

# The Islamic Review

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
مُحَمَّدٌ وَصَلَّى عَلَیْ رَسُوْلِہِ الْکَرِیْمِ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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JUMÁDA 'TH-THÁNIYA, 1346 A.H.

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## NOTES

### **The Growth of Divorce in England.**

“Rush to Divorce” is the title of an article in the *Daily Express* for October 3, 1927. It is interesting in that it throws a flood of light on the prodigious extent of an ever-growing cancer that is eating into the very entrails of society, and thereby gives us an insight into a state of affairs which shows all too clearly that the scruples of moral responsibility attendant on married life are on the wane.

When the year closes more than 2,400 divorce suits will have been heard in London alone, and cases heard by Assize judges will bring the total to 3,500. This means that, including the co-respondents, 10,500 persons will be concerned. . . .

Until women and men were recently placed on the same basis as regards grounds for divorce, the number of men and women against whom divorce decrees were issued was about equal, but now the petitions by women predominate. In 40 per cent. of the cases the parties are childless; in a further 32 per cent. there is one child only.

In a population of 40,000,000 (which is the population of England) this number does not seem to be alarmingly large, but, as the *Daily Express* states in its leader, “it represents a great increase on what has come to be regarded as usual.”

Eminent lawyers have given thought to this exceptional

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jump in the number of divorce cases, and generally attribute it to the prohibition of newspaper reports on such cases beyond the barest outline of the proceedings. This opinion is shared by Lord Hewart, the Lord Chief Justice of England.

Although it would take a bold man to predict what is awaiting the future generation, one thing is certain, and that is that if the divorce problem be left untackled the constancy of the English home life, nay, that of European life, will—and before very long—be rudely shaken. Is it wise, we might ask, to risk the sacrifice of its blessings by leaving it to time to cure?

The object of marriage is to engender in us respect for the responsibility thereby devolving on us, so as to prevent it from being desecrated by petty quarrels. But if it is well-nigh impossible for a married couple to live together with true love, what remedy other than divorce can there be for them? This observation, however, must not be taken to mean that we hold any brief for divorce, although we believe that to restrict the grounds for divorce to the infidelity of either of the parties is too rigid a law; and we are not alone in holding this view. The Lord Chief Justice, in an article on England's Divorce Laws, says that "divorce must have other grounds than infidelity—as, for instance, desertion, cruelty, incurable insanity and life imprisonment."<sup>1</sup> For there are scores of tragic cases of women who suffer under one or another of the above causes but who can never have recourse to divorce unless the victims provide sufficient evidence of their husbands' adultery.

Now the question remains whether indeed it is a fact that the increase in divorce in Western countries can be ascribed solely to the increase in some of the minor facilities thereto recently accorded by the law, such as the hearing of divorce cases in the provinces and the suppression of publicity by the cutting down of divorce reports to the bare proceedings of each case. We, for our part, are inclined to believe that the increase in these cases is rather due to the fact that

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Evening Standard* for October 24th, in "If Women Re-made our Marriage Laws."

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in Christian countries the sanctity of the institution of marriage had been strained so far that, at the altar, the exigencies of human nature were ruthlessly sacrificed. Even the experience of the party involved where no other remedy but the dissolution of marriage is left open has been ignored. Now the swing of the pendulum, as is natural, is in the other direction. People are dissolving marriage on trivial excuses which, although accepted by law, ought not to be resorted to in the ordinary course of things, because marriage is too sacred an institution to be trifled with. And why do they trifle with it? Simply because in the teachings of the Church, whereas there are frequent admonitions against separation and repeated recommendations to heal quarrels arising from transitory whims by private reconciliation, there is no remedy existing collaterally to permit the dissolution of marriage. The Church has no balm to offer to unhappy marriages which should not be allowed to continue.

People have now broken away from the teachings of the Church, and in so doing they have lost hold of even that semblance of ennobling force which the Church supplied. They have struggled to acquire the power to dissolve unhappy marriages. They have secured it, but without the leaven of religion. It should not be ignored that it is the leaven of religion—true religion—and that only, that inspires us towards higher things and saves us from abusing the concessions vouchsafed to us for dealing with abnormal cases.

We see everywhere people securing facilities for divorce, but nothing of *that* element which enables us to overcome petty quarrels and merge them into the vastness of the co-equal responsibility both of husband and wife. Human nature without the leaven of the Divine, as exhibited in religion, is bound to deteriorate into animality, which feature is responsible for the results indicated by the statistics quoted above. Religion ought to be able to say: "Divorce is a very detestable thing in the eyes of God, but you can have recourse to it if you find that you cannot pull together," which as can be readily seen is the opposite of the Church's injunction: "Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put

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asunder," which betrays lack of sympathy with and understanding of humanity.

It is certainly doubtful whether a Church with doctrines of this nature can ever prove itself equal to a situation which is growing more serious and difficult than ever.

### Is London Ceasing to go to Church?

We have now and then animadverted on the decay of the Churches, and tried to trace the causes of such decay. Even at the risk of being regarded as guilty of repetition, we cull certain passages from the leader of the *Methodist Times* for October 13, 1927, under the heading which we borrow for the title of this note, and these, we are sure, will throw further light on the condition in which "the Churches" find themselves. Although the figures of our contemporary are, more or less, local, the subject has long outgrown the limitations of local interest, and has developed into a national problem. It says:—

"London is ceasing to attend church. The people are giving up the habit of public worship. This is the most ominous sign of our times." These are the words of a leading Free Churchman, who has unwonted opportunities of judging. A pamphlet has just reached us containing some startling figures which go far to confirm this statement. It is written by Mr. Arthur Black, of the Shaftesbury Society—a man of clear vision and sound judgment, who is by no means given to pessimism. He and his friends have been engaged in visiting many of the churches in Central London, and the results are sufficiently disquieting. Here are a few of the facts:—

Of 61 services in connection with the Anglican Church the attendance ranged from 500 to 15, one-third of them having less than 50 present. At eight o'clock communion five churches had an average of 7 persons present. At one morning service, where there were twelve banns of marriage published, there were present 6 men and 19 women and children! The character of the building is sometimes advanced as a reason for non-attendance, but at one service in a beautiful church the congregation consisted of 5 men, 11 women and 9 children. The Anglo-Catholics are supposed to be able to attract the crowd; at one of these churches in the evening, which had all the symbols of ritualism, there were only 21 persons. In another church where incense was waved there were 20 women, 50 children, 3 young men and the verger.

Nor do the Free Churches show much better results. In fifty congregations the attendance varied from 200 to 6, an average of 35 in the morning and less than 100 in the evening. "The denominations," says the writer, "seem unable to deal effectively with their

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big chapels in slum areas." Five Wesleyan Central Halls showed an average of 120 in the morning, and one of these had 400 present in the evening. The smaller halls of various denominations, including the Salvation Army, showed a varying attendance from 150 to 3. Compared with the figures of the *Daily News* census of twenty-five years ago, attendances have seriously declined. Scarcely one is better, many are less than half what they were and some less than a quarter.

Various plausible reasons are advanced for this decline, but the bald fact is the Churches are ceasing to attract the people, and if the same rate of decline goes on for another twenty-five years many of them must close their doors. The area visited was from Paddington in the West to Canning Town in the East and from Hackney to Wandsworth. Rev. "Dick" Sheppard—and none knows Central London better—in his articles in the *Morning Post*, has not a much more heartening story to tell.

Our contemporary further proceeds to diagnose the causes of this decay. Among other things it says :—

The Churches are paying far too much attention to secondary matters, such as organizing sports, and too little to the spiritual and moral welfare of the people. We hold that it is not the Church's business to run whist drives and dances. It is her business to teach young people the meaning of the sacrificial life and the glory of service of humanity.

The opinion of our contemporary is one that might at once be taken to heart by the Churches. But we fear that in advancing this view the *Methodist Times* overlooked the nature of the foundation on which the edifice of the Church rests. The Church believes in and preaches an Immaculate Conception; the "fall" of man; and the consequent birth "in sin" of every man, and in the doctrine of atonement. In the face of these doctrines, subscription to which is against human nature, we wonder what better means could be found than "running dances and whist drives and organizing sports" for bribing people to come to church.

