The ISLAMIC REVIEW

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The Promised Messiah Speaks:

The Prophet of Arabia

by HADHRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD

The Promised Messiah, Mehdi and the Mujaddid
of the Fourteenth Century Hijrah

It may not be out of place to review briefly the conditions of people before the advent of the Prophet of Islam.

Pre-Islamic period

Before the birth of Islam, many people had strayed from the right path, and had fallen into many kinds of innovations and evil practices. Various cults of worship of different objects of nature had spread all over the world.

In addition to idol-worship, cults of the worship of many objects had spread all over the place, the original beliefs and principles having been contaminated both internally and externally. A beautiful green tree; a flame of fire rising from the earth; in fact, every object that excited astonishment was worshipped: the sun, the moon, fire, water and wind; stones and trees; birds and beasts; anything was exalted to divine honours.

In India, the poor people were oppressed. If a Sudra over-heard a Brahmin reciting the Vedas, he was to be punished by having molten lead poured into his ears.

Polygamy was practised to an unlimited extent. A woman was debarred from studying the Vedas; her religion was to serve her husband, and her eternal happiness depended on the performance of this duty.

Fire worship held sway over Persia. The kings were gods; they were absolute masters over the person and property of their subjects who possessed no rights.

Never was the condition of woman so bad than under the Mago-Zoroastrians. The Persian recognized no law but that of his own will. He could marry his nearest kindred, and divorce his wives at will.

The house of Israel was a wreck. Jesus had come and gone without producing any effect upon the Jews. Many a doubt had arisen in them. Not being content with the One True God, they had taken for themselves hundreds of different lords, and the worship of objects was rampant and rife amongst them to the utmost degree. Moreover, a great number of the Jews had fallen into the baneful belief, like the nature-worshippers, that the world was working in accordance with the firmly-fixed and set rules, and that God was unable to interfere in this law authoritatively, and this universe, ever since He had finished with its creation according to a certain measure, had been functioning automatically on the strength and fitness of its own parts, and the Lord of the worlds had no hand in the working of this machine, or could not introduce any change according to His own will and pleasure.

Believing God to be physical and corporeal, the Jews looked upon Him as a part and parcel of this material world, and ascribed to Him many things which are permissible only in the case of created objects. They did not consider Him as absolutely infallible and wholly above error. Some of them had relapsed into the doctrine of the transmigration of souls; continued on page 2
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He came to a fallen humanity, a humanity sunk deep in superstition, cruelty and vice. A humanity that worshipped gods carved and created with its own hands in addition to various elements of nature. A humanity labouring under the pagan myths of 'Gods incarnate' and 'Sons of God'. A humanity divided and diverse by prejudices of race, religion, language, color, cast and creed. To this fallen humanity Muhammad, 'the most successful of all the religious personalities of the world', brought the message which worked 'the most complete, the most sudden and the most extraordinary revolution that had ever come over any nation upon earth'. A message unique in many respects based on new precepts hitherto unknown to mankind. The message of 'Unity of God and Unity of Mankind'. A message of glory and dignity of mankind by living in God. The message which in unique terms spelled out the relationship of man with God and his relationship with the universe, the rest of the creation of God.

A perusal of the world history shows the idea of the whole of humanity being a single nation as first dawning upon the Prophet's mind. It was a revelation from on High in the truest sense. It was not the momentary idea of a visionary thrown out in a passing ecstasy; it was a principle of action worked out in all its details in the revelations and practice of the Prophet.

By the message 'Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all from Himself, He has made subservient to you'; the Prophet has put the man's position in nature as that of a conqueror, created to control all the forces of nature and to rule in the earth and not to bow before them. From the slave of nature's forces, the Prophet raised man to the dignity of the master and the ruler, and it was due to this realization of man's position in the universe, that mankind took vigorous strides towards the expansion of knowledge and advancement of the science in the physical sphere and a change too was brought about in the spiritual outlook in as much as that it was now considered degradation of human nature that man should worship the sun, or the moon or the stars or the elements of nature which were created for the service of man and he was required to yoke them into service and control them. Man was the noblest of God's creation, according to the Prophet, and it was degrading for him to worship things or to bow before things which he really excelled. That was to be the essential principle in man's
relations with the rest of creation. He had been made to excel all things. He excelled even the angels, as the angels are required to make obeisance to man. By worshipping only the Creator, man banishes all other gods from amongst the creation, including the gods incarnate, and thus the idea of human dignity is a natural sequel to the idea of the oneness of God, the foundation stone of the message of the Prophet.

Is there any other message, any other gospel or any other religion which puts mankind in such a true and great perspective in its relationship with God and the rest of the creation of God? If someone knows of an equal of it, then let him bring it forth. This message is no doubt unique. No wonder that God called the Prophet ‘mercy unto all nations’ and no wonder that Jesus Christ called him ‘the comforter who shall abide by thee forever’.

The secret of the Prophet’s success, a success admittedly unparalleled to this day, lay in his strong faith in God, in his deep conviction that God had a plan for the uplift of man, to bring to perfection not one nation or one people but the whole world, and that no power in the world could frustrate the Divine purpose. Not only is the height of perception of the Prophet about God and the position that mankind held in the universe unique but it also is unmatched till this day. Without such a perception the miracle of restoring the destined position to mankind in the scheme of God would not come to pass. Yet a greater achievement of the Prophet than the laying down of the above noble precepts relating to the oneness of humanity and the dignity of manhood is their translating into practice. God has called him the best model for the believers, and the believers have been called upon to follow in the footsteps of this best example. The one and the only question that every Muslim should address today to himself is: ‘Do I have any share of the Prophet’s perception about God, about mankind and its relationship with God and the universe?; and does this perception reflect from any of my deeds?’ On Muslim world’s capability to affirmatively answer this question is conditioned its capability of releasing the dynamics of the personality and the message of the last of the prophets to the rest of humanity.

Masud Akhtar

The Prophet of Arabia

some denied the Day of Judgment altogether; some misunderstood metaphorical statement; some denied Resurrection; some said that matter and soul were co-eternal with the Lord; some regarded soul to be perishable; and some believed that God was neither Master of the day of Requital, the Lord of the worlds, nor the All-Wise, All-Knowing Being.

The Christians, in a short space of time, had rendered their condition worse by falling from the practice of the teaching of the Gospel, and “this was the reason - adds a Christian missionary - why God did not check Islam in its rise to power, since He desired at the time that they should be punished, because they had forsaken the teachings of the New Testament.”

In Arabia, utter darkness and barbarism prevailed. No social laws were observed, and the most despicable deeds were openly committed. An unlimited number of wives was taken and all prohibited things were made lawful. Rapine and incest raged unchecked; a widow (other than the mother) was considered an integral part of her deceased husband’s patrimony and passed into the use of the son. There was no vice which was not freely practised by the Arabs. To the outward eye, they had the form of man, but they were totally devoid of rationality, modesty and other human qualities. Their thirst for wine was excessive, and fornication was committed unscrupulously.

Advent of Muhammad

The advent of Prophet Muhammad, therefore, took place at a time when conditions prevailing over the world called for the appearance of a great Teacher. Divine Guidance at the time was a great need for mankind. Appearing at this juncture of human history, the Prophet of Arabia set up a world with the philosophy of the Unity of God, with right conduct, and with a dire destruction of idolatry and all forms of the worship of nature. The truth of his claim is already proved because in view of the general falling off from the right path, which prevailed at the time, the laws of nature demanded the advent of a divine guide, and the way divine attributes worked in this world also called for the appearance of a Reformer. When an intensity and hardness of any kind reaches the extreme limit, it has always been the changeless law of God from the ancient ages that His grace addresses itself to the task of eliminating it.

When a prolonged drought leads to a severe famine, and people begin to perish, God sends rain; when thousands of people begin to die of some epidemic, something happens at last to clear the air of that contamination, or some medicine is discovered which works as a cure against the prevailing disease. Or, when oppression at the hands of some heartless tyrant becomes unbearable, a just leader is thrown up by events who redresses the prevailing wrongs. Similarly, when people lose sight of the way which leads to the Lord, when they forsake the Unity of God, He endows someone with true insight and vision and confers on him the honour of inspiration and revelation in order to cure theills humanity may happen to be suffering from, and to guide people on the right path.

Sublime morals

Muhammad⁴ was born in the year 571 of the Christian era (12th of the lunar month Rabî‘ l). Orphan from his birth, he lost even his mother when six years old. He came of the noblest family of the Quraish, yet, like the rest of his countrymen, he was not taught reading and writing. He tended sheep for some time, but in his youth he was chiefly occupied in trade. It was, however, his high morals that distinguished him from all his compatriots. The Qur’an, which contains the most trustworthy account of Prophet Muhammad’s life, testifies to the fact that he was “the possessor of sublime morals.”

The Prophet’s morals found full display on many occasions, and were put to test so that their truthfulness and veracity shone forth like the sun.

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2. The Qur’an, 7:57-58; 30:48-50
3. Ibid., 5:19; 28:47.
4. The Prophet’s best-known name is Muhammad, which means “the praised one”. Another name by which he was known is Ahmad, meaning “the praising one”.
5. The Qur’an, 68:4.
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continued

sublime qualities relating to munificence and generosity, self-sacrifice and chivalry, patience and piety, all beamed in his person with a dazzling light. God opened unto him the doors of innumerable treasures, all of which he spent devotedly in His way. The Prophet of Arabia lived all his life in a humble hovel which was no better than a poor man’s hut. He requited evil with good, and alleviated the distress and suffering of his persecutors. He slept mostly on the floor, often going without food, eating plain barley bread. Abundance of wealth and riches of the world lay at his feet, but he besmeared not his holy hands therewith, and preferred the life of poverty and humbleness with contentment to the life of affluence and plenty. The furniture of his house was composed of a coarse matting of palm leaves for his bed, and an earthen jug for water. For days no fire would be lighted in his house to prepare food, the whole family living on mere dates. There was no lack of means to live a life of ease and comfort. The public treasury was at his disposal. The well-to-do among his followers, who did not shrink from sacrificing their lives for his sake, would have been only too glad to provide him with every comfort of life, should he choose to avail himself of it. But worldly things carried no weight in his estimation. From the first day of his life unto the day he breathed his last, he cared for none other than his Lord.

His opponents were challenged to point out a single black spot on his character during the forty years that he had spent among them before he received the divine Call. It was in his youth that, on account of his pure and absolvied character and his love for truth and honesty, he won from his compatriots the title of “the Faithful” (al-Amin).

