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Continued on page 2

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The Islamic Review
FEBRUARY 1960  48th YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Contents

Editorial ................................................. 3
The Object of Prophethood in Islam ............... 5
   by Maulana Muhammad 'Ali Abu 'I-Alaa al-Ma'nawi ............... 9
   by Dr. George Kheirallah
Sufi Poets of Bengal ................................ 11
   by Ravindra Chopra, M.A., LL.B.
Indonesian Instrumental Music ................... 14
The Divine Divan ................................... 16
   by William Bashir Pickard
The President of Pakistan in Iran ............... 17
   Excerpts from the speech of the Premier of the Republic of Algeria on the
   Sixth Anniversary of the beginning of the Algerian People's
   Revolt ........................................... 19
   A look at Afghanistan .................................. 20-21
   Turkish Literature—II .................................. 22
   by Dr. Oghuz Turkhan
   Death Penalty Reintroduced in Ceylon ....... 29
   by A. R. M. Zeruq
   Islam in England ................................... 30
   Why I Accepted Islam ................................. 31
   by H. F. Fellowes
   Muhammad in the Old and New Testaments .......... 33
   by A. H. Deedat
   The Destiny of Islam ................................ 37
   by Norman Lewis

Book Reviews ........................................ 38
   Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism, by Hazrat Inayat Khan
   The Balance of Truth, by Katib Chelebi
   The Philosophy of Ibn 'Arabi, by Rom Landau
   Islamic Occasionalism and its Critique by Averroes and Aquinas
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   The Correct Way of Life, by Abdo S. Ahmed
   Studies in Honour of Philip K. Hitti, Edited by James Kritzeck
   and R. Buhy Winder

What Our Readers Say ................................ 39
Ghulam Ahmad Bashir
Abdul Taib Mahmud
Muhammad Lwal B. Aguato
Wat is Islam? (Dutch) ................................. 40

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CAN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS CO-OPERATE?

"Say: O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between us and you, that we shall serve none but God and that we shall not associate aught with Him, and that some of us shall not take others besides God.”

(The Qur’an 3:63)

Connection between Christianity and Islam

There has always existed some connection between Christianity and Islam, either of friendship, respect and tolerance or of tension, hatred and hostility. Abyssinia was the first Christian country that gave refuge to early Muslims from the persecution of Meccans and in return Muslims have always respected the political independence of this country. But there were other Christian lands at the border of Arabia who harboured feelings of enmity against Muslims which resulted in constant warfare between Christians and Muslims for years to come. There have been periods in history after the death of the Prophet Muhammad and the four righteous Caliphs when Muslims and Christians have wilfully exploited their respective faiths for political motives and considerations. At times enmity has existed between the two religious only out of mistrust and misunderstanding or lack of proper contact. And at times churches and mosques have also been found under one roof. The connection, however, has always been there for the last 1,400 years, that is, from the very inception of Islam, and will remain so for all time to come, as it is not possible either for Christians or Muslims to wipe the other party out of existence. The question of the relationship between Islam and Christianity would, therefore, ever remain a burning topic.

There are so many similarities between these two great faiths that one may be tempted to look for an easy solution of the problem, but underneath these apparent similarities an unexpected gulf may exist which would make the task of building a bridge between these two faiths extremely difficult.

A Muslim believes in Jesus Christ

Christians and Muslims both believe in Jesus Christ. This is where the hope and greatest difficulty of Christian-Muslim harmony lies. “Islam is the one great non-Christian religion,” writes Eric W. Bethmann in his useful though at times misleading book Bridge to Islam, “which knows of Christ, recognizes Christ and venerates Christ” (p. 80). It is this knowledge, recognition and veneration that brings Muslims nearer to Christians than the followers of any other religion but at the same time takes them poles apart.

A Muslim believes Jesus Christ to be a true messenger and prophet of God (The Qur’an, 4:48:19:20), an ebad Jehovah, i.e., 'abd Allah (19:20). God’s word, Spirit (mercy) from Him (4:171), a word from God and worthy of regard in this world and the Hereafter and of those who were drawn nigh to God (3:44). He also performed miracles and was sinless in his character. He was favoured of God and was made an example to the children of Israel (43:59), was not rude to his mother (19:32), was taught the Book, the Wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel (3:47). He was granted revelation of God (2:87:5:110), verified the Torah and modified the Mosaic law (3:49).

The Qur’an gives a different picture of Jesus

But the Qur’an does not stop at this picture of Jesus Christ. He was a messenger and prophet of God and ‘abd Allah (servant of God) like all other prophets, Abraham, Moses, Muhammad, etc. (the translation of ebad in Greek is pais, which means servant as well as child). He had a mortal body needing food (5:75:3:58) like other prophets of God including the Prophet Muhammad. It must be borne in mind here that when Muslims call Jesus a prophet they do not belittle his position because a prophet (nabi) enjoys the highest status between God and man. With regard to the teachings of Jesus it has been mentioned in the Qur’an that he said: “Serve God, My Lord and your Lord” (5:117), and that he did not say “take me and my mother for two Gods besides God” (5:116). “O People
of the Book," says the Qur'an addressing the Christians, "exceed not the limits in your religion nor speak anything about God but the truth. The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, is only a messenger of God and His word which He communicated to Mary and a Spirit (mercy) from Him. So believe in God and His messengers. And say not three. Desist, it is better for you. God is only One God. Far be it from His glory to have a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And sufficient is God as having charge of affairs. The Messiah disdains not to be a servant (abd) of God, nor do the angels who are near to Him" (4 : 171-172). Similar statements can be found at several other places of the Qur'an such as 2 : 116, 5 : 72-73, 6 : 102-103, 10 : 68 and 19 : 35.

Again, one of the objects of the advent of the Prophet Muhammad was "to warn those who say: God has taken to himself a son. They have no knowledge of it, nor had their fathers. Grievous is the word that comes out of their mouths. They speak nothing but a lie" (18 : 4-5): "And they say: The Beneficent has taken to Himself a son. Certainly you make an abominable assertion! The heavens may almost be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder and the mountains fall down into pieces that they ascribe the son to the Beneficent! And it is not worthy of the Beneficent that He should take to Himself a son. There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes to the Beneficent as a servant" (19 : 88-93).

The great obstacle

More such passages can be quoted from the Qur'an but these are enough to show how big a gulf exists between the doctrinal side of orthodox Christianity and Islam. The Qur'an has given a picture of Jesus Christ which a Muslim thinks is more true, more complete, more noble and more worthy of him than is found in the Christian theology. "In bringing Christ to Muslims," to quote Eric W. Bethmann once again, "we face a difficulty which is to be met nowhere else. That is that Muslims assume that they know Christ and that their knowledge of Him is more accurate than ours. We are, therefore, not introducing a new figure to their thinking in bringing Christ to them, but on the contrary, we are trying to impose our wrong ideas about Christ upon their better understanding of Him" (Bridge to Islam, p. 209).

It is these "wrong ideas" which are unacceptable to Muslims. Otherwise, as has been shown above, Islam has nothing against the person of Jesus, son of Mary, who is spoken of in the highest terms in the Qur'an. The only criticism the Qur'an makes is of certain doctrines which have been ascribed to him; for instance, the doctrines of sonship and Trinity. Muslims do not object if the term son is used in an allegorical sense. The approach of al-Ghazâli (1058-1111 C.E.), Muslim theologian and mystic, towards this problem was that "passages in the Gospels which attribute humanity to Christ should be taken literally and that any other passages which apparently predicate divinity to him should be interpreted allegorically." In fact all prophets were sons or tabernacles of God. In being manifestation of Divine attributes they had the same relation to God as a son has to a father. It is only in this way that the doctrine of sonship can be made intelligible to Muslims.

Attempts at reconciliation

Recent Christian writers who have greatly influenced the Church's attitude towards Islam in this age have also tried to overcome this difficulty not by the reassertion of their faith about the sonship of Jesus Christ but by emphasizing that:

"We both stand squarely in the Hebrew tradition:
'The Lord our Lord is One Lord'."

It has also been made clear that the expression "son of God" excludes all paternity in the physical sense. To further bridge the gulf between Islam and Christianity, Kenneth Cragg has made a long-awaited contribution when he has stated that:

"Reflection makes it clear that the idea of the Divine Unity cannot be enforced in a mathematical sense, and that enforcement in such sense is the ground of most Muslim antipathy to the Christian Trinity. Certainly we cannot disallow the doctrine of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit on the ground that these add up to three. Was not Muhammad prophet, husband, leader and example? He was no less one Muhammad. On whatever other grounds Muslims feel disposed to disagree with the Christian understanding of God, it cannot validly be on the ground that it is not a doctrine of Unity." 

An attempt is sometimes made to draw a parallel between the doctrine of Trinity and "ninety-nine names" of God mentioned in the Qur'an.

If such is the interpretation and conception of the doctrine of Trinity a Muslim finds hardly anything to differ with his Christian friends. The change of persons into attributes is nothing which is derogatory to the integral character of God. This new conception and interpretation is perhaps the re-echo of the beliefs of early Christian sects now extinct. It was Sabellius (215 C.E.) who maintained that the Trinity was not a union of three persons but one person, a single Divine Essence, which manifested itself under three successive aspects, as Father, Son, the Holy Spirit. These could be considered as metaphysical terms as was suggested by Eliyya of Nisibis that there was no difference in saying "one nature, three persons", and saying "self-existent possessor of life and wisdom". Paul of Samosata (a Christian bishop of Antioch, third century C.E.) held that logos and Spirit were properties or attributes of God and that Jesus Christ was a man who had been adopted or constituted the son of God.

The possibilities of bridging the gulf

I have analyzed briefly above some of the points which separate the Christian and the Muslim world, and the efforts which are being made to bridge the gulf. Belief in the Unity of God must be the starting point. The Qur'an invites all the Christians to this rallying force when it states:

"Say: O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between us and you, that we shall serve none but God and that we shall not associate aught with Him, and that some of us shall not take others besides God" (3 : 65).

There was a time when mosques and churches existed under the same roof. There is no reason why this cannot happen again. (S.M.T.)

3. Ibid., p. 391.
4. Ibid., p. 317.
5. The World of Islam, Kritzeck & Winder, article by Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith.
The Qur'anic Conception of Prophethood

THE OBJECT OF PROPHETHOOD IN ISLAM

The belief in the finality of the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad was perhaps never brought under discussion so explicitly before. The question engaged Muhammad 'Ali's attention for a considerable time. There has not been anybody else for the past so many centuries who has so elaborately discussed and defended the conception of the finality of prophethood (khatm nubuwwat). His monumental work al-Nubuwwa fi 'l-Islam is thus a unique contribution to this subject, translation of a part of which is reproduced here.

All prophets brought guidance from God

Thus the story of Adam and the concluding verses thereof show that God's attribute of Lordship (rabubiyyat) demands that for the upliftment of mankind He should send guidance from time to time. And this is the very object of raising the prophets that they, through Divine guidance, should free men from the bondage of sin and help them to attain to moral and spiritual perfection. Accordingly, in the beginning of the Qur'an the object of its revelation has also been described in the following words: This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty. This in other words refers to that guidance the promise of which was given to Adam and his descendants that Surely, there will come to you a guidance from Me. Because, for us, all the scriptures have been incorporated in the Qur'an, and all the prophets' excellences have been blended together in the person of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!), therefore, whatever object has been stated for the advent of the Prophet Muhammad should necessarily be considered the object of the raising of all other prophets.

Moses and all the prophets who were raised before or after him were the bearers of guidance

Similarly the book of Moses was also called guidance, which in fact also referred to this original Divine promise. Further, the prophets who appeared before Moses and those raised among the Israelites after him, were all mentioned as being sent with guidance. This is clear from the verses of surah al-An'am. After mentioning Abraham, the following other prophets have also been named: Izaac, Moses, Aaron, Zacharias, John, Jesus, Elias, Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, Lot (peace be upon all of them). This list carries the names of Noah, Abraham and Moses and those prophets also who appeared after Moses, though they did not bring new law. It has been said about all of them: And We chose them and guided them to the right way. This is God's guidance wherewith He guides whom He pleases of His servants. This was God's guidance, revealed to the prophets and, through it, He guided whom He willed among His servants. Thus He Himself guided the prophets and through other people were guided. In further explanation of this point it has been said: These are they whom We gave the Book and authority and prophecy. Book (kitab) is, in fact, the collection of the guidance which is given to every prophet so that by means of this he should uplift his people and lead them to the right path. This point will be dealt with in detail later but it must be borne in mind here that the thing granted to the prophets has been called guidance on the one hand and book (kitab) on the other.

Together with this the fact has been mentioned that it was given to all the prophets. It is exactly as in the beginning of the Qur'an: first the Qur'an has been described as a book and then the name guidance has been given to it, and further in the surah al-An'am it has been stated: These are they whom God guided, so follow
their guidance." Thus it has been made clear that the real object of every prophet's advent, whether he brought law or not, was the bringing of guidance and making his people follow it, which, in other words, could be described as perfection and upliftment of humanity, as God had promised in the beginning that "Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me." It was, however, this guidance which He revealed to various prophets from time to time.

The real object of prophethood is purification

To understand the real object of prophethood and messengership it is enough for us to know what was the object of the advent of the Prophet Muhammad. This has been mentioned in the Qur'an at various places. For instance in the prayer of Abraham and Ishmael, Our Lord, and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy messages and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; and at another place in fulfilment of this prayer it has been stated: Ever as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom.再度, in another surah, after mentioning that God has decided to purify the believers from all defects, it has been stated: Certainly God conferred a favour on the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His messages and purifying them, and teaching them the Book, and the Wisdom. Then in the surah al-Jumu'ah, while referring to the universal and everlasting mission of the Prophet Muhammad, it has been declared: He it is Who raised among the illiterate a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom although they were before certainly in manifest error and others from among them Who have not yet joined them. Finally, it is, however, strange that, at all these four places, the same object of his advent has been mentioned which includes (1) Recitation of God's verses, (2) Teaching of the Book, (3) Teaching of Wisdom, and (4) Purification. In fact these are the four works which every prophet has been performing in his own way. As the former three points are a means for tazkiyyah nafs or self-purification, which in fact is the ultimate object of prophethood, therefore, I shall only discuss it here and leave the others for the second chapter.

Purification means perfection

What is meant by tazkiyyah or purification? There is a beauty in the Arabic language that the meaning of a word also contains a scientific significance. That is, the word possesses in itself a proof for its meaning. And this is so, exactly as every assertion and claim in the Qur'an is accompanied by a substantial argument. That is, very often the argument is not put forward for the sake of argument but because it originates from, and is found in, the claim itself as life is found in the body. Thus, the distinction which the Qur'an enjoys over other Divine scriptures is the distinction which the Arabic language enjoys over all other languages. It was for this reason that out of His perfect wisdom God selected the Arabic language for the revelation of the Qur'an. Now the word tazkiyyah is derived from zaka, the root meaning of which is "it increased." The famous lexicologist of the Qur'an, Imam Raghib, writes in his al-Mufradat: "The real significance of zakat is the process attained by Divine blessing (i.e., by the development of the faculties placed by God within man) which relates to the affairs of this world as well as to the hereafter, i.e., man's physical as well as spiritual advancement. Thus it is said of the zaka of the crop when the increase and blessing is obtained by it . . . and from it is zakat which a man takes out (of his wealth) as God's right for the needy, and the giving it the name zakat is because there is a hope for blessing in it or because it helps in the self-purification, i.e., in its growth by means of good works and blessings, or for both of them because they exist within it." Thus the purification of the self (tazkiyyah nafs) in its original sense signifies the growth of the self, or in other words its development and its acquisition of high rank and excellence. In fact the purification (tazkiyyah) includes both the aspects, i.e., the removal of the causes which stand in the way of growth of a thing and the acquisition of the qualities which would help in its progress. Unless defects are removed, the condition of growth cannot exist, but the removal of defects alone is not enough unless such resources are brought about which can help man to progress. It is, however, a mistake to think that purification only means the removal of weaknesses and defects. A fine illustration of this point is that of a sown field. For the increase of the seed produce the first thing which is essential is that the ground must be cleared of all defects, for instance its hardness should be removed, and stones, weeds, etc., should be picked out of it. But this alone is not enough. The ground must have the strength and resources which would let the seed grow and increase. For this reason the Qur'an has compared the believers with seed-produce.

Like seed-produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the owners that He may enrage the disbelievers on account of them. God has promised such of them as believe and do good, forgiveness and great reward.

Here God by comparing the believers with seed-produce has mentioned two things. The first is maghfirah (forgiveness), the meaning of which is protection, from defects, and the second is the great reward, i.e., achievement of excellences. In short, the real meaning of tazkiyyah is to carry (a person or a thing) to perfection. Besides the testimony of the lexicon and the above references from the Qur'an the same meaning is confirmed by other Qur'anic verses as well, such as: He indeed is successful who causes it (nafs) to grow, and He indeed is successful who purifies himself. The word jadid signifies real success, as has been described in the beginning of the Qur'an. After all, the fundamental principles of Islam have been mentioned along with the great principle of faith and righteous action, it has been stated about the righteous servants that These are on a right course from their Lord and these it is that they are successful. That is, they would be successful in attaining to moral and spiritual excellences. The verse he indeed is successful who causes it (nafs) to grow has the same significance. That is anyone who purifies his self and helps it to reach to its perfection, he is the one who succeeds. Thus, to help men to reach the stage of self-purification or tazkiyyah nafs, which is synonymous with self-perfection or taknim nafs, is the real aim and purpose of prophethood.

* * *

Some people may object hastily that if prophethood was a gift why was the Prophet Muhammad asked to follow their guidance? It must be remembered that this command was given after he had become a prophet. Moreover, the books of those prophets did not exist, and, if they did exist, alterations had taken place in them. Thus, following their guidance meant conformation to their modes and methods of preaching, i.e., as they did face difficulties in the establishment of the Ta'lid (Unity of God), similarly the Prophet Muhammad should also work with steadfastness and patience. And this could also mean that he should combine all the excellences in his person which the previous prophets possessed individually.
The revelation of guidance is essential for the upliftment of humanity

To sum up, the revelation of some guidance is necessary, according to the Qur’ān, for the upliftment of humanity. Nobody can attain real perfection unless he is a follower of that guidance. All prophets of God brought guidance with them. So did the Prophet Muhammad and so did Moses, and so did the prophets who appeared before Moses and the prophets who appeared among the Israelites after him; all of them brought guidance. The word of God does not confine this universal principle to a few nations or tribes. It comprehends all the peoples of the world. As was promised with Adam that “Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me”, in a similar way it has been said in the Qur’ān that for everyone a guide was sent, which means that the Divine law was not limited to the children of Israel or Ishmael, but that every nation had a bearer of guidance. The promise given was universal, so it was universally fulfilled.

The most perfect and the last of all the guides is the Messenger Muhammad

But at the end of all came that perfect guide who was the first of all and the last. It has been mentioned in the Qur’ān:

Certainly the first house appointed for men is the one at Bakkah (Makkah), blessed and a guidance for the nations.17

The word mubahak (blessed) in the Arabic language signifies the blessing which is never cut off. Thus in space and time this house spreads its skirt far and wide and is a source of guidance for all the nations and men for ever. As this house is the first and the last, similarly the Prophet Muhammad is the first prophet and the last, as has been mentioned in a hadith: “I am the first prophet in creation and the last in advent”, i.e., in creation I am the first prophet as the House of Ka’bah is the first house appointed for men, and in advent I am the last, i.e., no prophet will be raised after him as Ka’bah is the last Qiblah appointed for men.