### **An Echo of the Middle Ages.**

The British Association, which met in 1858 at Leeds, met this year again in the same city, under the presidency of Sir Arthur Keith. Although it is a scientific institution, its deliberations always cause a flutter in the Church's dovecotes.

The Bishop of Ripon, Dr. Burroughs, in a sermon at Leeds on September 4, 1927, made some startling remarks which, if

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on the one hand by their inappositeness have given occasion for hearty laughter to some, have, on the other, certainly set men thinking as to what the Church would do if it had the chance. The words of the Bishop are in the nature of a warning, for he said :—

Dare I suggest, at the risk of being lynched by some of my hearers, that the sum of human happiness outside scientific circles would not necessarily be reduced if for, say, ten years every physical and chemical laboratory were closed, and the patient and resourceful energy displayed in them transferred to recovering the lost art of getting on together and finding the formula for making both ends meet in the scale of human life ?

Much, of course, we should lose by this universal scientific holiday, but human happiness would not necessarily suffer.<sup>1</sup>

The words of Dr. Burroughs drew a ready and a witty criticism from Sir Oliver Lodge the same evening at the Salem Brotherhood. Sir Oliver said :—

The Bishop preached what may be taken as a pessimistic sermon. It was rather amusing and very clever. He says we are going ahead too fast. The rush of discovery is too painful. My old grandmother used to say that.

He suggests we should have a holiday for ten years. We cannot call a halt. We have got to go on. The outlook is not at all depressing. It is very encouraging.

Do not be dismayed by any of these things. We must press on in all directions. We must seek for more wisdom.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Arthur Keith's remarks are equally interesting. He said :—

Nothing in this world can rest. Everything is moving forward except religion, and the Church, instead of helping humanity, is attacking those who are doing their best to assist the world.<sup>3</sup>

We, as onlookers, and especially as among those who are well acquainted with the relationship existing between Science and Christianity, are apt to treat it as a matter of course. But—and we make no secret of it—we never thought that one should have the courage to so much as suggest that Science, which has been the sole agent for the showering of so many boons on us, should take a holiday for ten years.

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Express* for September 5, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Times of India*, September 7, 1927.

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It might be added that those not living in Europe cannot very well comprehend the significance of the expression "to go on a holiday." For what it is popularly supposed to mean is, an utter cessation of all activity!

Now what the episcopal theory, as enunciated by the Bishop of Ripon, amounts to, is this, that even such sciences as aeronautics and broadcasting, which are still in their infancy, and which by their presence have made the world richer and happier, should be left to themselves. Who else but the Church, if the words of the Bishop be taken to represent the mind of the Church, would ever think of taking a holiday when the world still stands at the threshold of a new and far brighter era of invention and scientific discovery?

In order to give our readers an idea of what would happen if an entire cessation of scientific activity took place, we cannot do better than cite the condition of Europe some hundred years ago, when Science was asleep. For this purpose we may quote Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*. Although his words are concerned more with the achievements of the Muslims in increasing the amenities of life, yet they give a fair, if rough, idea of what Europe was when Science was more or less on a steady holiday; that is to say, such a holiday as she might be expected to enjoy under the rule of the Church. Draper thus depicts the condition of Europe:—

Scarcely had the Arabs become firmly settled in Spain when they commenced a brilliant career. Adopting what had now become the established policy of the Commanders of the Faithful in Asia, the Emirs of Cordova distinguished themselves as patrons of learning and set an example of refinement strongly contrasting with the condition of the native European princes. Cordova, under their administration, at its highest point of prosperity, boasted of more than two hundred thousand houses and more than a million of inhabitants. After sunset, a man might walk through it in a straight line for ten miles by the light of the public lamps. Seven hundred years after this time, there was not so much as one public lamp in London. Its streets were solidly paved. In Paris, centuries subsequently, whoever stepped over his threshold on a rainy day stepped up to his ankles in mud. . . . The palaces of the Khalifs were magnificently decorated. Those sovereigns might well look down with supercilious contempt on the dwellings of the rulers of Germany, France and England which were scarcely better than stables—chimneyless, windowless, and with a hole

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in the roof for the smoke to escape, like the wigwams of certain Indians.<sup>1</sup>

Does the Bishop of Ripon want us to revert to the conditions of three hundred years ago and to forgo all the comforts of life given us by Science, not only in the homes of the rich, in those of the poor as well?

### **The Conflict between Religion and Science.**

There have always existed two schools of controversialists on the question as to whether or not there is a conflict between religion and science. The discussion has once more been brought to the fore by some of the provocative remarks made at the recent meetings of the British Association. Mr. J. W. Draper, as we all know, preferred to call his book *Conflict between Religion and Science*, whereas Professor A. D. White, who deals with the same theme, calls his book *A History of Warfare between Theology and Science*. Draper, in contrast to White, held that there was a conflict between religion and science because, we believe, that to him Christianity, as taught and represented by the Church and religion, were synonymous terms. But it is suggested by others that supposing no controversy existed between religion and science, or that, if such did exist, it was between theology and science, is it not evident that, had there been no religion, there would have been no earthly reason for the appearance of theology? But people who hold this view seem to have overlooked the nature of man and the order of created things. There are so many good things and, we know it for a fact, the human hand has spoiled their beauty. It is, too, common knowledge that, directly or indirectly, much misery has been introduced into the world through their agency. But can we maintain that the existence of those beautiful things was unnecessary or harmful?

Nevertheless in all fairness to both the schools of controversialists it must be admitted that the position of each of them is tenable so long as there remains a sufficiency of con-

<sup>1</sup> Draper, *Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. ii, pp. 30-31 (London, 1910).

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fusion and obscurity as to the meanings we attach to the word "religion." It is all a question of definition. The greatest stumbling-block of all arises from the fact that the Western world is prone to look upon "religion" and "Christianity" as synonymous. Europe, unfortunately, is ignorant of the fact that there does exist a religion—Islam—which neither exploits, atrophies, nor snubs the human intellect, but actually teaches that there is no conflict between religion and science, to corroborate which claim it has for its evidence the standing, ever-living monument of history.

Our entire sympathy is with those who have to subscribe to a religion which demands belief, for instance, in the "Real and Essential Presence of our Lord" in the consecrated elements of the Holy Communion—it might be mentioned in passing that the Roman Catholic Church and a large section of the Anglican Church believe that wine and bread are changed in their nature during the ceremony<sup>1</sup>—or in the fiction that the first woman was made from a rib of Adam, or in the legend that the world was completely drowned by a flood, or in the story that the earth is flat, or that the human race was doomed to eternal perdition and torture because of Eve being tempted by the serpent and Adam tempted by Eve, or that some years later a golden opportunity was offered for man's redemption by believing in an Immaculate Conception. No wonder, then, that people who begin to use even a grain of that common sense with which they have been endowed by God Almighty should agree with the Archbishop of York, who said some years ago at the Church Congress: ". . . The Church repels";<sup>2</sup> still less is it cause for surprise if they to their utter amazement can see no way of escape but that of acquiescence in the assertion that there is an actual conflict between religion and science.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Barnes said in a sermon in Birmingham parish church: "There are among ourselves to-day men and women whose sacramental beliefs are not far from those of the cultured Hindu idolater. They pretend that a priest, using the right words and acts, can change a piece of bread so that within it there is the real presence of Christ. The idea is absurd and can be disproved by experiment." (*Daily Express*, October 7, 1927.)

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by the *Two Worlds*, Manchester, for July 13, 1927.

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But if, on the other hand, religion is the name for a system of life which, actuated by the Divine element in it, enables us to pass our days in the life granted to us in reverencing the limits imposed by God and performing our duties and service to the creatures of God, our fellow-beings, or a code of laws with a spiritual force to sublimate them so that it conduces to the happiness of the world; or if it means the emotions of sympathy, charity, which are to some extent part of every human structure, or that force which ennobles our baser nature and makes it strive and aspire to higher ends, then there is no conflict between religion and science. Mr. James Douglas, editor of the *Sunday Express*, says: <sup>1</sup> "Religion is not a complicated mass of rites and rules, phrases and formulas, definitions and sophistries, quibbles and casuistries. It is a way of life. It is a mode of living. It is a practice of peace. It is a fulfilment of spirit. . . . It is self-surrender." In other words, it is Islam. It is in this sense that scientists like Sir Oliver Lodge and Bishop Barnes use the expression "Religion."

