thus when the Muslim forces under the Muslim commander Abu-'Ubaida were engaged in a struggle with the Roman Empire in Syria, they were compelled to beat a retreat at Homs, which they had previously conquered. When the decision was taken to evacuate Homs, Abu-'Ubaida sent for the chiefs of the place and returned to them the whole amount which he had realized as *jiz'ia*, saying that as the Muslims could no longer protect them, they were not entitled to the payment of *jiz'ia* [1].

It further appears that exemption from military service was granted only to such non-Muslims as wanted it, for where a non-Muslim people offered to fight the battles of the country they were exempted from *jiz'ia*. The Bani-Taghlib and the people of Najran, both Christians, did not pay the *jiz'ia* [2]. Indeed, the Bani-Taghlib fought alongside with the Muslim forces in the battle of Buwaib in 13 A.H. Later on, in the year 16 A.H. they wrote to the Khalifa 'Omar offering to pay the *zakat* [the legal alms] which was a heavier burden, instead of the *jiz'ia*.

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[1] Al-Sira Al-Halabiya, a standard book on "The Life of the Prophet"; Ibn Hisham, Al-Tabari.

[2] Vide Encycl. of Islam.

From the foregoing, it is quite clear the *jizya* was levied not as a penalty for refusal to accept the faith of Islam, but it was paid in return for protection given to non-Muslims by the Muslim army, to which they were not compulsorily conscripted like the Muslims. This tribute was levied only on able-bodied men and not on women or children, the aged and the indigent, the blind and the maimed were specially exempted as were the priests and the monks.

### Islam, Jizya or the Sword

It is generally thought that the Muslims were out to impose their religion at the point of the sword, and that the Muslim hosts were overrunning all lands with the message of Islam, *jizya* or the sword. This is, indeed, a distorted picture of what really happened. The fact that there were people who never became Muslims at all, nor ever paid *jizya*, and yet were living in the midst of the Muslims, even fighting their battles, explodes the whole theory of the Muslims offering Islam or the *jizya* or the sword. The truth of the matter is that the Muslims finding the Roman Empire and Persia bent upon the subjugation of Arabia and the extirpation of Islam, refused to accept terms of peace without a safeguard against a repetition of the aggression and this safeguard was demanded in the form of *jizya* or a tribute, which would be an admission of defeat on their part. No war was ever started by the Muslims by sending this message to a peaceful neighbour or otherwise. History contradicts such an assertion. But when a war was undertaken on account of the enemy's aggression his advance on Muslim territory or help rendered to the enemies of the Muslim state - it was only natural for the Muslims not to terminate the war before bringing it to a successful issue. They were ever willing to avoid further bloodshed after inflicting a defeat on the enemy, only if he admitted defeat and agreed to pay a tribute, which was really a token tribute as compared with the crushing war indemnities of the present day. The offer to terminate hostilities on payment of *jizya* was thus an act of mercy towards a vanquished foe. But if the token tribute was not

accepted by the vanquished power, the Muslims could do nothing but have recourse to the sword until the enemy was completely subdued.

The only question that remains as to whether the Muslim soldiers invited their enemies to accept Islam, and whether it was an offence to do so. Islam was a missionary religion from its very inception, and every Muslim deemed it his sacred duty to invite other people to embrace Islam. The representatives of Islam, wherever they went, looked upon it as their first duty to spread the message of Islam, because they felt that Islam imparted a new life and vigour to humanity, and offered a real solution of the problems of every nation. Islam was offered, no doubt, even to the fighting enemy, but it is a distortion of facts to assume that it was offered at the point of the sword, when there is not a single instance on record of Islam being enforced upon a prisoner of war, nor of Muslims sending a message to a peaceful neighbouring people to the effect that they would be invaded if they did not embrace Islam. All that is recorded is that in the midst of war and after defeat had been inflicted on the enemy in several battles, when there were negotiations for peace, the Muslims in their zeal for the faith related their own experience before the chiefs of the enemy. They stated how they themselves had been deadly foes to Islam, and how ultimately they found Islam to be a blessing and a power that had raised the Arab race from the depth of degradation to great moral and spiritual heights, and had welded their warring elements into a solid nation. In such words did the Muslim representatives invite the Persians and the Romans to Islam, not before the declaration of war but at the time of negotiations for peace. If the enemy then had accepted Islam, there would be no conditions for peace, and the two parties would live as equals and brethren. It was not offering Islam at the point of the sword but offering it as a sign for peace of equality and of brotherhood. The early Khalifas had to wage wars, but these wars were never aggressive nor were they raised for the desire of propagating the faith of Islam by force. They

could not do anything which their Prophet never did, and which the Glorious Qu'ran never taught them to do.

### Directions Relating to War

The following instructions were given by the Prophet to the troops dispatched against the Byzantine force who threatened to invade the Muslims: "In avenging the injuries inflicted upon us molest not the harmless inmates of domestic seclusion; spare the weakness of female sex; injure not the infant at the breast, or those who are ill in bed. Abstain from demolishing the dwellings of the unresisting inhabitants; destroy not the means of their subsistence, nor their fruit trees and touch not palm" <sup>[1]</sup>.

The Khalifa Abu-Bakr also gave the following instructions to the commander of an army in the Syrian battle: "When you meet your enemies quit yourselves like men, and do not turn your backs; and if you gain the victory, kill not the little children, nor old people, nor women. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn or wheat, cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief of cattle, only such as you kill for the necessity of subsistence. When you make any covenant or treaty, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries and who propose to themselves to serve God that way. Let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries." <sup>[2]</sup>. Similar instructions were given by the succeeding Khalifas to their respective commanders of the troops, all tending to the treatment of the hostile enemies with justice and mercy.

### Treatment of the Prisoners of War

If the wars, during the time of the Prophet or early Khalifas had been prompted by a desire of propagating Islam by force, this object could easily have been attained by forcing Islam upon

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<sup>[1]</sup> Mair's "Caliphate", p. 142. "The Preaching of Islam", by Sir Thomas Arnold, p. 60.

<sup>[2]</sup> cf. Ibn Hisham, Al-Tabari, etc.

prisoners of war who fell helpless at the hands of the Muslims. Yet this the Glorious Qu'ran does not allow; but on the contrary it expressly lies down that those prisoners of war better be set free. To this effect we read in the Glorious Qu'ran the following instruction: "Now when ye meet in battle those who disbelieve, then it is smiting of the necks until, when ye have routed them, then making fast of bonds; and afterward either grace or ransom till the war lay down its burdens. That (is the ordinance). And if Allâh willed He could have punished them (without you) but (thus it is ordained) that He may try some of you by means of others. And those who are slain in the way of Allâh, He rendereth not their actions vain." [47:4].

