

CLASSIC REPRINT SERIES

THE FAITH OF ISLAM



by
Edward Sell

Forgotten Books

Forgotten Books

THE FAITH OF ISLAM

by

Edward Sell

Published by Forgotten Books 2013

Originally published 1896

PIBN 1000000093

www.ForgottenBooks.org

Copyright © 2013 Forgotten Books



eBook Terms & Conditions

www.forgottenbooks.org

1. This eBook* may be

- a. Distributed without modification or sale.
- b. Copied for personal and educational use.
- c. Printed for personal and educational use.

2. This eBook* may NOT be

- a. Sold individually or as part of a package.
 - b. Modified in any way.
 - c. Reversed-engineered.



This eBook* and all its content including images are
Copyright © 2014 FB &c Ltd - All rights reserved.
Forgotten Books is a registered trademark of FB &c Ltd.

FB &c Ltd, Dalton House, 60 Windsor Avenue, London SW19 2RR
Company number 08720141. Registered in England and Wales.

*eBook' refers to this PDF and any of its content including pages and images in either electronic or printed form.

The paperback edition of
this book can be purchased from

amazon.com

amazon.co.uk

amazon.de

amazon.fr

amazon.es

amazon.it



Over 1,000,000 eBooks
are available to read at

Forgotten Books

www.forgottenbooks.org



484,473 eBooks
are available to read at

Forgotten Books

www.ForgottenBooks.org



Alchemy

“In changing the base metals into gold and silver by the projection of the Stone, it follows (by an accelerated process) the method of nature, and therefore is natural.”

The New Pearl of Great Price, by Peter Bonus, 1338 AD

www.ForgottenBooks.org/Alchemy



Forgotten Books

Free App Download



Available on the
App Store



Windows
Store



ANDROID APP ON

Google™ play

Enjoy

484,473 Books

wherever you go

www.ForgottenBooks.org/apps



THE FAITH OF ISLÁM

Re
00

THE
FAITH OF ISLÁM

BY THE
REV. EDWARD SELL, B.D., M.R.A.S.
FELLOW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

SECOND EDITION
REVISED AND ENLARGED

242620
1. 4. 30.

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER, & CO. LTD
PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD
1896

The rights of translation and of reproduction are reserved.

*Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press*

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION

THIS edition is the result of another fifteen years' study of Islám, and of further intercourse with Musalmáns. It deals with certain phases of modern Muslim thought in India and in Persia which found no place in the first edition. The result is that a considerable amount of fresh matter has been added, though the general form of the book has not been altered. The Arabic editions of the Sahíhu'l-Bukhárf and of the Milal wa Nihal of Sharastání have been freely used, and many extracts from these important works have been made. I have also added two appendices, one of which enters into a technical and detailed account of the art of reading the Qurán and of its peculiar spelling, and also gives illustrations in Arabic of the "various readings;" the other, on the Law of Jihád, I have inserted in order to show the most recent method adopted by a liberal-minded Musalmán of dealing with this important subject.

The criticisms on the first edition of this work were highly favourable, and the general conclusions arrived at in it have not been controverted by any competent Muslim authority, except on the questions of the finality of the Muhammadán Law and of the present use of Ijtihád, on which subjects the late Maulavi Cheragh 'Alí differs from me; but in Chapter iv. I have dealt with the objections of the modern rationalistic school in India to the views held by

orthodox Muslims and expounded by European Oriental scholars. I have seen nothing yet from any authoritative source in Islám which leads me to depart from, or even to modify, the conclusions arrived at on these and other points in the former edition. On the contrary, recent events in Turkey show how hopeless it is to expect religious liberty, freedom of thought, security of life and property, and all that is involved in the term "modern progress" in a purely Muḥammadán State.

E. S.

LONDON, *June* 1, 1896.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE following pages embody a study of Islám during a residence of fifteen years in India, the greater part of which time I have been in daily intercourse with Musalmáns. I have given in the footnotes the authorities from which I quote. I was not able to procure in Madras a copy of the Arabic edition of Ibn Khaldún's great work, but the French translation by Baron M. de Slane, to which I so frequently refer, is thoroughly reliable. The quotations from the Quran are made from Rodwell's translation. The original has been consulted when necessary.

In some words, such as Mecca, Khalíf, Khalífate, and Osman and Omar, as the names of the two Khalífs, I have retained the anglicised form instead of using the more correct terms, Makkah, Khalífa, Khalífat, 'Uşman, and 'Umr.

E. S.

MADRAS, *December 1, 1880.*

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	PAGE xiii
------------------------	--------------

CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ISLÁM

The Qurán—Its revelation—Miraculous nature—Arrangement of Qurán—Osmán's recension—The Sunnat—the authority of Sunnat—Tradition—Bid'at or innovation—Shí'ah Traditions—Ijmá'—Ijtihad—Four Orthodox Imams, Hanífa, Malík, Sháfi'í and Hanbal—Qías—Established by the early Mujtahidín—Sterility of Islam	I
Note to Chapter I.—Ijtihád	41

CHAPTER II

EXEGESIS OF THE QURÁN AND THE TRADITIONS

Inspiration — Methods of revelation — The seven dialects — The various readings—Gradual revelation of the Qurán—Work of a Commentator—Words, sentences, and verses of the Qurán—Deductions of arguments from the Qurán—Divisions of the Qurán—Abrogation—Eternal nature of the Qurán—Hadís or Tradition—Collections of Traditions—Classification of Traditions	47
--	----

CHAPTER III

THE SECTS OF ISLÁM

The Shí'ahs—The Imám and the Imámat—Núr-i-Muhammadí—Is-má'ílians and Imámítes—Difference between Shí'ahs and Sunnis—The Sultán's claim to the Khalífate—Şufiism—Persian poetry	ix
--	----

100-12

—Darwishes—‘Umr Khayyám—The Báb and the Bábis—Wahabís—Their rise—Spread in India—Doctrines and influence	89
--	----

CHAPTER IV

THE CREED OF ISLÁM

Imán—God—Attributes of God—Discussions on the nature of God—The rise of the Mu‘tazilas—The Sifatians—Mushabihites—Names of God—Creation of the Quran—Modern Mu‘tazilas—Angels—Recording Angels—Hárut and Márut—Munkar and Nakir—Jinn—The Books—Abrogation—Tahrif—The Prophets—Rank and inspiration of prophets—Nabí and Rasúl—Sinlessness of prophets—The Anbiya-Ulu’l-‘Azm—Miracles of prophets—The Mi‘raj—The resurrection and the last day—The trumpets—Descent of the books—Balances—Bridge—Al-A‘raf—Al-Barzakh—Intercession of Muhammad—Heaven—Hell—The Predetermination of good and evil—Jabríans—Qadríans—Ash‘aríans—Free-will—Apostasy	165
Note to Chapter IV.—Muslim Philosophy	243

CHAPTER V

THE PRACTICAL DUTIES OF ISLÁM

Farz, wájib, sunnat, mustahab, and mubáh actions—Harám or unlawful acts—Tashahhud—Salat—Wazú—Ghusl—Tayammum—Namaz—Farz, mustahab, sunnat, witr, and nan rak‘ats—Appointed hours of prayer—Friday Namáz and Khutbah—Namaz on a journey and in time of war—Namaz in Ramazan and during an eclipse and in time of drought—Funeral service—Its ritual and prayers—Fasting—Its time and nature—Zakát—Nisab—Proportion of property to be given as alms—Recipients of the Zakát—The Hajj Farz, sunnat, wájib, and mustahab duties connected with the Hajj—Time for the Hajj—Arrival of the Hají at Mecca—Tawáf—Ceremonies of the Hajj—Conclusion of the Hajj—Formal nature of Islám	251
Note to Chapter V.—Fatvá on the Námaz	301

CHAPTER VI

THE FEASTS AND FASTS OF ISLÁM

	PAGE
Muḥarram — ‘Ashúr Khána — Marsiyah — Wáqi‘a Khán — ‘Alams— Ceremonies of the ‘Ashurá—Fátihahs for ‘Alí, for Hasan and Husain — Akhir-i-chár Shamba — Bárá Wafát — Jashn-i-milád-i- Sharíf—Áḡár-i-Sharif—Shab Barát—Ramazán and ‘Ídu‘l-Fitr— ‘Itikáf—Sadaqah—Sermon on the ‘Idu‘l-Fitr—Baqr-‘id or ‘Idu‘z- Zuha—Sermon on the ‘Idu‘z-Zuhá—The Qurbán or sacrifice— Festival of Madár—Festival of Salár Mas‘ud Ghází—Festival of Khája Khizr—Feast of Pír Dastgír Şáhib—Festival of Qádir Walí Şáhib	306
—————	
APPENDIX A.—‘Ilm-í-Tajwíd	333
APPENDIX B.—The Law of Jihád	359
INDEX	367

INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to enter into some explanation as regards the contents of this work. It does not fall in with its plan to enter into an account either of the life of Muhammad or of the wide and rapid spread of the system founded by him. The first has been done by able writers in England, France, and Germany. I could add nothing new to this portion of the subject, nor throw new light upon it. The political growth of Muslim nations has also been set forth in various ways.

It seems to me that the more important study at this time is that of the religious system which has grown out of the Prophet's teaching, and of its effect upon the individual and the community. What the Church in her missionary enterprise has to deal with, what European Governments in the political world have to do with, is Islam as it is, and as it now influences those who rule and those who are ruled under it.

I have, therefore, tried to show, from authentic sources and from a practical knowledge of it, what the Faith of Islám really is, and how it influences men and nations in the present day. I think that recent Fatvás delivered by the 'Ulama in Constantinople show how firmly a Muslim State is bound in the fetters of an unchangeable Law, whilst the present practice of orthodox Muslims all the world over is a constant carrying out of the precepts given in the

Qurán and the Sunnat, and an illustration of the principles I have shown to belong to Islam. On this subject it is not too much to say that there is, except amongst Oriental scholars, much misconception.

Again, much that is written on Islám is written either in ignorant prejudice or from an ideal standpoint. To understand it aright, one should know its literature and live amongst its people. I have tried faithfully to prove every statement I have made; and if, now and again, I have quoted European authors, it is only by way of illustration. I rest my case entirely upon Musalman authorities themselves. Still more, I have ascertained from living witnesses that the principles I have tried to show as existing in Islám are really at work now, and are as potent as at any previous period.

I have thus traced up from the very foundations the rise and development of the system, seeking wherever possible to link the past with the present. In order not to interfere with this unity of plan, I have had to leave many subjects untouched, such as those connected with the civil law, with polygamy, concubinage, slavery, and divorce. A good digest of Muhammadan Law will give all necessary information on these points. The basis of the Law which determines these questions is what I have described in my first chapter. Ijtihad, for example, rules quite as effectually in a question of domestic economy or political jurisprudence as on points of dogma. It was not, therefore, necessary for me to go into details on these points.

When I have drawn any conclusion from data which Muhammadan literature, and the present practice of Muslims have afforded me, I have striven to give what seems to me a just and right one. Still, I gladly take this opportunity of stating that I have found many Muslims better than

their creed, men with whom it is a pleasure to associate, and whom I respect for many virtues and esteem as friends. I judge the system, not any individual in it.

In India there are a number of enlightened Muham-madans, ornaments to native society, useful servants of the State, men who show a laudable zeal in all social reforms, so far as is consistent with a reputation for orthodoxy. Their number is far too few, and they do not, in many cases, represent orthodox Islám, nor do I believe their counterpart would be found amongst the 'Ulamá of a Muslim State. The fact is, that the wave of scepticism which has passed over Europe has not left the East untouched. Hindu and Muslim alike have felt its influence, but to judge of either the one system or the other from the very liberal utterances of a few men who expound their views before English audiences is to yield oneself up to delusion on the subject.

Islám in India has also felt the influence of contact with other races and creeds, though, theologically speaking, the Imán and the Dín, the faith and the practice, are unchanged, and remain as I have described them in Chapters iv. and v. If Islám in India has lost some of its original fierceness, it has also adopted many superstitious practices, such as those against which the Wahhábís protest. The great mass of the Musalmán people are quite as superstitious, if not more so, than their heathen neighbours. Still the manliness, the sauvity of manner, the deep learning, after an Oriental fashion, of many Indian Musalmáns, render them a very attractive people. It is true there is a darker side—much bigotry, pride of race, scorn of other creeds, and, speaking generally, a tendency to inertness. It is thus that in Bengal, Madras, and perhaps in other places, they have fallen far behind the Hindus in educational status, and in the number of appointments they hold in the Government

service. Yet an intelligent Muslim, as a rule, makes a good official.

Looking at the subject from a wider standpoint, I think the Church has hardly yet realised how great a barrier this system of Islam is to her onward march in the East. Surely special men with special training are required for such an enterprise as that of encountering Islam in its own strongholds. No better pioneers of the Christian faith could be found in the East than men won from the Crescent to the Cross.

All who are engaged in such an enterprise will perhaps find some help in this volume, and I am not without hope that it may also throw some light on the political questions of the day.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

1. THE QURÁN.—The question of the inspiration will be fully discussed, and an account of the laws of the exegesis of the Qurán will be given in the next chapter. It is sufficient now to state that this book is held in the highest veneration by Muslims of every sect. When being read, it is kept on a stand elevated above the floor, and no one must read or touch it without first making a legal ablution.¹ It is not translated unless there is the most urgent necessity, and even then the Arabic text is printed with the translation. The more bigoted Muhammadans say that it should not be taught to any one but Muslims, and that a Moulvie who teaches a Christian to read it becomes thereby a Kafir. In the year 1884 the Sunni Qazi and a number of Madras Moulvies issued a Fatva to this effect. This, however, is contrary to the Law, for Qazi Khan says: “The Harbi, or the Zimmi, when they desire to read the Quran, may be taught, and so also with the Fiqh and the Ahkams. It may be hoped that they will find the road to the truth. But until they have washed, they must not touch the Quran; after they have done this, they are not to be hindered.”² It is said that God chose the sacred month of Ramazan in which to give all the revelations which in the form of books have been vouchsafed to mankind. Thus on the first night of that month the books of Abraham came down from heaven; on the sixth, the books of Moses; on the thirteenth, the Injíl, or Gospel; and on the twenty-seventh, the Qurán.³ On that night, the Laylatu’l-Qadr, or “night of power,” the whole Quran is said to have descended to the lowest of the seven heavens, from whence it was brought piecemeal to Muhammad as occasion required.⁴ “Verily we have caused it (the Quran) to descend

¹ “Let none touch it but the purified.” (S. lvi. 78.)

² Fatava-i-Qázi Khan, chapter on Qiratu’l-Qurán.

³ The Prophet said: “Certainly Laylatu’l-Qadr was revealed to me, but I have forgotten (its date), but search for it in the last ten days and on one of the odd days.” (Sahíhu’l-Bukharí.)

⁴ “It was certainly an admirable and politic contrivance of his to bring down the whole Koran at once to the lowest heaven only, and not to the

on the night of power" (Súrah xcvi. 1).¹ "The Qurán," says Ibn Khaldun, "was *sent from heaven* in the Arab tongue, and in a style conformable to that in which the Arabs were wont to express their thoughts. . . . It was revealed phrase by phrase, verse by verse, as it was needed, whether for manifesting the doctrine of the unity of God, or for expounding the obligations to which men ought to submit in this world. In the one case we have the proclamation of the dogmas of faith, in the other the prescriptions which regulate the actions of men."² The night on which it descended is called the blessed night, the night better than a thousand months, the night when angels came down by the permission of their Lord, the night which bringeth peace and blessings till the rosy dawn. Twice on that night, in the solitude of the cave of Hirá, the voice called; twice, though pressed sore "as if a fearful weight had been laid upon him," the Prophet struggled against its influence. The third time he heard the words:—

"Recite thou, in the name of thy Lord who created—
Created man from clots of blood." (S. xcvi. 1.)

"When the voice had ceased to speak, telling how from minutest beginnings man had been called into existence, and lifted up by understanding and knowledge of the Lord, who is most beneficent, and who by the pen had revealed that which man did not know, Muhammad woke up from his trance and felt as if 'a book had been written in his heart.'" He was much alarmed. Tradition records that

earth, as a bungling prophet would have done; for if the whole had been published at once, innumerable objections might have been made, which it would have been very hard, if not impossible, for him to solve; but as he pretended to receive it by parcels, as God saw proper that they should be published for the conversion and instruction of the people, he had a sure way to answer all emergencies, and to extricate himself with honour from any difficulty which might occur." (Sale's Preliminary Discourse, Section III.)

¹ Hereafter the word Surah in brackets will be denoted by the letter S. alone.

² Prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldún, vol. ii. p. 458.

he went hastily to his wife and said, "O Khadíja! what has happened to me?" He lay down and she watched by him. When he recovered from his paroxysm, he said, "O Khadíja! he of whom one would not have believed (*i.e.*, himself) has become either a soothsayer (*káhin*) or mad." She replied, "God is my protection, O Abú'l-kásim. He will surely not let such a thing happen unto thee, for thou speakest the truth, dost not return evil for evil, keepest faith, art of a good life, and art kind to thy relatives and friends, and neither art thou a talker abroad in the bazaars. What has befallen thee? Hast thou seen aught terrible?" Muhammad replied, "Yes." And he told her what he had seen. Whereupon she answered and said, "Rejoice, O dear husband, and be of good cheer. He in whose hands stands Khadíja's life is my witness that thou wilt be the Prophet of this people."¹ After this there seems to have been an intermission, called the *Fatrah*. It is generally acknowledged to have lasted about three years, and it was at this time that the Prophet gained some knowledge of the Jewish and the Christian histories. "The accounts, however," says Muir, "are throughout confused, if not contradictory; and we can only gather with certainty that there was a time during which his mind hung in suspense and doubted the divine mission." It is not absolutely certain when the *Fatrah* commenced. Most commentators acknowledge that the first five verses of the *Súratu'l-'Alaq* (xcvi.) form the first revelation; but according to 'Alí, the *Suratu'l-Fatihah* is the first, and Jabir, a Companion, maintains that the *Suratu'l-Mudassir* (lxxiv.) preceded all others. These varying statements are thus reconciled: the *Suratu'l-'Alaq* was the first real revelation; the *Suratu'l-Fatihah* was the first one revealed for purposes of worship; the *Suratu'l-Mudassir* was the first of a continued series. Henceforth there was no intermission.² It is said that after the descent of the *Suratu'l-'Alaq* (xcvi.), called also the *Suratu'l-Iqra*, the

¹ Literary Remains of Emmanuel Deutsch, p. 77.

² Faizu'l-Bukharí, p. 61.

Prophet longed for a further revelation, but the Wahí (inspiration) came not. This Fatrah was a cause of much grief to him. Indeed one day he started from his home with the intention of committing suicide; but when staggering along, borne down with sorrow, a voice from heaven sounded in his ears. Then, as Bukharí relates it, he looked up and saw the angel who had appeared to him on a former occasion. The angel sat on a throne suspended midway between heaven and earth. Muhammad, much agitated, hastened home and said, "Cover me with a cloth." Then God revealed to him the Súratu'l-Mudassir, which commences thus: "O thou, enwrapped in thy mantle! arise and warn."¹ Bukharí also adds that the steady and regular flow of the revelation of the Quran then commenced, or, as he puts it, "inspiration became warm" (Fahamiya-al-wahí).²

Gabriel is believed to have been the medium of communication. This fact, however, is only once stated in the Qurán:—"Say, whoso is the enemy of Gabriel—For he it is who by God's leave hath caused the Quran to descend on thy heart" (S. ii. 91). This Surah was revealed some years after the Prophet's flight to Madína. The other references to the revelation of the Quran are:—"Verily from the Lord of the worlds hath this book come down; the Faithful Spirit (Rúhu'l-Ámín) hath come down with it" (S. xxvi. 192). "The Quran is no other than a revelation revealed to him, one terrible in power (Shadídu'l-Qua) taught it him" (S. liii. 5). "The Holy Spirit (Ruhu'l-Quds) hath brought it down with truth from the Lord" (S. xvi. 104). These latter passages do not state clearly that Gabriel was the medium of communication, but the belief that he was is almost, if not entirely, universal,³

¹ Faizu'l-Bukharí, p. 58.

² Sahíhu'l-Bukharí, chapter on Wahí, Third Tradition.

³ Bukharí states, on the authority of 'Ayesha, that Khadíja, after the Prophet had received the command to "recite," took him to Waraqa bin Naufal. He was a man, so says Bukharí, who had been a Nazarene in the days of ignorance. Now he was old and blind. Khadíja said, "O cousin, listen to thy nephew (Muhammad) and hear what he is saying." Waraqa replied, "O my brother's son, what hast thou seen?" Then

and the commentators say that the terms "Rúhu'l-Ámín," "Shadídu'l-Qua," and "Ruhu'l-Quds," refer to no other angel or spirit. The use of the word "taught" in the quotation from Súrah liii., and the following expression in Surah lxxv. 18: "When we have *recited it*, then follow thou the recital," show that the Quran is entirely an objective revelation, and that Muhammad was only a passive medium of communication. The Muhammadan historian, Ibn Khaldún, says on this point: "Of all the divine books, the Quran is the only one of which the text, words and phrases have been communicated to a prophet by an audible voice. It is otherwise with the Pentateuch, the Gospel and the other divine books: the prophets received them under the form of ideas."¹ This expresses the universal belief on this point—a belief which reveals the essentially mechanical nature of Islam.

The Qurán thus revealed is now looked upon as the standing miracle of Islam. Other divine books, it is admitted, were revelations received under the form of ideas, but the Quran is far superior to them all, for the actual text was revealed to the ear of the Prophet. Thus we read in Súrah lxxv. 16–19:—

“Move not thy tongue in haste to follow and master this revelation,
For we will see to the collecting and recital of it;
But when we have recited it, then follow thou the recital;
And verily it shall be ours to make it clear to thee.”

The Qurán is, then, believed to be a miraculous revelation of divine eloquence, as regards both *form* and *substance*, arrangement of words, and its revelation of sacred things. It is asserted that each well-accredited prophet performed Muhammad told him what had happened. Waraqa then said, "This is the Namus which God sent down upon Moses." The commentators on the Traditions say that this Námus, which means the possessor of a secret, is "none other than Gabriel." (Sahíhu'l-Bukhári on Surah xcvi.)

¹ Prolegomenes d'Ibn Khaldun, vol. i. p. 195. As I shall often refer to Ibn Khaldun, it may be as well to state what Stanley Lane-Poole says of him as an authority: "He stands at the head of the Arab historians, and comes nearest to European notions of a philosophical historian." (Lane's Modern Egyptians, vol. ii. p. 332.)

miracles in that particular department of human skill or science most nourishing in his age. Thus in the days of Moses magic exercised a wide influence, but all the magicians of Pharaoh's court had to submit to the superior skill of the Hebrew prophet. In the days of Jesus the science of medicine flourished. Men possessed great skill in the art of healing; but no physician could equal the skill of Jesus, who not only healed the sick, but raised the dead. In the days of Muhammad the special and most striking feature of the age was the wonderful power of the Arabs in the art of poetry. Muhammadu'd-Damiri says: "Wisdom hath alighted on three things—the brain of the Franks, the hands of the Chinese, and the tongue of the Arabs." They were unrivalled for their eloquence, for the skill with which they arranged their material and gave expression to their thoughts. It is in this very particular that superior excellence is claimed for the Qurán. It is to the Muhammadan mind a sure evidence of its miraculous origin that it should excel in this respect. Muslims say that miracles have followed the revelations given to other prophets in order to confirm the divine message. In this case the Quran is both a revelation and a miracle. Muhammad himself said: "Each prophet has received manifest signs which carried conviction to men, but that which I have received is the revelation. So I hope to have a larger following on the day of resurrection than any other prophet has." Ibn Khaldún says that "by this the Prophet means that such a wonderful miracle as the Quran, which is also a revelation, should carry conviction to a very large number."¹ To a Muslim the fact is quite clear, and so to him the Quran is far superior to all the preceding books. Muhammad is said to have convinced a rival, Lebid, a poet-laureate, of the truth of his mission by reciting to him a portion of the now second Súrah.² "Unquestionably it is one of the very

¹ Prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldún, vol. i. p. 194.

² There is some difference of opinion as to the exact nature of the superiority of the Qurán. "Some hold the proof to lie simply in the

grandest specimens of Koranic or Arabic diction. . . . But even descriptions of this kind, grand as they be, are not sufficient to kindle and preserve the enthusiasm and the faith and the hope of a nation like the Arabs. . . . The poets before him had sung of valour and generosity, of love and strife and revenge . . . of early graves, upon which weeps the morning cloud, and of the fleeting nature of life, which comes and goes as the waves of the desert sands, as the tents of a caravan, as a flower that shoots up and dies away. Or they shoot their bitter arrows of satire right into the enemy's own soul. Muhammad sang of none of these. No love-minstrelsy his: not the joys of the world, nor sword, nor camel, nor jealousy, nor human vengeance: not the glories of tribe or ancestor. He preached Islam." The very fierceness with which this is done, the swearing such as Arab orator, proficient though he may have been in the art, had never made, the dogmatic certainty with which the Prophet proclaimed his message, have tended, equally with the passionate grandeur of his utterances, to hold the Muslim world spell-bound to the letter and imbued with all the narrowness of the book.

So sacred is the text supposed to be, that only the Companions¹ of the Prophet are deemed worthy of being commentators on it. The work of learned divines since then has been to learn the Quran by heart and to master the Traditions, with the writings of the earliest commentators thereon. The revelation itself is never made a subject of investigation or tried by the ordinary rules of criticism. If only the Isnad, or chain of authorities for any interpretation, is good, that interpretation is unhesitatingly accepted as the correct one. It is a fundamental article of belief that no

eloquence; others, in the revelation of the Unseen; others, in the absence of discrepancies. Others, again, disagreeing as to the perfect eloquence of the revelation, hold to the doctrine of 'prevention,' or inability to produce the like, owing to divine intervention." (Muir's Beacon of Truth, p. 26.)

¹ Those who were in constant intercourse with the Prophet are called Ashab (Companion); their disciples are named Tábí'in (Followers); their disciples are known as Taba-i-Tabí'in (Followers of the Followers).

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

for the collection of the Qurán." Abú Bakr agreed, and said to Zaid, who had been an amanuensis of the Prophet, "Thou art a young man, and wise, against whom no one amongst us can cast an imputation; and thou wert wont to write down the inspired revelations of the Prophet of the Lord, wherefore now search out the Quran and bring it all together." Zaid being at length pressed to undertake the task, proceeded to gather the Quran together from "date leaves and tablets of white stone, and from the hearts of men." In course of time it was all compiled in the order in which the book is now arranged. This was the authorised text for some twenty-three years after the death of Muhammad. Owing, however, either to different modes of recitation, or to differences of expression in the sources from which Zaid's first recension was made, a variety of different readings crept into the copies in use. The Faithful became alarmed, and the Khalíf Osman was persuaded to put a stop to such a danger. He appointed Zaid, with three of the leading men of the Quraish as assistants, to go over the whole work again. A careful recension was made of the whole book, which was then assimilated to the Meccan dialect, the purest in Arabia. After this all other copies of the Quran were burnt by order of the Khalíf, and new transcripts were made of the revised edition, which was now the only authorised copy. As it is a fundamental tenet of Islam that the Quran is incorruptible and absolutely free from error, no little difficulty has been felt in explaining the need of Osman's new and revised edition, and of the circumstances under which it took place; but, as usual, a Tradition has been handed down which makes it lawful to read the Quran in seven dialects. On the authority of Ibn 'Abbas the following tradition is recorded: "Gabriel taught me to read the Quran in one dialect, and when I recited it he taught me to recite it in another, and so on until the number of dialects amounted to seven." These dialects, known as the Sabatu Ahraf, or, in Persian, Haft Qira'at, were the seven chief ones of Arabia. The members of these

several tribes used to recite the Qurán in their respective dialects until Osman's Quran was issued, when only one dialect was allowed.

The book in its present form may be accepted as a genuine reproduction of Abu Bakr's edition with authoritative corrections. We may rest assured that we have in the Qurán now in use the record of what Muhammad said. It thus becomes a fundamental basis of Islam. It was a common practice of the early Muslims when speaking of the Prophet to say, "His character is the Quran." When people curious to know details of the life of their beloved master asked 'Ayesha, one of his widows, about him, she used to reply, "Thou hast the Quran, art thou not an Arab and readest the Arab tongue? Why dost thou ask me? for the Prophet's disposition is no other than the Quran."

Whether Muhammad would have arranged the Qurán as we now have it is a subject on which it is impossible to form an opinion. There are Traditions which seem to show that he had some doubts as to its completeness. I give the following account on the authority of M. Caussin de Percival. When Muhammad felt his end draw near he said, "Bring ink and paper: I wish to write to you a book to preserve you always from error." But it was too late. He could not write or dictate, and so he said, "May the Qurán always be your guide. Perform what it commands you; avoid what it prohibits." The genuineness of the first part of this Tradition is, I think, very doubtful; the latter is quite in accordance with the Prophet's claim for his teaching. The letter of the book became, as Muhammad intended it should become, a despotic influence in the Muslim world, a barrier to freethinking on the part of all the orthodox, an obstacle to innovation in all spheres—political, social, intellectual and moral. "Unlike the Decemviral code, which was compiled in a business-like way for the guidance of magistrates and litigants, and which made no pretence of finality, the Quran is a religious miscellany with some legis-

lative matter embodied in it, which would never have been put forward to do duty as a code, but for the belief, common to rulers and ruled, that every word and every syllable came direct from heaven, and which, having been put forward in that belief, *cannot be abrogated or altered in the smallest particular until a new messenger shall present himself with equally good credentials.*"¹

There are many topics connected with the Qurán which can be better explained in the next chapter. All that has now to be here stated is that the Quran is the first foundation of Islam. It is an error to suppose it is the only one: an error which more than anything else has led persons away from the only position in which they could obtain a true idea of the great system of Islam. Stanley Lane-Poole in "Studies in a Mosque" (p. 167) well says: "A large part of what Muslims now believe is not to be found in the Quran at all. We do not mean to say that the Traditions of Muhammad are not as good authority as the Quran; indeed, except that in the latter case, the Prophet professed to speak the words of God, and in the former he did not so profess, there is little to choose between them. Nor do we assert that the early doctors of the Law displayed no imaginative faculty in drawing their inferences and analogies, though we have our suspicions; all we would insist on is, that it is a mistake to call the Quran either the theological compendium or the *corpus legis* of Islam."

The Shí'ahs maintain, without good reason, that the following verses favourable to the claims of 'Alí and of the Shí'ah faction were omitted in Osmán's recension:—

"O Believers! believe in the two lights (Muhammad and 'Alí).

"'Alí is of the number of the pious; we shall give him his right in the day of judgment; we shall not pass over those who wish to deceive him. We have honoured him above all this family. He and his family are very patient. Their enemy² is the chief of sinners.

¹ Anglo-Muhammadán Law, by Sir R. K. Wilson, p. 22.

² Mu'áwiyah.

“We have announced to thee a race of just men, men¹ who will not oppose our orders. My mercy and peace are on them, living² or dead.

“As to those who walk in their way, my mercy is on them; they will certainly gain the mansions of Paradise.”

The orthodox can reply to this claim by quoting a tradition recorded by Bukharí: “The Prophet left nothing but what is within the two covers (of the Quran).”

There is no evidence that Muhammad had any practical acquaintance with the Old and New Testament Scriptures.³ There is only one quotation in the Quran from the Old Testament, and that is a passage from Psalm xxxvii. 29, which is quoted in Surah xxi. 105: “Since the Law was given, we have written in the Psalms that ‘my servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth.’” There are a few apparent references to the New Testament, such as in the words, “Nor shall they enter Paradise until the camel passeth through the eye of the needle” (S. vii. 38); and in “Jesus, the Son of Mary, said: ‘O children of Israel! of a truth I am God’s Apostle to you to confirm the Law which was given before Me, and to announce an Apostle that shall come after Me, whose name shall be Ahmad’” (S. lxi. 6). This no doubt refers to St. John xvi. 7: “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.” Muhammad seems to have misunderstood the word *παράκλητος*, and imagined it to be the same as *περικλυτος*, which has somewhat the same meaning as Ahmad, from which word the name Muhammad is formed. The poetical parts of the Quran

¹ The twelve Imáms.

² Al-Mahdí is still supposed to be alive.

³ Muhammad is called in Surah vii. 156, the Al-Nabí'l-Ummi, which Muhammadáns generally translate as the “unlettered Prophet,” and say he could not read or write. This is used as an argument to show that he could not have composed so eloquent a book as the Quran, and that, therefore, it must be the words of God. But the term more probably means “the Prophet of the Gentiles,” as distinguished from a prophet belonging to the “people of the Book,” *i.e.*, Jews or Christians, and is meant to show that he was not acquainted with the books of preceding prophets.

are the Prophet's own creation; for the rest he was indebted to the Jewish Traditions based on the Talmud. The Babylonian Gemara was finished about the year 530 A.D.; the Jerusalem Gemara in 430 A.D., and the Mishna about 220 A.D. All of these, therefore, were available. Other portions of the Quran are derived from stories found in the Apocryphal Gospels, Christian legends, and Zoroastrian tales, to which latter reference seems to be made in—"The unbelievers say, 'Of old have we been promised this, we and our sires of old; it is but tales of the Ancients'" (S. xxvii. 70). Many also of Muhammad's friends were acquainted with the Bible, and some of them became Christians. There were also Jewish tribes in Arabia, with whom the Prophet came into contact, and with whom he was for a while friendly. Apart from the general conception of the Unity of God and other dogmas which Islam has borrowed from Judaism, many of the less important matters of belief are clearly taken from Talmudic sources, such as the story of the angels Harút and Marút (S. ii. 96); the seven heavens and hells (S. xvii. 46, xv. 44); the position of the throne of God at the creation (S. xi. 9); Al A'raf, or the partition between heaven and hell (S. vii. 44). The following also may be traced to Zoroastrian sources: the Jinn or Genii (S. vi. 100); the Houris, which are identical with the Parikas of the Avesta and the Peris of modern Persia, beings "endowed with seductive beauty, dwelling in the air, and attaching themselves to the stars and light;" the angel of death and the bridge (Şirat). The teaching generally about evil spirits is derived from the same source. In fact, the early adversaries of the Prophet accused him of having confederates, and spoke of his revelations as a collection of fables and mere poetical utterances. Thus, "The infidels say: 'This Quran is a mere fraud of his own devising, and others have helped him with it. . . . Tales of the Ancients that he hath put in writing, and they were dictated to him morn and eve'" (S. xxv. 5, 6). The Quran itself bears internal evidence of the great skill with which Muḥammad formed

the eclectic system of Islám, which has been well described as “a corrupt form of late Judaism with which ideas and practices derived from Arabian and Persian heathenism, and in one or two instances from heretical books, have been mingled.”

2. THE SUNNAT.—The second foundation of Islam is based on the Ḥadīṣ (plural Aḥādīṣ) or Tradition. Commands from God given in the Qurán are called “farz” and “wajib.” A command given by the Prophet or an example set by him is called “sunnat,” a word meaning a rule. It is then technically applied to the basis of religious faith and practice, which is founded on traditional accounts of the sayings and acts of Muhammad.¹ It is the belief common to all Musalmans, that the Prophet in all that he *did*, and in all that he *said*, was supernaturally guided, and that his words and acts are to all time and to all his followers a divine rule of faith and practice. “We should know that God Almighty has given commands and prohibitions to his servants, either by means of the Quran, or by the mouth of His Prophet.”² Al-Ghazzali, a most distinguished theologian, writes: “Neither is the faith according to His will complete by the testimony to the Unity alone, that is, by simply saying, ‘There is but one God,’ without the addition of the further testimony to the Apostle, that is, the statement, ‘Muhammad is the apostle of God.’” This belief in the Prophet must extend to all that he has said concerning the present and the future life, for, says the same author, “A man’s faith is not accepted till he is fully persuaded of those things which the Prophet hath affirmed shall be after death.” In the *Mishkát* (Book i. chapter vi.) the following Traditions on this point are recorded: “That which the Prophet of God hath made unlawful is like that which God Himself hath made so.” “Verily the best word is the word of God, and the best rule of life is that

¹ These are called (1) Sunnat-i-Fi’lí, that which Muhammad himself did. (2) Sunnat-i-Qualí, that which he said should be practised. (3) Sunnat-i-Taqríri, that which was done in his presence and which he did not forbid.

² Risála-i-Berkeví.

delivered by Muhammad." "I have left you two things, and you will not stray as long as you hold them fast. The one is the word of God, and the other the law (sunnat) of His Prophet." "I am no more than a man, but when I order anything respecting religion, receive it, and when I order anything about the affairs of the world, then I am nothing more than a man."

It is often said that the Wahhabís reject Tradition. In the ordinary sense of the word Tradition they may; but in Muslim Theology the term Hadís, which we translate Tradition, has a special meaning. It is applied only to the sayings of the Prophet, not to those of some uninspired divine or teacher. The Wahhabís reject the Traditions handed down by men who lived after the time of the Companions, but the Hadís, embodying the sayings of the Prophet, they, in common with *all* Muslim sects, hold to be an inspired revelation of God's will to men. It would be as reasonable to say that Protestants reject the four Gospels as to say that the Wahhabís reject Tradition.¹ An orthodox Muslim places the Gospels in the same rank as the Hadís, that is, he looks upon them as a record of what Jesus said and did handed down to us by His Companions. "In the same way as other Prophets received their books under the form of ideas, so our Prophet has in the same way received a great number of communications which are found in the collections of the Traditions (Ahadís).² This shows that the Sunnat must be placed on a level with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; whilst the Quran is a revelation superior to them all. To no sect of Musalmans is the Quran alone the rule of faith. The Shí'ahs, it is true, reject the Sunnat, but they have in their own collection of Traditions an exact equivalent.

¹ The great Wahhabí preacher Muhammad Ismá'íl, of whom some account will be given later on, says in the *Takwiatu'l-Imán*: "The best of all ways is to have for principles the words (holy writings) of God and of *His Apostle*; to hold them alone as precedents, and not to allow our own opinion to be exercised."

² *Prolegomenes d'Ibn Kha'dun*, vol. i. p. 195.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

In order to show the necessity of this obedience, God is said to have appointed Muhammad as the Mediator between Himself and man. In a lower sense, believers are to follow the "Sunnat" of the four Khalífs, Abú Bakr, Omar, Osmán, and 'Alí, who are true guides to men.

To the Muslim all that the Prophet did was perfectly in accord with the will of God. Moral laws have a different application when applied to him. His jealousy, his cruelty to the Jewish tribes,¹ his indulgence in licentiousness, his bold assertion of equality with God as regards his commands,² his every act and word are sinless and a guide to men as long as the world shall last. It is easy for an apologist for Muhammad to say that this is an accretion, something which engrafted itself on to a simpler system. It is no such thing. It is rather one of the essential parts of the system. Let Muhammad be his own witness:—"He who loves not my Sunnat is not my follower." "He who revives my Sunnat revives me, and will be with me in Paradise." "He who in distress holds fast to the Sunnat will receive the reward of a hundred martyrs." Thus the morality of Islám in the nineteenth century is the morality of Arabia in the seventh. Muhammad fulfilled the moral requirements of a perfect Arab: he is the ideal of the standard of ethics as he regulated it in his own day; and as this national standard of ethics is supposed to be divine and authoritative, it has fixed for ever the standard for all Muslim lands; but it is too limited. Muhammad fails as the ideal embodiment of a "Son of Man," one common to all humanity. As might be expected, the setting up of his own acts and words as an infallible and unvarying rule of faith accounts more than anything else for the immobility

¹ "O believers! take not the Jews or Christians as friends. They are but one another's friends. If any of you taketh them for his friends he is surely one of them. God will not guide the evil-doers." (S. v. 56.)

² "Obey God and the Apostle." "When God and His Apostle have decreed a matter . . . whosoever disobeyeth God and His Apostle erreth with a palpable error." "Verily they who affront God and His Apostle, the curse of God is on them in this world and in the world to come." (S. xxxiii. 33, 36, 57.)

of the Muhammadan world, for it must be always remembered that in Islam Church and State are one. The Arab proverb, "Al mulk wa dín tawáminí" (country and religion are twins), is the popular form of expressing the unity of Church and State. To the mind of the Musalmán the rule of the one is the rule of the other—a truth sometimes forgotten by politicians who look hopefully on the reform of Turkey or the regeneration of the House of Osman. The Sunnat, as much as the Quran, covers all law, whether political, social, moral, or religious. A modern writer who has an intimate acquaintance with Islám says: "If Islám is to be a power for good in the future, it is imperatively necessary to cut off the social system from the religion. The difficulty lies in the close connection between the religious and social ordinances in the Quran; the two are so intermingled that it is hard to see how they can be disentangled without destroying both." I believe this to be impossible, and the case becomes still more hopeless when we remember that the same remark would apply to the Sunnat. To forget this is to go astray, for Ibn Khaldún distinctly speaks of "the Law derived from the Quran and the Sunnat,"¹ of the "maxims of Musalman Law based on the text of the Quran and the teaching of the Traditions."² Al Junaid, a famous theological teacher of the third century A.H., says: "Our system of doctrine is firmly bound up with the dogmas of faith and the Qurán and the Sunnat."³

The Prophet had a great dread of all innovation. The technical term for anything new is "bid'at," and of it it is said, "Bid'at is the changer of Sunnat." In other words, if

¹ Prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldún, vol. ii. p. 477.

² In June 1827 A.D. Sultan Mahmud issued a manifesto protesting against interference in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire, "the affairs of which are conducted upon the principles of *sacred legislation*, and all the regulations of which are strictly connected with the principles of religion." These principles still remain in force, for the famous Fatvá given by the Council of the 'Ulamá in July 1879 anent Khairu'd-dín's proposed reforms, speaks of "the unalterable principles of the Sheri," or Law.

³ Ibn Khallikán, vol. i. p. 338.

men seek after things new—if fresh forms of thought arise, and the changing condition of society demands new modes of expression for the Faith, or new laws to regulate the community—if, in internals or externals, any new thing (*bid'at*) is introduced, it is to be shunned. The law, as revealed in the Quran and the Sunnat, is perfect. Everything not in accordance with the precepts therein contained is innovation, and all innovation is heresy. Meanwhile some “*bid'at*” is allowable, such as the teaching of etymology and syntax, the establishment of schools, guest-houses, &c., which things did not exist in the time of the Prophet; but it is distinctly and clearly laid down that compliance with the least Sunnat (*i.e.*, the obeying the least of the orders of the Prophet, however trivial) is far better than doing some new thing, however advantageous and desirable it may be.

There are many stories which illustrate the importance the Companions of the Prophet attached to the Sunnat. “The Khalif Omar looked towards the black stone at Mecca, and said, ‘By God, I know that thou art only a stone, and canst grant no benefit, canst do no harm. If I had not known that the Prophet kissed thee, I would not have done so, but on account of that I do it.’” ‘Abdu’lláh Ibn ‘Umr was seen riding his camel round and round a certain place. In answer to an inquiry as to his reason for so doing he said, “I know not, only I have seen the Prophet do so here.” Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, one of the four great Imáms, and the founder of the Hanbalí school of interpretation, is said to have been appointed on account of the care with which he observed the Sunnat. One day when sitting in an assembly he alone of all present observed some formal custom authorised by the practice of the Prophet. Gabriel at once appeared and informed him that now, and on account of his act, he was appointed an Imam.¹ In short, it is distinctly laid down that the

¹ “The respect which modern Muslims pay to their Prophet is almost idolatrous. The Imám Ibn Hanbal would not even eat water-melons because, although he knew the Prophet ate them, he could not learn

best of all works is the following of the practice of Muhammad. The essence of religion has been stated by a learned theologian to consist of three things: first, to follow the Prophet in morals and in acts; secondly, to eat only lawful food; thirdly, to be sincere in all actions.

The Sunnat is now known to Musalmans through the collections of Traditions gathered together by the men whose names they now bear. The whole are called Şiháhu's-Sittah, or "six correct books." Not one of these collectors flourished until the third century of the Hijrah, and so, as may be easily supposed, their work has not passed unchallenged. There is by no means an absolute consensus of opinion among the Sunnís as to the exact value of each Tradition, yet all admit that a "genuine Tradition" must be obeyed. Whether the Prophet spoke what in the Traditions is recorded as spoken by him under the influence of the highest kind of inspiration is, as will be shown in the next chapter, a disputed point; but it matters little. Whatever may have been the degree, it was according to Muslim belief a real inspiration, and thus his every act and word became a law as binding upon his followers as the example of Christ is upon Christians.

The Shi'ahs do not acknowledge the Sihahu's-Sittah, the six correct books of the Sunnís, but it by no means follows that they reject Tradition. They have five books of Traditions, the earliest of which was compiled by Abu Ja'far Muhammad A.H. 329, or a century later than the Sahih-i-Bukharí, the most trustworthy of the Sunní set. Thus all Musalman sects accept the first and second ground of the faith—the Quran and the Sunnat—as the inspired will of God; the Shi'ahs substituting, in the place of the Traditions on which the Sunnat is based, a collection of their own. What it is important to maintain is this,

whether he ate them with or without the rind, or whether he broke, bit, or cut them: and he forbade a woman, who questioned him as to the propriety of the act, to spin by the light of torches passing in the streets by night, because the Prophet had not mentioned that it was lawful to do so." (Lane's Modern Egyptians, vol. i. p. 354.)

that the Qurán alone is to no Musalmán an all-sufficient guide.