We have consistently maintained that it is not the religion of Jesus Christ, but that of the Church, which is repellent. We have, times and again, suggested that to create a complete harmony between the teachings of Jesus Christ and the findings of science is to abolish all those unintelligible dogmas, no matter how strongly entrenched they be, or how essential to the blissful self-satisfaction of the ignorant. Dr. Barnes <sup>2</sup> was certainly right when he remarked that "between the religious revelation of Jesus and modern Science there is no opposition. The two dovetail into one another with singular exactness. While evolution describes facts, the ultimate meaning of those facts Christ's teaching discloses."

No one will welcome the dawn of the new day more fervently than we, when the Church's authority has been completely demolished and a new search made for the words and teachings of Christ; for we believe—and we must confess to a leaven of selfishness in the fulfilment of this desire—that that

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by the *Two Worlds*, Manchester, for July 13, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> *The Christian Life*, September 3, 1927.

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day will not only help in revealing the true force of Islam to the West but will also go far towards bringing Christianity and Islam closer than ever to each other.

### **The All-India Tabligh Conference, 1927.**

The organizers of the All-India Tabligh Conference are to be congratulated on their decision to offer the Presidentship of the Conference to the Right Honourable Al-Hajj Lord Headley (El-Farooq). The Conference, as announced, will be in its annual session at Delhi during the coming Christmas vacation, and it is well to note that not only have they given practical proof of the fact that Islam does not recognize limitations of any kind—ethnological, political or social—but have also emphasized the oft-forgotten truth that the outlook of a Muslim cannot be dimmed by the distance which intervenes between country and country, thus witnessing in unmistakable terms to the catholic and cosmopolitan spirit of Islam.

It has been suggested in some quarters that Lord Headley's Presidentship will not be of much avail to the deliberations of the Conference. At the time of writing we have no precise information as to their probable details or scope, but it is safe to assume that the proceedings will remain true to the significance of the name of the body responsible for them, which is Anjumam-i-Tablighu 'ul-Islam—the Society for the propagation of Islam. It may well be that Lord Headley will not feel at home with the present India, infested as it is with petty jealousies and party strife. But he is not journeying so many thousand miles to attempt to unravel the skein of communal controversies under the litter of which the progress of India seems unfortunately to be choked.

Even as it is, Lord Headley has no light task before him, more especially when we consider how present-day India is riddled with schism of every kind, possible and impossible; but knowing him as we do, we are confident that he will steer the ship of debate clear of all the reefs and shoals that imperil the fortunes of many a conference.

In this connection, one more fact must be mentioned. We

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look upon the journey of Lord Headley's, seven thousand miles away from his native country, as one more link forged in the chain of brotherhood which unites the Muslims of the East and West. And we are probably not wrong in pointing out that it is the first time in the history of Islam in India that a Western Muslim has been honoured by his brother-Muslims to the extent of being invited to join them in the furtherance of a common cause, on which his views as to the ways and means of the propagation of Islam in the Western countries, where this world-wide religion is so much and so ignorantly criticized, will be eagerly awaited by all the well-wishers of Islam in the West.

We cannot bring this short note to a close without expressing how keenly Lord Headley's temporary absence will be felt by all those who have had the chance of coming in contact with him ; while the gap created by his absence in the activities of the British Muslim Society, whose presiding genius he was, will be difficult to fill.

Finally, we wish him all success in his aims—which can easily be summed up as an ardent desire to witness the rise of Islam in the West—and *bon voyage* and a speedy and safe return to the shores of England.

*Ba-Salámat rawi o báz á'i.*

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## ISLAM—A GREAT CIVILIZING FORCE <sup>1</sup>

By C. A. SOORMA

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<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered before the British Muslim Society, London.

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"Instruct in knowledge, because he who instructs fears God, who speaks of it praises the Lord; who disputes about it engages in holy warfare; who seeks it adores God; who spreads it dispenses alms to the ignorant and who possesses it attains the veneration and good will of all. Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish between what is forbidden from what is not; it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert; our society in solitude; our companion when far away from homes; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it raises us in the estimation of friends; it serves us as an armour against our enemies. With knowledge the servant of God rises to the height of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world and attains to the perfection and happiness in the next. The study of knowledge and letters is equal to fasting; its conversation, teaching and instruction are equal to prayers."—  
THE ARABIAN PROPHET.

IN these clear words the great Arabian Prophet sounded the trumpet-call ushering in a new era in the history of mankind fourteen centuries ago. At the time of his birth, as many of us know, Arabia was plunged into the very abyss of barbarism, superstition and ignorance. The Arabs were mostly worshippers of idols and stars—a relic from the days of the Babylonians and the Assyrians. Each city, like each tribe, had its own separate gods and goddesses, its separate temples and forms of worship jealously guarded and defended from alien influences. Mecca, which may be compared to Rome or Benares as being a great religious centre, enjoyed special distinction, as it contained the *Ka'aba*, built by Ishmael and dedicated by him to the worship of the One true God, but which, in the course of the centuries, had become a huge temple containing some three hundred and sixty idols, the national gods of the heathen Arabs. The Jews and the Christians who were found in large numbers among them, had strayed so far from their original teachings that they too had become idol-worshippers—the former deifying the Golden Calf and the latter the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ. Internecine warfare was the common order of the day; the various tribes and clans were at daggers drawn the greater part of the year. Superstition had so far reduced and warped their mentalities that to every natural physical phenomenon—like

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lightning or thunder—a special beneficent or evil influence was ascribed. Human sacrifice was resorted to in many cases “to appease the wrath of the gods.” The family life of the Arabs illustrates most clearly their depravity and cruelty. Polygamy was freely indulged in, and among certain tribes polyandry was not unknown. On the death of the father, the son inherited most of his wives, excepting his own mother. Daughters were not wanted, and it was a boast of the powerful clans that they buried their daughters alive, to escape the shame of seeing them married! Women were treated like chattels, and slavery was rampant. This was the state of Arabia when Muhammad—may peace be on him—gave to his countrymen the first message of Islam. How much he suffered and how earnestly he laboured I have attempted to show you before. Suffice it to say that after the fall of Mecca and the subsequent subjugation of the Peninsula, the Prophet appointed Governors, who were called *Amirs*, for all the chief cities and provinces. After the death of Abu Bakr, the great Omar continued the work begun by the Prophet. Omar is justly regarded as the practical founder of the political administration of Islam. He divided the conquered lands into separate Governorships, so as to enable his lieutenants to develop the resources of the countries in their charge. He also established the department of Finance, to regulate the receipt and disbursement of the revenue, to collect the poor-rate, called *Zakát*, and to pay all the executive officers, from the *Amir* downwards to the common soldier. The expense of the fiscal and civil administration of each province constituted the first charge upon its revenues; military requirements coming next, and the surplus applied to the support of the nation. Omar was shrewd enough to see that the improvement of the peasantry and the development of trade were necessary to bring prosperity to a growing and expanding nation, and he therefore gave particular instructions to the Governors to see to these matters. With these objects in view, Egypt, Syria, Irak and Southern Persia were measured field by field, and the assessment was fixed on a uniform basis. The survey which was undertaken,

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describing in detail the quality of the soil, the nature of the produce and the character of the holdings, can only be described as one of the greatest achievements of its kind and shows the administrative genius of the great Caliph.

Justice was administered by Civil Judges called *Qázis*, who were appointed by the Caliph and were independent of the Governors. Thus the Islamic administration, even in its infancy, proves the necessity of a separation of the powers of the executive from the judiciary, giving to the latter absolute freedom so essential to induce confidence in the people. This theory we find to-day in the political government of Great Britain, and on which so much stress is laid, but which Omar had clearly grasped centuries earlier. Justice was meted out to all alike, without fear or favour. No one, not even the Caliph, during the Republic, was above the law. 'Ali, for the first time, established a regular police system, including night-watches and a municipal guard.