The conception of guidance is wider than that of Shari’ah

This should also be borne in mind that the word guidance (hidayah) has a wide significance and is not synonymous with law (shari’ah). On the other hand, law is also a part of the same guidance, which was revealed more or less from time to time according to the needs. But the brimming of guidance is essential for every prophet, being the chief object of the advent of the prophets. If we first look at the Qur’ān, which could be a real guide to us in every matter because it is free from all alterations, substitutions and interpolations, we notice that the commands and prohibitions (awāmar wa nawaḥīl) only form a small part of it, although every word of it is a source of guidance; therefore, the whole book is called ḥidaya. Commandments and prohibitions obviously are only a part of the book. No doubt! God gave laws (Shara’āt) also to the nations, as is stated in the Qur’ān: For every one of you We appointed a law and a way, but every prophet brings guidance (hidayah) with him, whether he brings a law (shari’ah) or not. It is for this reason that in the Qur’ān, or for that matter in the authentic reports (hadith), no distinction has been made between prophethood with law and without a law. The same inference is also drawn from the verse: This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour to you, i.e., the law has been perfected as well as the guidance. Now in future neither would there be any alternation in the law nor would a new guidance be revealed for the upliftment of mankind. In view of this distinction no objection could even be raised about the meaning of the Qur’ānic verse where it is stated about the Torah that by it did the prophets judge for the Jews.20 This only means that the judgment in the disputes among the Israelites was given according to the law of the Torah. But, as will be shown later, even alterations and changes in the law were also made by the prophets, because these codes were after all not perfect. At any rate giving of judgment according to the Torah does not mean that no guidance from God was revealed to these prophets. Such a conclusion is clearly opposed to the teachings of the Qur’ān.

Prophethood is a gift and not an acquisition

It is evident from the Qur’ān and the hadith that Muslim theologians are unanimous on the point that prophethood is a gift and not an acquisition (iktisab). Nobody can acquire the office of prophethood by his effort. On the other hand, God, out of His bounty, whenever He wills, stations a person of His choice to this rank. In reply to the demand of the unbelievers that We will not believe till we are given the like of that which God’s Messengers are given, the Qur’ān says, God knows where to place His message,21 that is, messengership is a favour of God and He knows best who is fit to receive it. Similarly, the Qur’ānic verse He makes the spirit to light by His command upon whom He pleases of His servants who may warn (men) of the day of the meeting shows that the Divine revelation is granted only to the elect. Ruh (spirit) means the Divine revelation, not the soul which is given to every man.

Similarly, the reports of the Prophet also confirm that prophethood is a gift and cannot be realized by effort. As the Prophet is reported to have said, I am a prophet before the birth of Adam, or by way of creation I am the first among the prophets.

Thus to acquire prophethood by effort or by following some other person is against the plain teachings of all these Qur’ānic verses and the reports of the Prophet.

A person who acquires an excellence by effort cannot be called a prophet

After bearing this in mind it is easy to understand that prophethood is only conferred directly by God and what man realizes by his own effort or by following another person, however closely it may be to prophethood, cannot be called prophethood in reality. He who has been perfected and purified directly by the hand of God is alone entitled to be called a prophet. All the prophets were called prophets in the sense that they were mediators between God and mankind. God made them perfect and stationed them at a place from where they could themselves make others perfect. And although at times one prophet after another might have appeared, or sometimes a prophet with another prophet might have been raised, one prophet had no share at all in conferring the office of prophethood on another. For it was essential that whoever was raised as a prophet should reach the stage of prophetic perfection directly by the hand of God and not by following any other person. As for others, they should follow him in his footsteps and, by his care, attention and spiritual power, should be able to reach the stage of self-purification. Their light is the light of their master-prophet. The light which is a gift is genuine as the light of the sun but those who borrow it receive it as a reflection and their light is as the light of the moon; and as from this (reflected) light further light is not reflected, therefore, such persons cannot be called prophets.

FEBRUARY 1960
The view of Shah Wali Allah that a prophet is he who makes a deficient person perfect, himself following no Imam Hadrat Shah Wali Allah writes in one of his books:

"Similarly, people differ in their moral condition on which depends their happiness (sa'dadat) . . . and in some people the moral condition is latent while its signs are manifested by them but for its fuller expression they stand in need of an Imam for the betterment of this condition and according to this is the saying of God, the Most High: 'The oil whereof gives light though it touch not.'"28 Such people are called the forerunners and from among them are the prophets. They can bring the excellences of this moral condition into action and can adopt its proper condition. Without the help of a leader and invitation from anyone they make the imperfect perfect and according to the nature in whatever way they act their behaviour results into such a code that remains with the people as a remembrance. They make it the way of their conduct."29

This clearly shows that prophets are those whose very nature is gifted with excellences from God and therefore they do not stand in need of any Imam, leader or guide.

The view of Imam Ibn Hazm

Imam Ibn Hazm writes:

"Thus it is correct that prophethood is within possibility and it is the raising of a people who have been distinguished by God, the Most High, with excellence not for any reason but because He wills it to be so. Thus God teaches them without being taught and without making them progress by stages and without their search for it and from among this kind is the vision (ru'u'a) which comes true."30

This proves that learning without being taught is the condition of prophethood, which, in other words, is called receiving without mediation, or a gift (mauhibah).

The view of Imam Fakhr al-Din Rāżi

Imam Rāżi divides all men into three classes, from among which the last class is of prophets, about whom he writes:

"Those who are perfect in these two stations (i.e., knowledge and conduct M. 'Ali) and they have the power to cure the imperfect and can lift up the deficient from the depth of immaturity towards the height of perfection, they are the prophets (may the peace of God be upon them!)."31

The view of al-Ghazālī

Similar is the opinion of Imam al-Ghazālī:

"With regard to the point whether messengership (risalat) is a matter of acquisition or is a Divine influence, I say let it be known that messengership is a heavenly influence, a Divine decree and a Godly gift. It cannot be acquired by effort nor by acquisition. God knows best where to place His messengership."32

Similarly, at another place he writes:

"Prophets are a medium for the transmission of God’s command, as angel is a medium between the creation and the command. . . . As by the mediation of the angel He revealed in every heaven its affair, similarly, through the mediation of a prophet, He revealed His affair in every age. Thus the first revelation is measurement (taqdir) and the second is obligation (taklīf)."33

Two conditions for a prophet: (1) For the purification and upliftment of humanity he should bring guidance from God. (2) Acquisition, education or anyone’s discipleship should play no part in it

The sum and substance of the whole discussion is that the real object of prophethood is to bring some guidance for the upliftment of humanity or for self-purification. A prophet serves as a medium between God and His creation. The prophet's moral and spiritual excellence is a Divine favour (mauhibah), but that of all other people is due to following the prophet, that is, by way of acquisition (ikitsah). He receives his light directly from God, while other people receive their light from him, and whatever they receive is only the result of their discipleship. But prophets do not acquire their excellence by following others. Those who do so by following are not in fact prophets. All these conclusions are confirmed by the Qur'an, the Hadith, and sayings of the Muslim Imams. Thus after full deliberations over the real aim and object of prophethood, we arrive at the conclusion that, according to the terminology of Shari'ah, about which the Qur'an, the Hadith and the whole ummah of Islam has unanimously agreed (and it should be remembered that the ummah of Islam does not mean the common and illiterate people; to say this is rather a great audacity and impudence), only that person could be called a prophet who fulfills these two conditions: (1) he should bring some guidance from God for the perfection and upliftment of mankind, and (2) his own perfection and guidance should be the result of the gift of God and not the result of acquisition, i.e., by following somebody else. A person in whom these two conditions are not found the word prophet cannot be applied to him in reality.

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6 Ibid., 6 al-A'ām: 91.
7 Ibid., 2 al-Baqarah: 38.
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10 Ibid., 3 al-Imrān: 163.
11 Ibid., 63 al-Jumu'ah: 2-3.
14 Ibid., 91 al-Shams: 9.
15 Ibid., 87 al-A'ām: 14.
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17 Ibid., 2 al-Baqarah: 38.
18 Ibid., 13 al-Rū'd: 7.
19 Ibid., 13 al-Imrān: 95.
20 Mubārak signifies the continuance for ever of the blessings which a thing possesses, or that from which extensive flows. Iman 'Allāmah Abu l-Fadl Jamāl al-Dīn Muhammad Ibn Mukarram, Līsān al-A'rāb.
22 Ibid., 5 al-Mā'ād: 3.
23 Ibid., 5 al-Mā'ād: 44.
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28 pouring it on for the of the blessings...to which he makes a point.
29 Shah Wali Allah of Delhi, Huwāt Allah al-Balighah Ch. Ikhtilāf al-mā's fi al-xīdah (Difference of men in happiness).
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ABU 'L-'ALAA AL-MA'AAARI

A Great Arab Philosopher of the Tenth Century C.E.

The Forerunner and Prototype of Dante's Divine Comedy

By Dr. GEORGE KHEIRALLAH

Abu 'l-'Ala al-Ma'ari, the Arab blind philosopher, poet, great litterateur and a forerunner of modern rationalism, as conceived by Gibran Khalil Gibran

Do good for good is good to do
As better still, nor for reward.—Abu 'l-'Ala.

In the tenth century, at the height of Muslim and Arabian ascendancy, which was drawing the finest scholars of Europe to the Arabian schools of Sicily, Spain and North Africa, there arose among the Arabs of Syria a blind philosopher who not only became one of the greatest poets of a very poetic tongue, a great litterateur, but proved to be the forerunner of modern Rationalism. Abu 'l-'Ala al-Ma'ari was born in a small village near Aleppo, Syria, in 973 C.E. When four years of age, as a result of an attack of smallpox, he lost the sight of his left eye and by his fifth year he had become totally blind.

Abu 'l-'Ala began to study with his own father according to the oral method still in vogue in the East, and after he had finished his study at home he was sent to the school of Aleppo where he acquired knowledge under the eminent professors of the time and where the treasures of its libraries were unfolded to him. A little later we find him journeying to Antioch, Tripoli and Latakia, where he memorized various books and held discourse with many masters. His memory seemed to be prodigious. His ambition as a youth is illustrated in the following verse:

"And I, albeit I come in Time's late hour,
Achieve what lay not in the ancient's power."

By the time Abu 'l-'Ala had reached the age of forty-five he had become renowned as a famous poet and grammarian and a man of great learning. It was then that he crossed the Syrian desert and went to Baghdad, which had become the centre of Arabian culture. Here, in the city of Haroun al-Rasheed and of the Arabian Nights' tradition, Abu 'l-'Ala was received with acclaim in its learned and cultured circles for he had become the greatest poet of his day.

Poets in those days were assured of great riches if they composed panegyrics in praise of the rulers and notables, but Abu 'l-'Ala disdained such sycophancy, endured poverty and, retained his pride:

"And falsehood like a star all naked stand
But truth still hides her face 'neath hood and veil.
I lift my voice when e'er I talk in vain.
But do I speak the truth, hushed are my lips again."

After two years at Baghdad, Abu 'l-'Ala learned that his mother was ill, and decided to go home. It is recorded that the people of Baghdad paid him high homage at his departure — so great was the esteem in which this poor and solitary blind man was held by the people of the greatest centre of his time. On the journey home he learned of the death of his mother and decided to return to his native village and live the life of a simple recluse, but no sooner had he gone into retirement than students and learned men began to flock from all over Syria and the Arabian world to

FEBRUARY 1960
interrogate him and listen to his discourses on philology and the antiquities of the Arabs. He refused, however, all offers of pecuniary aid and lived on a yearly endowment of thirty gold dinars, half of which he paid his servant, subsisting on the remaining fifteen dinars per year.

"Who kindles fires in the night
For glory’s sake he shows a light;
But man, to live, needs little wealth
A shirt, a bellyfull, and health."

His clothing consisted of a coarse woollen garment and his diet of barley and vegetables — for he had become a vegetarian in the strictest sense, feeling that it was a sin to live by killing and robbing creatures who had the selfsame right to life.

"Do not unjustly eat what the water has given up, and do not desire as food the flesh of slaughtered animals.

"Or the white (milk) of mothers who intended its pure draught for their young, not for noble ladies.

"And do not grieve the unsuspecting birds by taking their eggs; for injustice is the worst of crimes.

"And spare the honey which the bees get betimes by their industry from the flowers of fragrant plants;

"For they did not store it that it might belong to others,

"Nor did they gather it for bounty of gifts.

"I washed my hands of all this; and would that I had perceived my way ere my temples grew hoar!"

Thus he lived until the age of eighty. During his long life he dictated to his amanuensis many works of erudition. One composition consisting of a hundred parts was lost, unfortunately for the world at large and Arabian culture in particular, and of some of Abu 'l-'Alaa's compositions only the names are now known. The estimate placed on their value is arrived at by weighing the precious epistles that have survived, as well as the philosophy which runs through the poetry that has come down to us. One of Abu 'l-'Alaa's epistles, for example, called The Epistle of Forgiveness, is held by Arabists as well as European Orientalists to be the forerunner and prototype of Dante's Divine Comedy.

The following selections from the poetry of Abu 'l-'Alaa are translated by the late Professor R. A. Nicholson of Cambridge University. The translations follow the meaning closely, but inevitably lose much of the form and beauty of expression and the pithy lucidity of the original.

"The truly religious is he that hates evil and girds his loins with a band and waistcloth of innocence."

"But some hope an Imam with voice prophetic
Will rise amidst the silent ranks agaze.
"An idle thought! There's no Imam but reason
To paint the morning and the evening ways."

"Let Rabbis laud their Sabbath as they may.
"The truly wise keep Sabbath every day."

"Our young man grows up in the belief to which his father has accustomed him.
"It is not reason that makes him religious, but he is taught religion by his next of kin."

"Falsehood hath so corrupted all the world,
"Ne'er deal as true friends they whom sects divide
"But were not hate Man's natural element
"Churches and Mosques had risen side by side.
"The religion is that thou be just
"To all — and what religion oweneth he
"That scornst due rights?"

"Consider every moment past
"A thread from Life's frayed mantle cast.
"Bear with the world that shakes thy breast
"And live serene as though at rest.
"How often did a coal of fire
"Blaze up awhile, sink low, expire!
"O captain, with calm mind lead on,
"Where rolls the dust of war: 'tis none
"Of thine, the cause that's lost or won.
"Time, who gave thee so scant a dole.
"He takes of human lives large toll.
"Spare us more wounds: enough we owe
"A fate enamoured of our woe.
"And him that weeps and pining sighs.
"And ask the laughter why he joys.
"When our most perfect sage seems yet
"A schoolboy at his alphabet."

The best interpreter of Abu 'l-'Alaa today, and the modern philosopher of the Arabian world, is another blind man, Dr. Taha Husayn of Egypt.

"When a blind man goes by, pity him and know for sure that ye all are blind, even if ye have sight."

— Abu 'l-'Alaa.

JESUS IN "HEAVEN ON EARTH"

By al-HAJJ KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD, Barrister-at-Law

AL-SAYYID RASHID RIDHA, a disciple of Mufti Muhammad 'Abduh of Egypt, wrote in his commentary of the Qur'an that Jesus' 'flight to India and his death in this town (i.e., Srinagar) is not against reason and inference'.

Jesus in "Heaven on Earth" is a detailed study of this problem.

KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD has rendered service of inestimable value both to history and to religion by making available to the average reader the mass of evidence which he has, after monumental labour, spread over the course of several years, compiled in the closely-pucked pages of this valuable book.

The author attempts to unravel the mystery surrounding the last days of Jesus of Nazareth. He bases his conclusions on well-founded authentic documentation. He covers a field hitherto unexplored by scholars for various and obvious reasons.

PUBLISHED BY:
THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION AND LITERARY TRUST

The Shah Jehan Mosque - Woking - Surrey - England
Sufi Poets of Bengal

By the end of the 18th Century the Bengali Sufi poets had done their work. The need of the people had now changed. Some continued to sing of the Beloved in the traditional manner, for the chief merit in the Bengali Sufi poetry lies exclusively in the fact that it is noble, pious and sweet, and it inspires the people even today to seek the Divine Love

By RAVINDRA CHOPRA, M.A., LL.B.

Pacifism and contentment, non-violence and benevolence, essential unity of all religions, transmigration and eternity of the soul, the immanence of God and a simple life intoxicated with Truth were some of the principal tenets of Sufism which established its roots deep in the fertile land of Bengal from the 16th century to the end of the 18th century. It was in this period that Sufism led the vanguard of progress in Bengali literature and was responsible for creating poets of exceptional talent such as Daulat Qazi, Alaaol, Sayyid Sultan, Hayaat Mamun, Nasrullah Mansur, Ghariullah and Sayyid Hamza.

Bengali Sufism, evidently, was a branch of the great Sufi movement which originated in Arabia during the second century A.H. (800 C.E.). But it came to differ a great deal, in details, from the original, on account of its having been subjected to many innovations and modifications under the influence of Hindu religious and philosophic thought.

During the second century A.H. (815 C.E.), it seems, Greek philosophical ideas began pouring in the Sufistic ideology and exercised great influence; as Sufism marched towards the east, these were supplanted by the Persian religion and Indian thought, both Buddhist and Hindu.

After the Muslim conquest of Northern India, the Sufis poured into the country and this new ideology spread like wildfire. This was the only peaceful, friendly and tolerant element of Islam. The Islam professed by aggressive 'ulama and qadhis could not impress the Hindus who abhorred it. But the Islam represented by the Sufis appealed to them and almost all the willing conversions were no doubt the result of Sufi preaching.

Sufism in Bengal

In the beginning, the Sufis in Northern India were preachers and often joined hands with the rulers to establish their power and to convert the people to Islam. Their tolerance, benevolence, patience and sincere friendly spirit brought under its sway a tremendous number of converts belonging to lower grades of Hindus. But later on, many Sufis gave up proselytism and devoted themselves to the study of different religious systems and philosophies of the country, and some went to the extent of questioning the superiority of their own religion.

A remarkable change, however, occurred in Sufism towards the end of the 17th century. The Emperor Aurangzeb's (d. 1707 C.E.) antipathy against Hinduism so much affected the intellectual Sufis that they were more than ever driven towards Hinduism. Hindu Vedantic philosophy captured their minds and the Bhakti movement, enunciated by Chaitanya (d. 1534 C.E.), Guru Nanak (d. 1520 C.E.), Namdeo and Kabir (16th century C.E.), influenced their ideas to a considerable extent. The result was that this change had surprising effect in Bengal, stronghold of Islam, and the Sufis began to hold the view that besides God there is no reality. To them everything else was illusion or Hindu maya.

Hindu influences

Hinduism exercised considerable influence on Bengali Sufi poets. The doctrine of reincarnation was soon adopted and was afterwards supplemented by the theory of Karma. Again the Prophet Muhammad, who had remained the perfect model of Man for the Sufis of other countries, became the hero of their poetry as Krishna is the hero of Bhagvata-lore. The condemnation of idols, which had not been very vehement even in the 16th century, lost its momentum. Muslim mystics accepted them as another way of adoring the Universal Lord. The Qur'an, which was held in great veneration by the early Sufis, had now come to be placed at par with the Vedas and Puranas. The principle of religious tolerance was advocated by many of them who denounced fanaticism and admitted freedom of religious beliefs.

Sufi poets in Bengal and Arakan

After the liquidation of the independent Sultanate of Bengal, in the 16th century, there was no cultural centre sponsored by the suzerain authority. Within Bengal and on its fringes there appeared small cultural centres patronized by local chiefs, many of whom enjoyed semi-independence. The courts of these chiefs and potentates for some time imitated the court of Hussian Shah and his successors: and so we find in these courts considerable patronage of scholars, poets and musicians. The most remarkable achievement in this respect was the court of the king of Cooch-Bihar in the late 16th century. But the literary vogue introduced by Pragal Khan and his son, Chhuuti Khan, in Chittagong, however, continued uninterrupted. Although there seems to have been no official patronage forthcoming after the downfall of the dynasty of Hussian Shah (1535 C.E.), the Muslim scholars and poets apparently enjoyed popularity. And in the late 16th century and subsequently, we find some powerful writers of Bengali verse from that part of the country. The most remarkable of such writers was Sayyid Sultan, who probably belonged to the last quarter of the 16th century.