3. IJMA'.¹—The third foundation of the Faith is called Ijma', a word signifying to be collected or assembled. Technically it means the unanimous consent of the leading theologians, or what in Christian theology would be called the "unanimous consent of the Fathers." Practically it is a collection of the opinions of the Companions, the Tabi'in and the Taba-i-Tabi'in. "The Law," says Ibn Khaldun, "is grounded on the general accord of the Companions and their followers." Ibn Abú Dáúd says: "A schismatic once came to Al-Mamún, who said to him, 'Why didst thou oppose us?' He replied, 'A verse of the book of God.' 'Which?' 'The words of the Most High—whoso judgeth not according to what God has revealed, they are infidels.' The Khalíf then wished to know whether he had any certain knowledge that this had been revealed, and what his proof was. He answered thus—'The consensus of the people;' to which Al-Mamun rejoined, 'As thou art content with their agreement concerning the revelation, be content with their unanimity in the interpretation thereof.' The man then said, 'Thou hast spoken truly; peace be to thee, O Prince of the Faithful.'"² The commentator Baizavi quotes the following text: "Ye were the best nation produced to men; ye enjoined right and forbade wrong, and believed in God" (S. iii. 106), and says that it is used to prove that the agreements of believers is a source of Law, for this verse makes it certain that they enjoined everything right and forbade everything wrong. The election of Abu Bakr to the Khalifate is called Ijma'-i-Ummat, the unanimous con-

¹ "In the Qurán and the Traditions we have respectively the *undoubted* and the *probable* teaching of the Prophet, each equally binding upon his followers. But the Muslim has something more than this to guide him, and this last is what Western students of Islám are apt to under-estimate. Christians would call it "the general consent of the Fathers," and possibly reject it. Muhammadans call it Ijmá', and implicitly obey it." (Studies in a Mosque, by Stanley Lane-Poole, p. 319.)

² History of the Khalífs, by Jalálu'd-dín As-Syutí, p. 335.

sent of the whole sect. The Companions of the Prophet had special knowledge of the various circumstances under which special revelations had been made; they alone knew which verses of the Quran abrogated others, and which verses were thus abrogated. The knowledge of these matters and many other details they handed on to their successors, the Tabi'ín, who passed the information on to their followers, the Taba-i-Tabi'ín. Some of the Mu'tazilas seem to reject Ijma' altogether,¹ and some Muslims, the Wahhabís for example, accept only the Ijma' of the Companions, and by all sects that is placed in the first rank as regards authority; others accept that of the "Fugitives" who dwelt at Madína; and there are some amongst the orthodox who allow, as a matter of theory, that Ijma' may be collected at any time, but that practically it is not done because there are now no Mujtahidín. The highest rank a Muslim Theologian could reach was that of a Mujtahid, or one who could make an Ijtihad—a word which, derived from the same root as Jihad (a Crescentade), means in its technical sense a logical deduction. It is defined as the "attaining to a certain degree of authority in searching into the principles of jurisprudence." The origin of Ijtihad was as follows:—Muhammad wished to send a man named Mu'az to Yaman to receive some money collected for alms, which he was then to distribute to the poor. On appointing him he said, "O Mu'az, by what rule will you act?" He replied, "By the Law of the Quran." "But if you find no direction therein?" "Then I will act according to the Sunnat of the Prophet." "But what if that fails?" "Then I will make an Ijtihad and act on that." The Prophet raised his hands and said, "Praise be to God, who guides the messenger of His Prophet in what He pleases."² This is considered a proof of the authority of Ijtihad, for the Prophet clearly sanctioned it.

When the Prophet was alive, men could go to him with

¹ Sharastání's *Milal wa Niḥal*, p. 87.

² *Mudárijū'n-Nabuwat*, p. 1009.

their doubts and fears; an infallible authority was always present, ready to give an inspired direction. They knew by experience that for each new case as it arose, that for each new emergency, Gabriel would bring some message direct from heaven, or that Muhammad would be rightly guided in the orders he gave. The Khalífs who succeeded the Prophet had only to administer the Law according to the opinions which they knew Muhammad had held. They were busily engaged in carrying on the work of conquest; they neither attempted any new legislation, nor did they depart from the practice of him whom they revered. "In the first days of Islam the knowledge of the Law was purely traditional. In forming their judgments, they had no recourse either to speculation, to private opinion, or to arguments founded upon analogy."¹ The duty of the religious teachers was, according to Ibn Khaldun, "to communicate to others the orders which they had heard from the mouth of the Legislator."² "The Prophet charged the principal men amongst his Companions to teach the (Arab) people the precepts of the Law which he had brought to men. This mission was at first confided to ten of the chief Companions, afterwards to others of lower rank. When Islam was firmly established and its foundations strengthened, the more distant people received it by means of their adherents; but after a while that teaching suffered modification, and they had to deduce from the sacred writings maxims to apply to the numerous cases which constantly came before the tribunals."³ Thus, as the Empire grew, new conditions of life arose, giving rise to questions concerning which Muhammad had given no explicit direction. This necessitated the use of Ijtihad. During the Khalífates of Abú Bakr, Omar, Osman, and 'Alí—the Khulafa-i-Ráshidín, or the Khalífs who could guide men in the right way—the custom was for the Faithful to consult them as to the course of action to be pursued under some new develop-

¹ *Prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldún*, vol. ii. p. 469.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 60.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 61.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

Imám Abú Hanífa was born at Basra (A.H. 80), but he spent the greater part of his life at Kúfah, and died at Baghdad in the year 150 A.H. He had two disciples, famous in the legal world, Muhammad and Abu Yúsun. He was the founder and teacher of the body of legists known as "the jurists of Irak." His system differs considerably from that of the Imam Malik, who, living at Madína, confined himself chiefly to Tradition as the basis of his judgments. Madína was full of the memories of the sayings and acts of the Prophet; Kúfah, the home of Hanífa, on the contrary, was not founded till after the Prophet's death, and so possessed none of his memories. Islam there came into contact with other races of men, but from them it had nothing to learn. If these men became Muslims, well and good: if not, the one law for them as for the Faithful was the teaching of Muhammad. Various texts of the Quran are adduced to prove the correctness of this position. "For to thee have we sent down the book which cleareth up everything" (S. xvi. 91). "Nothing have we passed over in the book" (S. vi. 38). "Neither is there a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor a thing green or sere, but it is noted in a distinct writing" (S. vi. 59). These texts were held to prove that all law was provided for by anticipation in the Qurán. If a verse could not be found bearing on any given question, analogical deduction was resorted to. Thus: "He it is who created *for you* all that is on earth" (S. ii. 27). According to the Hanífite jurists, this is a deed of gift which annuls all other rights of property. The "you" refers to Muslims. The earth¹ may be classified under three heads: (1) land which never had an owner; (2) land which had an owner and has been abandoned; (3) the person and property of the Infidels. From the last division the same legists deduce the lawfulness of slavery, piracy, and constant war against the unbelievers. "Abú Hanífa was esteemed a great master in the art of Qíás. The following story on this

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, 4me Série, tome xii.

point is related by 'Alí Ibn 'Asun. I went to visit Abú Hanífa, and found with him a barber about to cut his hair. 'Cut away only the parts which are white,' said Abú Hanífa. To which the barber replied, 'Do not insist on that.' 'Why not?' 'Because thou wilt increase their whiteness.' 'Well,' said Abu Hanífa, 'cut away those that are black, that may *perhaps* increase their blackness.' 'Alí Ibn 'Asun continues the story thus: I told Shauk about this. He laughed and said, 'If ever Abu Hanífa gave up his system of Qias he did so with the barber. That is, he used the word *perhaps*, and did not draw an absolute conclusion.'"¹ Abú Hanífa admitted very few Traditions as authoritative in his system,² which claims to be a logical development from the Quran. "The merit of logical fearlessness cannot be denied to it. The wants and wishes of men, the previous history of a country—all those considerations, in fact, which are held in the West to be the governing principles of legislation, are set aside by the legists of Irak as being of no account whatever. Legislation is not a science inductive and experimental, but logical and deductive."³

Imam Ibn Malik was born at Madína (A.H. 93), and his system of jurisprudence is founded, as might be expected from his connection with the sacred city, on the "Customs of Madína." His business was to arrange and systematise the Traditions current in Medina, and to form out of them and the "Customs" a system of jurisprudence embracing the whole sphere of life. The treatise composed by him

¹ Ibn Khallikán, vol. iii. p. 559.

² "The Traditions which Abu Hanífa has reported are few in number, because before he admitted the exactness and the probity of the persons who had collected them, he rigorously exacted that all the conditions of authenticity should be perfectly fulfilled. That which has proved him to be one of the greatest and most conscientious collectors of Tradition is the great authority which his system rightly enjoys amongst the Musalmáns, and the confidence which they place in the author and in his opinions. After his death his disciples relaxed the rigour of their master's conditions, and published Traditions wholesale." (Ibn Khaldun, vol. ii. p. 478.)

³ Osborn's Islam under the Khalífs, p. 29.

was called the "Muwatta" or "The Beaten Path." The greater part of its contents are legal maxims and opinions delivered by the Companions. His system of jurisprudence, therefore, has been described as historical and traditional. In an elegy on his death by Abu Muhammad Ja'far it is said: "His Traditions were of the greatest authority; his gravity was impressive; and when he delivered them, all his auditors were plunged in admiration."¹ The Traditions were his great delight. "I delight," said he, "in testifying my profound respect for the sayings of the Prophet of God, and I never repeat one unless I feel myself in a state of perfect purity"² (*i.e.*, after performing a legal ablution). As death approached, his one fear was lest he should have exercised his private judgment in delivering any legal opinion. In his last illness a friend went to visit him, and inquiring why he wept, received the following answer: "Why should I not weep, and who has more right to weep than I? By Allah! I wish I had been flogged and re-flogged for every question of law on which I pronounced an opinion founded on my own private judgment."³

Imam As-Shafi'i, a member of the Quraish tribe, was born A.H. 150. He passed his youth at Mecca, but finally settled in Cairo, where he died (A.H. 204). Ibn Khallikan relates of him that he was unrivalled for his knowledge of the Quran, the Sunnat, and the sayings of the Companions. "Never," said Imam Ibn Hanbal, "have I passed a night without praying for God's mercy and blessing upon As-Shafi'i." "Whosoever pretends," said Abu Thaur, "that he saw the like of As-Shafi'i for learning is a liar." Having carefully studied the systems of the two preceding Imáms, he then proceeded on an eclectic system to form his own. It was a reaction against the system of Abú Hanífa. As-Sháfi'i follows rather the traditional plan of Ibn Malik. The Hanífite will be satisfied if, in the absence of a clear and a direct statement, he finds one

¹ Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary, vol. ii. p. 594.

² *Ibid.*, p. 546.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 584.

passage in the Qurán or one Tradition from which the required judgment may be deduced. The Shafi'ite in the same circumstances, if Tradition is the source of his deduction, will require a considerable number of Traditions from which to make it.

Imám Ibn Hanbal was the last of the four Orthodox Imáms. He was born at Baghdad (A.H. 164). His system is a distinct return to Traditionalism. He lived at Baghdad during the reign of the Khalíf Mamun, when orthodox Islam seemed in danger of being lost amid the rationalistic speculations (that is, from an orthodox Muslim standpoint) and licentious practices of the Court. The jurists most in favour at Court were followers of Abu Hanífa. They carried the principle of analogical deduction to dangerous lengths in order to satisfy the latitudinarianism of the Khalíf. Human speculation seemed to be weakening all the essentials of the Faith. Ibn Hanbal met the difficulty by discarding altogether the principle of analogical deduction. At the same time he saw that the Málíki system, founded as it was on the "Customs of Madína," was ill suited to meet the wants of a great and growing Empire. It needed to be supplemented. What better, what surer ground could he go upon than the Traditions? These at least were inspired, and thus formed a safer foundation on which to build a system of jurisprudence than the analogical deductions of Abú Hanífa did. The system of Ibn Hanbal has almost ceased to exist. There is now no Muftí of this sect at Mecca, though the other three are represented there. Still his influence is felt to this day in the importance he attached to Tradition.

The distinction between the four Imams has been put in this way. Abú Hanífa exercised his own judgment, though this has not had much permanent influence on his system.¹

¹ "The advantages possessed by the Hanífis through their partial recognition of natural reason counted for less and less as the centuries wore on. Not only were their teachers, from Abu Yusuf downwards, ambitious of displaying their acquaintance with the Traditions, and of using them in support of their views whenever they could, thereby debarring themselves

Málík and Hanbal preferred authority and precedent. As-Shafi'í entirely repudiated reason. They differ, too, as regards the value of certain Traditions, but to each of them an authentic Tradition is an incontestable authority. Their opinion on points of doctrine and practice forms the third basis of the Faith.

The Ijmá' of the four Imáms is a binding law upon all Sunnís. It might be supposed that, as the growing needs of the Empire led to the formation of these schools of interpretation, so now the requirements of modern social and political life might be met by fresh Imams making new analogical deductions. This is not the case. The orthodox belief is, that since the time of the four Imams there has been no Mujtahid who could do as they did. If circumstances should arise which absolutely require some decision to be arrived at, it must be given in full accordance with the "mazhab," or school of interpretation, to which the person framing the decision belongs. This effectually prevents all change, and by excluding innovation, whether good or bad, keeps Islam stationary. Legislation is now purely deductive. Nothing must be done contrary to the principles contained in the jurisprudence of the four Imams. "Thus, in any Muḥammadan State legislative reforms are simply impossible. There exists no initiative. The Sultan or Khalíf can claim the allegiance of his people only so long as he remains the exact executor of the prescriptions of the Law."

The question then as regards the politics of the "Eastern Question" is not whether Muhammad was a deceiver or self-deceived, an apostle or an impostor; whether the Quran is on the whole good or bad; whether Arabia was the better or the worse for the change Muhammad wrought? but what Islam as a religious and political system has become and is, how it now works, what Orthodox Muslims believe and how

from repudiating such as told against them, but the authority of the earlier teachers was invoked to fetter the liberty of their successors." (Anglo-Muḥammadán Law, by Sir R. K. Wilson, p. 40.)

they act in that belief? The essence of that belief is, that the system as taught by Prophet, Khalífs, and Imams is absolutely perfect. The following statement by the author of the *Akhlak-i-Jalálí*, a book held in very great esteem, is most important. He says: "Authority becomes sacred because sanctioned by Heaven. Despotism, being the first form of consolidated political authority, is thus rendered unchangeable and identical in fact with government at large." "Supreme government has four stages: (1) where the absolute prince (Muhammad) is among them, concentrating in his own person the four cardinal virtues, and this we call the reign of wisdom; (2) where the prince appears no longer, neither do these virtues centre in any single person, but are found in four (Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman and 'Alí), who govern in concert with each other, as if they were one, and this we call the reign of the pious; (3) where none of these is to be found any longer, but a chief (Khalíf) arises with a knowledge of the rules propounded by the previous ones, and with judgment enough to apply and explain them, and this we call the reign of the Sunnat; (4) where these latter qualities, again, are not to be met with in a single person, but only in a variety who govern in concert; and this we call the reign of the Sunnat-followers."¹ "A bad king is like a bad season. The next may bring improvement, or, if his rule is wholly intolerable, he can be deposed. Under a bad constitution no such change is possible. It can be ended only by a revolution." But in Islám innovation is worse than a mistake: it is a crime, a sin. This completeness, this finality of his system of religion and polity, is the very pride and glory of a true Muslim. To look for an increase of light in the knowledge of his relation to God and the unseen world in the laws which regulate Islam on earth is to admit that Muhammad's revelation was incomplete, and that admission no Muslim will make. In fact, so hopeless has the attempt to reform Islam from within been felt, that the most recent reformers,

¹ *Akhlak-i-Jalálí*, pp. 374, 378.

the Bábís of Persia, gave up the idea and recognised the fact that freedom could be gained only by substituting for Muhammad's revelation a still later one, which claims not only to be suited to present needs, but to be of equal, if not even superior, authority.

It has been stated on high authority that all that is required for the reform of Turkey is that the Qanuns, or orders of the Sultan, should take the place of the Sharí'at or law of Islam. Precisely so; if this could be done Turkey might be reformed; but Islam would cease to be the religion of the State. That the law as formulated by the Imam Abu Hanífa ill suits the conditions of modern life is more than probable; but it is the very function of the Khalíf of Islam, which the Sultan claims to be, to maintain it. He is no Mujtahid, for such there are not now amongst the Sunnís, to which sect the Turks belong. If through stress of circumstances some new law must be made, orthodoxy demands that it should be strictly in accordance with the opinions of the Imams. Ibn Khaldun lays great stress on the fact that the legists were not to use their own judgment. He says: "As the opinion of each Imam formed, for those who followed it, the subject of a special science, *and as it did not permit them to decide new questions by reason, or by the conscientious employment of their own judgment (ijtihád)* they were obliged, in every doubtful case, to search for points of similarity or of difference which would permit them to connect it with a question already settled, or from which they could entirely distinguish it. In so doing, they were obliged to commence by resting on the principles which the founder of the system had established; and, in order to accomplish this, it was necessary to have acquired in a substantial manner the faculty of using these points of assimilation and distinction well, by following, as much as possible, the opinion of their Imam." ¹

The Shí'ahs, in opposition to the Sunnís, hold that there

¹ Ibn Khaldún, vol. iii. p. 15.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

as a rule of faith not only the Qurán, but the Sunnat and some Ijmá'.

In order to make Ijma' binding, it is necessary that the Mujtahidín should have been unanimous in their opinion or in their practice.

The whole subject of Ijtihad is one of the most important in connection with the possibility of reforms in a Muslim state. A modern Muḥammadan writer,¹ seeking to show that Islám does possess a capacity for progress, and that so far from being a hard and fast system, it is able to adapt itself to new circumstances, because the Prophet ushered in "an age of active principles," uses the story I have already related when describing the origin of Ijtihad to prove the accuracy of his statement. He makes Mu'az to say: "I will look first to the Quran, then to precedents of the Prophet, and lastly rely upon my *own judgment*." It is true that Ijtihad literally means "great effort;" it is true that the Companions and Mujtahidín of the first class had the power of exercising their judgment in doubtful cases, and of deciding them according to their sense of the fitness of things, provided always that their decision contravened no law of the Quran or the Sunnat; but this in no way proves that Islam has any capacity for progress, or that "an age of active principles" was ushered in by Muhammad, or that his "words breathe energy and force, and infuse new life into the dormant heart of humanity." For though the term Ijtihad might, in reference to the men I have mentioned, be somewhat freely translated as "one's own judgment," it is now a purely technical term, and its use, and only use, is to express the "referring of a difficult case to some analogy drawn from the Quran and the Sunnat." But even were the meaning not thus restricted, even though it meant now, as it sometimes meant at first, "one's own judgment," still Syed Amír 'Alí's position would remain to be proved; for, since the days of the four Imams, the orthodox believe that there has been no Mujtahid of the

¹ Life of Muḥammad, by Syed Amír 'Alí, p. 289.

first class, and to none but men of this rank has such power ever been accorded; and Ibn Khaldún has most clearly shown that the followers of the Imams are not to decide “new questions by reason, or by the conscientious employment of their own judgment.” Thus granting, for the sake of argument merely, that Syed Amír ‘Alí’s translation is grammatically and technically correct, all that results from it is that the “age of active principles” lasted only for two centuries. I do not admit that there ever was such an age in Islam, and certainly neither its theological development nor its political growth negative the opposite assertion, viz., that Muhammad gave precepts rather than principles. The Turks are included in “the dormant heart of humanity,” but it is difficult to see what “energy and force” is breathed, what “new life is infused” into them by the “wonderful words” of the Prophet, or what lasting good the “age of active principles” has produced. Amír ‘Alí also admits that the explanation such as I have given of the orthodox position is historically correct when he speaks of “the idea which has taken possession of the legists that the exercise of private judgment stopped in the third century of the Hijrah.”¹

4. QIAS is the fourth foundation of Islam.² The word literally means reasoning, comparing. It is in common use in Hindustani and Persian in the sense of guessing, considering, &c. Technically, it means the analogical reasoning of the learned with regard to the teaching of the Quran, the Sunnat, and the Ijma‘. For example, the Qurán says: “Honour thy father and thy mother, and be not a cause of displeasure to them.” It is evident from this that disobedience to parents is prohibited, and prohibition implies punishment if the order is disobeyed. Again, if the Quran and the Sunnat hold children responsible, according to their means, for the debts of their father, does it not follow that

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, September 1895, p. 375.

² The Nizámiah sect, a branch of the Mu‘tazilas, reject both Ijma‘ and Qías.

the elder ones ought to fulfil for their parents all those obligations which for some reason or other the parents may not be able to perform, such as the pilgrimage to Mecca, &c.? It is said in the Quran that "the maintenance of a woman who suckles an infant rests upon him to whom the child is born." From this the opinion is deduced that the maintenance of the infant also falls upon the father. A Tradition said to come from the Companions runs thus: "One day a woman came to the Prophet and said, 'My father died without making the Pilgrimage.' The Prophet said, 'If thy father had left a debt what wouldest thou do?' 'I would pay the debt.' 'Good, then pay this debt also.'" The Quran forbids the use of *khamar*, an intoxicating substance, and so it is argued that wine and opium are unlawful, though not forbidden by name. The Wahhabís would extend the prohibition to the use of tobacco.

From cases such as these, many juriconsults hold that the Mujtahidín of the earliest age established this fourth foundation of the faith which they call *Qías*. It is also called *I'tibaru'l-Amsal*, or "imitation of an example." The idea is taken from the verse: "Profit by this example, ye who are men of insight" (S. lix. 2). There are strict rules laid down which regulate *Qías*, of which the most important is, that in all cases it must be based on the *Qurán*, the *Sunnat*, and the *Ijmá'*. In fact, the fundamental idea of Islam is that a perfect law has been given, even unto details, of social and political life. The teaching of Muḥammad contains the solution of every difficulty that can arise. Every law not provided by the Prophet must be deduced analogically. This produces uniformity after a fashion, but only because intellectual activity in higher pursuits ceases and moral stagnation follows. Thus all who come within the range of this system are bound down to political servitude. Whatever in feeling or conviction goes beyond the limits of an outworn set of laws is swept away. There is a wonderful family likeness in the decay of all Musalman States, which seems to point to a common cause.

All first principles are contained in the Qurán and the Sunnat; all that does not coincide with them must be wrong. They are above all criticism.

Qías, then, affords no hope of enlightened progress, removes no fetter of the past, for in it there must be no divergence in principle from a legislation imperfect in its relation to modern life and stationary in its essence. "The laws of Islam, taken in the lump, the only way which their alleged sacred origin allowed them to be taken, and chiefly because they could only be so taken, were bad anywhere and for any community, and became worse and worse the farther they were transplanted from their original surroundings; worse under the Khalífate of Baghdad than at Madína under the "rightly directed" Khalífs, and worse for the Hindus of the seventeenth century than for Baghdad in the ninth."¹ In the *Nibáyatu'l-Murád* it is written: "We are shut up to following the four Imáms." In the *Tafsír-i-Ahmadí* we read: "To follow any other than the four Imams is unlawful." An objector may say that such respect is like the reverence the heathen pay to their ancestors. To this an answer is given in the preface to the *Tarjuma-i-Sharh-i-Waqayah*. The writer there says that it is nothing of the kind. "The Mujtahidín are not the source of the orders of the Law, but they are the medium by which we obtain the Law. Thus Imam Abú Hanífa said, 'We select first from the Quran, then from the Traditions, then from the decrees of the Companions; we act on what the Companions agreed upon; where they doubt, we doubt.' The Commentator Jelalu'd-dín Mahlí says, 'The common people and others who have not reached the rank of a Mujtahid must follow one of the four Imáms.' Then when he enters one Mazhab (sect) he must not change. Again, it may be objected that God gave no order about the appointment of four Imams. Now, it is recorded in a Tradition that the Prophet said, 'Follow the way of the great company; whosoever departs from it will enter hell.' The Followers of the Imams are

¹ Anglo-Muhammadan Law, by Sir R. W. Wilson, p. 87.

a great company." It is, moreover, the unanimous opinion, the "Ijma'-i-Ummat," that the Imams rightly occupy the position accorded to them. It is a great blessing, as we read in the Tafsír-i-Ahmadí: "It is of the grace of God that we are shut up to these four Imams. God approves of this, and into this matter proofs and explanations do not enter." Should any one further object that, in the days of the Prophet, there were no Mujtahidín, that each man acted on a "saying" as he heard it, that he did not confine his belief or conduct to the deductions made by some "appointed Companion," he may be answered thus: "For a long time after the death of the Prophet many Companions were alive, and consequently the Traditions then current were trustworthy; but now it is not so, hence the need for the Imams and their systems." ¹

These four foundations—the QURAN, the SUNNAT, IJMA', and QÍAS—form in orthodox Muslim opinion and belief a perfect basis of a perfect religion and polity. They secure the permanence of the system, but they repress an intelligent growth. The bearing of all this on modern politics is very plain. Take again the case of Turkey. The constitution of the Government is theocratic. The germs of freedom are wanting there as they have never been wanting in any other country in Europe. The ruling power desires no change; originality of thought, independence of judgment is repressed. "Some Musalman conquerors produced types of civilisation more or less permanent in India and in Spain. Turkish conquerors, in the full tide of might and energy, have overspread and extirpated; nowhere have they planted." Nothing good has the Turk ever done for the world. His rule has been one continued display of brute force unrelieved by any of the reflected glory which shone for a while in

¹ A modern Muslim writer, who strives to show that Islám is progressive, is yet obliged to admit that "the Sunnis base their doctrines on the entirety of the Traditions. They regard the concordant decisions of the successive Khalífs and of the General Assembly (Ijmá'-i-Ummat) as supplementing the Quranic rules and regulations, and as almost equal in authority to them." (Syed Amír 'Ali in the "Personal Law of the Muḥammadans," p. 9.)

Cordova and in Baghdád. No nation can possibly progress the foundations of whose legal and theocratic system are what has been described in this chapter.

“A religion that has the misfortune to be identified with the State is on this very account brought into trouble with the latter, whilst the State is on all sides restricted by the religion. The State has on it a divine stamp, and as the whole of its constitution, as well as its individual laws, possesses a character absolutely sacred, it is evident that mere human institutions, calculated only for a certain degree of culture, will be considered as being of divine authority, and hence unchangeable. Thus very soon the State will become an unmovable, petrified, death-like mass, and, if its end be not hastened from without in a beneficent manner, will entomb itself in its own corruption. The State, then, is in a most dangerous position when it is surrounded by other nations who, having been civilised by a higher religion, possess a freer and more movable form, and are therefore capable, without any particular restriction, of approaching nearer and nearer to perfection. But should those who administer the government perceive the necessity of radical reforms and commence new plans, then the State annihilates its religious basis: violent antagonistic principles are developed, and internal destructive dissension becomes inevitable.”¹

When brought into diplomatic and commercial intercourse with States possessing the energy and vigour of a national life and liberal constitution, Muslim kingdoms must, in the long-run, fail and pass away. It has been well said that “Spain is the only instance of a country once thoroughly infused with Roman civilisation which has been actually severed from the Empire; and even then the severance, though of long duration, was but partial and temporary. After a struggle of nearly eight centuries, the higher form of social organisation triumphed over the lower, and the usurping power of Islam was expelled.” So it ought to be, and so indeed it must ever

¹ The Relation of Islám to the Gospel, by Dr. J. A. Moehler.

be, for despotism must give way to freedom; the life latent in the subject Christian communities must sooner or later cast off the yoke of a barbarian rule, which even at its best is petrified and so is incapable of progress. However low a Christian community may have fallen, there is always the possibility of its rising again. A lofty ideal is placed before it. All its most cherished beliefs point forward and upward. In Islam there is no regenerative power. Its golden age was in the past. When the work of conquest is done, when a Muhammadan nation has to live by industry, intelligence, and thrift, it always miserably fails.

In this chapter, which must now draw to a close, I have tried to prove from authentic and authoritative sources that the Quran alone is to no Muslim the sole guide of life. The fetters of a dogmatic system fasten alike around the individual and the community. Islam is sterile, it gives no new birth to the spirit of a man, leads him not in search of new forms of truth, and so it can give no real life, no lasting vitality to a nation.¹

¹ "The Muslim everywhere, after a brilliant passage of prosperity, seems to stagnate and wither, because there is nothing in his system or his belief which lifts him above the level of a servant, and on that level man's life in the long-run must not only stagnate but decay. The Christian, on the other hand, seems everywhere in the last extremity to bid disorganisation and decay defiance, and to find, Antæus-like, in the earth which he touches, the spring of a new and fruitful progress. For there is that in his belief, his traditions, and in the silent influences which pervade the very atmosphere around him, which is ever moving him, often in ways that he knows not, to rise to the dignity and to clothe himself with the power which the Gospel proposes as the prize of his Christian calling. The submissive servant of Allah is the highest type of Moslem perfection; the Christian ideal is the Christ-like son." (*British Quarterly*, No. cxxx.)

"Marvellously adapted alike to the climate, character, and occupation of those countries upon which it has laid its adamant grip, Islam holds its votary in complete thrall from the cradle to the grave. To him it is not only religion, it is government, philosophy, and science as well. The Muhammadan conception is not so much that of a State Church as, if the expression may be permitted, of a Church State. The undergirders with which society itself is warped round are not of civil but of ecclesiastical fabrication; and, warped in this superb if paralysing creed, the Musalman lives in contented surrender of all volition." ("Persia," by the Hon. G. Curzon, vol. i. p. 509.)

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

4. As the Qurán and the Sunnat are the principal sources from whence the precepts of the Shari‘at have been drawn, so the rules recognised as the principal elements of actual jurisprudence are the subject of ‘Ilm-i-Fiqh, or the science of Law.

Fiqh in its root signifies conception, comprehension. Thus Muhammad prayed for Ibn Mas‘úd : “ May God make him comprehend (faqqihahu), and make him know the interpretation of the Quran.” Muhammad, in his quality of judge and chief of the Believers, decided, without appeal or contradiction, all the affairs of the people. His sayings served as a guide to the Companions. After the death of the Prophet the first Khalífs acted on the authority of the Traditions. Meanwhile the Quran and the Sunnat, the principal elements of religion and legislation, became little by little the subject of controversy. It was then that men applied themselves vigorously to the task of learning by heart the Quran and the Traditions, and then that jurisprudence became a separate science. No science had as yet been systematically taught, and the early Musalmans did not possess books which would serve for such teaching. A change soon, however, took place. In the year in which the great jurisconsult of Syria died (A.H. 80), Ni‘man bin Sabit, surnamed Abu Hanífa, was born. He is the most celebrated of the founders of the schools of jurisprudence, a science which ranks first in all Muslim seats of learning. Until that time and for thirty years later the Mufassirs,¹ the Muhaddis,² and the Fuqíha,³ had all their knowledge by heart, and those who possessed good memories were highly esteemed. Many of them knew by heart the whole Quran, with the comments made on it by the Prophet and by the Companions ; they also knew the Traditions and their explanations, and all the commands (ahkam) which proceed from the Quran and the Sunnat. Such men enjoyed the right of Mujtahidín. They transmitted their knowledge to their scholars orally. It was not till towards the middle of the second century A.H. that treatises on the different branches of the Law were written, after which six schools (Mazhabs) of jurisprudence were formed. The founders, all Imams of the first class, were Abu Hanífa, the Imam-i-A‘zam or great Imam (A.H. 150),⁴ Safian

¹ Commentators on the Qurán.

² The Traditionists.

³ Plural of Faqíh, a theologian.

⁴ I have given the dates of their death.

As-Sáurí (A.H. 161), Málík (A.H. 179), As-Sháfi'í (A.H. 204), Hanbal (A.H. 241), and Imam Daúd Az-Zaharí (A.H. 270). The two sects founded by Saurí and Zaharí became extinct in the eighth century of the Hijrah. The other four still remain. These men venerated one another. The younger ones speak with great respect of the elder. Thus Shafi'í said: "No one in the world was so well versed in jurisprudence as Abú Hanífa was, and he who has read neither his works nor those of his disciples knows nothing of jurisprudence." Hanbal when sick wore a shirt which had belonged to Sháfi'í, in order that he might be cured of his malady; but all this did not prevent them starting schools of their own, for the right of Ijtihad is granted to those who are real Mujtahidín. There are three degrees of Ijtihad:—

1. Al-Ijtihad fi'l Shari: absolute independence in legislation.
- 2 Al-Ijtihad fi'l Mazhab: authority in the judicial systems founded by the Mujtahidín of the first class.
3. Al-Ijtihad fi'l Masa'il: authority in cases which have not been decided by the authors of the four systems of jurisprudence.

The first is called a complete and absolute authority; the second, relative; the third, special.

THE FIRST DEGREE OF IJTIHÁD.

Absolute independence in legislation is the gift of God. He to whom it is given when seeking to discover the meaning of the Divine Law is not bound to follow any other teacher. He can use his own judgment. This gift was bestowed on the juriconsults of the first, and to some in the second and third centuries. The Companions, however, who were closely connected with the Prophet, having transmitted immediately to their posterity the treasures of legislation, are looked upon as Mujtahidín of much higher authority than those of the second and third centuries. Thus Abu Hanífa says: "That which comes to us from the Companions is on our head and eyes (*i.e.*, to be received with respect): as to that which comes from the Tabi'ín, they are men and we are men."

Since the time of the Tábi'ín this degree of Ijtihád has only been conferred on the six great Imams. Theoretically any Muslim can attain to this degree, but it is one of the principles of juris-

prudence that the confirmation of this rank is dependent on many conditions, and so no one now gains the honour. These conditions are :—

1. The knowledge of the Qurán and all that is related to it; that is to say, a complete knowledge of Arabic literature, a profound acquaintance with the orders of the Qurán and all their subdivisions, their relationship to each other and their connection with the orders of the Sunnat. The candidate should know when and why each verse of the Quran was written, he should have a perfect acquaintance with the literal meaning of the words, the speciality or generality of each clause, the abrogating and abrogated sentences. He should be able to make clear the meaning of the “obscure” passages (*mutashabih*), to discriminate between the literal and the allegorical, the universal and the particular.

2. He must know the Quran by heart with all the Traditions and explanations.

3. He must have a perfect knowledge of the Traditions, or at least of three thousand of them.

He must know their source, history, object, and their connection with the laws of the Quran. He should know by heart the most important traditions.

4. A pious and austere life.

5. A profound knowledge of all the sciences of the Law.

Should any one *now* aspire to such a degree another condition would be added, viz. :—

6. A complete knowledge of the four schools of jurisprudence.

The obstacles, then, are almost insurmountable. On the one hand, there is the severity of the ‘Ulama, which requires from the candidate things almost impossible; on the other hand, there is the attachment of the ‘Ulama to their own Imams, for should such a man arise, no one is bound now to listen to him. Imam Hanbal said: “Draw your knowledge from whence the Imams drew theirs, and do not content yourself with following others (*i.e.*, modern Mujtahidín), for that is certainly blindness of sight.” Thus the schools of the four Imáms remain intact after a thousand years have passed, and so the ‘Ulamá recognise since the time of these Imams no Mujtahid of the first degree. Ibn Hanbal was the last.

The rights of the man who attained to this degree were very

important. He was not bound to be a disciple of another ; he was a mediator between the Law and his followers, for whom he established a system of legislation, without any one having the right to make any objection. He had the right to explain the Quran, the Sunnat, and the Ijmá' according as he understood them. He used the Prophet's words, whilst his disciples only used his. Should a disciple find some discrepancy between a decision of his own Imam and the Quran or Traditions, he must abide by the decision of the Imam. The Law does not permit him to interpret after his own fashion. When once the disciple has entered the sect of one Imam, he cannot leave it and join another. He loses the right of private judgment, for only a Mujtahid of the first class can dispute the decision of one of the Imams. Theoretically such Mujtahidín may still arise ; but, as we have already shown, practically they do not.

THE SECOND DEGREE OF IJTIHÁD.

This degree has been granted to the immediate disciples of the great Imams who have elaborated the systems of their masters. They enjoyed the special consideration of the contemporary 'Ulamá and of their respective Imams, who in some cases have allowed them to retain their own opinion. The most famous of these men are the two disciples of Abú Hanífa, Abú Yúsuf, and Muhammad bin al Hasan. In a secondary matter their opinion carries great weight. It is laid down as a rule that a Muftí may follow the unanimous opinion of these two even when it goes against that of Abu Hanífa.

THE THIRD DEGREE OF IJTIHÁD.

This is the degree of special independence. The candidates for it should have a perfect knowledge of all the branches of jurisprudence according to the four schools, and of the Arabic language and literature. They can solve cases which come before them, giving reasons for their judgment, or decide on cases which have not been settled by previous Mujtahidín ; but in either case their decisions must always be in absolute accordance with the opinions of the Mujtahidín of the first and second classes, and with the principles which guided them. Many of these men attained

great celebrity during their lifetime, but to most of them this rank is not accorded till after death. Imam Qazí Khan, who died in the year 592 A.H., closes the list of the most famous of the men whose works serve as a guide to the Muftis and jurisconsults of a later age. Though some others have since claimed this position, it is not generally accorded to them by orthodox Sunnis.

There are three other inferior classes of jurists, called Muqallidín, or followers of the Mujtahidín; but all that the highest in rank amongst them can do is to explain obscure passages in the writings of the older jurisconsults. By some of the 'Ulama they are considered to be equal to the Mujtahidín of the third class. If there are several conflicting legal opinions on any point, they can select one opinion on which to base their decision. This a mere Qazí cannot do. In such a case he would have to refer to these men or to their writings for guidance. They seem to have written commentaries on the legal systems without originating anything new. The author of the *Hidayah*, who lived at the end of the sixth century, was a Muqallid.

Such is Mírza Kazim Beg's account. The whole article, of which I have only given the main points, is worthy of the closest study. It shows how "the system, as a whole, rejects experience as a guide to deeper insight or wider knowledge; tramples upon the teaching of the past; pays no heed to differences of climate, character, or history; but regards itself as a body of absolute truth, one jot or tittle of which cannot be rejected without incurring the everlasting wrath of God."¹

¹ Osborn's *Islám under the Khalífs*, p. 72.

CHAPTER II

EXEGESIS OF THE QURÁN AND THE TRADITIONS

THE following account of this branch of Muslim theology, technically called 'Ilm-i-Usul, may be introduced by a few remarks on the nature of inspiration according to Islam. though that is not, strictly speaking, a portion of this study.

There are two terms used to express different degrees of inspiration, Wahí and Ilham. The former is sometimes divided into Wahí Zahir (external inspiration) and Wahí Batin (internal inspiration), which is almost the same as Ilham. Wahí is the term applied to the inspiration of the Quran, and implies that the very words are the words of God. The whole book was prepared in heaven. Muhammad, instructed by Gabriel, is simply the medium through which the revelation of Wahí Zahir reaches man. The Wahí Quran, or the Wahí Zahir, the highest form of inspiration, always came to the ear of the Prophet through the instrumentality of Gabriel. In Muhammadan theology this is the special work of Gabriel. Thus in the Traditions it is related that he appeared to Adam twelve times, to Enoch four, to Noah fifty, to Abraham forty-two, to Moses four hundred, to Jesus ten times, to Muhammad twenty-four thousand times.

There is a lower form of Wahí Záhir, which is called Isháratu'l-Malak—the sign of the angel. This expresses what Muhammad meant when he said, “The Holy Ghost has entered into my heart.” He then received the inspiration through Gabriel, but not, as in the Wahí Quran, by word of mouth.

Ilhám means the inspiration given to a saint or to a prophet when he, though rightly guided, delivers the subject-matter out of his own mind, and is not a mere machine to reproduce the messages of Gabriel.

Imam Ghazzalí in "Ihya Ulumu'd-dín"¹ defines Ilham and Wahí thus:—(1.) The recipient receives information from an unknown source and in a way unknown. This is called the "breathing into the heart" (*nafakha fi qalb*). This is the inspiration of saints and Sufís. It is Ilham. (2.) The recipient knows the medium by which he receives information, *i.e.*, the angel appears to him. This is Wahí and is the inspiration of prophets. (3.) Between Ilham and Wahí there is only this difference, *viz.*, that in Wahí the angel who is the medium of communication appears, and in Ilham does not.

It is said that, except when delivering the Qurán, Muhammad spoke by Ilham, and not by Wahí. Some, however, believe that the words of the Prophet, as recorded in the Traditions, were Wahí inspiration, and thus they come to be as authoritative as the Qurán. Sharastaní speaks of "the signs (sayings) of the Prophet which have the marks of Wahí."² This opinion is said by some Muslim theologians to be supported by the text, "By the Star when it setteth; your companion Muhammad *erreth not*, nor is he *led astray*, neither doth he *speak of his own will*. It is none other than a revelation which hath been revealed to him" (S. liii. 1). In any case, the inspiration of Muhammad is something quite different from the Christian idea of inspiration, which is to Musalmans a very imperfect mode of transmitting a revelation of God's will.

That there should be a human as well as a divine side to inspiration is an idea not only foreign, but absolutely repugnant to Muhammadáns. The Quran is not a book of principles: it is a book of directions. The Quran describes the revelation given to Moses thus: "We wrote for him

¹ Vol. iii. p. 30.

² Dabistán, p. 214.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

Muhammad's wives, that a brightness like the brightness of the morning came upon the Prophet. According to some commentators, this brightness remained six months. In some mysterious way Gabriel, through this brightness or vision, made known the will of God.

2. Gabriel appeared in the form of Dahiah,¹ one of the Companions of the Prophet, renowned for his beauty and gracefulness. A learned dispute has arisen with regard to the abode of the soul of Gabriel when he assumed the bodily form of Dahiah. At times the angelic nature of Gabriel overcame Muhammad, who was then translated to the world of angels. This always happened when the revelation was one of bad news, such as denunciations or predictions of woe. At other times, when the message brought by Gabriel was one of consolation and comfort, the human nature of the Prophet overcame the angelic nature of the angel, who, in such case, having assumed a human form, proceeded to deliver the message.

3. The Prophet heard at times the noise of the tinkling of a bell. To him alone was known the meaning of the sound. He alone could distinguish it, and through it the words which Gabriel wished him to understand. The effect of this mode of Wahí was more marvellous than that of any of the other ways. When his ear caught the sound his whole frame became agitated. On the coldest day, the perspiration, like beads of silver, would roll down his face. The glorious brightness of his countenance gave place to a ghastly hue, whilst the way in which he bent down his head showed the intensity of the emotion through which he was passing. If riding, the camel on which he sat would fall to the ground. The Prophet one day, when reclining with his head in the lap of Zaid, heard the well-known sound: Zaid, too, knew that something unusual was happening, for so heavy became the head of Muhammad that it

¹ All the commentators bring this incident forward as an illustration of the verse: "And if we had appointed an angel, we should certainly have appointed one in the form of a man" (S. vi. 9).

was with the greatest difficulty he could support the weight. There is an *Asr*,¹ or saying of a Companion, to the following effect: "Zaid bin Sabit, a Companion, said, 'One day when God sent *Walī* on the Prophet, his thigh was on mine, but it became so heavy that I feared mine would be broken.'"²

4. At the time of the *Mirāj*, or night ascent into heaven, God spoke to the Prophet without the intervention of an angel. It is a disputed point whether the face of the Lord was veiled or not.

5. God sometimes appeared in a dream, and placing His hands on the Prophet's shoulders, made known His will.

6. Twice angels having each six hundred wings appeared and brought the message from God.

7. Gabriel, though not appearing in bodily form, so inspired the heart of the Prophet that the words he uttered under its influence were the words of God. This is technically called *Ilka*, and is by some supposed to be the degree of inspiration to which the Traditions belong.

Above all, the Prophet was not allowed to remain in any error; if, by any chance, he had made a wrong deduction from any previous revelation, another was always sent to rectify it. This idea has been worked up to a science of abrogation, according to which some verses of the *Quran* abrogate others. Muhammad found it necessary to shift his standpoint more than once, and thus it became necessary to annul earlier portions of his revelation.

Thus in various ways was the revelation made known to Muhammad. At first there seems to have been a season of doubt, the dread lest, after all, it might be a mockery. But as years rolled on confidence in himself and in his mission came. At times, too, there is a joyousness in his utterances as he swears by heaven and earth, by God and man; but more often the visions were weird and terrible. Tradition

¹ An *Asr* is of less authority than a *Hadīs* or Tradition, though it more nearly answers to the meaning of our word tradition.

² *Ṣaḥīḥu'l-Bukharī-Kitābu's-Ṣalat*, p. 105.

says: "He roared like a camel; the sound as of bells well-nigh rent his heart in pieces." The historian, Wackidi, says: "At the moment of inspiration anxiety pressed upon the Prophet, and his countenance was troubled." Large drops of perspiration gathered on his forehead. Some strange power moved him, his fear was uncontrollable. Muir quotes from the same historian a statement to the effect that Muhammad ascribed his grey hairs to the terror caused him by the revelation of the "terrific Súrahs" (Suúru'n-nazíra). These are said to be the Surah Hud (xi.) and its sisters, the Surahs lvi. and ci. Thus for twenty years or more the revelations came, a direction on things of heaven and of earth, to the Prophet as the spiritual guide of all men,¹ to the Warrior-Chief, as the founder of political unity among the Arab tribes.