Among the Republican Muslims the women moved freely in public, attended the sermons of the Caliphs and lectures delivered by 'Alí, Ibn Abbas and others. The home life was patriarchal and the restrictions imposed upon polygamy had so far raised the esteem and regard for women that men took their counsel before they acted in many important affairs of everyday life. The buying and selling of slaves was strictly forbidden—only captives of war were permitted to be held "in bond" until ransomed, and they were regarded as members of the household. In this connection it must be pointed out that among the Arabs, as much as among other nations of that time, the killing of prisoners of war was regarded as quite justifiable. They were very often at once actually butchered or offered as sacrifices to the gods. It was only during the latter half of the Middle Ages that their lives were spared, but they were still treated with extreme harshness and cruelty. Grotius in 1625 did much to improve the status of prisoners, but it was not until the eighteenth century, with its general tendency to mitigate the cruel practices of warfare, that the lot of the captives of war changed for the better. Compare it with the simple injunction of the Qur-án :—

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“ So when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, then smite the necks until you have overcome them, then make them prisoners, and afterwards either set them free as a favour or let them ransom themselves ” (xlvii. 4).

Besides, the Qur-án forbids the killing of non-combatants, the aged, the sick, and the young.

The banner of Islam had been carried through Northern Africa to the very shores of the Atlantic. Within the second century of the Hejira, Tarik ibn Zaiyád and Músá ibn Násir were knocking at the gates of the Iberian Peninsula. The rock of Gibraltar frowned on them, but they were inspired with a new zeal. Word had reached the former in Morocco that the people of Spain were groaning under the iron heel of the Goth. Poverty and misery stalked the land. As under the Romans, the rich, the noble and the privileged classes in general were exempt from taxation, but the middle-classes were so severely taxed that they were soon reduced to absolute penury and want. All forms of industrial activity were killed by heavy imposts, while trade and commerce was facing ruin and chaos. The land had been partitioned among the Grand Seigneurs, who employed either serfs or slaves to cultivate the land, and they were treated like animals. Under the blazing southern sun they were urged on by the cruel lashes of the overseers, and there was nobody in the land to mitigate their sufferings. The Jews, who had settled in large numbers in the Peninsula, were constantly tyrannized over by the kings, the clergy and the nobles. A premature rising led to an indiscriminate slaughter of the Jews ; and the lands and property of those who survived were confiscated, and they themselves were sold into slavery. Christianity was forced down the throats of the young, and a Jewish slave was henceforth compelled to marry a Christian. Such was the condition of Spain when the Crescent made its appearance there. What was the result of the conquest of Spain by the Saracens ? The results—for there were many—were startling. It swept away the cruel rights and powers of the privileged classes, of whom the clergy and the nobility were the most powerful

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members. All imposts from industry and manufacture were abolished, and thus the middle-classes came into their own. Instead of grinding and capricious taxation, the Saracens introduced a just, equitable and intelligible system of taxation—the usual poll or test tax, payable by non-Muslims, and the tax on cultivable land, payable by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The test tax was very light, and it varied according to the means of the payer. Moreover, it was spread over a period of twelve months. No lands were confiscated, except the land belonging to the rebels. The persecuted Jews obtained the right to follow their religion without any interference. But the most remarkable effect of the Conquest was the extension of the franchise to the labourers, and more so to the slaves and the serfs. Under their Muslim masters, many of them became virtual owners of the soil which they cultivated. This alone, I submit, is a striking proof of the charity of the early Muslims. In England, the franchise was extended to the middle-classes and the labouring classes only in the latter part of the nineteenth century by a series of Reform Acts, and only now, to women; whereas, under both Republican Islam and in Spain it had been granted to women on an equal footing with men centuries earlier.

For nine centuries the Saracens lived in Spain. To them we owe the erection of the Alhambra, the Universities of Cordova and Granada, and the palaces of Seville. It was a long and glorious reign. Their contribution to world-culture I shall describe shortly, but let me quote to you the opinion of a well-known historian of the last century on the expulsion of the Moors from Spain:—

“ The misguided Spaniards knew not what they were doing. The exile of the Moors delighted them; nothing more picturesque or romantic had occurred for some time. . . . They did not understand that they had killed their golden goose. For centuries, Spain had been the centre of civilization, the seat of arts and sciences, of learning and every form of enlightenment. No other country in Europe had so far approached the cultivated dominion of the Moors. The brief brilliancy of Ferdinand and Isabella, and of the empire of

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Charles V, could found no such enduring pre-eminence. The Moors were banished ; for a while Christian Spain shone, like the moon, with a borrowed light ; then came the eclipse, and in that darkness Spain has grovelled ever since. The true memorial of the Moors is seen in desolate tracts of utter barrenness, where once the Moslem grew luxuriant vines and olives and yellow ears of corn ; in a stupid, ignorant population where once wit and learning flourished ; in the general stagnation and degradation of a people which has hopelessly fallen in the scale of the nations, and has deserved its humiliation." (Lane-Poole.)

Let me take you with me on a flight into antiquity. Like Sindbad the Sailor, we alight on the banks of the Tigris, in Baghdad of the *Arabian Nights* fame. Under the Abbasides, Baghdad was known as " the capital of Islam, the eye of Irak, the seat of Empire, the centre of beauty, culture, and arts." Mansúr was as broad-minded in his ideas of government as he was in his patronage of the arts. It was related of him that once he was summoned by the *Qází* of Medina, at the instance of some camel-owners, and recognizing the equality of all in the eye of the law, he personally attended, accompanied only by his chamberlain. He stood as an ordinary litigant before the judge, who did not even rise from his seat to receive him. The suit was decided in favour of the plaintiffs, and Mansúr acknowledged the integrity and independence of the *Qází*, and rewarded him handsomely afterwards. He laboured to make Baghdad a centre of learning and culture. He founded a department for the translation of scientific works into Arabic. Hárún 'ar-Rashid, recognized by historians as one of the greatest rulers of all time, continued the work so ably begun by his grandfather Mansúr. Among the eminent men who flourished in his reign may be mentioned Asma'í the grammarian, Ibráhím Músali the musician, and Gabriel the physician. Rashíd himself was a poet and, naturally, he was specially kind to the devotees of the Muse. He established communications with the West as well as the Far East, and he was the first to receive at his Court embassies from the Emperor of China and from Charlemagne. The wonderful

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clock which he sent to Charlemagne as a present is regarded, even to-day, as a marvellous piece of mechanism.

“Mámún’s Caliphate,” says Ameer Ali, “constitutes the most glorious epoch in Saracenic history, and has justly been called the Augustan age of Islam. The twenty years of his reign have left enduring monuments of the intellectual developments of the Muslims in all directions of thought. Their achievements were not restricted to any particular branch of science or literature, but ranged over the whole course of the domain of intellect; speculative philosophy and *belles-lettres* were cultivated with as much avidity as the exact sciences. Mathematics, astronomy, the science of medicine, etc., all made gigantic strides during this glorious period of Asiatic civilization; its intellectual heritage passed both into Saracenic Spain and Christian Constantinople, whence it descended to modern Europe.”

To the undying fame of Mámún must also be added his toleration and political wisdom. Mámún established a regular Council of State—a sort of Parliament—composed of representatives from all the communities under its sway. Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sabæans, Zoroastrians and Hindus, had an equal voice where their respective interests were concerned. Liberty of conscience and freedom of worship were strictly observed. But Mámún went even a step farther. In his reign some eleven thousand churches, besides some hundreds of synagogues and temples, were in existence, and yet no attempt was made either to confiscate the trusts belonging to them or to deprive the priests of their rights and privileges.

The translation of works from Greek, Syriac and Chaldaic was under the supervision of Costa, the son of Luke; from ancient Persian, under Yehya bin Hárún; from Sanscrit, under Duban the Brahmin. The size of the earth was measured at a time when Christian Europe was asserting its flatness. Abúl-Hasan invented the telescope and the first observatory in Islam was established by Mámún at Shamassia, on the plains of Tadmor.

The Arabs were undoubtedly the inventors of the mariner’s compass which enabled them to sail as far as Cathay, the

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Malay Archipelago, especially to Java and Batavia, where their descendants can be seen to this day. Towards the south, they went to Madagascar, and of course colonized East Africa, the relic of whose once powerful empire can now be seen in the Sultanate of Dar-es-Salaam. Inland, they penetrated eastwards to Multán in India, and westwards, as we have seen, as far as Spain and Southern France. Both Sicily and Malta were conquered, and their ruins can be seen to this day.