Here we are told that prisoners of war can only be taken after meeting an enemy in regular battle, and even in that case they may either be set free, as a favour, or after taking ransom. The Prophet carried this injunction during his lifetime. In the battle of Hunain, six thousand prisoners of the Hawazin tribe were taken, and they all set free simply as an act of favour <sup>[1]</sup>. A hundred families of *Bani Mustaliq* were taken as prisoners in the battle of Mura'isi, and they were also set at liberty without any ransom being paid <sup>[2]</sup>. Seventy prisoners were taken in the battle of Bader, and it was only in this case that ransom was exacted; but the prisoners were granted their freedom while war with the Koraishtes was yet in progress <sup>[3]</sup>.

The form of ransom adopted in the case of these prisoners was that they should be entrusted with teaching some of the illiterate Arab Muslims how to read and write.<sup>[4]</sup> When war ceased and peace was established, all war prisoners would have to be set free, according to the verse quoted above.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Vide Sahih Al-Al-Bukhari, 40: 7.

<sup>[2]</sup> Ibn Jarir, Tabari's History III: op. 132, Cairo Edition.

<sup>[3]</sup> Ibn Jarir, Vor. III, P. 66.

<sup>[4]</sup> Musnad ibn Hanbal, I: 247; "Sharhul-Mawahib", by Al-Zurqani, Vol. I: 534.

## Prisoners of War not Slaves

The treatment accorded to prisoners of war in Islam is unparalleled. No other nation or society can show a similar treatment. The prisoners were distributed among the various Muslim families as no arrangements for their maintenance by the state existed at the time, but they were treated mercifully. A prisoner of war states that he was kept in a family whose people gave him bread while they themselves had to live on dates <sup>[1]</sup>. Prisoners of war were, therefore, not only set free but so long as they were kept prisoners they were treated generously.

## War As a Struggle to Be Carried out Honestly

It will be seen from the foregoing statements concerning the injunctions relating to war and peace, that war is recognized by Islam as a struggle between nations which is sometimes necessitated by the conditions of human life. But Islam does not allow its followers to provoke war, nor does it allow them to be aggressors, yet it commands them to put their whole force into the struggle when war is forced on them. If the enemy wants peace after the struggle has begun, the Muslims should not refuse, even though there is doubt about the enemy's honesty of purpose. But the struggle, so long as it exists, must be carried on to the end. In this struggle, honest dealing is enjoyed even with the enemy throughout the Glorious Qu'ran verse 2, Chapter 5, runs thus: "And let not hatred of a people incite you to exceed the proper limits; and help ye one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression."

Again verse 8 of the same Chapter reads thus: "Let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; see that you act equitably, that is nearer to piety." The tradition of the Prophet too enjoins honest dealing in war: "Fight and do not exceed the limits and be not unfaithful and do not mutilate bodies and do not kill

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<sup>[1]</sup> Al-Tabari's History, Vol. 2-287.

children” [1] Such are some of the directions given which purify war of the elements of barbarity and dishonesty in which Western warring nations generally indulge. Neither inhuman nor immoral practices are allowed by Islam in war or peace.

### Directions Relating to Reformation of Man’s External Life

The directions relating to the reformation of the external life of man and his gradual advancement from savageness to civilization until he reaches the highest peaks of spiritual life are based on the following method: The Almighty God has been pleased to lead man out of darkness and raise him up from a savage state by teaching him the rules relating to his ordinary daily actions and modes of social life. Thus they begin at the lowest point of man’s development, first of all, drawing a line of distinction between man and the lower animals, teaching him as well the first rules of morality which may pass under the name of sociality. Next they undertake to improve upon the low degree of morality already acquired by bringing his habits to moderation, thus turning them to sublime morals. Therefore, in the first stage we are concerned with more ignorant savages, whom it is our duty to raise to the status of civilized men by teaching them the social laws embracing their daily mutual relations. The first step towards civilization therefore, consists in teaching the savage not to walk about naked, or devour carcasses, or indulge in barbarous habits. This is the lowest grade in the reformation of man. In humanising people upon whom no rays of the light of civilization have yet fallen, it is necessary, first of all to take them through this stage and make them accustomed to morals of the lowest type. When the savage has learned the crude manners of society, he is prepared for the second stage of reformation. He is then taught the high and excellent moral qualities pertaining to humanity as well as the proper use of his own faculties and of whatever lies hidden beneath them. Those who have acquired excellent morals are now prepared for the third stage. After attaining the outward

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[1] “Imam” Muslim’s Collection of Hadith, Vol. 3: 32.



perfection, they are made to taste of the real knowledge and love of God. These are the three stages which the Glorious Qu'ran has described as necessary for anyone who has embraced Islam.

Our Prophet was raised at a time when the whole world had sunk to the lowest depth of ignorance. Utter darkness and barbarism at that time prevailed over the whole of Arabia. No social laws were observed, and the most despicable deeds were openly committed. An unlimited number of wives was taken, and all prohibited things were made lawful. Rape and incest reigned supreme and mothers were not infrequently taken for wives. It was to prohibit this horrible custom that the words of the Qu'ran were revealed: i.e. "Your mothers are prohibited to be taken as your wives." [4:23] Like beasts, most Bedouin Arabs did not even hesitate to eat of carcasses and to practise cannibalism. There was no vice which was not freely practised by them. The great majority of them did not believe in a future life, and not a few were atheists. Infanticide prevailed throughout the whole peninsula, and they mercilessly butchered orphans to rob them of their properties. Their thirst for wine was excessive and fornication was committed unscrupulously. Such was the dark picture of the time and the land in which the Prophet of Arabia appeared, and it was to reclaim this wild and ignorant people that the word of God came upon him. It is for this reason that the Glorious Qu'ran claims to be a perfect guidance to mankind as to it alone was given the opportunity to work out a reformation complete on all sides, the other Scriptures having never been given such an opportunity. The Qu'ran had a grand aim before it. It had first to reclaim mankind from savagery and to make good men of them, then to teach them excellent morals and make them good, and last of all to take them to the highest pinnacles of advancement and make them godly. The Glorious Qu'ran gives excellent and distinct teachings on these three points. It is to be observed that the first stage of a moral being, *i.e.* one whose actions can be classed as good or bad morally, is that in which he is capable of distinguishing between good and bad actions or between two good or two bad actions of different degrees. This takes place

when the reasoning faculty is sufficiently well developed to form general ideas and perceive the remoter consequences of actions. It is then that man regrets the omission of a good deed and feels repentance or remorse after doing a bad one. This is the second stage of man's life which the Glorious Qu'ran terms "*nafsillawwama*," i.e. the self-blaming soul [or conscience]. But it should be borne in mind that for the primitive minded man or the savage to attain this stage of the self-blaming soul, mere admonition is hardly sufficient. He must have so much knowledge of God that he may not look upon his own creation of God as an insignificant or meaningless thing. This soul-ennobling sense of God can greatly help to lead to actions truly moral. And it is for this reason that the Glorious Qu'ran inculcates a true knowledge of God along with the admonitions and warnings, and assures man that every good or bad action is watched and seen by God and that accordingly it bears fruit which causes spiritual bliss or torture in this life, while a clear and more palpable reward or punishment awaits him in the next. In short, when man reaches this stage of advancement, which we have called the self-blaming soul, his reason, knowledge, and conscience reach the stage of development, in which a feeling of remorse overtakes him in doing unrighteous deeds and he is very anxious to perform good ones. This is the stage in which the actions of man can be said to be moral. Thus in the earlier stage in man's civilization, the Qu'ran teaches this particular portion of morals which we term "manners." Qu'ranic Laws are laid down to guide the actions of daily life; and all that is necessary to make the primitive-minded a social being is inculcated. Examples of the injunctions of the Glorious Qu'ran on this point are as follows: "Your mothers are forbidden to you [as wives] and so are your daughters and sisters and your aunts, both on the father's side and the mother's side; and your nieces on the brother's and sister's side, and your foster-mothers, and your foster-sisters and the mothers of your step-daughters who are your wards, born of your wives to whom you have gone in [but if you have not gone into them it shall be no sin]; and the wives of your sons who proceed out of your loins;