Sayyid Sultan

He was a Sufi poet of renown and occupies a very secure place in Bengali literature. He rendered into Bengali verse many religious works and the most outstanding one is Nabi-vansh. In this poem Sayyid Sultan had described the life of the Prophet Muhammad in detail and at the same time, as an introduction to the life of the Prophet, he had given the life-stories of earlier prophets, not only of the Semitic religions but also of the Hindu religion.

Krishna, the greatest Avtar of the Hindus, was specially treated by Sayyid Sultan as an ancient prophet of the religion of the world. The name Nabi-vansh shows that the author
intended his work to belong to the same category as Hari-
vansh, an old and important Hindu Purana where the story of Hindu Avtar is described. Another important work from the same writer is Jnan Pradip (Tract of Knowledge), which is also known as Jnan Choutisha. It is a book on a mystic religion where Sufism mingles with Yoga and a clear illustration of the new light which had kindled in the Sufis and illuminated and widened their outlook.

Arakan is contiguous to Chittagong but linguistically and culturally it has always been a part of lower Burma. In the early 15th century the Arakan king conquered Chittagong and till the conquest of Husain Shah, Chittagong continued to remain a part of the Arakan kingdom. It appears that Bengali language and culture began to influence the Arakan court from the 15th century, but there is no record to show that there was any literary activity worthy of note till the beginning of the 17th century, when we meet with the court poet Daulat Qazi.16

Daulat Qazi

He was a forerunner among the greatest Muslim poets of Bengal. He wrote Lovehandraati, which is also commonly known as Sati Mina. It is one of the most interesting romantic poems in Middle Bengali literature. The story is based on a popular tale that was and is still current in South Bihar. The poet, unfortunately, did not live to complete his poem and died when about two-thirds of the story was written. The poem was completed thirty years later by Sayyid Alaao. He also wrote Barah-nasaar in Brajhasha. Daulat Qazi was a Sufi of versatility and a much greater poet than Alaao.17

Sayyid Alaao

Alaao is, perhaps, the best-known Sufi poet of Arakan. He originally belonged to Jalapur, in the district of Faridpur, and under the force of circumstances18 he had to migrate to Arakan. He had his education under the able guidance of Daulat Qazi. He is said to have introduced the Islamic system of poetry into Bengali literature.

At the request of Magan Thakur, a Muslim chief, he rendered into Bengali verse Malik Muhammad Jai's Padmaavat in 1660 C.E. Alaao's poem is not a mere translation. It is an adaptation sometimes following the original closely and sometimes treating the theme independently. On the whole Alaao's poem is better than Jai's if we consider the story alone, but as an allegorical poem, Jai's is by far superior.

Alaao wrote another poem at the request of Magan Thakur. It is an adaptation of Persian romance, Sulaf al-Muluk. While he was translating Badi al-Jama'at, Magan Thakur died, and the poet came under the patronage of Muhammad Musa, the Commander-in-Chief, at whose request he translated Nizami's poem Haft Paikar. At that time Emperor Shahjahan's son Shuja had taken refuge at the court of Arakan. Prince Shuja soon came in contact with Alaao and was attracted by his accomplishments, as Alaao, besides being a poet of renown, was also an accomplished musician. When Shuja was killed, Alaao was taken as a friend of the unfortunate prince and, as a result, his property was confiscated and he was put into jail. He remained in jail for twelve years and the sad years of confinement had added to the weight of years. When he came out he was a broken man of 71. The Chief Minister of the King of Arakan was Sayyid Musa, who gave him shelter, and the king also began to show favour. When he was requested by the king to render out in Bengali verse Nizami's Sikander-namaah, the poet first declined, saying that he was too old and disappointed. The king promised him all help and so he wrote Dara-Sikandar-

namah. He died at the ripe age of about 80 in 1698 C.E.

Alaao spent his later life in deep meditation and spiritualistic pursuits. One thing that we gather from his verses is that he was an earnest seeker after God and was persuaded of the truth of Sufi doctrines by the condition of the world around him. He says:

Jodi nor bokirose shukh lage mote
ashirbad koromore faqir karone
Ishwarte mukti mago amar lagia
poro fateha ek mustianna khaya.
(If you feel pleased to read my poetry, bless me to become a Faqir; eat a handful of rice, read Fatihah and pray to God for my salvation.)

The poem's sweet melody reflects on the well-known Indian asceticism and the inner feelings of a devout Sufi. Alaao's love for Perfect Love and zeal for spiritual attainment is shown in the following lines:

Prem bine bhab nahn, bhab bine rash
tribhubane joto dekho prem honte bash
prem honte jonomay biraha tinakh
panchakhore birohini lakho panchoras.
(Without love there is no feeling and without feeling there is no enjoyment (eternal), and whatever is visible in the world succumbs to Love. Love gives birth to the feeling of separation and the five syllables of love and separation together make the Love Perfect.)19

Other Sufi poets

Other Sufis who followed Sayyid Sultan and Arakan Sufis and who wrote on Nabhivansh and Jungnama20 themes were Hayat Ma'mun, whose poem is entitled Ambiya-bani. It was completed in 1758 C.E. He wrote one narrative poem on the Karbala theme in 1723 C.E., the title of which is Muharram-purva.21 He also wrote Hitu-Innar-bani, a compendium of good advices, mostly dealing with Muslim thought and religious practices. Hayat Ma'mun is considered to be the foremost poet of North Bengal.

Muhammad Khan of Chittagong wrote Maqtaal-Husain in 1646 C.E., a Jungnamah poem describing the deeply pathetic story of Karbala. His spiritual predecessor was Pir Shah Sultan of Chittagong, a Sufi of renown. Maqtaal-Husain is an outstanding poem for its style and characterization and much better than that of the Bengali writers of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Still other Sufi poets who wrote on the above themes were Jahauddin, Shaikh Chand, Nasrullah and Mansur of Chittagong, who deserve a special mention.

Gharibullah and his school

That part of West Bengal which is now the meeting point of three districts, viz., Bankura, Hooghly and Midnapur, a very old cultural centre and from the early 18th century to the middle of the 19th century the most important literary centre of the Muslim writers in Bengal, gave birth to the greatest of the Sufi poets of Bengal — Gharibullah. Gharibullah wrote Yassuf Zulaikhu and the Jannama of the Amir Hamza; the former is an adaptation of Jami's Sufi poem. His poems are written in chaste and elegant Bengali with the minimum of pseudo-Arabic words. He was familiar with all that was Bengali in tradition and beauty. He never attempted to explore those regions of which he had no real knowledge. He was a child of the land and so sang in his mother-tongue, in the old original verse-forms of his land,
taking his similies from the life that was familiar to him. His poetry, though abstract, is not difficult to understand. His Sufic attainsments and his writings bear ample testimony to his universal sympathy and wide outlook. At the end of Yusuf Ziauddin, he solicits from God welfare for everybody, Hindi and Muslim, that were listening to his poem and that were living in his village.

Sayyid Hamza, who also belonged to the same place as Gharibullah, is one of the major Muslim writers of Bengal. He wrote the concluding portion of Gharibullah's Jangnamah in 1792 C.E. Other works of his are Madhumalati, a romantic poem based on a Hindu original: Jangnamah of Hanifa (1797) and the Qissah-i-Hattin Tal (1804).

Gharibullah's school influenced the writings of some of the Hindu poets belonging to West Bengal. It is quite probable that the best known Bengali poet of the 18th century, Bharat Chandra, was indebted to these Muslim writers for his racy style. It may be mentioned here that the Jangnamah poems were not the exclusive property of Muslim writers. We know at least one Hindu writer who wrote a big Jangnamah poem. He was Radha Charan Gop, belonging to the north-west region of Bengal. He wrote this poem at the request of his Muslim patron.

Bengali Sufi poetry

The history of Bengal from the 16th century to the 18th century saw many storms and peaceful interludes. These vicissitudes were reflected in the Sufi poets, though faintly. Mysticism being more predominant than materialism in Bengali Sufi poets' temperament, all complexity of expression, the artificial and ornate style were missing from it. The chief effort of the poets was to give direct expression to their pious feelings in as brief a manner as possible. The vocabulary, similes and technical terms were often borrowed from Persian, the prevalent mythological ideas and social customs. Similies were also taken from everyday life and were used with skilful restraint and proceeded in order. The result was that though this poetry lacked dazzling brilliancy and poetic conceit, it always maintained dignity, order and sincerity.

The ideal of the Sufi poet

A Sufi, who was guided by the will of God, passed through the various states (ahwaiz) and stages (maqamaat) of the spiritual pilgrimage, encountered many proofs of special relationship in which he stood to God. He hoped to win a glimpse of immortality in this mortal life by passing away from self (jana) into the consciousness of survival in God (baqat). This union or annihilation in God was the ideal of the Bengali Sufi poet. He referred to the stories of perfect love which had a spiritual significance for him. The heroines in these stanzas, stood for the Sufi's soul and the heroes for God (the Beloved sought). Sufi poetry, consequently, was full of poems, songs and hymns praising the Beloved, describing the pain and sorrow inflicted by separation, and ultimately, the joy, peace and knowledge attained in the union.

The Sufis, who came to India with the object of leading the Indians to the Beloved by Muhammad's path, did creditable work for some years. Then the old Indian vigour asserted itself and in its turn influenced the Sufi beliefs. The Sufis, especially of Bengal, therefore, absorbed the best of Islam and Hinduism and developed a new sort of Sufi thought more Indian than foreign in character. Proselytizing zeal forced them to carry this new thought to the masses, they versified it in their language. In times of turmoil, the Sufis maintained with their preachings the mental balance of the different communities and, through their poems, sent the message of peace, unity and love to almost every home and hamlet.

By the end of the 18th century they had done their work.

The need of the people had now changed. Some continued to sing of the Beloved in the traditional manner, for the chief merit in Bengali Sufi poetry lies exclusively in the fact that it is noble, pious and sweet; it inspires the people even today to seek the Divine Love.

REFERENCES

3. The Shari'ah 'Ali Makhdum Hujwir, commonly known as Data Gunj Baksh, followed the arms of Mas'ud, son and successor of Mahmud Ghaznavi, to Lahore, where he settled down to preach. In Bengal, Shah Jalaluddin Tabrizi (1303 C.E.) roamed about in villages to convert people to Islam. Makh-i-Nau, November, 1952, 6, 21.
4. Zahruddin Ahmed, in his Mystic Tendencies in Islam, p. 142, writes: "Out of the later Sufis very few appear to have given any thought to this practical aspect (conversion) of the doctrine of Islamic Sufism."
5. Emperor Akbar, Prince Dara Shikuh, poet Ala'ab are a few examples.
7. The doctrine of 'Karma' which is alien to Sufism. "The Mystics of Islam, p. 191" became now one of its doctrines. The Early Turkish Empire of Delhi, p. 330.
8. Songs of Sayyid Sultan and Nabi-vansh by the same author.
10. Subhijan, a celebrated Sufi of the 17th century, performed the pulia in the house of idols (Dabistan, Vol. III, p. 302). Bengali Sufis fortunately did not go to that extreme but considered both temple and mosque the same. He reached a stage when his temple and mosque were everywhere.
11. Alaao, who was a great Samskrit scholar, venerated Hindu sacred books as he did the Qur'an.
12. Gharibullah is famous for his universal sympathy and wide outlook.
13. Pragul Khan was a general of Husain Shah, he was deputed to conquer Chittagong. He and his son, Chhutti Khan, were great patrons of learning. At Chittagong he would listen to the Mahabharata and was greatly interested in this Hindu epic. The poets used to flatter him by calling him an incarnation of Hari in Kalyuga.
14. R. C. Majumdar, A Brief History of India, p. 128.
15. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Krishna are among the prophets mentioned by him.
16. He is also known as 'Daulat Ghazi', which is wrong.
17. Makh-i-Nau, September 1952, p. 35.
18. Daulat Qazi was also well-versed in Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. He frequently used Persian words in his poems and the following six lines taken from Lorchorhanda testify it:
Bismillah pirdhan ek nam mianzand
Te ram sadaye kar jo sarh bikhan
Rahman nam artho ko rona sadaye
Se nam sadaye rakho daromahandyae
Rahman nam artho ki kohi monar
Din daayi prabhun bima apan.
Makh-i-Nau, September 1952, p. 35.
19. Alaao's father was an officer of the local governor. Once he and his father were making a river journey when they met Portuguese pirates. His father was killed and he was taken as a slave and sold in Arakan. He was a scholar not only of Arabic and Persian but also of Samskrit. As a slave he joined the cavalry of the Arakan king and soon his fame and name reached the ears of the regent Sulaiman, who on knowing that Alaao could write Bengali verse, asked him to complete Daulat Qazi's Lorchorhanda. He did this in 1660 C.E. From Sulaiman's patronage Alaao went to the patronage of the regent Magan Thakur.
20. In Bengali biraha (separation) comprises of three letters and prem (love) comprises of two letters only; therefore, five letters of love and separation altogether make the Love Perfect.
21. So much were the Muslim writers influenced by the Ramanayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavat-Parana, that from the early 17th century onwards they began to write the story of the Prophet Muhammad and the story of fightings and conquests made by the early Imams after the model of the Hindu works. These narrative poems by Muslim writers belong to two classes. The first class comprises the story of the prophets and are generally known as Nabi-vansh. The second class includes the poems describing exploits of the early Muslim conquerors, generally the conquest of Iran and quarrels among themselves. These poems are generally called Jangnamah.
22. The name is reminiscent of the purva division of the Mahabharata.
INDONESIAN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The Gamelan

A short history of the gamelan

Of all the original music still to be found in Indonesia, only the gamelan music of Java and Bali has, up to now, been properly studied and analysed from its origins. In the historical development of music in Indonesia the pelog and slendro gamelans have had a flourishing and vigorous growth. The early music from other parts of Indonesia, from Sumatra, Kalimantan, etc., has nearly all disappeared in the face of the influence of Arabic and Western musical culture, but the pelog and slendro music has withstood the currents of foreign cultures, and has developed with continuity; and the evidence shows that the religious and cultural influences of both Islam and Christianity have not changed this music.

Knowledge of music in pre-Hindu times appears to have been very small. It is known that kettle-drums made of brass were used, and some instruments made from wood and gourds, such as the tong-tongs and the flutes. More is known about the Hindu-Javanese period (8th century onwards) from the evidence of temple relics which show images of gods and men playing many different instruments, and from inscriptions and ancient documents and manuscripts.

In mid-Javanese times (9th century) music was an integral part of the life of the whole community, both in the rajah's court and amongst the common people, in religious as well as in secular life. From documents of this period we find reports of the court musicians and the positions they held. These musicians were professional artists who spent their whole lives studying and improving their art and playing technique. Such men are referred to in these accounts as "leader of the drummers", "leader of the cymbals players", "director", or "chief guitar player", and from this we get some idea of the variety of instruments played at the time. There existed, too, instruments which are no longer to be found now, for instance, the citerjongkat, the lute and the bowed harp, but on the other hand such gamelan instruments as the gongs, gendang, flute, bonang and saron are heard of for the first time. The gender and the wooden gambang made their appearance in the East Javanese period (10th century).

It is believed that the gamelan kaji munggang, which we find constantly praised in Mordopahit times (1239-1520 C.E.), was already employed at this period in the palaces of the Hindu rajahs, and that the musical roles which existed in it were similar to those found in the palaces in Islamic times (after 1520). Yet complete gamelan orchestras did not exist then. In the book Negarakriyagama, which was written in the year 1306 by Prapanca, there is no mention of a gamelan orchestra, but there is other evidence to show that in the late Hindu-Javanese period two combinations of musical instruments were used by the people. The first was called "female", and consisted of light-sounding instruments of the xylophone and flute type (gender, gambang and suling) to be played indoors; the second was known as male, and used loud-sounding instruments such as drums (gendang), cymbals and various kinds of gongs, which were played in the open to accompany temple feasts, and on the battlefield. This male combination is still to be found on some of the Indonesian islands, for instance in Nias and Flores. The gamelan munggang according to this classification comes into the category of a male combination of instruments. Since Hindu-Javanese times a "marriage" has taken place between the male and female elements of the orchestra to give us the complete gamelan orchestra of today.

The difference between the pelog and slendro gamelans lies in the note systems employed by each, neither corresponding with the note intervals to be found in Western music. Using the special measurement, the "cent", in which a whole tone is measured as 200 cent and a half tone as 100 cent, the pelog scale, which has seven notes, and the slendro scale with five notes, can best be denoted by the table below.

Pelog:

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<tr>
<td>Bem</td>
<td>Gulu</td>
<td>Dada</td>
<td>Pelog</td>
<td>Lima</td>
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<td>Barang</td>
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<td>120c.</td>
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<td>150c.</td>
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Slendro:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barang</td>
<td>Gulu</td>
<td>Dada</td>
<td>Lima</td>
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<td>240c.</td>
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The Bonang-group which elaborates the melody

The origin of the pelog and slendro notations

The origins of the pelog and slendro scales are far from clear, but it would appear that the pelog is much older than the slendro system, although theories vary as to exact dates
when each system was introduced into Indonesia. According to one theory, it was the ancestors of the Balinese and Sudanese peoples, some of the earliest migrants to Indonesia, who introduced the pelog system, whilst the slendro system was brought several centuries later by the ancestors of the Javanese people. But another theory maintains that the slendro came via the Srimadja Empire of South Sumatra in the 8th century. In that century the cultural characteristics of the two islands were similar since they were ruled by rajahs of the Cailendra dynasty of Sriwidjaja. The name slendro is thus believed to be derived from Cailendra. According to this latter theory, the pelog system was pushed inland and to the mountains by the spread of the slendro system, and evidence can be found to support this in the fact that the slendro is found in certain areas, notably Middle Java, which form connected groups, whereas the pelog is to be found scattered throughout many regions, in isolated and mountainous places and in remote villages. As an exception to this, in the sultans’ courts both systems were employed.

However, neither theory has been verified, and in face of the lack of scientific evidence it is probable that the history of the origin of the slendro and pelog systems will remain a matter for conjecture. Whatever the origin and distribution in former times, today the gamelan is far more widely known, and because of the influence of radio and the greater mobility of population since the revolution both pelog and slendro systems are played not only in Java and Bali but in the other regions also. Wherever the gamelan is found, in fact, both systems are in use.

Composition of the orchestra

The gamelan orchestra is composed of a number of instrumental sections, and may consist of up to 30 instruments. One of the main instruments in the string section is the rebab, which is believed to have originated in Arabia and Persia. This resembles a two-stringed lute, and is played with a bow. The main function of the rebab is to pick out the melody. Another stringed instrument, the tJELEMPUNG, which is a twenty-six stringed zither, is used for filling the gaps between the notes of the main melody by means of paraphrase and variation.

The main theme is usually played on the saron, a xylophone-type instrument of which there are three kinds, each separated by an octave interval. Two other kinds of xylophone, the gender and the gambang, are used to paraphrase and fill out the main theme.

In a small orchestra the bonang, which has twelve small gongs mounted on a table framework, may lead the melody instead of the saron, but at other times this group is used to ornament the theme and for syncopation.

The marking of the phases of the melody is done by different kinds of gongs, the smaller ones marking phases within the main phrase, the larger gongs marking the end of the main phrase. The kendang, which is a drum beaten with the hand, provides the beat and tempo of the melody, and in a sense it occupies the role of the conductor in a European orchestra.

The following poem helps to illustrate the structure of the melody and the functions of the different instruments:

The rebab is the soul of the melody
But the bonang paraphrases the melody.
The kendang gives the beat and the rhythm,
The idiophones accompany the melody,
And at the end there is the gong.

Functions of the gamelan

Gamelan music, although often played for pure entertainment, has also melodies specially appropriate to certain occasions and functions. In Bali, for instance, the gamelan music forms an integral part of the religious life of the community, and provides a background to the
ceremonies and prayers in the temples. When the people walk in procession, carrying images of the gods to the sea or lake, they are accompanied by special gamelan music called Blegandjur; cremation ceremonies have the Gambang melody, and trance dances the Sanghyang composition with voice accompaniment.