Under the Abbasides, manufacture of every kind was fostered and encouraged. The glass and soap factories at Basra were then famous all over the world, and Venice, as a rival, had to hide herself in shame. Mutaassim established new factories at Baghdad, Samarra and other important towns. The muslin of Mosul was eagerly bought in the markets of Europe, Persia and India. Workmen and foremen were brought from Egypt to make paper in Baghdad, while royal factories for gold and silver embroidery existed in Ispahan and Tabriz; and the looms for silk, satin, brocade, and carpets were busy at Samarkand, Bokhárá, Damascus, Khorasán and Shíráz.

The empire was equally rich in raw produce; barley, wheat, rice (called *Ruzz* in Arabic), dates and fruits of all kinds, were largely grown. Cotton was cultivated at Aleppo, Beyrut, Khilat and Tyre, while the sugar plantations and factories of Ahwáz and Fars supplied the greater part of the world with refined sugar.

Colleges and hospitals were established in all the important towns, where free education and free treatment was given to the poor; the Nizamiyyah College, built by Nizám 'ul-Mulk, and the Mustanseriyyah built, by Mustansir BÍ-Iláh, are well known to students of history.

Under the Ommeyades in Spain, the same brilliancy and culture was to be found. I cannot enumerate at length the contribution which they have made to world-culture. But I shall mention a few facts to show that to them we owe much of what we know to-day.

To Rhazes we owe a comprehensive work on smallpox, and up to the sixteenth century the ninth book of this great

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work was the subject of lectures in the Universities of Europe. The greatest name in Arab medicine is, of course, that of Avicenna (Abú 'Ali Ibn Sina), who is recognized as one of the greatest physicians and philosophers of all time. He was a prolific writer, as versatile as profound. Among his more famous works may be mentioned (a) Utility and Advantage of Science, (b) Of Health and Remedies, (c) On Astronomical Observations, (d) Mathematical Theorems, (e) An Abridgment of Euclid, (f) Physics and Metaphysics, (g) An Encyclopædia of Human Knowledge, in twenty volumes.

Abu 'l-Qásím Zahraví, known as Abucassis, wrote a chapter on Surgery in which he has left such minute details, both of the instruments and the different types of operation on males and females, that he is entitled to rank as a pioneer of this science.

When Christianity was persecuting the students of chemistry as followers of witchcraft and sorcery, the Arabs had made some notable progress. Geber, or Abú Músá Jábir ibn Hayyan, was the father of Arab Chemistry. He discovered nitric acid and aqua regia. Geber also made discoveries of the nature of metals, which was a distinct advance upon Greek theories. Rhazes also discovered sulphuric acid. The Arabs, of whom Abú Mánúsúr Muwaffik is easily the leader, invented chemical pharmacy. The origin of modern dispensaries we owe to the Arabs. Mr. Holmyard, writing of these researches, says :—

“ Out of the inchoate body of mystical doctrine which represented chemistry (known to the Arabs as *Al-Kímiya*) in the Alexandrian school, the Muslims had extracted a definite scientific system in which experimental facts and theoretical speculation were for the first time brought into their true relation. The practical applications of chemistry were acknowledged to be an important factor of the whole, so that Europe was able to start its chemical studies with a firm basis of fact, a coherent body of doctrine, and a realization of the value of chemistry to everyday life, ready to hand. For this privilege of our ancestors let us make haste to pay our homage to the followers of the Prophet.”

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The Arabs discovered the manufacture of ice, which was unknown to Europe until the latter half of the sixteenth century.

Mathematics was permanently enriched by the discoveries and researches of the Arabs. They borrowed the decimal system from the Indians, but improved upon it. Algebra owes its development to the Saracens, who discovered many new formulæ. Ibn Músá in the ninth century substituted lines for chords in trigonometry, and also invented the quadratic equations. Al-Kindí wrote two hundred works on various subjects such as Arithmetic, Geometry, Philosophy, Meteorology, Optics and Medicine. The tables of Abú Ma'ashar (corrupted into Albumazar) and Abú Wafá have always remained one of the chief sources of astronomical knowledge. The first observatory in Europe was established in Seville, under the supervision of Geber, in 1196. In the tenth century the rival school of Cairo produced the great Ibn Yúnus, whose work was continued by Ibn 'un-Nabdí—both eminent astronomers.

(To be continued.)

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### VIEWS OF PRINCE LEONE CAETANI ON THE BURNING OF THE ALEX- ANDRIAN LIBRARY AT SERAPIS

[Translated from the Italian of *Annali Dell' Islam* by  
PROFESSOR ABDULAHAD DAVOUD, B.D.]

#### TRANSLATOR'S PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

IN translating the summary account and observations of the learned Orientalist author of the *Annali Dell' Islam*, concerning the famous legend of the destruction of the Alexandrian Library by order of the second Khalípha 'Umar, I have been very careful to keep the sense and the meaning of the writer as literally as possible. The principal creator of this legend was the famous Maferyana, or the "Illuminator," the Jacobite Bishop of Maragha, in Persia. Ibn al-Ibri, as the Arabs render the Latin form of Bar Hebraeus, is known among the

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Syrians under the names of "Mar Greghorius Abu-l-Feraj Bar Ibhrayi." He was a great champion of the Monophysite Christians in opposition to the Nestorians and the Orthodox, who held that there existed two natures in Christ. The Jacobites, who believed Jesus Christ to have one divine person and nature, considered his humanity to be but a phantom. Notwithstanding the encyclopædic learning of this "son of the Hebrews," he was as bitterly prejudiced against Islam as against those Christians who held the doctrine of the two natures in Jesus Christ, one divine and the other human, united in his one divine person !

The Alexandrian legend, which is a malicious calumny against the name of one of the most upright and God-fearing of the Companions of the Holy Prophet, has no authentic origin in the history of Islam, nor is the faintest trace of the fanaticism implied to be found in the teachings of the Qur-án. If the Blessed 'Umar had officially ordered the destruction of books which agreed or did not agree with the Book of Allah, not a single line of the Christian, Jewish, Persian, or Pagan literature—sacred or profane—could have escaped the like fate. Such a decree from 'Umar would have constituted a precedent in Islam, and in consequence not one Christian, Jew or heathen could have escaped death or conversion to Islam in any Muslim land ; and so far-reaching a decree would have been fearlessly recorded in the Annals of Islam.

As to the Alexandrian Library, the Trinitarian and Arian or Unitarian rapacity in destroying one another's books and churches whenever in power would not have spared the Library of the Ptolemeii, even if it had existed before the entrance of the Arabs into Egypt.

Those who have studied the immortal Persian epic poet Firdausi's heinous remarks against the Arabs who conquered Persia under the Khaliphath—caliphate—of 'Umar may justify—to a certain degree—Bar Hebraeus for having derived the origin of his calumny from a secular and purely nationalistic Persian source.

In the East, even to-day, the irregular soldiers do sometimes plunder, even to the destruction of books ; and I hear

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that my library in Urmia, which contained many valuable works, and my own manuscripts as well, were being sold in Tabriz and Baghdad as a result of the ravages of the Great War. The Arabs, whether in Persia or in Egypt, might have plundered books, not to burn, but to sell them; but a great and invaluable treasure of books and learning could never be destroyed by a Muslim decree.

### TRANSLATION.

#### **The Legend of the Destruction of the Library of Alexandria.<sup>1</sup>**

§ 105. It is not possible to omit, when discoursing on the capture of Alexandria by the Arabs, a remark about the celebrated legend, for such we believe it to be, of the destruction of the library of Alexandria, that grand library which has remained famous in history as the temple that housed all the treasures of the classical Greek Literature. The legend forms an essential part of the history, seeing that men do not like the naked and simple history of the facts, which we sceptic critics prefer to use in rebuilding the story of the past. Men conserve the memory of facts and events only inasmuch as they can be concerned with victory and glory, or of admonition, instruction or delight. When the simple story of the facts does not present the artistic and dramatic contour necessary to give the narrative its desired shape, then the popular imagination creates in its conscience, esthetic and moralizing, the legend which must serve the ethical scope for which humanity unconsciously torments and vexes itself.