and it is also forbidden that you should have two sisters together [as two wives at one and the same time] : this that you did before [in the time of ignorance] is now forbidden to you and forgiven by the All Forgiving and All Merciful God.” [3:4] “And marry not women whom your fathers have married, but what is passed shall be forgiven [for you did it in ignorance].” [3:22]

“This day [all] the good things are allowed to you, and the food of those who have been given the Scriptures [Jew and Christians] is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them; and the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the Scriptures before you [are lawful for you], when you have given them their dowries, taking them in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret ....” <sup>[1]</sup>[5:5] “Do not commit suicide.” [4:29], “Do not kill your children.” [6:151], “Enter not into houses other than your own [like savage] without permission, but wait until you have asked leave; and when you enter, salute the inmates; and if the house is empty do not enter till the owner of the house gives you leave; and if the owner asks you to go back, return forthwith; that is more decent for you.” [24:27-28], “Enter houses by their doors [not by clambering their walls].” [2:189]

“When you are saluted with a salutation, just salute the person with a better salutation or at least return the same.” [4:86], “Wines [including all intoxicants] and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are but an abomination of Satan’s mischief, avoid them, therefore, that you may prosper.” [5:90], “You are forbidden to eat that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine.” [2:173], “And they [the new converts] ask what is lawful for them to eat, say: [everything good and clean is allowed to you [only the dead and the unclean things which resemble the dead are forbidden].” [5:4] “When you are told to make room in your

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<sup>[1]</sup> There was a custom among some ignorant Bedouins that if children were not born to a man, his wife would secretly go into another man for getting children. It is for the extirpation of this savage custom that the last clause of the above teaching is expressed.

assemblies for others, then make room [that others may sit].” [58:11], “Eat and drink, but be moderate in your diet and do not exceed the proper limits.” [7:31], “The Believers are successful, (are) those who humble themselves in their prayers, who avoid vain talk..” [23:1-3], “Thy raiment (clothes) purify, pollution (all which is dirty) shun!.” [74:4-5], “O ye who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allâh in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to Allâh. Lo! Allâh is informed of what ye do.” [5:8] “Be modest in thy bearing and subdue thy voice. Lo! The harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass.” [31:19]

### Moralities

#### Muslim Ethical Basis of Social Life

The ethical Muslim social life is rather a difficult subject to write about in anything like adequate fashion. Islam is international, and Muslims, who inhabit different parts of the world, live in different stages of social development, and are attached to their inherited customs of ages, some of them of pre-Muslim origin. The ethical basis on which Muslim society is built up may be traced back to the last address delivered by the Prophet soon after his farewell pilgrimage, in which he said: “O men. Listen to me, for I may not be with you after this year in this place. Let it be well understood that your lives and property are sacred and inviolable to each other. Everyone will have his share of inheritance. The child belongs to his parents. You have right over your wives and they have right over you. They should not be faithless to you and you must treat them with loving kindness. Do not transgress, and be faithful to any trust placed in you. Usury is prohibited and also vengeance for blood. Treat your slave [servants] with kindness, feed them with what you eat, and clothe them as you do yourselves. Forgive them if they commit fault. The slaves in your possession, who perform prayers, are your brothers and all Muslims are brothers to one another. I ask you all to guard yourselves against all sorts of injustice.”

Such was the fraternal spirit under which Muslim society came to be first established and later developed, first and foremost in Arabia and then Central and South Asia, North Africa, and Southern Europe. The same spirit made itself felt in less or more degree, wherever Islam permeated even in a mild or attenuated form. Among the more important factors which influence the development of society is the status assigned to men and women as members of the family.

In Islam man is the maintainer of the family and as such holds greater power and responsibility, though women take a prominent part in it. In fact, one of the most striking features in Muslim culture is the position assigned to woman in social life.

### The Moral Conditions

Muslim ethics and moralities as stated in the Qu'ran embrace the consideration of all those moral excellences known to any advanced civilization, such as sincerity, honesty, humility, justice, patience, straightforwardness, keeping a promise, chastity, meekness, politeness, forgiveness, goodness, courage, veracity, sympathy, and other ethical instructions and rules of conduct, which are recommended, praised and enjoined upon Muslims in the Glorious Qu'ran and in the teachings of the Prophet. But the Qu'ran does not simply list such moral qualities and distinctions as God is pleased to enjoin upon his servants; nay, it further gives us ethical teachings as to how man can get to acquire these moral excellences and shows the straight way leading to their achievements. Now, what is the effect of the teachings of the Glorious Qu'ran upon the physical state of man, how does it guide us with respect to it and what practical limits does it set to the natural inclination? It may be remarked at the outset that according to the Glorious Qu'ran, the physical conditions of man are closely connected with his moral and spiritual states, so much, so that even his modes of eating and drinking play a part in the moulding of his moral and spiritual qualities. If, therefore, his natural desires are subjected to the directions of the law, they take the form of moral qualities and deeply affect the spiritual state of

the soul. It is for this reason that in all forms of devotion and prayer and in all the injunctions relating to internal purity and moral rectitude, the greatest stress has been laid upon external purity and cleanliness and the proper attitude of the body. The relation between the physical and spiritual nature of man would become evident on careful consideration of the actions of the outward organs and the effect they produce upon the internal nature of man. Weeping, even when artificial at once saddens the heart, while an artificial laugh makes it cheerful. Likewise, a prostration of the body, as is done in prayer, causes the soul to humble itself and adore the Creator; whereas strutting produces vanity and vain glory. Experience also shows the strong effect of food upon the heart and brain powers. For instance, the vegetarians ultimately may lose courage. There is not the least doubt that food plays an important part in the formation of the character. Furthermore, as there is a defect in excluding meat from the diet altogether, excess of meat is also injurious to character and badly affects the admirable qualities of humility and meekness. But those who adopt the middle path are heirs to both the noble qualities of courage and meekness. It is with this great law in view that the Glorious Qu'ran gives the instructions: "Eat [meat as well as other food] and drink but do not give way to excess" [7:31]. [in any particular form of diet so that your character and health may not suffer from it]"

In fact, there is a mysterious relation between the body and the soul of man, and the solution of the mystery is rather beyond human comprehension.