A Muhammadan student, after passing through a course of instruction in grammar, rhetoric, logic, law, and dogmatics, at length reaches the stage when he is permitted to enter upon the study of "‘Ilm-i-usúl," or the exegesis of the Quran and the inspired sayings of the Prophet. This done, he can henceforth read the approved commentaries in order to learn what the Fathers of Islam have to say. This science in one way fits him to be a commentator, for the work of a Muslim divine now is, not to bring things "new and old" out of the sacred book, but to hand down to others the things old. There is no indwelling spirit in the Church of Islam which can reveal to the devout mind new views of truth, or lead the pious scholar on to deeper and more profound knowledge.

The greatest proficient in theology is the man who can repeat the Quran by heart, who knows also and can reproduce at will what the early commentators have said; who can remember, and quote in the most apposite manner, the Prophet's sayings preserved in the Traditions handed down by the Companions, their followers, and their followers' followers; who can point out a flaw in the Isnad (*i.e.*, chain

¹ "It (the Quran) is simply an instruction for all mankind" (S. xii. 104).

of narrators) of a Tradition quoted by an opponent, or maintain, by repeating the long list of names, the authority of the Isnad of the Tradition he quotes himself. A good memory, not critical acumen, is the great desideratum in a Muslim theologian. The chief qualification of a Háfiz, a man who can repeat the whole Quran by heart, is not that he shall understand its meaning, but that he shall be able to pronounce each word correctly. By men who are not Arabs by birth this is only to be attained after years of practice from childhood. The Sunnís say that no Shí'ah can ever become a Hafiz, from which fact they draw the conclusion that the Shí'ahs are heretics. In the early days of Islam, the great authorities on the question of the correct pronunciation of the Quran were the Khalífs Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman, and 'Alí, and ten of the Companions, who learned from the Prophet himself the exact way in which Gabriel had spoken. The Arabic of heaven was the Arabic of Islam.

The effort, however, to preserve one uniform method of repeating the Quran failed. Men of other lands could not acquire the pure intonation of Mecca, and so no less than seven different ways of reading the sacred book became current. Here was a great difficulty, but it proved surmountable. Abú Ibn Káb, one of the Companions, had become so famous as a reader that the Prophet himself said, "Read the Quran under Abu Ibn Kab." These men remembered that Abu Ibn Kab had stated that one day, when scandalised at man after man who entered the mosque repeating the Quran in different ways, he spoke to Muhammad about it. His Highness said, "O Abu Ibn Kab! intelligence was sent to me to read the Quran in one dialect, and I was attentive to the Court of God, and said, 'Make easy the reading of the Quran to my sects.' These instructions were sent to me a second time, saying, 'Read the Quran in two dialects.' Then I turned myself to the Court of God, saying, 'Make easy the reading of the Quran to my sects.' Then a voice was sent to me the third time, saying, 'Read the Quran in seven dialects.'"

This removed all difficulty, and the foresight displayed by the Prophet in thus obtaining a divine sanction for the various ways of reading was looked upon as a proof of his inspiration. Thus arose the "haft qira'at," or seven readings of the Quran, now recognised.

In the Quran compiled by the order of the Khalíf Osman there were no vowel-points, but when men of other countries embraced Islam they found great difficulty in mastering Arabic. Khalid bin Ahmad, a great grammarian, then invented the short vowels and other diacritical marks. The seven famous "Readers" (Qarís), whose names have been given to the various modes of reading, are Imam Nafi of Madína, Imam Ibn-i-Kasir of Mecca, Imam Abu 'Umr of Basrah, Imam Hamza of Kufah, Imam Ibn 'Amír of Syria, Imam 'Asim of Kufah, Imam Kisae of Kufah. These learned men affixed different vowel-points in many places in the Quran, and thus, in some cases, slight differences of meaning arose. In many passages, however, the sense is not at all affected. In India the "qira'at"—reading—of Hafs, a disciple of Imam 'Asim, is followed by both Sunnis and Shí'ahs. Jalalu'd-dín, in his famous commentary, follows the qira'at of Imám Abú 'Umr. Those who belong to the Mazhab, or sect of Imam As-Shafi'í, also prefer this qira'at. Imám 'Ásim had two disciples. Their names are Abu Bakr and Hafs. They differ slightly between themselves, but the qira'at of Hafs is the one in common use in India. The qira'at of Nafí is preferred in Arabia, and is highly valued by theological writers. Each of the seven Qarís or Readers had two disciples, called Ravís, or narrators, from whose testimony the qira'at approved by their master is known. They never give an opinion of their own on the text, but simply record that of their master.

There are three readings of lesser note allowable when reading the Quran privately, but not when reading any part in a liturgical service. During the month of Ramazan the Quran is repeated every night in the mosque, it being so arranged that one-thirtieth part shall be recited each

night. The Imám of the mosque, or the public reader (Qári), who commences according to one of the seven recognised readings (qira'at), must keep to the same all the month. As he has to recite without a book, this involves a great exercise of the memory. A good Ḥafiz will know the whole seven varieties. The various readings thus introduced, though unimportant in their nature,¹ amount to about five hundred in number. The following are a few illustrations:— In the second Surah, Abu 'Umr reads: “Nor shall ye be questioned concerning that which *they* have done;” but 'Asim reads: “That which *ye* have done.” Again, 'Asim reads: “*Enter ye* the gates of hell” (S. xxxix. 73); but Nafi reads: “*Ye will be made to enter* hell,”—that is, by a slight change, the passive is substituted for the active voice. These are fair samples of the rest. No doctrine, so far as I know, is touched, but the way in which Tradition records the Prophet's anticipation of the difficulty is instructive to the student of Islam. At times, too, fierce disputes have arisen between the followers of the seven famous Readers, whose names I have given above. In the year 323 A.H., Ibn Shanabud, a resident of Baghdad, ventured to introduce some different readings in his recital of the Quran. The people of Baghdad, not knowing these, were furious, and the Khalíf was compelled to cast the offender into prison. A council of divines was called together, before whom the unhappy Ibn Shanabud was produced. For a while he maintained the correctness of his “readings,” but after being whipped seven times he said, “I renounce my manner of reading, and in future I shall follow no other than that of the manuscript drawn up by the Khalíf Osman, and that which is generally received.”²

When the first copy of the Quran was written and presented to the Khalíf Osman, he said, “There are faults of

¹ The opinion of Von Hammer, quoted by Sir W. Muir in his *Life of Muhammad* (vol. i. p. 27), seems to be correct: “We may hold the Qurán to be as surely Muḥammad's words as the Muḥammadans hold it to be the Word of God.”

² Ibn Khallikan's *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. iii. p. 16.

language in it; let the Arabs of the desert rectify them with their tongues.”¹ The meaning of this order is that they were to learn to pronounce the words properly, but on no account to alter the writing or form in which the words were spelt. This accounts for the peculiar spelling of many words in the Qurán. In fact, there are special rules laid down for guidance of the copyist. They are technically known as the Rasmu'l-Khatt, or rules for writing.²

Closely connected with this subject is the history of the rise of the science of grammar. As Islam spread, it became necessary to expound the Quran to persons unacquainted with Arabic. The science of grammar then became an important branch of study, and the collection of Traditions a necessary duty. The Faithful were for a long time in doubt as to the lawfulness of applying the laws of grammar to so sacred a book. There was no command in the book itself to do so, nor had the Prophet given any directions on this point. It was, then, neither “farz” nor “sunnat”—that is, neither a command based on the Quran nor one based on any saying or act of the Prophet. The Traditions, however, solve the difficulty.

Al Mamun, the distinguished though heretical Khalíf of Baghdad, was a patron of Al Farra, the chief of grammarians. A distinguished pupil of his, Abu'l 'Abbas Thalub, on his death-bed expressed his belief in the fact that the Quranists, the Traditionists, and others, had gained their heavenly reward, but he had been only a grammarian, and grammar after all was, in connection with the Quran, a science of doubtful legality. The friend to whom he told his doubts and fears went home and saw a vision. It is recorded that he had a vision in his sleep that very night, in which he saw the blessed Prophet, who said to him, “Give my greeting to Abu'l 'Abbas Thalub, and say, ‘Thou

¹ Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary, vol. ii. p. 401.

² The subjects of Tiláwat, or manner of reading the Qurán; of Rasmu'l-Khatt, or the spelling of the words in the Quran; of the Haft qira'at, or seven readings, are so highly technical that I have dealt with them in an appendix, instead of going into further detail in this place.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

The external mode in which it came is referred to in the verse, "We have *sent down* to thee an Arabic Quran" (S. xx. 112). The fragmentary way in which the Quran was given was not without its difficulties.¹ Some passages contradicted others; some were difficult to understand. To the Prophet alone was the solution known. The knowledge he communicated to his immediate followers, the Companions, as they are called, thus: "To thee have we sent down this book of monitions, that *thou mayest make clear to men* what hath been sent down to them" (S. xvi. 46).

Ibn Khaldun says: "The Prophet unfolded the meaning, distinguished between abrogated and abrogating verses, and communicated this knowledge to his Companions. It was from his mouth that they knew the meaning of the verses and the circumstances which led to each distinct revelation being made."² The Companions thus instructed became perfectly familiar with the whole revelation. This knowledge they handed down by word of mouth to their followers, the Taba'ín, who in their turn passed it on to their followers, the Taba-i-Taba'ín. The art of writing then

¹ There are many Traditions which refer to this fact. Omar Ibn Al Khatáb said: "I accorded with my cherisher (*i.e.* God) in three things. One is that I said, 'O messenger of God! if we were to say our prayers in Abraham's place it would be better.' Then a revelation came down, 'Take the place of Abraham for a place of prayer.' The second is that I said, 'O messenger of God! good and bad people come to your house, and I do not see that it is fitting; therefore, if you order your women to be shut up it will be better.' Then the revelation for doing so came down. The third is that his Majesty's wives were all agreed in a story about his drinking honey, and he had vowed never to drink it more. Then I said to his Majesty's wives, 'Should the Prophet divorce you, God will give him better in exchange.' Then a revelation came down, agreeing with what I said."

'Áyesha said: "I was reflecting on those women who had given themselves to the Prophet, and said, 'What! does a woman give herself away!' Then the revelation descended, 'Thou mayest decline for the present whom thou wilt of them, and thou mayest take to thy bed her whom thou wilt, and whomsoever thou shalt long for of those thou shalt have before neglected: and this shall be no crime in thee' (S. xxxiii. 51). I said, 'I see nothing in which your God doth not hasten to please you: whatever you wish He doeth.'"

- Les Prolegomenes d'Ibn Khaldun, vol. ii. p. 459.

became common, and the business of the commentator henceforth was to collect together the sayings of the Companions thus handed down. Criticism of a passage in the Quran was not his duty, criticism of a comment made on it by a Companion was beyond his province: the first was too sacred to be touched, the second must be accepted if only the chain of narrators of the statement were perfect. Thus early in the history of Islam were the principles of exegesis fixed and settled. Every word, every sentence, has now its place and class. The commentator has now only to reproduce what was written before,¹ though he may, in elucidation of the point, bring forth some Tradition hitherto unnoticed, which would, however, be a difficult thing to do. It will thus be seen that anything like the work of a Christian commentator, with all its fresh life and new ideas, is not to be had in Islam. The perfection of the Quranic exegesis is its dogmatic and antique nature—

“ While as the world rolls on from age to age,
And realms of thought expand,
The letter stands without expanse or range,
Stiff as a dead man’s hand.”

The technical terms which the student must know, and the definitions of which he must understand, are those which relate to the nature of the words, the sentences, the use of the words of the Quran, and the deduction of arguments from passages in the book.

I. The words of the Quran are divided into four classes:—

1. *Khâṣṣ*, or special words. These are subdivided into three classes. First, words which relate to genus, *e.g.* mankind. Secondly, words which relate to species, *e.g.* a man, which refers to men as distinguished from women.

¹ This includes even the orthography, for: “ La génération suivante, je veux dire les Tabis (Tāba‘īn), adopta l’orthographe des Compagnons du Prophète et se fit un mérite de ne point s’écarter des formes adoptées par ceux qui, après Muhammad, étaient les plus excellents des hommes, et qui avaient reçu de lui les révélations célestes, soit par écrit, soit de vive voix.” (Ibn Khaldun, vol. ii. p. 397.)

Thirdly, words which relate to special individuality, *e.g.* Zaid, which is the name of a special individual.

2. *‘Amm*, or common or collective names, such as “people.”

3. *Mushtarak*, or words which have several significations, as the Arabic word “‘ain,” which may mean an eye, a fountain, or the sun. Again, the word “Sulat,” if connected with God, may mean mercy, as “Sulat Ullah,” the mercy of God; if with man, it may mean either “namaz,” a stated liturgical service, or “du‘a,” prayer in its ordinary sense, *e.g.* Sulatu’l-Istisqa (prayer in time of drought) is du‘a, not namaz.

4. *Muawwal*, words which have several significations, all of which are possible, and so a special explanation is required. For example, Surah cviii. 2, reads thus in Sale’s translation: “Wherefore pray unto the Lord and *slay* (the victims).” The word translated “slay” is in Arabic “inhar,” from the root nahr, which has many meanings. The followers of the great legist Abu Hanífa render it “sacrifice,” and add the words (the “victims”). The followers of Ibn Shafi‘í say it means “placing the hands on the breast in prayer.”

The Tafsír-i-Ibn ‘Abbás gives another illustration of *Muawwal* in Súrah xli. 6, where the phrase “they do not give alms” is sometimes interpreted as meaning “they do not say: ‘there is no God but God’;” that is, the word “zakat” bears the double meaning of “alms” and of “kalimah” or creed.

This illustrates the difference between *Mushtarak* and *Muawwal*. In the former, only one meaning is allowable, and that meaning the context settles; in the latter, both meanings are allowable, and both right.

These divisions of words having been well mastered and the power of defining any word in the Quran gained, the student passes on to consider the nature of the sentences. These are divided into two great classes,—the “Obvious” and the “Hidden.”

This division is referred to in the following passage of the Quran:—"He it is who hath sent down to thee the book. Some of its signs are of themselves *perspicuous*; these are the basis (literally 'mother') of the book, and others are *figurative*. But they whose hearts are given to err follow its figures, craving discord, craving an interpretation; yet none know its interpretation, but God.¹ And the stable in knowledge say: 'We believe in it, it is all from God'" (S. iii. 3).

This has given rise to the division of the whole book into literal and allegorical statements. In order to explain these correctly, the commentator must know (1) the reason why, (2) the place where, (3) the time when, the particular passage he is expounding was revealed; he must know whether it abrogates or is abrogated, whether it is in its proper order and place or not; whether it contains its meaning within itself or needs the light which the context throws upon it; he must know all the Traditions which bear upon it, and the authority for each such Tradition. This effectually confines the order of commentators in the strict sense of the word to the Companions, and supplies the reason why commentators since then simply reproduce their opinions.² But to return from this digression. Sentences are *Zahir*—"obvious," or *Khaff*—"hidden." Obvious sentences are divided into four classes:—

I. (1.) *Záhir*, or obvious, the meaning of which is so clear that he who hears it at once understands its meaning without seeking for any explanation. This kind of sentence may be abrogated. Unless abrogated, action in accordance with it is to be considered as the express

¹ This interpretation God made known to the Prophet, who communicated it to the Companions; hence all orthodox opinion must be in strict accordance with theirs. They were the sole depositaries of the inspired commentary given by Muḥammad. There is now no room for, as there is no need of, any other.

² Speaking on this very subject Ibn Khaldún says: "Rien de tout cela n'a pu se connaître que par des indications provenant des Compagnons et de leurs disciples" (vol. ii. p. 460).

command of God. All penal laws and the rules regulating the substitution of one religious act for another, *e.g.*, almsgiving instead of fasting, must be based on this, the clearest of the obvious sentences.

(2.) *Nass*, a word commonly used for a text of the Quran, but in its technical meaning here expressing what is meant by a sentence the meaning of which is made clear by some word which occurs in it. The following sentence illustrates both *Zahir* and *Nass*: "Take in marriage of such other women as please you, two, three, four." This sentence is *Zahir*, because marriage is here declared lawful; it is *Nass*, because the words "one, two, three, four," which occur in the sentence, show the unlawfulness of having more than four wives.

(3.) *Mufassar*, or explained. This is a sentence which needs some word in it to explain it and make it clear. Thus: "And the angels prostrated themselves, all of them with one accord, save Iblis (Satan)" (S. ii. 32). Here the words "save Iblis" show that he did not prostrate himself. This kind of sentence may be abrogated.

(4.) *Muhkam*, or perspicuous. This is a sentence as to the meaning of which there can be no doubt, and which cannot be controverted, thus: "God knoweth all things." This kind of sentence cannot be abrogated. To act on such sentences without departing from the literal sense is the highest degree of obedience to God's command.

The difference between these sentences is seen when there is a real or apparent contradiction between them. If such should occur, the first must give place to the second, and so on. Thus *Muhkam* cannot be abrogated or changed by any of the preceding, or *Mufassar* by *Nass*, or *Nass* by *Zahir*.

The other great division of sentences is that of

II. (1.) *Khafi*, or hidden. Such are those sentences in which other persons or things are hidden beneath the plain meaning of a word or expression contained therein, as: "As for a thief, whether male or female, cut ye off their hands

in recompense for their doings" (S. v. 42). The word for thief is "sariq," and in this passage it is understood to include highwaymen, pickpockets, plunderers of the dead, &c. These meanings are Khafi or hidden under it.

(2.) *Mushkil*, or ambiguous. The following is given as an illustration: "And (their attendants) shall go round about them with vessels of silver and goblets. The bottles shall be bottles of silver." The difficulty here is that bottles are not made of silver, but of glass. The commentators say, however, that glass is dull in colour, though it has some lustre, whilst silver is white, and not so bright as glass. Now it may be that the bottles of Paradise will be like glass bottles as regards their lustre, and like silver as regards their colour. But anyhow, it is very difficult to ascertain the meaning.

(3.) *Mujmal*. These are, first, sentences which may have a variety of interpretations, owing to the words in them being capable of several meanings; in that case the meaning which is given to the sentence in the Traditions relating to it should be acted on and accepted. Secondly, the sentence may contain some very rare word, and thus its meaning may be doubtful, as: "Man truly is by creation hasty" (S. lxx. 19). In this verse the word "halu'" —hasty—occurs. It is very rarely used, and had it not been for the following words, "when evil toucheth him, he is full of complaint; but when good befalleth him, he becometh niggardly," its meaning would not have been at all easy to understand.

The following is an illustration of the first kind of *Mujmal* sentences: "Stand for prayer (ṣalát) and give alms" (zakát.) Both ṣalát and zakát are Mustarak words. The people, therefore, did not understand this verse, so they applied to Muḥammad for an explanation. He explained to them that "salat" might mean the ritual of public prayer, standing to say the words "God is great," or standing to repeat a few verses of the Quran; or it might mean private prayer. The primitive meaning of "zakat" is growing.

The Prophet, however, fixed the meaning here to that of "almsgiving," and said, "Give of your substance one-fortieth part."

(4.) *Mutashábih*. These are sentences so difficult that men cannot understand them, a fact referred to in Surah iii. 3, nor will they do so until the day of resurrection. The Prophet, however, knew their meaning. Such portions are the letters A, L, M; A, L, R; Y, A, at the commencement of some of the Surahs.¹ Such expressions also as "God's hand," "The face of God," "God sitteth," &c., come under this category. The Tabi' Mujahid says: "The verses which speak of things lawful and unlawful (*i.e.*, give orders and prohibitions) are Muḥkam, all others are Muta-shabih."²

III. The next point to be considered is the *use* (isti'mal) of words in the Quran, and here again the same symmetrical division into four classes is found, viz. :—

(1.) *Haqíqat*, that is, words which are used in their literal meaning, as "ruku'," a prostration, and "ṣalat" in the sense of prayer.

(2.) *Majaz*, or words which are used in a figurative sense, as "salat" in the sense of "namaz," a liturgical service.

(3.) *Ṣaríh*, or words the meaning of which is quite evident, as "Thou art *divorced*" "Thou art *free*"

(4.) *Kinayáh*, or words which, being used in a metaphorical sense, require the aid of the context to make their

¹ Ibn Khaldún says that Zamakcheri (a theologian of good repute for learning in the sixth century A. H.) remarked on these letters as follows :— "They indicate that the style of the Quran is carried to such a degree of excellence, that it defies every attempt to imitate it; for this book which has been sent down to us from heaven is composed of letters. All men know them all alike, but this power disappears when, in order to express their ideas, they want to use these same letters combined."

On this curious passage Baron de Slane remarks that the author is not very clear, and that the Turkish translator of Ibn Khaldun gives the sense of the passage as: "God has placed these letters in several Surahs as a sort of defiance; as if He had said: 'Voilà les elements dont se compose le Quran; prenez-les et faites-en un livre qui l'egale par le style.'" (Ibn Khaldun, vol. iii. p. 68.)

² Sahihu'l-Bukhári-Tafsír on Súratu'l-'Imrán.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

they are included amongst those whom "God loveth not," and that therefore the severest punishment may be given to them, for any deduction that comes under the head of "dalalat" is a sufficient basis for the formation of the strictest penal laws.

(4.) *Iqtizá*. This is a deduction which demands certain conditions: "Whosoever killeth a believer by mischance, shall be bound to free a believer from slavery" (S. iv. 94). As a man has no authority to free his neighbour's slave, the condition here required, though not expressed, is that the slave should be his own property.

The Quran is divided into:—

(1.) *Harf* (plural *Huruf*), letters. The numbers given by different authorities vary. In one standard book it is said that there are 338,606 letters, including the Bismillahs. The last letters of each Surah are collectively called Fawasil by the Qarís, and each letter of the alphabet thus occurs, except Ghain, Khai, and Waw. The variety in the number of letters is thus explained: "Some letters are written but not read, as Aliph in qumúa and in aulik, and some are read but not written, as w in Dawud, which is always written Daúd. This, and the rules of the rasmu'l-khatt, which are not always observed, account for the variety in the enumeration."¹

(2.) *Kalimah* (plural *Kalimát*), words stated by some to amount to 79,087, by others to 77,934. The difference is accounted for by the fact that some persons count compound words as one word, some as two; some reckon the article *al* as a word, others do not; in the same way prepositions joined with another word, such as *fímá*, sometimes count for one word instead of two.

(3.) *Áyat* (plural *Áyát*), verses. *Áyat* really means a sign, and was the name given by Muḥammad to short sections or verses of the Qurán. The end of a verse is determined by the position of the small circle o. The early Quran Readers did not agree as to the position of these

¹ Zawábitu'l-Furqán, p. 44.

circles, and so five different ways of arranging them have arisen. This accounts for the variation in the number of verses in various editions. The varieties are:—

(1.) *Kúfah* verses. The Readers in the city of Kúfah say that they followed the custom of ‘Alí, and they reckon according to the qira’at of the Qarí Imam ‘Asim. Their way of reckoning is generally adopted in India. They reckon 6239 verses.

(2.) *Basrah* verses. The Readers of Basrah follow ‘Ásim bin Hajjaj, a Companion. They reckon 6204.

(3.) *Shámi* verses. The Readers in Syria (Sham) followed Abdu’llah bin ‘Umr, a Companion. They reckon 6225 verses.

(4.) *Mecca* verses. According to this arrangement, based on a statement made by ‘Abdu’llah bin Kasír, there are 6219 verses.

(5.) *Madína* verses. This way of reading, according to the reckoning of Abu Ja’far Zaid binu’l-Q’aqa, contains 6211 verses.

In each of the above varieties the verse “Bismilláh” (in the name of God) is not reckoned. It occurs one hundred and thirteen times in the Quran.

The variety in the number of verses is thus accounted for: “The Prophet, at first, paused at the close of each verse; afterwards he omitted the pause at the end of some verses. Thus those who heard him at first count more verses than those who heard him at a later period. Again, a slight pause, merely to take breath, may have been misunderstood, and thought to be a pause completing the verse.”¹

The diversity of punctuation does not generally affect the meaning of any important passage. The third verse of the third Surah is an important exception. The position of the circle O, the symbol denoting a full stop, in that verse is of the highest importance in connection with the rise of scholasticism (‘ilm-i-Kalam) in Islam.

¹ Zawábitu’l-Furqán, p. 52.

Most of the cases, however, are like the following:—

In Surah xxvii. an account is given of the Queen of Sheba's receiving a letter from King Solomon. Addressing her nobles she said: "Verily, kings, when they enter a city (by force) waste the same, and abase the most powerful of the inhabitants hereof: and so will (these) do (with us)." Many Readers put the full stop after the word "hereof," and say that God is the speaker of the words "and so will they do."

(4.) *Súrah*, or chapter. The word *Súrah* means a row or series, such as a line of bricks arranged in a wall, but it is now exclusively used for chapters in the Quran. These are one hundred and fourteen in number. The *Súrah*s are not numbered in the original Arabic, but each one has some approximate name (as Baqr—the cow, Nisa—women, &c.), generally taken from some expression which occurs in it. They are not arranged in chronological order, but according to their length. As a general rule, the shorter Surahs, which contain the theology of Islam, belong to the Meccan period of the Prophet's career,¹ and the longer ones, relating chiefly to social duties and relationships, to the organisation of Islam as a civil polity, to the time when he was consolidating his power at Madína. The best way, therefore, to read the Quran is to begin at the end. The attempt to arrange the Surahs in due order is a very difficult one, and, after all, can only be approximately correct.² Carlyle, referring to the confused mass of "endless iterations, long-windedness, entanglement, most crude, incondite," says: "Nothing but a sense of duty could

¹ The last verse revealed at Mecca was, "This day have I perfected your religion for you, and have filled up the measure of my favours upon you; and it is my pleasure that Islam be your religion; but whoso without wilful leanings to wrong shall be forced by hunger to transgress, to him, verily, will God be indulgent, merciful" (S. v. 5). (Ibn Khaldun, vol. i. p. 206.)

² The arrangement made by Professor Th. Noldeke in his "Geschichte des Qurans" is considered by Stanley Lane-Poole to be the best. Rodwell's English version of the Quran is, with some exceptions, an example of this order.

carry any European through the Qurán." When rearranged the book becomes more intelligible. The chief tests for such rearrangement are the style and the matter. There is a very distinct difference in both of these respects between the earlier and later Surahs. The references to historical events sometimes give a clue; but the help from external sources is very limited. Individual Surahs are often very composite in their character, but, such as they are, they have been from the beginning. The recension made by Zaid in the reign of the Khalif Osman has been handed down unaltered in its form. The only variations (qirá't) now to be found in the text have been already noticed. They in no way affect the arrangements of the Surahs.

The ordinary arrangement is a most unfortunate one, as it makes it very difficult to follow the working of the Prophet's mind. In Rodwell's translation the first ninety Surahs are Mecca, and the last twenty-two Madína ones. The Mecca Surahs are divided into three parts. The first forty-eight were delivered during the first four years of the Prophet's mission; then twenty-one more during the fifth and sixth years, and again twenty-one more before the flight to Madína. The Hebrew legends and references to the Old Testament are mostly found in the second and third of these periods. The first Surahs are the most eloquent and rhetorical, and contain passages of great beauty. The Prophet deals there with a simple theology, emphasises the doctrine of the Unity of God, illustrates His power, and declares that His justice will be seen at the day of reckoning. The ritual is not elaborated. The social system and the laws of Islam are not as yet fixed in their rigidity. The Madína Surahs are different. The fervid eloquence of the preacher is absent, and the dictates of the practical administrator take its place. He deals now with questions of social life, domestic details, peace and war. This may be called by contrast the legal section of the Quran. There is, however, comparatively little of definite legislation in the

book. I have already shown in chapter i. how the canonical law grew up. In theory the Quran is the law-book of the Muslim; in practice he resorts to the "Traditions and Decisions of the Canonists."

(5.) *Sípara*, a thirtieth portion. This is a Persian word derived from *sí*, thirty, and *pára*, a portion. The Arabs call each of these divisions a *Juz*. Owing to this division, a pious man can recite the whole Qurán in a month, taking one *Sípara* each day. Musalmans never quote the Quran as we do by Surah and Ayat, but by the *Sípara* and *Rukú'*, a term I now proceed to explain.

(6.) *Rukú'* (plural *Rukú'át*). This word literally means a prostration made by a worshipper in the act of saying the prayers. The collection of verses recited from the Quran, ascriptions of praise offered to God, and various ritual acts connected with these, constitute one act of worship called a "rak'at." After reciting some verses in this form of prayer, the worshipper makes a *Rukú'*, or prostration; the portion then recited takes the name of *Rukú'*. Tradition states that the Khalíf Osman, when reciting the Quran during the month of Ramazan, used to make twenty rak'ats each evening. In each rak'at he introduced different verses of the Quran, beginning with the first chapter and going steadily on. In this way he recited about two hundred verses each evening, that is, about ten verses in each rak'at. Since then it has been the custom to recite the Quran in this way in Ramazan, and also to quote it by the ruku', e.g., "such a passage is in such a *Sípara* and in such a *Rukú'*."

The following account of a rak'at will make the matter plain. When the Faithful are assembled in the mosque, the Imam, or leader, being in front facing the Qiblah, the service commences thus:—Each worshipper stands and says the *Niyyat* (literally "intention"), a form of words declaring his intention to say his prayers. He then says, "God is great." After this, looking downwards, he says, "Holiness to thee, O God! and praise be to Thee; Great is Thy name, Great is Thy greatness, there is no deity but Thee." Then

follows: “I seek from God refuge from cursed Satan.” Then the Tasmiyah is repeated: “In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful.” Then follows the Fatihah, that is, the short chapter at the commencement of the Quran. After this has been recited, the Imám proceeds, on the first night of the month Ramazan, with the first verse of the second chapter.¹ After saying a few verses, he makes a Ruku‘, that is, he bends his head and body down, and places his hands on his knees. In this position he says, “God is great.” Then he repeats three times the words, “I extol the holiness of my Lord, the Great.” He then stands up and says: “God hears him who praises Him.” To this the people respond, “O Lord, thou art praised.” Again, falling on his knees, the worshipper says, “God is great.” Then he puts first his nose and then his forehead on the ground and says three times, “I extol the holiness of my Lord, the Most High.” Then sitting on his heels he says, “God is great;” and again repeats as before, “I extol,” &c. He then rises and says, “God is great.” This is one rak‘at. On each night in the month of Ramazan this is gone through twenty times, the only variation being that after the Fatihah, and before the first prostration, fresh verses of the Quran are introduced. The whole is, of course, done in Arabic, in whatever country the worshippers may be. The name of the prostration (Ruku‘) has been transferred to the portion of the Quran recited just before it is made. There are altogether five hundred and fifty-seven Ruku‘at.

(7.) The other divisions are not important. They are, a *Sumn*, *Ruba‘*, *Nisf*, *Suls*, that is, one-eighth, one-fourth, one-half, one-third of a *Sıpara* respectively.

In reciting the Quran the worshipper must be careful to say the “Takbır,” *i.e.*, “God is great,” after the several appointed places. Such a place is after the recital of the 93rd Surah. The custom arose in this way. The hypocrites

¹ On ordinary occasions any verses may be chosen. The 112th Súra is the one generally repeated.

came to the Prophet and asked him to recite the story of the "Seven Sleepers." He said, "I will tell you to-morrow," but he forgot to add the words, "if God will." By way of warning, God allowed no inspiration to descend upon him for some days. Then the hypocrites began to laugh and say, "God has left him." As it was not God's purpose to put His messenger to ridicule, the Surah entitled "The Brightness" (xciii.) was immediately brought by the ever-ready Gabriel. It begins: "By the brightness of the morning, and by the night when it groweth dark, *thy Lord hath not forsaken thee*, neither doth He hate thee." In remembrance of this signal interposition of Providence on his behalf, the Prophet always concluded the recital of this Surah with the words, "God is great." The practice thus became a "sunnat" obligation, that is, it should be done because the Prophet did it. A Tradition states that the Prophet said, "The Takbír should be recited after every Surah which follows the Súratu'z-Zuha (xciii.)." The Tafsír-i-Jalalain confirms this. Other authorities say that the Takbír should be said after eleven of these only, viz., the Surahs 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 102, 109, 110, 112, and that after all the others the words "La-ilaha-il-lal-lahu" should be said.

In reciting the Qurán, the person so doing must carefully observe all the rules and regulations concerning it. The correct recital is called Tilawat; but before a person can do this properly, he must have some acquaintance with the science called 'Ilm-i-tajwíd. It includes a knowledge of the peculiar spelling of words in the Quran, of its various readings, of the tabkírs and responses at the close of certain appointed passages, of its various divisions, punctuation, and marginal instructions, of a correct pronunciation and intonation.¹

The doctrine of abrogation is a very important one in connection with the study of the Quran. The opening verses of the 77th Surah are by some commentators held to

¹ For further details on this subject see Appendix.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

who shall repent." The Imám states that originally this verse was in the 9th Súrah, called Repentance. The verse called the "verse of stoning" is an illustration of the second kind. It reads: "Abhor not your parents, for this would be ingratitude in you. If a man and woman of reputation commit adultery, ye shall stone them both; it is a punishment ordained by God; for God is mighty and wise." The Khalif Omar says this verse was extant in Muhammad's lifetime, but that it is now lost. But it is the third class which practically comes into 'Ilm-i-usúl.

Authorities differ as to the number of verses abrogated. Sale states that they have been estimated at two hundred and twenty-five. The principal ones are not many in number, and are very generally agreed upon. I give a few examples. It is a fact worthy of notice that they occur chiefly, if not almost entirely, in Surahs delivered at Madína. There, where Muhammad had to confront Jews and Christians, he was at first politic in his aim to win them over to his side, and then, when he found them obstinate, the doctrine of abrogation came in conveniently. This is seen plainly in the following case. At Mecca Muhammad and his followers did not stand facing any particular direction when at prayer, a fact to which the following passage refers: "To God belongeth the east and west; therefore, whithersoever ye turn yourselves to pray, there is the face of God" (S. ii. 109). When Muhammad arrived at Madína he entered into friendship with the Jews, and tried to win them to his side. The Qiblah (sanctuary), towards which the worshippers now invariably turned at prayer, was Jerusalem. This went on for a while, but when Muhammad claimed to be not merely a prophet for the Arabs, but the last and the greatest of all the prophets—when he asserted that Moses had foretold his advent, and that his revelations were the same as those contained in their own Scriptures—they utterly refused allegiance to him. In the first half of the second year of the Hijrah the breach between them was complete. The later Surahs contain fierce denunciations

of Jews and Christians, for there was then irreconcilable hostility: "O Believers! take not Jews or Christians as friends. They are but one another's friends. If any one of you taketh them for his friends, surely he is one of them" (S. v. 56). It was now time to reconcile the leaders of the Quraish tribe at Mecca.¹ So the verse quoted above was abrogated by—"We have seen thee turning thy face towards heaven, but we will have thee turn to a Qiblah which shall please thee. Turn then thy face toward the Holy Temple (of Mecca), and wherever ye be, turn your faces toward that part" (S. ii. 139). The faithful were consoled by the assurance that though they had not done so hitherto, yet God would not let their faith be fruitless, "for unto man is God merciful, gracious."

This change of the Qiblah placed Islam in direct antagonism with Judaism and Christianity. It became a rival faith possessed of an independent centre of existence. Thus Islam became isolated, and so the Muslim has become unable to move with the progress of the nations as the centuries pass by. "The keystone of his creed is a black pebble in a heathen temple. All the ordinances of his faith, all the history of it, are so grouped round and connected with this stone, that were the odour of sanctity dispelled which surrounds it, the whole religion would inevitably perish. The farther and the faster men progress elsewhere, the more hopeless becomes the position of the Muslim. Chained to a black stone in a barren wilderness, the heart and reason of the Muhammadan world would seem to have taken the similitude of the objects they reverence. And the refreshing dews and genial sunshine which fertilises all else, seek in vain for anything to quicken them."²

¹ "At first the Prophet said prayers towards Jerusalem for sixteen or seventeen months, and he was glad when Mecca became the Qiblah. The first namáz said towards Mecca was the Salátu'l-'Asr, the afternoon prayer. One of those present went into another mosque and told the worshippers that the Prophet prayed toward Mecca. They then did the same. The Jews and Christians were displeased at this." (Şaḥīḥu'l-Bukhāri, Kitābu'l-Imām.)

² Islam under the Arabs, by Major Osborn, p. 58.

The doctrine of abrogation is brought in for a more personal matter in the following case: "It is not permitted to thee to take other wives hereafter, nor to change thy present wives for other women, though their beauty charm thee, except slaves, whom thy right hand shall possess" (S. xxxiii. 52). This is said by Baizaví and other eminent Muslim divines to have been abrogated by a verse which, though placed before it in the arrangement of verses, was really delivered after it. The verse is: "O Prophet, we allow thee thy wives whom thou hast dowered, and the slaves which thy right hand possesseth out of the booty which God hath granted thee; and the daughters of thy uncle, and the daughters of thy aunts, both on thy father's side and on thy mother's side, who have fled with thee (to Madína), and any other believing woman who hath given herself up to the Prophet; if the Prophet desireth to wed her, it is a peculiar privilege for thee above the rest of the Faithful" (S. xxxiii. 49).

The Moghul Emperor Akbar, wishing to discredit the 'Ulama, in one of the meetings so frequently held for discussion during his long reign, propounded the question as to how many free-born women a man might marry. The lawyers answered that four was the number fixed by the Prophet. "Of other women who seem good in your eyes marry two and two, and three and three, and four and four" (S. iv. 3). The Emperor said that he had not restricted himself to that number, and that Shaikh 'Abdu'n-Nabí had told him that a certain Mujtahid had had nine wives. The Mujtahid in question, Ibn Abi Lailah, reckoned the number allowed thus: $2 + 3 + 4 = 9$. Other learned men counted in this way $2 + 2, 3 + 3, 4 + 4 = 18$. The Emperor wished the meeting to decide the point.

Again, the second verse of Surah lxxiii. reads: "Stand up all night, except a small portion of it, for prayer." According to a Tradition handed down by 'Ayesha, the last verse of this Súrah was revealed a year later. It makes the matter much easier. "God measureth the night and

the day ; he knoweth that ye cannot count its hours aright, and therefore turneth to you mercifully. Recite *then so much of the Qurán as may be easy to you*" (verse 20).

The following is an illustration of a verse abrogated, though there is no verse to prove its abrogation. However, according to the Ijma' it has been abrogated: "But alms are only to be given to the poor and the needy, and to those who collect them, and to those whose hearts are won to Islam" (S. ix. 60). The clause—"to those whose hearts are won to Islam"—is now cancelled.¹ Muhammad, to gain the hearts of those who, lately enemies, had now become friends, and to confirm them in the faith, gave them large presents from the spoils he took in war; but when Islam spread and became strong, the 'Ulama agreed that such a procedure was not required, and said that the order was "mansukh."

The words "Put up with what they say" (S. xx. 130) are, according to the commentators Jalalain and Husain, abrogated by the verse called the Ayatu's-saif, or verse of the sword: "Kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them" (S. ix. 5). The "they" in the first verse refers to the idolaters of Mecca, to whom for a while toleration was shown. When the power of the Muslims increased, the toleration ceased, and the 130th verse of Surah xx. was abrogated accordingly.

The other verses abrogated relate to the Ramazan fast, to Jihad, the law of retaliation, and other matters of social interest.

The doctrine of abrogation is now almost invariably applied by Musalman controversialists to the Old and New Testaments, which they say are abrogated by the Quran. "His (Muhammad's) law is the abrogator of every other law."² This is not, however, a legitimate use of the doctrine. According to the best and most ancient Muslim divines, abrogation refers entirely to the Qurán and the

¹ Tafsír-i-Ḥusainí, p. 216.

² Sharḥ-i-'Aqáid-i-Jámí, p. 131.

Traditions, and even then is confined to commands and prohibitions. "Those who imagine it to be part of the Muhammadan creed that one law has totally repealed another, are utterly mistaken—we hold no such doctrine."¹ In the *Tafsír-i-Itifáq* it is written: "Abrogation affects those matters which God has confined to the followers of Muhammad, and one of the chief advantages of it is that the way is made easy." In the *Tafsír-i-Mazhirí* we find: "Abrogation refers only to commands and prohibitions, not to facts or historical statements."² Again, no verse of the Qurán, or a Tradition can be abrogated unless the abrogating verse is distinctly opposed to it in meaning. If it is a verse of the Quran, we must have the authority of Muhammad himself for the abrogation; if a Tradition, that of a Companion. Thus "the word of a commentator or a Mujtahid is not sufficient unless there is a 'genuine Tradition' (*Hadís-i-Sahih*), to show the matter clearly. The question of the abrogation of any previous command depends on historical facts with regard to the abrogation, not on the mere opinion of a commentator." It cannot be shown that either Muhammad or a Companion ever said that the Bible was abrogated.³ This rule, whilst it shows that the assertion of modern controversialists on this point is void of foundation, also illustrates another point to which I have often called attention, viz., that in Islam all interpretation must be regulated by traditionalism.

Additions were occasionally made. Thus when it was revealed that those who stay at home were not before God as those who go forth to war, 'Abdullah and Ibn Um-Maktum said, "And what if they were blind?" The Prophet asked for the shoulder-blade on which the verse was written. He then had a spasmodic convulsion. After his

¹ Commentary on the Holy Bible, by Syed Ahmad, C.S.I., vol. i. p. 268.

² *Niáz Namah*, by Maulavi Safdar 'Ali, p. 250.

³ In fact, the Quran is said to be "confirmatory of previous scriptures and their *safeguard*" (S. v. 52.) If then, as some Muslims say, the Bible has been corrupted, the Quran has failed of its purpose, and has not been a "safeguard."

recovery he made Zaid add the words "free from trouble." So now the whole verse reads thus: "Those believers who sit at home *free from trouble* (*i.e.*, bodily infirmity), and those who do valiantly in the cause of God, with their substance and their persons, shall not be treated alike" (S. iv. 97). Years after Zaid said, "I fancy I see the words now on the shoulder-blade near a crack."

The question of the eternal nature of the Qurán does not properly come under the head of 'Ilm-i-usul, but it is a dogma fondly cherished by many Muslims. In the days of the Khalíf Al-Mamum this question was fiercely debated. The Freethinkers, whilst believing in the mission of Muhammad, asserted that the Quran was created, by which statement they meant that the revelation came to him in a subjective mode, and that the language was his own. The book was thus brought within the reach of criticism. In the year 212 A.H. the Khalíf issued a decree to the effect that all who held the Quran to be uncreated were to be declared guilty of heresy. But the Khalíf himself was a notorious rationalist, and so the orthodox, though they remained quiet, remained unconvinced. The arguments used on the orthodox side are: that both the words and their pronunciation are eternal; that the attempt to draw a distinction between the word as it exists in the Divine Mind and as it appears in the Quran is highly dangerous. In vain do their opponents argue that if the Quran is uncreated, two Eternal Beings are in existence. To this it is answered: "This is the honourable Qurán, written in the preserved Tablet" (S. lvi. 76). A Tradition is also adduced which states: "God wrote the Thorah (Law) with His own hand, and with His own hand He created Adam; and also in the Quran it is written, 'And We wrote for him upon the tables a monition concerning every matter,' in reference to the tables of the Law given to Moses." If God did this for former prophets and their works, how much more, it is argued, should He not have done it for the last and greatest of the prophets and the noble Quran?

It is not easy to get a correct definition of the term "the uncreated Quran,"¹ but a Musalman author puts it thus: "The Word as it exists in the mind of God is Kalam-i-Nafsı (spiritual word), something unwritten and eternal. It is acknowledged by the Ijma'-i-Ummat (consent of the Faithful), the Traditions, and by other prophets that God speaks. The Kalam-i-Nafsı then is eternal, but the actual words, style, and eloquence are created by God; so also is the arrangement and the miraculous nature of the book." This seems to be a reasonable account of the doctrine, though there are theologians who hold that the very words are eternal. The doctrine of abrogation clashes with this idea, but they meet the objection by their theory of absolute predestination. This accounts for the circumstances which necessitated the abrogation, for the circumstances, as well as the abrogated verses, were determined on from all eternity.

This concludes the consideration of the exegesis of the Quran, a book difficult and uninteresting for a non-Muslim to read, but one which has engaged, and is still engaging, the earnest thoughts of many millions of the human race. Thousands of devout students in the great theological schools of Cairo, Stamboul, Central Asia, and India are now plodding through this very subject of which I have here been treating; soon will they go forth as teachers of the book they so much revere. How utterly unfit that training is to make them wise men in any true sense of the word, how calculated to render them proud, conceited, and scornful of other creeds, its rigid and exclusive character shows. Still, it is a marvellous book; for twelve hundred years and more it has helped to mould the faith, animate the courage, cheer the despondency of multitudes, whether dwellers in the wild uplands of Central Asia, in Hindustan,

¹ "The orthodox Muslims maintain, if I may venture upon a definition of their belief, that the Quran, the uncreated Logos, was from the beginning, co-eternal with the Deity, not of His essence in hypostatic union, but an inseparable quality of it, like His unity." (Major Jarrett in the *Bibliotheca Indica*, No. 446, Fasciculus iv. p. 318.)