In Java, too, particular gamelan compositions are played for weddings, religious and official ceremonies. In addition, both the classical Javanese dances and the famous wayang shadow plays are accompanied by these orchestras.

An interesting question in gamelan music is that of the pitch of the melody, which is made to correspond to the mood of nature at any given time. The choice of pitch is particularly important when we consider the wayang plays, since the changes of key through the successive phases of the play symbolize the search of man for a higher meaning to life. A wayang performance generally begins about 9 p.m. and continues throughout the night until about 6 in the morning. The play opens in the low key known as the patet nem, but at midnight the atmosphere changes and the gamelan shifts to a higher key to correspond with the more serene and mysterious mood of the night. When morning breaks and life begins anew the orchestra changes to a still higher key.

The change of pitch marks the phases of the story of the play, symbolizing the stages in the mastery over earthly desires until the final understanding of the divine is reached. Thus the plays, and their accompanying gamelan music, are not merely entertainment; they possess a strong moral, even metaphysical, character as well.

Today, through the medium of radio and “live” performances in the towns and villages, the gamelan music is probably heard and appreciated by more people than ever before in its history, and continues to flourish as a living expression of the original culture of Indonesia.

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THE DIVINE DIVAN

73

'Tis now the time of cloud, and thou
Must use thine inner eye, rememb'ring how,
In times gone by, the glorious golden sun
Shone with soft warmth and wondrous ecstasies were spun.
Though sorrow sit beside thee and thy days be dark.
Kindle thine eye of faith within! throw off the stark
Despair deluding thee! His Mercies are not less.
Th' Omnipotent can bless
Thine hours, thy days, thy years with faithful peacefulness.
Ah, yes!
Keep strong thy faith! Is He not Faithful first?
Scatter thy doubts! The tiger of despair should not be nursed.
But faced and slain
With might and main,
Lest that delusive monster lurk and plague again.
Rise up, then, o'er his body and with thine inner eye
Behold the steadfast brilliance of His Mercies in the sky.
Beyond thy present clouds
See the serene eternity!
Beyond these jostling crowds
Enter the eterne serenity!

William Bashyr Pickard.

CORRECTION,
The Islamic Review, January 1960, p. 18, “The Divine Divan”,
line 2 for slumbering read numbering.
line 4 for slumbering read numbering.
WHAT MUSLIM LEADERS SAY . . .

THE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN IN IRAN

“We rejoice in the happiness of Muslim peoples of all countries and are always prepared to share their pain and sorrow”

At a joint session of both Houses of the Iranian Parliament (the Majlis) held on 10th November 1959, the President of Pakistan, Field-Marshall Muhammad Ayub Khan, said: “I am greatly honoured to have been given this opportunity of addressing this august body. I am deeply conscious of the significance of the gesture and assure you that it will be sincerely appreciated in Pakistan. While this is the first time I am addressing the Senate I am no stranger to Iran. I have visited your great country on many occasions and my mind goes back to the extremely happy associations I have had with Iran and many of your leaders. During this visit I look forward not only to meeting old friends but to making new ones. It is a happy augury that meeting the honourable senators should have been among the first in my list of official engagements.

“In the brief period I have been in your beautiful capital I have been struck by the spontaneous welcome extended to me. It has been a heart-warming experience and has been like home-coming.

“Our two nations are no strangers to each other. Our friendship is nothing new. Our links are steeped in history. We share the same faith and are heirs to a common cultural heritage. Your language and literature has, for centuries, been the fountain of Iranian culture, and it has left indelible marks on our everyday life.

“The Shah Namah, the Gulistan of Sa’di and the Diwan of Hafiz, to mention just a few, are read and admired widely in Pakistan. Your classics are our classics; your heroes our heroes; your friends our friends; and your enemies our enemies.

“We have produced many eminent Persian scholars, and the most illustrious in recent years among them is our poet-philosopher Iqbal, with whom, I am sure, you are all familiar. He was the father of the ideology of Pakistan and wrote the major portion of his works in your language.

“It is not only through a common cultural and religious heritage that our nations are linked together. Historically we have been one nation in the past, geographically we have a common border and ethnologically we are of the same stock. It is not at all a wonder, therefore, that the relationship between our two countries is a model of friendship.

“I have been captivated by the beauty of your metropolises. My thoughts turn to the dynamic and forceful personality of the late Imperial Majesty Raza Shah Pahlavi (may peace rest upon his soul!), whose genius unified the country, eradicated foreign domination, revitalized the national dignity and infused it in a greater unity. His achievements in organizing a stable administrative machinery and the introduction of numerous reforms of far-reaching character are an everlasting tribute to his qualities of head and heart.

Three Heads of State photographed together on 20th February 1960 at the President’s House, Karachi, Pakistan. The picture shows, from left: The President of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Juzal Bayar; the President of Pakistan, Field-Marshall Muhammad Ayub Khan; and the Shahinsihah of Iran, His Imperial Majesty Muhammad Raza Shah Pahlavi.
His illustrious son, His Imperial Majesty the Shahinshah, is held in equal esteem and regard by us. His statesmanship, far-sightedness and courageous leadership have never failed to evoke our admiration. The Shahinshah is an enlightened monarch, who is a worthy successor to a worthy father. His contribution in modernizing Iran and securing for her the place which she so richly deserves in the affairs of the world has been outstanding. The country is fortunate in having the Shahinshah to preside over the destiny of the nation.

"Pakistan is genuinely interested in the welfare of Iran, just as one brother shows a healthy concern for the welfare of the other. The Iranian people and the Iranian Government reciprocate these sentiments. It is in this spirit of mutual understanding that our two Governments have worked in the recent past to strengthen co-operation between the two countries.

"The agreement for the demarcation of the boundary is only one illustration. The smooth manner in which this has been accomplished in such a short time is in itself a tribute to the desire of the two countries for closer understanding. Demarcation of the boundary between any two countries who did not share each other’s hopes and aspirations would have proved a very difficult, ticklish and protracted task.

"The problems of our two countries are very similar; politically we are both endeavouring to further the growth and development of democratic institutions. Democracy in each country has to be shaped and moulded in accordance with the genius of the people of the country. I can say with confidence that there is no country in the world which has not had its trials and tribulations in reaching the goal of establishing the type of democracy which is best suited to her needs. You are aware of the experiment we in Pakistan have just introduced in this field. The institutions we have established will take time to mature, but I have every hope and confidence that we will not be long in finding our own measure in this field and that very soon we will be able to work out a constitution which best serves our needs.

"We believe in human dignity and in the right of all citizens to receive equal opportunities.

"We consider poverty a discrediting element and like you it is our endeavour within our limited means to raise the standard of living of our people sufficiently to provide them with the basic necessities of life. Our recently introduced land reforms have eradicated a serious economic injustice. We wish to do away with illiteracy and ignorance. We want to make the administration of law simple, expeditious and cheap.

"We would like to see the incidence of disease reduced and medical facilities provided for every citizen. With these aims in view a series of commissions were appointed and their recommendations are now in the process of study and implementation. It is a hard task but we are confident of success. The efforts of these reforms will be far-reaching and in a few years we hope to see a better and happier generation in Pakistan striving with still greater efforts for a yet brighter future.

"In the world of today when nations are conquering space and reaching to the moon, it is no longer an improbability. It is perhaps appropriate to remind ourselves that to millions of people in a very large part of the world what is more important are the hard facts of life centring round the comparatively simple problem of ensuring two square meals a day, relief from the ravages of disease and release from a state of ignorance. Until these basic requirements of humanity have been met the great scientific achievements of our day will have little meaning. Science in the service of humanity appears to have lost its meaning, and unless the balance is restored we shall continue to be plagued by instability, uncertainty and confusion.

"We in Pakistan are making efforts to eradicate hunger, disease and ignorance. To achieve our objective we need long years of peace. We, therefore, earnestly desire to be left alone and would like to see an end of all causes which strain relations among countries.

"We regard war as a most unproductive effort and as a soldier I condemn unreservedly resort to force for the settlement of disputes between nations. Unfortunately not all nations feel the same way and we have, therefore, had to take defensive measures in the shape of regional alliances to safeguard our independence.

"Those who do not plan our enslavement should have no cause for anxiety from these purely defensive arrangements. But the chorus of condemnation we hear against these defensive alliances only make us suspicious of the motives of our detractors. Your own nation and its gallant sovereign have in recent times been the target of most provocative and subversive propaganda attacks which we condemn wholeheartedly. This campaign has been in object a lesson in how one nation may try to browbeat another by resort to such methods.

"We stand for the right of nations to live peacefully within their own frontiers according to the dictates of their own faith and aspirations and free from threats of outside aggression and internal subversion.

"We believe in the right of subject peoples to choose their own destiny and live in freedom and dignity because freedom, like peace, is indivisible.

"We have particularly close bonds of unity with the Muslim world. We rejoice in the happiness of the Muslim peoples of all countries and are always prepared to share their pain and sorrow. Their strength is our strength and our weakness is their weakness, and we, therefore, wish them well and would wholeheartedly welcome any move towards greater unity and co-operation among the people of this great millat.

"I should like to end by expressing once again my very great pleasure at the privilege you have accorded to me by inviting me to address you today.

"May the friendship between our two countries live eternally — itehad Pakistan wa Iran painbadab."

In speaking at a reception given to him by the Iran-Pakistan Cultural Association at Teheran, Iran, on 17th November 1959, the President of Pakistan said:

"... It is obvious that no other two nations in the world could claim so much of common culture, common literature and common traditions as Iran and Pakistan.

"The very mention of the name of Iran raises before our minds the great and immortal images of people like Ibn Sina, al-Beruni, Firdusi, Sadî, Rumi, Hafiz and scores of others who have enriched our common literary history.

"And the people of Pakistan owe a great deal of their spiritual heritage and Islamic mysticism to the saints and religious missionaries who went from here to bless our land with the divine message of Islam.

"Along with the message of Islam these great messengers and missionaries also introduced to our people the sweet Iranian language which has become proverbially known as the Persian sugar.

"The introduction of Iranian arts and crafts also helped us a great deal in finding our own cultural roots. Our national poet Iqbal, while paying homage to Shah Hamadan, specially points out that Shah Hamadan not only brought with him religion and faith but also the treasures of arts and crafts.
and cultural traditions of his land, and it was as a result of this contact that the land of Kashmir, which is so near and dear to Pakistan, was turned into another Iran — popularly known as the Little Iran.

"The Muslim conquerors and rulers of what was then the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, Ghaznavis, Ghauris, Khiljis, Lodhis, and most important of all the rulers of Taimuri dynasty, known to history as the great Moghuls, enriched the sub-continent with Persian life and literature to the extent that the two countries became almost a single cultural unit."

"Apart from the close and intimate association built up between the two neighbouring countries in the realm of letters there are also many other influences visible to this day, such as in the massive buildings which were built after the pattern of Iranian architecture so sublimely and gloriously immortalized in Isfahan, Shiraz and Mashhad. The huge symmetrical domes and tall graceful minarets became known throughout the sub-continent as the unmistakable symbol of what is now popularly known as Islamic architecture. All these buildings were decorated with writings in the Persian language infused with the same artistic excellence as seen in the works of the Iranian masters.

"Unfortunately we were subjected to a period of foreign rule which resulted in a serious setback to cultural as well as political activities of the sub-continent..."

"In their struggle for freedom from foreign domination the ideals which the Muslims of the sub-continent had always kept before themselves were chiefly to be able once again to preserve and develop the rich heritage of their national Islamic culture and the way of life."

"It was in 1930, seventeen years before the birth of Pakistan, that the poet-philosopher Iqbal said in a public address that the only way left for the Muslims of the sub-continent to live as Muslims and preserve and develop their cultural life was to have a separate homeland in the areas in which they formed a majority..."

"The basic and fundamental urge that gave life to the Pakistan movement was thus the unbending and unyielding will and determination of the Muslims to preserve their thousand-year-old cultural, religious and literary traditions."

"Iqbal was, as it naturally should have been, the first country to recognize and welcome the new Islamic neighbour, Pakistan."

"Our national poet Iqbal revived and, as several Iranian scholars have pointed out, gave new form and spirit to the Persian language, which remains to this day our cherished cultural language learned by hundreds of thousands of students all over the country. The two countries being so intimately united by a common history, the Iran-Pakistan Cultural Association can do a very useful and lasting service by awakening and guiding the interests of the two peoples in the spiritual and social life of each other..."
Above: This Great Mosque of Herat was built early in the thirteenth century C.E. during the reign of Sultan Ghausuddin Ghori. The Sultan also had a mausoleum built next to it and he was buried there. The mosque was redecorated and repaired during the reign of Sultan Shahrukh Mirza. Amir Ali Sher Nawai later completed its present form. The great metal vase, now placed in the yard, was apparently made prior to the reign of Sultan Shahrukh Mirza. It has a diameter of one and a half metres and a depth of two metres and was probably used as a receptacle for donations.

Below: The Arch of Triumph in Paghman.
AFGHANISTAN

Above: The mausoleum of Khwaja Abdullah Ansari in Herat was built by order of Sultan Shahrukh Mirza, then ruler of Herat in the fifteenth century C.E. A great deal of lapis lazuli — the beautiful semi-precious stone for which Afghanistan is famous — and many-hued tiles and various styles of script were used to decorate the mausoleum. It is a fine example of Timurid Art in Afghanistan.

Centre top: A view of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, looking west towards the snow-clad Panjshir mountains.

Centre: Embroidery section of one of Kabul’s women’s societies.

Centre bottom: More and more children begin their first schooling at Kabul’s growing number of kindergartens.

Below: One of the lush valleys of Nooristan, Eastern Afghanistan.
The Turkish language

Turkish belongs to the broad general classification of Ural-Altaic languages which includes Finnish, Hungarian and Lithuanian. The Turkish branch of this group is spoken today by 70,000,000 people who occupy a wide area of the world ranging from Turkey, Azerbaijan and Turkestano to the Balkan peninsula in Europe and the borders of China in Asia.

The Turkish tongue is part of the group of languages known as “agglutinative”, where the suffixes are always added to the end of the root words. Several suffixes can thus be joined to the end of the same word, this “glued” construction conveying a variety of meanings. The root word is never altered as it is in the “a-flexion” languages, such as the Semitic and Indo-European groups.

The earliest known Turkish alphabet dates from the 8th century C.E. and was called Gok-Turk, and inscriptions have been found in Central Asia upon memorial stones dating from 720 C.E. It was a well-developed and well-regulated script, containing 38 letters, written from left to right. At a later date it was written from right to left. This alphabet was dropped with the passing of the Gok Turk dynasty in the 9th century.

It was superseded by the Uygur alphabet of the Uygur Turks in the 9th century. Employing only 18 letters, this was in use for more than seven centuries, until the Turks were converted to Islam and simultaneously adopted the Arabic alphabet. Extremely poor in vowel sounds, the Arabic script was not too well suited to the Turkish language, which is rich in vowels. In the course of the centuries, however, the linear construction of Arabic caused the Turks to develop calligraphy into one of the supreme artistic achievements.

In 1928 the Turks of Turkey finally adopted the Roman alphabet. Devised phonetically, the new alphabet was well suited to the vocal requirements of Turkish. At the same time reading and writing were simplified, and illiteracy considerably decreased. Turkic groups in the Soviet Union followed the Turkish example, but the government of the U.S.S.R. imposed the Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet upon them in 1939.

Early Turkish literature

The beginnings of Turkish literature, like that of other people’s, evolved from legends and myths, not the creation of one artist, but of the entire tribe. From time immemorial, Turkish folk legends and fables have been sung by wandering minstrels or troubadours. Sometimes they were even danced and acted in a ballet-pantomime fashion. Still to this day, a few folk singers wander from village to village in Turkey, singing ancient legends set to their improvised poetry, and accompanied by the music of their long-necked mandolin, or saz.

The oldest of the Turkish legends is the Myth of Creation, which has many similarities with the Finnish Kalevala. It probably evolved during pre-historic times, perhaps one or two millenia B.C., and reflects the shamanistic conceptions of the early Turks in Central Asia. This legend, whose precise chronology is difficult to establish, already speaks of the supremacy of “One God” (Tari Karahan) and the cosmos, before the act of creation, is described as “water everywhere and nothing else”. The typical Turkish attitude towards women, for until the adoption of Islam they were completely free and unveiled, is shown in this ancient myth. Womanhood is so important in the universe, that the urge to create is given to God by “a womanly reflection in the ripple of the water”.

The legend of Oguz Khan, 3rd or 4th century B.C., is an epic that has survived, with slight variations, among all Turks for over 2,000 years. Oguz Khan, the hero, fits the description of the Emperor Mete, ruler of the Kun (Hryung-Nu) Turks (209-174 B.C.). The legend is filled with episodes reminiscent of well-known European epics, even to dragon-slaying in the best Saint George tradition. The most moving passages, however, are those dealing with love, and the sweeping panoramas of national victories.

A common theme of many ancient Turkish legends is the fear of extermination, and the triumphant survival of the Turkish race through the miraculous intervention of the Sacred Blue-Grey Wolf (Bokkurt). This celestial totemic animal appears sometimes as a she-wolf, not unlike the she-wolf in the Etruscan Romulus and Remus fable. The most elaborate of these early tales is that of the Ergenekon or Hidden Valley, in which the Turks are imprisoned in a valley from which there is no escape. With the help of Burjeteke, the King Blue-Wolf, they melt a mountain made of iron and reach the outside world once more.

The first literary creation of the Western (Oguz) Turks that we know of are the Tales of Dede Korkut (infra p. —, Story and Novel). These tales originated some time in the 11th and 12th centuries, when the Oguz Turks migrated further west from Central Asia, and became Muslims. The name Oguz was replaced by “Turkmen” around this time. They settled in the Caucasus, Northern Iran and Eastern Anatolia, and are the direct ancestors of the Seljuk, Ottoman and modern Turks. In the 13th century they pushed as far west as Anatolia (Asia Minor), and developed new legends of the frontier-warrior type. In these, heroism, compassion and frankness are the main features.

Another facet of Turkish literature that needs special consideration is the anecdote, or brief witty story. Turks are extremely fond of this form, and much of their writing is humorous and satirical. Indeed, throughout most of Middle East literature, the satiric poems with all the makings of great comedy are generally Turkish. Turkish humour is, in the words of the American Turkologist John K. Birge, “a subtle wit, rather than boisterous exaggeration”.

The most celebrated of the Turkish humorists is Nasreddin Khoja (1203-1284). His anecdotes have been translated into many languages, including English, and the two following examples are typical. Receiving a particularly poor shave from a barber who must have been a novice, one side of Khoja’s face was dotted with tufts of cotton stuck on the many cuts. The barber was about to start shaving the other side, but Nasreddin, seeing his face in the mirror, said thoughtfully, “Don’t shave it. I think I’ll plant flax there instead of cotton”. On another occasion, when asked his

1 The veil is an anti-Islamic institution grafted on to Islam by the Arabs themselves, who found it in vogue in Persia. They borrowed it from the Persians, under whose cultural influence they eventually came (Ed., 1965).
age, he replied that he was 40. “But you said the same thing last year,” said his acquaintance. “I’m a man of my word,” was the answer. “I always stick to what I say.”

Today Khoja is still in the news, even in the United States of America. A recent article in the American monthly Esquire magazine described him as “a teacher, a preacher, a judge and a jester, all rolled up into one, with a gift for doing wise things foolishly and foolish things wisely, and sometimes wise things wisely as well.” Nasreddin was as popular with the intellectuals as he was with the people, and today a newspaper editorial or public speaker will frequently stress a point with a well-aimed anecdote drawn from this endless source.

Such anecdotes and the legends referred to earlier have been handed down to us either in rare manuscripts or in the oral tradition which still flourishes in Anatolia and Turkestan. They have been recorded by Turkish, German and Russian experts.

Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman literature

This period, from the 11th century folk poets up to the classics of the mid-19th century, has two main characteristics.

First, poetry rather than prose was the principal mode of expression, the latter being generally neglected for the benefit of a consistently refined and polished verse form. Even political treatises, stories and novels were written in poetry, which was not a prerogative of the intellectuals, but was widespread among all segments and classes of the Turkish people. The common people and villagers had their own highly-developed poetic forms, folk poetry, whilst the upper and more sophisticated class preferred the Divan or classic poetry.

Throughout history, Turkish rulers were not only interested in literature, but were extremely active patrons of the arts. Many were great poets in their own right, and their pen-names have become landmarks in Turkish literature. In one century alone, the 16th, all the rulers of the various Turkish empires that co-existed were first-class poets: Babar, the conqueror of India; Seybani, Khan of the Ozbeks; Isma’il Safavi (Hatai), Shah of Iran and Azerbaijan; and lastly, Yavuz Selim (Selimi), Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

Indeed, the Ottoman emperors were particularly gifted, and E. J. Gibb, the well-known British scholar, in his study of Ottoman literature makes the following comment: “The house of ‘Osman has been gifted to a very remarkable degree with the poetic vein; among its members, sultans, princes and princesses, it can perhaps show a greater number of poets than any other royal house in the whole course of history.”

Finally, philosophers and religious sects chose to discuss their ideas and religious concepts in poetry rather than prose, thus giving rise to an entirely different literary group known as Mystic (Tasavvuf) poetry. Prose, in Turkish literature, only gained momentum towards the end of the 19th century.

The second characteristic that should be noted in Turkish literature of the period is that there were no literary schools, in the Western manner, until the 19th century. In place of this, there were three different literary currents flowing side by side for centuries, co-existing with only minor interchanges and influences. It was like three separate literatures existing parallel to one another within the same country.

The first of these was folk poetry, with its pure Turkish, forthright style and syllabic measure. The rhyme and verse patterns were definite and clean-cut, and allegorical ideas were peculiar to this type of literature. The second was Divan poetry, the poetry of the upper class, where the vocabulary was laden with foreign words, Arabic and Persian. Allegories, the ‘Aruz measure, separate verse and rhyme construction, and stereotyped subject matter were prominent features of Divan poetry. Mystic or Tasavvuf verse is the third; existing somewhere between the first two, mystic poetry did not have a separate poetic form, but borrowed freely from folk and Divan. The subject matter, however, was entirely different. It was an emotional expression of religious experience and philosophic ideas. The unique allegories and symbolism were also distinct from the other two literatures.

These three currents of Turkish writing started to intermingle in the 19th century, just before they finally expired. In some ways modern Turkish literature is a blend of these three influences with certain characteristics taken from Western literary schools.

Turkish folk poetry

Turkish folk poetry is the literature of the common people and the villagers. It is the natural and unbroken continuation of the folk legends, epics, myths, tales and anonymous poems that Turkish minstrels have sung from time immemorial. It escaped all foreign influence, and continued to use pure Turkish words, measures and forms.

Form and structure

The unit structure of Turkish folk poetry is the quatrains or four-line stanza. The rhythm is achieved by syllabic or metric measures, each hemistich equal to the others by its number of syllables. Each line contains a given number of syllables, 11 or 14 being the most popular, and the poem adheres rigidly to this number throughout. No folk poem will ever have 14 syllables in one line and 11 in a later one.
A deeper rhythm is sometimes achieved by placing stops at appropriate intervals in the hemistich. These are so arranged that they come at the end of a word, where the voice will naturally pause. Generally, popular taste dictated the intervals, and most frequent was an interval at the end of the 6th syllable, then at the end of the 11th, thus completing the line, or at the end of the 4th, 8th and 11th, or at the end of the 7th and 14th, so denoting the completion of a 14-syllable line. Such stops were never allowed to cut a word, thus adding considerably to the clarity of folk poetry as compared to Divan.

The type of rhythm, and the subject matter, determined the generic name of each poem, e.g., Koshuma, Turku, Maani, etc. The rhythm could be either full or half, and it should be noted that this half rhythm lent itself at an early stage to the free verse technique. Longer poems are constructed by a series of stanzas, where the first three hemistiches rhyme with each other, but do not necessarily rhyme with the hemistiches of other stanzas. The fourth hemistich, however, always rhymes with the final hemistich in the following stanza, thus giving a structural unity to the poem.

Another unique feature of Turkish folk poetry was the practice of working the writer's name into the final stanza of his poem, as in the Dadaloughlu extract. This served as a signature, as the verses of this period were almost always unsigned.

Subject matter
Folk poetry was extremely versatile in its range of subjects, and reflected life much more faithfully than the rigid and formalized classic poetry. Folk poets, like their early predecessors, were minstrels and troubadours, wandering from village to village, to camps, fortresses, coffee houses, wedding parties, fairs, indeed wherever the people gathered. The would sing their verses to the accompaniment of their own instruments, sometimes improvising upon the spur of the moment. Occasionally the crowd would be treated to a poetic contest, when one poet met the challenge of another.

Influence
In the beginning, classic or Divan literature entirely ignored the folk poets. They were not even mentioned in the Tadhkirahs, or literary digests of the time. However, after the 17th century, the Golden Age of folk poetry, the lofty classics began to pay attention, and even to imitate the popular poets. Nedim, one of the great artists of the Divan style, was clearly influenced by folk poetry. The mystic poets, though, generally preferred the folk form, although a few practised the Divan method. Yunus Emre, the greatest of the mystics, always wrote in the folk tradition, and he influenced the poets of this group for centuries to come. The supreme victory of folk poetry, however, was in our own century, when modern Turkish poets adopted the syllabic measure, and many of the old forms which had almost died away a century before.

Leading folk poets
Karaja Oghlan (?—1679). Karaja Oghlan is to Turkish literature what François Villon is to French. He is the poet of love — the love of women and the love of nature. He extolled and idealized the Turkish village girl, placing her deep within the heart of the beautiful countryside. His verses are colourful and melodious, and his descriptions racy and entertaining, particularly when he describes, without a trace of prudery, the physical attractions of his beloved. His verses are remembered for their deep spiritual quality, and the poet frequently mourns his lost love, as in the stanza:

Beloved, to tell you of my love
I need the tongue of the nightingale.
My heart is burned to cinders,
I need torrents to extinguish it.

Dadaloughlu (19th century). The last of the great folk poets, Dadaloughlu was a member of one of the vanishing tribes in southern Turkey. When the Sultan issued a decree to settle his tribe, the poet himself took to the mountains and became as famous a guerrilla fighter as he was a poet. His verse, pure, simple and powerful, rings with the echoes of the early Turkish epics:

The Avshar tribes are up, migrating.
The landscape that slowly passes by is ours.
Arab horses make near faraway places.
The roads that shoot over the high mountains are ours.

Dadaloughlu, tomorrow is battle day.
Guns will roar, drums will beat.
Many, many heroes will fall.
Those that die will die, the survivors are ours.

Turkish mystic poetry
Islamic mysticism (or Sufism) found a means of expression in Turkish literature through a unique poetic form. The Sufis practised poetry, not so much as a means to spread their ideas, but rather as an outlet for their religious fervour. In the beginning, Sufism evolved as a philosophical interpretation of the Muslim religion, and developed side by side with the growing rival force of the Madrasahs, or religious schools or universities, which expounded the orthodox religious beliefs. Two great philosophers, Farabi and Ibn Sina, gave impetus to the movement in the 9th century. With the growth of Turkish power, Seljuk, and later Ottoman, in the Islamic world, the mystic movement became firmly established, and the Tazkas, or mystic circles, flourished in every corner of Anatolia.

Subject matter and philosophy of Turkish mystic poetry
The Sufi philosophy is based on the conviction that the only true existence is that of God, and that everything else in the universe is an image of God in different forms. The image closest to God's true identity is Man. "God could see Himself in Man, as we could see our own image in the pupils of our eyes reflected from a mirror." Truth (Existence), Beauty and Benevolence are attributes of God. Untruth (Void), Ugliness and Cruelty are temporary things, essential for the understanding of these attributes of God. If Man wishes to reach true existence, which is union with God, he must strive to rid himself of the temporary attributes, and cultivate the Godly attributes. By examining ourselves, we will discover these hidden within ourselves. It follows that introspection is the basis of much of the poems of the great Yunus Emre and other Sufi poets.

To break away from selfishness, and to see one's own Godly attributes, the Sufis believed humanity needed one thing, love, but love in its universal sense. The purifying emotion of love will lead us to understand our Godly attributes. They also insisted that every man had a part of God in him, thus enabling him to love all mankind and show complete understanding. Discrimination was unknown to them:

Whosoever does not look to 72 nations with the same eyes
Is a rebel to Truth, be he a teacher of people.
Form, structure and allegory

Mystic poetry has no separate or distinct literary forms, and borrowed freely from either folk poetry or Divan. The symbolism, allegories and images are fairly elaborate, however, and though the imagery was sometimes adopted by the classic poets, they were unique to mystic poetry. It is impossible to understand a mystic poem without the key to the poetic terminology. The “Friend” or the “Fair One,” that the poet so eagerly calls, and asks to throw off “the scholar. After a period of brilliant teaching, he suddenly renounced his position at Konya University. “Besides knowledge of the mind, there is a greater knowledge of the heart that only emotion and feeling can lead to,” he said.

Almost a contemporary of Thomas Aquinas, he lived true to his philosophy, and though from a rich family, refused wealth and existed frugally. He died in 1273, and his son, Sultan Valad, himself a poet and remarkable organizer, continued the work of his father in forming a school that became known as the Maulavi, or Order of Dervishes.

The Maulana’s masterpiece is the Mathnavi, a paired rhyme epic of 25,700 verses compiled in six tomes. It has been translated into many languages, the finest English version being that of R. A. Nicholson. Another poem, the Divan-i-Kahir, has more than 20,000 verses, some in Ghazal and some in Rubaii form. The Mejaalis-i-Sab’a contains seven of his sermons, and the Fih-Ma-Fih is the recorded transcript of the Maulana’s talks. His correspondence has been collected under the title of Maktubat (Letters).

Basically his ideas are the same as the mystic philosophy already outlined, and which the Maulana helped to form. One of the tenets of his philosophic system was a belief in evolution. The universe is in a continuous state of struggle, he taught, and is eternally undergoing a creative process, and consistently becoming better, more beautiful and more true. His conception of the world is causative, and, despite his mysticism, has many aspects of reality.

The Maulana’s lyricism has no equal. Composing his poems in the Divan manner, he wrote in Persian, the “Latin” of his time. Such was the intensity of his emotions that occasionally he shattered the rigid canons of the classic form, even frequently writing free verse. Allegory and symbolism play a large part in his work. The following quotation illustrates the longing of the poet to find God hidden within his own un-Godly attributes:

Veil” that conceals her perfect beauty from his comprehension, is none other than God. The “Lover” is mankind, “Wine” is divine love, and “the Cup Bearer” is the spiritual instructor of celestial love.

Influence

Influence of Turkish poetry

Mystic poetry had far more influence on the Divan and folk groups than the latter pair had upon each other. Yunus Emre, the mystic, who wrote in the folk form, influenced folk poetry for centuries, and his influence is still felt in modern Turkish poetry. On the other hand, the Maulana and the Shaikh Ghalib Dede, two great mystic poets, created their masterpieces in the Divan form. They not only left their imprint on classic poetry, but they inspired many future works that used their creations as models.

Leading mystic poets

The Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273).

Born in 1207, the Maulana came to Konya, then capital of the Western Turks or Seljuks, when he was still a child. His father, a man of considerable learning, carefully looked after his son’s education, and the boy grew up to be a

There is someone hidden here,
Someone that holds me and impedes me.
There is someone hidden here
Like my own life, more beautiful even,
Showing me a garden, and yet hidden.
There is someone hidden here,
Hidden like an illusion of the heart.
The glow of His face reflects throughout my being.
There is someone hidden here.
Hidden like sugar in a cane.
No one has seen Him yet.
I do not care for other beauty,
My eyes are spellbound with His image.
And they stay open.

Imagining a state of existence after union with God, the poet wrote:

I looked and beheld the dead as they came to life.
I saw the old ones suddenly turning young,
I watched copper turning into solid gold.
And in place of those that left our town,
Better ones, prettier ones returned.
Strange.
There used to be one king of a land,
And one moon in the skies.
This town is full of kings,
And the sky full of moons and stars.
Go quickly, tell the physicians

FEBRUARY 1960

25
They have no more business here,
Tell them there is no more exhaustion,
No more worries,
No more pain and no more trouble.
There you find no judges and no governor,
No princes and no guards.
Lawsuits, enmities, quarrels
Could never walk on the oceans.

The Maulana was a man filled with love, not only love
of God, but a love for all humanity, people of every creed,
colour and class. His famous “We love, that is why we are
at peace” verse was the quintessence of his philosophy and
life. At that time it was believed that there were 72 races of
mankind, and the Maulana once said, “I am with 72 races
of humanity.” When bitterly attacked by an enemy who
compared the poet with the vilest and lowest, he answered
gently, “I am with them too.” The Turkish attitude towards
women which, as has already been stated, was completely
liberal until the adoption of Islam, was faithfully reflected in
the writings of the Maulana. He severely criticized the
fanatics who would veil and hide their womenfolk. In Fihl
Ma-Fih he argued that such a step would be dishonest and
merely serve as a provocation. Setting tremendous import-
ance on freedom, he wrote:

What do I care for others’ honey?
Here I have my bowl of buttermilk.
I do not possess any worldly goods,
And yet I will work to make you an owner.
An owner of a house, or of an orchard.
But my freedom I will not sell.
Even if the rocks crack and split.

In a more challenging and angry spirit he wrote:

Even if we are split, piece by piece,
Even if we are crushed like grains of oats,
Even if we are cut, slice by slice,
We still cannot say what we do not want to say,
Or stay silent when we want to speak.

Such was his universal appeal and personal magnetism
that he attracted people from every walk of life and had
countless followers, including kings and princes. Well aware
of his influence, he nevertheless exercised it with discretion,
as the following two verses show:

I am the Mecca for those in need,
Because I am the Mecca of the heart.
I am not a Friday sermon-giver,
I am the chair for all humanity.

I am the Mystic with the simple soul,
My church is Man’s heart everywhere.
My classroom is the whole world,
I am not a sectarian.

A great artist, who felt deeply, he was dissatisfied with
purely poetic self-expression, and sought other means,
incorporating poetry, music, and a balletic type of dance. The
music was created chiefly by a special flute (the ney), small
tympany (two-tenths the regular size), and a choir, whilst the
dances were performed by white-robed Dervishes, crowned
with long, white head-dresses. These “Whirling Dervishes”,
with raised arms, would revolve around their own pivot and
throughout the room, inducing a trance-like effect in them-
seves, and thus hoping to achieve communion with God.

The religious and philosophic influence of the Maulana
spread over three continents, and travelled as far as Budapest
in Europe, whilst in literature the poet’s style was to become
the model for all who aspired to the lyrical form. Through
translations, Europe evinced great interest in the Maulana,
and the German poet Ruckert wrote many of his poems under
the Turkish poet’s influence.

Yunus Emre (?-1307)

Little is known of Emre’s life, except that he was born
towards the beginning of the 13th century in mid-Anatolia,
and that he was a peasant. He supplied a local monastery,
that of Saint Emre, a mystic leader, indulged in philosophic
contemplation, and it was almost forty years before he began
to write mystic poetry. His tendencies were liberal, and
Emre never hesitated to attack the bigoted and fanatical.

A contemporary of the Maulana, this peasant poet was
different in many ways from the highly-educated scholar of
Konya. Writing in the folk tradition, he was to become one
of the greatest Turkish poets of all time. A unique clarity
and admirable facility of expression were two of his greatest
strengths. Emre could convey every shade of meaning and
feeling within an extreme economy of words, and when he
expressed his love for God, it was done in a disarmingly
simple fashion.

Love, according to Emre, is the highway to God, but it
should never be analyzed for meaning or purpose, as it has
no end, not in man’s lifetime, not even in the span of
the universe. He wanted to eliminate the grosser part of himself,
to “end himself”, so that he could exist with only his Godly
attributes, the reflection of God that each man carries within.
When he is aware of these Godly parts in his innermost
being, he is happy and at peace, and can write:

I love Thee, further inside than my soul,
There is an ‘I’ within me, further within than ‘I’.

The young contemporary Turkish poet Bulent Ecevit
has done some fine English translations of Emre’s poems.
He points to “The Voice of the Water-Wheel” as the most
perfect example of the longing and nostalgia of the true
mystic:

Why do you wail, oh water-wheel?
Sorrowful I am, so I wail.
I have fallen in love with God,
This is the reason I wail.

One cannot attain the heart’s desire,
Sorrowful I am, so I wail.
None can endure this wailing dirge,
Sorrowful I am, so I wail.

From below my water I draw,
Then higher this water I pour.
Come and see what I suffer so,
By their carpenters I was hewn.

Yunus, one does not smile in here,
All my parts have been set in tune,
This wailing came to me from God.
Sorrowful I am, so I wail.

* This translation gives some indication of the harmonious
beauty of the original, where the verse is filled with a clear
melody, unique to Emre. The complexity of his emotions are
uttered with a clarity that is crystal clear, even when the depth and profundity of his thought would lead to obscurity in a lesser poet. Like the Maulana, Emre loves all mankind, and sees a reflection of God in every being, regardless of rank, race or religion:

We love the Created
For the love of the Creator

he says simply.

His sensitivity to human suffering is well expressed in the following quatrains translated by Lord Dunsany:

Who to another's feeling causes pain,
Will fast and pray upon his knees in vain.
If any meaning whatsoever is
In the Four Holy Books, be sure 'tis this.

Emre had no time for vanity and fanaticism, nor did he believe that learning and reading were sufficient. In one poem he wrote: "If you do not practise your learning, go study a hundred years, what do I care," and, perhaps more significant, "When you do not know yourself, an animal is more worthy." All his life the poet was quietly prepared for death, and one of his most moving poems, "Farewell To Those Who Remain," ends thus:

What more can Yunus tell?
His eyes with tears are swollen.
Those who knew him, farewell.
Those who knew him not, would not care.

He deeply influenced not only his contemporary mystic poets writing in the folk tradition, but others for centuries to come. When Turkish nationalism heralded the era of modern poetry in the 20th century, young poets turned to Emre, attracted by his simplicity, subtlety and pure Turkish style. Musicians were also influenced by the 13th century mystic, the latest example being that of the contemporary Turkish composer Adnan Saygun, whose "Oratorio of Yunus Emre" is regarded by Leopold Stokowski as "our century's most inspired composition".

Ghahib Dede

The Shaikh Ghahib Dede (1757-1798), a well-educated man of great sensitivity, was the last outstanding poet of the mystic and classic literatures; he belongs to both. For some time he was Grand Master of the Mawali Takya (Whirling Dervishes centre) in Beyoglu, Istanbul. He wrote his masterpiece, "Love and Beauty," when he was 21.

At the age of 24, his works were collected in a Divan, an expression also used for a volume of verses. His fame, however, rests on the long Mathnavi style poem, Husn ile Ishaq (Beauty and Love). This is written in an allegorical, romantic form.

The Shaikh Ghahib had the double distinction of being one of the greatest mystic as well as classic poets in Turkish literature, and in him the two literary trends finally merged. In a unique blend of his own devising, he infused deep feeling, movement and imagination into his classic poems. But the revolution started by the Shaikh Ghahib ended with him, for his writing coincided with the final act of both Divan and mystic poetry.

His Beauty and Love was the climax of this superb finale, and the scholar John K. Birge has called it "one of the greatest Ottoman poems." He goes on to say: "This great poem, well worthy of being translated into English, as a contribution of Turkish poetry to the literature of the world, is an allegory of divine love, which first seeks, and finally finds, human love and understanding.