Having briefly indicated the directions given by the Glorious Qu'ran in the first stage of reformation, we now come to the second. After it has given to the savage and the primitive such rules as are necessary for his guidance, it undertakes to teach him high morals. We shall, therefore, mention, as an example, only a few of the moral qualities upon which the Glorious Qu'ran has laid stress. All moral qualities fall under two heads:

- 1) Those which enable man to abstain from inflicting injury upon his fellow-men, and
- 2) Those which enable him to do good to others:
  - to the first class belong the rules of conduct which direct the intentions and actions of man so that he may not injure the life, property, or honour of his fellow-beings by means of his tongue or hand or eye, or any other member of his body.
  - The second class comprises all rules calculated to guide the intentions and actions of man in doing good to others by means of the faculties which God has granted him or in declaring the glory or honour of others or in forbearing from punishing an offender, or in punishing him in such a manner that the punishment turns to be a blessing for him.

## Chastity

The moral qualities which fall under the heading of abstaining from doing wrong or injuries are chiefly four in number. Each of these is designed by a single word in Arabic, the language of the Glorious Qu'ran, which is so rich in vocabulary that it supplies a different word for different human conceptions, manners and morals. First of all we shall consider the quality of *ibsan* [in Arabic]. This word signifies the virtue which relates to the act of procreation in men and woman. A man or a woman is said to be "*mubsana*" when he or she abstains from illegal intercourse and its preliminaries which bring disgrace and ruin upon the head of the sinners in the world and severe torture in the next. None is more wicked than the infamous villain who causes the loss of a wife to a husband and that of a mother to her children, and thus violently disturbs the peace of the whole household bringing ruin upon the head of both the guilty wife and the innocent husband and children.

The first thing to remember about this moral quality which we call chastity is that no one deserves credit from refraining from satisfying his carnal desires illegally if nature has not given him these desires. The expression “moral quality,” therefore, cannot be applied to the mere act of refraining from such a course unless nature has also granted him the capacity of committing the bad deed. It is refraining under such circumstances, *i.e.* against the power of passions which nature has placed in man that deserves to be credited as a high moral quality. Underage, impotence, emasculation or old age nullifies the existence of the moral quality we term chastity, although refraining from the illegal act exists in these cases. But the fact is that in such cases it is a natural condition, and there is no resistance of passion, and, therefore, no propriety in the act. This is a distinction of importance between natural conditions and moral qualities. In the former there exists no tendency to go to the opposite direction, while in the latter there is a struggle between the good and evil passion, which necessitates the application of the reasoning faculty as well as the restrictions of the law together with a true sense of feeling that the Almighty God is aware of all human deeds. There is no doubt that children under the age of puberty and men who have lost the power upon which restrictions are to be imposed, cannot claim to possess a moral quality of so great a value, though their actions might resemble those of chaste men and woman. But their chastity, if it might at all be called chastity, is only a natural condition over which they have no control. For this reason the Prophet announced that “He is not the true courageous who overcomes his enemies, but the most true is he who overcomes and controls his lower passion.” Again the tendency of the Muslim precepts is that no man should deserve God’s reward for acting in accordance with the ordinances of religion unless he was naturally capable of disobeying them. The directions contained in the Glorious Qu’ran for attainment of the noble quality of chastity are given in the following ordinances: “Ask [O Prophet] the believing men to lower their gaze [to strange women] and be



modest. That is purer for them. [Let them know] that God is aware of all that they do.” [24:30]

“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands and husbands’ fathers, or their sons or their husbands’ sons, or their brothers or their brothers’ sons or sisters’ sons, or their women or their slaves or male attendants who lack vigour, or children who know naught of woman’s nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. Tell the believing men and women to observe these ordinances so that they might lead a successful life.” [24:31]

The Holy Qu’ran also instructs Muslims “Not to draw near unto fornication, but that they should keep aloof from occasions which give rise to such injurious ideas, and keep away from paths which might lead to commission of sin, for he who commits fornication does an extremely wicked deed, and it is an evil way [for it keeps back from attaining the desired perfection].” [17:32-33]

In another verse, the Glorious Qu’ran directs those who cannot find a match to employ other means to preserve their self-restraint over sexual desire, such as fasting or taking light food or try to apply themselves to remembrance of the fear of God’s punishment to the evil-doers. Furthermore, the Qu’ran states that some people [of the Christians] have devised methods of their own [for restraining themselves from sexual relations as by adopting celibacy or monasticism [and thus depreciating marriage], or by submitting themselves to castration, but all these methods have been invented by the people themselves and not decreed by God, and the results was that they could not observe these innovations as they ought to. Here the Almighty God declares that He did not prescribe the method of castration, etc., for had these been among the commandments of the Almighty, the people would have to observe these rules and then the human race would long since have disappeared from the face of

the earth. In addition to the immorality attaching to such evil practice, it is an objection against the Creator for having put such a power in man. Moreover, it can be easily seen that there is no merit in having been unable to do an act, and credit is due to him only who has to resist the evil tendency and to overcome the evil passions from fear of God. The person who has the energy in him to do so deserves a twofold credit, *viz.* For the application of the energy in the proper place and for refraining from applying it where there is no proper occasion for it. But the man who has lost it is not entitled to any of these. He is like a child and deserves no credit for refraining from what he has lost the power to do. There is no resistance, no overcoming and consequently no merit or glory.

The foregoing Qu'ranic verses not only contain excellent teachings for the attainment of charity, but point out certain remedies for observing self-restraint over sexual desire: Restraining from casting unrestrained looks upon strangers and refraining the ears from listening to love stories of stranger men and women exciting lust; avoiding every occasion where there may be fear of being involved in the wicked deed and, last of all, resorting to fasting or light food and constant remembrance of the fear of God's punishment upon evil-doers and wicked transgressors.

Here we can confidently assert that teachings upon chastity, together with the remedies for self-restraint over sexual desire, as contained in the Glorious Qu'ran, are a peculiarity of Islam. One point deserves special attention. The natural tendency of man, in which carnal appetite takes its root and over which man cannot have full control except by undergoing a thorough change, is that whenever there is occasion for it, it takes its object into serious and regrettable consequences. The divine injunction in this respect is, therefore, that it is unlawful for a Muslim to cast unnecessary free glances, whether with pure or impure looks, upon strange women. We must avoid every circumstance which may make us err at any time. Unrestrained looks are almost sure

to lead to danger. The word of God, therefore, restrains the lascivious desires of man and woman to avoid the very occasion where there is danger of the excitement of the passions.

This is the secret underlying the institution of the seclusion of women in Islam. It is complete ignorance of the noble principles of that religion to take seclusion in the sense of shutting up women like prisoners in a jail. The object of seclusion is that both men and women should be restrained from intermingling freely and that members of the fair sex should not display their decoration and beauty freely to strangers.