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

his sayings to writing. They were handed down by word of mouth. As no argument was so effectual in a dispute as "a saying" of the Prophet, the door was opened by which spurious Traditions could be palmed off on the Faithful. To prevent this, a number of strict rules were framed, at the head of which stands the Prophet's saying, itself a Tradition: "Convey to other persons none of my words except those which ye know of a surety. Verily, he who purposely represents my words wrongly will find a place for himself nowhere but in fire." To enforce this rule, it was laid down that the relator of a Tradition must also repeat its "Isnad," or chain of authorities, as: 'I heard from such an one, who heard from such an one,' and so on, until the chain reaches the Prophet himself. The following Tradition, taken from Imam Malik's treatise, the *Muwatta*, affords a good illustration of an *Isnad*: "Malik relates from Yahya Ibn Said, from Omra, the daughter of 'Abdu'r-Rahman, from 'Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet, who said: 'The Prophet conducted morning service, and the women returned therefrom with their upper garments wrapped around them in such a way that they could not be recognised in the twilight.'" This Tradition also settles the time for the *Salatu'l-Fajr*, which must be just before daybreak. Each person, too, in an "Isnad" must be well known for his good character and retentive memory. "The system of *Isnad* employed by the Traditionists of the Hedjaz is very superior to that which the others follow, and singularly corroborates the authenticity of their Traditions. This arises from the extreme care they took. They only received Traditions from the mouths of upright and virtuous men, gifted with good memories."¹ All this care, however, failed to prevent a vast number of manifestly false Traditions becoming current; so men set themselves to the work of collecting and sifting the great mass of Tradition that in the second century of Islam had begun to work untold evil. These men are called "Muhadisin," or "collectors of Tradition." The Sunnis and

¹ Ibn Khaldún, vol. ii. p. 468.

the Wahhábís recognise six such men, and their collections are known as the "Siḥáhu's-sittah," or six correct books. They are the following:—

(1.) The *Sahíh-i-Bukhári*, called after Abu 'Abdu'llah Muḥammad Ibn-i-Isma'íl, a native of Bukhara. He was born A.H. 194. He was a man of middle height, spare in frame, and as a boy totally blind. The grief of his father was on this account intense; but one day in a dream he saw the Patriarch Abraham, who said to him, "God, on account of thy grief and sorrow, has granted sight to thy son." The sight being thus restored, at the age of ten he went to school, and began to learn the Traditions by heart. After his education was finished, a famous Muḥadiṣ named Dakhlí came to Bukhára. One day the youthful Bukhári ventured to correct the famous man. It was an astounding piece of audacity, but the youth was proved to be in the right. This set him on the work of collecting and sifting the Traditions. At the early age of sixteen he was able to remember fifteen thousand. In course of time he collected 600,000 Traditions. The result of his examination and selection was that he approved of seven thousand two hundred and seventy-five. These are now recorded in his great work, the *Sahíhu'l-Bukhári*. It is said that he never sat down to examine a Tradition without first performing a legal ablution and repeating two rak'at prayers. He then said: "O Lord, let me not make a mistake." For sixteen years he lived in a mosque, and died much respected, at the age of sixty-four.

(2.) *Sahíh-i-Muslim*. Muslim Ibn-i-Hajjaj was born at Nishapur, a city of Khorásan. He collected about 300,000 Traditions, from which he made his collection. He is said to have been a very just man, and willing to oblige all who sought his advice. In fact, this willingness to oblige was the indirect cause of his death. One day he was sitting as usual in the mosque when some people came to ask him about a Tradition. As he could not discover it in the books he had with him, he went to his house to search there. The

people brought him a basket of dates. He went on eating and searching, but unfortunately he ate so many dates that he died (A.H. 261).

(3.) *Sunan-i-Abu Dáud*. Abu Daud Sajistaní, a native of Seistán, was born A.H. 202. He was a great traveller, and went to all the chief places of Musalman learning. In knowledge of the Traditions, in devotion, in piety, he was unrivalled. He collected about 500,000 Traditions, of which he selected four thousand eight hundred for his book.

(4.) *Jámi'-i-Tirmizí*. Abu Isa' Muhammad Tirmizí was born at Tirmiz in the year A.H. 209. He was a disciple of Bukharí. Ibn Khallikan says this work is "the production of a well-informed man: its exactness is proverbial."¹

(5.) *Sunan-i-Nasáí*. Abu 'Abdu'r-Rahman Nasáí was born at Nasa, in Khorasan, in the year A.H. 214, and died A.H. 303. It is recorded of him, with great approbation, that he fasted every other day, and had four wives and many slaves. This book is considered of great value. He met with his death in rather a sad way. He had compiled a book on the virtues of 'Alí, and as the people of Damascus were at that time inclined to the heresy of the Kharijites, he wished to read his book in the mosque of that place. After he had read a little way, a man arose and asked him whether he knew aught of the praises of Mu'awiyah, 'Alí's deadly enemy. He replied that he did not. This answer enraged the people, who beat him so severely that he died soon after.

(6.) *Sunan-i-Ibn Májah*. Ibn Májah² was born at 'Irák, A.H. 209. This work contains 4000 Traditions.

The Shí'ahs reject these books and substitute five books³

¹ Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary, vol. ii. p. 679.

² "He ranked as a high authority in the Traditions, and was well versed in all the sciences connected with them." (Ibn Khallikan, vol. ii. p. 680.)

³ The Káfi, by Abu Ja'far Muhammad, A.H. 329. The Man-la-yastah-zirahu'l-Faqih, by Shaikh 'Alí, A.H. 381. The Tahzib and the Istibsár, by Shaikh Abu Ja'far Muhammad, A.H. 466. The Nahaju'l-Balághat, by Syed Razí, A.H. 406.

of their own instead. They are of a much later date, the last one, indeed, having been compiled more than four hundred years after the Hijrah.

The belief which underlies the question of the authority of the Traditions is that before the Throne of God there stands a "preserved Table," on which all that can happen, and all that has ever entered or will enter the mind of man, is "noted in a distinct writing." Through the medium of Gabriel, the Prophet had access to this. It follows, then, that the words of the Prophet express the will of God.

Of the four great "Canonical Legists" of Islam, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal was the greatest collector of Traditions. It is said that he knew by heart no less than one million. Of these he incorporated thirty thousand into his system of jurisprudence. That system is now almost obsolete. Abú Hanífa, who is said to have accepted only eighteen Traditions as authentic, founded a system which is to this day the most powerful in Islam. The Hanifites, however, as well as other Muslims, acknowledge the six standard collections of Traditions as direct revelations of the will of God. They range over a vast number of subjects, and furnish a commentary on the Quran. The Prophet's personal appearance, his mental and moral qualities, his actions, his opinions, are all recorded over and over again. Many questions of religious belief are largely founded on the Traditions, and it is to them we must go for an explanation of much of the ritual of Islam. It is very difficult for any one, who has not lived in long and friendly intercourse with Muslims, to realise how much their religious life and opinions, their thought and actions, are based on the Traditions.

Having thus shown the importance of the Traditions, I now proceed to enter a little into detail on the question of the rules framed concerning them. The classification adopted by different authors may vary in some subordinate points, but the following account is adopted from a standard Muḥammadan work. A Tradition may be Ḥadīṣ-i-Qualí,

that is, an account of something the Prophet said; or *Hadis-i-Fi'li*, a record of something which he did; or *Hadis-i-Taqriri*, a statement of some act performed by other persons in his presence, and which action he did not forbid.

The Traditions may be classed under two general heads:—

First, *Hadis-i-Mutawatir*, that is, “an undoubted Tradition,” the *Isnad* or chain of narrators of which is perfect, and in which chain each narrator possessed all the necessary qualifications for his office.¹ Some authorities say there are only a few of these Traditions extant, but most allow that the following is one: “There are no good works except with intention;” for example, a man may fast, but, unless he has the intention of fasting firmly in his mind, he gains no spiritual reward by so doing.

Second, *Hadis-i-Ahad*. The authority of this class is theoretically somewhat less than that of the first, but practically it is the same.

This class is again subdivided into two:—

(1.) *Hadis-i-Sahih*, or a genuine Tradition. It is not necessary to go into the subdivisions of this subdivision. A Tradition is *Sahih* if the narrators have been men of pious lives, abstemious in their habits, endowed with a good memory, free from blemish, and persons who lived at peace with their neighbours. The following also are *Sahih*, though their importance as authorities varies. I arrange them in the order of their value. *Sahih* Traditions are those which are found in the collections made by Bukhari and Muslim, or in the collection of either of the above, though not in both; or, if not mentioned by either of these famous collectors, if they have been retained in accordance with their canons for the rejection or retention of Traditions; or

¹ If the *Isnad* is good, internal improbability carries with it little weight against the genuineness of a Tradition. There is a saying current to this effect:—“A relation made by Shafi'i on the authority of Malik, and by him on the authority of Nan, and by him on the authority of Ibn Omar, is really the golden chain.”

lastly, if retained in accordance with the rules of any other approved collector. For each of these classes there is a distinct name.

(2.) *Hadís-i-Hasan*. The narrators of this class are not of such good authority as those of the former with regard to one or two qualities, but these Traditions should be received as of equal authority as regards any practical use.¹ It is merely as a matter of classification that they rank second.

In addition to these names there are a number of other technical terms which have regard to the personal character of the narrators, the Isnad, and other points. A few may be mentioned.

(1.) *Hadís-i-Za'if*, or a weak Tradition. The narrators of it have been persons whose characters were not above reproach, whose memories were bad, or who, worse still, were addicted to "bid'at," innovation—a habit now, as then, a crime in the eyes of all true Muslims. All agree that a "weak Tradition" has little force; but few rival theologians agree as to which are, and which are not, "weak Traditions."

(2.) *Hadís-i-mu'allaq*, or a Tradition in the Isnád of which there is some break. If it begins with a Tabi' (one in the generation after that of the Companions), it is called "Mursal," the one link in the chain, the Companion, being wanting. If the first link in the chain of narrators begins in a generation still later, it has another name, and so on.

(3.) Traditions which have various names, according as the narrator concealed the name of his Imam, or where different narrators disagree, or where the narrator has mixed some of his own words with the Tradition, or has been proved to be a liar, an evil liver, or mistaken; but into an account of these it is not necessary to enter. for no Tradition of this class would be considered as of itself sufficient ground on which to base any important doctrine.²

¹ Núru'l-Hidáyah, p. 5.

² A full account of these will be found in the preface to the Nuru'l-Hidayah, the Urdu translation of the Sharḥ-i-Waqayah.

A Tradition may be abrogated in the same way as a verse of the Quran is. The following example from Bukharí is quoted as a proof of this: "We made salaam to the Prophet when he was engaged in prayer, and he returned it." This is now abrogated by this Tradition: "After we returned from Abyssinia, we made our salaam to the Prophet when he was at prayer. He did not return it, but said, 'In prayer there is no employment'" (*i.e.*, do not attend to other things then).¹ This latter Tradition agrees with the verse of the Quran: "Be careful in prayer and stand with respect. Silence is enjoined on us." Another example is given with regard to mut'ah marriages. The Tradition, "Whatever man or woman agrees to live together for ten or more days, if they like they can increase it or separate," is said to have been abrogated by this later Tradition: "The Prophet at last forbade mut'ah marriages."²

It is the universally accepted rule that no authentic Tradition can be contrary to the Qurán. The importance attached to Tradition has been shown in the preceding chapter, an importance which has demanded the formation of an elaborate system of exegesis. To an orthodox Muslim the Book and the Sunnat, God's word direct and God's word through the mind of the Prophet, are the foundation and sum of Islam, a fact not always taken into account by modern panegyrists of the system.³

¹ Sahíhu'l-Bukhári, p. 302.

² *Ibid.*, p. 427.

³ "The Qurán is not the only source of information on Muhammad's teaching. It contains his official *pronunciamenti*, his public orations, his judgments from the bench. If we would know his private talk, his daily acts and sayings, which form the rules and precedents for every Muslim's conduct—insomuch that a pious jurist refused to eat water-melons, because, though it was recorded that the Prophet ate them, it was not recorded whether he cut or crushed them—we must turn to these collections of Traditions which form the table-talk of Muḥammad." (Studies in a Mosque, by Stanley Lane-Poole, p. 318.)

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

the Umawíyah, both descendants of the great Koshai. The feud passed on from generation to generation. Muhammad was a lineal descendant of Háshim. His ablest and most active enemy in Mecca was Abú Sofyán, a grandson of Umaiya. The Arab families were united in hate as well as in love. Nothing delighted their members more than to hear of and dwell upon the passions and strifes of their ancestors—hatreds which they took care to keep alive and hand down to their descendants as they had received them from the generations passed away. Abu Sofyan commanded the Quraish in more than one attack on the Prophet's forces. So bitter was the hatred of the Prophet to this leader of the Umawíyah faction that, when he made his triumphant march to Mecca in the year 630 A.D., he excluded Abu Sofyan and his wife from the amnesty granted to his foes. They were condemned to death, but, the day before the entry of the Prophet with his friends into Mecca, Abu Sofyan acknowledged his error and submitted to Muhammad, who then granted him a free pardon. It was a mere outward conversion, and led to much heart-burning between the faithful Ansars¹ of Madína and these newly found allies.

Two parties now gradually formed themselves amongst the Muslims—on the one side the Companions of the Prophet and the men of Madína; on the other, the descendants of Umaiya and of the Quraish generally. The two first Khalífs, Abu Bakr and Omar, held the respective parties in check, but the third Khalíf, Osman, failed to do so. He was a member of the family of Umaiya, though he had voluntarily and sincerely adopted the Prophet's cause. He gradually removed the leaders of the army and others from places of command and trust.

Men most distasteful to the great body of Muslims, men such as Mu'awiyah, son of Abu Sofyan, Merwan, whom the Prophet had banished from Mecca, and others of the Uma-

¹ The term Al-Ansár means "The helpers," and is used of the early converts at Madína: the men of Mecca who accompanied Muhammad to Madína were called Muhajirun, or the exiles.

wiyah family, were placed in high commands and in administrative posts of influence. Syria and Palestine, Egypt, Kufah, and other places were intrusted to the care of men whose antecedents and present practices scandalised the Faithful. The political position was becoming intolerable, and at length Muhammad, a son of the late Khalíf Abu Bakr, with 10,000 men, came to Madína to state the grievances of his party. Osmán put them off with a promise of redress; but on their return home they intercepted an official letter to the Governor of Egypt, ordering him to put them all to death. They returned at once to Madína, stormed the palace, and assassinated the Khalíf.

'Alí, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, was now proclaimed Khalíf by the people of Madína, for the faction of the Hashimites was in power in that city. The Umawíyahs, however, held all the chief provinces, and so a terrible civil war ensued. Bitter feelings were then engendered which even to this day find vent in the annual ceremonies of the Muharram. 'Alí was too straightforward to adopt any temporising policy, and at once issued a decree deposing all the Governors of the Umawíyah party. Although theoretically, as Khalíf, he had this power, yet men who had tasted the sweets of office were not inclined to give them up, and so they quickly set up a hostile force, headed by one of the ablest and most unscrupulous men of the age, Mu'awiyah, son of Abu Sofyan, and now Governor of Syria. Mu'awiyah denounced 'Alí as the murderer of Osman. "Thirty thousand men," so says the message sent to 'Alí, "have sworn to avenge his death, and never cease from mourning till all concerned in it have been killed."

The cause of 'Alí received its chief blow at the battle of Siffin. All went well for a time, and Mu'awiyah was about to beat a retreat, when 'Amru, one of his generals, hit upon a cunning device. He ordered a number of his soldiers to advance with copies of the Qurán fixed to the heads of their lances. "Let the blood of the Faithful cease to flow," they shouted. "Let the book of God decide

between us." 'Alí's army was composed of military theologians, fanatical and disputatious. "God is great," they replied, "we must submit to the arbitrament of this book." 'Alí tried in vain to prevent his followers from falling into the trap laid for them, but failed. Violent altercations ensued, which finally resulted in a very large secession from his ranks. These men originated the sect called the Khárigites. The arbitration went in favour of Mu'awiyah. Still the trickery of the whole affair was so manifest that the war soon recommenced, but then clouds and darkness gathered around the path of 'Alí. Many of the more fanatical Muslims of his own party turned against him, and the old feudal hatred of the Umawíyahs followed him to the death. His sad and chequered life ended in the year 40 A.H., when he was assassinated by a Kharigite. One great blot in his character seems to be connected with the fate of Osman, to whom he had sworn allegiance, and whose murderers he should have brought to justice. It was an error of judgment, to say the least, and lent a strong motive to men who perhaps otherwise might not have opposed him. But for all that, 'Alí was one of the best and truest-hearted of the early Muslim chiefs, and worthily calculated to win and retain, as he has done for so many centuries, the ardent love and affection of so many millions of Shí'ahs. 'Alí's eldest son, Hasan, made a formal renunciation of his claim, and took an oath of allegiance to Mu'awiyah, who thus became the Khalif of Islam. Still, so long as the lad was alive, he felt insecure, and being anxious to leave the government to his son Yazíd, he caused Hasan, some years after, to be put to death by poison—so at least the Shí'ah historians say. The city of Kufah, where 'Alí was assassinated, was the centre of religious fanaticism. It was the home of the Quran Readers, Doctors of the Law, and of Theologians generally. Theological controversy raged, and much of the after bewildering refinement of Muslim theology owes its origin to the wrangling disputes of the men of Kúfah.

Yazíd, who succeeded his father Mu'áwiyah in the year 60 A.H., was not an orthodox Muslim. He drank wine, loved dogs, and hated an austere life. The men of Kufah were scandalised, and he in return treated them with much contempt. At this time, Husain, the remaining son of 'Alí, was residing at Mecca. He had never taken the oath of allegiance to Mu'áwiyah, and so now the men of Kúfah begged him to come, and promised to espouse his cause if only he would pronounce the deposition of Yazíd and take away the Khalífate from the house of Umaiya. The friends of Husain in vain urged that the men of Kúfah were a fickle lot, and that they could, if they wished, revolt against Yazíd without his help. Husain accepted the call, and started for Kufah with his family and a small escort of forty horsemen and one hundred foot-soldiers.

But meanwhile Yazíd sent the Governor of Basrah to block the way, and Husain on the plains of Karbala found his progress arrested by a force of 3000 men. The people of Kufah gave no aid. Submission or death was the alternative placed before him. To his followers he said, "Let all who wish to go do so." "O son of the Apostle of God," was the reply, "what excuse could we give to thy grandfather on the day of resurrection did we abandon thee?" One by one the little band fell, and at last Husain and his little son, a mere infant, alone remained. Husain sat on the ground. Not one of the enemy seemed to dare touch the grandson of the Prophet. The scene was a strange one—Husain sitting down, his little boy running round him, all his followers lying dead close by, the enemy longing for his blood but restrained by a superstitious awe. Husain took the little lad up into his arms; a chance arrow pierced the child's ear and it died at once. Husain then placed the corpse on the ground, saying, "We come from God and we return to Him. O God, give me strength to bear these misfortunes." He stooped down to drink some water from the Euphrates which flowed close by. Just then an arrow struck him in the mouth. Encouraged by

this, the enemy rushed on him and speedily put an end to his life. The plain of Karbala is now a place of sacred pilgrimage to Shí'ahs, and the sad event which took place there is kept alive in their memories by the annual celebration of the Muharram. The schism was now complete. A rent had been made in the Muslim world which time has failed to heal. 'The martyred Husain' is a watchword which has kept alive a spirit of hatred and of vengeance even to this day.

Many traditions record the virtues of 'Alí and his family. The martyrdom of Husain was foretold by Muhammad, for he is reported to have said of Husain, "He will die for the sake of my people." Just before he set out upon his fatal journey, standing by the grave of the Prophet, Husain said, "How can I forget thy people, since I am going to offer myself for their sakes?" This idealising of the natural result of a tribal feud seems to show that the hard and cold system of orthodox Islam failed to find a warm response in the Persian mind. The Christian idea of self-denial, of self-renunciation, of self-sacrifice for others was needed; and this representation of Husain as a voluntary sacrifice was the substitute the Shí'ahs found. It has been well said by a sound critic of Islam, that "the death of Husain, as idealised in after ages, fills up this want in Islam: it is the womanly as against the masculine—the Christian as opposed to the Jewish element that this story supplies to the work of Muḥammad."

The annual ceremonies celebrated in the month of Muharram refer to the historical facts, and help to keep alive a bitter feud; but to suppose that the only difference between the Shí'ah and the Sunnī is a mere dispute as to the proper order of the early Khalīfs would be a mistake. Starting off with a political quarrel, the Shí'ahs have travelled into a very distinct religious position of their own. The fundamental tenet of the Shí'ah sect is the "divine right" of 'Alí the Chosen and his descendants. From this it follows that the chief duty of religion consists in devotion

to the Imám (or Pontiff); from which position some curious dogmas issue.

The whole question of the Imamat is a very important one. The term Imam comes from an Arabic word meaning "to aim at," "to follow after," and it thus becomes equal to the word leader or exemplar. It is applied in this sense to Muhammad as the leader in all civil and religious questions, and to the Khalífs, his successors, who are called the Great Imams. It is also, in its religious import only, applied to the founders of the four orthodox schools of jurisprudence, and in a restricted sense to the leader of a congregation at prayer in a mosque. They are called the Lesser Imáms. The Shí'ahs hold that the Imam, as a leader of prayer, must be sinless (*ma'sum*); the Sunnis say that the Namaz can be led by any Imam, whether he is a good or a bad man. They adduce the following story in support of their view:—"One day the people asked Abú Hanífa about the leading tenets of the Sunnis." He replied, "To consider Abu Bakr and Omar as the highest in rank, to esteem Osman and 'Alí, to allow a ceremonial ablution to be made on the shoe (*i.e.*, not necessarily on naked feet), and to say the Namaz behind any Imam, a good man or a sinner." It is with the Imám considered as the Great Imám that we have now to deal. It is used in this sense in the Quran—"When his Lord made trial of Abraham by commands which he fulfilled, He said, 'I am about to make of thee an Imam to mankind;' he said, 'Of my offspring also?' 'My covenant,' said God, 'embraceth not the evil-doers'" (S. ii. 118). From this verse two doctrines are deduced: First, that the Imam must be appointed by God, for if this is not the case why did Abraham say, "of my offspring also?" Secondly, the Imam is free from sin, for God said, "My covenant embraceth not the evil-doer."

The first dispute about the Imamat originated, as we have seen, with the men who revolted from 'Alí after the battle of Siffin. Some years later they were nearly all destroyed by 'Alí. A few survivors, however, fled to

various parts. Two at last settled in Omán, and there preached their distinctive doctrines. In course of time the people of Oman adopted the doctrine that the Imamát was not hereditary but elective, and that in the event of misconduct the Imam might be deposed. ‘Abdu’llah-ibn-‘Ibadh (744 A.D.) was a vigorous preacher of this doctrine, and from him the sect known as the ‘Ibadhiyah takes its rise. The result of this teaching was the establishment of the power and jurisdiction of the Imam of Oman. The ‘Ibadhiyah seem to have always kept themselves independent of the Sunní Khalífs of Baghdad, and, therefore, would consider themselves free from any obligation to obey the Sultan of Turkey. From the ordinary Shí’ahs they differ as regards the “divine right” of ‘Alí and his children. The curious in such matters will find the whole subject well treated in Dr. Badger’s “Seyyids of Omán.”

The tragic end of ‘Alí and his sons invested them with peculiar interest. When grieving for the sad end of their leaders, the Shí’ahs found consolation in the doctrine which soon found development, viz., that it was God’s will that the Imamát should continue in the family of ‘Alí. Thus a Tradition relates that the Prophet said, “He of whom I am master has ‘Alí also for a master.” “The best judge among you is ‘Alí.” Ibn ‘Abbás, a Companion, says: “I heard the Prophet say, ‘He who blasphemes my name blasphemes the name of God; he who blasphemes the name of ‘Alí blasphemes my name.’” Some say ‘Alí is alive and that “a part of God” is in him, and also that ‘Alí will descend upon earth and fill it with justice, as it is now filled with tyranny. “‘Alí existed before the creation of the heavens and the earth; he is a shadow at the right hand of the throne, and men and angels make tasbíh to him.”¹

The general idea is, that long before the creation of the world, God took a ray of light from the splendour of His own glory and united it to the body of Muḥammad

¹ Milal wa Niḥal, pp. 132-134.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

probably refers to the possession by the Imám of the "light of Muhammad." The bodies of the Imams are so pure and delicate that they cast no shadow. They are the beginning and the end of all things. To know the Imams is the very essence of the knowledge which men can gain of God. As mediums between God and man they hold a far higher position than the prophets, for "the grace of God, without their intervention, reaches to no created being." These extravagant claims for the Imams culminate in the assertion that "for them a pillar of light has been fixed between the earth and heaven, by which the actions of the Faithful are made known to them." The Imam is the supreme Pontiff, the Vicar of God on earth. The possession of an infallible book is not sufficient. The infallible guide is needed. Such wisdom and discernment as such a guide would require can only be found amongst the descendants of the Prophet. It is no longer, then, a matter of wonder that, in some cases, almost, if not entirely, divine honour is paid to 'Alí and his descendants.¹

The Usúl, or fundamental tenets of the Shí'ah sect, are five in number: (1) To believe in the unity of God. (2) To admit that He is just. (3) To believe in the divine mission of all the prophets, and that Muhammad is the chief of all. (4) To consider 'Alí the Khalíf next in order after Muhammad,² and to believe 'Alí's descendants from Hasan to Al-Mahdí, the twelfth Imam, to be his true

¹ The Sunnis esteem and respect the Imáms as Ahl-i-Bait, "men of the House (of the Prophet)," but do not give them precedence over the duly appointed Khalífs.

² The Shí'ahs, in support of their opinion regarding the close union of 'Alí with the Prophet, adduce the fact that in the 34th verse of Surah xxxiii. the pronoun "you" in the words, "God only desireth to put away filthiness from you as his household," is in the masculine gender and in the plural form. The household being, according to the Shí'ahs, Muhammad, Fatimah, 'Alí, Husain, and Hasan, they say the word "you" must mean 'Alí and his sons. The Sunni commentators say that the context shows that the "you" refers to the wives of the Prophet, and support this view by stating that the preceding pronouns and the next finite verb, "recollect," are all feminine. I have not yet seen a good explanation of this difficulty.

successors, and to consider all of them, in character, position, and dignity, as raised far above all other Muslims. This is the doctrine of the Imamát. (5) To believe in the resurrection.

The two principal divisions of the Shí'ah sect are the Isma'ílians and the Imamites. The latter believe in twelve Imáms, reckoning 'Alí as the first.¹ The last of the twelve, Abu'l-Qásim, is supposed to be alive still, though hidden in some secret place. He bears the name of Al-Mahdí, "the guided," and hence a leader qualified to guide others. When he was born the words, "Say: 'truth is come and falsehood is vanished: Verily falsehood is a thing that vanisheth'" (S. xvii. 83), were found written on his right arm. A person one day visited Imam Hasan 'Askarí (the eleventh Imam) and said, "O son of the Prophet, who will be Khalíf and Imam after thee?" He brought out a child and said, "If thou hadst not found favour in the eyes of God, He would not have shown thee this child; his name is that of the Prophet, and so is his patronymic" (Abu'l-Qasim).

A Tradition, recorded on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, says: "There will be twelve Khalífs after me; the first is my brother, the last is my son." "O messenger of God," said the people, "and who is thy brother?" The Prophet replied, "'Alí." "And thy son?" "Mahdí, who will fill the earth with justice, even though it be covered with tyranny. He will come at last. Jesus will then appear and follow him. The light of God will illuminate the earth, and the empire of the Imam will extend from east to west."

The Imámities also adduce the following Traditions. "Gabriel came one day with the tablet of decree in his hand, and lo! on it were the names of the twelve Imams in their proper order of succession." A Jew named Janúb once said to the Prophet, "Who will be your heirs and

¹ The names are 'Alí, Hasan, Husain, Zainu'l-'Abid-dín, Muhammad Baqr, Ja'far Sadiq, Musa Kazim, 'Alí ibn Musa-ar-Raza, Muhammad Taqí, Muḥammad Naqí, Hasan 'Askarí, Abu'l-Qásim (or Imam Mahdí).

successors?" The Prophet replied, "They agree in number with the twelve tribes of Israel."

As to the claim of the Imámítes that 'Alí was the Khalíf appointed by Muhammad to succeed him as head of the faithful, Ibn Khaldún, a Sunní historian, says: "The error of the Imamites arises from a principle which they have adopted as true and which is not so. They pretend that the Imamat is one of the pillars of religion, whereas, in reality, it is an office instituted for the general advantage and placed under the surveillance of the people. If it had been one of the pillars of religion the Prophet would have taken care to bequeath the functions of it to some one; and he would have ordered the name of his intended successor to be published, as he had already done in the case of the leader of prayer (Namaz). The Companions recognised Abu Bakr as Khalíf because of the analogy which existed between the functions of the Khalíf and those of the leader of prayer. 'The Prophet,' they said, 'chose him to watch over our spiritual interests; why should we not choose him to watch over our earthly interests?' This shows that the Prophet had not bequeathed the Imamat to any one, and that the Companions attached much less importance to that office and its transmission than is now done."¹

The other large division, the Ismá'ílians, agree with the Imámítes in all particulars save one. They hold that after Ja'far Sadiq, the sixth Imam, commenced what is called the succession of the "concealed Imáms." They believe that there never can be a time when the world will be without an Imam, though he may be in seclusion. Sharastaní says, "If any one says, How can the Imam remain concealed?—did not Enoch and Elias live a thousand years in the world without food: why should the Ahl-i-Bait have more need?" "The earth is never without a living Imam, though concealed." "He who dies without knowing the Imam, or who is not his disciple, dies ignorant." This idea has given rise to all sorts of secret societies, and has

¹ Ibn Khaldún, vol. i. p. 431.

paved the way for a mystical religion, which often lands its votaries in atheism.

The "Veiled Prophet of Khurásán" was one of these emissaries of disorder. Babek, who taught the indifference of human actions, and illustrated his teaching by acts of cruelty and lust during the reigns of the Khalifs Mamún and Mu'tasim, was another. For a while they were kept in check, but in the fourth century A.H., when the power of the Khalífate began to wane, the Karmathian outbreak shook the Islamic empire to the very centre. Mecca was captured, the Ka'bah pillaged, and the famous black stone, spilt by a blow from the sacrilegious Karmathians, was removed and kept away for twenty-two years. This was, however, too serious a matter. It became the question of the preservation of society against anarchy. The Karmathians were at length defeated, and passed away; but in the places where they lived orthodox Islam never regained power in the hearts of the people. "The district," Mr. Gifford Palgrave tells us, "has remained permanently estranged, a heap of moral and religious ruins, of Karmathian and esoteric doctrines." From it, however, serious divisions arose and made great rents in the political world of the Muslim people. One of the latest pretenders was the Mahdí in the Soudan. The fanatical attachment of his followers to his person is now explained, for what I have described as the doctrine concerning the Imam would, when once they acknowledged him to be such, have a very real influence over them. They would look upon him as the "Concealed Imam" brought again amongst men to restore the world to obedience to God's law, to reprove the careless Musalmans and to destroy the Infidels. This also accounts for his arrogant tone and defiance of the Sultan, the acknowledged head of the Sunnís, who form the majority of Musalmans.

When Islám entered upon the tenth century of its existence, there was throughout Persia and India a millenarian movement. Men declared that the end was draw-

ing near, and various persons arose who claimed to be Al-Mahdí. Amongst others was Shaikh 'Alaí of Agra (956 A.H.). Shaikh Mubarak, the father of Abu'l-Fazl, the Emperor Akbar's famous vizier, was a disciple of Shaikh 'Alaí, and from him imbibed Mahdavi ideas. This brought upon him the wrath of the 'Ulama, who, however, were finally overcome by the free-thinking and heretical Emperor and his vizier. There never was a better ruler in India than Akbar, and never a more heretical one as far as orthodox Islam is concerned. The Emperor delighted in the controversies of the age. The Sufis and Mahdavis were in favour at Court. The orthodox 'Ulama were treated with contempt. Akbar fully believed that the millennium had come. He started a new era and a new religion called the "Divine Faith." There was toleration for all except the bigoted orthodox Muslims. Abu'l-Fazl and others like him, who professed to reflect Akbar's religious views, held that all religions contained truth. Thus:—

"O God, in every temple I see people that seek Thee, and in every language I hear spoken people praise Thee !

Polytheism and Islam feel after Thee,

Each religion says, 'Thou art one, without equal.'

If it be a mosque, people murmur the holy prayer, and if it be a Christian church, people ring the bell from love to Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and sometimes the mosque,

But it is Thou whom I search from temple to temple."

The whole of the Shí'ah doctrine of the Imámat seems to show that there is in the human heart a natural desire for some Mediator—some Word of the Father, who shall reveal Him to His children. At first sight it would seem as if this dogma might to some extent reconcile the thoughtful Shí'ah to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and Mediation of Jesus Christ, to His office as the perfect revealer of God's will, and as our Guide in life; but it is not so. The mystic lore connected with Shí'ah doctrine has sapped the foundation of moral life and vigour.

A system of religious reservation, too, is a fundamental part of the system in its mystical developments, whilst all Shí'ahs may lawfully practise "taqíyah," or religious compromise in their daily lives. It thus becomes impossible to place dependence on what a Shí'ah may profess, as pious frauds are legalised by his system of religion. If he becomes a mystic, he looks upon the ceremonial and the moral law as restrictions imposed by an Almighty Power. The advent of Al-Mahdí is the good time when all such restrictions shall be removed, when the utmost freedom shall be allowed. Thus the moral sense, in many cases, becomes deadened to an extent such as those who are not in daily contact with these people can hardly credit. The practice of "taqíyah," religious compromise, and the legality of "mut'ah," or temporary marriages, have done much to demoralise the Shí'ah community.

It is said that there are thirty-two subdivisions of the Shí'ah sect, but Imamites and Isma'ílians are the most important ones. The chief point of difference between the Shí'ah and the Sunní is the doctrine of the Imamát. The annual ceremonies of the Muharram also keep alive the old historic feud. The Sunnís are blamed for the work of their ancestors in the faith, whilst the Khalífs Abu Bakr, Omar, and Osmán are looked upon as usurpers. They had not the ray of light, on the possession of which alone could any one make good a claim to be the Imam, the Guide of the Believers. The terrible disorders of the early days of Islám can only be understood when we realise to some extent the passionate longing which men felt for a spiritual head. It was thought to be impossible that Muhammad, the last of the prophets, should leave the Faithful without a guide, who would be the interpreter of the will of Allah.

Other distinctive differences between the Shí'ah and the Sunní are the belief that the most learned men of the Shí'ahs are Mujtahidín, qualified to give analogical judgments on any point on which a legal decision is needed, and whose decision is final, which authority, however, the

Sunnís decline to accord to them; that the Muharram ceremonies should be observed in commemoration of the deaths of Hasan and Husain, whilst Sunnís observe only the tenth day of Muharram, or the 'Ashúrah, as the day on which Adam was created. There are also minor differences in the liturgical ceremonies, and in some points of the civil law. On what may be termed questions of scholastic philosophy, Shí'ahs differ from the Sunnís, and, speaking generally, have a tendency to a somewhat freer method of looking at some abstruse questions.

We here make a slight digression to show that this longing for a spiritual leader extends beyond the Shí'ah sect, and is of some importance in its bearing upon the Eastern Question. Apart from the superhuman claims for the Imam, what he is as a ruler to the Shí'ah, the Khalíf is to the Sunní—the supreme head in Church and State, the successor of the Prophet, the Conservator of Islam, as made known in the Quran, the Sunnat, the Ijma', and the legal decisions of the early Mujtahidín. To administer the laws, the administrator must have a divine sanction. Thus when the Ottoman ruler, Salím the First, conquered Egypt (A.D. 1516), he sought and obtained, from an old descendant of the Baghdad Khalífs, the transfer of the title to himself, and in this way the Sultans of Turkey became the Khalífs of Islam. Whether Mutawakkil Billal, the last titular Khalíf of the house of 'Abbas, was right or wrong in thus transferring the title is not my purpose now to discuss. I only adduce the fact to show how it illustrates the feeling of the need of a Pontiff—a divinely appointed Ruler. Strictly speaking, according to Muhammadan law, the Sultáns are not Khalífs, for it is clearly laid down in the Traditions that the Khalíf (also the Imam) must be of the tribe of the Quraish, to which the Prophet himself belonged. Ibn 'Umr relates that the Prophet said: "The Khalífs shall be in the Quraish tribe as long as there are two persons in it, one to rule and another to serve." "It is a necessary condition that the Khalif should be of the Quraish tribe."

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

a Khalíf. Unfortunately for Islám, there is nothing in its history parallel to the conflict of Pope and Emperor, of Church and State. "The action and reaction of these powerful and partially independent forces, their resistance to each other, and their ministry to each other, have been of incalculable value to the higher activity and life of Christendom." In Islam the Khalíf is both Pope and Emperor. Ibn Khaldún states that the difference between the Khalíf and any other ruler is that the former rules according to divine, the latter according to human law. The Prophet in transmitting his sacred authority to the Khalífs, his successors, conveyed to them absolute powers. Khalífs can be assassinated, murdered, banished, but so long as they reign anything like constitutional liberty is impossible. It is a fatal mistake in European politics and an evil for Turkey to recognise the Sultan as the Khalíf of Islam, for, if he be such, Turkey can never take any step forward to newness of political life.¹

The Mu'tazilas, or Seceders, were once an influential body. They do not exist as a separate sect now. An account of them will be found in the next chapter.

There has been from the earliest ages of Islam a mystical movement known as Şufiism (Taşawwuf). It has been especially prevalent among the Persians. It is a reaction

¹ Nothing shows this more plainly than the Fatvá pronounced by the Council of the 'Ulamá in July 1879 anent Khairu'd-dín's proposed reform, which would have placed the Sultán in the position of a constitutional sovereign. This was declared to be directly contrary to the Law. Thus:— "The law of the Sheri does not authorise the Khalíf to place beside him a power superior to his own. The Khalíf ought to reign alone and govern as master. The Vakils (Ministers) should never possess any authority beyond that of representatives, always dependent and submissive. It would consequently be a transgression of the *unalterable principles of the Sheri, which should be the guide of all the actions of the Khalíf*, to transfer the supreme power of the Khalíf to one Vakil." This, one of the latest and most important decisions of the jurists of Islam, is quite in accordance with all that has been said about Muhammadan Law. It proves as clearly as possible that so long as the Sultan rules as Khalíf, he must oppose any attempt to set up a constitutional Government. There is absolutely no hope of real reform.

from the burden of a rigid law and a wearisome ritual, a vague protest of the human soul in its longing for a purer creed. The Sufí values the Quran as a divine revelation, but in practice he substitutes the voice of his Pír, or spiritual director, for it. The term Sufí is most probably derived from the Arabic word Suf, "wool," of which material the garments worn by Eastern ascetics used to be generally made. Some persons, however, derive it from the Persian Saf, "pure," or the Greek σοφία, "wisdom." The chief idea in Sufiism is that the souls of men differ in degree, but not in kind, from the Divine Spirit, of which they are emanations, and to which they will ultimately return. The Spirit of God is in all He has made, and it in Him. He alone is perfect love, beauty, and so love to Him is the only *real* thing; all else is illusion. The poet Sa'dí says: "I swear by the truth of God, that when He showed me His glory all else was illusion." The present life is one of separation from the beloved. The beauties of nature, music, and art revive in men the divine idea, and recall their affections from wandering from Him to other objects. These sublime affections men must cherish, and by abstraction concentrate their thoughts on God, and so approximate to His essence, and finally reach the highest stage of bliss—absorption into the Eternal.¹ The true end and object of human life is to lose all consciousness of individual existence, to sink "in the ocean of Divine Life, as a breaking

¹ It is instructive to compare the words of the Christian poet Tennyson with the Şufi idea of absorption into the Divine Being:—

" That each who seems a separate whole
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet ;
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside ;
And I shall know him when we meet."

bubble is merged into the stream on the surface of which it has for a moment risen.”

“Sweep off the life of Háfiz like a dream,
Whilst Thou art, none shall hear me say, ‘I am.’”

The way in which Súfís gain inspiration (ilhám) is thus described. First, they must put away all thoughts of worldly things, of home, family, and country, and so arrive at the state in which the existence or non-existence of things is all the same. Then in retirement, engaged in serving and praising God, the Súfí must cast away all thoughts save of Him. Even the reading of the Quran, the Traditions, and Commentaries may be set aside. “Let him in seclusion, with collectedness of heart, repeat the word Allah, Allah, so often that at last the word involuntarily passes from his lips. Then ceasing to speak, let him utter the word mentally, until even the word is forgotten and the meaning only remains in the heart; then will God enlighten his mind.” The difference between an ordinary Muslim and a Súfí is said to be that the former has only a counterfeit faith (iman-i-taqlídí), or that belief which he accepts on the authority of his forefathers and his teachers, without really knowing how essential true belief in the creed of Islam is for his salvation. The Şufí, on the other hand, is said to search for the origin of religious dogmas. Many spend years in the search and miss it after all, for only those of them who perfectly subject themselves to the Murshid, or spiritual director, find the reality of things and finally arrive at a fully established faith.

The habit of speaking of forbidden things as if they were lawful, such as wine, wine-shops, wine-cups, and the frequent references to sweethearts, curls of the mistress, and other descriptions of the beauty of the beloved, are thus explained. The Súfís look at the internal features of things, exchange the corporeal for the spiritual, and thus to outward forms give an imaginary signification. By wine they mean the love of God; the wine-shop is

the excellent preceptor, to whom a strong spiritual attachment is formed. The ringlets of the beloved are the praises of the preceptor, which bind the heart and affections of the disciple to him. In a similar way some mystical meaning is attached to all other descriptions of a more or less amatory nature.

Şufís suppose that long before the creation of the world a contract was made by the Supreme Soul with the assembled world of spirits, who are parts of it. Each spirit was addressed separately thus: "Art thou not with thy Lord?" that is, bound to him by a solemn contract. To this they all answered with one voice, "Yes."

The principle underlying the Sufí system is that sense and reason cannot transcend phenomena, or see the real being which underlies them all; so sense and reason must be ignored in favour of the "Inner Light," the divine illumination in the heart, which is the only faculty whereby men perceive the Infinite. Thus when enlightened, they see that all the external phenomena, including man, is but an illusion, and as it is "non-existent, it is an evil because it is a departure from the one real being." The one great duty of man is now plain; it is to cast off the "not being," to die to self, to live in this "being." He must live in God, and "break through the one-ness." "In addition to reason, man has a certain faculty (taur) whereby he perceives hidden mysteries"¹ "This faculty is the inner light, the intuition which, under certain conditions, conveys to him a knowledge of God by direct apprehension in a manner similar to the evidences of the senses."

The following verse of the Qurán is quoted by Sufís in support of their favourite dogma—the attaining to the knowledge of God: "When God said to the angels, 'I am about to place a vicegerent on the earth,' they said, 'Wilt Thou place therein one who shall commit abomination and shed blood? Nay; we celebrate Thy praise and holiness.' God answered them, 'Verily I know that ye wot

¹ Gulshán-i-Ráz, Sowál vi.

not of'" (S. ii. 28). It is said that this verse proves that, though the great mass of mankind would commit abomination, some would receive the divine light and attain to a knowledge of God. Sufís also claim as on their side the following verse: "Then found they one of our servants to whom we had vouchsafed our mercy, *and whom we had instructed with our knowledge*" (S. xviii. 64). A Tradition states that David said, "'O Lord! why hast Thou created mankind?' God replied, 'I am a hidden treasure, and I would fain become known.'" The business of the mystic is to find this treasure, to attain to the Divine light and the true knowledge of God. The Sufís are divided into those who claim to be the Ilhamiyah, or those inspired by God, and the Ittihadiyah, or those in union with God.

The earlier Muhammadan mystics sought to impart life to a rigid and formal ritual, and though the seeds of pantheism were planted in their system from the first, they maintained that they were orthodox. "Our system of doctrine," says Al-Junaid, "is firmly bound up with the dogmas of the faith, the Qurán, and the Traditions." There was a moral earnestness about many of these men which frequently restrained the arm of unrighteous power, and their sayings, often full of beauty, show that they had the power of appreciating the spiritual side of life. Some of these sentences are worthy of any age. "As neither meat nor drink," says one, "profit the diseased body, so no warning avails to touch the heart full of the love of this world." "The work of a holy man doth not consist in this, that he eats grain and clothes himself in wool, but in the knowledge of God and submission to His will." "Thou deservest not the name of a learned man, until thy heart is emptied of the love of this world." "Hide thy good deeds as closely as thou wouldst hide thy sins."

"And he'll ne'er take his flight towards heaven's eternal King
Who holds at heart the thought that he's a perfect thing."

A famous mystic was brought into the presence of the

Khalíf Hárúnu'r-Rashíd, who said to him, "How great is thy abnegation?" He replied, "Thine is greater." "How so?" said the Khalíf. "Because I make abnegation of this world, and thou makest abnegation of the next." The same man also said, "The display of devotional works to please men is hypocrisy, and acts of devotion done to please men are acts of polytheism."

Even in a book like the Masnavi of Jelalu'd-dín Rumi, in which Súfíism pure and simple, with all its disregard for the outward restraints of an objective revelation, is inculcated, the author now and again teaches sounder principles. Thus, in Redhouse's translation, we read:—

"To trust in God, and yet put forth our utmost skill,
The surest method is to work His holy will :
The friend of God must work."

"Exert thyself, O man ! put shoulder to the wheel,
The prophets and the saints to imitate in zeal.
Exertion's not a struggle against Providence :
'Twas Providence enjoined it—made it our defence."