The chief characters in the poem are Beauty, a lovely girl who represents the divine beauty, and Love, her suitor, who symbolizes the human soul with its mystic longings. Beauty first loves Love, and by the intervention of the all-wise Logos, or Word, Love comes to love Beauty also. Love then sets out in search of an elixir, worthy of being presented to Beauty. Through trials and hardships, reminiscent of the Pilgrim's Progress, Love is guided by the Word, until finally he arrives back at the spot from which he started. Love, at the bidding of the Word, passes beyond the veil concealing the divine Beauty, and thus Love and Beauty become one, their identities are merged, Love is Beauty and Beauty is Love.

Turkish classic poetry

Divan literature

Called "Divan Literature" by the Turks, classic poetry was an esoteric or élite literature, created by and for the intelligentsia at the Court and universities. It began in the 11th century, some 300 years before the Ottoman period, and was strongly influenced by Persian, and to a lesser degree, Arabic, literature. After the 13th century, however, it became more or less localized, and soon reached such a height of perfection that it rejected imitation, although it continued to employ a language thickly interspersed with foreign words and Persian syntax. Classic poetry was finally replaced by newer conceptions towards the middle of the 19th century, though independent poets still continued to use the form even to the present day.

The main concern of the classic Turkish poet is sharp distinction of imagery, and a style of exquisite craftsmanship. Infinite pains are expended in polishing and ornamenting the verse, until the finished article is a dazzling display of virtuosity. The best classic poetry is a happy marriage of sound patterns with ideas, a blending of the intellectual and the musical. Sentimentality plays a very small part, even though the main subject of the Divan group is the joy and misery of love. The verse is also formalized and rigid, and more attention is paid to the perfection of a small unit, such as a hemistich or couplet or stanza, rather than to the unity and perfection of the entire poem, be it a short Ruba'i or long Mathnavi.

The measure used is the 'Aruz, with rhythmic variations. The 'Aruz consists of various arrangements of long and short syllables, reminiscent of the accented and unaccented syllables in English poetic measures. Awkwardly adapted in the beginning to the requirements of the Turkish tongue, the form was used later with such supreme skill that it could be applied even to pure Turkish with equal success.

Qusidah, Ghazal, Mathnavi and Ruba'i.

Divan poetry may be written in one of a number of traditional forms such as Qusidah, Ghazal, Mathnavi, Ruba'i, and so on. The Qusidah (Homage Hymn) has, like a symphony, four distinct movements or portions. Usually a Qusidah opens with a pastoral description, passes to a declaration of love, and is followed by a bridging section that leads to the final and most important portion, "the Praise":

FEBRUARY 1960
This "Praise", or panegyric, could be of an exalted person or a city, but frequently a Qasidah ends with the poet's unrestrained self-praise. The poet Nef'i is the master of this form.

The Ghazal is an ode written in a short mono-rhythmic style, where the poet usually inserts his name in the last couplet. Notable for its lyricism, the Ghazal is used for poems of love and of wine. It was a great favourite with the Divan poets and reached its perfection in the sensitive hands of Fuzuli, Baki, Nedim and, more recently, Yahya Kemal.

The Mathnawi is written in paired rhymes. It is a long epic poem and was the favourite media for love stories, heroic tales and romances. Such popular stories as Asli ile Kerem, Layla ile Majnun, Yusuf ile Zuleykha, and similar tales in the "Romeo and Juliet" genre, have been written by Divan poets using the Mathnawi form. The Mathnawi has also served as a vehicle for didacticism and religious expression. The Maulana's monumental Mathnawi is an excellent example of the last-mentioned.

A series of short quatrains, not unlike the English sonnet, make up the form known as the Ruba'i. The Maulana and Yahya Kemal are two of the greatest artists in the Ruba'i.

The subject of classic poetry is restricted and stereotyped, and the ground was worked over again and again. Within an extremely narrow range of common aesthetic values and themes, the Divan poet was forced to demonstrate his originality and individuality through sheer poetic talent, otherwise he failed and became just another imitator. The standard plots of Layla ile Majnun, Khusrav ile Shirin, and Yusuf ile Zuleykha are recounted many, many times, in much the same way as the Faust legend was used in the West, up until the time of Goethe. Philosophically, the poems are based on the orthodox Sunni school of thought in Islam, or its mystic conception (Sufi).

The symbolism and allegories were unchanging, and used repeatedly for more than 500 years. "Rose" is the cheek of the beloved; "Rosebud" is her lips; her eye-lashes were invariably "Arrows"; the eyebrows, "Bows"; teeth, "Pearls"; figure, "Cypress Tree"; hair, "Night"; and her face was "a Full Moon". Play of words, puns, analogies and metaphors are used extensively, and the poet showed his skill by expressing an idea, a thought or emotion, within a couplet which used all these tools of the Divan group. It should be noted that classic poetry is divorced from social problems and current events. These, as a rule, are never discussed or mentioned.

Despite these self-imposed limitations, Turkish classic poetry lasted more than five centuries, and produced writers of genius. It was only during its decline that second-rate poets began to repeat past masters, and to play with worn-out clichés.

(To be continued)
DEATH PENALTY REINTRODUCED IN CEYLON

By A. R. M. ZERRUQ

“And there is life for you in retaliation. O men of understanding, that you may guard yourself” (The Qur’an 2:179)

One of the first legislative steps the “Mahajana Eskath Peramuna” (The People’s United Front of Ceylon) took a few days after it assumed power was the suspension of the Death Penalty. On 17th May 1956, the M.E.P. Government introduced the Bill to suspend Capital Punishment for three years. Certain ideas coerced the Government into taking such a step — the spirit of the Buddha Jayanti, and the new theory of penology, that is, the punishment must be corrective or deterrent but never vindictive. At public meetings, by preaching and radio talks, the Buddhist priests and laymen stressed the need of abolishing capital punishment in accord with the real ethics of Buddhism which teach love, patience and forgiveness to one’s enemies. “Love is the best sauce,” so goes the Buddhist ideology, and “Not hate but love makes hate to end and reconcileth friend to friend.” But this noble and lofty ideal which Buddha taught fell on deaf ears, for with the suspension of the death penalty there was a sharp increase in the group of premeditated killers.

Increase in crime after the suspension of capital punishment

According to the reports of the Ceylon Inspector-General of Police there was an increase of 45 per cent in premeditated murders after the suspension of the death penalty. In fact, the murder rate in Ceylon was considered high compared to States with similar conditions as those of Ceylon. Thus one of the first legislative steps which the Government of Ceylon took proved, so to say, the collapse of its hope — the hope of reducing the number of murders by dispensing with the death penalty.

In the face of the increasing rate of murder from day to day the suspension of capital punishment could no longer be sustained and there was the claim for its re-introduction. Politicians expressed their fears that if this step was not taken the whole population would be in danger from knives, pistols, hand bombs and grenades. The national newspapers also commented favourably on the reintroduction of the death penalty. Public outcry in the form of letters and reports appeared in the press which tended to justify the abrogation of the suspension of the death penalty.

The Government under pressure from all quarters appointed a Commission to review the suspension of the death penalty. The Death Penalty Commission comprised three persons with Professor Norval Morris as Chairman. Eighty-five per cent of the persons who gave evidence before the Commission supported the re-introduction of Capital Punishment. The Law Society of Ceylon and prominent citizens advocated the death penalty for murderers. It is noteworthy — since it somewhat corresponds to the Islamic legal conception of Diyah (compensation) to the heir or next of kin of the murdered person — the Law Society in particular favoured the idea of compensation to the dependants of the murdered person. The Society stated that compensation should also be recovered from those murderers who serve life imprisonment as a result of the suspension of capital punishment.

Capital punishment re-introduced

Although the majority of witnesses favoured the introduction of the death penalty, the Death Penalty Commission recommended that the suspension of capital punishment should continue until April 1961. At that time, so stated the Commission, the question may merit reconsideration. The Commission held the duration of the suspension so far to be too short to serve as a basis for final decision. What had happened between May 1956 and the end of 1958 did not justify the re-introduction of capital punishment. The member of the three-man Commission who dissented from the recommendation was Sir Edwin Wijeyaratne, who recommended inter alia that the death penalty should be enforced again for deliberate and premeditated murders, a view which is quite in keeping with the Islamic notion of penology. Prominent judges like Mr. Justice Gratiaen and Mr. Justice Fernando held that the death penalty should not have been suspended. Although there was the public outcry for the re-introduction of the death penalty, yet it had no relevance to the Commission. The character of the people, their social and economic background weighed little with the Commission, and the Government, therefore, decided not to accept the report of that Commission.

For four brief periods in the history of Ceylon, it is said, the penalty for murder was execution. As the irony of fate would have it, in the first, third, and fourth centuries, kings of Ceylon who abolished capital punishment had met with untimely deaths. Again, a tragic irony indeed it was that even the late Premier, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, succumbed to the pistol-shot of a Buddhist monk. Nothing but the enthronement of gangsterism and violence in political life were responsible for such a dastardly act.

The steady rise in the murder rate and the assassination of the late Premier forced the Ministers to re-introduce capital punishment — and that, too, at once. The Ministers at a special meeting made this decision and directed the Minister of Justice to prepare the necessary legislation without delay. Under the Emergency Regulations the Government re-introduced the death penalty with immediate effect until the law under which capital punishment was suspended was repealed.

In 1944 the death penalty was abolished in Trivandrum (India) and Cochin (India), but in 1951 it was re-introduced. In Australia, only Tasmania and Queensland abolished capital punishment. The question of penalty meted out to murderers indulged in certain countries the fancy of political issues: in the event of a party coming into power, it abolished capital punishment; and when the opposition party assumed power it took the reverse side of it. Thus capital punishment has indulged in many countries the whims of politicians rather than imbibe the wisdom of Divine Law.

Islam adopts a middle course

The action of taking the life of another without justification, in Islam, is one of the seven heinous offences. According to the Islamic notion of penology, the life
of a killer should be forfeited in case of wilful homicide (Qatl al'amud). Thus it says in the Qur'an: "And the Law of Capital Punishment is ordained for you in cases of murder" (2:178). Here the Muslim jurists purport the Qur'anic word Qisas to be retaliation for murder not committed by mistake or accident. However, the choice between requital (qisas) and compensation (diyaa) in Islam rests with the heir or next of kin of the murdered person. It is evident from the following Qur'anic verse: "But (if the killer) is forgiven by his brother (of the slain), next, follow it up with (reasonable demand) of a good turn bringing him a just and fair retribution. This is a mitigation and a mercy from your Lord" (2:178). It follows from this verse that the law of the Qur'an strikes a compromise between two extremes: one is the Mosaic Law of strict retaliation; and the other is the Buddhist and Christian doctrine of exaggerated forbearance. In other words, Islam mitigated the severity of the Old Testament and judiciously blended the law of requittal with that of forgiveness. Islam adopts a middle course by stressing the importance of moderation in every case.

There is no shadow of doubt that the Qur'anic philosophy of punishment can never be susceptible of any flaw but capable of realizing good results that would be conducive to the peace and welfare of a civilized society. In this respect, Islam renders a social service of tremendous value. Capital punishment serves as an object-lesson for others and a preventive of increasing homicide. It is because the Creator knows the deterrent effect of capital punishment He says in the Qur'an: "And (indeed) you have in the Law of Requittal (saving of) life, O ye men of understanding, that you may restrain yourselves" (2:179). There is indeed the reformative element in capital punishment in that it will make others shrink from the crime of killing innocent souls.

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**ISLAM IN ENGLAND**

**The Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust**

A meeting was arranged at 18 Eccleston Square on 16th January 1960, when Dr. Daud Beg Barlas spoke about the life and literary achievements of the Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1275 C.E.). The Maulana Abul Majid, Editor of The Islamic Review, presided. The speaker started from the early life of Rumi spent in Konya and went on to his meeting his teacher, Shams-i-Tabriz, “a weird figure wrapped in coarse black felt,” as Nicholson put it. The speaker also quoted from Mathnawi some of the selected passages to give the audience some glimpses into the mind of Rumi.

After the meeting there were questions. Some friends stayed for a long time to have more knowledge of Rumi from the speaker.

Discussions on Islam based on the Qur'an were continued on Saturdays at the above address. Light refreshments are served at about 4.30 p.m.

Friday services in London are held at 1.5 p.m. at 16 Chesham Place, S.W.3 (Tube Station, Knightsbridge).

Sunday gatherings at the Mosque, Woking, were held as usual. With the approaching of the month of fasting, over a thousand copies about the significance of the month of Ramadhan are being sent to Muslims living in England. The Ramadhan chart for the London area is also issued. Arrangements are also in hand for the 'Id al-Fitr festival, which will be celebrated on Monday 28th March 1960, when about 2,000 people are expected to go to Woking from all parts of Great Britain. An 'Id Programme is being published which will give the details of the service and the other interesting features of 'Id. With the help of the ladies of various Muslim countries an 'Id Bazaar will also be set up where handicrafts such as knitwear for children, tablecloths of different sizes, saris, bangles, toys and many other things will be on sale. Pakistan, Indonesia and the Lebanon have promised to set up their exhibition stalls separately. After the prayers some person will be initiated into Islam by the Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, and on 'Id day two marriages will also be solemnized.

On Saturday 30th January, S. Muhammad Tufail, the Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, took part in the Death Anniversary of Ghadhi Ji, held at India House, London, where he recited the Fatiha and gave a short explanation of its contents. Leaders of other faiths also took part. Professor Arnold Toynbee was the main speaker. The Imam was invited to other receptions and meetings as well.

Miss Ingrid Bahlmann, of Hamburg, Germany, was initiated into Islam by the Imam on 1st January. A few days later she was married to Mr. Abdullah Duaij of Kuwait.

Marriage between the following persons was solemnized by the Imam of the Mosque, Woking:

1st December 1959: Sheikh Muhammad (Indian) and Kulsum Bibi (Indian). Address: 154 Old Brompton Road, London, S.W.5.

2nd January 1960: Sayed Mahmood Hussain (Pakistani) and Miss Christina Rani Anisah Ottinger (German). Address: 149 Oriental Road, Woking.

9th January 1960: Mr. Kaya Oktay (Cypriot) and Miss Margaret Mitchell (English). Address: 56 Crowland Road, London, N.15.

21st January 1960: Mr. Najim el-Din Abdullah al-Rubayi (Iraqi) and Miss Elin Poulsen (Danish). Temporary Address: 23 Seaforth Lodge, Bonnes High Street, London, S.W.13.

14th February 1960: Mr. Ahmad Noor Hosein (of Trinidad) and Miss (Dr.) Shamim Fazal (of Kenya). Address: P.O. Box 10056, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa.

26th February 1960: Syed Munawar Ali (Indian) and Miss Bärbel Anneliese Papke (German). Address: 85 Warwick Road, London, S.W.5.
WHY I ACCEPTED ISLAM

By H. F. FELLOWS

I have spent most of my life in the Royal Navy, which includes service at sea in both the 1914 and 1939 wars.

At sea you cannot escape from the immense forces of nature even with powerful and efficient twentieth century machinery and apparatus. Simple examples are fog and gales. In wartime there are additional hazards.

There is a book in constant use called Queen's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions. This book defines the duties of every officer and man. It specifies the rewards in the form of promotion, awards for good conduct, pay and pensions. It details the maximum punishments for offences against naval discipline and it covers every other aspect of life within the service. By obeying the instructions contained in this book a large number of men have been united to form a happy, efficient and disciplined service.

If I may say so without disrespect or irreverence, the Qur'an is a similar book but on an immeasurably higher plane. It is the instructions of Almighty God to every man, woman and child on this earth.

For the past eleven years I have been a flower grower. This happens to be another occupation which demonstrates man’s dependence on God. If you work in accordance with God’s orders He helps you and your plants prosper. If you disregard His laws, plant failures are the reward. Trained men issue weather forecasts but not infrequently they prove incorrect.

I am convinced that the Qur'an is the Word of God and that He chose the Prophet Muhammad to repeat His Word to the whole world.

Islam harmonizes with the life in this world. It is simple and straightforward, free from elaborations which cannot be believed. This form of worship reflects this honest sincerity.

Even so, born and bred a Christian in a Christian country, the Christian tradition becomes so firmly embedded that to forsake it requires considerable persuasion. In this connection I must make it clear that the persuasion came from within myself. Although my questions were answered nobody ever even suggested that I should become a Muslim.

The fundamental beliefs of both Islam and Christianity are the same. A further examination is therefore necessary.

Because Martin Luther believed that the Christian Church had retained many pagan rites and beliefs he started a revolt which led to the Reformation and the foundation of the Protestant Church.

When her country was threatened by Roman Catholic Spain and, at the same time, Central Europe was threatened by the advancing Ottoman Empire, Queen Elizabeth I identified the cause of Islam with that of Protestantism on the ground of their common hostility to idolatry.

It would not be correct to maintain that Martin Luther was unaware or ignorant of the fact that some nine centuries earlier, under Divine guidance, the Prophet Muhammad had reformed, purified and perfected not only the Christian religion but also all other revealed religions. Martin Luther had studied the Qur'an.

Yet the Reformation by no means eliminated all the pagan beliefs and ceremonies from Christianity. What it did was to inaugurate a period of cruelty and intolerance which to some extent endures to the present day.

It is noteworthy that at a time when the Spanish Inquisition was most vicious Islam demonstrated its tolerance. The Turks gave asylum to persecuted Jews in Spain.

Jesus said that we were to obey the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The First Commandment, “I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods but Me,” is comprised by the Doctrine of Atonement. Loyalty to Jesus Christ is prized more highly than loyalty to God because Jesus Christ can intercede for us on the Day of Resurrection. Yet Christians believe that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate. My conception of God has always been that He directs everything, knows everything and that He is infinitely Kind, Forgiving, Merciful and Just. Man can therefore be absolutely sure that he will be fairly judged and that all extenuating circumstances will be considered.

In this life you expect to be held responsible for your own behaviour. If you are an accountant and falsify your employer’s accounts you will be sent to prison. If you drive a motor car too fast on a twisting slippery road you will have an accident and so on. To blame somebody else for your own misdeeds is considered to be cowardly. I do not believe that we were born miserable sinners. It is my experience that normal people like to please others unless they come across an unpleasant individual. Children value

If the story of this signboard at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, is faithfully recorded, one will find that it has shown the Light of Islam to many persons groping in the dark. Mr. H. F. Fellowes wrote to the Imam of the Mosque for literature after reading this signboard in the beginning of last year (see The Islamic Review for March 1959, p. 38), and later decided to join the Universal Brotherhood of Islam.

WHAT IS ISLAM? WRITE TO OR CALL AT THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

FEBRUARY 1960
the opinion of their parents and school-teachers. Adults who are respected by their fellows also respect the responsibilities of those in authority over them, and they take pleasure in helping their neighbours. There are times when for some reason or another we are seized by a mutinous impulse and inflict damage on somebody or something. The frequency and degree of these outbursts varies. When we do this we sin. Organized games are another example. If a player breaks a rule the referee penalizes him.

Bearing these considerations in mind the Doctrine of Atonement becomes confusing and incomprehensible.

The Second Commandment starts: “Thou shalt not make for thyself any graven image”, and later it says “Thou shalt not bow down nor worship them”. There are churches and cathedrals littered with images before which some people actually bow down.

I have often wondered why the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus made no immediate impression at the time on the residents of Palestine whether Jews, Romans or others. As far as secular history is concerned Jesus’ life seems to have escaped notice. At school I was only taught the Bible version. It also took, against strong opposition, several centuries before Christianity spread and became established.

The history of the Prophet Muhammad and the triumph and the amazing speed with which Islam was spread was taught at school. No reference was made to the spiritual side of Islam.