It should further be borne in mind that “*to restrain the looks,*” in the Qu’ranic verse, means, in the Arabic language of the Glorious Qu’ran, the casting down of one’s eyes when the object of sight is not one which it is proper for a person to look at freely and not the refraining altogether of one’s looks on the proper occasions. The casting down of eyes on proper occasions is the first requirement of pure social life. This habit, without causing any serious disadvantages to man in his social relations, has the invaluable advantage of making him perfect in one of the highest morals, which we call chastity.

## Honesty

We come next to the second moral quality of refraining from injury which is called in Arabic *أمانة* i.e. honesty. This quality consists in not causing injury to others by cheating them or taking unlawful possession of their own properties. Honesty is naturally met within man. An infant, free as it is from every bad habit, is averse to sucking the milk of a woman other than his mother, if it has not been entrusted to her when quite unconscious. This habit in the infant is rather the root from which grows the natural inclination to be honest, and which is later developed into the moral quality known to advanced civilization as “honesty.” The true principle of honesty is that there should be the same aversion to the dishonest taking of another’s property. In the child, however, this is not a moral quality but only a natural condition,

in as much as it is not regulated by any principle or displayed on the proper occasion. The child has no choice in the matter. Unless there is a choice, the action of a moral being cannot be included under the category of moral conditions. The person, who shows the inclination in obedience to the requirements of his nature, without considering the propriety of the occasion, cannot, in the strict sense of the word, be called an honest man. The person who does not distinctly observe the conditions which raise this natural inclination to the status of a moral quality cannot lay claim to it, although his action may, to outward appearances, resemble the action of a moral being which is done with all the requisites, at after a due consideration of its advisability. We cite illustration interpretation of a few verses from the Glorious Qu'ran bearing upon the subject.

“To those weak of understanding make not over your property, which God hath made a means of support for you, but feed and clothe them therewith, and speak to them words of kindness and justice. Make trial of orphans until they reach the age of marriage; if then ye find sound judgment in them, release their property to them; but consume it not wastefully, nor in haste against their growing up. If the guardian is well-off, let him claim no remuneration, but if he is poor, let him have for himself what is just and reasonable. When ye release their property to them, take witnesses in their presence: but all-sufficient is God in taking account. Let those [disposing of an estate] have the same fear in their minds as they would have for their own if they had left a helpless family behind; let them fear God, and speak words of appropriate [comfort]. [4:5, 6, 9]

“And if there are among you any owners of property who are weak of understanding, being minors or orphans, and have not sufficient prudence for the management of their affairs, you [i.e. the Muslims] should assume full control over their property as a Court of Wards, and do not make over to them that which God has placed with you as a means of support and as placed with you as a means of support and as a stock of trade, but assign them a

portion of it such as is necessary for their maintenance and clothing, and speak to them words of kindness such as may sharpen their intellects and mature their understandings and train them for the business which is most suited for their capacities, giving them that full instruction in these respects. And test the orphans in whatever you instruct them so you may be able to see if they have made and progress. And when they attain the age of maturity [for which the proper limit is eighteen]<sup>[1]</sup> and you perceive that they are able to manage their affairs well, release their property to them. And do not waste it profusely, nor consume hastily under the fear that they will shortly be of age to receive what belongs to them. If the guardian is well off, he should abstain entirely from taking remuneration from the orphan's estate, but if he is poor he may take a reasonable remuneration. When you make over their property to them, do it in the presence of witnesses; and know well that God takes sufficient account of all your actions." "Let those who are guardians over orphans" property have the same fear in their minds as if they have [when died] left a weakly offspring behind them. Let them, then fear God and speak words of appropriate comfort" [4:5, 6, 9].

This which the Almighty God has preached is true honesty and faithfulness, and its various requisites are clearly set forth in the verses quoted above.

Elsewhere the Glorious Qu'ran teaches us: "Not to consume each other's wealth unjustly, nor offer it to judges as a bribe, so that with their aid ye might seize other men's property dishonestly." [2:188]. And again we are instructed thus: "God enjoins upon you to give back faithfully any trust to its owner. God hates the unfaithful" [4:58]. In another instance the Glorious Qu'ran gives the following instructions: "Give just measure and be not of those who diminish. And weigh [things] with an exact and right balance. And defraud not the substance of any people, and do not act

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<sup>[1]</sup> According to "Imam" Abu Hanifa School of Jurisprudence, if at that age maturity of mind is not attained, the limit may be extended.

corruptly in the earth, making mischief. And guard yourselves against the punishment of God for all sorts of corruption.” [26:181-183]. “And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless things for [their] good ones and do not devour their property [as an addition] to your property; this is surely a great crime.” [4:2].

These are comprehensive injunctions against all sorts of dishonest dealings, and every breach of trust comes within them. Separate offences are not enumerated in this chapter for a comprehensive list of them would have required much space; and even that it would have been very hard to set a limit to them. But it was the message of the Prophet of Islam to explain in full detail any and all ordinances referred to in the Qu’ran; and Muslims are instructed by the Qu’ran to obey the rules and abide by the explanations and instructions laid down by God’s Prophet whose sayings are to be treated by all believers as if they were God’s Himself. The Glorious Qu’ran says: “He who has obeyed the Prophet has in fact obeyed God.” [4:80].

And again the Qu’ran teaches that the Prophet is charged with explaining and pointing out any precepts revealed to him.

### Peacefulness

Let us now turn to the third class of morals falling within the first division, namely the refraining from causing injury to others. This moral quality is that known as peacefulness. It consists in refraining from causing harm or injury of any sort to another person and thus living a peaceful life upon earth. Peacefulness is, no doubt, a blessing for humanity and must be valued for the great good which proceeds from it. The natural inclination, out of which this moral quality develops, is witnessed in the young of a human being in the form of attachment. A natural inclination towards submission and attachment so early witnessed in the young human is only the germ, out of which flows the high moral quality of peacefulness. It is plain that deprived of reason man cannot realize peacefulness or hostility. It cannot be called a

moral quality that which is not consciously resorted to upon a recommendation of reason.

The directions of the Glorious Qu'ran may be briefly noticed:

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allâh is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allâh has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).”[49:13], “If they [the other party] incline to peace, do you also incline to it.” [8:61], “There is much good in coming to agreeable reconciliation, i.e. to live peacefully.” [4:128]. “And the servants of the Compassionate [God] are those who walk peacefully upon earth.” [25:63]

The guiding principle of peacefulness is that one should not be offended at the slightest opposition to one's feelings. The word frivolous in the above teaching requires some explanation. A word or deed is to be frivolous when it causes no substantial loss material injury to its object, although it be said or done with a mischievous or bad intention. But if the injury is not trivial and causes material loss of life, property or honour, the Islamic moral quality required to meet this emergency is not peacefulness or meekness but forgiveness, which shall be treated later.

The Qu'ran also teaches us to: “Repel the evil deed which is vain or frivolous with such a better answer, as to make the person between whom and ourselves there was enmity or discord to become as though he was a bosom friend” [41:34].

In fine, the overlooking of trivial injuries is inculcated in the moral quality of peacefulness.