Above all, his earlier life was marked by that rare characteristic, rarest of all in Arabia at the time, the love of the poor, the orphan, the widow, the weak, the helpless and the slave. Before he had affluence of means, he was one of the members who, taking an oath to stand by the oppressed, formed themselves into a league as champions of the injured. When at twenty-five he married a wealthy widow, Khadija - who was fifteen years his senior, he spent freely for the help of the poor. No slave came into the household but was set free by him.

To these great qualities was added his anxiety for a fallen humanity. The Word of God refers to it repeatedly. As years went on, the gross idolatry of the Arabs and their evil ways pressed the more heavily on his heart, and he spent hours in solitude in the neighbouring mountains. Still later, he repaired for days to a cave at the foot of Mount Hira, and it was here that the divine Light shone on him in its full resplendence.

Living in a country in which polygamy was the rule, Muhammad had no liking for polygamy. He passed the prime of his life, up to fifty-four years of age, as the husband of a single wife, thus showing that the union of one man and one woman was the rule under normal conditions. But when abnormal situations arose, he did not, like a sentimentalist, shirk his duty. He saw that the chastity of a woman was at stake if polygamy was not allowed and, for the sake of a higher interest, he permitted polygamy as an exception to meet exceptional circumstances. Exactly thus he had to resort to war, though by disposition he was averse to it. Full forty years before the Call he had been living in a land where the sword was wielded as freely as a stick elsewhere, where fighting and feuds were the order of the day, where men would fly at each other’s throats like animals, where there was no chance of survival for one who could not use the sword, yet not once during these forty years did he deal a blow at an enemy.

In the administration of justice, the Prophet was scrupulously even-handed. Muslim and non-Muslim, friend and foe, were all alike in his eyes. Even before the Call his impartiality, his honesty and integrity were of household fame, and people would bring their disputes to him to settle. At Medina, the Jews and the idolaters both accepted him as the arbitrator in all their disputes.

The Prophet’s integrity and sincerity were of universal fame throughout Arabia. His worst foes had often to confess that he had never told a lie. When he once pledged his word, he kept it under the most trying conditions and even at a heavy cost. Despair and despondency were unknown to him. Hemmed in as he was on all sides by a gloomy prospect and severe opposition, his faith in the ultimate triumph of the Truth was never for one moment shaken.

Great contributions

The idea of the oneness of humanity is Muhammad’s greatest contribution to human civilization, and it came as a natural sequel to that foundation-stone of his teachings, the Unity of God. A perusal of world history shows the idea of the whole of humanity being a single nation as first Dawning upon the Prophet’s mind. It was a revelation from on High in the true sense of the word. No country was more unsuited than Arabia, either to give birth to such an idea or to see its accomplishment. The whole country was rent into innumerable petty states, each clan forming a separate and independent political unit. Each tribe had its own chief who would lead it in battle against a hostile tribe. The whole people were on the verge of a fiery abyss.

Here dawned the idea for the first time in human history, not that the Arabs were one nation, but that the whole of humanity was a single nation: “Mankind is a single nation. So Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth.”

Another great contribution made by the Prophet of Islam to human civilization was the idea of human dignity. This, too, was a natural sequel to the idea of the oneness of God, on which he laid so much stress. Man was the noblest of the Creator’s creation, and it was degrading for him to worship things or to bow before things which he really excelled: “Shall I seek for you a god other than Allah, while He has made you excel (all) created things?”

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6. The Qur’an, 10:16.
8. The Qur’an, 3:102.
9. The Qur’an, 2:213. Note that as all people are single nations, God, too, has been revealing Himself to all.
10. Ibid., 7:140.

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position which nature had given him: "Shun the filth of the idols and shun false words, being upright for Allah, not associating aught with Him. And whoever associates (aught) with Allah, it is as if he had fallen from on high, then the birds had snatched him away, or the wind had carried him off to a distant place."11

According to him, man's position in nature was that of a conqueror; he had been created to control all the forces of nature and to rule in the earth, not to bow before them: "When thy Lord said to the angels, I am going to place a ruler in the earth . . . "12

From the slave of nature's forces which man was generally at that stage of human civilization, Muhammad thus raised him to the dignity of the master and the ruler, and it was due to this realization of man's position in the universe that the Muslims in their very early history took vigorous strides towards the expansion of knowledge and the advancement of the sciences, reading and writing was within a few years spread throughout the whole of Arabia and other countries which came under the influence of Islam, and the Muslim State so encouraged the pursuit of study and scientific research that centres of learning sprang up throughout the empire of Islam.

Another remarkable service which Muhammad rendered to humanity was to give an impetus to work and to dignify labour. The principle was laid down at the very start in the most unequivocal terms that no one who does not work should hope to reap any fruit and that the worker should have his full reward: "That man can have nothing but what he strives for: And that his striving will soon be seen. Then he will be rewarded for it with the fullest reward."13

The Prophet himself was an indefatigable worker. While he passed half the night, and even two-thirds of it, praying to God, he was doing every kind of work in the day-time. No work was too low for him. He would milk his own goats, patch his own clothes and mend his own shoes. In person he would dust his house; he would tie his camel and look after it personally. He would assist his wife in her household duties. In person he would do shopping, not only for his own household but also for his neighbours and friends. He worked like a labourer in the construction of the mosque. Again, when a ditch was being dug around Medina to fortify it against a heavy attack, he was seen at work among the rank and file. He never despised any work, however humble, notwithstanding the dignity of his position as prophet. He thus demonstrated, through his personal example, that every kind of work dignified man, and that a man's calling, whether high or low, did not constitute the criterion of his status. A roadside labourer, a hewer of wood and a drawer of water were as respectable members of the social order founded by the Prophet Muhammad as a big merchant or a high dignitary.

Unlettered

Notwithstanding the fact that the transcendental truths and fine principles and infallible arguments on religion and divine knowledge, and other subtle secrets incorporated in the Qur'an, are generally of a nature that no human power or wisdom and philosophy has ever been able to make them, as is also borne out by history, yet God's sublime knowledge was conferred upon and granted to an unlettered (ummi), who had never attended a school, nor ever sat in the company of learned people, but lived all his life among the savages of the desert. This fact is not unknown to any student and scholar of Islamic history. The Qur'an says that "He it is Who raised among the illiterates 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."14 And, addressing Muhammad, God says: "thus did We reveal to thee an inspired Book by Our command. Thou knewest not what the Book was, nor (what) Faith (was), but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants. And surely thou guidest to the right path."15

From these verses, the fact of Muhammad being an unlettered is proved conclusively. The claim had not been made in a country the people of which were ignorant of his life-history. They were, on the other hand, a people among whom he had been brought up right from his childhood. If he had not been an unlettered, he could not possibly have made that claim in the face of the people, from whose penetrating eyes none of his affairs had been hidden and concealed.

For every objection which the opponents raised against Muhammad, they were given a satisfactory reply. For instance, when some ignorant people of Mecca objected to the Divine Unity preached by the Qur'an proclaimed that they could accept only such a book as sanctified the worship of their idols, or that the present Qur'an might be amended accordingly, the Almighty revealed the following reply to His Messenger as was based finally on his life-history: "When Our clear messages are recited to them, those who have no hope of meeting with Us say: Bring a Qur'an other than this or change it. Say: It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I follow naught but what is revealed to me. Indeed I fear, if I disobey My Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day. Say: If Allah had desired, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you. I have lived among you a lifetime before it. Do you not then understand?"16

In short, the fact of the Prophet's being an unlettered was so well-known to the Arabs and the Jews and the Christians that they dared not question it. They would, on the other hand, interrogate him, by way of test, in reference to certain texts of the Torah. And when they got correct replies, the learned amongst them would bow before him and believe in him: "Thou wilt find the nearest in friendship to the believers to be those who say, We are Christians. That is because there are priests and monks among them and because they are not proud. And when they hear that which has been revealed to the Messenger thou seest their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth they recognize. They say: Our Lord, we believe, so write us down with the witnesses."17

12 Ibid., 2:20. This shows the high place that man was destined to hold in the whole of creation.
13 Ibid., 53:39-41.
14 Ibid., 62:2.
15 Ibid., 42:52. See also 7:156-158; 29:48-49.
16 Ibid., 10:15-16.
17 Ibid., 5:82-83. See also 17:107-109.
SOME WESTERN APPRECIATION
OF ISLAM IN THE 18th AND 19th CENTURIES
by Dr. Ruth S. Gaevernitz

It is known that through many centuries of history - if we except some thinkers - a fateful misconception of Islam has prevailed in the West. Through more than a millennium Islam was taken to stand beside Christianity as a heresy, partly but not fully acknowledging Christ. The Prophet of Islam was thus regarded as a “cunning author” and a “false prophet”. This is not the place to analyse how this misconception had come to prevail among the believers in the Gospel towards the assertors of a later revelation.

“It is to the credit of the Age of Enlightenment, the eighteenth century, to have abandoned this attitude. Its representatives widened their field of research. Simon Ockley, a Cambridge man, wrote his remarkable History of the Saracens, which appeared in 1712-18. It was Montesquieu who, in his great work, Esprit des Lois, 1748, broadened the traditional scheme of confining world history to that of the Jews, Greeks, Romans and later Christian nations only. He explained how climate, religions and laws mutually contributed to shape the fates and features of nations. Drawing from all the sources available, he compared the conditions of the nations of Europe, of the Islamic world, of India and of China. He had a considerable knowledge of Islamic countries and proclaimed the rules laid down by Islam, ablations, fast and the prohibition of wine, as ‘wise and healthy having regard to the climate’. He comments on the ‘advantages’ and ‘disadvantages’ of some Islamic institutions. He is not dealing with religion as such but with the consequences of religion.

The great German essayist Lessing, who was in communication with the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, turned to the problem of the Three Religions. Hampered by the censor, he gave his new ideas the shape of a drama, Nathan the Wise, written in 1799, which he wove around the Oriental legend of the Three Rings: A father left his three sons three rings of perfectly equal make, not mentioning which one was the original. Remembering that he had said that the genuine ring would give its bearer special grace and amiability, they each in their own way tried to live up to this test through their conduct. The three main figures of the play are Nathan, a wise, generous and broad-minded Jewish merchant, King Saladin (Salah ud-Din), that great Muslim statesman of proverbial piety, wit and liberality, and the Templar, a rash, romantic, noble-minded young Crusader. All three come to probe one another’s character and meet through an episode happening in Jerusalem. This play, which was regarded as a defence both of religious tolerance and of religious values, was translated into many languages.