Between 1919 and 1923 I served in ships employed in Turkish waters. This stimulated an interest in Islam. The elemental declaration “There is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger” compels attention. I bought books about it. Most of them were prejudiced against Islam. The behaviour of the Caliphs during the previous three centuries and the corruption of Turkish politicians and government officials cast an unfavourable light on Islam. Gradually I let the matter drop. I retained a profound faith in God but it was entirely passive.

A year or so ago I began investigating the subject again. I wrote to the Woking Muslim Mission at Woking and I was supplied with books by Muslim authors. These books exposed Western misconceptions, distortions and inventions and explained why and how they had arisen. They showed that Islam is reawakening and that there are constructive movements actively restoring Islam to its original purity in the light of present-day progress and scientific knowledge with which Islam is in complete harmony.

Recently newspapers have been reporting statements by philosophers and authors to the effect that present religions are obsolete. This reflects the scepticism of the mass of Western peoples in the complexities and ambiguities of the Christian religion. These would-be reformers are again making the same mistake as Martin Luther. Islam, the complete answer, is still here.

It is a paradox that if you never go near a church nobody thinks anything about it. If you become a Muslim, you are liable to be considered eccentric, to say the least.

To sum up, I have become a Muslim because Islam is the only true religion in theory, in practice and in all other respects. Doubts and misgivings are swept away by a feeling inside me that Islam is unquestionably "the Right Path" on which we ask God "to guide us" and that it will remain eternally the Right Path.

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**PEN PALs**

Mr. Rahman L. Benamore Rex, Humacao 1010, Urb. Sta. Rita, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, U.S.A. A Spanish Muslim doing graduate work in Spanish language and literature at the University of Puerto Rico. Interested in having correspondence with Muslims from all over the world, especially Muslims of Spanish ancestry living in North Africa. Also interested in Islam, books, stamps from the various Muslim countries, languages, customs, etc. Correspondence in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.


Mr. G. D. Agha, 3 Sams Hotel, Edwards Road, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, aged 27, would like to correspond with young Muslims in any part of the world.

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**THE ISLAMIC REVIEW**
MUHAMMAD IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

The Prophecies of Moses and Jesus as understood by Muslims

By A. H. DEEDAT

The Muslim attitude to the Bible

At the outset, I think it necessary that I should explain what the Muslim conception is of the Old and the New Testaments. Broadly speaking, the Bible, the Holy Book of the Christians, has two major divisions — the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament consists of what the Muslims call the Torah (the Law of Moses) and the Zabur (the Psalms of David), together with numerous smaller works attributed to various prophets. The New Testament, on the other hand, is referred to by Muslims as the Injil — the Gospel of Jesus, in which are contained the writings of his followers and disciples. A combination of all these works forms one book known as the Bible.

Although the Muslims acknowledge that in their origin the Torah (the Law of Moses), the Zabur (the Psalms of David) and the Injil (the Gospel of Jesus) were revelations from God to the persons of the prophets, they — the Ahl Kitab (the “People of the Book”), for that is the respectful title given to the Jews and the Christians in the Qur’an — did not preserve the teachings of their prophets in their pristine beauty, the Muslims doubt the authenticity of the different versions as they now exist.

A reference in the Qur’an to a prophecy of Jesus about Muhammad

As Muslims are closer to the New Testament in point of time I shall deal with the prophecies as contained in the New Testament first, foretelling the advent of the Prophet of Islam. But before giving the actual quotations, I shall first record the Qur’anic version alluding to this subject:

“...And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said, ‘O children of Israel! I am the Messenger of God (sent) to you, confirming the law (which came) before me and giving glad tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.’” (61:6). Also confirmed in Matt. 10:5-6, 15:24-26, 5:17.

The Qur’an in attributing these words to Jesus Christ says that in the original saying of Jesus there was a prophecy about the Prophet Muhammad, Ahmad by name, which is another name for Muhammad. There is a Gospel still extant which confirms this Qur’anic statement almost word for word. I am referring to the Gospel of St. Barnabas, in which Muhammad is prophesied by name. But this Gospel is excluded from the Books of the New Testament.

The Gospel of St. Barnabas

It may be noted that St. Barnabas was one of those twelve disciples of Jesus Christ who were promised thrones in Heaven to judge the twelve tribes of Israel; yet his Gospel is not included in the New Testament, whereas the writings of Mark, Luke and Paul, who were nowhere in the picture during the ministry of Jesus, occupy an honoured position in the Book. But this is just by the way.

As the average person is not in a position to verify these observations of mine about the Gospel of St. Barnabas, in which Muhammad is mentioned by name, I shall restrict myself to the Authorized and Revised Versions of the Bible, which are within the reach of all.

With the exception of a few words and sentences spoken by Jesus in Hebrew the New Testament is not the mother tongue of Jesus

In the New Testament as it now exists, the names Ahmad or Muhammad do not occur. It is because the sayings of Jesus have not been preserved in the language in which he originally uttered them. It is an admitted fact that the language of Jesus, whatever the dialect, was Hebrew. Ample evidence of this statement is still traceable in the New Testament. For example, the original patronym given by Jesus to his disciple Simon was not Peter but Cephas (John 1:42), meaning a rock or stone; and Peter is the Greek rendering of this name, the Greek root-word being petros, meaning a stone. Jesus never used the name Peter for Simon in his lifetime.

The title Christ also was never used by Jesus for himself, as this is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Masih. Messiah is what he claimed to be. Incidentally, the Hebrew as well as the Arabic words for Christ are the same — Masih’, which means the anointed. Priests and kings were anointed in consecration to their office. But dealing with the mother tongue of Jesus, who can forget his agonizing cry on the cross, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani” (Matt. 27:46), which is the Hebrew for “My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?” These, with “Salitha cumi” (Mark 5:41), meaning “Damsel, arise!” and a few others, are the only remnants of the original utterances of Jesus; the rest are lost in translations and interpretations.

“The Comforter” spoken of by Jesus

Besides this great loss, the copyists of the Greek manuscripts have inflicted a further disadvantage upon us. They had the insidious tendency of translating proper nouns, namely the names of persons. They changed Cephas into Peter, Masih into Christ. But there are other names whose originals have been utterly lost. One such name with a lost origin is the word “comforter” which occurs in the Gospel of St. John. As there are no Hebrew manuscripts of the original utterances of Jesus, we are forced to have recourse to the Greek translations. The Greek form from which the word “Comforter” is derived is Paracletos. Now Paracletos

1 The author of this dissertation has here and there introduced slight verbal changes in the text of the Biblical verses (the Revised Version) with a view to conforming to modern English. The sense, however, has not in the least suffered therefrom (Ed., I.R.).
means more of an advocate, one called to the help of another, a kind of friend, rather than Comforter. Even in this sense, it most truly fits Muhammad, as the Qur'an says (21:107):

"And we have not sent thee, but as a mercy unto all mankind!"

But in the original saying of Jesus, there was a prophecy about the Prophet Ahmad by name!

It is an anomaly that only St. John has recorded this prophecy in his Gospel, whereas all the four authors of the Canonicial Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — have not failed to record trilling events, unimportant things like Jesus riding a donkey into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:7, Mark 11:7, John 12:14, Luke 19:35). If the other three, the Synoptists Matthew, Mark and Luke, had also recorded these prophecies, in their own words of course, it would have made our task still easier.

However, reference to the Prophet Muhammad to come is made in five places in the Gospel of St. John, greater details being contained in chapter 16, verses 7 and 8, which read as follows:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

And in verses 12-14:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, and he will show you things that are to come, he shall glorify me..."

These two sayings of Jesus, together with the other shorter references on the subject, lead us to one of the most notable aspects of the Comforter, of the Spirit of Truth, as he is alternatively described. That he, when he is come, will bear witness of Jesus Christ. In the words of Jesus:

"He will bear witness of me. John he will testify of me" (John 15:26), and:

"He shall glorify me" (John 16:14).

With regards to Jesus Christ, two things of all needed testifying to: one was his miraculous birth, and the other the accusation by the Jews that he blasphemed against the Lord, that he claimed to be a God, or the Son of God in a special capacity, in a physical sense; that he failed to prove that he was the Promised Messiah and as a consequence was hanged on the cross as a false prophet. Not satisfied with this, they accused his mother for his illegitimate birth.

The Jesus of the Qur'an is a holier and nobler personality than the Jesus of the New Testament

Muslims not only testify and bear witness to the authenticity of Jesus Christ, but actually accept Jesus as one of their own prophets. It will come as a surprise to many to know that no Muslim is a Muslim unless he believes in Jesus as a true prophet of God. The Qur'an does not leave it to the choice of Muslims that Jesus was a prophet of God and that his mother was a righteous person.

In reference to the miraculous birth of Jesus, this is what the Qur'an says (3:44-46):

"Behold! The angel said: 'O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him. His name shall be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the hereafter, and of (the company of) those nearest to God.

"He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity, and he shall be of (the company of) the righteous.

"She said: 'O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man hath touched me?' He said: 'Even so, God createth what He willeth. When He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it: 'Be', and it is!"

This is the Muslim's conception of the creative power and majesty of God. His is only to command: "Be! And it is."

Contrast this with the version as given in the Gospel of St. Luke, when it is said that "the Holy Ghost came upon Mary and conceived her" (1:35). I venture to claim that no unbiased Christian will hesitate to acknowledge that the Qur'anic version is sublime and more befitting the Omnipotence of God than the one given in the Gospels. And this is by no means an isolated example! The Jesus of the Qur'an is a holier and nobler personality than the Jesus of the New Testament.

"Ye cannot bear them now" (Jesus)

Reverting to the text of the prophecy: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." The truth of this statement, "Ye cannot bear them now," is written large throughout the pages of the New Testament. Times out of number Jesus rebuked his disciples for their lack of faith and understanding. "Ye of little faith! Ye of little faith!" (Matt. 26:26, 14:31 and 16:8) and "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?" (Matt. 17:17, Mark 9:19 and Luke 9:41) are frequent reproaches.

Unfortunate indeed was Jesus in his choice. He went after the Jews like a "hen after her chickens" (Matt. 23:37 and Luke 13:34). But they, for whom his heart bled, despised and rejected him; and his very own "Mother and Brethren" (Matt. 12:49), as he called his disciples, proved unworthy of the trust. The one he loved most — Judas Iscariot — sold his God and Master for half-a-crown (Matt. 26:49). It is hardly necessary to refer to the infamous kiss of Judas (Matt. 26:49), which has become proverbial for its infamy. The other on whom he had the utmost trust to build his Church — Peter — cursed, abused and swore at him (Matt. 26:74 and Mark 14:71), while the other ten were nowhere to be found when he was most in need of them, when he was about to be crucified. In the words of St. Matthew, "All his disciples forsook him and fled."

A "faithless and perverse generation" (Matt. 17:17), to use the words of Jesus Christ, were ill-deserved to receive all the truth which Jesus wanted to impart. So he promises: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."

My six reasons in support of the Muslim claim that "The Comforter" is no other than Muhammad

Now who is this Spirit of Truth or the Comforter, as he is described in another place? Christians assert that the "Comforter" or "Spirit of Truth" of these prophecies is the Holy Ghost, which inspired the disciples at Pentecost. Against this mere assertion I detail below six reasons, six arguments, to prove as to why these prophecies do not apply to the Holy Ghost and how Muhammad fulfilled precisely every requirement of these prophecies.

The first reason why this prophecy relates to Muhammad and not to the Holy Ghost is derived from the say-
ing of Jesus: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come". This means that the coming of the Comforter was dependent upon Jesus going away: but we learn from the Testament the contrary about the Holy Ghost. That the coming of the Holy Ghost, that the assistance of the Holy Ghost, that the inspiration by the Holy Ghost, was in no way dependent upon the departure of Jesus. Who can deny the fact that the Holy Ghost was constantly aiding and assisting Jesus in his ministry? As Jesus says: "I by the Spirit of God cast out devils" (Matt. 12:28). Moreover, it was not Jesus alone that the Holy Ghost aided and assisted but also it was an accompaniment of his disciples (Mark 13:11). Addressing his disciples regarding the Holy Ghost, Jesus says: "Ye know him: for he dwelleth in you" (John 14:17). If the Holy Ghost was with Jesus and if it was abiding in the disciples, as it is clear from these verses, this saying "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come," does not make sense unless we agree that the "Comforter" of these prophecies is somebody else other than the Holy Ghost, whose coming was dependent upon Jesus' going away, but on the contrary the Holy Ghost worked in conjunction with Jesus and his disciples. Therefore the Comforter of this prophecy is not the Holy Ghost!

The second reason why this prophecy applies to Muhammad and not to the Holy Ghost will become more evident by my re-quotting the prophecies with emphasis on the pronouns: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak from himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come; he shall glorify me." And in the other prophecy: "And he, when he is come, etc., etc. All these masculine pronouns, he, he, he, he, must, after all, mean something. The Holy Ghost as we know is a Spirit, and it ill-deserves so many he's. Belonging to the neuter gender, the pronoun it would have been quite appropriate. All this emphasis does indicate that the Comforter of this prophecy was to be a man and not a spirit. When this point was stressed the Christian missionaries in India altered one of their Urdu versions of the Bible to read she, she, she in place of the pronoun he in these prophecies. This is a very common habit of theirs adding, deleting and altering words to suit their whims and fancies. There could be given numerous examples of this practice of theirs. The point is, that all this emphasis, all these his', eight in fact in one verse, goes to prove that the Comforter of these prophecies was to be a man and not a ghost.

"He will guide you into all truth" (Jesus)

The third reason why this prophecy applies to Muhammad and not to the Holy Ghost is derived from this saying of Jesus: "He will guide you into all truth." Now "all truth" was to be more than what Jesus was able to impart during his short ministry. He had many more things to say, which his disciples were incapable of hearing because of their lack of faith and understanding, as has already been explained. It is for our Christian friends to say what new truths are, which were too much for Jesus' disciples to bear in his lifetime, and also if the Holy Ghost did reveal at Pentecost which he had not already imparted in so many different words. There is but one answer to these questions — no, not one. Furthermore, no one can sincerely claim that one has now got all truth in the writings of the Apostles. Are there not a hundred and one problems facing humanity today for which Christianity offers no solution, except "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's" (Matt. 22:21), as if man was made of two airtight compartments, one for the things of this world and the other for the Life Hereafter.

In justification of my stand that it is Muhammad who claims to have taught all the truth as prophesied by Jesus, in the evolution of religions, religion has indeed reached perfection in Islam, as God says in the Qur'an (5:4):

"This day I have perfected for you your religion, and have completed my favours unto you."

Islam is the only religion, the Qur'an is the only holy book, which puts forth this claim to perfection in its own words, without any assistance from its followers. Thus Muhammad fulfilled the saying of Jesus that "He will guide you into all truth", by bringing religion to perfection — by teaching all truth.

The fourth reason why this prophecy applies to Muhammad and not to the Holy Ghost is derived from this saying of Jesus: "For he shall not speak from himself, but whatsoever shall he hear, that shall he speak". As believers in the Trinity — that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost — that the three are one, and the one is three. I fail to see how Christians can reconcile the two parts of this clause: the one: "For he shall not speak from himself," with the other: "But whatsoever shall he hear these shall he speak". If it is the Holy Ghost referred to here, it is absurd to say that "he shall not speak from himself," because the Holy Ghost is one with God; it is the same as God: it is God! Then whom will it be hearing from? Whom will it be speaking from? Surely not hearing from himself and then speaking from himself.

Muhammad satisfies the sense of these prophecies when we interpret it in the light of these utterances of Jesus:

"For I speak not from myself, but the Father Who sent me. He hath given me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak" (John 12:49).

And in the very next verse:

"Even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:50).

And again:

"I can of myself do nothing, as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).

And in another place he says:

"The word ye hear is not mine but the Father's Who sent me" (John 14:24).

In the same way that revelation came to Jesus from God Almighty, by that very method revelation was to come down to the Spirit of Truth or Comforter of these prophecies, and so it did to the Prophet of Islam:

"Nor does he speak from his own desire; it is no less than an inspiration sent down to him" (The Qur'an, 53:3-4).

In other words, "He does not speak from himself, but whatsoever shall he hear, these shall he speak." These prophecies fit Muhammad like a glove.

The prophecy of Jesus about the "Comforter is just" does not fit the Holy Ghost

The fifth reason why this prophecy applies to Muhammad and not to the Holy Ghost is because of this statement: "And he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." Muhammad did declare many mighty truths. He did prophecy, and his prophecies were fulfilled, but prophecies...
by themselves, foretelling future events by themselves, are of little consequence unless they bring about a change of heart, a change of attitude in the mentality of a people, and in this regard Muhammad was the most successful of all the prophets. In a very short time he transformed the Arabs from the lowest depths of degradation to the summit of culture and civilization. From that state in which Gibbon describes the Arabs of the time as "the human brute almost without sense, is poorly distinguished from the rest of the animal creation". That there was hardly anything to differentiate between the man and the beast of the time. From that lowly state he transformed them, in the words of Thomas Carlyle, "the torchbearer of light and learnings," for centuries, during the darkest period of the Middle Ages in Europe.

And the followers of Muhammad did not have to wait long for the fulfilment of his words: in their very lifetime they saw the mightiest empires of the day — the empires of Persia and of Rome — crumble in their hands. Such were the declarations of Muhammad; his were no vague expressions, which with a little twist could be made to apply to anything and everything, but unambiguous truth on the shape of things to come. The Muslims had no need to stretch his words to suit passing events!

"That" Prophet

The sixth reason why this prophecy applies to Muhammad and not to the Holy Ghost is, "He shall glorify me". I have already mentioned without enumerating it as to how Muhammad truly glorified Jesus by testifying, bearing witness of him and clearing him of the blasphemies of his enemies.

But besides these six points there is yet another, an outstanding point, which conclusively proves that the "Comforter" or "the Spirit of Truth" of these prophecies was to be a prophet — a man and not a ghost. The Jews had a prophecy that before the coming of the promised Messiah, Elias must come first (Malachi 4:5). Elias is supposed to have ascended to Heaven. When Jesus claimed to be the promised Messiah, the Jews asked him, "Where is Elias?". Jesus acknowledged that Elias must indeed come first (Matt. 17:11), but that he had come already; and pointed out to John the Baptist, who was languishing in prison at the time, that he (John) was Elias. To verify this statement of Jesus, the Jews sent unto John from Jerusalem. To quote the Testament, "the Jews sent unto John from Jerusalem, priests and Levites (i.e., learned men) to ask him, 'Who art thou?' (Who are you?). And he (John) confessed, and denied not, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ'. And they asked him, 'What then? Art thou Elijah?' "Elijah and Elias stand for one and the same person, like the names Abraham and Muhammad for the Prophet Muhammad. "And they asked him, 'What then? Art thou Elias?' And he saith, 'I am not.' "Thus giving a direct lie to Jesus Christ. Jesus says that "John is Elias", but John denies being Elias. However, we are not here concerned about this controversy between Jesus and John. What we are interested in is the third question, "Art thou that prophet?", and he answered "No!" (John 1:21).

It could not escape one's notice that three distinct questions were asked, and John replied to all of them with an emphatic "No!". But if one still has any doubts as to the number of questions asked, one should read this: "And they that had been sent by the Pharisees asked him further, 'Why baptizest thou then, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, nor that Prophet?' " (John 1:25). The third question clearly indicates that even during the time of Jesus, the Jews were expecting another prophet besides the Christ, and besides Elias; they called him that prophet. That prophet must have been no mean prophet, because no explanation was necessary. It was understood that that prophet was the one prophesied in the Old Testament, in Deuteronomy 18:18, where God promises Moses: "And I will raise them up a prophet, from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

Blessed indeed were the Jews and the Christians who recognized Muhammad as the fulfillment of this prophecy and accepted Islam in the early days, but the latter-day followers of Jesus Christ have developed a technique of stretching every prophecy, however far-fetched, to fit Jesus Christ, and this particular one I have just quoted is not an exception to the fanciful interpretations.