### Politeness

The fourth and last class of the morals is politeness or gentlemanliness. The preliminary stage of this quality as witnessed in the child is cheerfulness. Before the child learns to speak, the cheerfulness of its face serves the same purpose as kind words in

a grown-up man, but the propriety of the occasion is an essential condition in classing politeness as “a high moral quality.” The teachings of the Qu’ran on this point are as follows: “Let not a folk deride another folk, who may be better than they, neither let women deride other women who may be better than they; neither defame one another, nor insult one another not even by calling him or her by nickname” [49:11]. “Avoid such suspicion, for some suspicions are surely sinful, neither backbite one another. Would any one of you love to eat the flesh of his brother, certainly not, ye abhor that: so abhor the other” [49:12]. “They are most honoured by God, who are the best in conduct,” i.e. those who are most dutiful to God and are fraternally polite with one another” [49:13].

In these fine verses, the Almighty God enjoins upon the believers to lead a polite life, to defame not one another, to avoid entertaining frequent suspicions, not to traduce any person in his absence and to embrace the best conduct in our social life. “To walk not in the earth exultantly or arrogantly” [17:37].

### Forgiveness

We now turn to the second heading of morals which relate to doing good to others as taught by the Glorious Qu’ran. The first of these morals is forgiveness. The person to whom a real injury has been caused has the right to compensate by bringing the offender to law for punishment or himself dealing out some punishment to him, and therefore, when he foregoes his right of compensation and forgives the offender he does him a real good. The Glorious Qu’ran contains the following injunction upon this point: “Praised are they who restrain their anger and pardon the faults of others; and God love those who do good to other.” [3:134]. “God loves those who shun transgression and indecencies, and whenever they get anger they forgive [him who caused their anger] [42:37]. The Glorious Qu’ran also teaches that: “The recompense of an evil deed is punishment proportionate to it, but whoever forgives [the injury caused to him thereby] and



amends, he shall have his reward from God”: “Surely God does not love the wrongdoer” [42:40].

Here is a golden Islamic rule for forgiveness of evil. The rule laid down is that evil must be requited by punishment proportionate to the amount of wrong committed. This is a very just and necessary restriction. But the verse furnishes a guiding rule as to the occasions of forgiveness. There is in Islam neither the one extreme of “tooth” for tooth” nor the opposite one of “turning the left cheek when the right is smitten” or “giving away the cloak to one who has already taken the coat of his brother.” Forgiveness in Islam is highly praised, but it is preached in such a manner as to make it not impracticable; it is the beautiful means that forgiveness may be exercised if it will mend the matter and do good to the wrong doer himself. The object is to “reform” whether it may be attained by giving proportional punishment or by exercising forgiveness. The course which is calculated to mend the matter should be adopted. The offender would under certain circumstances benefit by the forgiveness and mend his ways for the future. But on other occasions, forgiveness may produce the contrary effect and may embolden the culprit to do worse deeds. The word of God does not, therefore, enjoin that we should go on forgiving faults quite blindly. It requires us to consider and weigh the matter first and see what course is likely to lead to real good. As there are persons of vindictive nature that carry the spirit of revenge to excess, there are other who are ready to yield and are too prone to forgive on every occasion.

Excess in mildness, like excess in revenge, leads to harmful consequences. The mere giving up of a claim to requital from an offender, whatever the circumstances and however serious the nature of the offence done by an attack upon the honour or chastity, is far from being a great moral quality to which men should aspire. The mere presence of this quality in person, therefore, does not entitle him to real credit unless he shows by its use on the right occasion that he possesses it as a moral quality. The distinction between natural and moral qualities

should be clearly borne in mind. The inborn or natural qualities of man are transformed into moral qualities when a person does, or refrain from doing, an act upon the right occasion and after due consideration of the good or evil that is likely to result from it.

Many of the lower animals are quite harmless and do not resist when evil is done to them. A cow may be said to be innocent and a lamb meek, but to neither do we attribute the high moral qualities which man aspires after, for they are not gifted with reason and do not know right from wrong. It is only the occasion upon which anything is done that justifies or condemns a deed; and the wise and perfect Word of the Omniscient God has, therefore, imposed this condition upon every moral quality.

### Goodness

The second moral quality is that known as goodness, *i.e.* to do good to others, or, in other words, to do good for God's sake which represents the justice in its simplest meaning. Then comes forward—towards the moral development – the higher quality of kindness, followed by the highest quality named tenderness. Thus in the Glorious Qu'ran, the Almighty God commands men to repay good for good and [if we can avail ourselves of an opportunity of doing more than mere justice], to do good for the sake of goodness, *i.e.* without having received any benefit and [if it befits the occasion] to bestow gifts with the natural tenderness of kindred. He forbids rudeness and abomination and wrongdoing [16:90], God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.

These commandments call attention to three stages in the doing of goodness. The lowest stage is that in which man does good to his benefactors only. Even an ordinary man who has the sense to appreciate the goodness of others can acquire this quality and do good in return for good. From this there is advancement to the second stage in which man takes the initiative to do good to other. It consists in bestowing favours upon persons who cannot

claim them as a right. This quality, excellent as it is, occupies a middle position. To it often attaches the imperfection that the doer expects thanks or prayers in return for the good he does, and the slightest opposition from the object of compassion is termed ungratefulness. He would gladly have an acknowledgment of the benefit given and is let sometimes to take advantage of his position by laying upon him some burden, which the other could not have otherwise willingly carry. To remedy this effect, the Glorious Qu'ran has warned the doer of goodness saying:

“Make not your alms or benefits void by reminding those whom you relieve of your obligation, and by injuring them” [2:264]. If there is no sincerity in the deed, alms are of no effect, being mere show. In brief, this is an imperfection attached to the noble deed of doing goodness to another that the doer is led sometimes to remind the person relieved of the obligation, or to boast of it. A third stage has, therefore, been taught by the Glorious Word of God which is free from every imperfection. To attain this perfection man should not think of the goodness he has done, nor expect even an expression of thankfulness from the person upon whom the benefit is given. The idea of doing good should proceed from sincere sympathy like that which is shown by the nearest relatives: by a mother, for instance, towards her children. This is the highest and the last stage of showing kindness to the creatures of God. Such sympathetic and sincere benefactors are highly praised by the Lord in the Qu'ran where it states that: The servants of God [whom He loves] are those who on account of their love for God bestow their food on the needy *wretch* and the *orphan* and the *bondsman*, though longing for it themselves, and who say: “we do not confer any obligation upon you, but our desire is that God may be pleased with us and we do it only for the sake of God, and this is a service for which we seek from you neither recompense nor thanks” [76:8-9]. “God loves those who, when they spend, are neither prodigal nor niggard and keep the mean” [25:67]; “And those of whose property there is a due portion for those who beg and for those who are needy and outcast” [70:24-25]; “And those who spend in ease and in

adversity” [3:134], “You shall by no means attain goodness till you expend in the cause of your fellow-being out of that which you love” [3:92]. “And give your kindred what they require in time of need and also to the poor and the wayfarer and do not squander wastefully” [17:26]

This verse forbids wastefulness and squandering away of wealth in luxury or in proper occasion. Therefore, any excess in the doing of that which would otherwise have been most beneficial is condemned by the law. Nor, it should be borne in mind, is the mere doing of good in any of the forms above mentioned a high moral quality of goodness unless attested to as much by the appropriateness of the occasion as by exercise of judgment. In another verse the word of God enjoins upon the believers to: “be good to the parents and to the kindred and to the orphans and to the poor and to the neighbours who are your relatives and to the neighbours who are strangers and the companions in a journey and to the wayfarer; and whatever you rightly possess [be they your servants or horses or other domestic animals]”, “this is what God loves you to do, and He does not love the vain boasters and the selfish and does not like those who are niggardly themselves and bid others to be niggards, and hide away what God of His bounty has given them, saying to the poor and the needy, “We have nothing to give you” [4:36, 37].