But towards the close of the second century of the Hijrah this earlier mysticism developed into Súfíism. A little later on, Al-Hallaj taught in Baghdad thus: "I am the Truth. There is nought in Paradise but God. I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I; we are two souls dwelling in one body. When thou seest me, thou seest Him; and when thou seest Him, thou seest me." This roused the opposition of the orthodox divines, by whom Al-Hallaj was condemned to be worthy of death. He was then, by order of the Khalíf, flogged, tortured, and finally beheaded (309 A.H.). Thus died one of the early martyrs of Súfíism; but it grew in spite of bitter persecution.

In order to understand the esoteric teaching of Súfíistic poetry, it is necessary to remember that the perceptive sense is the traveller, the knowledge of God the goal; the doctrines of this ascent or upward progress is the Taríqat, or the road. The extinction of self is necessary before

any progress can be made on that road. A Šúfí poet writes :—

“Plant one foot upon the neck of self,
The other in thy Friend’s domain ;
In everything His presence see,
For other vision is in vain.”

Sa’dí in the Bostán says : “Art thou a friend of God ? Speak not of self, for to speak of God and of self is infidelity.” Shaikh Abu’l-Faiz, a great poet and a friend of the Emperor Akbar, from whom he received the honourable title of Maliku’sh-Shu‘ara (Master of the Poets), says : “Those who have not closed the door on existence and non-existence reap no advantage from the calm of this world and of the world to come.” Khusrau, another well-known poet, says :—

“I have become Thou : Thou art become I,
I am the body, Thou the soul ;
Let no one henceforth say
That I am distinct from Thee, and Thou from me.”

The fact is, that Persian poetry is almost entirely Súfíistic. Pantheistic doctrines are largely inculcated.¹ Thus :—

“I was, ere a name had been named upon earth ;
Ere one trace yet existed of aught that has birth ;
When the locks of the Loved One streamed forth for a sign,
And Being was none, save the Presence Divine !
Named and name were alike emanations from Me,
Ere aught that was ‘I’ existed, or ‘We.’”

The poet then describes his fruitless search for rest and peace in Christianity, Hinduism, and the religion of the Parsee. Even Islam gave him no satisfaction, for—

“Nor above nor beneath came the Loved One to view,
I toiled to the summit, wild, pathless, and lone,
Of the globe-girding Kaf :—but the ‘Anka had flown !

¹ “Le spiritualisme des Sofis, quoiqu’il soit le contraire du matérialisme lui est en réalité identique. Mais si leur doctrine n’est pas plus raisonnable, elle est du moins plus élevée et plus poétique.” (Poésie Philosophique et Religieuse chez les Persans, par M. Garcin de Tassy, p. 2.)

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

one idea, the knowledge of God. In this road there are eight stages:—(1.) Service ('Abúdiyát). Here he must serve God and obey the Law, for he is still in bondage. (2.) Love ('Ishk). It is supposed that now the Divine influence has so attracted his soul that he really loves God. (3.) Seclusion (Zuhd). Love having expelled all worldly desires, he arrives at this stage, and passes his time in meditation on the deeper doctrines of Suffism regarding the Divine nature. (4.) Knowledge (Ma'rifat). The meditation in the preceding stage, and the investigation of the metaphysical theories concerning God, His nature, His attributes, and the like, make him an 'Arif—one who knows. (5.) Ecstasy (Wajd or Hal). The mental excitement caused by such continued meditation on abstruse subjects produces a kind of frenzy, which is looked upon as a mark of direct illumination of the heart from God. Arrival at this stage is highly valued, for it is the certain entrance to the next.

“Amazement fell upon him, stupor bathed each sense,
Ecstatic trance then followed, earth and sky flew hence;
Such ecstasy, such words, beyond all mood and tense,
Immersion total in God's glorious effulgence.”

The next stage (6) is the Truth (Haqiqat). The true nature of God is revealed to the Traveller, who now learns the reality of that which he has been for so long seeking. This admits him to the highest stage in his journey, as far as this life is concerned. (7.) That stage is union with God (Waşl).¹

“There was a door to which I found no key;
There was a veil past which I could not see:
Some little talk of Me and Thee
There seemed—and then no more of Thee and Me.”

He cannot, in this life, go beyond that, and very few

¹ This is defined as “the extinction of our own existence in the existence of God, as snow melts in the sea and as motes vanish in the sun” (Tamámiu'l-Asamí, quoted by Tholuck.)

reach that exalted stage. Jalálu'd-dín considers that prophets reach this stage, for, as Redhouse translates it:—

“God is invisible to weakly mortal sight ;
His prophets are a need, to guide His Church aright.
No ! that's not right ; the phrase is sadly incorrect ;
A prophet's one with God, not two : think well, reflect,
They are not two, they are one. Then, blind materialist,
With God they're one ; their forms but make Him manifest.”

Thus arose a “system of Pantheism, which represents joy and sorrow, good and evil, pleasure and pain as manifestations of one changeless essence.” Religion, as made known by an outward revelation, is, to the few who reach this stage, a thing of the past. Even its restraints are not needed. The soul that is united to God can do no evil. The poet Khusrau says : “Love is the object of my worship ; what need have I of Islam ?” It is only so long as the soul is apart from God, only so long as there is a distinct personality embracing evil as well as good tendencies, that the Law is needed. Thus in the *Gulshan-i-Raz* we read—

“All the authority of the Law is over this ‘I’ of yours,
Since that is bound to your soul and body ;
When ‘I’ and ‘you’ remain not in the midst,
What is mosque, what is synagogue, what is fire-temple ?”

Death ensues, and with it the last stage is reached. (8.) It is *Fana*—extinction. The seeker after all his search, the traveller after all his wearisome journey, passes behind the veil and finds—nothing ! As the traveller proceeds from stage to stage, the restraints of an objective revelation and of an outward system are less and less heeded. “The religion of the mystic consists in his immediate communication with God, and when once this has been established, the value of ecclesiastical forms and of the historical part of religion becomes doubtful.” What law can bind the soul in union with God, what outward system impose any trammels on one who, in the “Ecstasy,” has received from Him who is the Truth the direct revela-

tion of His own glorious nature? Moral laws and ceremonial observances have only an allegorical signification. Creeds are but fetters cunningly devised to limit the flight of the soul; all that is objective in religion is a restraint to the reason of the initiated.¹

The traveller on the mystic path finds much aid from three things: attraction (*injazab*), devotion (*'ibadat*), elevation (*'urij*). When the grace of God enters the heart the man is attracted towards God. He should then renounce everything which hinders his being drawn Godwards; he must forget all else but God. He is now called the attracted (*majzub*). Others use further aids for development. They pass their time in introspection and devotion. They are called the "devoutly attracted" (*majzúb-i-salik*). All teachers of Sufism should be of this rank at least. The third aid, "elevation," seems to mean steady progress in the upward path. The journey *to* God is completed when all existence save that of God is denied; then commences the journey *in* God, when all the mysteries of nature are made plain and clear. In due time God guideth whom He pleaseth to His own light—the Divine light of His own nature. Now the progress is complete, for "from Him they spring and unto Him they return."

Dogmatic religion is compared by Jalalu'd-dín to water used for the purposes of a mill; after it has turned the wheel it is of no further use, and may now be rejected.

So to the Sufi the orthodox dogmas and the outward forms of religion carry no authority, for "he sees the realm where his spirit thoughts may roam, he careers over the boundless fields of ecstasy, where fancy joins reality in entity."

In interpreting the mystical poems of Hafiz and other Sufistic writers, it must be borne in mind that the point

¹ "Ils pensent que la Bible et le Coran ont été seulement écrits pour l'homme qui se contente de l'apparence des choses, qui s'occupe de l'extérieur, pour le *záhir parast*, comme ils le nomment, et non pour le *sofi* qui sonde le fond des choses." (*La Poésie Philosophique et Religieuse chez les Persans*, par M. Garcin de Tassy, p. 13.)

of view from which they discuss their views is generally the second stage ('Ishk), in which the Traveller is supposed to have attained to the "love of God."

Pantheistic in creed, and too often antinomian in practice, Sufiism possesses no regenerative power in Islam. "It is not a substantive religion such as shapes the life of races or of nations; it is a state of opinion." No Muslim State makes a national profession of Šufiism. The general result has worked for evil in Islam. The divorce between the "religious" life and the worldly life has been disastrous. Sufiism has separated between those who by renouncing the world profess to know God, and those whom it terms the ignorant herd, who may nevertheless have been striving to do their duty in their daily lives and avocations. When man's apparent individuality is looked upon as a delusion of the perceptive faculty, there seems no room left for will or conscience. Profligate persons may become darwishes and cover a licentious life by pious phrases; emancipated from ritual order and law, they seem free also from moral restraints. Thus, to use the words of Major Osborn, "A movement animated at its outset by a high and lofty purpose has degenerated into a fruitful source of ill. The stream which ought to have expanded into a fertilising river has become a vast swamp, exhaling vapours charged with disease and death."

In spite of all its dogmatic utterances, in spite of much that is sublime in its idea of the search after light and truth, Sufiism ends in utter negation of all separate existence.¹ The pantheism of the Sufís, this esoteric doctrine of Islam, as a moral doctrine leads to the same conclusions as materialism, "the negation of human liberty, the indifference to actions, and the legitimacy of all temporal enjoyments."

¹ "The Muhammadan mystics conceive of an union of essence; but they associate it with the annihilation of personal consciousness, so that the individual is lost, like a drop in the ocean of Deity. According to the Christian view, consciousness, so far from being annihilated in the union with God, is, on the contrary, only thus perfected in its own peculiarity." (Olshausen.)

This is plainly stated by Jalálu'd-din, who says that the registers of good and bad deeds are not to be examined in the case of holy men.¹

The result of Sufiism has been the establishment of a large number of religious orders known as Darwishes. These men are looked upon with disfavour by the orthodox, but they nourish nevertheless, and in Turkey at the present day have great influence. There are in Constantinople two hundred Takyahs or monasteries. Each order of Darwishes has its own special mysteries and practices, by which its members think they can obtain a knowledge of the secrets of the invisible world. They are also called Faqírs—poor men, not, however, always in the sense of being in temporal want, but as being poor in the sight of God. As a matter of fact, the Darwishes of many of the orders do not beg, and many of the Takyahs are richly endowed. They are divided into two great classes, the Ba Shara' (with the Law) Darwishes, and the Be Shara' (without the Law). The former profess to rule their conduct according to the law of Islam, and are called the Salik, travellers on the path (tariqat) to heaven; the latter, though they call themselves Muslims, do not conform to the law, and are called Azad (free), or Majzúb (abstracted), a term which signifies their renunciation of all worldly cares and pursuits. The latter do not even pay attention to the namaz or other observances of Islam. What little hope there is of these professedly religious men working any reform in Islam will be seen from the following account of their doctrines.²

1. God only exists,—He is in all things, and all things are in Him. Verily we are *from* God, and *to* Him shall we return. (S. ii. 151.)

¹ The registers referred to are the "Book of Actions," to be placed in the hands of all at the judgment-day. If placed in the right hand, the man is saved; if in the left, he is lost; but according to the teaching of the Sufis no inquiry is made into the conduct of saints.

² La Poesie Philosophique et Religieuse chez les Persans, per M. Garcin de Tassy, p. 7.

2. All visible and invisible beings are an emanation from Him, and are not really distinct from Him.

3. Paradise and Hell, and all the dogmas of positive religions, are only so many allegories, the spirit of which is only known to the Sufi.

4. Religions are matters of indifference; they, however, serve as a means of reaching to realities. Some, for this purpose, are more advantageous than others. Among which is the Musalman religion, of which the doctrine of the Sufis is the philosophy.

5. There is not any real difference between good and evil, for all is reduced to unity, and God is the real author of the acts of mankind.

6. It is God who fixes the will of man. Man, therefore, is not free in his actions.

7. The soul existed before the body, and is now confined within it as in a cage. At death the soul returns to the Divinity from which it emanated.¹

8. The principal occupation of the Sufi is to meditate on the unity, and so to attain to spiritual perfection—unification with God.

9. Without the grace of God no one can attain to this unity; but God does not refuse His aid to those who are in the right path.

The power of a Shaikh, a spiritual leader, is very great. The following account of the admission of a Novice, called Tawakkul Beg, into an order, and of the severe tests applied, will be of some interest.² Tawakkul Beg says:—

“Having been introduced by Akhund Mulla Muhammad to Shaikh Mulla Shah, my heart, through frequent intercourse with him, was filled with such a burning desire to arrive at a true knowledge of the mystical science that I found no sleep by night nor rest by day. When the initiation commenced, I passed the whole night with-

¹ Masnavi, Book i.

² Sufi doctrines of the Mullá Sháh, by Tawakkul Beg. *Journal Asiatique*, 6me Serie, tome 13.

out sleep, and repeated innumerable times the Súratu'l-Ikhlás :—

‘Say : He is God alone,
 God the eternal :
 He begetteth not, and He is not begotten ;
 And there is none like unto Him.’ (S. cxii.)

“ Whosoever repeats this Súrah one hundred times can accomplish all his vows. I desired that the Shaikh should bestow on me his love. No sooner had I finished my task than the heart of the Shaikh became full of sympathy for me. On the following night I was conducted to his presence. During the whole of that night he concentrated his thoughts on me, whilst I gave myself up to inward meditation. Three nights passed in this way. On the fourth night the Shaikh said, ‘Let Mulla Senghim and Sálíh Beg, who are very susceptible to ecstatic emotions, apply their spiritual energies to Tawakkul Beg.’

“ They did so, whilst I passed the whole night in meditation, with my face turned toward Mecca. As the morning drew near, a little light came into my mind, but I could not distinguish form or colour. After the morning prayers I was taken to the Shaikh, who bade me inform him of my mental state. I replied that I had seen a light with my inward eye. On hearing this, the Shaikh became animated and said, ‘Thy heart is dark, but the time is come when I will show myself clearly to thee.’ He then ordered me to sit down in front of him, and to impress his features on my mind. Then, having blindfolded me, he ordered me to concentrate all my thoughts upon him. I did so, and in an instant, by the spiritual help of the Shaikh, my heart opened. He asked me what I saw. I said that I saw another Tawakkul Beg and another Mulla Shah. The bandage was then removed, and I saw the Shaikh in front of me. Again they covered my face, and again I saw him with my inward eye. Astonished, I cried, ‘O master ! whether I look with my bodily eye or with my spiritual sight, it is always you I see.’ I then saw a dazzling

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

The Rev. Dr. Imádu'd-dín in his autobiography has described how, in his search after truth, which finally led him to embrace Christianity, he passed through a somewhat similar stage. He says, "I used to shut my eyes and sit in retirement, seeking, by thinking on the name of God, to write it on my heart. I constantly sat on the graves of holy men, in hopes that by contemplation I might receive some revelation from the tombs. I went and sat in the assemblies of the elders, and hoped to receive grace by gazing on the face of the Sufís. I used to take my petitions with joy to the shrine of Kalandar Bo 'Alí, and to the threshold of the saint Nizamu'd-dín. I sought for union with God from travellers and from faqírs, and even from the insane, according to the tenets of the Sufí mystics." He then describes how his Director gave him a mystical book which contained the sum of everlasting happiness, and how he followed the instructions given. He sat on one knee by the side of a flowing stream for twelve days in perfect solitude, fasting and repeating a certain form of devotion thirty times a day. He wrote the name of God thousands of times on paper, wrapped each piece on which the name was written in a small ball of flour, and fed the fishes of the river with them. Half of each night he sat up and "meditated on the name of God, and saw Him with the eye of thought." But all this left him agitated and restless for some years, until, having turned towards the Christian religion, he was able to say, "Since my entrance

similar lines. There can, I think, be no doubt that hypnotism and auto-hypnotism form the basis on which many initiations rest, and doubtless the Yoga practice in India is at first, at any rate, nothing but induced or auto-hypnotism. From what we know of hypnotism in its most modern development, there can, I think, be little doubt that, apart from the rare cases of natural clairvoyance, trained clairvoyance is certainly a fact. In the hypnotic sleep, whether induced or self-induced, apparitions are far from infrequent, and to my mind explain the apparition which Tawakkul Beg saw. In this case it is rather curious to notice that a voice was not heard, but the figure seems to have answered inaudibly to the querent. In many other cases this is not so, and the novice really hears or is conscious of direct spoken words."

into the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have had great peace in my soul."

Before passing from this branch of our subject, it is necessary to say something about 'Umr Khayyam, who, if not a Súfí, had much in common with Súfism. About seven centuries and a half ago, three lads, each destined to become famous, were playfellows in the city of Naishapúr, the capital of Khurasan. The story goes that the three lads made a compact to the effect that the one who first arrived at a position of eminence should use his influence on behalf of the other two. Nizámu'l-Mulk, who became, in due course, the Vizier of Alp Arslan and of Malik Shah, had the privilege of fulfilling the engagement, and this he did most loyally. At his request, his former schoolfellow, Hasan-bin-Sabbah, was appointed to an office in the administration of the Sultan's dominions; but being dissatisfied on account of the slowness of his promotion, he commenced to intrigue against his benefactor, and was finally disgraced. After many adventures he became the founder of the sect of the Assassins. His fortress was the castle of Alamút, situated in the mountainous tract south of the Caspian Sea. He is known in accounts of the Crusades as the "Old Man of the Mountains." Nizámu'l-Mulk fell a victim to an assassin's dagger.

The third lad was 'Umr Khayyám. Nizámu'l-Mulk wished him to remain at the court of the Sultan, but this he declined to do. "The greatest boon," said he, "you can confer on me is to let me live in a corner under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the advantages of science, and to pray for your long life and prosperity." His request was agreed to, and a small pension was granted to him. In the reign of Malik Shah he was appointed, in conjunction with seven other learned men, to the work of reforming the Calendar. The result of their labours is known as the Jaláli Era, of which Gibbon says, "It is a computation of time which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style." 'Umr

Khayyám also compiled the astronomical tables called *Zij-i-Malikshahi*, and wrote a treatise on Algebra. The Sultan Malik Shah esteemed him highly for his scientific attainments and “showered favours upon him.” Still, neither his attainments in this direction, great for the age in which he lived, nor the many marks of favour the Sultan showed to him, could make ‘Umr Khayyam a popular man. The reason of this will be seen as we consider in some detail the poem with which his name will be, so long as Persian literature shall last, indissolubly connected. It is not as a man of science, but as a poet that his name has come down with fame to posterity. In the whole range of Persian literature there are few books more attractive, though none more sad, than the *Rubá‘iyat* of ‘Umr Khayyam.¹ The scathing sarcasm, the wit and the vigour of the expressions, the possible esoteric teaching of many verses, the utter despair and despondency which runs through the whole, render this short poem unique of its kind. It possesses a special interest for all students of human thought and life, for it shows how a man, learned in his day, found no abiding consolation in scientific researches, no rest in the pantheism of the Sufí, no satisfaction in the sterner creed of his orthodox Muslim friends, and no peace whatever in a cynical rejection of religious belief. He was a bold brave man, and gave free utterance to his thoughts. It is said that the Sufís hated him, but later poets have used his figures of speech in a mystical sense, and some have claimed him as a Sufí. This he is not. The scorn for external rights shown by the Sufí is one way of declaring his belief that all existence is illusion, but he has no intention of destroying all religious feeling. The amorous language of the mystic is

¹ The term *Rubá‘í* is used for a quatrain in which the first, second, and fourth lines always rhyme, and sometimes the third as well. *Rubá‘iyat* means a collection of such quatrains in one poem. No edition, so far as I know, contains more than “two hundred and fifty-three verses.” Khayyám is the *Takhallus*, or *nom de plume* of the poet, and literally means “tent-maker.”

meant to be devout. 'Umr Khayyám at times uses Súfí language, but only to show his contempt for orthodoxy and his own epicurean tastes. The Súfí does believe something; 'Umr Khayyam believed nothing and was a saddened man. This is the great lesson the Ruba'iyat teaches us. Unbelief in the twelfth, as in the nineteenth century, could give no peace, no settled calm to the restless soul of an earnest, thoughtful man. In order to appreciate the beauty of the Rubá'iyát, we must remember that the author was a man utterly wearied with the religious conflicts of his day and the hollowness of many professors of religion, a man who turned from all in blank despair, and who, finding no Gospel to direct him to the Light of the World, fell into utter darkness. It may be the lot of many thoughtful men to pass through the earlier stages of 'Umr's mental career, yet none need follow him into the gloom of despair, for now, far and wide, the good news of the kingdom of God has reached, and life and immortality are brought to light.

Let us now turn to the poem. There is no definite order or arrangement in it, and 'Umr's views must be gathered here and there. 'Umr is looked upon as a Súfí by some, as a mere Epicurean by others, who speak of his views as "Rindana Mazhab." It is the latter with whom we agree, although we think that he only came to be this when he failed to satisfy the cravings of his nature for higher truth. However, we may first notice some of the verses on which Şufis base their claim to him.

"Once and again my soul did me implore
To teach her, if I might, the inspired lore :
I bade her learn the Alif well by heart ;
Who knows that letter well need learn no more."

The letter Alif, the first letter of the alphabet, is used in the numerical notation called Abjad to represent the number one, and so "to know the Alif" is a figurative expression meaning to know God as the One, the sole

existent Being. It is a common expression amongst Śúfí poets. Thus Hafiz says—

“My Loved one’s Alif form stamps all my thought,
Save that, what letter has my master taught?”

That is, he who knows the God as One knows all—he needs no other teaching.

“The search for that ‘single Alif’ was a great spur to inquiry. It struck the imagination as a kind of vista which narrowed, the further one advanced, by the progressive elimination of all unimportant accidents from the vast and complex phenomenon which had to be investigated, until at the far end the inquirer was brought to the philosopher’s stone, the single Alif, the narrow portal which gave admission to the temple of universal knowledge.”

A belief in the Unity is supposed to cover a multitude of sins.

“Khayyám strings not the fair pearls of good deeds,
Nor sweeps from off his soul sin’s noisome weeds ;
Nevertheless he humbly hopes for grace,
Seeing that One as two he ne’er misreads.”

It is possible that ‘Umr Khayyám is here speaking satirically. Anyhow, it is good Śúfí doctrine. The doctrine of the Tauhid is the central dogma of Islam. In ordinary language it means “there is no god but God,” but in the mystical language of the Sufís it means “there is no Being—no real existence—but God.” Everything else but God is phenomenal and non-existent. Thus “One as two he ne’er misreads,” means that he looks on all else but God as illusion.

The final goal of all Śúfí aspiration is absorption in the Divine, and this ‘Umr seems to teach in—

“O Soul! when on the Loved one’s sweets to feed
You lose your *self*, yet find your *Self* indeed ;
And when you drink of His entrancing cup,
You hasten your escape from quick and dead.”

“To die to self, to live eternally in God,” is the mystic doctrine round which the Śúfí system professedly gathers,

though it is not so much life *in* God, as Faná, or extinction, which leads the Muríd (disciple) on stage after stage in the mystic journey until the end is reached, and the phenomenal "Not-being" is lost for ever in the Eternal "Being." This belief in the illusion of phenomena is described by 'Umr thus:—

"The drop wept for his severance from the sea,
But the sea smiled, for, 'I am all,' said he,
'And naught exists outside my unity,
My one point circling apes plurality.'"

The "one point" is the "Being." It is not easy to get much sense out of the last line as it stands here, but some light is thrown upon it by a somewhat similar statement in a well-known Súfí book, the *Gulshan-i-Raz*:—

"Go! whirl round one spark of fire,
And from its quick motion you will see a circle."

The circle is not real, it is phenomenal, and thus the "point circling *apes* plurality;" and, after all, the sole existence is the "one point." The Súfí does not trouble himself much with creeds and confessions. He has little faith in systems of religion. If what he deems "The Truth" is known, he cares very little about an objective revelation or an ecclesiastical system. If earth and all it contains are an illusion, so also, he considers, heaven and hell may be. Such notions may be needed for those weaker souls who in Jewish synagogue or Christian cloister or Muslim mosque need an outward law as a restraint and a guide, but for the Illuminated all these things are worthless:—

"In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosoms rule;
But they who pierce the secrets of the 'Truth,'
Sow not such empty chaff their hearts to fool."

Even fate has no objective existence:—

"Pen, tablet, heaven, and hell I looked to see
Above the skies from all eternity;
At last the Master sage instructed me
'Pen, tablet, heaven, and hell are all in thee.'"

Thus far 'Umr is Súfiistic, but yet he is not a Súfí. There is a certain calm in the life of the Súfí to which 'Umr never attains. He is full of despair, in spite of the rollicking mood in which many verses are written. Life is not worth having, not worth living.

“ I never would have come, had I been asked ;
I would as lief not go, if I were asked ;
And, to be short, I would annihilate
All coming, being, going, were I asked.”

'Umr was, in reality, a fatalist. His training as a youth in the orthodox school under Imam Muaffik would naturally produce this result. Neither his scientific studies, nor the lighter ones of literature, seem to have led him to a brighter view of the universe.

“ The ‘ tablet ’ all our fortune doth contain,
Writ by the ‘ pen ’ that heeds not bliss nor bane ;
'Twas writ at first whatever was to be,
To grieve or strive is labour all in vain.

“ We are but chessmen, who to move are fain
Just as the great Chess-player doth ordain ;
He moves us on life’s chess-board too and fro,
And then in Death’s box shuts us up again.”¹

So he gives it all up. It is useless to contend against irresistible decrees. It is useless to grieve over it, so

“ O heart ! this world is but a fleeting show,
Why let its empty griefs distress thee so ?
Bear up and face thy fate ; the eternal pen
Will not unwrite his roll for thee, I trow.”

“ O Soul, so soon to leave this soil below,
And pass the dread mysterious curtain through,
Be of good cheer, and joy you while you may,
You wot not whence you come, nor whither go.”

The result is that all sense of personal responsibility to a Personal God is lost. Good and evil are matters of in-

¹ Most of these verses are from the Rubá'iyát of 'Umr Khayyám, and are taken, with permission, from an excellent translation by Whinfield (Trubner's Oriental Series).

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

No one can accuse 'Umr Khayyám of not having the courage of his opinions. In his position he could say and do what men of lesser note could not. Mulla and Pír, Philosopher and Saint, all have to bear his bitter sarcasm. He calls upon them to leave their dogmas, vigils, and researches, and to join with him in the enjoyment of an animal existence. To the Philosopher he says—

“Slaves of vain wisdom and philosophy,
Who toil at Being and Nonentity,
Parching your brains like dry and shrivelled grapes,
Be wise in time, and drink grape-juice like me !”

To the Şúfí he says—

“The joyous souls who quaff potations deep,
And Saints whom the mosque sad vigils keep,
Are lost at sea alike, and find no shore ;
One only wakes, all others are asleep.”

To the Mullá, for whom he has no mercy, he says—

“Mullá ! give heed, if thou true Muslim be,
Quit saintly show and feigned austerity,
And quaff the wine that blessed 'Alí pours,
And sport with Ḥouris 'neath this shady tree.”

“A Mullá spied a harlot, and quoth he,
'You seem a slave to drink and lechery.'
And she made answer, 'What I seem I am,
But, Mulla, are you all you seem to be?'"

There is a verse in the Qurán which says, “Kill them (your foes) wherever ye shall find them” (S. xii. 187). 'Umr makes a curious use of this verse, and by it refutes and confounds the Mullas who objected to his use of wine.

“From right and left grave Mullás came and stood,
Saying, 'Renounce this wine, this foe of good ;'
But if wine be my foe, as they declare,
I swear by Allah I must drink his blood.”

The Mullás held out hopes to all the faithful of Houris in Paradise. 'Umr, on his principle of “ready cash,” cannot see that what is morally right there can be morally wrong here. The satire is perfect in

“ All a long summer's day her Khayyám lies
 On this green sward, gazing on Houris' eyes,
 Yet Mullas say he is a graceless dog,
 Who never gives a thought to Paradise.

“ In Paradise are Houris, as you know,
 And fountains that with wine and honey flow ;
 If these be lawful in the world above,
 What harm to love the like down here below ?”

No doubt he heard these men speak much of God's mercy, a sentiment too often, then as now, a cloak for evil-doing. 'Umr, whatever his views on the subject as an abstract question may have been, was far too honest a man to treat it, in the way he heard it, as more than a mere shibboleth.

“ O thou who hast done ill, and ill alone,
 Think not to find forgiveness at the throne ;
 Hope not for mercy, for good left undone
 Cannot be done, nor evil done undone.”

It is thus no wonder that, seeing unreality all around, in the mysticism of the Sufí as in the formalism of the orthodox, and with no true gospel placed before him, he should get utterly weary of the world.

“ Ah ! would there were a place of rest from pain,
 Which we poor pilgrims might at last attain,
 And, after many thousand wintry years,
 Renew our youth like flowers and bloom again.”

'Umr Khayyám was a strange compound. He often utters nobler sentiments than those we have yet quoted from his poem. His better nature comes out in the earnest longing for a true, a perfect guide.

“ Open the door of Truth, O Usher purest !
 And guide the way, O thou of guides the surest !
 Directors born of men shall not direct me ;
 Their counsel comes to nought, but thou endurest.”

Cynical though he was, he retains kindly feeling for others. A noble sentiment is contained in

“Whate'er thou doest, never grieve thy brother,
 Nor raise a fume of wrath his peace to smother.
 Dost thou desire to taste eternal bliss?
 Vex thine own heart, but never vex another.”

It is quite natural that he should show a spirit of toleration, but this is merely the result of indifferentism, which looked upon all systems of religion as equally true and equally false.

“Pagodas are, like mosques, true homes of prayer;
 'Tis prayer that church-bells waft upon the air;
 Ka'bah and temple, rosary and cross,
 All are but divers tongues of world-wide prayer.

“Hearts with the light of love illumined well,
 Whether in mosque or synagogue they dwell,
 Have their names written in the book of love,
 Unvexed by hopes of heaven or fears of hell.”

Still, in spite of an occasional glimpse of a better nature, of more hopeful qualities, the student of the Ruba'iyat will come to see that 'Umr Khayyam was a saddened man, that he had no hope in the future or in God. What bitter words are these with which the poem concludes:—

“Khayyám of burning heart, perchance to burn
 In hell, and feed its balefires in thy turn,
 Presume not to teach Allah clemency,
 For who art thou to teach, or He to learn?”

Is it any wonder that, in spite of his better nature, he should become cold and heartless, that he should be callous and careless?

“Quoth fish to duck: 'Twould be a sad affair
 Should this brook ever leave his channel bare.'
 To whom the duck: 'When I am dead and roasted,
 The ocean may run dry for aught I care.'”

'Umr Khayyám has with justice been compared to Lucretius. Both were materialists, both believed not in a future life. “Lucretius built a system for himself in his poem . . . it has a professed practical aim—to explain the world's self-acting machine to the polytheist, and to

disabuse him of all spiritual ideas." 'Umar Khayyám builds up no system, he only shows forth his own doubts and difficulties; "he loves to balance antitheses of belief, and settle himself in the equipoise of the sceptic."

The fact that there is no hereafter gives Lucretius no pain, but 'Umr, who, if only his reason could let him, would believe, records his utter despair in words of passionate bitterness. He is not glad that there is no help anywhere.¹ And though he calls for the wine-cup, and listens to the voice within the tavern cry—

"Awake, my little ones, and fill the cup
Before Life's liquor in its cup be dry,"

yet he also looks back to the time when he consorted with those who professed to know, and could say—

"With them the seed of wisdom did I sow,
And with my own hand laboured it to grow."

The modern sect of the Bábís is closely connected with the teaching of the Shí'ahs on the Imam, his position and functions, and with the mystical modes of thought of the Sufís. It is not strictly correct to call them a Muslim sect, for they practically discard the Quran and supersede Muhammad. But the close connection of Babíism with Muhammadan dogmas, its present-day importance and the devotion of its followers claim for it more than a passing notice. No non-Christian sect in modern days has suffered such perse-

¹ "That 'Umr in his impiety was false to his better nature we may readily admit, while, at the same time, we may find some excuse for his errors if we remember the state of the world at that time. His clear strong sense revolted from the prevailing mysticism where all the earnest spirits of his age found their refuge, and his honest independence was equally shocked by the hypocrites who aped their fervour and enthusiasm; and at that dark hour of man's history, whither, out of Islam, was the thoughtful Muhammadan to repair? No missionary's step, bringing good tidings, had appeared on the mountains of Persia; the few Christians who might cross his path in his native land would only seem to him idolaters." Speaking, too, of Sa'di's life the reviewer says: "Almost the only point of contact with Christendom is his slavery under the Crusaders at Tripoli. The same isolation runs through all the golden period of Persian literature." (*Calcutta Review*, No. LIX.)

cution and survived. The movement is one which illustrates the mystical tendency of Persian thought, the fanaticism of the Mullas, and the barbarity of the rulers; but all the efforts of the Muslim Church and State have hitherto failed to suppress Babism, or to lessen the veneration in which the Bab is held by all who accept his teaching.

Abú'l-Qasim (Al-Mahdi), the twelfth Imam, disappeared in the year 329 A.H., but for a period of sixty-nine years he is said to have held intercourse with his followers through a successive number of men, who were called the Doors or mediums of communication. Abu'l-Hasan, the last of these Doors, refused to appoint a successor, saying that "God hath a purpose which He will accomplish." Many centuries passed by, and it was not until the beginning of the present one that this curious theory of intermediaries between the concealed Imam and the Faithful again took definite shape.

Shaikh Ahmad (1753-1826 A.D.), the founder of the Shaikhí sect, was a devout ascetic and a man of independent thought. He had a profound belief in 'Alí, and was devoted to the memory of the Imams, whom he looked upon as creative forces, arguing from the text, "God the best of creators" (S. xxiii. 14), that, if He be the best, He cannot be the only one. The special point of his teaching was that "God is immanent in the universe which proceeds from Him, and that all the elect of God, all the Imams, and all just persons are personifications of the divine attributes." ¹

Shaikh Ahmad was succeeded by a man who soon commanded much respect and influence. His name was Haji Syed Kazim. He died in the year 1843 A.D., and left no successor. After fastings, vigils, and prayers for guidance, the Shaikhís began to consider what was to be done in the matter of a spiritual director. Mulla Husain proceeded to Shíraz, and there met with Mírza 'Alí Muhammad, who produced before him the signs of his call to his divine mission. For several days Mulla Husain pondered over these matters, and, after a long and severe struggle, became

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, 6me Série, tome vii. p. 458.

convinced that he had found in the young and ardent enthusiast before him the "True One," to whose advent Hají Syed Kazim had pointed. "He wrote to his friends at Karbalá that neither he himself nor any other of them was worthy of the high dignity of Murshid (or leader), and that that "Illuminated One" to whom their late master had referred was alone worthy. I have found him at Shíraz, and he is worthy to be the Murshid." ¹

As the connection between the Babís and the Shaikís is thus so close, we must now see what was the special dogma of the latter sect. The orthodox Shí'ah creed consists of five articles, which are called the pillars or supports of the Faith (irkan-i-dín). They are belief (1) in the unity of God (tauhid), (2) in the justice of God ('adl), (3) in prophetship (nabúwat), (4) in the imamate (imamat), (5) in the resurrection (ma'ad). The Shaikís set aside the articles two and five, as already implied in the belief in God and the prophets. To take the place of the rejected articles and to bring the number up to four, they added a new one which they called the Fourth Support or Pillar (rukn-i-rabi'). The meaning of this is that there must always be amongst believers one perfect man (Shí'ah-i-Kamil') who can be the channel of grace (wasita-i-faiz) between the absent Imam and his people. The term "fourth support" is primarily applied to the dogma that the concealed Imam must always have on earth some one who possesses his entire confidence, to whom he gives special spiritual instruction, and who is thus qualified to convey to the believers the wishes and wisdom of their invisible head. The term has, however, come to be applied to the person who fulfils this office. At first the Báb claimed to be this "fourth support," and so to occupy the place held by the "doors," who were the earlier intermediaries between the Imam and his followers. Thus it is that Bábism is connected with the very central doctrine of the Shí'ahs, though in many other ways it has so far departed

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, 6me Série, tome vii. p. 465.

from accepted Muḥammadán ideas as to form a new sect altogether.

Mírza 'Alí Muhammad, the Bab, was born at Shíraz on the 9th of October 1820. When quite young he lost his father. For a time the youth assisted his uncle in mercantile pursuits, but as his mind was more inclined to religious meditation and speculative thought than to business affairs, he proceeded to Karbala, where he was brought into contact with Hají Syed Kazim, the Shaikhí leader, whose lectures he occasionally attended. At Karbala he was distinguished by his zeal for learning and by his remarkably austere life. Visitors to Karbala, especially those from Shíraz, showed him much consideration, and so his fame was spread abroad. He now composed a commentary on Súratu'l-Yúsuf.

The Babi historian¹ says of this work, that "in it he addressed himself to that person unseen, from whom he received help and grace, sought for aid in the arrangement of his preliminaries, and craved the sacrifice of life in the way of love. Amongst others is this sentence: "O residue of God,² I am wholly sacrificed to Thee; I am content with

¹ Maqálah-i-Shakhsí Saiyáh, p. 4.

² The expression residue (or remnant) of God—*Baqiyat Ulláh*—is a very peculiar one. It is connected with a curious belief of the Shí'ahs, viz., that God allowed some part or fraction of Himself in some way or other to be connected with the Imám. As soon then as Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad was raised by his followers to the dignity of the Bab, or as soon as the idea became present to his own mind, he could address the Imám as the Baqiyat Ulláh, and set forth his complete devotion to him. His followers then gave him the titles of the servant of Baqiyat Ullah, the mystery of Baqiyat Ullah, the friend of Baqiyat Ullah. Gradually as, during his imprisonment, he became more and more invisible to his followers, and when he became credited with the power of working miracles and more or less a mythical being, he was no longer called the servant, or the mystery, or the friend of Baqiyat Ulláh, but himself was esteemed to be the Baqiyat Ulláh—the true Imám so long looked for. Mírzá Kazim Beg says that under the term "mystery" they understood one who shared the secrets of the Imám. "The name *Sirr-Ulláh*, Mystery of God, was given to 'Alí, as to one who knew the secrets of divine revelation; and so, in its new application, the title *Sirr-i-Baqiyat Ullah*, now a name of the Bab, would mean the one who knew all that was in the mind of the concealed Imám, who himself was the remnant (or residue) of God." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, vol. viii. p. 486.)

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

desired reform in Persia, and thought that Bábism would conduce to that end; thirdly, the mystics, who considered Bábism to be similar to their own pantheistic system; fourthly, those who were drawn by the personal influence and character of the Bab.¹

On his return from Karbala he was heartily welcomed. Until then, it is said, he looked upon himself only as one who had made some progress in the divine way (*taríqat*), but he soon began to consider himself a master, appointed by heaven to regenerate his country.

There is some difference of opinion as to what he exactly meant by the title of Bab which he had assumed. Mírza Kazim Beg says: "I do not know whether he was acquainted with the words of Christ, 'I am the door,' but he doubtless knew that Muḥammad had said, 'I am the city of knowledge and 'Alí is the gate of that city.'" A Muhammadan historian, an enemy of the Bab, says "that the Bab, having gathered some Shaikhs together, said, 'I am the "door" of God. Whosoever desires to come to God, and to know the religion of God, cannot do so till he sees me and receives permission from me.'" His followers have now, however, discarded that name, and he is known amongst the Bábis by several titles, such as His Highness, His Highness the Point of Revelation, His Highness the First Point. More recently the Beha'is call him His Highness the Evangelist. Gobineau, a good authority on the subject, says: "Mírza Muhammad 'Alí said that he was not the Bab in the sense in which they (his followers) had believed and as he himself had thought—that is to say, the 'door' of the knowledge of truth—but that he was the Point, or the originator of truth, a divine appearance, a powerful manifestation," and so goes on to show that the title Bab was set free, and could henceforth reward the pious devotion of one of the Bab's followers. As a matter of fact, it was bestowed on Mulla Husain, who is sometimes called His Excellency, the Gate of the Gate (*Hazratu'l Babu'l-Bab*). Having made

¹ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, p. 504.

this digression, we may now continue the history of this remarkable man.

The next step seems to be the pilgrimage to Mecca in November 1844, where he stayed a short time and completed all the rites incumbent on pilgrims, returning early in the following year to Bushire. He soon gathered together a large body of disciples and aroused the hostility of the Mullahs. The matter then acquired such importance that the reigning Shah sent one of the most learned Doctors of the age, Syed Yahya, to interview the Bab and report the result. He held three long conferences with him, but the result was that he was so charmed with the Bab that he accepted him as a leader and admitted all his claims. About this time Mulla Muhammad 'Alí, a leading teacher, sent a person to Shíraz to ascertain the facts of the case. This messenger returned with some of the Bab's writings, which so impressed Mulla Muhammad 'Alí that he, too, became a follower of the Bab, and urged all his disciples to become Babís. The Mullahs complained to the Shah, and Mulla Muhammad 'Alí was summoned to Teheran, but he was able to meet successfully all his opponents in debate, and nothing came of this action.

The cause of the Bab was now very much strengthened by the support of such famous teachers, who were most earnest and active in propagating the new faith. The orthodox Mullahs soon perceived that they must attack the Bab direct. The result of this hostility was that the Bab, after undergoing a strict examination at Tabríz, was kept in confinement.¹

All this time the Báb's followers were most active in spreading his doctrines throughout the land. It was now that his most famous convert was made. This was a woman called Kurratu'l-'Ayn (Lustre of the Eye). She went everywhere preaching and making converts to the Babi faith. Some of the Babís looked with disfavour on this preaching

¹ A full account of this examination is given in the "Episode of the Báb," pp. 277-290.

by a woman; but the Báb supported her, applauded her zeal, and bestowed on her the title of Janab-i-Tahira (Her Excellency the Pure). From that time all acknowledged her position. She was put to death in the massacre at Teheran which followed on the attempt to kill the Shah in 1852. Kurratu'l-'Ayn was the most remarkable of the Báb's disciples. She was a person of marvellous beauty, possessed of high intellectual gifts, eloquent, devoted, and fearless. She threw her whole soul into the cause she advocated, and her martyrdom sheds a halo of glory round her short and active career.

A Bábí historian says: "Such fame did she acquire, that most people who were scholars or mystics sought to hear her speech, and were eager to become acquainted with her powers of speculation and deduction. She wrested pre-eminence from stalwart men, and continued to strain the feet of steadfastness, until she yielded up her life at the sentence of the mighty doctors in Teherán." Mírza Kazim Beg, a most sober writer, waxes eloquent over the charms of Kurratu'l-'Ayn, thus: "This woman had an influence over her hearers wholly spiritual. She knew how to inspire them with perfect confidence. She was well educated and very beautiful. Everything retired before her. She raised the veil which covered her face, not to set at nought the laws of chastity and modesty, so deeply graven on the tables of the orthodox law and in popular prejudice, but much rather in order to give by her look more force to the inspired words she spoke. Her speeches stigmatised that gross tyranny which for so many centuries had imprisoned liberty. She preached not, as some have said, to abolish the laws of modesty, but to sustain the cause of liberty. The eloquent words which fell from her mouth captivated the hearts of her hearers, who became enthusiastic in her praise."

Some of her poems breathe the spirit of Sufism and show how deeply her mind was imbued with mystic lore. Her romantic career, her marvellous power, and her tragic

and will continue to give for a long time to come strength to the Babí cause and the spirit of endurance to its followers.¹

In the year 1848 Násiru'd-dín Sháh, the late ruler of Persia, was crowned at Teheran, and the position of the Babís became most critical. The Prime Minister hated and persecuted them. A civil war broke out, and the Babís suffered a great deal; but no persecution, however severe, could restrain the ardour of the Babí teachers or the devotion of their followers. It became plain to the authorities that the Bab himself must be put out of the way. He was then condemned to death.² A young disciple, Aka Muhammud 'Alí, who belonged to a noble family of Tabríz, was also condemned at the same time. Great pressure was brought on him by his relatives to induce him to recant and thus to save his life, but he remained quite firm, and shared the martyrdom of his beloved master. It is a remarkable witness to the power which the Bab had over his disciples, a power which could lead this youth, with so promising a future before him, to give up home and life, to face death and its terrors, rather than be separated from the master he loved so truly.³

¹ The following sonnet on Kurratu'l-'Ayn brings out some characteristic aspects of her influence :—

“ Kurratu'l-'Ayn ! not famous far beyond
Her native shore. Not many bards have sung
Her praises, who, her enemies among,
Wielding her beauty as a magic wand,
Strove for the cause of him who had proclaimed
For poor down-trodden womanhood the right
Of freedom. Lifting high her beacon light
Of truth, she went unveiled and unashamed.
A woman, in the land where women live
And weep and die, secluded and unknown,
She broke the bonds of custom, and to give
The Báb her aid, she dared the world alone,
Only to fail : death closed the unequal strife,
And Persia blindly wrecked a noble life.”

² A detailed account is given in the “New History of the Báb,” pp. 299–306, 383.

³ Mr. E. G. Browne has given a translation of a very touching letter, in

It may be well at this point to give a summary of the character of the Bab, as portrayed by Mírza Kazim Beg, always remembering that the critic, though eminently fair, does not believe in the claims of the Bab.