Reasons why Jesus is not "that" Prophet

I will now give seven clear-cut reasons, without elaboration, as to why this prophecy does not apply to Jesus, and how it relates to Muhammad.

The main distinguishing feature of the Promised Prophet is that he should be like Moses. "Like unto thee," says God to Moses. In the first place, according to the Christians, Jesus was a God and Moses but His servant, a servant of God. Secondly, Jesus was cursed for the redemption of the sins of the world, but Moses was not cursed for the redemption of their sins: thirdly, Jesus had to go to Hell for three days, but Moses had no need to go there. However, these are matters of mere belief only; many more such differences could be given. But let us scrutinize the actual, the factual and the incontrovertible differences between Moses and Jesus, and the similarity of Muhammad with Moses.

"LIKE UNTO THEE (MOSES)"

1. Moses had a father and mother, and so had Muhammad, but Jesus, according to Christian belief, had only a mother.
2. Moses and Muhammad married and begot children, but Jesus remained a bachelor all his life.
3. Moses and Muhammad were temporal as well as the spiritual heads of their peoples — they were "prophets" as well as "leaders", but Jesus only claimed spiritual leadership. He said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).
4. Moses and Muhammad brought new laws and ordinances for their peoples, but Jesus never claimed to have brought a new law; on the contrary he said: "Think not that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I came not to destroy but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17).
5. Moses and Muhammad were acknowledged as prophets by their people in their very lifetime, but Jesus was "despised and rejected" by his people, and even 2,000 years after his coming, his people — the Jews — still remained unconvincing about his bona-fides.
6. Moses and Muhammad died a natural death, but Jesus was killed on the cross (Mark 15:31 and John 19:30). After this one fails to understand by what stretch of imagination one can make belief that Jesus is the like of Moses, and that this prophecy applies to him.

Search as one may, there has not been another prophet like Moses except Muhammad, and he was from "among the brethren" of the two sons of Abraham — the Jews are the descendants of Isaac, and their brethren, the Arabs, are the descendants of Ishmael. So Muhammad was also from among their brethren.

Thus Muhammad fulfilled the sayings of Moses and
Jesus, but when he came with clear signs, with unmistakable evidence, the vested interests in religion said: “Did you know that there were and there are vested interests in religion as well?” These vested interests in religion said:

“This is evident sorcery” (61:6).

They denounced it as trickery, unreal, untrue. They called it unreal, which became the most solid fact in all human history. But this is the only argument the vested interests in religion had fourteen hundred years ago, and this is the only argument open to them today!

In this age of reason and enlightenment, in this age of tolerance and broad-mindedness, I end up with the words of Jesus Christ:

“By their fruits ye shall know them.
Do men gather grapes from the thorns.
Or figs from the thistles?
Always the good tree bears good fruit:
But the evil tree (the corrupt tree, the bad tree) bears bad fruit.
Always ye shall know them by their fruits!”
(Matt. 7 : 16-20).

THE DESTINY OF ISLAM

By NORMAN LEWIS

“The truest guide in life is science.”

How bright and clear seems this bold statement of Ataturk. At last the bewildered human mind has apparently found the way. Many in the Near East are probably accepting this new thought and are beginning to follow where it leads.

The first steps in science are fascinating. Here is an immense body of knowledge accumulated by inquiring minds. Here is a method, a way of learning, a technique of testing. It is not surprising that the beginner is filled with enthusiasm for science. Ordered and orderly knowledge is very gratifying to an orderly mind.

But with science is apt to go a peculiar shortsightedness. Is man mind or soul? Is his basic nature mental or spiritual?

The Near East and Middle East, looking towards Ataturk and his “guide”, are taking the first steps along the path of science, with or without backward glances.

But if a man has lived forty or fifty years in the midst of Western civilization he has had an opportunity to test this sure guide of Ataturk, this only true path, as he would say, of the questing human spirit.

And we find after decades of testing that it does not supply what man deeply hungers for: it does not satisfy his greatest longings. The life of a man who is completely dedicated to science, we observe, becomes more and more hollow and empty. Year after year, the West becomes more Godless, more the land of the worshippers of the material. A few years ago a questionnaire was sent to leading scientists of the West, and from it we learned that the great majority of them believe in no reality but the reality of matter.

Are these people to be the High Priests of the rising generation? Are they to show them the surest path of life?

Only the thought of God is real, vital, incandescent. Only the thought of God can glorify human life and make it worthwhile. Only this thought has power. The science which Ataturk has worshipped cannot transform human life and make it a noble and beautiful thing.

The genius of Muhammad, as that of Abraham, was to break from all forms of High Priesthood and to stand alone, defenceless, trusting, before God.

If Muslims accept this statement of Ataturk, they have no choice but to follow the way of the West to materialism, scepticism, atheism, cynicism, to a gradual loss of all ideals, all spirituality, all soul.

In contrast, we have the words of a man who turned from materialism to God, as recorded by William James in his remarkable book, The Varieties of Religious Experience: “The very heavens seemed to open and pour down rays of light and glory. Not for a moment only, but all day and night, floods of light and glory seemed to pour through my soul, and, oh, how I was changed, and everything became new.”

Science stands abashed before such a disclosure. It is powerless to reproduce or to explain this type of experience.

Shall we, then, discard science? It is hardly necessary to do that. All that is necessary is to recognize science as a tool, not a “guide in life.” The intellect of man is one of the most powerful and effective tools of the spirit. But man is spirit, not intellect. He is soul, functioning through intellect and body in a material world.

“O my people! Lo! this life of the world is but a passing comfort, and Lo! the Hereafter, that is the enduring home” (The Qur’an, 40 : 39).

The Court of Lions in the Alhambra, Granada, Spain

The beautiful picture published in December, 1959 issue can be had separately. Price 1/-.

Write to the MANAGER, ‘THE ISLAMIC REVIEW’, WOKING, SURREY, ENGLAND

FEBRUARY 1960

37

Philosophy, Psychology, Mysticism consists of three series of lectures delivered mainly during the three-monthly Sufi Summer School of 1925, there being one lecture in each of these courses every week. Ever since it has remained the exclusive privilege of Hazrat Inayat Khan's mureeds (pupils of his esoteric school) to hear them being read at subsequent summer schools directed by his brothers and successors. Lectures deal with subjects such as Illusion and Reality, Spirit and Matter, the Law of Rhythm, Impression and Belief, Physical Magnetism, the Ideal of the Mystic, the Realization of the True Ego, etc.

* * *


Katib Chelebi, also known as Hajji Kalfa, was an Ottoman polymath who died in 1657. He is best remembered for his Kashf al-Zawyan, a bibliographical dictionary in Arabic, and for his Ilihamuna, a compendium of geography and cosmology, from which he drew on Western sources. The constant theme of The Balance of Truth is the futility of trying to force people to abandon practices which, while not justifiable according to the strict letter of the law, do not conflict with it either, and have become rooted in custom.

* * *


Ibn ‘Arabi is possibly the most significant thinker of Islam. Yet he is far less widely known in the Western world than Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd or even al-Farabi. By and large, the legend of his pantheism and his obscurity persist in a world little aware of what he actually wrote and taught. The late R. A. Nicholson and Dr. A. F. Affifi are the English-speaking world’s chief contribution to Ibn ‘Arabi studies. The present essay attempts to fill the gap that remains.

Professor Landau has given original interpretations and illustrations to some of Ibn ‘Arabi’s puzzling ideas, and it is hoped that this introduction to him might induce the reader to seek out the original sources. For the sake of those unable to read Ibn ‘Arabi in the original, a number of his texts in English have been included.

* * *


Occasionalism is generally associated, in the history of philosophy, with the name of Malebranche. But long before this time, the Muslim theologians of the ninth and tenth centuries had developed an occasionalist metaphysics of atoms and accidents, which was inspired by the same theological motives which had inspired Malebranche, viz., the vindication of the omnipotence of God and the powerlessness of man without Him.

Dr. Fakhr contends that a number of distinctively Islamic concepts such as fatalism, utter resignation to God, the surrender of personal endeavour, belief in the unqualified transcendence of God, etc., cannot be fully understood, save in the perspective of the occasionalist world view of Islam, expounded and discussed in this work. He also discusses the devastating attack on occasionalism launched by the great Arab-Spanish philosopher, Averroes (died 1198 C.E.), and that made by St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 C.E.). One of the chief merits of the work is that it brings to light a chapter of significant and challenging intellectual contact between Muslim and Latin scholasticism in the Middle Ages; and for this reason alone should have a claim upon the attention of the student of history and of philosophy.

* * *


Writing with personal persuasiveness as though speaking directly to the reader, Abdo S. Ahmed, founder of the Industry for Peace Organization and the Islamic Science Organization, combines the ancient tenets of Islam with the ideas of American democracy. His book, The Correct Way of Life, is an analysis of the problems, material and spiritual, that beset twentieth century man, and in which the author has tried to present a series of solutions to these problems.

Studies in Honour of PHILIP K. HITTI
Edited by James Kritzeck and R. Bayly Winder
This volume brings together a number of essays on Islamic and Near Eastern subjects by distinguished scholars as well as by relative newcomers in this field of study. Conceived as a tribute by his students and colleagues to the American orientalist, Philip K. Hitti, the articles fall naturally into three divisions: Islam, the religion and its background; various important aspects of the medieval Islamic period; and, the modern and contemporary Near East. Of interest to scholars in the field, this work will also help the layman to understand the genius of the Islamic world in its medieval period of greatness and to appreciate some of the problems now besetting it with such intensity. 8½"x5¼". 384 pages. 8 half-tone plates. 52/- post free.
ISLAM IN THE NETHERLANDS
54 Ruychrocklaan,
The Hague.
28th February 1960.

Dear Sir,

Our inter-religious discussions have aroused great interest among the Dutch people. Eenheid Overwint Alles, a monthly journal of the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, gave an interesting survey of our meetings and discussions with our Christian friends. The article published in the December 1959 issue was entitled “The Invasion of Islam”. This is, however, only a spiritual invasion, if it can at all be called an invasion. We are confident that Islam will win many friends in this part of the world. Christianity also came from the East. It has played its role and now it is the turn of Islam — a liberal, rational and united Islam which alone can be the panacea of human ills. Our means of acquainting the West with the message of Islam are meagre but we must continue the struggle with whatever limited sources we have at our disposal.

On the New Year’s Day we had a message printed and sent it to nearly 400 persons.
In our public meetings we had announced the commencement of a four-evening course on Islam. Many friends gave their names and addresses. During the month of January we held these gatherings at our place. A young Dutch Muslim, Mr. Saifullah Chalid Bruin, gave a series of lectures on the fundamentals of Islam.

The writer of these lines was invited by the members of the Humanist Society at Utrecht on 28th January 1960 to speak about the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. Again a meeting in Pulchri Studio, the Hague, was held, where he spoke on “Islam and its Comparison with Christianity”. After the talk a long discussion took place in which a Baptist priest also joined. The proceedings were briefly reported in the two leading papers of the Hague.

During the month of Ramadhan we have reserved every Friday evening for the study of the Qur’an, in which our Dutch Muslim friends will also participate.

It will be interesting to note that our friends, Messrs. R. L. Mellema (The Royal Institute of the Tropics, Amsterdam O.I.), A. C. van Onck (c/o 54 Ruychrocklaan, the Hague), and J. Habibullah Krul (Keizerstraat 36, Scheveningen), are constantly engaged in translating and producing various works on Islam. Sh. Mian Muhammad Trust has printed some pamphlets on Islam in Dutch by the offset method in Pakistan.

Reports from Curacao show that our friend Mr. D. R. Boschmans Abdul Fatin (Porioticoweg 176, Willemstad, Curacao N.A.), has been very active in bringing home the message of Islam to his countrymen. Through his efforts several persons have seen the light of faith. May God help him in his endeavours.

Yours faithfully,
GHULAM AHMAD BASHIR (H.A.).

Islamic Society of South Australia,
Box 1694N, G.P.O.,
Adelaide,
South Australia.
24th September 1959.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for printing my article on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. This article was in fact a paper I read on the occasion of the celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. I think the topic should be dealt with more fully by some of our able modern scholars, as it is of very great interest to our young students, who usually embark upon a university career without sufficient knowledge of their religion. Some of my colleagues at the University of Adelaide thought that Islam was merely a system which concerns with the supernatural question of God and the next life. They had never heard of the rational side of Islam until the paper was read to them.

As the topic is worthy of much attention, I take the liberty of requesting you to bring to the notice of those well-qualified scholars who know of the need for emphasizing the rational side of Islam for the benefit of our students who are trained in Western institutions.

As a law student, I am interested in the rationalism of Islam itself, and I am very eager to receive more information on the subject from any sources.

Yours in Islam,
ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD,
Secretary.

* * *

AN AFRICAN MUSLIM ON THE FUTURE OF MUSLIM REFUGEES IN CENTRAL EUROPE

In writing in The Bulletin, Series V, No. 2, 1959, the English language organ of the JAI (Jami’at al-Islam, Wiedner Strasse 85/6, Vienne V. Austria), Mr. Muhammad Lawal B. Agusto, Barrister-at-Law, Chief Imam of the Jami’at al-Isamiyya, Lagos, Nigeria, has the following useful suggestion on the problem of Muslim refugees in Central Europe:

“The freedom and self-rule soon to be attained will not be painless for they bring responsibilities for which, under colonial administration, Africa has been denied preparation. The problems before us are not insurmountable. The thirteen Colonies which with the Declaration of Independence became the original thirteen United States of America, survived. Rich in natural wealth and opportunity, North America attracted skilled hands and engineers and teachers from the Old World. The nation grew. Africa south of the Sahara is rich beyond compare. And Muslim refugees who have been forced from far homelands, escapee artisans and functionaries, and professors, are available to serve an awakening land. To this will be added the strong support of all men and women, Muslim and non-Muslim, who equate other men not by complexion or religious denomination but by deeds and aspirations.”
WAT IS ISLAAM? (Dutch)


Doel. De Islaam geeft aan zijn volgelingen een volmaakt stelsel van levensregels, waardoor deze godsdienst het edele en goede in de mens tot ontwikkeling kan brengen en aldus een vreedzame samenleving van de mensheid bevorderen.

De Profeet van de Islaam. Muhammad, algemeen bekend als de Profeet van de Islaam, moet in het bijzonder worden gezien als de laatste van een lange reeks van Profeten. Muslims, dat zijn de volgelingen van de Islaam, erkennen alle vroegere Profeten, waaronder mede zijn begrepen Abraham, Mozes en Jezus, als dragers en overbrengers van een goede boodschap, door Gods wil geopenbaard om aan de dwalende mensheid leiding te geven.


Geloofsartikelen van de Islaam. Deze zijn zeven in getal. De Muslim gelooft in (1) God; (2) Engelen; (3) de door God geopenbaarde Boeken; (4) de Afgezanten Gods; (5) het Hiernamaals; (6) de voorafbepaling van goed en kwaad; (7) de opstanding na de dood.

Het leven na de dood is volgens de Islamitische leer niet een nieuw leven, maar een voortbestaan van dit leven; de dood opent de poort naar een andere, hogere levensvorm. De duur er van is onbeperkt. Een andere naam voor deze levensvorm is “Paradijs”. Zij, die niet in staat blijken de hemelse zegen te waarderen als gevolg van het begaan van slechte daden in dit leven, worden in het “Vuur” gelouterd van alle onvolkomenheden, totdat ook zij geschikt worden geacht voor het leven in de Hemel.

Het komt wel voor, dat men bij het onder punt 6 genoemde absoluut denkt aan “fatalisme” en “praestatie”. Een Muslim gelooft noch in fatalisme, noch in praestatie; hij gelooft in de goddelijke maat der dingen.

De mens bezit echter nog zowel kennis, noch een absolute macht, noch ook een absolute wil. Al deze eigenschappen komen slechts God toe. De menselijke kennis, de menselijke macht en de menselijke wil zijn onderworpen aan beperkingen en deze beperkingen zijn aan de mens gesteld door de “Godeelijke Maat”, die in de Qur’ān als  qadr wordt aangeduid.

De Muslim gelooft, dat al het door God geschapen goed is van nature. Goed blijft het, zolang de mens er een gebruik van maakt, dat in overeenstemming is met het doel; maakt de mens misbruik van hetgeen van hetgeen van nature goed is, dan ontstaat het kwaad en het slechte.

De zullen van de Islaam. De Islaam wordt gedragen door een vijftal zullen, te weten: (1) de geloofsbelijdenis van de eenheid van God en van de goddelijke zending van Muhammad; (2) het gebid; (3) de weldadigheid; (4) het vasten; (5) de pelgrimstocht naar het Goedshuis in Mecca.

Attributen van God. De Muslims vereren één God, de Eindachtige, de Alwetende, de Rechtvaardige, de Onderhoud van alle werelden, de Vriend, de Helper. Niemand is aan Hem gelijk. Hij heeft geen deelnemers. Hij is niet voortgebracht, noch heeft Hij ooit een zoon of dochter voortgebracht. Hij is onbeheersbaar in wezen. Hij is het Licht van de hemelen en van de aarde, de Genadige, de Barmhartige, de Roemrijke de Prachtvolle, de Schone, de Eeuwige, de Oneindige, de Eerste en de Laatste.


De vermogens van de mens. De Muslim gelooft in een van nature in de mens aanwezige zondeloosheid, waardoor elk mens in staat is, gemaakt als hij is van de beste grondstoffen, zich onbeperkt te ontwikkelen tot een niveau dat hem boven de Engelen verheft en hem voert tot de grenzen van de goddelijke macht.


Gelijkwaardigheid der mensheid en de Broederschap van de Islaam. Uit de leer van de Eenheid van God volgt de leer van de eenheid der schepping en de gelijkwaardigheid van alle mensen. Afstamming, rijkdom en familie tradities (adel) zijn bijkomstige zaken; persoonlijke verdiensten en dienen de mensheid hebben alleen waarde. Het beoordelen van zijn medemens naar kleur, ras of geloof komt in de gelederen van de Islaam niet voor. De gehele mensheid is één familie en de Islaam is er in geslaagd om zowel negers als blanken en daartussen gelegen getinte huidskleurigen en rassen door de banden van broederschap te verbinden.

Persoonlijk oordeel. De Islaam moedigt het geraken tot een persoonlijke mening aan en heeft eerbied voor de afwijkende mening van een ander. Het meningsverschil in de gemeente is volgens de Profeet een genadegave Gods.

Kennis en wetenschap. Het verwerven van kennis en het beoefenen van wetenschap is de Muslim, zowel man als vrouw, als plicht voorgeschreven. Door het verwerven van kennis kan de mens een positie bereiken, die boven die der Engelen ligt.

Heiligheid van de arbeid. Alle arbeid, die de mens in staat stelt eerzaam te leven, wordt geëerbiedigd en is eervol. Luiheid en ledigheid zijn als zondig te veroordelen.

Weldadigheid. Alle vermogens die de mens bezit zijn hem door God als een kostbaar pand toevertrouwd, dat hij heeft aan te wenden ten behoeve van zijn medeschepels. Het is zijn plicht voor anderen te leven en hij dient zijn weldaden te verrichten zonder aanzien des porsens. Het doen van goede daden brengt de mens dichter bij God. Barmhartigheid en het geven van aalmoezen worden de Muslim als plicht voorbehouden en ieder die eigendom bezit boven een zeker minimum heeft daarvan een deel af te staan, dat, gebeven van de rijke aan de arme ten goede zal komen.

(Vertaald door R. I. Mellema)

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
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The following books are at present out of stock. They are, however, on order and we hope to receive them before very long.

- Muhammad the Prophet, by S. Khuda Bakhsh. 36 pp.
- Glimpses from the Life of the Prophet Muhammad by Eminent Scholars. 186 pp.
- The Prophet and Islam, by Stanley Lane Poole. 52 pp.
- The Fallacy of Marxism, by Dr. Rafi-ud-Din. 144 pp.
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