### Courage

Courage is a virtue resembling the instinct of bravery. The very young human being, when it lacks sufficient reason, is appropriate to display bravery and is ready to thrust its hand into the fire, because, having no knowledge of the consequences of the instinctive quality is predominant in it, and its action is by no means a noble quality. The virtue which we call courage cannot be displayed but after a good deal of reasoning and reflection and a full consideration of the appropriateness of the act. The Glorious Qu’ran contains the following directions upon this point: “The true brave are those who lose not their hearts but stand firmly and behave patiently under ills and hardships and in battles – those

are they who are true [to themselves], and those are they who guard themselves against the displeasure of their Lord” [2:177]

“They shall have a great reward from their Lord who do good to others and guard against evil; those who, when they are threatened with the mustering of people against them and are told to fear the forces gathering around to crush them, are not dispirited thereby” [3:172 – 174]. This circumstance, on the other hand, increases the faith of true believers and they say; “God is sufficient protector and excellent guardian, since they were to fight in the cause of truth and in obedience to their Lord” [3:173].

Therefore, the moral quality of courage, according to the teachings of Islam is not a mechanical movement depending upon passions and flowing in one direction only, but is utilized in two ways, *viz.* with its aid the faithful resist and overcome the passions of the flesh, and besides they utilize it to resist the attacks of transgressors when it is advisable to do so in the cause of God. The truly courageous do not display their bravery in a rude or disrespectful manner and with a view to appear with pretension to other men, but their only consideration is the pleasure of God, who wishes them to resist evil by their courage and to be patient under hardships. All this leads to the conclusion that true courage takes its root in patience and steadfastness. The courageous man resists his passions and does not flee from danger like a coward, but before he takes any step he looks to the remote consequences of his action. Between the daring dash of a savage and the indomitable courage of a civilized man, there is this vast difference that the latter is prepared to meet real dangers but he reasons and reflects even in the fury and tumult of battle, before he proceeds to take the course best suited to prevent the evil, while the former in obedience to an irresistible passion makes a violent assault in one direction only.

### Veracity

The next virtue, which is developed out of the natural conditions, is veracity. So long as there is no motive to tell a lie, man is

naturally inclined to speak the truth. He is averse to lying from his very nature and hates the person who is proved to have told a plain lie. But this natural condition cannot claim our respect as one of the noble moral qualities. Unless a man is purged of the low motives which impede him from truth, his veracity is questionable. For if he speaks the truth only in the matters in which truth produces no harm to himself and tells a lie or holds his tongue from the utterance of truth when his interest or property or honour is at risk, he can claim no superiority over the untruthful. In fact, no one speaks untruth without a motive, and there is no virtue in resorting to truth so long as there is no apprehension of harm the only circumstance which can serve as a test of truthfulness is the occasion when one's life or honour or property is in danger. The Glorious Qu'ran contains the following injunctions on this subject: "Shun ye the pollution of idols and shun ye the word of falsehood" [22:30].

The shunning of idols and falsehood is enjoined in the same breath; it indicates that falsehood is an idol and the person who trusts to it – in like manner as the idolaters and the heathen used to do – does not trust in God for he bows in submission to an idol and does not worship God. "The witnesses –among the true believers– shall not refuse to present themselves whenever – they are summoned to give witness; and conceal not true testimony, for he who conceals it has surely a wicked heart" [2:283]. "When you speak a word or pronounce a judgment be true and just, though the person concerned be your relative." [6:152]. "Stand fast to truth and justice and let your testimony be only for the sake of God and speak not falsely, although the declaration of truth might be against your own interest or against your parents or your near relatives, such as your children." [4:135].

"Let not hatred towards any person induce you to act unjustly against him" [5:8]. "The truthful men and the truthful women shall find a rich reward" [33:35]. "They are beloved and blessed who enjoin truth and patience upon each other" [103:3]; "and

they who do not give false witness or those who sit in the company of liars” [25:72].

### Patience

Another virtue which develops out of the natural condition of man is patience. Everyone has more or less to suffer misfortunes, diseases and afflictions which are the common lot of humanity. Everyone, too, has, after much sorrowing and suffering, to make his peace with the misfortune which befalls him. But such contentment is by no means a noble moral quality. It is a natural consequence of the continuance of affliction that weariness at last brings about conciliation. The first shock brings about depression of spirit, in quietude and wails of woe, but when the excitement of the moment is over, there is necessarily a reaction, for the extreme has been reached. But such disappointment and consequent contentment are both the result of natural inclination. It is only when the loss is received with total resignation to the *will of God* and in complete *resignation to His predestination* that the deed deserves to be closed under virtuous moral qualities. The word of God thus deals with that noble quality of patience. “We shall prove you by afflicting you in some measure with fear, and hunger, and decrease of wealth and loss of lives, and fruits. Those who prove patient under such misfortunes are to be given good tidings of God’s reward – to those who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: “Surely we are God’s creatures and His charges, and, therefore, must return to the owner of the charge” [2:155,156]. This is the true expression of a true Muslim. “We are God’s creatures and His charges, and to Him must the charges return; we come from God and He is our goal, therefore no trial or misfortune can disturb the course of our life, which has a much higher aim than mere comfort.”