He had some characteristics truly great and noble, and was a man of firm and settled convictions. His moral character was high, and he aimed in his preaching to bring all his countrymen into a community united by intellectual and moral ties. He spoke with much earnestness on the necessity for a religious and social reform in Persia, the cessation of religious persecution, and the amelioration of the lot of women. It is said that much of what he preached on these points had an esoteric meaning, known only to his disciples ; but whether that is the case or not, the veneration they felt for him was profound, and there can be no doubt that the teaching of the Bab was in the direction of freedom, and that he personally was in favour of reform. Mírza Kazim Beg sums up his reflections thus : “ We neither consider him an adventurer nor a fanatic, but an eminently moral man, a dreamer brought up in the school of the Shaikhs, and possessing some touch of Christianity. We regard him also as a man troubled by the direct influence

which Áká Muhammad ‘Alí replied to an affectionate appeal from his brother, who urged him to give up the Bab and return to his family :—

“ He is the Compassionate.

O thou who art my Qiblah ! My condition, thanks to God, has no fault, and ‘ to every difficulty succeedeth ease.’ You have written that this matter has no end. What matter, then, has any end ? We, at least, have no discontent in this matter : nay, rather, we are unable sufficiently to express our thanks for this favour. The end of this matter is to be slain in the way of God, and O what happiness is this ! The will of God will come to pass with regard to His servants, neither can human plans avert the divine decree. O thou who art my Qiblah ! the end of the world is death. If the appointed fate which God hath decreed overtake me, then God is the guardian of my family, and thou art mine executor ; behave in such wise as is pleasing to God, and pardon whatever has proceeded from me which may seem lacking in courtesy or contrary to the respect due from juniors : and seek pardon for me from all those of my household and commit me to God. God is my patron, and how good is He as a Guardian !” (New History of the Bab, p. 202.)

of some of his devoted and ambitious disciples. In any case, we believe that the appearance of the Bab will be more or less of use in time to the cause of civilisation in Persia.”¹

In the year 1852 an attempt was made by some Bábís to assassinate the Shah. It does not appear to have been the result of a plot made by the Babí leaders, but rather the independent action of a few men who had in themselves, or in their families, suffered wrong. A bitter persecution followed. “The Babís,” says Mírza Kazim Beg, “were tortured in the most odious manner, with an unheard-of refinement of cruelty.” An English traveller says: “Tow steeped in oil was inserted between their fingers and behind their shoulder-blades, leaving portions hanging down which were lighted, and in this condition the unhappy wretches were led, as long as they could walk, through the principal streets of the capital. A furious proscription followed. No time was lost between apprehension and execution, death was the only punishment known, the headless bodies lay in the streets for days, the terrified relatives fearing to give them burial, and the dogs fought and growled over the corpses in the deserted thoroughfares.”

Renan speaks of the massacre thus: “The day of the great slaughter of the Babís in Teheran was perhaps a day unparalleled in the history of the world.”² He quotes from M. le Comte de Gobineau’s work, “*Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l’Asie Centrale*,” to the following effect: “Children and women with lighted candles stuck into the wounds were driven along by whips, and as they went along they sang, ‘We came from God, to Him we return.’ When the children expired, as many did, the executioners threw the corpses beneath the feet of their fathers. Life was offered if they would recant. An executioner told one father that if he did not recant, his two sons, the elder of whom was fourteen years old, should be slain on his breast.

¹ *Journal Asiatique*, 6me Série, tome vii. p. 384.

² *Les Apôtres*, p. 378.

The father, lying down, said that he was ready, and the elder boy claimed by right of birth to be the first to have his throat cut. At last night fell on a mass of shapeless flesh, and the dogs of the suburbs came in troops to the place." So ended one important period in the history of the Babís.

There has been since then no formal outbreak of Bábí revenge, nor has there been any persecution like it. Even this altogether failed of its purpose, for it gave to the movement a vigour and vitality which otherwise it might have lacked. It is said that half a million Persians are Babís, but the Hon. G. Curzon considers the total to be nearer one million. He says: "They are to be found in every walk of life, from the ministers and nobles of the court to the scavenger or the groom, not the least arena of their activity being the Musalman priesthood itself. It will have been noticed that the movement was initiated by Syeds, Hajís, and Mullas." Whilst it is true that there has been no persecution so terrible as the one in 1852, yet now and again the hostility of the 'Ulama shows itself. In 1878, 1888, and in 1889 Babís were put to death. The heroism and the devotion of the Babís is something very wonderful. It is said that there is only one instance of a Babí having recanted under pressure, and he returned again to his faith, and was afterwards put to death for his renewed devotion to the Bab.

After the death of the Báb, the chief interest in the movement circles round Mírza Yahya and his half-brother Beha'ullah, who became the respective leaders of the two sects into which the Babís are now divided—the Ezelís and the Beha'ís. There seems no doubt that the Bab in the year 1849 nominated the former,¹ whom he named Subh-i-Ezel (Morning of Eternity), as his successor, and that for a short time he really held an undisputed position as head of the Babí Church.

¹ A copy of the original letter of nomination is given in the "New History of the Bab," p. 426.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

exiled to Famagusta in Cyprus. Since then the followers of Beha have increased very much, while those of Subh-i-Ezel, or Yahya, have decreased. This is an unlooked-for development of the work of the Bab, for Beha claims to be the messenger of a new dispensation altogether.

The question at issue now became something more than a mere struggle for leadership, for Beha's claim virtually deposed the Bab from his position as the "Point of Revelation" and made him the mere forerunner of "Him whom God shall manifest." The Ezelis are, however, nearly extinct, and it is not likely that they will ever attain to power again. Assuming that Beha had right on his side, it is stated that the changes he made were in a practical direction and beneficial.

The Babi doctrines are to be found in the writings of the Bab called the *Beyan*, a name sometimes apparently applied to them collectively, but more generally to a particular book. Many of the dogmas are very mystical, but the following is a brief summary.

God is eternal and unapproachable. All things come from Him and exist by Him. Man cannot approach Him except through some appointed medium. So, distinct from God there is a Primal Will¹ who becomes incarnate in the

¹ There is an evident connection between this dogma of the Bábís and the Sufi system, in which the "First Intelligence" or "Primal Element" is represented as a manifestation of God. To the Sufi, as to the Bábí, God is "sterile in His inaccessible height." Men can never be more than slaves, nearness to Him is impossible. But men longed for communion with some one or something above them. They felt the need of some intermediary, and found it in a revival of the old Gnostic notions of the *Æons*, forms of manifestation of the Ineffable and Incomprehensible. Neander thus describes the Gnostic view: "Self-limitation is the first beginning of a communication of life from God—the first passing of the hidden deity into manifestation: and from this proceeds all further self-developing manifestation of the divine essence. Now, from this primal link in the chain of life there are evolved, in the first place, the manifold powers or attributes inherent in the divine essence, which, until that first self-comprehension, were all hidden in this abyss of His essence." This intermediary is the Primal Will of the Bábí and the Primal Element of the Sufi, who also calls it by the names of the Pen, the First Principle, the spirit of Muḥammad, Universal Reason (*'aql-i-kull*). God's voice is

prophets. This Primal Will spoke in the Báb and will speak in "Him whom God shall manifest." This is apparent from the following texts of the Beyan:—"The whole Beyan revolves round the saying of 'Him whom God shall manifest.'" "A thousand perusals of the Beyan are not equal to the perusal of one verse of what shall be revealed by 'Him whom God shall manifest.'" "The Beyán is to-day in the stage of seed, but in the day of 'Him whom God shall manifest' it will arrive at the degree of fruition." It must be remembered that Beha claimed and is allowed by his followers this exalted position. The following are some of the expressions used of Beha by his followers:—"Beha has come for the perfecting of the law of Christ, and his injunctions are in all respects similar. For instance, we are commanded that we should prefer that we should be killed rather than that we should kill. It is the same throughout, and indeed, could not be otherwise, for Beha is Christ returned again." "Christ returns to you as Behá with Angels, with clouds, with the sound of trumpets. His angels are his messengers, the clouds are the doubts which prevent you recognising him: the sound of the trumpets is the sound of the proclamation which you now hear."¹

heard through it, by it material things were brought into existence. It works in Prophets and Saints. The Imam is closely connected with it. I am not able to find out whether the Báb taught that the Primal Will was created or not. In Şufí theology it certainly is, for in the *Akhláq-i-Jaláli* it is written: "It is admitted, equally by the masters of perception and conception, that the First Principle, which, at the mandate, 'Be and it is,' issued, by the ineffable power and will, from the chaotic ocean of inexistence, was a simple and luminous essence, which, in the language of philosophy, is termed the Primary Intelligence, and the great fathers of mysticism and investigation call it the Muhammadan Spirit." It is to this, and not to the inaccessible and incomprehensible God, that the Imam seeks to return. When his work in life is done, then "his end is joined to his beginning" (*Ba ágház girdad baz anjám*). It is a curious phase of human thought, which the Sufis evidently borrowed from the Gnostics and the Babís from the Sufís. This earnest longing for communion with a manifestation of God we can sympathise with, and only regret that, in their ignorance or repudiation of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation both Sufí and Bábí have so sadly missed the mark.

¹ "A Year amongst the Persians," by E. G. Browne, p. 308.

Each dispensation of the Primal Will thus become incarnate supersedes a preceding one, and so Islam has ceased to be the true religion for this age. "Since it is impossible for created beings to know the Divine Essence, the Primal Will has, for their guidance and instruction, incarnated itself from time to time in a human form. These incarnations are known as 'Prophets.' That which spoke in all the Prophets of the past now speaks in the Bab, and will speak through 'Him whom God shall manifest,' and after him through others, for there is no cessation in these manifestations. "That which spoke in Adam, Noah, Moses, David, Jesus, and Muhammad was the one and the same Primal Will. In each manifestation news has been given of the following one. Thus the Jews were told to expect a Messiah, but they rejected him; the Christians to expect Muhammad, but, as a rule, they did not accept him; so the Muhammadans are taught to look out for Imam Mahdí. Yet now he has come (*i.e.*, in the Báb) they persecute him."¹

Another point on which the Beyan lays much stress is that no revelation is final. This is entirely opposed to the ordinary Muhammadan view, which is that, as Muhammad was the seal of the Prophets (Khatamu'l-anbiya), his revelation closed the series. The Bab taught that, as the human race progresses, the Primal Will, the teacher of men, speaks in each new revelation more fully and more clearly. All these successive and progressive revelations and dispensations are simply to prepare the world for the fuller teaching of "Him whom God shall manifest."

"A new prophet is not sent until the development of the human race renders this necessary. A revelation is not abrogated till it no longer suffices for the needs of mankind. There is no disagreement between the prophets: all teach the same truth, but in such measure as men can receive it. As mankind advance and progress they need fuller instruction. The instruction given by Abraham was suitable and sufficient for the people of his day, but not

¹ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xxi. p. 914.

for those to whom Moses was sent, while this in turn had ceased to meet the needs of those to whom Christ was sent. Yet we must not say that their religions were opposed to one another, but rather that each manifestation is more complete and more perfect than the last.”¹

The great point in the Babí theology is that the teacher is one and the same, though he manifests himself according to the capacity and needs of those to whom he is sent. The outward form changes but the Universal Spirit remains.² It then follows that now, during the long intervals which separate one prophetic dispensation from the next, there must be in the world some silent manifestation of the Spirit not less perfect than that in prophets.

The Beyan speaks with confidence of the future success of Babíism, the government of which is to be tolerant. The Muhammadan doctrines of the examination in the grave, the resurrection, sirat, heaven and hell, are all treated allegorically. The views of the Bab on a future state are not very clear. In any case, the hope of a future reward was not placed before his followers as an inducement to follow him. This is in direct contrast to the practice and teaching of Muhammad. In the Beyan the Bab wrote the following striking words: “So worship God that, if the recompense of thy worship of Him were to be the fire, no alteration in thy worship of Him would be produced. If you worship from fear, that is unworthy of the threshold of the holiness of God, nor will you be accounted a believer; so also, if your gaze is on Paradise, and if you worship in hope of that; for then you have made God’s creation a partner with Him.”

By a very large number of Babís, Beha was during the latter part of his life³ looked up to as a divinely appointed guide. Before he assumed that position he wrote a book

¹ “A Year amongst the Persians,” by E. G. Browne, p. 103.

² For a good account of primitive Babí doctrines see “New History of the Bab,” pp. 327–338. This is a most valuable work.

³ He died in exile on May 16, 1892.

called the *Ikán*, which is held in great esteem. In this book he seems to acknowledge the then superior position of Subh-i-Ezel, but writes bitterly of some who were hostile to himself. Two years after the Turks had banished him to Adrianople he boldly asserted his claim and called on all the Ezelís to submit to his direction. He then wrote other treatises in which his position is dogmatically set forth.

A few extracts¹ from some of Behá's writings will show to some extent what he taught his followers. "As for those who commit sin and cling to the world, they assuredly are not of the people of Behá." "With perfect compassion and mercy have we guided and directed the people of the world to that whereby their souls shall be profited. I swear by the sun of truth that the people of Beha have not any aim save the prosperity and reformation of the world and the purifying of the nations." "The heart must be sanctified from every form of selfishness and lust, for the weapons of the worshippers of the Unity and the saints were and are the fear of God." "Every one who desireth 'victory' must first subdue the city of his own heart with the sword of spiritual truth and of the word."

A good many changes in religious ceremonies are made. Prayer is said three times a day instead of five, and the worshippers no longer turn towards Mecca. The fast of Ramazan is discarded, and the last month of the Babí year is substituted for it. The traffic in slaves is forbidden. Shaving the head is not allowed, but the beard may be cut off. Legal impurity is abolished and intercourse with persons of all religions is enjoined. Music is permitted, wine and opium are prohibited. The furniture of houses should be renewed every nineteen years. It is recommended that chairs should be used. No one must carry arms except in times of tumult or war. All are to read the sacred books regularly, to be kind and courteous in their conduct, to approve for others what they would like

¹ "A Traveller's Narrative," translated by Mr. E. G. Browne in the "Episode of the Bab," pp. 70, 114.

themselves, and to forgive their enemies.¹ Religious warfare, or Jihad, is abolished, and friendly intercourse with all sects is enjoined.

The result of Beha's death has yet to be seen. He had marvellous influence over his followers, and seems to have been a person who commanded much reverence. Mr. E. G. Browne thus describes an interview with him: "The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat in that ample brow; while the deep lines of the forehead and face implied an age which the jet black hair and beard flowing down in undistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain."

The person and appearance of Şubĥ-i-Ezel are thus described by Mr. Browne. "A venerable and benevolent-looking old man of about sixty years of age, somewhat below the middle height, with ample forehead, on which the traces of care and anxiety were apparent, clear searching blue eyes and long grey beard, rose and advanced to meet us. Before that mild and dignified countenance I involuntarily bowed myself with unfeigned respect; for at length my long-cherished desire was fulfilled, and I stood face to face with Mírza Yahya, Subh-i-Ezel (Morning of Eternity), the appointed successor of the Bab, fourth 'Letter' of the 'First Unity.'" ² When Cyprus was handed over to the English Government, Mírza Yahya, with other political exiles, was transferred, and still remains there as a political prisoner.

From what has now been stated, it will be seen that Babiism is not a political movement, though in its early

¹ For a fuller account see *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, October 1892. pp. 678-799.

² "Episode of the Báb," pp. xl., xxiv.

days it was brought into conflict with the civil power ; but that it is a religious revolt against orthodox Islam, so far as that is represented by the Shí'ah sect. It raises women to a higher level, it professes to limit many of the social evils of Islam, it tends to give liberty of thought and to develop a friendly spirit to others. "Brotherly love, kindness to children, courtesy combined with dignity, sociability, hospitality, freedom from bigotry, friendliness even to Christians are included in its tenets." If men are sometimes better than their creed, they are sometimes worse, and not every Babí lives up to this ideal. It is perhaps too soon to speculate on the future of the movement. Those who think it will gradually take the place of Islam in Persia base a strong argument on the fact that its "recruits are won from the best soldiers of the garrison it is attacking." It certainly appeals to the traditionary instincts of many Persians. The Sufí needs a Pír or living guide ; the Shí'ah meditates on the Imam, and the high position accorded to that person in Babíism is at least attractive. The life and death of the Bab, and the magnificent heroism of his followers, all help forward the movement. Whether, when the victory is won, the Babís in the day of power will be as gentle and as liberal as they are in the night of adversity is perhaps doubtful. To all who take an interest in Christian missions in Persia, the movement is one of great interest. It betrays a longing for a real, living, loving, personal guide, the revealer of God to man, which can be best met by the acceptance of the Eternal Word. In any case, if only liberty of conscience can be secured, there seems to be a wide and open door.¹

The founder of the Wahhabí sect was Muḥammad-ibn-

¹ I am indebted to a well-known missionary who has spent a long time in Persia for the following additional facts :—

(1.) "The Beha'ís admit that the Lord Jesus Christ was the incarnate Son ; but claim that Behá was the incarnate Father—each incarnation being greater than the preceding one."

(2.) "Some of the Beha'ís have said to me, 'We are Christians ;' others, 'We are almost Christians ;' others, 'The only difference between us is

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

Prophet, and the sepulchre of 'Alí, and of other saints who have died in the odour of sanctity. They run there to pay the tribute of their fervent prayers. By this means they think that they can satisfy their spiritual and temporal needs. From what do they seek this benefit? From walls made of mud and stones, from corpses deposited in tombs. Now, the true way of salvation is to prostrate one's self before Him who is ever present, and to venerate Him, the One without associate or equal." Such outspoken language raised up opposition, and he had to seek the protection of Muhammad-Ibn-Sa'ud, a chief of some importance. He was converted to Wahhabíism about the year 1742 A.D., and was a stern and uncompromising man. "As soon as you seize a place," he said to his soldiers, "put the males to the sword. Plunder and pillage at your pleasure, but spare the women, and do not strike a blow at their modesty." The traveller Burckhardt says that the rule of the Wahhabís was to kill all their enemies whom they found in arms. On the day of battle the chief used to give each soldier a paper, a safe-conduct to the other world. This letter was addressed to the Treasurer of Paradise. It was enclosed in a bag which the warrior suspended to his neck. The soldiers were persuaded that the souls of those who died in battle would go straight to heaven, without being examined by the angels Munkir and Nakír in the grave. The widows and orphans of all who fell were supported by the survivors. Nothing could resist men who, fired with a burning zeal for what they deemed the truth, received a share of the booty, if conquerors; who went direct to Paradise if they were slain. In course of time, Muhammad-Ibn-Sa'ud married the daughter of Ibn-'Abdu'l-Wahhab, and founded the Wahhabí dynasty, which to this day rules at Ryadh.¹

¹ The following are the names of the Wahhabí chiefs: Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud, died A.D. 1765; 'Abdu'l-'Azíz, assassinated by a Persian in 1803; Sa'ud Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azíz, died 1814; 'Abdu'lláh ibn Sa'ud, beheaded 1818; Turki ibn Sa'ud, assassinated 1834; Fayzul, died 1865; 'Abdu'lláh.

Such was the origin of this great movement, which spread, in course of time, over Central and Eastern Arabia. 'Abdu'l-Azíz, the second chief, made a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1799, and another in 1803 A.D., when both Mecca and Madína fell into his hands, and a complete wreck was made of all things not approved of by the Wahhabís. "There did not," it is said, "remain an idol in all that pure city." The zenith of Wahhabí power was reached in 1810 A.D., when his son, Sa'ud Ibn 'Abdu'l Azíz, plundered the tomb of the Prophet at Madína, and distributed the jewels and the relics to his soldiers. This led to the Turkish and Egyptian attacks on the Wahhabís. The destruction of cupolas and tombs of saints was a favourite employment. "When destroying them, the Wahhabís said, 'God have mercy on those who destroy, and none on those who built them.'" Rosaries and charms, silk robes and pipes, were consigned to the flames, for smoking is a deadly sin. On this point there is a good story told by Palgrave. "'Abdu'l-Karím said, 'The first of the great sins is the giving divine honours to a creature.' Of course I replied, 'The enormity of such a sin is beyond all doubt. But if this be the first, there must be a second; what is it?' 'Drinking the shameful!' (in English idiom, 'smoking tobacco') was the unhesitating answer. 'And murder, and adultery, and false witness?' I suggested. 'God is merciful and forgiving,' rejoined my friend; that is, these are merely little sins."

Never before had such outward devotion been seen in Mecca. The mosques were crowded with worshippers, some of whom had been forcibly driven to the stated prayers. Pipes became very scarce, and one unfortunate woman who had been caught "smoking the shameful" was paraded through the public streets seated on an ass, with a large green pipe suspended from her neck. Thus were all lax Muslim men and women warned of the consequence of evil ways.

After holding possession of the holy cities for nine years they were driven out by the Turkish forces. 'Abdu'lláh,

the fourth Wahhábí ruler, was captured by Ibrahím Pasha and afterwards executed at Constantinople in the year 1818 A.D. The political power of Wahhabís has since been confined to parts of Arabia, but their religious opinions have widely spread.

On the death of Fayzul in 1865 A.D., his two sons, 'Abdu'llah and Sa'ud, the former a bigot, the latter a comparatively liberal man, disputed the succession. Finally, Sa'ud established himself as Emir. In 1871 'Abdu'llah put himself into communication with Midhat Pasha, then Governor of Baghdad, who at once appointed him Kaím-makan or Deputy-Governor of Nejd. 'Abdu'llah, however, failed to get possession. A little later on, Midhat Pasha deposed the whole family, and issued a proclamation to the effect that a Turkish Governor would be appointed. This scheme failed, and in 1872 Sa'ud returned to Riadh, where he died. 'Abdu'llah then became the Emir. The Turkish Government wished him to rule as its nominee, but this position he declined to accept. He had in 1881, the latest date up to which I have any information, very little power outside Riadh. Wahhabíism is now in its own stronghold rapidly declining, and the power of the once warlike and prosperous family that guided its destinies in Central Arabia is at an end.

The leader of the Wahhábí movement in India was Syed Ahmad. He soon gained a large number of disciples, and in 1826 A.D. preached a Jihad against the Sikhs, but five years after the Wahhabís were suddenly attacked by the Sikhs under Sher Singh, and Syed Ahmad was slain. This did not, however, prevent the spread of Wahhabí principles, for he had the good fortune to leave behind him an enthusiastic disciple. This man, Muhammad Isma'íl, was born near Delhi in the year 1781 A.D. When quite a youth, he met with Syed Ahmad, who soon acquired great influence over his new disciple. Isma'íl told him one evening that he could not offer up his prayers with Huzúr-í-qalb, or presence of heart. The Syed took him to his

room, where he instructed him to repeat the first of the prayers after him, and then to conclude them alone. He did so, and was able to so abstract himself in the contemplation of God that he remained engaged in prayer till the morning. Henceforward he was a devoted adherent of his spiritual teacher. In the public discussions, which often took place, none were a match for Isma'íl. This fervent preacher of Wahhabiism is now chiefly remembered by his great work, the *Taqwíatu'l-Iman*, the book from which the account of Wahhabí doctrine given in this chapter is taken. In one sense it is a struggle against the traditionalism of later stages, but in no sense can it be said that the Wahhabís reject Tradition. The traveller Burckhardt says: "The Quran and the Traditions of Muhammad are acknowledged as fundamental and as comprising the laws; the opinions of the best Commentators are respected, though not implicitly followed." They acknowledge, then, as the foundation of the faith, first, the Quran; secondly, the Traditions which are recorded on the authority of the Companions; and thirdly, the *Ijma'* of the Companions. Thus to the Wahhabí as to the Sunní, Muḥammad is in all his *acts* and *words* a perfect guide.

So far from Wahhabiism being a move onward because it is a return to first principles, it rather binds the fetters of Islam more tightly. It does not originate anything new; it offers no relaxation from a system which looks upon the Quran and the Traditions as a perfect and complete law, social and political, moral and religious. The Wahhabí places the doctrine of the "Tauhíd," or Unity, in a very prominent position. It is true that all Musalmán sects put this dogma in the first rank, but Wahhabís set their faces against practices common to the other sects, because they consider that they obscure this fundamental doctrine. It is this which brings them into collision with other Musalmáns. The greatest of all sins is *Shirk* (*i.e.*, polytheism). A *Mushrik* (polytheist) is one who so offends. All Musalmans consider Christians to be polytheists, and Wahhabís

consider all other Musalmáns also to be polytheists, because they look to the Prophet for intercession, pray to saints, visit shrines, and do other unlawful acts.

The Taqwiatu'l-Iman says that "two things are necessary in religion—to know God as God, and the Prophet as the Prophet." The two fundamental bases of the faith are the "Doctrine of the Tauhid and obedience to the Sunnat." The two great errors to be avoided are Shirk and Bid'at (innovation or change).

Shirk is defined to be of four kinds: Shirku'l-'ilm, ascribing knowledge to others than God; Shirku't-tasarruf, ascribing power to others than God; Shirku'l-'Ibadat, offering worship to created things; Shirku'l-'adat, the performance of ceremonies which imply reliance on others than God.

The first, Shirku'l-'ilm, is illustrated by the statement that prophets and holy men have no knowledge of secret things unless as revealed to them by God. Thus some wicked persons made a charge against 'Ayesha. The Prophet was troubled in mind, but knew not the truth of the matter till God made it known to him. To ascribe, then, power to soothsayers, astrologers, and saints is polytheism.

The second kind, Shirku't-tasarruf, is to suppose that any one has power with God. He who looks up to any one as an intercessor with God commits Shirk. Thus: "But they who take others beside Him as lords, saying, 'We only serve them that they may bring us near God,'—God will judge between them (and the Faithful) concerning that wherein they are at variance" (S. xxxix. 4). Intercession may be of three kinds. For example, a criminal is placed before the king. The Vizier intercedes. The king, having regard to the rank of the Vizier, pardons the offender. This is called Shafa'at-i-Wajahat, or "intercession from regard." But to suppose that God so esteems the rank of any one as to pardon a sinner merely on account of it is Shirk. Again, the queen or the princes intercede for the criminal. The king, from love of them, pardons him. This

is called Shafá'at-i-muhabbat, or "intercession from affection." But to consider that God so loves any one as to pardon a criminal on his account is to give that loved one power, and this is Shirk, for such power is not possible in the court of God. "God may out of His bounty confer on His favourite servants the epithets of Habíb, favourite, or Khalíl, friend; but a servant is but a servant; no one can put his foot outside the limits of servitude, or rise beyond the rank of a servant." Again, the king may himself wish to pardon the offender, but he fears lest the majesty of the law should be lowered. The Vizier perceives the king's wish and intercedes. This intercession is lawful. It is called Shafá'at-i-ba-izn, intercession by permission, and such power Muhammad will have at the day of judgment. Wahhabís hold that he has not that power now, though all other Musalmans consider that he has, and in consequence (in Wahhabí opinion) commit the sin of Shirku't-tasarruf. The Wahhabís quote the following passages in support of their view. "Who is he that can intercede with Him but by *His own permission*" (S. ii. 256). "Say: Intercession is wholly with God! His the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth" (S. xxxix. 46). "Who shall teach thee what the day of doom is. It is a day when one soul shall be powerless for another soul: all sovereignty on that day shall be with God" (S. lxxxii. 18, 19). "No intercession shall avail with Him, but that which He Himself shall allow" (S. xxxiv. 22). They also say: "Whenever an allusion is made in the Quran¹ or the Traditions to the intercession of certain prophets or apostles, it is this kind of intercession and no other that is meant."

The third Shirk is prostration before any created being, with the idea of worshipping it. Thus: "Prostration,

¹ His name shall be Messiah, Jesus the Son of Mary, *illustrious in this world and in the next* (S. iii. 40). Baizávi says that this eminence refers to the prophetic office in this world and to the permission to intercede in the next.

bowing down, standing with folded arms, spending money in the name of an individual, fasting out of respect to his memory, proceeding to a distant shrine in a pilgrim's garb and calling out the name of the saint while so going, is Shirku'l-'Ibádat." It is wrong to "cover the grave with a sheet (ghiláf), to say prayers at the shrine, to kiss any particular stone, to rub the mouth and breast against the walls of the shrine." This is a stern condemnation of the very common practice of visiting the tombs of saints and of some of the special practices of the pilgrimage to Mecca. All such practices as are here condemned are called Ishrak fi'l 'Ibadat—"association in worship."

They quote the following Tradition, recorded by Bukharí, to show that pilgrimages should be made to three places only: "Pilgrims do not go except to three mosques—the mosques in Mecca, Madína, and Jerusalem."

The fourth Shirk is the keeping up of superstitious customs, such as the Istikhara, *i.e.*, seeking guidance from beads, trusting to omens, good or bad, believing in lucky and unlucky days, adopting such names as 'Abdu'n-Nabí (Slave of the Prophet), and so on. The denouncing of such practices brings Wahhabíism into daily conflict with the other sects, for scarcely any people in the world are such profound believers in the virtue of charms and the power of astrologers as Musalmáns. The difference between the first and fourth Shirk, the Shirku'l-'ilm and the Shirku'l-'adat, seems to be that the first is the *belief*, say in the knowledge of a soothsayer, and the second the *habit* of consulting him. To swear by the name of the Prophet, of 'Alí, of the Imams, or of Pírs (Leaders) is to give them the honour due to God alone. It is Ishrak fi'l adab—"Shirk in association." Another common belief which Wahhábis oppose is that Musalmáns can perform the Hajj, say prayers, read the Quran, abide in meditation, give alms, and do other good works, the reward of which shall be credited to a person already dead.

The above technical exposition of Wahhabí tenets shows

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

Palgrave allows that such a notion of the Deity is monstrous, but maintains that it is the "truest mirror of the mind and scope of the writer of the Book" (Quran), and that, as such, it is confirmed by authentic Tradition and learned commentaries, a knowledge of the literature, and intercourse with the people. Men are often better than their creeds. Even the Prophet was not always consistent. There are some redeeming points in Islam. But the root idea of the whole is as described above, and from it no system can be deduced which will grow in grace and beauty as age after age rolls by. The Arab proverb states that "the worshipper models himself on what he worships." Thus a return to "first principles," sometimes proclaimed as the hope of Turkey, is but the "putting back the hour-hand of Islam" to the place where, indeed, Muhammad always meant it to stay, for, as Palgrave says, "Islam is in its essence stationary, and was framed thus to remain. Sterile, like its God, lifeless like its first Principle, and supreme Original in all that constitutes true life—for life is love, participation, and progress, and of these the Quranic Deity has none—it justly repudiates all change, all advance, all development."

Muhammad Ibn 'Abdu'l Wahhab was a man of great intellectual power and vigour. He could pierce through the mists of a thousand years, and see with an eagle eye how one sect and another had laid accretions on the Faith. He had the rare gift of intuition, and could see that change (*bid'at*) and progress were alien to the truth. This recognition of his ability is due to him; but what a sad prostration of great gifts it was to seek to arrest, by the worship of the letter, all hope of progress, and to make "the starting-point of Islam its goal." That he was a good Musalman in so doing no one can doubt, but that his work gives any hope of the rise of an enlightened form of Islam no one who really has studied Islam can believe.

Wahhabism simply amounts to this, that while it denounces all other Musalmans as polytheists, it enforces the

Sunnat of the Prophet with all its energy.¹ It breaks down shrines, but insists on the necessity of a pilgrimage to a black stone at Mecca. It forbids the use of a rosary, but attaches great merit to counting the ninety-nine names of God on the fingers. It would make life unsociable. The study of the Fine Arts, with the exception of Architecture,²

¹ Muhammad Ismá'il concludes his great work, the *Taqwíatu'l-Iman*, with the prayer—"O Lord, teach us by Thy grace the meaning of the terms *Bid'at* and *Sunnat*, and the Law of the Prophet. Make us pure Sunnis *and strictly submissive to the Sunnat*" This is a clear and distinct proof that Wahhabís do not reject Tradition as a basis of the Faith. It also shows their horror of innovation, and reveals the little hope there is of any real progress through their influence.

² On the subject of Architecture, Syed Amír 'Alí in his *Life of Muhammad* says: "The superiority of the Muslims in architecture requires no comment." At all events none is given, and the reader is left to suppose that the praise sometimes given to them on account of the beauty of many Muhammadan buildings is rightly awarded, and that Islám is thus shown to be a system which has produced culture. The fact is that just as Islám borrowed its philosophy from the Greeks, so did it get its ideas about architecture from the Byzantines and the Persians. The Arabs, inspired by the teaching of Muhammad, originated neither the one nor the other. Ibn Khaldun says of the Arabs: "When they ceased to observe the strict precepts of their religion and the desire of dominion and luxurious living overcame them, the Arabs employed the Persian nation to serve them, and acquired from them the arts and architecture. They then made lofty buildings. This was near the end of the Empire." He also says that when the Khalíf Walid Ibn 'Abdu'l Malik wished to construct mosques at Madína, Jerusalem, and Damascus, he sent to the Emperor at Constantinople for "workmen skilled in the art of building" (Ibn Khaldun, vol. ii. p. 375). Thus, on the testimony of this Muhammadán historian, it is clear that the origin of Muslim architecture is to be traced to Persian and Greek sources. In connection with this subject there is a valuable article on Arabian architecture in an appendix to the second volume of Lane's "Modern Egyptians." The writer, Stanley Lane-Poole, the best living authority on the subject, says: "To the architecture of these kings (*i.e.*, of the Sassanian dynasty) the Arabs owed more than had been commonly supposed." "Besides the Persians, the Arabs were also indebted to the Copts for assistance." "The influence of Byzantium on the art of the Arabs cannot be doubted." "Their workmen were commonly Copts, Greeks, and Persians, and though they (*i.e.*, Arabs) must have learnt from these peoples, they appear never to have been able to dispense altogether with their services." "The modern fashion of assuming everything Muhammadán to be of true Arabian art has misled art critics." There is much misconception on this subject, and modern Muslim apologists for Islam quite ignore the testimony of their own great historian—Ibn Khaldun.

can find no place in it. Ismá'il quotes with approval the following Tradition. " 'Ayesha said, 'I purchased a carpet on which were some figures. The Prophet stood in the doorway and looked displeased.' I said, 'O messenger of God, I repent to God and His Messenger; what fault have I committed that you do not enter?' His Highness then said, 'What is this carpet?' I replied, 'I have bought it for you to sit and rest upon.' Then the messenger of God replied, 'Verily, the makers of pictures will be punished on the day of resurrection, when God will desire them to bring them to life. A house which contains pictures is not visited by the angels.'" In a Tradition quoted by Ibn 'Abbas, the Prophet classes artists with murderers and parricides. Wahhabíism approves of all this, and thus by forbidding harmless enjoyments it would make society an organised hypocrisy. It would spread abroad a spirit of contempt for all mankind except its own followers, and, where it had the power, it would force its convictions on others at the point of the sword.

Wahhabíism was reform after a fashion in one direction; in the history of Islam there have been attempts at reform in other directions; there will yet be such attempts, but so long as the Quran and the Sunnat (or, in the case of the Shí'ah, its equivalent) are to form, as they have hitherto done for every sect, the sole law to regulate all conditions and states of life, enlightened and continued progress is impossible.

From the account given in this chapter, it is plain that Musalmans are not all of one heart and soul.¹ In the next chapter I hope to show that Islam is a very dogmatic and complex system in spite of the simple form of its creed.

¹ "Mr. Finlay, the clever but partial author of 'The Byzantine Empire,' has declared in a sweeping way 'that there is no greater delusion than to speak of the unity of the Christian Church.' However this may be, I can affirm the perfect applicability of this sentence to Islam in the East. In no part of the world is there more of secret division, aversion, misbelief (taking Muhammadánism as our standard), and unbelief than in those very lands which to a superficial survey seem absolutely identified in the one common creed of the Quran and its author." (Palgrave's Arabia, vol. i. p. 10.)

CHAPTER IV

*THE CREED OF ISLÁM*¹

FAITH is defined by Muslim theologians as “Confession with the tongue and belief with the heart.”² It is said to “stand midway between hope and fear.” It is subdivided into *Imán-í-mujmal* and *Imán-í-mufassal*. The former is an expression of the following faith: “I believe in God, His name and attributes, and accept all His commands.” The latter is the acceptance of the following dogmas: “I believe in God, Angels, Books, Prophets, the Last Day, the Predestination by the Most High God of good and evil, and the Resurrection after death.” These form the articles of faith which every Muslim must believe, to which belief, in order to render it perfect, he must add the performance of the “acts of practice,” viz.: (1) *Tashahhud*—the recital of the *Kalimah* or creed:—“There is no God but God, and *Muḥammad* is the Apostle of God.”³ (2) *Ṣalat*—the five daily prayers. (3) *Rozah*—the thirty days’ fast of

¹ Strictly speaking, this chapter should be entitled the “Faith of Islam,” as the subject of it is technically called *Imán*, or faith. The creed, or *Kalimah*, is simply the expression of belief in one God, and in *Muhammad* as His apostle. I use the word *creed* here in the usual sense of a body of dogmas.

² There is much dispute as to whether faith can increase or not. *Imám Abu Hanífa* says: “It does not change. It is not affected by sin or the omission of religious duties, though such misconduct will be punished.” *Imam As-Sháfi‘i* says that faith does decrease if religious duties are neglected. *Abu Hanifa* replies that women do not, at certain times, say the *Namaz*, nor the poor give alms. Is their faith decreased? The words “it increased their faith” (S. iii. 167) seem to support *As-Sháfi‘i*.

³ The first clause is called the *nan wa iṣbāt*, rejection and affirmation: “there is no God” is the *nafi*, “but God” is the *iṣbāt*.

Ramazán. (4) Zakát—the legal alms. (5) Hājj—the pilgrimage to Mecca.

1. GOD.—This article of the faith includes a belief in the existence of God, His unity and attributes, and has given rise to a large number of sects. Tauhíd, or unity, is said by Abu Muntaha to be of two kinds—Tauhídu'r-rubiyat and Tauhídu'l-uluhaiyat. The first means that God who creates and sustains all is one; but belief in this does not necessarily make a man a believer, for Kafirs, it is said, can accept this dogma; so, to be a true believer, a man must accept as an article of faith the Tauhídu'l-uluhaiyat, that is, worship only one God, and look upon Him as the only object of worship, the one without a second. Thus it is wrong to worship angels and saints.

The author of the Risalah-i-Berkevi,¹ speaking of the divine attributes, says:—

(1.) Life (Hyát). God Most High is alone to be adored. He has neither associate nor equal. He is neither begotten nor does He beget. He is immutable, invisible, without figure, form, colour, or parts. His existence has neither beginning nor end. If He so wills, He can annihilate the world in a moment or re-create it in an instant. If all the infidels became believers, He would gain no advantage; if all believers became infidels, He would suffer no loss.

(2.) Knowledge ('Ilm). God has knowledge of all things hidden or manifest, whether in heaven or on earth. Events past and future are known to Him. He knows what enters into the heart of man and what he utters with his mouth. He is free from forgetfulness, negligence, and error. His knowledge is eternal: it is not posterior to His essence.

(3.) Power (Qudrat). God is almighty. If He wills, He can raise the dead, make stones talk, trees walk, annihilate the heavens and the earth, and re-create them. His power is eternal *à priori* and *à posteriori*. It is not posterior to His essence.

M. Garcin de Tassy, in his "L'Islamisme d'après le Coran" (p. 154), speaks of this book thus: "L'ouvrage élémentaire de la religion Musalmane le plus estimé et le plus répandu en Turquie."

(4.) Will (Irádah). He can do what He wills, and whatever He wills comes to pass. Everything, good or evil, in this world exists by His will. He wills the faith of the believer and the piety of the religious. He willeth also the unbelief of the unbeliever and the irreligion of the wicked. All we do we do by His will: what He willeth not does not come to pass. We must acknowledge that the will of God is eternal, and that it is not posterior to His essence.

(5.) Hearing (Sama'). He hears all sounds, whether low or loud. He hears without an ear, for His attributes are not like those of men.

(6.) Seeing (Basr). He sees all things, even the steps of a black ant on a black stone in a dark night; yet He has no eye as men have.

(7.) Speech (Kalám). He speaks, but not with a tongue as men do. He speaks to some of His servants without the intervention of another, even as He spoke to Moses, and to Muhammad on the night of the ascension to heaven. He speaks to others by the instrumentality of Gabriel, and this is the usual way in which He communicates His will to the prophets. It follows from this that the Quran is the word of God, and is eternal and uncreated.

These are the "haft sífát," or seven attributes of God. There is unanimity of opinion as to the number of attributes, but not as regards their nature and the extent of the knowledge concerning them to which men can attain. Thus some say that the knowledge¹ of God is the first thing to acquire; but Imám Sháfi'í and the Mu'tazilas say that a man must first attain to the idea of the knowledge of God. The meaning of the expression "knowledge of God" is the ascertaining the truth of His existence, and of His positive and privative attributes, as far as the human understanding can enter into these matters. The unity is not a mere

¹ The knowledge of God is said to be gained from the Qurán in three ways: (1.) " 'ilmu'l-yakín, that is, by reason and outward apprehension, and this is the knowledge gained by the ordinary 'Ulamá; (2.) 'Ainu'l-yakín, that is, knowledge gained by the inward eye or intuition. This is gained by a few of the 'Ulamá; (3.) Haqu'l-yakín, that is, the highest form of knowledge, which includes the lower kinds, gained only by the Prophets." (Abu Muntahá, p. 58.)

numerical unity, but absolute, for the number one is the first of a series and implies a second, but God has not a second. He is “singular, without anything like Him, separate, having no equal;” for, “had there been either in heaven or earth gods beside God, both surely had gone to ruin” (S. xxi. 22). God is not a substance, for substance has accidents, but God has none: otherwise His nature would be that of “dependent existence.” God is without parts, for otherwise He would not exist till all the parts were formed, and His existence would depend on the parts, that is, on something beside Himself.

The orthodox strictly prohibit the discussion of minute particulars, for, say they, “just as the eye turning to the brightness of the sun finds darkness intervene to prevent all observation, so the understanding finds itself bewildered if it attempts to pry into the nature of God.” All the attributes of God are declared to be beyond explanation (*bila keif*), and so cannot be understood either by reason or by analogical deduction.

The Prophet said: “We did not know the reality of the knowledge of Thee;” and to his followers he gave this advice: “Think of God’s gifts, not of His nature: certainly you have no power for that.” The Khalíf Akbar is reported to have said: “To be helpless in the search of knowledge is knowledge, and to inquire into the nature of God is Shirk (infidelity).” A moderate acquaintance with Muslim theology shows that neither the injunction of the Prophet nor the warning of the Khalíf has been heeded.

According to the early Muslims, the Companions and their followers, inquiries into the nature of God and His attributes were not lawful. The Prophet, knowing what was good for men, had plainly revealed the way of salvation and had taught them:—

“Say: He is God alone:
 God the eternal!
 He begetteth not, and He is not begotten;
 And there is none like unto Him.” (S. cxii.)

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

But they whose hearts are given to err follow its figures, craving discord, craving an interpretation; yet none knoweth its interpretation but God. And the stable in knowledge say, 'We believe in it: it is all from our Lord.' But none will bear this in mind save men endued with understanding."¹ Here it is clearly stated (1) that no one except God can know the interpretation of *mutashabih* verses, and (2) that wise men, though they know not their interpretation, yet believe them all. Many learned men, however, say that the full stop should not be placed after the word "God," but after "knowledge." The difference will be seen thus:—

FIRST READING.

None knoweth its interpretation but God. And the stable in knowledge say "We believe in it: it is all from our Lord."

SECOND READING.

None knoweth its interpretation but God and the stable in knowledge. They say "We believe in it: it is all from our Lord."

On this slight change in punctuation,² which shows that the "stable in knowledge" can interpret the *mutashabih* verses, opposite schools of theology have arisen in Islam. The latter reading opens the way to a fearless investigation of subjects which all the early Muslims avoided as beyond their province. In the early days of Islam it was held that all parts of the Quran, except the *muhkam* verses and the purely narrative portions, were *mutashabih*; that is, all verses which related to the attributes of God, to the existence of angels and *genii*, to the appearance of Anti-christ, the period and signs of the day of judgment, and generally all matters which are beyond the daily experience

¹ Bukhári relates how 'Áysha said, "One day the Prophet recited the 5th verse and said to me, 'When thou seest those who follow its figures, these are they whom God has named men of error—avoid them.'"

² The commentator Bukhári says: "Some consider that the letter *waw* (and) after the word 'God' is a copulative conjunction (*waw-i-'atf*), and that consequently there is no full stop after God;" others, however, treat the *waw* as *waw-í-isti'náf*, *i.e.*, it commences a sentence, and is therefore preceded by a full stop. This is the opinion of most commentators.

of mankind. It was strongly felt that not only must there be no discussion on them,¹ but no attempt should be made to understand or act on them. Ibn 'Abbas, a Companion, says: "One must believe the mutashabih verses, but not take them for a rule of conduct." 'Ayesha said, "Avoid those persons who dispute about the meaning of the Qurán, for they are those whom God has referred to in the words, 'whose hearts are given to err.'"

The first reading, which puts the full stop after the word "God," is the one adopted by the Ashab, the Tabi'in, and the Taba-i-Tabi'in, and the great majority of Commentators. The Sunnis generally are of this opinion. Those who take the opposite view are the Commentators Mujahid (A.H. 101), Rábí' bin Ans, and others. The scholastic theologians (Mutakallimán)² generally adopt the second reading, which puts the full stop after the word "knowledge." They argued thus: How could men believe what they did not know? to which their opponents answered, that the act of belief in the unknown is the very thing here praised by God. The scholastics then inquired why, since the Qurán was sent to be a guide and direction to men, were not all its verses muhkam? The answer was, that the Arabs acknowledged two kinds of eloquence. One kind was to arrange words and ideas in a plain and simple style, so that the meaning might be at once apparent, the other was to speak in figurative language. Now, if the Quran had not contained both these styles of composi-

¹ "Telle fut la règle suivie par les anciens musulmans à l'égard des verses motachabeh; ils l'appliquaient aussi aux expressions du meme genre qui se presentent dans la Sonna, parce qu'elles proviennent de la meme source que celles du Coran." (Ibn Khaldun, vol. iii. p. 67.)