Montesquieu’s proposition of giving a synopsis of all civilizations was taken up by Herder, an outstanding scholar of theology, literatures and languages, a native of the German Baltic provinces of the Czarist Russian Empire, who taught in Strassburg and later in Weimar. He, too, was an untiring collector from all the then available sources. But his original problem was not, as in Montesquieu’s case, laws and sociology, but language, poetic inspiration, prophetic revelation and the literatures of nations. The nations of ‘national literatures’ and of ‘Universal Literature’ (Weltliteratur), and the aiming at a higher education which would comprise the classics of all nations, go back to Herder. He did believe deeply in the Creator. In his main work, Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind, 1784, he sets out a clear history of the creation of the Earth; then of the gradual evolution of plant life, animals, and finally of man and of the evolution of mankind on the whole globe - of peoples, languages, literatures and societies.

“Approaching the Arabic field through his deep scholarship of Hebrew literature and poetry, Herder achieved a fine knowledge of Arab civilization. He knew the pre-Muslim poems of the Mu’allaqat, which had been published and translated by the English Orientalist, Sir William Jones, in 1783. He describes Muhammad as an accomplished offspring of his tribe and town, of his nation and of its history, and a genius in its magnificent language. He sees in him a visionary poet of a ‘glowing imagination’ who became the educator of his people and moderator of their violent customs. All this, as well as the events of following centuries and the many achievements of the Arabic civilization, he depicts in a colourful style.

“Herder’s pupil was the young Goethe, who listened to this thinker when a student in Strassburg about 1770. Already in his schooldays Goethe had got hold of the Qur’an in the classical translation of Maracci (a scholar in close touch with Pope Innocent XI), of 1698, which was re-edited in Leipzig in 1740. He had translated some passages into German. Under Herder’s influence he was led to meditate on the inspiration of the poet and prophet. He was completely undogmatic. His own religious feeling - feeling the nameless One, the One beyond recognition - is echoed in the famous verses of Faust, ‘Who can name Him, who can know Him . . . ?’ In this mood he began to design a play on Muhammad, of which fragments remain. His hero is for him first the lonely seeker, then the inspired prophet. He first experienced nature, the hills and thunder-clouds, the desert and skies, the firmament of the night with its hosts of stars, the moon with its phases and the sun upon which all life depends. He invokes the morning star; the moon; the sun - each time in vain. From this experience of nature he comes to recognize the Creator Himself. ‘Arise, my loving heart, to the Creating One! Be my Lord, Thou, my God! Thou, All-Loving, Thou, who dost create the sun, the moon and stars, earth, and heaven and me!’

Hehe, liebendes Herz, dem Erschaffender, dich! Sei mein Herr du, mein Gott! Du Allliebender, du, Der die Sonne, den Mond und die Stern’ Schuf, Erde und Himmel und mich! (Mahomet’s Nachthymne, 1771)

This beautiful poem, of which the last strophe is a monologue of Muhammad, is one of the fragments of continued on next page
the unfinished play of the twenty-four year old poet, in whose heart certain famous verses of the Qur'an seem to have resounded. For the first time in Western literature it was Goethe who represented Muhammad without reserve as a poet - a true prophet of God.

"Many decades later, after a full human life, a Minister of State, and a figure of European stature, Goethe, in his sixties, again turned to Oriental studies. Now the Persian poets and Sufi mysteries attracted him. Sa'di's famous Rose Garden, a compendium of the experiences, anecdotes and wisdom of the traveller-poet, had appeared with a Latin version, re-edited after the first edition of Amsterdam, 1651, in Jena in 1777. The publisher, einhorn, presented a copy to Goethe, and this volume became his treasured companion ever after. In the same year an Anthologia Persica appeared under the auspices of the Vienna Oriental Academy. But what impressed the poet most was Hammer's elaborate German verse-translation of the poems of Hafiz. These two elegant small leather volumes were published at Cotta's, Stuttgart, in 1813. Baron Joseph v. Hammer had begun his translation with the help of various commentators when he was a young Austrian diplomat in Constantinople in 1799, and he finally brought it to a conclusion when again in Istanbul in 1806. In his introduction he stresses that Hafiz of Shiraz (about 1300-1389) was essentially a religious teacher, called by his contemporaries the 'mystic tongue' and 'interpreter of divine secrets', and that his love poems were only a side issue, collected after his death. He mentions the old controversy as to whether his poems were expressions of earthly love, or were divine allegories. Goethe took the issue up in his lovely verse 'Sie haben dich, heiliger Hafis, die mystische Zunge gennant' in which he says that Hafiz was a mystic and saint, not in spite of having written those astounding love poems, but indeed just because he was that great poet and wizard of words and that great and true lover. Though not one of the 'pious', yet he was blessed.

"Goethe devoted himself to these Oriental studies mainly during the later Napoleonic wars which swept from the Seine to Moscow and back and disturbed the repose of the small principality of Weimar. The fruits he collected in the West Eastern Divan, published in 1819, which comprised a garland of verses in a more or less Oriental style, some being deep interpretations of Eastern thought, others profound love poems, others little incidental verses clad in 'Oriental' robes; the whole being followed by a set of scholarly essays. In these remarkable prose essays, Noten and Abhandlungen, Goethe gives the backgrounds to Oriental poetry, Hebrew, Arabic and Persian. This enlightening little work is enriched by many new findings, the fruits of Goethe's own research. The chapter on Muhammad gives the fundamentals of Islam and a character-sketch of the Prophet. There follows the period of the Caliphs. Then monographs of the seven classical poets of Persia, Firdusi, Anwari, Nizami, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Sa'di, Hafiz and Jami. Also monographs of Western travellers who brought knowledge of the Orient to the West, from Marco Polo and della Valle, Olearius, German translator of Sa'di(1654), and the French Protestant travellers Tavernier and Chardin to his contemporaries, the British in India, men like sir William Jones, who, as Goethe stresses, shed light on Muslim as well as on Sanscrit literature, and to Baron von Hammer.

"His Oriental studies between 1812 and 1817 Goethe considered as an escape from war-ridden Europe to a more peaceful East, where the poet saw a wise religion, a contented civilization, and elements of the patriarchal age. This escape he calls, in the title of the first poem, his Hejira. He says, 'When North and West and South splinter, thrones burst and empires tremble, flee to the pure East and breathe the air of the patriarchs.'

"There follows what is the motto of the Divan:
Gottes ist der Orient.
Gottes ist der Occident.
Nord' und suedliches Gelaende.
Ruh im Frieden seiner Haende.

("God's is the Orient. God's is the Occident. The North and the South, all rest in the Peace of His hands", which is a free rendering in accomplished verse of Sura II, 115, of the Qur'an. Then another Qur'anic verse: 'He, the only One, for every man desires the right. Of His hundred names, be this one highly praised. Amen.'

"To assess Herder's and Goethe's work for a re-appreciation of Islam, both, drawing from the primary as well as from many later and modern sources, and thinking widely and deeply, have established a truth which had been lost in the West, namely, that the Orient is an integral part of our common tradition and civilization. And they realized that the famous nations of the Orient have largely been shaped, and carried towards maturity, through the influence of Islam.

"We might note that Johannes von Muller, famous Swiss historian and European statesman, published in 1806 a short collection translated from the Turkish of verses of the Qur'an on Holy War. He tells in the introduction how he was stirred by contemporary issues, the enthusiastic armies of the French Revolution and their victories, their secular creed, problems of defence and the need for a God-fearing public spirit. He compares his own period with the rise of Islam, the expansion and the later ebbing of events: 'Speedily,' he says, 'as in our times the fibre caught, but unchangeable, immutable, fast as Sinai's granite, remained the Word - not written on sheets of paper, but in the depths of human nature.'

"There is a connection between Goethe and the young Thomas Carlyle. The volcanic Scotsman became an inspired, re-inspiring pupil of the grand old man of Weimar, corresponding with him from 1820 down to Goethe's death in 1832. Carlyle's mind revolted against the utilitarian 'morality' and economy of Jeremy Bentham, this 'beggarly and false view of man and the universe'. He groped back to the deep, true sources of life. He meditated on the hero - the prophet, the poet, the king, men who with Moses's staff struck the rock and made spring the living water and who led their people. He first envisaged Muhammad; Dante, Shakespeare, Luther and others followed.

"The second of his lectures on Heroes and Hero-worship, in 1840, is devoted to Muhammad and Islam. He refuted silly and vile misrepresentations 'that are disgraceful to ourselves'. His style rises to the heights of his strong colourful diction and moral passion. continued on page 10
THE PROPHET'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS AS A REFORMER
by Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B.

The Most Successful of Prophets

Ever since the dawn of human civilization this planet has been visited by prophets and reformers in different ages and at different places. The last of them was Prophet Muhammad. We should like to mention a few important points which distinguish his dispensation.

First of all comes the amazing success he achieved in his mission admitted on all hands by friend and foe alike. A single sentence in the Encyclopaedia Britannica1 - under its article on the “Koran” - is sufficient to establish the truth of this statement: “Of all the religious personalities of the world, Muhammad was the most successful.” Never did a reformer find his people sunk so low as the Arabs were at the time of Muhammad’s advent. They were equally ignorant of the true principles of religion and of civic and political life. They had no great art or science to boast of, nor had they any intercourse with the rest of the world. National Solidarity was a thing unknown to them, each tribe forming an independent unit and being at daggers drawn with the others. Judaism had done its best for their reformation, but to no avail. Christianity had also failed in similar attempts. Hanifism, which had risen in a feeble wave, failed like the preceding movements and died out without leaving any impress on Arab society. It was for the regeneration of such a lost people that Muhammad was sent. In the course of a few years he swept away long-standing religious, moral and social corruptions, and metamorphosed, so to speak, the very soil of Arabia. Debased forms of idolatry and superstition were replaced by the purest unitarianism. The selfsame barbarous children of the desert were imbued with a new fervour for the cause of Truth, which carried them far and wide to the distant corners of the world to deliver the message of the Lord. In respect of divine worship they excelled the greatest of ascetics and hermits, without renouncing the world. In the midst of their busy everyday life, no sooner did the call to prayer reach their ears than they would leave off their worldly concerns and fall prostrate in humble submission before the Lord.

Their nights were also mostly spent in His worship. Thus, despite their being in this world, they were not of this world, and consequently their devotions to God were attended with a living conviction hardly ever experienced by a recluse in his hermitage.

Whereas such was the spiritual elevation to which they had attained, their temporal achievements were no less grand. They won a foremost position among the mighty conquerors of the world. Great empires melted away like snow before them. They not only conquered vast territories but also developed a statecraft which preserved their strength for twelve long centuries, notwithstanding the negligence of later generations. In brief, they had attained to the heights of moral greatness and material prosperity. But hand in hand with their achievements in these two directions, they cultivated various branches of science which enlightened the whole of the world, then ensnared in utter darkness. And what is still more surprising, all this was accomplished within a score of years. It is thus obvious that Muhammad’s teachings were all-comprehensive and were calculated to bring about all-round development of man’s faculties.