### Sympathy

Another quality falling under the same category is sympathetical zeal. People of every nationality and religion are naturally endowed with the feeling of national sympathy, and in their zeal

for the interest of their countrymen or co-religionists they do not hesitate to wrong others. Such sympathetic zeal, however, does not proceed out of moral feelings, but it is an instinctive passion and is witnessed even in lower animals especially ravens, of which the call of one brings together numerous others, or in sheep in which case the crush of one, though it be towards a precipice, brings the whole flock to follow their example. To be classed as moral quality, it must be displayed in accordance with the principles of justice and equity and on the proper occasion. It is expressed that under this condition the word sympathy is to be used. The injunction of the Glorious Qu'ran on this point is as follows: "Sympathy and co-operation are enjoined upon you towards deeds of goodness and piety, but you must not cooperate towards sinful or transgressive deeds." [5:2]. Again the Glorious Word of God teaches every Muslim not "To be a pleader for the treacherous" [4:105]. "And plead not on behalf of any people who deceive themselves; God does not love anyone who is treacherous and sinful" [4:107]

True Believers  
Their Manners and Characters  
As Described in the Qu'ran

The Glorious Qu'ran describes the Muslim, *i.e.* the true believers as follows: "Believers are they who fear God and fear nothing else" [3:102], "They hold together and unit together" [3:103], "Their lives, honour and property are sacred" [4:92], "Believers should not disregard those who salute them and wish them peace, even if the saluters are unbelievers" [4:95], "They should not sit when God's attributes are ridiculed" [4:140], They prefer their co-religionists for true friends "O ye who believe do not take the unbelievers for guardians [true friends] rather than the believers" [4:144], Their behaviour when giving witness is "To be upright and bear witness with justice and let no hatred of a people incite them to act inequity ably" [5:8], Believers are not to ask inquisitive questions "O you who believe! Do not put questions above things which if declared to you may give you trouble; but wait until



things are revealed to you by the Qu'ran" [5:101] <sup>[1]</sup> Their duties to God are given in the following verses: - "O ye who believe! Be careful of your duty to God, and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard in His way that you may prosper" [5:35].

"O you who believe! Turn sincerely to God [from your own passions] so that He will pardon your past evil-doings and will cause you to enter paradise in the hereafter" [66:8]. Believers' exalted grades are described as follows: -"They are true believers whose hearts become full of loyalty when God is mentioned; and when His communications are recited to them they increase them in faith, and in their Lord they put wholly their trust; those who keep up prayer and spend benevolently out of what the Almighty God has granted them. These are the true believers surely; they shall have from their Lord exalted grades and forgiveness and honourable sustenance" [8:2-4].

The righteous are described as they "Who walk on the earth in humbleness, and When the ignorant [i.e. the foolish] address them, they say [nothing but] peace! Peace!; and they who pass the night [before going to bed] prostrating themselves before their Lord [through love and good hope]" [25:63-64]. "And they who When they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious but keep always in the moderate and middle way. And they who do not worship or bow down to any but God and they who do not kill any soul, except in the requirement of justice. [25:67-68].

"And they who do not commit fornication" [25:68]. "And they who do not give false witness, or bear witness to what is false" "And when they pass by vain scenes they pass by nobly and gentlemanly [25:72] i.e. they take no part in such vain sceneries. And they who when reminded of the enjoiments of their Lord, do not fall dawn deaf and blind. And they who say, 'O Our Lord!

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<sup>[1]</sup> As Islam discouraged rigorous practices such as monastic life, it also prohibited asking questions relating to details on many points, which would make this or that practice obligatory, and such was left to individual will or circumstances of the time or place.

Grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes; and make us guides to those who seek to be 'righteous'." [25:73, 74].

The above Qu'ranic description of the righteous shows how great was the transformation wrought by the advent of the Prophet, a people having been at the depth of degradation being converted into such righteous servants of the only true God. True believers are also they: "Who should be firm against the enemies and not to lose heart but should rely upon God for victory". "O you who believe! When you meet a party [of the enemies] then be firm and keep remembering God to help you and make you Victorious. And obey God and his Apostle and do not quarrel between yourselves, for if you do, you will be weak in hearts and your power will depart; so be patient as God supports those who are patient". [8:45, 46]. And also who are not coward, nor should be weary and faint-hearted against their enemies:- "Be not slack so as to cry for peace when fighting against the enemies, while you have the upper hand, and God is with you, and He will not bring your struggle to naught" [47:35]. And who should help each other and give asylum to those who adopt exile towards the cause of God: "Surely those who believed and fled their homes and struggled hard in God's way with their property and their souls, and those who give shelter -and help - these are guardians of each other" [8:72]. And who do not ask for exemption from joining the army of the Muslims when at war: "And who do not ask leave to stay away from striving hard against the offending enemies with their property and their persons" [9:44] And who do unite with those who are true in works and deeds: "O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to God and be united only with those who are truthful" [10:119].

And who should never despair or exult: "No evil or anything disliked befalls on the earth nor in your own souls but it is predestined and recorded before God brings it into existence.... so that you may not despair [of God's mercy] or grieve of what has escaped you, nor should you be exultant at what God has granted you: God does not love -any arrogant boaster". [57:22,

23]. And who are to make peace and act equitably: “If two parties of the believers should quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to submit to God's command! then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably. Surely God loves those who act equitably. The believers are but brethren- therefore, make peace between your brethren and adopt righteous conduct so that the Almighty God showers His blessings and mercy upon you [49:9-10].

And who avoid suspicion and spying: “O you believers! Avoid most of suspicion; for surely suspicion is a sin, and do not spy, nor let some of you back-bite others” [49:12] “And who remember God in humility” [57:16]. And who are sincere lovers of truth:- “Those who believe in God and the message of his Apostles are the lovers of truth and are themselves truthful and faithful” [57:19]. And who do what they say:- “O ye who believe! it is most hateful sight of God that you say what you will not put into action” [61:2-3]. Believers are they who fulfill their promise and not simply talk without confirming by deeds what they say by their lips” And who are helpers of God's ordinances: “O Believers! Be ye helpers of God's ordinances” [61:14].<sup>[1]</sup>

And who put their trust wholly in God: “There is no deity but God; therefore, let the, believers put their trust in God only” [64:13] “And who do righteous deeds” [85:11].

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<sup>[1]</sup> If we seek God's help, we must first help God's cause, i.e. dedicate ourselves entirely to Him and without reserve by obeying His ordinances and forbidding what He has declared forbidden.

## Final Word

“Prophet Muhammad delivered his last sermon on the ninth of Dhul Hijjah (12<sup>th</sup> and last month of the Islamic year), 10 years after Hijrah (migration from Makkah to Madinah) in the Uranah Valley of mount Arafat. His words were quite clear and concise and were directed to the entire humanity. After praising, and thanking Allâh the Prophet Muhammad said:

“O People. Lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefor listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today”.

“O People. Just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. Allâh has forbidden you to take usury (interest); therefore all interest obligations shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity”. “Allâh has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all interest due to Abbas Ibn ‘Abd al Muttalib (the Prophet's uncle) shall henceforth be waived”.

“Beware of Satan for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things”. “O People. It is true that you have certain rights in regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives, only under Allâh's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat you women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste”.

“O People. Listen to me in earnest, worship Allâh, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford to”.

“All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black, nor a black has any superiority over a white- except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim, which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not therefor, do injustice to yourselves”.

“Remember one day you will appear before Allâh and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone. People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well therefore, O people, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and the Sunnah (Hadîth), and if you follow these you will never go astray. All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listened to me directly. Be my witness, O Allâh, that I have conveyed your message to your people.”<sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> See Al-Al-Bukhari, Hadith 1623, 1626, 6361) Sahih of Imam Muslim also refers to this sermon in Hadith number 98. Imam al-Tirmidhi has mentioned this sermon in Hadith nos. 1628, 2046, 2085. Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal has given us the longest and perhaps the most complete version of this sermon in his Masnud, Hadith no. 19774.)

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