This passage is of some interest as maintaining the common source and origin of the Quran and the Sunnat.

² "The Musulmán authors distinguish between the earlier and later Mutakalliman. The former (of whom we here treat) were occupied with purely religious questions; the latter, who arose after the introduction of the Greek philosophy amongst Muslims, embraced many philosophic notions, though they tried to make them fit in with their religious opinions." (Melanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe, p. 320.)

tion, it could not have claimed the position it does as a book absolutely perfect in form as well as in matter.

Bearing in mind this fundamental difference of opinion, we can now pass on to the consideration of the attributes. The essential attributes are Life, Knowledge, Power, Will, for without these the others could not exist. Then the attributes of Hearing, Seeing, Speech give us a further idea of perfection. These are the *Sifat-i-Sabútiyah*, or affirmative attributes, the privation of which would imply loss; there are also *Sifát-i-Salbiyah*, or privative attributes, such as God has no form, is not limited by place, has no equal. The attributes are also called *Sifátu'z-zatiyah* and *Sifatu'l-fa'liyah*. The former are those which have no opposite, as Life, for death cannot be predicated of God; the latter are those which have an opposite, as Mercy, for God can have its opposite—anger. The acts of sitting, rising, descending, the possession of face, hands, eyes, &c., being connected with the idea of corporeal existences, imply imperfection, and apparently contradict the doctrine of “exemption” (*tanzih*), according to which God is, in virtue of His essence, in no way like the creatures He has made. This was a difficulty, but the four great Imáms all taught that it was impious to inquire into these matters, for all such allusions were *mutashábih*. “The Imám Hanbal and other early divines followed in the path of the early Muslims and said: ‘We believe in the Book and the Sunnat, and do not desire explanations. We know that the High God is not to be compared to any created object: nor any creature with Him.’” Imám As-Sháfi‘í said that a man who inquired into such matters should be tied to a stake and carried about, and that the following proclamation should be made before him: “This is the reward of him who left the Quran and the Traditions for the study of scholastic theology.” Imam Hanbal says: “Whosoever moves his hand when he reads in the Qurán the words, ‘I have created with my hand,’ ought to have his hand cut off; and whoever stretches forth his finger in repeating the saying of

Muhammad, 'The heart of the believer is between two fingers of the Merciful,' deserves to have his finger cut off." At-Tirmízi, when consulted about the statement of the Prophet that God had descended to the lowest of the seven heavens, said: "The descent is intelligible, the manner how is unknown; the belief therein is obligatory; and the asking about it is a blamable innovation." But all such attempts to restrain discussion and investigation failed.

The two main points in the discussion of this question are (1) whether the attributes of God are internal or external? whether they are part of His essence or not? and (2) whether they are eternal or not?

The two leading sects were the Şifatians and the Mu'tazilas. The Sifátians, according to Sharastání (p. 67), taught that the attributes of God are eternally inherent in His essence, without separation or change. Every attribute is conjoined with Him as life with knowledge or knowledge with power. They also taught that the mutashábih verses were not to be explained. So at first they did not attempt to give the meaning of the terms "hands, eyes, face," &c., when applied to God. They simply accepted them as they stood.

The Mu'tazilas were the great opponents of the Sifátians. They rejected the idea of eternal attributes, saying that eternity was the formal attribute of the essence of God. "If," said they, "we admit the eternal existence of an attribute, then we must recognise the multiplicity of eternal existences." They also rejected the attributes of hearing, seeing, and speech, as these were accidents proper to corporeal existences. They looked upon the divine attributes as mental abstractions, and not as having a real existence in the divine essence. The expression "hand of God," they said, meant simply His power or His favour. To this the orthodox replied, that in this case then the Devil (Iblis) could say that he had been created by the "favour of God," for God had said, "I created thee with my two hands." Again,

they urged, if "hand" means "power," then God has two powers; and as the Prophet gave no explanation of such a *mutashabih* expression, it is clear that none is possible, and therefore the *Mu'tazila* explanation is not to be accepted.

The *Mu'tazilas* were emphatically the Free-thinkers of Islám. The origin of the sect was as follows:—Al Hasan, a famous divine, was one day seated in the mosque at Basrah when a discussion arose on the question whether a believer who committed a mortal sin became thereby an unbeliever. The *Khárigites* affirmed that it was so. The orthodox denied this, saying that, though guilty of sin, yet that as he believed rightly he was not an infidel.¹ One of the scholars, Wasil Ibn 'Ata (who was born at Madínah, A.H. 80), then rose up and said: "I maintain that a Muslim who has committed a mortal sin should be regarded neither as a believer or an unbeliever, but as occupying a middle station between the two." He then retired to another part of the mosque, where he was joined by his friend 'Umr Ibn Obaid and others. They resumed the discussion. A learned man, named Katáda, entering the mosque, went up to them, but on finding that they were not the party in which Al Hasan was, said, "These are the Seceders (*Al-Mu'tazila*)." Al Hasan soon expelled them from his school. Wasil then founded a school of his own, of which, after the death of his master, 'Umr Ibn Obaid became the head.

Wasil felt that a believer, though sinful, did not merit the same degree of punishment as an infidel, and thus starting off on the question of degrees of punishment, he opened up the whole subject of free-will. This soon brought him into conflict with the orthodox on the subject of predestination, and that again to the subject of the inspiration, the interpretation and the eternity of the Quran, and of the divine attributes. His followers rejected the doctrine of the "divine right" of the Imám, and held that the entire body of the Faithful had the right to elect the most suitable

¹ Ibn Khallikán's "Biographical Dictionary," vol. iii. p. 343.

person, who need not necessarily be a man of the Quraish tribe, to fill that office. The principles of logic and the teaching of philosophy were brought to bear on the precepts of religion. According to Sharastaní the Mu'tazilas hold :—

“That God is eternal, and that eternity is the peculiar property of His essence ; but they deny the existence of any eternal attributes (as distinct from His nature). For they say, He is Omniscient as to His nature ; Living as to His nature ; Almighty as to His nature ; but not through any knowledge, power, or life existing in Him as eternal attributes ; for knowledge, power, and life are part of His essence, otherwise, if they are to be looked upon as eternal attributes of the Deity, it will give rise to a multiplicity of eternal entities.”

“They maintain that the knowledge of God is as much within the province of reason as that of any other entity ; that He cannot be beheld with the corporeal sight. They also maintain that justice is the animating principle of human actions, and that justice means the following out the dictates of reason.”

“Again, they hold that there is no eternal law as regards human actions ; that the divine ordinances which regulate the conduct of men are the results of growth and development ; that God has commanded and forbidden, promised and threatened by a law which grew gradually. At the same time, he who works righteousness merits rewards, and he who works evil deserves punishment. Knowledge is attained only through reason. The cognition of good and evil is also within the province of reason ; nothing is known to be right or wrong until reason has enlightened us as to the distinction ; and thankfulness for the blessings of the Benefactor is made obligatory by reason, even before the promulgation of any law upon the subject. Man has perfect freedom ; is the author of his actions both good and evil, and deserves reward or punishment hereafter accordingly.”

The following story, narrated by Jalálu'd-din As-Syúti, illustrates Sharastaní's statement that the Mu'tazilas denied that God could be seen by the eye of man. The Khalíf Al-Wathik (227–232 A.H.) summoned the Traditionist

Ahmad bin Nasru'l-Khuzá'í to Baghdád, and questioned him regarding the creation of the Qurán and the vision of God at the day of judgment. Ahmad replied, "Thus goes the tradition, 'Ye shall see your Lord in the day of judgment, as ye see the moon.'" ¹ Al-Wathik said, "Thou liest;" to which Ahmad replied, "Nay, it is thou that liest." The Khalíf added, "What! will He be seen as a circumscribed and corporeal form which space can contain and the eye observe? Verily, I deny a God with such attributes. What say ye?" Then some of the Mu'tazilas who were present said, "It is lawful to put him to death." The Khalíf said, "When I rise against him, let no one rise with me; for verily I throw the burden of my sins on this infidel, who worships a God whom I do not worship, and whom I do not recognise with such attributes." The Khalíf then, with his own hand, slew Ahmad.

Ahmad bin Háyat, a Mu'tazila, tries to explain away the tradition thus: "It is not God, but the 'primary intelligence' ('aql-i-kul) which will be seen." This 'aql-i-kul is another name for the "primary reason" (jauhar-i-awwal), which in the Sufi cosmogony is the first thing created. However, the orthodox view, as opposed to that of the Mu'tazilas, is that God will be seen, but that it cannot be said that He will appear on this side or that, in this manner or that. They hold that all Musalmans (though some exclude women) will see God, and that those persons before Muhammad's time who followed the teaching of the prophets will also see Him. There is a difference of opinion about angels and genii; some say they also will see God, and some deny this privilege to them.

During the reigns of the 'Abbáside Khalífs Mámún, Mu'tasim, and Wathik (198-232 A.H.) at Bagdad, the Mu'tazilas were in high favour at court. Under the

¹ The narrators say, "We were sitting on the fourteenth night of the month with the Prophet, who said, 'Certainly, you will see your Lord just as you see this moon.'" (Şaḥiḥ-i-Bukharí, chapter on Surah Qaf.)

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

in His Holy Book?—‘O Apostle! proclaim all that hath been sent down to thee from thy Lord; for if thou dost not, thou hast not proclaimed His message at all.’ Now this doctrine that you desire to spread among the Faithful, has the Apostle taught it, or has he abstained from doing so?” Ahmad remained silent. The old man resumed, “Prince of Believers, such is my third argument.” Then turning to Ahmad he said, “If the Prophet was acquainted with the doctrine which you desire to impose upon us, had he the right to pass by it in silence?” “He had the right.” “And did the same right appertain to Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman, and ‘Alí?” “It did.” “Prince of Believers,” said the prisoner, “God will, in truth, be severe on us if He deprives us of a liberty which He accorded to the Prophet and his Companions.” The Khalíf assented, and at once restored the old man to liberty. So ended one of the fiercest persecutions the orthodox have ever had to endure, but so also ended the attempt to break through the barriers of traditionalism. The next Khalíf, Al Mutawakkil, a ferocious and cruel man, restored the orthodox party to place and power. He summoned the Traditionists to Samarra, loaded them with presents, honoured them, and commanded them to bring forward traditions on the attributes of God, and on the personal vision of Him at the day of judgment. This was done to refute the views of the Mu‘tazilas on these points. The people were much pleased, and one man said, “The Khalífs are but three—Abú Bakr for his waging war on the apostates, Omar for his removal of abuses, and Mutawakkil for his revival of traditional doctrine. Now, to-day orthodoxy has been honoured as if it had never been in reproach, and the innovators in religion have fled into hell-fire disgraced and unaccepted of God.” The Khalíf also issued a fatva (decree) declaring that the dogma that the Quran was created was an utter falsehood. He instituted severe measures against Christians, Jews, Shí‘ahs, and Mu‘tazilas.¹ Ahmad Ibn Abu Daud was one of the

¹ “The non-Muslim population had to wear yellow head-coverings and

first to be disgraced. Heresy and latitudinarianism were banished. The final blow to the Mu'tazilas, however, came not from the Khalíf, but a little later on from Abu Hasan-al-Ash'arí (270-340 A.H.), who had been brought up in the strictest orthodoxy, but, when able to think for himself, took a wider view of things, and became for a time a Mu'tazila.

The Mu'tazilas when expelled from power in Baghdád still nourished at Basrah, where one day the following incident occurred. Abu 'Alí Al-Jubbai, a Mu'tazila doctor, was lecturing to his students when Al-Ash'arí propounded the following case to his master: "There were three brothers, one of whom was a true believer, virtuous and pious, the second an infidel, a debauchee and reprobate, and the third an infant; they all died. What became of them?" Al-Jubbai answered, "The virtuous brother holds a high station in Paradise, the infidel is in the depths of hell, and the child is among those who have obtained salvation." "Suppose now," said Al-Ash'arí, "that the child should wish to ascend to the place occupied by his virtuous brother, would he be allowed to do so?" "No," replied Al-Jubbai, "it would be said to him, 'Thy brother arrived at this place through his numerous works of obedience to God, and thou hast no such works to set forward.'" "Suppose then," said Al-Ash'arí, "that the child should say, 'This is not my fault; you did not let me live long enough, neither did you give me the means of proving my obedience.'" "In that case," said Al-Jubbai, "the Almighty would say, 'I knew that if I allowed thee to live, thou wouldst have been disobedient and have incurred the punishment of hell; I acted, therefore, for thy advantage.'" "Well," said Al-Ash'arí, "and suppose the infidel brother were here to say, 'O God of the Universe! since Thou knewest what awaited

also collars of wood or iron round their necks. The figures of devils were placed in front of their houses. In 236 A.H. the Khalif ordered the tomb of Husain to be destroyed and its neighbourhood to be laid waste. Pilgrimages to it were stopped." (Syuti's History of the Khalifs.)

him, Thou must have known what awaited me; why then didst Thou act for his advantage and not for mine?'" Al-Jubbai was silent, though very angry with his pupil, who was now convinced that the Mu'tazila dogma of man's free-will was false, and that God elects some for mercy and some for punishment without any motive whatever. Disagreeing with his teacher on this point, he soon began to find other points of difference, and soon announced his belief that the Quran was not created. This occurred on a Friday in the great mosque at Basrah. Seated in his chair he cried out in a loud voice, "They who know me know who I am; as for those who do not know me, I shall tell them: I am 'Alí Ibn Isma'il Al-Ash'arí, and I used to hold that the Quran was created, that the eyes (of men) shall not see God, and that we ourselves are the authors of our evil deeds; now I have returned to the truth: I renounce these opinions, and I take the engagement to refute the Mu'tazilas and expose their infamy and turpitude."

Another account says that, standing on the steps of the pulpit in a mosque at Basrah, he threw away his kaftan and said, "O ye who are here met together! Like as I cast away this garment, so do I renounce all I formerly believed." It is no uncommon thing in the history of religious beliefs for a man to give up broad and liberal views and to return to the narrower ways of orthodoxy, but it is an uncommon thing for such an one to retain in the new sphere the methods of the old; but this is just what Al-Ash'arí did. He enlisted on the side of orthodox Islam all the dialectical skill of the Mu'tazilas, and gave to the side of the orthodox the weapons of the sceptic. He then adopted the scholastic methods, and started a school of thought of his own, which was in the main a return to orthodoxy. He thus overthrew the liberal school, and his principles and methods have ruled the greater part of the world of Islam ever since. His own dying words are said to have been, "The curse of God be on the Mu'tazilas: their work is delusion and lies." The result of this retro-

gression of so able a man is to be regretted, for it undoubtedly retarded the progress of free thought, and helped to make Islam still more conservative and immobile. It is this which makes the defection of Al-Ash'arí from the Mu'tazila ranks so important an event in Muslim history. Had it been otherwise, and had Al-Ash'arí maintained his liberal views, it may be that the system of Islam would have been largely modified, its fierce bigotry softened, its culture less pedantic, its susceptibility to foreign and outside influences greater, and the lands in which it has flourished more progressive and enlightened. But so it has not been, and all has become hard and fast, and apparently immobile and unprogressive.

The Ash'arían doctrines differ slightly from the tenets of the Sifatians, of which sect Al-Ash'arí's disciples form a branch. The Ash'aríans hold—

(i.) That the attributes of God are distinct from His essence, yet in such a way as to forbid any comparison being made between God and His creatures. They say that they are not “‘ain nor ghair,” not of His essence, nor distinct from it—*i.e.*, they cannot be compared with any other things.

(ii.) That God has one eternal will from which proceed all things, the good and the evil, the useful and the hurtful. The destiny of man was written on the eternal table before the world was created. So far they go with the Sifatians, but in order to preserve the moral responsibility of man they say that he has power to convert will into action.¹ But this power cannot create anything new, for then God's sovereignty would be impaired; so they affirm that God in His providence so orders matters that whenever “a man desires to do a certain thing, good or bad, the action corresponding to the desire is, there and then, created by God, and, as it were, fitted on to the desire.” Thus it seems as

¹ “Thus, if a man becomes an infidel, it is not to be said that it is by the decree of God, although it is written on the ‘Concealed Tablet;’ it is not by the decree or will of God, but by Kasb and choice.” (Háshiyah of ‘Aqáid-i-Abu l-Muntaha,” p. 25.)

if it came naturally from the will of the man, whereas it does not. This action is called *Kasb* (acquisition), because it is acquired by a special creative act of God. "The servant of God, with his actions, confession, and knowledge, is created; so when he is a doer, the thing done is the creation of God, for to the servant there is no power, but *Kasb* is lawful." Sharastaní states that the *Mu'tazilas* entirely denied this idea of *Kasb*. They said, "For servants there is no *Kasb*, only intention; the actions of a servant are produced from his own nature." *Kasb*, then, is an act directed to the obtaining of profit or the removing of injury; the term is, therefore, inapplicable to the Deity. The Imam Al-Haramain (419-478 A. H.) held "that the actions of men were effected by the power which God has created in man." Abu Ishaqu'l Isfarayain says, "That which maketh impression, or hath influence on action, is a compound of the power of God and the power of man."

(iii.) They say that the word of God is eternal, though the vocal sounds used in the Quran, which is the manifestation of that word, are created. They say that the Quran contains the eternal word which existed in the essence of God before time was, and the word which consists of sounds and combinations of letters. This last they call the created word.

Thus Al-Ash'arí traversed the main positions of the *Mu'tazilas*, denying that man can by the aid of his reason alone rise to the knowledge of good and evil. He must exercise no judgment, but accept all that is revealed. He has no right to apply the moral laws which affect men to the actions of God. It cannot be asserted by the human reason that the good will be rewarded or the bad punished in a future world. Man must always approach God as a slave, in whom there is no light or knowledge to judge of the actions of the Supreme. Whether God will accept the penitent sinner or not cannot be asserted, for He is an absolute Sovereign, above all law.¹

¹ Ibn Khaldún says: "L'établissement des preuves (fondées sur la raison) fut adopte par les (premiers) scolastiques pour le sujet de leur

The opinion of the more irrational subdivisions of the Sifátians need not be entered into at any length.

The Mushabihites (or Assimilators),¹ interpreting some of the Mutashabih verses literally, held that there is a resemblance² between God and His creatures. They quoted in support of their opinion a Tradition: "My God met me, took my hand, embraced me and put one hand between my shoulders: when I felt His fingers they were cold." They said that the Deity was capable of local motion, of ascending, descending, &c. These they called "declarative attributes." The Mujassimians (or Corporealists) declared God to be corporeal, by which some of them meant a self-subsisting body, whilst others declared the Deity to be finite. They are acknowledged to be heretics.

The Jabríans gave great prominence to the denial of free agency in man, and thus opposed the Mu'tazilas, who in this respect are Qadríans, that is, they deny "Al-Qadr," God's absolute sovereignty, and recognise free will in man. The Ash'aríans say of themselves that they are neither Jabríans nor Qadríans, but between the two.

These and various other subdivisions are not now of much importance. The Sunnís follow the teaching of Al-Ash'arí, whilst the Shí'ahs incline to that of the Mu'tazilas.

Connected with the subject of the attributes of God is that of the names to be used when speaking of Him. The term Alláh is said to be the "great name" (Ismu'l-A'zam); it is also the name of the divine essence (Ismu'z-zat): all

traités, mais il ne fut pas, comme chez les philosophes, une tentative pour arriver a la decouverte de la vérite et pour obtenir, au moyen de la demonstration, la connaissance de ce qui etait ignore jusqu'alors. Les scolastiques recherchaient des preuves intellectuelles dans le but de confirmer la vérite des dogmes, de justifier les opinions des premiers Musalmáns et de repousser les doctrines trompeuses que les novateurs avaient emises." (Prolegomenes d'Ibn Khaldun, vol. iii. p. 169.)

¹ "As regards the views held on Mutashabih verses by the Ahl-i-Sunnat, the Mushabihites held quite different views, but they considered the Qurán to be eternal." (Sharastaní in Milal wa Nihal, pp. 85, 87.)

² "It was a resemblance only. This body (God's) is not like the bodies (of men)." Sharastaní in Milal wa Nihal, p. 87.)

other titles are names based on qualities or attributes (Asmá-as-Sifat). All sects agree in this, that the names "the Living, the Wise, the Powerful, the Hearer, the Seer, the Speaker," and so on, are to be applied to God; but the orthodox belief is that all such names must be "tauqífí," that is, dependent on some revelation. Thus it is not lawful to apply a name to God expressive of one of His attributes, unless there is some statement made or order given by Muhammad to legalise it. God is rightly called Sháfí (Healer), but He cannot be called Tabíb, which means much the same thing, for the simple reason that the word Tabíb is never applied in the Quran or the Traditions to God. In like manner the term 'Alim (Knower) is lawful, but not so the expression 'Aqil (Wise). Mu'tazilas say that if in the Quran or Traditions there is any praise of an attribute, then the adjective formed from the name of that attribute can be applied to God even though the actual word does not occur in any revelation. Al-Ghazzalí says, "The names of God not given in the Law, if expressive of His glory, may be used of Him, but only as expressive of His attributes, not of His nature." On the ground that it does not occur in the Law, the Persian word "Khudá" has been objected to, an objection which also holds good with regard to the use of such terms as God, Dieu, Gott. To this it is answered, that as "Khudá" means "one who comes by himself," it is equivalent to the term Wájibu'l-Wajúd, "one who has necessary existence," and therefore, so long as it is not considered as the Ism-i-zát, it may with propriety be used.

The opinion now seems to be that the proper name equal to the term Allah current in a language can be used; provided always that such a name is not taken from the language of the Infidels; so God, Dieu, Gott, still remain unlawful. The names of God authorised by the Quran and Traditions are, exclusive of the term Allah, ninety-nine in number. They are called the Asmá'-i-Ḥusná, according to the verse, "Most excellent names has God: by these call ye

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

existence and their operation. There is the ancient Sifátian doctrine that the attributes are eternal and of the essence of God, the Mu'tazíla theory that they are not eternal, and the Ash'arían dogma that they are eternal but distinct from His essence.

There is great difference of opinion with regard to the next three attributes of hearing, sight, speech. For the existence of the two first of these the following verses are quoted:—"He truly heareth and knoweth all things" (S. xlv. 5); "No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision" (S. vi. 103). The use of the terms sitting, rising, hands, face, eyes, has also given rise to much difference of opinion. The commentator Baizaví says: "Certainly 'sitting on the throne' is an attribute of God, but its manner is not known." He considers the verse which speaks of it to be metaphorical (*mutashábih*). Al-Ghazzálí says: "He sits upon His throne after that manner which He has Himself described, and in that sense which He Himself means, which is a sitting far remote from any notion of contact or resting upon, or local situation." This is the Ash'arían idea. The followers of Imám Ibn Hanbal say that such words represent the attributes existing in God. The words "God sits on His throne" mean that He has the power of sitting. They say, "We keep the literal meaning of the words; we allow no figurative interpretation. To do so is to introduce a dangerous principle of interpretation, for the negation of the apparent sense of a passage may tend to weaken the authority of revelation. At the same time we do not pretend to explain the act, for it is written, 'There is none like unto Him' (S. cxii.); 'Nought is there like Him' (S. xlii. 9); 'Unworthy the estimate they form of God'" (S. xxii. 73). To prove that God occupies a place, they produce the following Tradition: "Ibnu'l-Hakim wished to give liberty to a female slave, Saouda, and consulted the Prophet about it. Muhammad said to her, 'Where is God?' 'In heaven,' she replied. 'Set her at liberty; she is a true believer.'" Not, say

the Commentators, because she believed that God occupied a place, but because she took the words in their literal signification. The Shí'ahs consider it wrong to attribute to God movement and quiescence, for these imply the possession of a body. They hold, too, in opposition to the orthodox, that God will never be seen, for that which is seen is limited by space.

The seventh attribute, speech, has been fruitful of a very long and important controversy connected with the nature of the Quran, for the word "Kalam" means not mere speech, but revelation and every other mode of communicating intelligence. Al-Ghazzalí says: "He doth speak, command, forbid, promise, and threaten by an eternal ancient word, subsisting in His essence. Neither is it like to the word of the creatures, nor doth it consist in a voice arising from the commotion of the air and the collision of bodies, nor letters which are separated by the joining together of the lips or the motion of the tongue. The Quran, the Law, the Gospel, and the Psalter are books sent down by Him to His Apostles, and the Qurán, indeed, is read with tongues, written in books, and is kept in hearts; yet, as subsisting in the essence of God,¹ it doth not become liable to separation and division whilst it is transferred into the hearts and on to paper. Thus Moses also heard the word of God without voice or letter, even as the saints behold the essence of God without substance or accident." Abu Hanífa, in the *Wasiyát* (p. 3), says: "The Qurán is the Kalam Ullah, inspired, sent by Him and His attribute. It is not He, nor other than He (*la hú wa lá ghairahu*); written in books, read with tongues, remembered in hearts, but not entering into them. The letters, ink, paper, writing—all these are created, for these are the work of servants. The Kalam is not created, for the writing, letters, words, and verses are only the instruments of the Qurán, needed

¹ The orthodox believe the Kalám to be of God's nature (*Qáim ba Zátahu*), as other attributes are, without reference to letters and sounds. (*Bazu'l-Ma'ání*, p. 14.)

for servants of God. He who says the Kalám is created is a Kafir." Abú'l-Muntahá in the 'Aqáid (p. 15) says: "Al Kalám is not created, but the letters, paper, and writing are, being the work of men; these letters are the instruments of the Qurán. If a person says the 'Word of God' is created, he is a Káfir: if he says 'it is created,' meaning the Kalam-i-nafsí, he too is a Kafir, because he denies an eternal attribute: if he says '*it* is created,' meaning thereby only the words, &c., but not the eternal attribute, he commits a fault by this way of speaking, for his orthodoxy may be doubted."

The orthodox believe that God is really a speaker: the Mu'tazilas deny this, and say that He is only called a speaker because He is the originator of words and sounds. They also bring the following objections to bear against the doctrine of the eternity of the Qurán:—(1.) It is written in Arabic, it descended, is read, is heard, and is written. It was the subject of a miracle. It is divided into parts, and some verses are abrogated by others. (2.) Events are described in the past tense, but if the Quran had been eternal the future tense would have been used. (3.) The Qurán contains commands and prohibitions; if it is eternal, who were commanded and who were admonished? (4.) If it has existed from eternity it must exist to eternity, and so even in the last day, and in the next world, men will be under the obligation of performing the same religious duties as they do now, and of keeping all the outward precepts of the law. (5.) If the Qurán is eternal, then there are two eternals. (6.) Men could produce its like in eloquence and arrangement.

The position thus assailed was not at first a hard and fast dogma of Islam. It was more a speculative opinion than anything else, but the opposition of the Mu'tazilas soon led all who wished to be considered orthodox to become stout assertors of the eternity of the Quran, and to give up their lives in defence of what they believed to be true. The Mu'tazilas, by asserting the subjective nature

of the Quránic inspiration, brought the book itself within the reach of criticism. This was too much for orthodox Islám to bear, even though the Khalíf Mamun in the year 212 A.H. issued a fatvá declaring that all who asserted the eternity of the Quran were guilty of heresy. Jalalu'd-dín As-Syútí, in his History of the Khalífs, says: "In the year 212 A.H. Al-Mamún made public his doctrine on the non-creation of the Quran, but the people shrank from it with aversion, so for a while he remained quiet; but in the year 218 he wrote to his prefect in Baghdad, Ishaq bin Ibrahimu'l-Khuza'í, as follows: 'Verily the Prince of the Faithful is aware that the public at large, and the general herd of the rabble and vulgar mob, who have no insight nor knowledge, nor seek illumination from the light of wisdom and its demonstration, are a people ignorant of God and blind in regard to Him, and in error as to the truth of His doctrine, and fail to estimate Him according to the reality of His transcendence, and to arrive at a true knowledge of Him, and to distinguish between Him and His creature, and that inasmuch as they have formed an ill opinion of the difference between Him and His creation and what He hath revealed in the Qurán, for they are agreed upon its being from the beginning, not created by God, nor produced by Him, yet the Most High hath said: 'Verily we have made the same an Arabic Qurán' (S. xl. 111). Now, indeed, whatever He hath made He hath created, as the Most High hath said: 'And hath created the darkness and the light' (S. vi.), and 'We relate unto thee the histories of the apostles' (S. xi.), viz., of what had previously occurred, wherefore He announceth that He relateth events subsequent to which He produced the Quran. Again He says: 'This book, the verses of which are guarded against corruption, and are also distinctly explained' (S. xi.). Therefore is He the guardian of this book and its expounder. He is therefore its maker and originator.'" The Khalíf goes on to accuse those who differ from him of spiritual pride, and calls them "vessels of

ignorance and beacons of falsehood, men whose testimony should be rejected." He says to Ishaq bin Ibrahim: "Assemble the Qazís that are with thee, and read to them my letter, and question them as to what they maintain, and discover from them what they believe in regard to the creation of the Quran, and inform them that I seek no assistance in my service, nor do I put any confidence in one who is untrustworthy in his faith. If they allow it, and are of one accord, then command them to interrogate those witnesses that come before them as to their belief in the matter of the Qurán." Seven famous Qázís were accordingly sent for to hold a personal interview with Al-Mamun. Many, including Hanbal, Walid, and other famous doctors, were also summoned to the presence of Ishaq bin Ibrahim and examined. The following is a fair sample of what then took place. Ishaq said to Ibnu'l-Baká, "What dost thou say?" Baká replied, "I declare, on the authority of the revealed text, that the Quran was made and brought into existence." Ishaq said, "And what is made is created?" "Yes." "Therefore," rejoined Isháq, "the Quran is created." So nothing satisfactory came out of this inquiry, and Al-Mámún wrote yet again: "What the pretenders to orthodoxy and the seekers after the authority for which they are unfitted have replied has reached me. Now, whoso doth not admit that the Quran is created, suspend his exercise of judicial powers and his authority to relate traditions." Individual messages were also sent: "Tell Bishar that if he denieth that the Qurán is created, that his head shall be smitten off and sent to me." To another he said, "The sword is behind thee." All were threatened, and were in mortal fear lest they should lose their lives, for Al-Mámun, hearing that they had assented under compulsion only, had summoned them to his presence; but on their way they heard that he was dead. "Thus," says the historian, "the Lord was merciful to them and banished their fear."

It was during the persecution carried on by the next

Khalíf, Al-Mu'tasim, that the Imám Ahmad Ibn Hanbal was severely beaten and then imprisoned, because he refused to assent to the truth of the decree issued by the Khalíf Al-Mámun in the year 212 A.H. Al Buwaiti, a famous disciple of As-Sháfi'í, used an ingenious argument to fortify his own mind when being punished by the order of the Khalíf. He was taken all the way from Cairo to Baghdad, and told to confess that the Quran was created. On his refusal, he was imprisoned at Baghdad, and there remained in chains till the day of his death. As Ar-Rábí Ibn Sulaiman says: "I saw Al Buwaiti mounted on a mule: round his neck was a wooden collar, on his legs were fetters, from these to the collar extended an iron chain to which was attached a clog weighing fifty pounds. Whilst they led him on he continued repeating these words, 'Almighty God created the world by means of the word Be! Now, if that word was created, one created thing would have created another;'" which he held to be impossible. Al Buwaiti here refers to the verse, "Verily our speech unto a thing when we will the same is that we only say to it 'Be,' and it is,—Kun fayakúna" (S. xxxvi. 82). This, in the way Al Buwaiti applied it, is a standing argument of the orthodox to prove that the Quran was not created.¹

When times changed men were put to death for holding just the opposite opinion. The Imám As-Sháfi'í held a public disputation in Baghdád with Hafs, a Mu'tazila preacher, on this very point. Shafi'í quoted the verse, "God said Be, and it is," and asked, "Did not God create all things by the word Be?" Hafs assented, for, unlike Al Buwaiti, he considered it quite possible. "If then the Quran was created, must not the word Be have been created with it?" Hafs could not deny so plain a proposition.

¹ The verse, "Nay, but it (Qurán) is a warning, written on honoured pages, exalted, purified" (S. lxxx. 11-12), is said to refer to the eternal copy on the Lauh-i-Mahfuz; but Zamaksharí, a Mu'tazila commentator (520-613 A.H.), says that the words "honoured pages" refer to books of preceding Prophets with which the Quran agrees in substance.

“Then,” said Sháfi‘í, “all things, according to you, were created by a created being, which is a gross inconsistency and manifest impiety.” Thus he too proved to his own satisfaction that the Quran was not created. Hafs, who had asserted that it was created, was reduced to silence, and such an effect had Shafi‘í’s logic on the audience that they put Hafs to death as a pestilent heretic. Thus did the Ash‘arían opinions of the subject of the Divine attributes again gain the mastery.

The Mu‘tazilas failed, and the reason why is plain. They were, as a rule, influenced by no high spiritual motives; often they were mere quibblers. They sought no light in an external revelation. Driven to a reaction by the rigid system they combated, they would have made reason alone their chief guide. The nobler spirits among them were impotent to regenerate the faith they professed to follow. It was, however, a great movement, and at one time it threatened to change the whole nature of Islam. This period of Muslim history, famed as that in which the effort was made to cast off the fetters of the rigid system which Islam was gradually tightening by the increased authority given to traditionalism and to the refinements of the four Imams, was undoubtedly a period of, comparatively speaking, high civilisation. Baghdad, the capital of the Khalífate, was a busy, populous, well-governed city. This it mainly owed to the influence of the Persian family of the Barmecides, one of whom was Vizier to the Khalíf Harunu‘r-Rashíd. Hárun’s fame as a good man is quite undeserved. It is true that he was a patron of learning, that his empire was extensive, that he gained many victories, that his reign was the culminating point of Arab grandeur. But for all that, he was a morose despot, a cruel man, thoroughly given up to pleasures of a very questionable nature. Drunkenness, in this brilliant period of Muslim history, is said to have been common at court.¹

¹ It is, however, only fair to state that Ibn Khaldún (vol. i. pp. 35-36) maintains that what they drank was date-wine or date-wort (nabid),

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

I cannot but observe the movement which has been going on for some time among them. The advancement of culture and the development and growth of new ideas have begun to exercise the same influence on them as on other races and peoples. The younger generation is tending unconsciously towards the Mu'tazila doctrines."¹ I have already shown that the general tendency of the Mu'tazila movement was towards a more liberal view of inspiration and the use of reason in matters of religion. This view is now reasserted with much force by Maulaví Cherágh 'Alí Sáhib, a great scholar in both Eastern and Western learning, and a distinguished official in the service of the Nizám of Haidarábad. He says: "A prophet is neither immaculate nor infallible. A prophet feels that his mind is illumined by God, and the thoughts which are expressed by him and spoken or written under this influence are to be regarded as the words of God. This illumination of the mind, or effect of the divine influence, differs in the prophet according to the capacity of the recipient, or according to the circumstances—physical and moral and religious—in which he is placed."² This is quite contrary to the orthodox view of inspiration, or wahí, and is not in accordance with the received teaching of the orthodox divines; nor, so far as I know, has this liberal view ever been propounded by a Musalman scholar unacquainted with Western and Christian modes of thought. Another writer, approaching the subject from a different standpoint, says: "The present stagnation of the Muhammadan community is principally due to the notion which has fixed itself in the minds of the generality of Muslims that the right to the exercise of private judgment ceased with the early legists, that its exercise in modern times is sinful, that a Muslim, in order to be regarded as an orthodox follower of Muhammad, should abandon his judgment absolutely to the interpretations of men who lived in the ninth century

¹ "Personal Law of the Muhammadáns," by Syed Amír 'Alí, p. xi.

² "Critical Exposition of Jihad," by Cherágh 'Alí, p. lxix.

and could have no conception of the nineteenth. . . . No account is taken of the altered circumstances in which Muslims are now placed. The conclusions at which these learned legists arrived several centuries ago are held to be equally applicable to the present day.”¹

I have shown in the first chapter of this book that the glory of orthodox Islam is the finality of the revelation and of its law, and that its fixed and final nature is the real barrier to any enlightened improvement in purely Muhammadan states. This is also admitted by the men whom we may call the modern Mu'tazilas. Syed Amír 'Alí says: “The Church and State were linked together; the Khalíf was the Imam—temporal chief as well as spiritual head. With the advance of time, and as despotism fixed itself upon the habits and customs of the people, and as the Khalíf became the arbiter of their fate, without check or hindrance from jurisconsult or legist, patristicism took hold of the minds of all classes of society. . . . What had been laid down by the Fathers is unchangeable and beyond the range of discussion. The Faith may be carried to the land of the Esquimaux, but it must go with rules framed for the guidance of Irakians.”² Maulaví Cherágh 'Alí writes in the same strain: “Slavish adherence to the letter, and the taking not the least notice of the spirit of the Quran, is the sad characteristic of the Quranic interpreters and of the deductions of the Muhammadan doctors. . . . There are certain points in which the Common Law is irreconcilable with the modern needs of Islam, whether in India or in Turkey, and requires modification. . . . It was only from some oversight on the part of the compilers of the Common Law that, in the first place, the civil precepts of a transitory nature, and as a mediate step leading to a higher reform, were taken as final; and, in the second place, the civil precepts adapted for the dwellers of the Arabian desert were pressed upon the necks of all ages and

¹ “Spirit of Islám,” by Syed Amír 'Alí, p. 287.

² *Ibid.*, p. 521.

countries. A social system for barbarism ought not to be imposed on a people already possessing higher forms of civilisation.”¹

These quotations fully support all that I have said in previous pages on this subject. It is true that all this is not approved; indeed it is severely condemned. Still these statements do bear witness to the accuracy of the conclusions at which European writers competent to deal with the subject have arrived. These statements also show that the deductions made by such European writers from the history of the past and from Muslim theological literature have been correct. Palgrave, for example, says nothing stronger than these Indian Muhammadan writers state when, speaking of the stagnation of Islam, he says: “We cannot refrain from remarking that the Islamic identification of religion and law is an essential defect in the system, and a serious hindrance to the development of good government and social progress.”

From the writings of these enlightened Musalmans it is clear that to the Shari‘at, as viewed in its finality by the orthodox, the following objections more or less apply, viz.: that an imperfect code of ethics has been made a permanent standard of good and evil and a final irrevocable law; that the Shari‘at deals with precepts rather than with principles; that it has led to formality of worship; that by it Islam is rendered stationary and unable to adapt itself to the varying circumstances of time and place. In order to remove these difficulties, it is said that the Shari‘at is not really the sacred and final code which the canonical legists have stated it to be; but that it is Common Law which can be changed when circumstances require it. Thus, Maulavi Cheragh ‘Alí says: “The Muhammadan Common Law, or Shari‘at, if it can be called Common Law, as it does not contain any Statute Law, is by no means unchangeable or unalterable.”² “The legislation of the Muhammadan Common Law cannot

¹ “Reforms under Moslem Rule,” p. ii.

² “Critical Exposition of Jihád,” p. xcii.

be called immutable ; on the contrary, it is changeable and progressive.”¹ I am not aware that any responsible Muhammadan ruler holds this view that the Shari‘at is Common Law and therefore changeable, nor has any Musalman state, so far as I know, except when compelled by some stronger and more civilised non-Muslim Government, attempted to make any such changes. The Sultan of Turkey, who, as the nominal Khalif, is the religious head and guide of the Sunni Musalmans has, at times, to bend to the superior will and power of his stronger neighbours and to make departures from the Shari‘at ; but this, which to the orthodox mind is a dereliction of duty, is excused because he must submit to *force majeure*. It is indeed fully admitted by the men of what we may call the New Islam in India that the great body of the authorised teachers of the past is against them ; but it is said that no “ regard is to be paid to the opinions and theories of the Muqallids.”²

The movement of the ancient Mu‘tazilas was almost entirely an intellectual one ; they left moral questions alone. In this respect the modern Mu‘tazilas are far ahead of their predecessors. It would take me far beyond my subject to pursue this aspect of the case ; but the opinion of some of the most cultured and enlightened of the Indian Musalmans is in full accordance with the words of Syed Amir ‘Alí, who says : “ The conviction is gradually forcing itself on all sides, in all advanced Muslim communities, that polygamy is as much opposed to the teachings of Muhammad as it is to the general progress of civilised society and true culture.”³ The statement that polygamy is opposed to the teachings of Muhammad cannot be substantiated ; but the fact that many enlightened Musalmans now repudiate the practice is correct. Although the liberal views of these writers to whom I have referred do not alter the fact of the non-progressive nature of Islam, nor show that the opinions of

¹ “ Reforms under Moslem Rule,” p. xiii.

² *Ibid.*, p. vii.

³ “ Spirit of Islám,” p. 327.

the orthodox theologians are not correct; yet this movement, on the part of men, deeply influenced by Western culture and affected by the environment of a higher civilisation, towards freedom of thought and a truer moral life, is one of the deepest interest. It is not in lands under Muslim rule where the Law and Faith of Islam have full sway, but in British India we find men of these advanced views. They are entirely out of touch with the many millions of Indian Muslims who repudiate entirely all such liberal ideas.¹ The popular opinion, which classes them as persons who have rejected a revealed religion for a mere religion of nature, is not correct; but the fact that they are so looked upon detracts materially from their claim to be regarded as trustworthy exponents of Islam as it has been, and is now, known and received in all Muslim lands. If Islam possesses in itself all the regenerative power claimed for it, if the wonderful words of the Prophet breathed new force and infused new life into the dormant heart of Humanity, if the Arabs went forth inspired by the teaching of Muhammad to "elevate and civilise," we may surely look to Arabia to see some fruit of it all. Yet that land, the centre of Islam under its most revered teachers, the Muftis of the great legal systems, the home of its most sacred spot, a pilgrimage to which ensures salvation; the land in which its sacred language—the language of the uncreated Quran and so of heaven—is the mother-tongue of the people; this land is now hopelessly behind almost every other land,

¹ "A remarkable instance of enlightened Muhammadánism has recently been seen in Mr. Justice Syed Amír 'Alí's "Spirit of Islam," in which the Ijma', or scholastic tradition, is wholly set aside; the right of private interpretation of the Qurán is maintained, and the adaptability of Islám to the most advanced ideas of civilisation is warmly upheld. But such men as Syed Amír 'Alí are very rare, and cannot strictly be called Muslims; no respectable member of the 'Ulamá or religious jurists would tolerate them. They may be Islamitical theists—just as there is a Theism formed upon Christianity—but they are not orthodox Muslims. To the true Muhammadan, authority is everything, and his authority, the Qurán, Sunnat, and Ijma', tells them. . . ." ("Studies in a Mosque," by Stanley Lane-Poole, p. 324.)

Christian or non-Christian, in the world to-day. At distant intervals there have been brilliant periods under Muslim rule; but it has always been when heterodoxy has been supreme, as in the day of Al Mamún at Baghdad and under Akbar in India. The Moors in Spain attained to some degree of culture, which they entirely lost when they retired to Africa. Syed Amír 'Alí accounts for this by saying that "the retention of culture depends on the surroundings,"—a statement which unwittingly admits that not to Islam, but to the Christian and Jewish culture of Spain the Moors owed what they then had gained. Still, the protest against the traditionalism of the past and the bigotry of the present is a noble one, and if we place it in its true relation to orthodox Islam, we may watch its growth with much interest. It will raise individuals, purify the family life of some, and stir up in its adherents a desire for useful knowledge; but on Islam as a religion and a polity it will have little effect.

With this digression we must now return to the consideration of the second article of the creed.

2. ANGELS.—Of this article of the creed Muḥammad Al-Berkevi says:—

"We must confess that God has angels who act according to His order, and who do not rebel against Him. They neither eat nor drink, nor is there amongst them any difference of sex. They are on earth, and in heaven, some have charge of men and record all their actions. Some angels are high in stature and are possessed of great power. Such an one is Gabriel (Jibrá'il), who in the space of one hour can descend from heaven to earth, and who with one wing can lift up a mountain.

"We must believe in 'Izrá'il, who receives the souls of men when they die, and in Isráfil, into whose charge is committed the trumpet. When he receives the order, he will blow such a terrible blast that all living things will die. This is the commencement of the last day" (S. xxxix. 68, 69).

This confession of faith makes no mention of Míká'il (Michael), the fourth of the archangels. His special duty is

to see that all created beings have what is needful for their sustenance. Israfil is said to have a very pleasant voice, to which an allusion is made in the Masnaví of Jalálu'd-dín Rumí, where a good minstrel is spoken of as one whose song is

“Like voice of Isráfil, whose trump on Judgment Day
Will wake the dead to life ; his made the saddest gay.”