If the popular creation is happy, if the legend responds to certain fundamental and eternal canons of the artistic and esthetic creations of the human psyche, then its fortune is made and it lays such solid roots in the fertile field of the story, that it becomes very difficult to pull it up and to re-establish the naked truth of the facts. The analysis of the legend is a clumsy and coarse work, for the demolishing operation of criticism takes the place, sometimes, of the

<sup>1</sup> *Annali Dell' Islam*, Complati da Leone Caetani, Principe Di Jeano, Milano, 1914, vol. vii, pp. 119-125 (§§ 105-111).

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genial legendary invention, which presumes altogether a state of human evolution, or simply a denial that leaves behind it a sad and sinister emptiness, or a complicated explanation of a fact, simple enough, in the simple mind of contemporaneous persons, but exalted and exaggerated by the sentiment and the conscience of the succeeding generations. Very often an aspect of the historical evolution of humanity finds a happy and beautiful synthesis in legend.

This is precisely the case with the pretended destruction of the Alexandrian Library, a legend which has in itself an undeniable foundation in truth of some sort; in fact, this legend sums up in popular form the sentiment that the victory of Islam signified the condemnation and the end of the dominion of the ancient classical spirit in Asia, a dominion commenced with Hellenism, consolidated by Romano-Byzantine arms, and which disappeared for ever as soon as the Arabs, the heralds of the renewed Semitism of Asia, had traversed the confines of the desert and overrun the tumbling Byzantine Empire.

The truth of such considerations will appear more manifest if we examine attentively the literal version of the celebrated passage of the Christian chronicler Gregory Abū-l-Farāj Bar Hebraeus, who wrote towards the end of the thirteenth century (he died in 685 A.H.) and was one of the first to transmit the legend of the destruction of the famous library.

§ 106—(Abū-l-Farāj). At this time (or a little before the Mussulman conquests) there became famous among the Muslims a certain John (Yahya), known among us (Christians) by the surname of Ḡhramátiquis (the Grammarian) or al-Naḥwi. He was an Alexandrian and belonged to the Jacobite Christian faith, and very ardently used to support the doctrine of Sāwari (Severus). He abjured the Christian faith concerning the Trinity, although the bishops assembled in the council in Misr invited him to recant and renounce his heretical opinions. He refused to obey; therefore the bishops dismissed him from the office which he used to hold. As soon as he saw that 'Amr b. al-'As had conquered the capital town of Alexandria, he went and visited the Arabian general, who

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had already known the great fame of John's learning, and received him with all due honours. 'Amr heard from him philosophical discourses of which the Arabs had had no knowledge or familiarity as yet, discourses which astonished and troubled him. But 'Amr was a very intelligent man, ready to listen, sincere and precise in his thoughts, and accordingly took John as a companion and kept him always by his side. One day John told him: "You have descended into all the magazines or storehouses (ḥawasil) of Alexandria and have put your seal over all that is stored therein: concerning those things in them which interest you I do not wish to question you, but from the things which can be of no real advantage to you we can draw greater profit (if you would concede them to us)." And 'Amr asked him: "And what is the thing that you are in need of?" John said: "The books of philosophy (Kutub al-ḥikmar) which are conserved in the government's deposits (Khazā-in al-mulūkyyah)." 'Amr answered him: "But I cannot give any order concerning such things until after I have requested the permission of the Prince of the Believers, 'Umar b. al-Khattāb." And in fact he wrote to him, informing him concerning the discourses he had held with John the Grammarian. And the answer of 'Umar arrived in the following manner: "With regard to the books you have mentioned, if they contain things that agree with the Book of God, then we have no need of them, for there is already so much in the Book of God which is amply sufficient for us. But if they contain what is contrary to the Book of God, then again we have no need of them, and I order thee to destroy the books." Then 'Amr b. al-'As prepared to distribute them among the baths of Alexandria to burn them in the ovens: six months were necessary to burn them all.

Listen to what has taken place and marvel (O reader)! (Abū-l-Farāj, pp. 175-176).

§ 107. The legend has attracted the fantasy of the writers and of the learned, and it was received with pleasure by those who, for religious purposes wishing to persecute the followers of Islam, had the delight of putting round their neck a carcan or iron collar as the barbarous enemies of ancient civilization

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and of culture in general. Gibbon, who entertained no tender sentiments in favour of Christianity and admired the manifestations of the Islamic civilization, in the fifty-first chapter of his history refers summarily to this anecdote and, putting in relief the words with which Bar Hebraeus concludes his narrative, he declares himself decidedly against the veracity of the fable, and recalls the fact that two other Christian chroniclers, earlier than Abū-l-Farāj, namely, Eutyches and al-Makin, entirely ignore the destruction of the Alexandrian Library, whereas they both having not the slightest sympathy for the Muslims would have been certainly pleased to record a fact so tending to their dishonour or disgrace. Gibbon maintains that it is most unlikely that the Arabs should worry themselves about destroying books, and he sets out to state rather how many have been the disasters which have befallen the celebrated library ever since the times of Julius Cæsar, and how the criminal bigotry of the Christians has been one of the most efficacious means for the destruction of all the literary and artistic monuments of paganism. Moreover, Gibbon adds that, if we were to collect all the records of contemporaneous testimonies from the time of the Antonines until that of Theodosius, it would be seen how the palace and the temple of Serapis no longer contained the 400,000 or the 700,000 volumes collected there by the thirst for knowledge and by the passion for greatness of the Ptolomeii of Egypt.

Let us leave the noble considerations and the happy intuitions of truth with which Gibbon closes the indication to this legend as final ; but we must mention that Lebeau, in his great history of the Byzantine Empire (Book LIX, Section 12, vol. xi, pp. 295–296), not only welcomes the whole legend, but holds it to be certain, adducing as proof the testimony of 'Abd ul-Latif, an Arab and Muslim author who died in the year 629 H. ; that is to say, he lived half a century before Abū-l-Farāj. This Egyptian writer, in fact, mentions some great ruins of Alexandria, and adds : “ I believe this edifice to be the porch where Aristotle used to teach and after him his disciples, and that here was the Academy built by Alexander the Great, when he founded the city, and where the library

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was fixed which was burnt by 'Amr with the permission of 'Umar" ('Abd al-Latif, p. 183 of the French edition).

§ 108. De Sacy, in his edition of 'Abd al-Latif (pp. 240-244), prints a long and most learned note on the question, where, having put together summarily all that has been written and discussed in favour of (Langles and White) and against (Reinhard and Sainte Croix) the veracity of the account given by Abū-l-Farāj, he declares himself decidedly in favour of the historical truth of the legend without taking into account that none of the earlier chroniclers has ever referred to it: that Sayf b. 'Umar ignores it altogether, he who on the capture of al-Madā'in (cfr. 16 A.H. §§ 194-205) narrates so many and such minute particulars. As a support to his thesis, De Sacy adduces [from Haji, iii. 90-91] a passage of ibn Khaldūn [Prolegomeni, iii. 124-125], in which it is stated that there was a distribution of many Persian books by Soa'd b. abi Waqqās, after the victory over the Sassanides, and in spite of the order of the Khalipha 'Umar, given in words identical with those in which he had ordered the destruction of the Library of Alexandria.

De Sacy cites, moreover, the modern writer Haji Khalifa, who [p. 78 of Diz. encicl., ed. Flügel] indicates how the Arabs in old times [it is fame that : yurwā] used to burn many books in the countries which they conquered.

Recognizing, however, that the story of the destruction of the library could not be referred to the famous Alexandrian Library, De Sacy, for reasons so evident that he does not even care to repeat them, maintains that the library was another one, viz. a Christian library much inferior to the old one, and completed only a short while before the advent of the Arabs. In fact, De Sacy quotes also the testimonies of Orosius, of Ammonius son of Hermeas, and of John Philoponus, from which it follows, that in the fifth century of the Christian era the Alexandrian Library, formed by the Ptolomeii, no longer existed.

Concerning the same question Butler devotes a long chapter (pp. 401-426) to showing that the account is false, supporting his view with a rich concourse of arguments and proofs, some

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weak, others efficacious; among the latter is the statement that John the Grammarian mentioned by Bar Hebraeus proves to be the same person as John Philoponus, and that he was dead before the coming of 'Amr, and consequently even this particular item turns out to be false. Besides, he passes in review all the testimonies of the classical authors, from which it results that the Alexandrian Library was destroyed in the burning of Alexandria in the Alexandrian war of Julius Cæsar in 48 B.C. Moreover, he adduces other historical facts which equally imply a destruction of the Alexandrian edifice and of all that it contained, also as events long past.