Universality of Message

Another point which marks him out among the great spiritual reformers and prophets of the world relates to the universality of his message. Every prophet had his message confined to a particular people. Every prophet came with light and guidance but for the benefit of a particular nation or country. Purification of the human soul was, no doubt, the mission of each, but the mission was always limited. But Muhammad’s message was cosmopolitan, his light universal, and the sphere of his sympathies co-extensive with humanity. “And We have not sent thee but ... as a mercy to the nations.” “We have not sent thee but as a warner to all the mankind.” “That he might be a warner to the nations.” “Say: O mankind, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all.” - are a few of the numerous verses of the Qur’an which speak of Muhammad being commissioned for the uplift of the entire human race.

There was a time when humanity was partitioned into numerous watertight compartments, so to speak. Every nation, shut up within the confines of its own particular homeland, lived in entire isolation from the others. Means of communication were limited. Under such conditions of life no great expansion of mental outlook could be expected. The outlook of each was limited to its own immediate environments. Their own part of the race was all-in-all to each people. Thus Divine Wisdom could not but commission separate reformers to each people, adapted to their particular needs and conditions. These various prophets played their specific role - the vivification of a particular nationality. But like the field of their mission, their spiritual force was also limited in its range. The flare kept on for a period of time but grew gradually dimmer and dimmer till it was ultimately extinguished altogether. Then would arise the need for another spiritual luminary to illumine the dark age, and hence the succession of reformer after reformer. But whereas Divine Providence thus provided for the spiritual welfare of man by raising prophets from time to time among various peoples, this led to a baneful impression. Each nation, ignorant of similar Divine favours shown to others, began to think that only they were the chosen ones of God. This fostered the mischievous idea of Divine favouritism, with a host of concomitant evils. To correct this sense of racial distinction, to remove prejudices created by geographical, social and other artificial barriers, and to weld humanity into one compact whole, Divine purpose decreed the commission of a World-Prophet, with a message for the whole of the human race. And just as his spiritual force knew no bounds, it was likewise to be above all limits of time - it was to maintain its efficacy for all time to come. Consequently when the chain of national prophets came to an end with its last link, Jesus, who was sent to use his own words, “for the lost sheep of the House of Israel,” the time was ripe for the sun of spirituality to dawn on the

continued on next page
The Prophet's Characteristics as a Reformer

Development of entire human nature

Again, the mission of each one of the preceding prophets was limited to the cultivation of a particular phase of human character. Thus, the life of each presents a model in this or that branch of human morals. But the Prophet Muhammad came to develop human nature in its entirety and bring out and cultivate each one of its numerous faculties. In his own life, every phase of human morals found a thorough manifestation. He was, therefore, a perfect Exemplar for humanity. In connection with the Mosaic dispensation, prophet after prophet makes his appearance, but each one serves as a model in a particular line. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, all by himself, combines in his person, in a much higher degree, the collective virtues of all the Israelite prophets - the manliness of Moses, the tender-heartedness of Aaron, the generalship of Joshua, the patience of Job, the daring of David, the grandeur of Solomon, the simplicity of John and the humility of Jesus. Thus every spiritual luminary sent forth but one ray, beam of light in one particular direction, but the Prophet Muhammad was the centre from which went forth rays of light in every direction, and this is the fourth characteristic.

Greatness in all directions

Fifthly, while the achievements of every great man are limited to a definite sphere, those of the Prophet cover the whole field of human conditions. If, for instance, greatness consists in the reformation of a degraded people, who can have a greater claim to greatness than the one who uplifted a nation, sunk low as the Arabs were, and made them the torch-bearers of civilization and learning? If greatness lies in unifying the discordant elements of society into a harmonious whole, who can have a better title to the distinction than the one who welded together a people like the Arabs, rent into warring tribes with blood-feuds extending over generations? Like the sands of their desert, the Arabs lay scattered when the Prophet appeared, and he cemented them into a solid whole, endowed with the strength of withstanding the attacks of the most powerful empires of the age. If greatness consists in establishing the kingdom of God on earth even then the Prophet stands unrivalled. He wiped idolatry and polytheism off the face of Arabia and illumined it with Divine light. If it lies in displaying high morals, who can be a match for one admitted by friend and foe as al-Amin, the Trustworthy! If in conquest is to be found the greatness of a man, surely history cannot point to the like of the Prophet, who rose from a helpless orphan to a mighty conqueror and king, who founded a great empire that has withstood all these thirteen centuries the united world-attempts at its destruction. If the living driving-force that a leader commands is the criterion of greatness the Prophet's name even today exerts a magic charm over four hundred million souls spread all over the world, whom it binds together in a strong cord of fraternity, irrespective of caste, colour or clime.

Not a product of environment

The sixth distinguishing feature of the Prophet lies in the fact that he was not the product of his environment. As a matter of course, it is the prevailing state of society that gives birth to its own great man. For instance, whenever there is a general yearning among a people after metaphysical truth, a philosopher is bound to arise. If there is a passion for conquest, the birth of a conqueror is inevitable. Likewise moral teachers, poets, sculptors, eminent men in various branches of human activity spring up from the very atmosphere of the society in which there is a general demand for the particular accomplishment. Such leaders of men only embody in themselves the very spirit that permeates the age. In other words, they arise, in the ordinary course of evolution. But the Prophet stood for what was in diametrical opposition to the then state of Arab society. He had to carry on his mission in the very teeth of prevailing notions. Idolatry and polytheism were the order of the day but even as early as the age of sixteen, the Prophet had an abhorrence of idols. Superstition was keeping out the light of reason, and society was consequently enshrouded in thick layers of ignorance. Could such an atmosphere give birth to a philosophic mind such as the Prophet
PROPHECIES ABOUT PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES

by Mumtaz Ahmad Faruqui

Prophecies in the Holy Bible

(1) “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken” (Deut. xxi. 15).

“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 them” (Deut. xviii. 18).

Note. - The Brethren of Israel could have no other meaning but of ‘Ishmaelites’ (Arab descendants of Ishmael, son of Prophet Abraham); and these never had any prophet but Muhammad. Further in Deut. xxxiv. 10, we read that “there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses.”

(2) Another prophecy in clear terms is mentioned in Deut. xxxiii. 2: “And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.”

In the above verse “coming from Sinai” refers to the appearance of Moses; rising up from Seir, that of Jesus; for it was at these places that these Prophets received the Divine Call. Now Paran (Farah in Arabic) is admittedly the ancient name for the hilly range in the Hejaz, Arabia; wherefrom arose Muhammad from the descendants of Ishmael, as Genesis xxi. 21 also points to it. The reference to “ten thousands of saints” alludes to the ten thousand saintly followers with whom the Holy Prophet Muhammad made a triumphant entry into Makka.

(3) In another prophecy, Isaiah xxvi. 13-15, the land of Arabia and a “flight” are specifically mentioned. It may be noted that the flight of the Holy Prophet Muhammad from Makka to Madina was to escape persecution, and was momentous enough so that the Muslim Era commences from thence.

(4) “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (John, xiv. 15-16).

“These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John, xiv. 25-26).

“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 judgement” (John, xvi. 7-8).

“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 shew you things to come” (John, xvi. 12-13).

Although the above prophecies point to the advent of another prophet after Jesus, yet Christian theologians have tried all they could to apply these to the Holy Ghost. The words “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you,” however, are too clear to need any comment. For the study of the New Testament clearly shows that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost even before he was born. Then it speaks of Jesus himself as receiving the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove. Obviously the use of the words “Holy Ghost” in the prophecy is intended to betoken that the Promised One would have such an inseparable union with the Holy Ghost that his advent might be taken, metaphorically of course, as the coming of the Holy Ghost itself. The words “That he may abide with you for ever” are significant, as Muhammad claimed to be the last of the Prophets. Then again, “He will guide you into all truth,” as the prophecy says, is corroborated by the Holy Qur’an which says:

(i) “This day I have made perfect for you your religion” (5:3).

(ii) “Say, the truth has come and falsehood has vanished” (17-81).

(5) According to the Holy Qur’an, the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was expressly foretold in sacred books of all the religions. It says: “And when God (Allah) made a covenant through the prophets: Certainly what I have given you a

Book and Wisdom - then a Messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you shall believe in him and you shall aid him. He said: do you affirm and accept my Compact in this (matter)? They said: We do affirm. He said: Then bear witness, and I am of the bearers of witness with you” (3:80).

Prophecies in Hindu Scriptures

Likewise in Hindu scriptures too there are a good many prophecies about the Holy Prophet Muhammad. A few of these are in the Puranas. The one in the Bhavishya Purana is the clearest of all. The fifth word from left to right is the name of the Holy Prophet. It gives even the name of the country of the Prophet “Marushhalivasanin” - denizen of the desert (Arabia). The Prophecy runs as follows:

Translation from Original Sanskrit Text

1. Just then an illiterate man with the epithet teacher, Muhammad by name, came along with companions.

2. Raja (Bhoja in a vision) to that Great Deva, the denizen of Arabia, purifying with the Ganges water and with the five things of cow offered sandal-wood and pay worship to him.

3. O denizen of Arabia and Lord of the Holies, to thee is my adoration. O thou who hast found many ways and means to destroy all the devils of the world.

4. O pure one from among the illiterates, O sinless one, the spirit of truth and absolute master, to thee is my adoration. Accept me at thy feet (Bhavishya Purana, Purv 3, Khand 3, Adhya 3, Shalok 5-8).

Then Again:

“O people! listen this emphatically; the man of praise (Muhammad) will be raised among the people. We take the emigrant in our shelter from sixty thousand and ninety enemies whose conveyances are twenty camels and she-camels, whose loftiness of position touches the heaven and lowers it.

“He gave to Mamh Rishi hundreds of gold coins, the circles, three hundred Arab horses and ten thousand cows” (Atharva Veda, Kanda 20, Sukta 197, Mantras 1-3).

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Prophecies About Prophet Muhammad in Other Scriptures continued

Prophecy in the Parsi Scripture

The Parsi religion is one of the oldest religions in the world. It has two collections of scriptures - the Dasatir and the Zand Avasta. In Dasatir, No. 14, which is associated with the name of Sasanil, a clear prophecy about the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, is given; the translation from the original Pahlavi (Persian) language is given below:

“When the Persians should sink so low in morality, a man will be born in Arabia whose followers will upset their throne, religion and everything. The mighty stiffnecked ones of Persia will be overpowered. The house which was built (referring to Abraham building the Ka’ba in Makka) and in which many idols have been placed will be purged of idols, and people will say their prayers facing towards it. His followers will capture the town of Persia and Taus and Balkh and other big places roundabout. People will embroil with one another. The wise men of Persia and others will join his followers.”

Buddha’s Prophecy

Buddha has prophesied the advent of a “Maitreya,” and the prophecy is so famous that some of the Christian missionaries, Hindu Pandits and Theosophist propagandists have tried to apply it to their own reformers. Almost all Buddhist books contain this prophecy. It is in Chakkavattis Sinh nad Suttanta D. III 76. It goes as follows:

“There will arise in the world a Buddha named Maitreya (the benevolent one) a holy one, a supreme one, an enlightened one, endowed with wisdom in conduct, auspicious, knowing the universe; an incomparable charioteer of men who are tamed, a master of angels and mortals, a blessed Buddha even as I have now arisen in the world, a Buddha endowed with these same qualities. What he has realised by his own supernal knowledge he will publish to this universe with its angels, its friends and its archangels and to the race of philosophers and Brahmins, princes and peoples, even as I now, having all this knowledge, do publish the same unto the same. He will preach his religion, glorious in its origin, glorious at its climax, glorious at the goal, in the spirit and the letter. He will proclaim a religious life, wholly perfect and thoroughly pure; even as I now preach my religion and a like life do proclaim. He will keep up the society of monks numbering thousands, even as I now keep up a society of monks numbering many hundreds” (Edmunds, Buddhist and Christian Gospels, Vol. II, pp. 160-161; Comming World Teacher by Pavri, p. 23).

The term “Maitreya” is found in all books on Buddhism with slight differences of pronunciation.

(a) “Maitreya” in Sanskrit means loving, compassionate and merciful, benevolent (Sanskrit-English Dictionary by Monier Williams, and Buddhism by the same author, p. 181).

(b) “It is also the name of Buddhista, the comming blessed one who is the fifth Buddha of this world” (ibid).

(c) It originates from maitai which stands for friendship, goodwill (ibid., p. 128).

Now the Holy Qur’an has described the Prophet Muhammad as such:

(1) “And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to all the nations” (21:107).

(2) “Certainly a messenger has come to you from among yourselves: grievous to him is your falling into distress, most solicitous for you, to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful” (9:128).

Besides, Maitreya, the promised one, has been described as a guide to the whole of mankind. It is mentioned in overt terms that he will be the last of the Prophets, that no Buddha will come after him. In the historic literature of the Buddhists it is mentioned as a fact that the Promised One is awaited everywhere earnestly.

The description above fits in only with the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Western Appreciation of Islam cont.

There is also the human touch of the biographer, for instance when he tells how Khadija, good wife and friend of her husband, first wondered and shook her head, then calmed and encouraged him - and at last fully understood when Muhammad, spiritually and physically shaken by his Divine experience, returned home from the cave of Mount Hira. Even today the reader will be moved and will get an unforgettable picture of the Prophet and those fine men and women around him, of Muhammad the man, straight-minded, humble, sincere, also he will get some idea of the message of Islam:

“‘A silent great soul, one of those who cannot but be earnest. ‘He was to kindle the world, the world’s Maker had ordered it so’. The routine of Arab Idolatry was nought. The arguments of the Greeks seers were distant. By the favour of Heaven he found: ‘There is One God in and over all. God is greatest - and nothing else is great. He is the Reality . . . We and all things are but the shadow of Him. A transitory garment veiling the Eternal Splendour. . . . We must submit to God. This is Islam . . .’

‘Carlyle quotes here the words of Goethe: ‘We resign ourselves to God. If this be Islam, do we not all live in Islam?’

“Our survey has shown that it was the School of Enlightenment and even more the following Romantic School originating from Herder (who called upon intuition besides learning to unveil the roots of history, the depths of personality, the genius of language and the essentials of religion) that discovered Islam for the West. Shedding light on all the great civilizations of the Orient and of Asia, these thinkers have re-ascertained the unity of mankind and have taught us to see East and West in one. This modern scholarship at its best has given, in the cosmos of living religion, its due place to Islam. We in the West, now better than the more limited generations of the past, may realize the abundance of God’s gifts to His nations.”

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AS THEY SEE HIM
Opinions of Some Non-Muslims About Prophet Muhammad

Out of the many religions in the world, to-day only Islam and Christianity could be called world-wide missionary religions. While Islam enjoins its followers to honour and respect the founders of other known religions of the world, it is a pity that quite a number of non-Muslim writers have not done justice to Islam and its founder, although it can be proved that all the known founders of the Faith had predicted the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, the final and universal Messenger of God.

Still there have been some great non-Muslim writers, mostly Christian, who have been just and fair enough when commenting on Islam and its founder Muhammad (may God’s blessings be on him). For the first time in Western literature it was Goethe (the famous German poet and philosopher) who represented Muhammad without reserve as a prophet - a true prophet of God. A few of such other opinions and quotations are given below:

(1) “The most successful of all the Prophets and religious personalities” (Encyclo. Brit., 11th Edn.).

(2) “The driving force of his life was his belief in the unity of Allah and his desire to bring his people to this belief... He showed deep sincerity and must have been a man of unusual personality and charm, for he not only bound to himself men of different types, but also kept their devotion...”

(3) “In his private character he showed amiability, loyalty, tenderness towards his family and a forgiving spirit. He lived at the height of his power in extreme simplicity...” (Chamber’s Encyclopaedia under the headline “Muhammad”).

(4) “Other men have been monotheistic in the midst of idolaters but no other man has founded a strong and monotheistic religion. The distinction in his case was his resolution that other men should believe... certainly he had two of the most important characteristics of the Prophetic order. He saw the truth about God which his fellow-men did not see and he had an irresistible inward impulse to publish this truth...” (Dr. Marcus Dodds, about Muhammad in his book Muhammad, Buddha and Christ).

(5) “We shall see, moreover, that the Koran is an exceedingly human document, reflecting every phase of Muhammad’s personality and standing in close relationship to the outward events in his life; so that here we have materials of unique and incontestable authority for tracing origin and early development of Islam as do not exist in the case of Buddhism or Christianity or any other ancient religion” (Professor R.A. Nicholson in his Literary History of the Arabs, London, 1914).

(6) “By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Muhammad is a threefold founder, of a nation, of an empire and of a religion... Muhammad to the end of his life claimed that title only with which the highest philosophy and the truest Christianity will one day, I venture to believe, agree in yielding him, that of a Prophet, a very Prophet of God...” (R. Bosworth Smith in his Muhammad in Muhammedanism, London, 1874).

(7) Bernard Shaw, the famous writer and critic, opined that if a man like Muhammad were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness.

(8) “In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints” (Washington Irving, Mohommet and His Successors, London, 1909, p. 193).

(9) “... His (Muhammad’s) memory was capacious and retentive, his wit easy and social, his imagination sublime, his judgment clear, rapid and decisive. He possessed the courage of both thought and action; and although his design might gradually expand with his success the first idea which he entertained of his divine mission bears the stamp of an original and superior genius” (Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, London, 1838-39, Vol. V, p. 335).

(10) Mahatma Gandhi, the great Hindu leader, on reading a book on the life of the Prophet, wrote in his newspaper, Young India, an extract from which is given below:

“... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle... It is enough for me to know that he was a man among millions who tried to walk in the fear of God, died a poor man, wanted no grand mausoleum for his mortal remains and did not forget even on his death-bed the last of his creditors.”

(12) James A. Michener, the famous American writer, contributed an article “Islam, the Misunderstood Religion” in the May 1955 issue of the American Edition of The Reader’s Digest, extracts from which are given below:

“... Later he (Muhammad) became head of the State, and the testimony of even of his enemies is that he administered wisely... In his final years he was invited to become a dictator or a saint, but he rejected both temptations, insisting that he was an average man to whom God had sent another of His periodic messages to the world... “Muslims think it particularly ironic when Muhammad is charged by Western writers with having established a voluptuous religion. Among drunkards he abolished alcohol, so that even to-day all good Muslims are prohibitionists. Among the lazy he ordained individual ritual prayers five times each day. In a nation that revelled in feasting he instituted a most rigorous daytime fasting a full month each year...”

continued on next page
Western writers have based their charges of voluptuousness mainly on the question of women. Before Muhammad, however, men were encouraged to take innumerable wives; he limited them to four only and the Koran is explicit that husbands who are unable to maintain strict equality between two or more wives must confine themselves to one.

Mohomet himself, after all that can be said about him, was not a sensual man. We shall err widely if we consider this man as a common voluptuary, intent mainly on base pleasures, nay, on enjoyments of any kind. His household was of the frugal; his common diet barley-bread and water; sometimes for months there was not a fire once lighted on his hearth. He record with just pride that he would mend his own shoes, patch his own cloak. A poor, hard-toiling, ill-provided man; careless of what vulgar men toil for. Not a bad man, I should say; something better in him than hunger of any sort, or these wild Arab men, fighting and jostling three-and-twenty years at his hand, in close contact with him always, would not have reverenced him so! They were wild men, bursting ever and anon with quarrel, with all kinds of fierce sincerity; without right worth and manhood, no man could have commanded them . . . No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own cloutting. During three-and-twenty years of rough actual trial, I find something of a veritable hero necessary for that myself. (Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, London, 1888, p. 61.)

Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born at Mecca, in Arabia, the man who, for all men, has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race . . . Muhammad” (John William Draper, M.D., L.L.D., A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe, London 1875, Vol. I, pp. 329-330).

Never claiming divine powers at any period of his mission, this very human prophet of God made his first converts in his own family, in his own aristocratic gens (people), and had such a remarkable personal influence over all with whom he was brought into contact that, neither when a poverty-stricken and hunted fugitive, nor at the height of his prosperity, did he ever have to complain of treachery from those who had once embraced his faith. His confidence in himself, and in his inspiration from on high, was even greater when he was suffering under disappointment and defeat than when he was able to dictate his own terms to his conquered enemies. Muhammad died as he had lived, surrounded by his early followers, friends and votaries; his death as devoid of mystery as his life of disguise.” (H. M. Hyndman, The Awakening of Asia, London 1919-20, p. 9.)

Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime air, since this aim was superhuman: to subvert superstitions which had been interposed between man and his Creator, to render God unto man and man unto God; to restore the rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the chaos of the material and disfigured gods of idolatry, then existing. Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human power with so feeble means, for he (Muhammad) had in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design no other instrument than himself, and no other aid, except a handful of men living in a corner of the desert. Finally, never has a man accomplished such a huge and lasting revolution in the world, because in less than two centuries after its appearance, Islam, in faith and in arms, reigned over the whole of Arabia, and conquered, in God’s name, Persia, Khorasan, Transoxania, Western India, Syria, Egypt, Abyssinia, all the known continent of Northern Africa, numerous islands of the Mediterranean, Spain, and a part of Gaul.