For the convenience of the studious we also add the passage from al-Maqrizi, which is taken partly from 'Abd al-Latif.

§ 109 (al-Maqrizi) 'Amūd al-Sawāri. This column was of spotted red stone (= porphyry?) and used to belong to the long (al-māti') deposit (al-sawwān), round which arose at a time about 400 other columns. They were broken to pieces by Qirāgā,<sup>1</sup> the governor of Alexandria at the time of the Sultan Salāh al-din Yūsuf b. Ayyūb (564-589 A.H.), and thrown on the shore of the sea with the object of obstructing the landing of the enemy whenever he should present himself. Among other things it is said that this column was one of a number which supported the porch (riwāq) of Aristotle, in which he used to teach science (al-ḥikmah). They say it was a dār 'ilm—that is, a house of knowledge—and contained a library (khizānah kutub), destroyed (afterwards) with fire by 'Amr b. al-'As for he had orders from the Khalif 'Umar b. al-Khattāb (Maqrizi Khitat, i. 159, lines 26-30).

§ 110. Ludolf Krehl published in the *Acts of the IV International Congress of the Orientalists*, Florence, 1878 (vol. i. pp. 433-454) a work entitled "Ueber die Sage von der Verbrennung der Alexandrinischen Bibliothek durh die Araber," in which he combats with various arguments the veracity of the tradition which he describes as a legend. His arguments are good, though he loses himself here and there in discussing things in a more general manner, which a little distract one's attention from the principal argument. He sets off all the

<sup>1</sup> Or, Qir Agha. (A. DAVOUD.)

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difficulties raised by the tradition, the silence of the historical sources of the first six centuries after the capture of Alexandria, and records the destruction of the grand library of Baghdad by the order of Hulagu Khān, the King of the Mongols, when he effaced and destroyed Baghdad in 656 H. (=1258 E.V.<sup>1</sup>). (Cfr. *Notices et Extraits*, iv. 569.) It is probable that this fact (i.e. the incident of Baghdad) may have inspired Gregory Bar Hebraeus (Abū-l-Farāj), born precisely in 1226 A.C.H., to give a willing welcome of the legend in his chronicle. Krehl turns aside to demonstrate that during the Arab conquest the Library of Alexandria existed no longer, (it was) destroyed and disappeared in those tempestuous political vicissitudes to which Alexandria was exposed, from the time when Julius Cæsar caused the museum to be burnt at the siege of Alexandria in 47 or 48 B.C., until the fall of the Byzantine Empire in Egypt.

Lumbroso (*Rendiconti della R. Accademia Lincei*, Classe scienze morali, serie quinta, vol. 12, 1903, p. 311) just upon this very question joins with some and would like to see an allusion to the famous library of Alexandria in a scrap of Syriac chronicle published by our I. Guidi (*Chronicum Anonymum*, nel *Corpus Script. Christ. Orient.*, ed. Chabot, eti. *Script. Syri*, versio, series tertia, tomus iv. pag. 22). The text indicates or alludes to a deposit, or archives, or library of Alexandria, but this does not imply that it deals with the great and famous collection. Nothing in the (Syriac) text leads us to suspect an allusion to it; and we can add that in a great, rich and cultured city like Alexandria there must have existed in all times numerous big libraries.

Concerning the Library of Alexandria and its legendary fate at the hands of the Arabs, there have written in these last years also Father Cheikho (al-Masrig, n. 4, Aprile 1911, pag. 299-307; n. 5, maggio 1911, pag. 388-393: "Les sciences Arabes et l'incendie de la Bibliotheque d'Alexandrie"; again, in a more recent number, December 12, 1912, pp. 912-918, in an appendix to some observations of Saykh Fida

<sup>1</sup> By "E.V." I think is meant "era vecchia," i.e. "old era," or the Christian era. (A. DAVOUD.)

## CAETANI ON ALEXANDRIAN LIBRARY

Husayn on the argument), which do not add anything new to the subject; and Mgr. Kyrillos Maccaire (*Bulletin de la Société Khédiviale de Géographie*, viii<sup>e</sup> série, n. 8, pag. 423-460). This latter study collects a mass of new material drawn from the Fathers of the Church, and from other old sources of the Byzantine period, to demonstrate that, even if the famous library of the Ptolemei perhaps did no longer exist at the time of the Arab conquest, there might have existed others of equal importance, and admits that there could have existed a large public library (pubblica) in Alexandria destroyed afterwards by order of 'Umar. Against the conclusions of this learned Coptic patriarch, so offensive to the good name of the second Khalif of Islam, an article appears in the same *Bulletin* (vii<sup>e</sup> série, n. 10, pag. 553-570) from the pen of Muhammed Majdi (Magdi), Counsellor of the Court of Appeal of Cairo, showing the conclusions of the Patriarch to be erroneous.

Both these writings deserve to be read, for they throw useful light upon the whole question. To the considerations made in the beginning of this *excursus* concerning the celebrated question, it will be necessary to add certain others, upon which it will suffice to insist very briefly, because in truth, all this discussion has, I know not what that is barren, empty and academic, so that the question must be treated from a point of view rather more elevated and comprehensive.

§ 115. We have already (*in the course of these annals*) said and repeated many and many times that the Arabs in making their conquests were dragged by the passion of glory, of power and of riches: Muslims only in name, they were not aiming at proselytism, they persecuted no faith whatever, and everywhere they had only one thought: to leave things as they were, for the money of the tributes flowed fluidly and copiously into the coffers of the State. There was no tendency towards obscuration, nor the suppression of foreigners' faith and culture; on the contrary, whoever studies intimately the genesis and the evolution of the whole Islamic movement in its thousands and thousands of diverse manifestations, social, political, literary, juridical, fiscal, administrative, artistical, etc., etc., is struck indeed with the repeated observations that

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the same movement was not at all a movement of destruction, but altogether that of absorption of all that existed. Islam swallowed up, so to speak, all the civilization of the Anterior, Asia, and made it its own, giving to it, however, only a new varnish, which may deceive the superficial student; but nothing is hidden to the expert observer and to the good judge of the historical evolution of the Oriental world under Islam.

In the beginning there existed the greatest cordiality between the Muslim Arabs and their Christian subjects. The Arabs admitted the Christians into very exalted administrative offices, and in the Muslim world there existed an exceedingly strong current of culture and of thought which sought to draw profit and advantage from the superior Asiatic civilization (hellenistico-judaico-Persian) to enrich the extreme leanness of the Islamic theology, ritual and culture. The ḥadith, with its hundreds of thousands of traditions, stands there to demonstrate what thirst for knowledge, what an irresistible want and need for absorbing and for adopting everything pervades the Mussulman world up to the end of the second century of the Hijrah.

The tendencies, fanatical, obscurantist, anti-Christian in particular, and anti-liberal in general, affirm themselves only afterwards, and this, too, owing to many and various reasons, political, social and religious, and through the preponderating influence of the non-Arab populations converted to Islam.

Hence, whoever knows well the history of these times and of this singular Asiatic civilization feels the unlikelihood and the absurdity of the legend, so contrary to the spirit of the first Arab conquerors. It is precisely for this reason that we have been content to give here only a summary account of the whole *vexata quæstio*, without troubling ourselves to linger and lose time by showing the falsity of a legend which, according to our manner of looking at things, has no nucleus or foundation of truth.

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**Friday Prayer and Sermon.**—At the London Muslim Prayer House  
—111, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday  
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**Service, Sermon, and Lectures** every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking,  
at 3.15 p.m. Every Friday at 1 p.m.

# MAN IN THE QUR-AN

## MAN IN THE QUR-AN

By SYED MAQBOOL AHMAD, B.A.

(Continued from No. 11, p. 420.)

### RETRIBUTION.

1. " And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that they shall have gardens in which rivers flow ; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say : This is what was given to us before ; and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them, and in them they shall abide " (ii. 25).