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls. On the basis of a Book, every letter of which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race. He has left us as the indelible characteristic of this Muslim nationality the hatred of false gods and the passion for the One and Immortal God. This avenging patriotism against the profanation of Heaven formed the virtue of the followers of Muhammad; the conquest of one-third of the earth to his dogma was his miracle; or rather it was not the miracle of a man but that of reason. The idea of the unity of god, proclaimed amidst the exhaustion of fabulous theogonies, was in itself such a miracle that upon its utterance from his lips it destroyed all the ancient temples of idols and set on fire one-third of the world. His life, his meditations, his heroic revilings against the superstitions of his country, and his boldness in defying the furies of idolatry, his firmness in enduring them for fifteen years at Mecca, his acceptance of the role of public scorn and almost of being a victim of his fellow countrymen: all these and, finally, his flight, his incessant preaching, his wars against odds, his faith in his success and his superhuman security in misfortune, his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death: all these attest, not, to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold, the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what god is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with the words. “Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of national dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?” (Lamartine, Histoire de la Turquie, Paris 1854, Vol. II, pp. 276-277).

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As They See Him
continued

(17) "He (Muhammad) is, in fact, the promoter of the first social and international revolution of which history gives mention . . . He lays the foundations of a State which is to spread over the whole world and to observe no other laws than those of justice and of charity. He preaches the equality of all men and the duty of mutual aid and of universal fraternity." (Raymund Lerouge, Vie de Mahomet, pp. 18-19).

(18) "A master was enjoined to make his slave share the bounties he received from God . . . He (Muhammad) recommended to set free slaves who demand it, and he himself gave the example in setting free all his slaves shortly before his death . . . It must be recognized that, in this respect, the Islamic teaching acknowledged such a respect for human personality and showed a sense of equality which is searched for in vain in ancient civilizations." (P.L. Riviere in Revue Bleue for June 1939).

(19) "It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel, whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher." (Annie Besant, The Life and Teachings of Muhammad, Madras 1932, p. 4).

(20) "... He was gifted with mighty powers of imagination, elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement of feeling. 'He is more modest than a virgin behind her curtain,' it was said of him. He was most indulgent to his inferiors, and would never allow his little page to be scolded whatever he did. 'Ten years,' said Anas, his servant, 'I was about the Prophet, and he never said as much as "uff" to me.' He was very affectionate towards his family. One of his boys died on his breast in the smoky house of the nurse, a blacksmith's wife. He was very fond of children; he would stop them in the streets and pat their little heads. He never struck anyone in his life. The worst expression he ever made use of in conversation was, 'What has come to him? May his forehead become darkened with mud!' When asked to curse someone he replied, 'I have not been sent to curse, but to be a mercy to mankind.' He visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of a slave to dinner, mended his own clothes, milked the goats, and waited upon himself,' relates summarily another tradition. He never first withdrew his hand out of another man's palm, and turned not before the other had turned.

"He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who say him were suddenly filled with reverence: those who came near him loved him; they who described him would say, 'I have never seen his like either before or after.' He was of great taciturnity, but when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could forget what he said."

"The day of Muhammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Koraysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mekka. Four criminals whom justice condemned made up Muhammad's proscription list when he entered as a conqueror to the city of his bitterest enemies. The army followed his example, and entered quietly and peacefully; no house was robbed, no woman insulted. One thing alone suffered destruction. Going to the Kaaba, Muhammad stood before each of the three hundred and sixty idols, and pointed to it with his staff, saying, 'Truth is come and falsehood is fled away!' and at these words his attendants hewed them down, and all the idols and household gods of Mekka and round about were destroyed.

"It was thus Muhammad entered again his native city. Through all the annals of conquest there is no triumphant entry comparable to this one." (Stanley Lane-Poole, The Speeches and Table-Talk of the Prophet Muhammad, London 1882, Introduction, pp. 46-47).

(21) "This child (Muhammad) was destined to become the greatest Arab who ever lived and one of the most influential figures in all time." (J. Christy Wilson, Introducing Islam, New York 1950, p. 6).

(22) "In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints." (Washington Irving, Mahomet and his Successors, London 1909, p. 193)

The Prophet's Characteristics
as a Reformer
cont.

had? All over Arabia, individuals took pride in revolting against their tribes while the latter in their turn abhorred the idea of a central authority. Under such circumstances, the appearance of one who upholds the principle of harmony and unity could not be expected in the ordinary course of events. Drinking, gambling, adultery were common pastimes. Infanticide was also in vogue among them, and women were treated as chattels. Such conditions could not of themselves create a moral tower and an emancipator of women. The fact is that the same divine hand that prepares a pure gem in the darkest depths of the deep had created and fostered this Light under its direct influence, to penetrate such thick clouds of all-round corruption and illumine every spot on the earth.

Universal peace

The greatest distinction Muhammad enjoys is the fact that he laid the foundation of universal peace. He taught not only how one individual could live at peace with another but also how different families and tribes of the human race could live in peace and harmony with each other, and how peace could be brought about among the contending religions of the world. Greatest of mankind, as he admittedly was, he yet looked upon himself just as an ordinary member of mankind in general: "I am only a mortal like you." Man and woman, master and servant, king and subject all have their mutual rights. This equality of man with man not only formed a topic for lip-sermons continued on next page
THE PROPHET'S CHARACTERISTICS AS A REFORMER cont.

but was scrupulously carried out in the everyday life. In the daily prayers, the king and the peasant stand shoulder to shoulder before their common Lord on High. A slave must enjoy the same civic rights as a man of high birth, to demonstrate which, Zaid, a liberated slave of the prophet, was put in authority over the Quraish. As regards tribal and national equality, he taught that the variety of tribes and nationalities was not meant to give one any preference over another. They were simply a means of identification. Nationality, it was taught, was no criterion of greatness; "Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you." But above all, he brought about a reconciliation between the conflicting religions of the world by laying it down as a fundamental principle of faith for a Muslim to believe in all the prophets of the world, to whichever people they were sent, as much as in himself. He taught that there is not a nation on the face of the earth but has had a divine messenger of its own. Profession of faith, in all the religious reformers, who appeared from time to time, is in fact the only principle, that can form a common meeting ground for the various religious systems of the world. Again he taught his followers to refrain from speaking ill of even the false deities of others: "Abuse not those whom they call upon besides Allah." This is another practical step towards creating a spirit of inter-religious goodwill and amity. And a yet more definite method of settling all religious differences was thus pointed out: "come to an equitable proposition between us and you." In other words, taking what is common to all the religions as a basis, we should proceed to raise a superstructure thereon. Thus we would be able to build up a universal religion.

NOTES
3. Ibid., 34:28.
5. Ibid., 7:158.
7. Ibid., 18:110.
10. Ibid., 3:63.

THE PROPHET OF ARABIA continued

Such was the condition of those among the Jews and the Christians, who had been endowed with knowledge and fair-mindedness. On the one hand, they believed that Muhammad was an unlettered, who had not learnt a single word of knowledge, had not attended any literary meeting, nor ever lived among a civilized people. On the other, they found in the Qur'an not only narratives of the previous Scriptures but also hundreds of such sublime and transcendental truths as either existed not in the previous Books, or existed in an obscure and hazy condition. When they saw the dreadful darkness and iniquity of the age prevailing on one side, and exalted knowledge and wisdom and supreme spiritual light on the Prophet's side, they became completely convinced of his divine mission.

If these Christian scholars had not been overpowered by their own judgment, how could it have been possible for them to give up their own religion, which had the great Roman Empire on its back, and had spread far and wide in the vast continent of Asia as well as in the Western world?

It is thus clear that the only reason which diverted and drew their mind towards Islam was that they found Muhammad a mere unlettered, but endowed with inspiration from God, and the Qur'an as far above the power and capacity of human beings. They had also read the prophecies in the ancient Scriptures about the advent of the Last Prophet. So, the Almighty opened their hearts for the reception of Truth, to which they turned out to be so faithful that they hesitated not to lay down their lives in His way.

Again, from a consideration of those among the Arabs, the Jews and the Christians, who were mischievous, it appears that they believed the Prophet to be an unlettered and it was for this reason that when they got silencing replies about certain texts of the Bible, on which they interrogated him by way of test, they had not the courage to say that he was a literate person. But, like the man who, despite being vanquished, would still argue, they offered the most puerile excuses, saying: "This is nothing but a lie, which he has forged, and other people have helped him at it." And the following reply came from God: "Say: If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others." Whatever the case may be, if the unbelievers had not been fully convinced that the Prophet was an unlettered, they would have left no stone unturned to prove that he had received his education in such and such an institution.

Main teaching

Living in a country in which idol-worship was the basis of the everyday life of the community, Muhammad, like most of the ancient teachers, hated idolatry from his childhood, and the Qur'an is again our authority for the statement that "he never bent his forehead before an idol." On the contrary, by preaching the Unity and Oneness of God, he antagonized all the religious sects and all the nations of the world sunk in polytheism. His own kith and kin whom he tried to dissuade from the worship of idols were the first to take up cudgels against him. Relations became strained with the Jews whom he tried to wean off from the worship of the created beings and other evil practices. And when he admonished them to desist from denouncing and defaming Prophet Jesus, they became his bitterest enemies and conspired against his life.

The Christians, likewise, became offended and annoyed when Muhammad taught, contrary to their belief, that Jesus Christ was neither God, nor the Redeemer who atoned for the sins of other people by killing himself on the cross. The worshippers of fire and heavenly bodies, too, were nettled and enraged when they were discouraged from bowing their heads before those inanimate objects, and the criterion of deliverance was said to be the worship and adoration of the One True God only, the Creator of the Universe.

Was it the way of winning the world that the followers of every faith should be told things which provoked and aroused them to stand against him?

20. Ibid., 109:4. continued on next page

21. Islam, literally means "peace" or "submission".
Without gaining any following or power to be able to repulse an attack, the Prophet opposed all the peoples to such an extent that they became his mortal enemies. It would have been in keeping with political skill and ingenuity that if he had censured some people to be in error in the matter of their religious beliefs, he should have assured others that they were on the “right path”, so that if the former would turn against him, the latter might come to his help. And had he told the Arabs that their idols were “true gods”, they would have fallen at his feet, ready to yield obedience to him. Then, what worldly expediency could it be that he antagonized all - kinsmen, friends and others - and held fast to the doctrine of Divine Unity which was, in those days, the most dreaded and repulsive idea? What personal interest could possibly be served by this doctrine, a mere mention of which drew a veritable hell upon the new converts to Islam? Could it be a plan for any worldly gain that everyone was turned into a mortal enemy by flinging in his face the bitter word which was disagreeable and repugnant to his own mind?

Affliction

There are some people who argue that if the divine power, which is said to be a sure sign of the revealed news, had been with the Prophet of Islam, he would not have suffered so much persecution.

It must be noted here that the authoritative announcement of the revealed news is quite different from Muhammad’s persecution, which has a lot of providential wisdom behind it. In fact, the tortures suffered by all prophets and reformers are not troubles, but blessings granted to such persons who are favoured with divine grace; these blessings in disguise bestow a number of benefits on the prophets as well as on the whole world. The existence of prophets and apostles is meant for the purpose that people may follow their example in moral actions, and seekers-after-truth may walk after them on the true path of righteousness and rectitude, revealed unto them by God. It is but obvious that a man’s moral actions get to the degree of excellence and approval only when they are displayed at the proper time. It is only then that they produce their effect on human souls.

The divine will, with regard to prophets and reformers, is that every trait of their high moral character should be put into action and displayed. That is how God divided Prophet Muhammad’s life into two distinct periods: the period of sufferings and persecutions, and the period of triumph and prosperity.

The thirteen years at Mecca represent the time of suffering, and a study of his life during that time clearly shows that there is not a single moral quality which could be manifested in suffering by the righteous that was not displayed by the Prophet. His complete trust in God, his refraining from showing the slightest impatience, his calm and serenity, his noble and dignified manner, his unshaken activity and zeal in the performance of the duties entrusted to him, his perseverance, his fearless courage, and numerous other moral qualities so deeply impressed that even the unbelievers bore testimony to the great miracle of his perseverance under the hardest trials and sufferings, and were ultimately convinced that all this was because of his perfect trust in God.

Then followed the life of Muhammad at Medina, a period of triumph and prosperity, suited for the display of another division of moral qualities. His forgiveness, charity, sympathy, courage, were so well displayed during this period that a large number of the unbelievers embraced Islam. He freely forgave those who had persecuted him, extended shelter to those who had expelled him from Mecca and showed kindness to his bitterest foes when their lives were completely at his mercy. Their inveterate hatred was, by these noble morals, at once converted into fast friendship.

Holy wars

It has been supposed that Islam was propagated by the sword. As we have seen, temperamentally, Muhammad was not inclined to war; he had not once handled the sword in actual fighting up to the fifty-fifth year of his age, and this in a country where, owing to constant internecine warfare, fighting had become a vocation for the people. The religion which he preached, Islam, was a religion of peace, laying stress on prayer to God and the service of humanity, and he was required to preach this religion: to deliver the message, not to enforce it on others: “There is no compulsion in religion.”

Again: “The Truth is from your Lord; so let him who please believe and let him who please disbelieve.” And again: “We have truly shown him (man) the way; he may be thankful or unthankful.”

But war was being forced on Muhammad, and it was his duty, he was told, to defend his oppressed community who had twice fled their homes from persecutions of a cruel enemy to a distant place: “Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed. And surely Allah is able to assist them.” Why were they expelled from their homes? Why was war made on them? What was their offence? The Qur’an replies in the following words: “Those who are driven from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah.” To worship Allah, to say that He is our Lord, was an offence in this land, the punishment for which was that the men who worshipped God, and the places where He was worshipped, should be destroyed. So the Muslims were required to defend all houses of worship, whether they belonged to the Jews or the Christians or their own community: “If Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered, would have been pulled down.”

There was no question of converting any one to Islam by force; it was the enemy that wanted to turn back the Muslims by force from Islam: “They will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can.”

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The Prophet of Arabia

cont.

Almighty to the perfect degree and was totally heedless of the hope and fear of this world. He reposed all his confidence in God and, losing his own self in the will and pleasure of the Supreme Being, harboured not the smallest care and anxiety in his mind as to what a hell of distress and calamity would be let loose upon him on account of his preaching the Unity of God, and what a terrible misery he would have to suffer at the hands of his enemies. He endured all the afflictive persecutions, and carried out the commandments of his Lord, fulfilling the conditions of strenuous struggle and effort in preaching.

We may state here that no other instance can be cited of reposing such a complete faith in God in the presence of most dangerous difficulties and of continuing to preach openly against polytheism, and of showing such a high degree of firmness and fortitude in the face of so many foes. It should be appreciated how all these facts prove the internal purity and truthfulness of Muhammad. Besides, if people reflect over the conditions prevailing at the time of his appearance - that it was an age which required urgently the direction and guidance of a divine Teacher, and that the teaching imparted by him was true and comprehensive enough to meet the needs of the age, producing such a marvellous effect as to draw thousands of people towards Truth and Righteousness and imprint indelibly on their souls the stamp of "there is no god but Allah" - they will arrive at the conclusion that he was, forsooth, a true Spiritual Guide sent by the Lord.

Therefore, the secret of the Prophet's success - a success admittedly unparalleled to this day - lay in his strong faith in God. He had a deep conviction that the Almighty had a plan for the uplift of man, to bring to perfection not one nation or one people but the whole universe, and that no power in the world could frustrate the divine purpose. His firm conviction in his final triumph at the time of the severest opposition, when there was not a ray of hope otherwise, may be read through almost every page of the Qur'an. To Muhammad the Holy Book was the great spiritual force bound to influence the whole world: "If there could be a Qur'an with which the mountains were made to pass away, or the earth were cloven asunder, or the dead were made to speak - nay, the commandment is wholly Allah's." 29

The Prophet was sure that all opposition to his mission would fail and that he would succeed in bringing about the reformation with which he was charged. The stronger the opposition grew the deeper became his faith in his ultimate success and in the failure of opposition. In another early revelation it is said, after speaking of Pharaoh and other opponents of the Truth: "We overtook them with the seizing of the Mighty, the Powerful. Are your disbelievers better than these, or have you an immunity in the scriptures? Or say they: We are a host allied together to help each other? Soon shall the hosts be routed and they will show (their) backs. Nay, the Hour is their promised time, and the Hour is most grievous and bitter." 30

The man who has faith in God is like a live wire, and those who come in contact with him imbibe faith from him. Full of faith as the Prophet's own heart was, full to overflowing, it had a magic effect on those who came in contact with him, and their hearts were filled with the same strong faith.

True Prophet

It is established on the basis of historical evidence, conceded even by the unbelievers that at the time of Muhammad's advent the calamity which prevailed was that the people of all nations had abandoned the right path of the Unity of God, of sincerity, and of devotion to justice. It is also a well known fact that the Teacher, who rectified the situation of this widespread disorder and decadence and brought mankind back to the right path, was Muhammad. The valid conclusion which flows from these facts is that he is the true messenger of God,

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27. The Qur'an, 22:40. The religious freedom which was established by Islam thirteen hundred years ago has not yet been surpassed by the most civilized and tolerant of nations. It deserves to be noted that the lives of Muslims are to be sacrificed not only to stop their own persecution by their opponents and to save their own mosques, but, to save churches, synagogues and cloisters as well.

28. Ibid., 2:217.


30. Ibid., 54:42-46.

31. Ibid., 16:63-65. The water from heaven is the Divine revelation, the death of the earth is its corruption, and the giving of life signifies its spiritual awakening, marvellous signs of which had already appeared in Arabia.
Thus Spoke the Holy Prophet
Selections From the Sayings
of the Prophet Muhammad

Of Chastity

Modesty and chastity are parts of the Faith.

Of Christians and Jews

Muhammad once referred to strife, and said, “It will appear at the time of knowledge leaving the world.” Zayd said, “O Messenger of God, how will knowledge go from the world, since we read the Qur’an, and teach it to our children, and our children to theirs, and so on till the last day?” Then Muhammad said, “O Zayd, I supposed you the most learned man of Medina. Do the Jews and Christians who read the Bible and the Evangel act on them?”

When the bier of anyone passeth by thee, whether Jew, Christian or Muslim, rise to thy feet.

Of Cleanliness

Were it not for fear of troubling my disciples, verily I would order them to clean their teeth before every prayer. God is pure and loveth purity and cleanliness.

Of Compassion

There is no reward but paradise for a Muslim who suffereth with patience when the soul of his affectionate friend is taken.

Once Muhammad went together with some of his companions to Abu Yusuf, a blacksmith, who was a husband of the nurse of Muhammad’s son Ibrahim. And the Apostle of God took him and embraced him. On another occasion they went to see Ibrahim, when he was in dying moments. Then the eyes of Muhammad were fixed, and flowered with tears; and Abdul-Rahman, son of Auf, said to the Messenger of God, “Do you weep and shed tears, O Apostle of God?” He said, “O son of Auf, these tears are compassion, and feeling due to the dead.” After that he shed tears again, and said, “Verily my eyes shed tears and my heart is afflicted, and I say nothing but what is pleasing to my Benefactor; for verily, O Ibrahim, I am melancholy at being separated from thee.” (The disciples expected the Messenger of God to be above tears and smiles.)

Of Conscience

A man asked Muhammad what was the mark whereby he might know the reality of his faith. Muhammad said, “If thou derive pleasure from the good which thou hast performed and thou be grieved for the evil which thou hast committed, thou art a true believer.” The man said, “In what doth a fault really consist?” Muhammad said, “When an action pricketh thy conscience, forsake it.”

Of Self-Control

The most excellent Jihad (Holy War) is that for the conquest of the self. The exercise of religious duty will not atone for the fault of an abusive tongue. A man cannot be a Muslim till his heart and tongue are so.

Riches are not from abundance of worldly goods, but from a contented mind.

God loveth those who are content.

Of Courtesy

Verily, for a man to teach his child manners is better for him than to give one bushel of grain in alms.

No father has given his child anything better than good manners.

Respect people according to their eminence.

Of Cultivation of Land

There is no Muslim who planteth a tree, or soweth a field, and man, birds or beasts eat from them, but it is charity for him.

Whoever bringeth the dead land to life again, that is cultivateth waste land, for him is reward therein.

Of The Dead

And behold! A bier passed by Muhammad, and he stood up; and it was said to him, “This bier is a bier of a Jew.” He said, “Was it not the holder of a soul, from which we should take example and fear?”

Do not speak ill of the dead.

The faithful do not die; perhaps they become translated from this perishable world to the world of eternal existences.

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Thus Spoke the Holy Prophet continued

Of Envy
If envy were proper, two persons would be the most proper object of it; one, a man to whom God hath given riches, and appointed to bestow in charity; the other, to whom God hath granted the knowledge of religion, and who acteth thereon himself, instructing others.

Of Forgiveness
There is no man who is wounded and pardonneth the giver of the wound but God will exalt his dignity and diminish his faults.
That person is nearest to God who pardoneth when he hath in his power him who would have injured him.