2. " Say : Shall I tell you what is better than these ? For those who guard against evil are gardens with their Lord, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and pure mates and Allah's pleasure ; and Allah sees the servants " (iii. 14).

3. " On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil " (iii. 29).

4. " And whatever good they do, they shall not be denied it, and Allah knows those who guard against evil. As for those who disbelieve, surely neither their wealth nor their children will avail them in the least against Allah ; and these are the inmates of fire ; therein they shall abide " (iii. 114-115).

5 " And as to those who are careful of their duty to their Lord, they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding in them ; an entertainment from their Lord, and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous " (iii. 197).

6. " And as for those who believe and do good deeds. We will make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them forever ; they shall have therein pure mates and We shall make him enter a dense shade " (iv. 57).

Note the last word ; this word could not be appreciated either in India or Europe where the dense foliage or gloomy winter make it not so very desirable as to people of a country where treelessness and burning rays make the situation, as

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cool shade, a source of delight. This shows that future happiness is only told in example as much as God's attributes told in the faculties of men. See No. 21 below.

7. " And as for those who believe and do good, We will make them enter into gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever ; it is a promise of Allah, true indeed ; and who is the truer of word than an Allah ? This shall not be in accordance with your vain desires, nor in accordance with the vain desires of the followers of the Book ; whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it, and besides Allah he will find for himself neither a guardian nor a helper. And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he or she is a believer—these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly " (iv. 122-124).

8. " Surely as for those who disbelieve, even if they had what is in the earth, all of it, and the like of it with it, that they might ransom with it themselves from the chastisement of the day of resurrection, it shall not be accepted from them, and they shall have a painful chastisement. They would desire to go forth from the fire, and they shall not go forth from it, and they shall have a lasting chastisement " (v. 36-37).

9. " And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and an idle sport, and whom this world's life has deceived, and remind them thereby lest a soul should be given up to destruction for what it has earned ; it shall not have besides Allah any guardian or an intercessor, and if it should seek to give every compensation, it shall not be accepted from it ; these are they who shall be given up to destruction for what they earned ; they shall have a drink of boiling water and a painful chastisement because they disbelieved " (vi. 70).

10. " And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors about whom you asserted that they were Allah's associates in respect to you ; certain the ties between you are now cut off, and what you asserted is gone from you " (vi. 95).

11. " Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed

## MAN IN THE QUR-AN

only with the like of it, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly" (vi. 161).

12. "And the measuring out that day will be just; then as for him whose measure of good deed is heavy, those are they who shall be successful. And as for him whose measure of good deed is light, those are they who have made their souls suffer loss because they disbelieve in Our communications" (vii. 8-9).

13. "Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah or rejects His communications? As for those, their portion of book shall reach them, until when Our messengers come to them causing them to die, they shall say: Where is that which you used to call upon besides Allah? They would say: They are gone away from us; and they shall bear witness against themselves that they were unbelievers. He will say: Enter into fire among the nations that have passed away before you from among the Jinn and men; whenever a nation shall enter, it shall curse its sister, until when they have all come up with one another into it, the last of them shall say with regard to the foremost of them: Our Lord, these led us astray, therefore give them a double chastisement of the fire. He will say: Every one shall have double, but you do not know. And the foremost of them will say to the last of them: So you have no preference over us, therefore taste the chastisement for what you earned. Surely as for those who reject Our communications and turn away from them haughtily, the doors of heaven shall not be opened for them, nor shall they enter the garden until the camel pass through the eye of the needle; and thus do We reward the guilty. They shall have a bed of hell fire and from above them covering of it; and thus do We reward the unjust. And as for those who believe and do good—We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability—they are the dweller of the garden; in it they shall abide. And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath them and they will say: All praise is due to Allah who guided us to this, and we would not have found the way had it not been that Allah had guided us; certainly the

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apostles of our Lord brought the truth ; and it shall be cried out to them that this is the garden of which you are made heirs for what you did. And the dwellers of the garden will call out the inmates of fire : Surely we have found what our Lord promised us to be true ? They will say : Yes. Then a crier will cry out among them that the curse of Allah is on the unjust, who turn away from Allah's way and seek to make it crooked, and they are the disbelievers in the hereafter. And between the two there shall be a veil ; and on the most elevated places there shall be men who knew all by their marks, and they shall cry out to the dwellers of the garden : Peace be on you, they shall not yet have entered it, though they hope. And when their eyes shall be turned towards the inmates of fire, they shall say : Our Lord, place us not with the unjust people. And the dwellers of Aláráf (elevated place for making comparison between bad and good people—may be compared to purgatory of Roman Catholics) shall call out to men whom they will recognize by their marks, saying : Of no avail were to you your amassings and your behaving haughtily—are these they about whom you swore that Allah will not bestow mercy on them ? enter the garden ; you shall have no fear, nor shall you grieve. And the inmates of the fire shall call out to the dwellers of the garden, saying : Pour on us some water or of that which Allah has given you. They shall say : Surely Allah has prohibited them both to the unbelievers, who take their religion for an idle sport and a play, and this world's life deceived them ; so to-day We forsake them, as they neglected the meeting of this day of theirs and as they denied Our communications ” (vii. 42-51).

14. “ Allah has promised to the believing men and the believing women gardens, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode ; and best of all is Allah's goodly pleasure—that is the grand achievement ” (ix. 72).

15. “ Surely as for those who believe and do good, their Lord will guide them by their faith, there shall flow from beneath them rivers in gardens of bliss. Their prayer in it shall be :

## MAN IN THE QUR-AN

Glory to Thee, O Allah! and their greeting in it shall be : Peace ; and the last of their prayer shall be : Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds " (x. 9-10).

16. " For those who do good is good reward and more than this ; and blackness or ignominy shall not cover their faces ; these are the dwellers in the garden ; in it they shall abide. And as for those who have earned evil, the punishment of an evil is the likeness of it, and abasement shall come upon them—they shall have none to protect them from Allah—as if their faces had been covered with slices of the dense darkness of the night ; these are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide " (x. 26-27).

17. " There shall every soul become acquainted with what it sent forth before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true patron, and what they devised shall escape from them " (x. 30).

18. " And if every soul that has done injustice had all that is in the earth, it would offer it for ransom, and they will manifest regret when they will see the chastisement, and the matter shall be decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly " (x. 54).

19. " So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire ; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it ; abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please ; surely your Lord is the mighty doer of what He intends. And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please—a gift which shall never be cut off " (xi. 106-107).

NOTE.—From this verse it will appear that the sky and earth are as much endurable as the heavens and hell. This confutes the doctrine of the creation of the world on the 24th of December, 4004 B.C. ! as well as of its disappearing when the heaven and hell will come into existence. *Wal ilm indallah.*

(To be continued.)

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### AN APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS

“ They are wrong who say : Verily, God is Christ, the son of Mary. Say unto them : And who could obtain anything from God to the contrary, if He pleased to destroy Christ the son of Mary, and his mother, and all those who are on the earth.”—THE HOLY QUR-ÁN, c. 5.

WE call our Christian neighbours  
To worship God alone,  
And place nor Christ nor Mary  
As rivals on His throne.

True, Jesus was a prophet  
Inspired to teach God's will,  
And show that men no longer  
Need Israel's law fulfil.

But God, if He had willed it,  
Could straightway have destroyed  
Both him and his disciples,  
And left their places void.

And Jesus, to his hearers,  
Prescribed a rule divine :  
Call no man “ Lord,” but worship  
One God—your Lord and mine.

Then hold his name in honour,  
Pursue the path he trod,  
Observe his worthy precepts,  
But make him not your God ;

Nor list to heathen fables  
Which picture him God's son,  
For God was ne'er begotten,  
And He begetteth none.

When He on aught decideth,  
He saith, So let it be ;  
And lo ! it is, for all things  
Conform to His decree.

Then, all good Christian people,  
Come, worship God alone,  
And place nor Christ nor Mary  
As rivals on His throne.

# WHAT IS ISLAM ?

## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teaching. For further details please write to the IMÁM of the Mosque, Woking.]

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

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

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

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

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

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state, in this life.

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

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

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Cherisher of all the

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Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the heaven and the earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

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

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

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

**THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.**—Men and women come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainment. Islam places man and woman under like obligations, the one to the other.

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

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

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

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

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