Of Gentleness
Verily, God is mild, and is fond of mildness, and he giveth to the mild what he doth not to the harsh.
God saith, "The person I hold as beloved, I am his hearing by which he heareth, and I am his sight by which he seeth, and I am his hands by which he holdeth, and I am his feet by which he walketh."

Of God's Kindness
God is not merciful to him who is not so to mankind.
Muhammad said, "I would not have the whole wealth of the world for this revelation." "Say (O Muhammad) O my servants who have oppressed your own souls by sinning, despair not of the mercy of God." A man said, "What of him who hath associated others with God?" Muhammad remained silent for a while and then said, "know that him also God forgiveth; but on repentance."

Of the Heart
Beware! verily, there is a piece of flesh in the body of man, which when good, the whole body is good; and when bad, the whole body is bad, and that is the heart.

Of Heaven and Hell
Hell is veiled in delights, and Heaven in hardships and miseries.

Of Hospitality
He who believeth in one God and in a future life (i.e., a Muslim) let him honour his guest.
Some of the highlights of the religion revealed to Muhammad.

One God, One Humanity
Islam looks upon the whole of humanity as one family under the universal benevolence of God - the common Creator and Nourisher of all.

Universality of Divine Light
Islam teaches that just as the life and light-giving rays of God's sun shine upon all alike, the light of revelation, equally indispensable for man's spiritual growth and well-being, was vouchsafed to all the nations of the world in all ages.

Belief in all World Teachers
As a corollary to the above, Islam enjoins faith in all the Founders of the revealed religions of the world, as much as in the Prophet Muhammad.

Jesus Venerated as a Divine Teacher
The Qur'an (The Scripture of Islam) speaks of Jesus in the highest terms, describing him as one of God's chosen Prophets, making it obligatory on a Muslim to venerate him as such. It refutes the doctrines of sonship, resurrection and atonement as later inventions never taught by Jesus.

No Chosen People
Islam rejects the idea of a chosen people, making faith in God and good actions the sole key to Heaven.

No Priestcraft
Islam is the common man's religion, making direct personal access to God open to all alike, without the mediation of a priest.

No Fatalism
Islam makes man the architect of his own destiny. Created with the highest of potentialities, man is left a free master to make or mar his own future through a life of honest endeavour or otherwise.

Universal Human Rights
Islam teaches the sanctity of human personality, confers equal rights upon all, makes freedom of conscience and expression man's most sacrosanct birthright which just on no account be violated, and subjects the highest and the humblest, the prince and the peasant, the king and the commoner, equally to the sovereignty of the law.

Equality of the Sexes
Islam puts man and woman on a footing of equality, throwing open to both alike all opportunities for self-advancement - spiritually, intellectually, morally, socially and economically.

Tolerance of Differences
Islam gives every individual the right to differ with others, and teaches toleration of, even respect for, honest differences of opinion or religious views.

A Democratic Way of Life
Islam stands for a democratic way of life, making popular will and public opinion the corner-stone of both the State and social progress, abhorring indoctrination or regimentation in any shape or form.

A Dynamic Progressive System
There is no rigidity in the Islamic system. It looks upon change and progress as the very breath of life - staticness and stagnation being its very negation.

Five Pillars of Islam

Declaration of Faith
The very first thing essential to put one on the road to the Islamic way of life is the public declaration of the following, which constitutes the first article of Faith:
"I bear witness that there is no god but One God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

Prayer
A Muslim is required to say his prayers (Salaat) five times a day - early dawn, early afternoon, late afternoon, sunset and late evening.

Fasting
A Muslim has to observe the whole of the lunar month of Ramadhan as a month of fasting, abstaining from eating, drinking and smoking between the hours of early dawn and sunset.

Zakat
A Muslim has to give away annually 2½ percent of his wealth as charity to be spent on the poorer sections of the community.

Pilgrimage
A Muslim must perform once in his lifetime a pilgrimage to the Ka'ba in Mecca, provided he has the means to do so.

No Ritualism
All these various observances are intended to foster a sense of the Divine majesty, self-discipline, fellow-feeling and a sense of the universal fellowship of man, irrespective of caste, colour, language or station in life. Shorn of this inner content, warns the Qur'an, they carry no value with God.

The Prophet of Arabia
as stated in the Qur'an itself: "We certainly sent (messengers) to the nations before thee, but the devil made their deeds fair-appearing to them. So he is their patron to-day, and for them is a painful chastisement. And We have not revealed to thee the Book except that thou mayest make clear to them that wherein they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe. And Allah sends down water from above, and therewith gives life to the earth after its death. Surely there is a sign in this for a people who listen."

The firmness and fortitude with which Muhammad stuck to his claim from the beginning to the end, in spite of many dangers and implacable enemies...continued on next page
who had stood against him, is worth
consideration. For years, he suffered
such terrible tyranny and torture at the
hands of his opponents that the possi-
bility of success seemed to have
been precluded altogether. With the
ever-increasing opposition, on the
one hand, and his patience and forbearance,
on the other, the achievement of any
worldly purpose could not even be
thought of. By one word claiming
prophethood, he lost even his previous
position and social status, and thrust
his head into the nest of thousands of
deadly hornets. He was driven into
exile, and pursued to be put to death.
Poison was administered to him many a
time. Those who had been well-wishers
turned into evil-minded malevolents;
friends became foes. For a considerably
long time, he had to suffer a persistent
persecution which certainly could not
be forborne so steadily by an impostor.

When Islam predominated in the
long last, and the era of power and
prosperity ushered in, the Prophet
treasured no gold for himself, built no
palace, no audience hall, nor other
things of kingly pleasure and comfort.
Rather, whatever he had, he spent on
the orphans and the widows, the poor
and the needy, and for the relief of those
held in debt, and himself had not even
one square meal at a time.

Just as from these premises flows the
undeniable proof of the truth of
Muhammad’s prophethood, similarly,
his greatness stands proved. For, he had
to contend against the forces of evil
which held the whole world in their grip,
the mission and the task entrusted to
him having been so vast and so difficult
that it called for the endeavour of a
great prophet. And since it was the
divine purpose that all humanity
should be brought together as one nation,
God sent down the final guidance as the
common inheritance of all mankind.

It may be added that the endeavour
of the earlier prophets was limited since
their missions were to some nations or
groups of mankind, while the mission
entrusted to the Prophet of Islam was
universal. Besides, it is a self-evident
fact that refutation of idolatry, and the
establishment of the grandeur of the
Lord, and of the philosophy of life
based on belief in the Unity of God is the
highest kind of virtue. Apart from the
Qur’an, what law is there down here
that has kept millions of people firm on
the fundamental principle of the Unity
of God? When at the tenth year of the
Hijra, Muhammad set out to perform
the pilgrimage to Mecca, there was not a
single idolater in the huge concourse
of 124,000 pilgrims assembled at Mecca
from all corners of the country. The
very spot where he was only twenty
years ago a rejected person, to whose
word no one was willing to lend his ear,
as now the scene of marvellous
devotion to him. To whichever side he
turned his eye, he saw hosts of devoted
friends who recognized him both as
their temporal and their spiritual leader
- an inspiring manifestation of divine
power to him as well as to those who
had assembled there.

It was here on the ninth day of Dhu
Hijja, the day of the assembling of the
pilgrims at Mount Arafat, that he
received a revelation12 from on High
which sent a thrill of joy through the
vast gathering: “This day have I
performed for you your religion and
completed My favour to you and
chosen for you Islam as a religion.”

Obviously Muhammad perceived
that the message of the perfection
of religion meant his approaching end.
Here he delivered the following sermon
to the whole of Arabia through
representatives of tribes coming from
every quarter: “O people! Lend an
attentive ear to my words, for I know
not whether I shall ever hereafter have
the opportunity to meet you here...
I appraise you that your lives, your
properties and your honour must be as
sacred to one another as this sacred
day in this sacred month in this sacred
town. Let those present take this message
to those absent. You are about to meet
your Lord Who will call you to account
for your deeds ... “O people! This day
Satan has despaired of re-establishing
his power in this land of yours. But
should you obey him even in what may
seem to you a trifling matter, it will be a
source of pleasure for him. So you must
behave in him the matter of your
faith.

32. This revelation is a clear testimony to the
perfection of religion in Islam, no such calim
being made by any other book or religion.

33. The Qur’an, 5:3.


O my people! You have certain
rights over your wives and so have your
wives over you ... They are the trust of
Allah in your hands. So you must treat
them with all kindness ... And as
regards your slaves, see that you give
them to eat of what you yourselves eat
and clothe them with what you clothe
yourselves.

“O people! Listen to what I say and
take it to heart. You must know that
every Muslim is the brother of another
Muslim. You are all equal, and
members of one brotherhood. It is
forbidden to any of you to take from his
brother save what he should willingly
give. Do not do injustice to your
people.”34

After delivering this sermon, the
Prophet of Arabia cried at the top of his
voice: “O Allah! I have delivered Thy
message,” and the valley resounded
with the words: “Aye! That thou hast.”

This is known as the Prophet's
Farewell pilgrimage. A little while after
his return to Medina, he fell ill. After
about twelve days' illness, on the 12th of
Rabi' I, on a Monday in the 11th year of
the Flight, (8th June. 632 A.C.) at the
age of sixty-three, he commended his
soul to his Maker, his last words being:
“Blessed companionship on High.”

Prophecies fulfilled

The promises of triumph and glory
held out by the All-powerful to a
powerless, penniless, and unlettered
man - as against all the world at large,
all the opponents of Truth, disbelievers,
kings, philosophers, wealthy, and the
systems of religion - are remarkable.
It was that solitary man who uttered the
prophecy of the spread and ascendancy
of Islam at a time when he had nothing
with him except a few destitutes who
could easily be wiped out of existence
by the people of the desert. He had to stand
against such people who were rulers
of the land. He also had to confront those
nations that were, in spite of their huge
numbers, unanimously determined to
annihilate the Muslims. Today, those
few and humble people have grown into
millions all over the world.
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MUHAMMAD THE GREATEST MAN OF HISTORY

“If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? . . . Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask: Is there any man greater than he?”

—Alphonse de Lamartine in Histoire de la Turquie

QUR’AN, THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL FORCE

“It is the one miracle claimed by Muhammad—his standing miracle, he called it—and a miracle it is.”

—Bosworth Smith

“Never has a people been led more rapidly to civilization, such as it was, than were the Arabs through Islam. . . . And to it was also indirectly due the marvelous development of all branches of science in the Moslem world.”

—New Researches by H. Hirschfeld

“Here, therefore, its merits as a literary production should, perhaps, not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad’s contemporaries and fellow-countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well organized body, animated by ideas far beyond those which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilized nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history.”

—Dr. Steingass, Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam

THE BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

“I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phases of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him—the wonderful man—and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the Dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”

—George Bernard Shaw