The one desire of angels is to love and to know God. “All beings in the heaven and on the earth are His: and they who are in His presence disdain not His service, neither are they wearied: they praise Him day and night” (S. xxi. 19, 20). They are free from all sin. It is true that they did not wish for the creation of Adam, and this may seem like a want of confidence in God. It is said, however, that their object was not to oppose God, but to relieve their minds of the doubts they had in the matter. Thus “When the Lord said to the angels, ‘Verily, I am about to place one in my stead on earth,’ they said, ‘Wilt thou place there one who will do ill therein, and shed blood when we celebrate thy praise and extol thy holiness?’ God said, ‘Verily I know what ye know not.’” It is also true that Iblís was disobedient, but then he belonged not to the angelic order, but to that of the jinn. “When we said to the angels, ‘Prostrate yourselves before Adam,’ they all prostrated themselves save Iblís, who was of the jinn, and revolted from his Lord’s behest” (S. xviii. 48; ii. 33).

Angels sometimes appear in human form, but usually they are invisible. They intercede for man: “The angels celebrate the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for the dwellers on earth” (S. xlii. 3). They also act as guardian angels: “Each hath a succession of angels before him and behind him, who watch over him by God’s behest” (S. xiii. 12). “Is it not enough for you that your Lord aideth you with three thousand angels sent down from on high?” (S. iii. 120). “Supreme over

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

mitigate the evils of Satanic interference. "Iblís," says Jabir Maghrabí, "though able to assume all other forms, is not permitted to appear in the semblance of the Deity, or any of His angels or prophets. There would otherwise be much danger to human salvation, as he might, under the appearance of one of the prophets, or of some superior being, make use of this power to seduce men to sin."

The story of Harút and Marút is of some interest from its connection with the question of the impeccability of the angels. Speaking of those who reject God's Apostle, the Quran says: "And they followed what the Satans read in the reign of Solomon; not that Solomon was unbelieving, but the Satans were unbelieving. Sorcery did they teach to men, and what had been revealed to the two angels Harút and Marút at Babel. Yet no man did these two teach until they had said, 'We are only a temptation. Be thou not an unbeliever'" (S. ii. 96). The story goes that in the time of the prophet Enoch, when the angels saw the bad actions of men, they said: "O Lord! Adam and his descendants, whom Thou hast appointed as Thy vicegerents on earth, act disobediently." To which the Lord replied: "If I were to send you on earth, and to give you lustful and angry dispositions, you too would sin." The angels thought otherwise; so God told them to select two of their number who should undergo this ordeal. They selected two renowned for devotion and piety. God having implanted in them the passions of lust and anger, said: "All day go to and fro on the earth, put an end to the quarrels of men, ascribe no equal to Me, do not commit adultery, drink no wine, and every night repeat the Ismu'l-A'zam, and return to heaven." This they did for some time, but at length a beautiful woman named Zuhra (Venus) led them astray. One day she brought them a cup of wine. One said, "God has forbidden it;" the other, "God is merciful and forgiving." So they drank the wine, killed the husband of Zuhra, to whom they revealed the "exalted name," and fell into grievous sin.

Immediately after, they found that the "name" had gone from their memories, and so they could not return to heaven as usual. They then begged Enoch to intercede for them. The prophet did so, and with such success that the angels were allowed to choose between a present or a future punishment. They elected to be punished here on earth. They were then suspended with their heads downwards in a well at Babel. Some say that angels came and whipped them with rods of fire, and that a fresh spring ever flowed just beyond the reach of their parched lips. The woman was changed to a star. Some assert that it was a shooting star which has now passed out of existence. Others say that she is the star Venus.

It is only right to state that the Qazí 'Ayaz, Imam Fakhru'd-dín Razí (544-606 A.H.), Qazí Násiru'd-dín Baizaví (620-691 A.H.), and most scholastic divines deny the truth of this story. They say that angels are immaculate, but this does not meet the difficulty which the Quran itself raises in connection with Harút and Marut. As to the woman, they think the whole story absurd, not only because the star Venus was created before the time of Adam, but also because it is inconceivable that one who was so wicked should have the honour of shining in heaven for ever. A solution, however, they are bound to give, and it is this: magic is a great art which God must allow mankind to know. The dignity of the order of prophets is so great that they cannot teach men what is confessedly hurtful. Two angels were therefore sent, and so men can now distinguish between the miracles of prophets, the signs of saints, the wonders of magicians and others. Then Hárút and Márút always discouraged men from learning magic. They said to those who came to them, "We are only a temptation. Be not thou an unbeliever." Others assert that it is a Jewish allegory, in which the two angels represent reason and benevolence, the woman the evil appetites. The woman's ascent to heaven represents death.

To this solution of the difficulty, however, the great body of the Traditionists do not agree. They declare that the story is a *Hadís-í-Sahih*, and that the *Isnad* is sound and good. Such divines are Imam Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Ma'súd, Ibn 'Umr, Ibn 'Abbas, Hafiz 'Asqallaní, and others. They say that angels are immaculate only so long as they remain in the angelic state; that, though confined, Harut and Marút can teach magic, for a word or two is quite sufficient for that purpose; that some men have no fear, and, if they have, it is quite conceivable that the two angels may teach through the instrumentality of devils or jinn. With regard to the woman Zuhra, they grant that to be changed into a bright star is of the nature of a reward; but they say the desire to learn the "exalted name" was so meritorious an act that the good she desired outweighs the evil she did. With regard to the date of the creation of the star Venus, it is said that all our astronomical knowledge is based on observations made since the Flood, whereas this story relates to the times of Enoch, who lived before the days of Noah. So the dispute goes on, and men of great repute for learning and knowledge believe in the story, although it seems to discredit the orthodox theory of the sinlessness of angels.

Munkar and Nakir are two fierce-looking black angels, who visit every man in his grave, and examine him with regard to his faith in God and in Muhammad. The dead are supposed to dwell in 'Alam-i-barzakh, a state of existence intervening between the present life and the life of mankind after the resurrection. This is the meaning of the word "grave" when used in this connection. Unbelievers and wicked Muslims suffer trouble in that state; true believers who can give a good answer to the angels are happy. There is a difference of opinion with regard to children. The general belief is that the children of believers will be questioned, but that the angels will teach them to say, "Allah is my Lord, Islam my religion, and Muḥammad my Prophet." With regard to the children of

unbelievers being questioned, Imám Abú Hanífa hesitated to give an opinion. He also doubted about their punishment. Some think they will be in A'raf, a place between heaven and hell; others suppose that they will be servants to the true believers in Paradise. The verse, "Twice, O our Lord, hast thou given us death, and twice hast thou given us life" (S. xl. 11), is said to refer to the visit of these angels. Thus it is said in the Tafsír-i-Ibn 'Abbas, that death takes place in the world, and again a second time after the corpse has been raised to answer the questioning in the grave: life is thus given temporarily in the grave, and will also be given at the general resurrection.

Distinct from the angels there is another order of beings made of fire, called jinn (genii). It is said that they were created thousands of years before Adam came into existence. "We created man of dried clay, of dark loam moulded, and the jinn had been before created of subtle fire" (S. xv. 26, 27). They eat, drink, propagate their species, and are subject to death, though they generally live many centuries. Some are believers in Islam; some are infidels, and will be punished. "I will wholly fill hell with jinn and men" (S. xi. 120). The Súratu'l-Jinn (lxxii.) refers to their belief in Islam. The passage is too long to quote. Their earnest desire to hear the Qurán is referred to in the verse, "When the servant of God stood up to call upon him, they almost jostled him by their crowds" (S. lxxii. 19). All the commentators say the phrase "Servant of God" refers to Muḥammad and the word "they" to the jinn. Some try to hear what is going on in heaven. "We guard them (*i.e.*, men) from every stoned Satan, save such as steal a hearing" (S. xv. 18). They were under the power of Solomon and served him (S. xxxviii. 36). An 'Ifrít of the jinn said, "I will bring it thee (Solomon) ere thou risest from thy place: I have power for this, and am trusty" (S. xxvii. 39). At the last day the jinn also will be questioned. Abu Hanífa doubted whether the jinn who are Muslims will be rewarded. The unbelieving jinn will assuredly be

punished. Tradition classifies them in the following order: (1) Jann, (2) Jinn, (3) Shaitan, (4) 'Ifrít, (5) Marid. Many fables have been invented concerning these beings, and though intelligent Muslims may doubt these wonderful accounts, yet a belief in the order of jinn is imperative, at least as long as there is belief in the Qurán. Those who wish to know more of this subject will find a very interesting chapter on it in Lane's "Modern Egyptians."

The teaching of Islam about the angels, the work and nature of evil spirits and the Houris, is derived from Zoroastrian or Magian sources directly, or indirectly through the medium of later Jewish legends, and shows how much Muhammad borrowed from Pagan sources.

3. THE BOOKS.—Al Berkevi says:—

"It is necessary to believe that the books of God have been sent through the instrumentality of Gabriel to prophets upon the earth. The Quran was sent to Muhammad portion by portion during a space of twenty-three years. The Pentateuch came to Moses, the Injíl to Jesus, the Zabúr to David, and the other books to other prophets. The whole number of the Divine books is one hundred and four. The Quran, the last of all, is to be followed till the day of judgment. It can neither be abrogated nor changed. Some laws of the previous books have been abrogated by the Quran, and ought not to be followed."

The one hundred to which no distinctive name is given are known as the "Suhúfu'l Anbiyá,"—Books of the Prophets. The Quran is also known as the Furqan, the distinguisher; the Quran-i-Sharíf, noble Quran; the Quran-i-Majíd, glorious Quran; the Mushaf, the Book. It is said to be the compendium of the Taurat, Zabúr, and Injíl; so Muslims do not require to study these books. The orthodox belief is that they are entirely abrogated by the Quran,¹ though Syed Aḥmad, in his commentary on the Bible

¹ Sharh-i-'Aqáid-i-Jámí, p. 147: "Manusukh shud tiláwatan wa Kitábatan," *i.e.*, abrogated both as regards reading and writing. Also Takmilu'l Imán, p. 64: "This religion abrogates all religions"—Dín-i-wai násikh-i-jamf' adíán ast.

(vol. i. p. 268), denounces as ignorant and foolish those Musalmans who say so. Be that as it may, their inspiration is considered to be of a lower order than that of the Qurán. A large portion of the Injíl is considered to be mere narrative. The actual words of Christ only are looked upon as the revelation which descended from heaven. It is so in the case of the Old Testament Prophets. "However, it was the rule to call a book by the name of the prophet, whether the subject-matter was pure doctrine only, or whether it was mixed up with narrative also. . . . It is to be observed that, in the case of our own Prophet, the revelations made to him were intended to impart a special miracle of eloquence, and they were written down, literally and exactly, in the form in which they were communicated, without any narrative being inserted in them. . . . We do not consider that the Acts of the Apostles, or the various Epistles, although unquestionably very good books, are to be taken as part and parcel of the New Testament itself; nevertheless we look upon the writings of the Apostles in the same light as we do the writings of the Companions of our own Prophet; that is to say, as entitled to veneration and respect."¹ There are many verses in the Quran which speak of previous revelations, thus: "When a prophet came to them from God, *attesting that (Scripture) which is with them*, a part of those to whom the Book was given cast the book of God behind their backs, as if they knew not" (S. ii. 97). The commentator Jalalain says: "Cast it away," *i.e.*, they acted in respect of the testimony of the Taurát to the Prophet as if they knew not that he was the true Prophet and it *the book of God*" Again, "O ye people of the Book! why do ye deny the revelation of God, and yet ye are witnesses of the same?" (S. iii. 68). By the "revelation" is meant the Taurat and the Injíl, which Musalmans (wrongly) say foretold Muhammad's advent as a Prophet of God. "And how shall they make thee judge, since they already know the Taurat, *in which is the judgment of God?*"

¹ Syed Ahmad's Commentary on the Holy Bible, vol. i. pp. 22, 31.

(S. v. 44). “And let the people of the Gospel judge according to that which is revealed therein, and whoso judgeth not according to that which *God hath revealed*, these are the wicked ones” (S. v. 48). “We also caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow the footsteps of the prophets, confirming the law (Taurat) which was sent before him, and we gave him the Injil with its guidance and light, confirmatory of the preceding law; a guidance and a warning to those that fear God” (S. v. 50). “We believe in God, and that which hath been sent down to us, and that which hath been sent down to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which hath been given to Moses and to Jesus, and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. No difference do we make between any of them: and to God are we resigned” (S. ii. 130). “In truth hath He sent down to thee the Book, which confirmeth those that precede it, for He had sent down the Law and the Injil aforetime as man’s guidance; and now hath He sent down the Furqan” (S. iii. 2).

Practically, Musalmáns reject the Old and New Testaments. To do so is manifestly against the letter of the Quran, and, as some reason for this neglect of previous Scriptures must be given, Muslim divines say that the Jewish and Christian Scriptures have been corrupted. The technical expression is “tahríf,” a word signifying to change, to turn aside anything from the truth. Then tahríf may be of two kinds: tahríf-í-ma’naví, a change in the meaning of words; tahríf-í-lafzî, an actual change of the written words. Most Musalmans maintain that the latter kind of corruption has taken place, and so they do not feel bound to read or study the previous revelations so frequently referred to in the Qurán. The charge brought against the Jews of corrupting their Scriptures is based on the following verse of the Quran: “Some truly are there among you who torture the Scriptures with their tongues, in order that ye may suppose it to be from the Scripture, yet it is not from the Scripture. And they say, ‘This is from God,’ yet

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

heads of their respective dispensations, and because they will be permitted by God to intercede in the day of judgment for their followers. They are the greatest and most exalted of the prophets.

There are degrees of rank amongst the prophets, for "Some of the Apostles have we endowed more highly than others.¹ Those to whom God hath spoken, He hath raised to the loftiest grade, and to Jesus, the Son of Mary, we gave manifest signs, and we strengthened him with the Holy Spirit" (S. ii. 254). It is said that the "first appearance of prophetship was in Adam, and its perfection in the 'Seal of the prophets.'" In the *Maṣnavi* it is said—

"The name of Ahmad includes the names of prophets all,
Just as one hundred, when received, includes ninety all."

A Tradition, as usual, supports this position. "I am the chief of the sons of men." "Adam and all beside him will be ranged under my flag in the judgment-day." It is said that the law given by Moses was harsh and severe; that by Christ was mild and gracious; but that the law given by Muhammad is perfect, for it combines both the quality of strictness and that of graciousness; according to the Tradition: "I always laugh and by laughing kill." Each prophet is said to have been sent to his own tribe, but Muhammad was sent for all men. A Tradition states: "I was raised up for all men whether white or black, other prophets were not, except for their own tribe." The Qurán also says: "We have sent thee (Muhammad) for all men."

Many Sunnis hold that prophets are superior to angels, and sometimes quote the verse, "Verily, God chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of Imrán out of the worlds" (S. iii. 30), as a proof of it. The *Mu'tazilas* say that the angels are superior to the prophets. *Al-Jubbai*, a *Mu'tazila*, quotes the verse, "Neither do I say unto you, 'Verily I am an angel'" (S. vi. 50), to prove

¹ This, however, is contrary to the verses, "We make no difference between them" (S. iii. 78); "We make no distinction between any of His Apostles" (S. ii. 285).

that prophets are inferior. Qázi 'Abdu'l-Jubbár in his Commentary denies this, and says that Al-Jubbai interprets the words as if Muḥammad meant that he had not the *glory and dignity* of an angel, whereas all that he meant to declare was that he had not the *rank* of an angel, because, as a matter of fact, his glory was greater. The Shí'ahs assert that the twelve Imams are superior to prophets. There is also a Tradition which says, "The 'Ulama of my faith are as the prophets of the children of Israel."

Ibn Khaldún (vol. i. pp. 196–205) gives a very interesting account of prophetic inspiration. He speaks somewhat as follows. If we contemplate the world and the creatures it contains, we shall recognise a perfect order, a regular system, a sequence of cause and effect, a connection between different categories of existence, and a transformation of beings from one category of existence to another. Then the phenomena of the visible world indicate to us the existence of an agent whose nature is different from that of the body, who is, in fact, a spiritual existence. This agent, which is the soul, must, on the one hand, be in contact with the existences of this world, and, on the other, with the existences of the next category of superiority, and one whose essential qualities are pure perception and clear intelligence. Such are the angels. It follows, then, that the human soul has a tendency towards the angelic world. All this is quite in accordance with the idea that, according to a regular order, all the categories of existences in the universe are in mutual contact by means of their faculties and on account of their nature.¹

¹ This is very similar to the views of the Pseudo-Dionysius. "The chain of being in the upper and invisible world, through which the Divine Power diffuses itself in successive gradations, he calls the Celestial Hierarchy. The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy is a corresponding series in the visible world. The order of angelic natures and of priestly functionaries correspond to each other. The highest rank of the former receive illumination direct from God. The lowest of the heavenly imparts divine light to the highest of the earthly hierarchy. Each order strives perpetually to approximate to that immediately above itself, from which it receives the transmitted influence." ("Hours with the Mystics," by Vaughan, vol. i. p. 114.)

The souls of men may be divided into three classes. The first kind of soul is too feeble by nature to attain to a perception of the spiritual: it has to content itself with moving in the region of sense and imagination. Thus it can understand concepts and affirmations. It can raise itself high in its own category, but cannot pass its limit.

The souls of the second class are carried by a reflective movement and a natural disposition towards a spiritual intelligence. They can enter into a state of contemplation which results in ecstasy. This is the intuition of the saints (Auliya),¹ to whom God has given this divine knowledge.

The souls of the third class are created with the power of disengaging themselves altogether from their human bodies in order that they may rise to the angelic state, where they become like angels. In a moment of time such a soul perceives the sublime company (of angels) in the sphere which contains them. It there and then hears the speech of the soul and the divine voice. Such are the souls of the prophets. God has given to these souls the power of leaving the human body. Whilst thus separate from it, God gives to them His revelation. The prophets are endowed by God with such a purity of disposition, such an instinct of uprightness, that they are naturally inclined to the spiritual world. They are animated by an ardour quite peculiar to their order. When they return from the angelic state they deliver to men the revelations they have received. The journey to, the journey from the angelic state, and the comprehension of the revelation received there, occupy less time than the twinkling of an eye. So rapidly do the souls of prophets move. So instantaneously do they receive and understand God's revelations. This is why inspiration is called *Wahí*, a word which, according to Ibn Khaldún, means to make haste.

¹ That the "Auliya" are distinguished above ordinary mortals is maintained on the authority of: "Are not the friends (Auliya) of God those on whom no fear shall come, nor shall they be put to grief" (S. x. 63).

A Nabí (who must be a wise and a free man, that is, one who is not a slave of another, and one also who is free from imperfection either of body or mind) receives wahí, but has not necessarily to deliver to men the orders of God. A Rasúl, who must possess the same qualifications as a Nabí, is one who is commanded to deliver God's message to men, though he does not necessarily abrogate what preceding Rasúls have delivered. Some Rasúls do so, but the distinguishing mark of the Rasúl is that he delivers to men commands direct from God, and is specially commissioned so to do. Thus every Rasúl is a Nabí, whilst every Nabí is not a Rasúl.¹

The orthodox belief is that prophets are free from sin.² The Ash'aríans believe that the power of sinning is not created in them. The Mu'tazilas deny this, but admit the existence of some quality which keeps them from evil. These theories do not agree with actual facts. Prophets, like other men, commit faults, but here comes in the Muslim distinction of sins into gunáh-i-kabíra, "great sins," and gunah-i-saghíra, "little sins." The gunáh-i-kabíra are murder, adultery, disobedience to God and to parents, avoiding fighting against infidels, drunkenness, usury, neglecting the Friday prayers and the Ramazan fast, forgetting the Quran after reading it, swearing falsely or by any other than God, magic, gambling, calling on the names of deceased persons and beating the breast at such times,³ dancing, music, disrespect to a Hafiz, shaving the beard, omitting to say the "darúd" (*i.e.*, on whom and on whose family be the peace and mercy of God) whenever the name

¹ There is some dispute as to whether a woman can attain to the rank of prophets. The Ash'aríans say she can, and mention as possible prophetesses the Virgin Mary, the wife of Pharaoh, Sarah, Hagar, and some add the names of Eve and of the mother of Moses.

² Some of the subsections of the Shí'ahs, in order to exalt the Imáms, hold that prophets can sin. The Hashámíyah, for example, say: "The prophets sin, but the Imáms are pure" ("Milal wa Niḥal," by Sharastání, p. 142).

³ This is an orthodox blow at the Shí'ah practices in the month of Muḥarram. Shí'ahs consider this a good act.

of Muhammad is mentioned. These are all "great sins," and can only be forgiven after due repentance; the "little sins" are forgiven if some good actions are done. "Observe prayer at early morning, at the close of day, and at the approach of night; for the *good deeds drive away the evil deeds*" (S. xi. 116). It is the universal belief that a prophet never commits the greater sins, but there is a difference of opinion with regard to the lesser sins. Some limit even this frailty to the period before wahí comes upon them. The general opinion, however, is that the frailties which they show are merely faults and slight imperfections not amounting to sin.

This, to the Muslim mind, at once disposes of a difficulty the Quran itself raises on this point. With the exception of Jesus Christ, the Anbiya-Úlu'l-'Azm are spoken of as doing what every one except an orthodox Muslim would call sin. Adam's transgression¹ is referred to in Surah ii. 29-37, and in Surah vii. 10-24. "They said, 'O our Lord! with ourselves have we dealt unjustly; if Thou forgive us not and have not pity on us, we shall surely be of those that perish.'" The sin of Noah is plainly hinted at in "Unless Thou forgive me and be merciful to me, I shall be one of the lost" (S. xi. 49). There is a similar request in Surah lxxi. 29. Abraham also is represented as saying, "When I am sick, He healeth me, and who will cause me to die and again quicken me, and who, I hope, will forgive me my sins in the day of reckoning" (S. xxvi. 80-82). Moses is described as having done "a work of Satan" in killing a man, and as saying, "'O my Lord, I have sinned to my own hurt; forgive me.' So God forgave him; for He is the forgiving, the merciful. He said: 'Lord, because Thou hast showed me this grace, I will never again be the helper of the wicked'" (S. xxviii. 15, 16).

¹ It is said Adam's sin was a mere slip, but it brought good to the world. Had he remained in Paradise the world would not have been peopled; and the word of God, "I have not created men and jinns except for worship," would not have been fulfilled.

The following passages refer to Muhammad. "Be thou steadfast and patient; for true is the promise of God; and seek pardon for thy sin" (S. xl. 57). Baizaví says that this refers to his remissness in propagating Islam. According to the *Tafsír-i-Ibn 'Abbas*, it is "the deficiency in giving thanks for the blessings God bestowed on thee and thy Companions;" according to the *Tafsír-i-Husainí*, it is "that the Prophet as an act of worship sought pardon, and so rose to a high rank, or that he did it to set an example, according to his Tradition, 'I seek pardon seventy times daily;' or it means simply, 'Seek pardon for the sins of thy people.'" In reply to all these ingenious attempts to get rid of a very troublesome fact, it may be noted that the word used for the Prophet's sin (*zanb*) is also used in describing the sin of ordinary people. Thus, "Others have owned their sins (*zanb*)" (S. ix. 103).

"Ask pardon for thy sin, and for believers, both men and women" (S. xlvii. 21). In the Commentary *Mu'alimu't Tanzir* it is said that the Prophet was told to ask pardon for his sins, not because he had any sin, or really personally needed any pardon, but because, if he so asked, it would become a *sunnat* practice for the people. Thus each one can now say, "Pardon my sin." In the book known as *Tabian* an attempt to explain the difficulty is made by saying that "seek pardon for thy sin" means "ask for purity, which will keep away sin."¹ The commentator *Ibn 'Abbas* quotes the verse, "Have we not opened thine heart for thee and taken off from thee thy burden?" (S. xciv. 1-2), and says "thy burden" means "thy sin." A more common interpretation is to refer this to anxiety or to trouble of mind. The scandal caused by the Prophet's conduct with the wife of *Zaid* and with the Egyptian slave *Mary* necessitated a pretended revelation of God's will in reference to these events. The circumstances will be found fully detailed in *Súrah xxxiii. 36-38*, and in *Súrah lxvi. 1-5*. One of the most important verses is: "Verily, we

¹ "*Tafsír-i-Husainí*," vol. ii. p. 348.

have won for thee an undoubted victory, in token that God forgiveth thy earlier and later fault" (S. xlvi. 1-2). It is not quite clear what victory is here referred to. According to the Tafsír-i-Husainí, some commentators say that it is the taking of Mecca, the past tense being prophetically used for the future. The following explanations are given of the expression "earlier and later fault." (1.) God has forgiven thy sin committed before and after the descent of wahí, (2.) before and after the taking of Mecca, or (3.) before the descent of this Surah. (4.) The commentator Salmí says: "The earlier sin refers to the sin of Adam committed when Muhammad was in the loins of his great ancestor and thus connected with him; the later sin refers to the followers of the Prophet, and in that way is connected with him, just as the sin of Adam was the predecessor and cause of their sin." (5.) Imam Abu'l-Lais says: "The words refer to the sin of Adam, and to those of the followers of the Prophet. Both are connected with Muhammad, because the former is forgiven by the blessing, and the latter by the intercession of Muhammad."

From these extracts from the Quran it appears that sin is imputed to the prophets, though Muslims evade the charge by the casuistry I have already referred to. Be that as it may, it is a striking fact that the one sinless member of the Anbiya-Úlu'l-'Azm, the one sinless prophet of Islam, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no passage in the Quran which hints at sin, even in the modified form in which Muslims attribute it to other prophets, being committed by him: no passage which speaks of his seeking for pardon.

In the Traditions (Sahíhu'l Bukharí, vol. iii. 194) there is the same absence of any imputation of evil to Christ. There is a very marked instance of this in the Sahíhu'l-Bukharí. Muhammad is reported to have said: "The people will be gathered together at the day of judgment and will say, 'If some one would only intercede for us with our Lord.' They will go to Adam and say, 'Thou art the

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

(S. xvii. 92-95). "The unbelievers say, 'Why hath not a sign been given him by his Lord?' Nay, but thou art only a Warrior, and unto every people hath been given a guide" (S. xiii. 8). The commentator Baizawí says: "When the people demanded miracles such as those wrought by Moses and Jesus, Muhammad is told that he is only a warrior. The demand was withheld because it was made perversely and not with sincerity." Other passages on this point are Surahs vi. 37; vii. 204; xvii. 58; xix. 48. Former prophets, Muhammad used to say, were sent to their own sect, but he was sent for all. Their miracles were confined to their own times. The Qurán, the great miracle of Islam, was for all ages. He needed no other sign than this. But his followers maintain that in this, as in all other respects, he was equal to all and superior to some prophets, and produce various passages of the Quran in support of their view. Thus, according to Shaikh Jalalu'd-dín Syuti, if to Adam was given the power of naming everything, Muhammad also possessed the same power. Enoch was exalted on high, but Muhammad was taken to the "Baqab-i-qausain," the "two bows' length," where Gabriel, "one mighty in power," appeared to him (S. liii. 5-9). Ishmael was ready to be sacrificed, but Muhammad endured the splitting of his chest;¹ Joseph was to some extent handsome, but Muhammad was the very perfection of beauty; Moses brought water from the rock, but Muhammad produced it from his fingers. The sun was stayed in its course by Joshua, and so it was by Muhammad. Solomon had a great kingdom, Muhammad a greater, for he possessed the keys of the treasuries of the earth. Wisdom was given to John the Baptist whilst yet a child, so also were wisdom and understanding granted to Muhammad at an early period of his life. Jesus could raise the dead, so also could Muhammad. In addition to all these, the special miracles of the Prophet

¹ "Have we not opened thine heart for thee?" (S. xciv. 1). Tradition relates that when young, two angels cut open his breast and took out a black drop. Many other marvels are also connected with this event.

are the splitting of the moon asunder (the truth of which Nizam, a Mu'tazíla, denied), the Mi'raj, the coming of a tree into his presence, and above all the wonderful miracle of the Quran itself. The splitting of the moon asunder is referred to in "The hour of judgment approacheth, and the moon hath been split in sunder" (S. liv. 1). The following account is given by Bukharí:—Masa'úd says "The moon was split into two parts, one above the mountain, one under; and the Prophet said, 'Bear witness.' 'Abdu'llah says: 'We were with the Prophet; the moon became two parts, and the Prophet said to us, 'Bear witness.'" Imám Zahid says that Abu Jahl and a Jew visited the Prophet, and demanded a sign from him on pain of death. The Prophet made a sign with his little finger, and at once the moon separated into two parts, one of which remained in the sky, the other went off to a long distance. The Jew believed in Islam forthwith. Some, however, refer the passage to the future, as they consider the splitting of the moon to be one of the signs of the last day. The commentators on the verse, "When they (Meccans) see a sign, they fall to mocking" (S. xxxvii. 14), say the "sign" referred to is "the splitting of the moon or some such marvel."

The Mi'raj, or night ascent, is mentioned in "Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night from the sacred temple (of Mecca) to the temple that is more remote, whose precinct we have blessed, that we might show him of our signs" (S. xvii. 1). Muslim writers, who are fond of the marvellous, narrate at length the wonderful things the Prophet saw and did on this eventful night;¹ but some maintain that it was only a vision, and quote the words, "We ordained the vision which we showed thee," in proof of this assertion. The commentator Baizávi admits there is a difference of opinion, but that the general consensus of opinion (ijma') is on the side of a bodily migration.²

¹ For a graphic account of these events see "Literary Remains of Emmanuel Deutsch," pp. 99-112.

² "All that Muhammadans must believe respecting the Mi'raj is that

Be that as it may, all orthodox Muslims maintain the superiority of Muḥammad as a worker of miracles over all other prophets.¹

5. THE RESURRECTION AND THE LAST DAY.—These two articles of the faith may be considered together. The following is a summary of the remarks of Muhammad Al Berkevi on this point. It is necessary to acknowledge:—

1. That the torments of the tomb are real and certain, and that Munkar and Nakír will interrogate the dead person concerning his God, his Prophet, his faith, and his Qiblah. The faithful will reply, “Our God is God; our Prophet is Muhammad; our religion, Islam; our Qiblah, the Ka‘bah.

2. That all the signs of the last day mentioned by the Prophet will come to pass; such as the appearance of Dajjal, or Anti-christ; the descent of Jesus from heaven; the appearance of Imam Mahdí and of Gog and Magog; the rising of the sun from the west, &c.

3. That all living things will die; that the mountains will fly in the air like birds; that the heavens will melt away; that after some time has thus passed, God Most High will raise the dead; that prophets, saints, doctors of the law, and the faithful will find near them the robes and the horses of Paradise. They will put on the robes, and mount the horses, and go into the shade of the throne of God. Other men, hungry, thirsty, and naked, will go on foot. The faithful will go to the right, the infidels to the left.

4. That there will be a balance, in which the good and bad actions of men will be weighed. Those whose good deeds outweigh the bad will go to Paradise; if the bad predominate, they

the Prophet saw himself, in a vision, transported from Mecca to Jerusalem, and that in such a vision he really beheld some of the greatest signs of his Lord.” (Essays by Syed Ahmad, Essay vi. p. 34.) This, though a legitimate, is not, however, an orthodox opinion, which is, that he who denies an actual bodily migration from Mecca to Jerusalem is a Káfir (infidel), as he denies the statement of a “nass,” or plain text of the Qurán. He who denies the ascension to heaven and the wonderful account of the night’s proceedings preserved in the Traditions is a “fasiq” (sinner), though he remains a Muslim.

¹ The miracle worked by a prophet is called mu‘jizah; by a saint, karámat; by an evil spirit or an opposer of God, istidraj.

will go into the fire, unless God has mercy on them, or the prophets or saints intercede for them. If, however, they were not Muslims, there will be no intercession for them, nor will they come out from the fire. The Muslims who enter the fire will, after having purged their crimes, enter Paradise.

5. That the bridge Sirat, which is sharper than a sword, is raised above the fire; that all men must pass over this. Some will pass over with the speed of lightning, some will go very slowly over; others will fall and certainly enter into the fire.

6. That each prophet has a pool where he, with his people, will quench their thirst before entering Paradise; that the pool of Muhammad is the largest of all. Its water is sweeter than honey, whiter than milk.

7. That Paradise and Hell actually exist; that the chosen remain for ever in the former; they neither die nor grow aged. The Houris and the females are exempted from the infirmities of their sex. They will no longer bear children. The elect will find there the meat and the drink they require, without taking upon themselves any trouble. The ground of Paradise is of musk; the bricks of its edifices are of gold and of silver.

The unbelievers and the demons will remain for ever in hell, tormented by serpents as thick as the neck of a camel, by scorpions as large as mules, by fire and by scalding water. Their bodies will burn till they become reduced to a coal, when God will revive them so that they may endure fresh torments. This will last for ever.

The following additional remarks are based on the *Sharḥ-i-'Aqáid-i-Jámí*. They fall under four heads:—

(1.) The sounding of the trumpets (*Nafkhatain-i-Sur*). The Prophet said: "The last hour will not be till no one is found who calls on God." Then "There shall be a blast on the trumpet, and all who are in the heavens and all who are in the earth shall expire, save those whom God shall vouchsafe to live. There shall be another blast on it, and lo! arising they shall gaze around them" (S. xxxix. 68). Abu Huraira, a Companion, relates that the Prophet, speaking of the trumpet, stated as follows: "After the creation of the heavens and the earth, God created the trumpet and

gave it to Isráfil, who, with his mouth placed to it, is ever looking up and waiting for the order to blow it. He will blow three times.¹ The first time, the blast of consternation, to terrify; the second, the blast of examination, to slay; the third, the blast of resurrection, to quicken the dead." Most persons believe that everything, save God and His attributes, will perish.

The resurrection of the body is clearly proved by the Qurán. Thus, "They say, 'Who will bring us back?' Say: 'He who created you at first'" (S. xvii. 53). "'Who shall give life to bones when they are rotten?' Say: 'He shall give life to them who gave them being at first, for in all creation is He skilled'" (S. xxxvi. 79). "Man saith: 'What! after I am dead, shall I in the end be brought forth alive?' Doth not man bear in mind that we made him at first, when he was nought?" (S. xix. 68). "The infidels will say, 'Shall we indeed be restored as at first? What! when we have become rotten bones?' 'This then,' say they, 'will be a return to loss.' Verily, it will be but a single blast, and lo! they are on the surface of the earth" (S. lxxix. 10-14). "Is He not powerful enough to quicken the dead?" (S. lxxv. 40). This resurrection will be to judgment. "'Never,' say the unbelievers, 'will the hour come upon us.' Say: 'Yea, by my Lord who knoweth the unseen, it will surely come upon you, . . . to the intent that God may reward those who have believed, . . . but as for those who aim to invalidate our signs, a chastisement of painful torment awaiteth them'" (S. xxxiv. 3, 4). "A terrible chastisement doth await them *on the Day* when faces shall turn white and faces shall turn black. 'What! after your belief have ye become infidels? Taste, then, the chastisement for that ye have been unbelievers.' And as to those whose faces shall have become white, they shall be within the mercy of God" (S. iii. 102). The Prophet knew not

¹ Some commentators make no distinction between the first and second blast, as only two are distinctly mentioned in the Quran.

the time when all this would take place. "They will ask thee of the 'Hour,' when will be its fixed time? But what knowledge hast thou of it? Its period is known only to thy Lord; and thou art charged with the warning of those who fear it" (S. lxxix. 41-45). These and similar texts show the certainty of the resurrection. According to the Ijmá' of the Faithful, he who has any doubts on this article of the faith is an infidel. The Mu'tazilas show from reason that a resurrection of the body is necessary in order that rewards and punishment may be bestowed. The orthodox agree with the conclusion, but hesitate to base it on reason.

The learned are not agreed as to the state of the soul during the time when the body is dead, and therefore disagree with regard to its revival. Some assert that it is wrong to speak of a resurrection of the soul, for it exists in the body as "fire in coal," hence its revival is included in the resurrection of the body; others maintain that as it is a distinct entity, it is not annihilated with the body. The scholastics favour the first idea. Practically the result seems the same in both cases. The resurrection body had a soul. Wise and foolish, devils and beasts, insects and birds—all will arise at the last day. This is according to the Tradition: "He will raise up animals at the last day to receive reward, and to show His perfection and His justice. Then the hornless goat will be revenged on the horned one. At length God will say to all the animals, 'Turn again to dust,' and to dust they will return." Muhammad will come first in order, and be the first to enter Paradise.

(2.) The descent of the Books (Tatáír-i-Sahá'if). After the resurrection men will wander about for forty years, during which time the books which contain the record kept by the Kiramu'l-Katibín will be given up. Men will rise up naked and confused; some will walk about, some stand for forty years. All will be constantly looking up towards the heavens (*i.e.*, expecting the books). They will perspire profusely through excess of sorrow. Then God will say to Abraham, "Put on clothes." He will put on a robe of

Paradise. The Prophet said: "I will also put on a dress, and will stand near the throne, where no one else will be allowed to stand, and God will say: 'Ask and it shall be granted to thee; intercede, thy intercession shall be accepted.'" Each book flies from the treasury under the Throne of God, and is given to its proper owner. "Every man's fate have we fastened about his neck; and on the day of resurrection will we bring forth to him (every man) a book which shall be proffered to him wide open: 'Read thy book; there needeth none but thyself to make out an account against thee this day'" (S. xvii. 15). A portion of verse 78 of Surah xxviii., "But the wicked shall not be asked of their crimes," seems to contradict this; but commentators say that this verse simply means that God knows all, or that their sinfulness will appear on their foreheads. "One day we will summon all men with their leaders (Imáms). They whose books shall be given into their right hands, shall read their book, and not be wrong a thread" (S. xvii. 73). "He into whose right hand his book shall be given shall be reckoned with an easy reckoning, and shall turn rejoicing to his kindred. But he whose book shall be given behind his back (*i.e.*, into his left hand) shall invoke destruction"¹ (S. lxxxiv. 8-11). "He who shall have his book given into his left hand will say: 'O that my book had never been given me, and that I had not known my reckoning'" (S. lxix. 25). But the command goes forth, "Lay hold of him and chain him; then at the hell-fire burn him" (S. lxix. 30). It is said that wicked Musalmans will be seized by the right hand before they are cast into the fire, which is held a proof that they are not always to remain there. Some consider that the expression "Read thy book" implies a literal reading; others, that it is a metaphorical expression, which simply means that all the past actions will be known. Those who believe in a literal reading say that each believer will read the account

¹ The former are called Ashábu'l-Yamin, men of the right; the latter, Ashábu-sh-Shamal, men of the left.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

ported by a Tradition recorded by Tirmízí. “The Prophet said: ‘Ninety-nine registers will be distributed. God will say: ‘What! dost thou deny this, or have the recording angels treated thee unjustly?’ Each will say: ‘No, O Lord.’ ‘Hast thou then any excuse?’ ‘No, O Lord.’ Then God will display a cloth on which the Kalima is written. This will be put into one scale, and God will say: ‘To thee will be no evil if thou hast a register in one scale and this cloth in the other, for the first scale will be light.’” This is considered conclusive testimony with regard to the weighing of the books. The Mu‘tazilas objected to statements such as these, for said they, “Actions are accidents, and the qualities of lightness and heaviness cannot be attributed to accidents.” They explained the verses of the Quran, and the statements of the Traditions on this point, as being a figurative way of saying that perfect justice will be done to all in the day of judgment. To this the orthodox reply, that “it is not known *how* God will do this (*i.e.*, the weighing of the books), but this ignorance does not make God’s actions—so clearly made known—vain.”

(4.) The Bridge (Sirát).¹ The meaning of the word Şirát is a road, a way. It is so used in the Qurán. “If we pleased, we would surely put out their eyes: yet even then would they speed on with rivalry in their path (Sirat)” (S. xxxvi. 66). “Gather together those who have acted unjustly, and their consorts (demons), and the gods whom they have adored beside God, and guide them to the road (Sirat) for hell” (S. xxxvii. 23). It is nowhere in the Quran called a bridge, but Tradition is very clear on this point. The Prophet said: “There will be a bridge sharper than the edge of a sword, finer than a hair, suspended over hell. Some will pass over it in the twinkling of an eye,

¹ Muhammad was indebted to Zoroastrianism for this idea. The ancient Persians called this bridge or road over hell the Chinavat. The word Sirát does not come from an Arabic root. (“Religion of the Crescent,” p. 173.)

some like a flash of lightning, others with the speed of a swift horse. The angels will call out, 'O Lord! save and protect.' Some Muslims will be saved, some will fall headlong into hell, and afterwards be released." The infidels will all fall into hell and there remain for ever. The Mu'tazilas deny the existence of such a bridge. "If we admit it," say they, "it would be a trouble for the believers, and such there is not for them in the day of judgment." To this the orthodox reply that the believers pass over it to show how they are saved from fire, and that thus they may be delighted with Paradise, and also to annoy the infidels.

Al A'ráf is situated between heaven and hell. It is described thus: "On (the wall) Al A'raf shall be men who know all by their tokens,¹ and they shall cry to the inhabitants of Paradise, 'Peace be on you!' but they shall not yet enter it, although they long to do so. And when their eyes are turned towards the inmates of the fire, they shall say, 'O our Lord! place us not with offending people, &c.'" (S. vii. 44, 45). Sale's summary of the opinions regarding Al A'raf in his Preliminary Discourse is exceedingly good. It is as follows:—

"They call it Al Orf, and more frequently in the plural Al Araf, a word derived from the verb *Arafa*, which signifies to distinguish between things, or to part them; though some commentators give another reason for the imposition of this name, because, say they, those who stand on this partition will *know* and *distinguish* the blessed from the damned by their respective marks or characteristics: and others say the word properly intends anything that is *high raised* or *elevated*, as such a wall of separation must be supposed to be. Some imagine it to be a sort of *limbo* for the patriarchs and prophets, or for the martyrs and those who have been most eminent for sanctity. Others place here such whose good and evil works are so equal that they exactly counterpoise each other, and therefore deserve neither reward nor punishment;

¹ "That is, they will know the inhabitants of Paradise by their whiteness, and the people of Hell by the blackness of their faces."

and these, say they, will on the last day be admitted into Paradise, after they shall have performed an act of adoration, which will be imputed to them as a merit, and will make the scale of their good works to overbalance. Others suppose this intermediate space will be a receptacle for those who have gone to war without their parents' leave, and therein suffered martyrdom; being excluded from Paradise for their disobedience, and escaping hell because they are martyrs."

There is also an interval between the death of the body in this world and the Last Day, called Al-Barzakh. "Behind them shall be a barrier (barzakh), until the day when they shall be raised again" (S. xxiii. 102). When death takes place, the soul is separated from the body by the Angel of Death; in the case of the good with ease, in that of the wicked with violence. It then enters into Al-Barzakh.¹

The Mushrik, one who ascribes plurality to God, will remain in hell for ever, for as Kufr, infidelity, is an eternal crime, its punishment must also be eternal. "The unbelievers among the people of the Book, and among the Polytheists, shall go into the fire of Gehenna, to abide therein for aye. Of all creatures are they the worst" (S. xcvi. 5). "Cast into hell every infidel, every hardened one, the hinderer of the good, the transgressor, the doubter who set up other gods with God. Cast ye him into the fierce torment" (S. l. 23-25).

Muslims who commit great (kabíra) sins, though they die unrepentant, will not remain in hell for ever, for "whoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of good shall behold it" (S. xcix. 7). It is asserted that the fact of believing in Islam is a good work and merits a reward. The commentator Baizávi says that the teaching of the verse, "Every soul shall be paid what it wrought" (S. iii. 24), is that "Service done is not lost. The believer will not be left in hell for ever, because, as the reward for his

¹ For some curious opinions with regard to the state of the soul there, see Sale's Preliminary Discourse, Section iv. p. 55.

faith and his works cannot be paid in hell or before he enters it, it can only be given after he is released from it.” “Perfect faith (Imán-i-kamil) consists in believing with sincerity of heart and acting in accordance thereto, but the actions are not the faith itself. Great sins, therefore, prevent a man from having ‘perfect faith,’ but do not destroy faith (iman), nor make the Muslim an infidel, but only a sinner.” The Mu‘tazilas teach that the Muslim who enters hell will remain there for ever. They maintain that the person who, having committed great sins, dies unrepentant, though not an infidel, ceases to be a believer, and hence suffers as the infidels do, though the punishment is lighter than that which an infidel receives. Al-Ash‘arí held the following views :—“The sinner who dies unrepentant is at the mercy of God, but the Prophet will intercede for him, as he said, ‘My intercession is for those among my people who commit great sins.’” “At last they enter Paradise, and, whilst being punished, they must not be in the same fire as the infidels. He in whose heart is one atom of faith cannot be finally lost.” “If any man should repent, I (Ash‘arí) do not by *my reason* say, ‘God must pardon him ;’ but so it is revealed.”¹

The orthodox belief is that Muhammad is now an intercessor, and will be so at the Last Day. The intercession then is of several kinds. There is the “great intercession,” to which the words “It may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a glorious station” (S. xvii. 81) are supposed to refer. The Maqám-i-mahmúd (glorious station) is said to be the place of intercession, in which all persons will praise the Prophet. The people will be in great fear. Muhammad will say, “O my people! I am appointed for intercession.” Their fear will then pass away. The second intercession is made so that they may enter into Paradise without rendering an account. The authorities differ with regard to this. The third intercession is on behalf of those Muslims who ought to go to hell. The fourth for those who are already

¹ Sharastání in “Milal wa Niḥal,” p. 73.

there. No one but the Prophet can make these intercessions. The fifth intercession is for an increase of rank to those who are in Paradise. The Mu'tazilas, however, maintained that there would be no intercession for Muslims guilty of great sins, and quoted the verse, "Fear ye the day when soul shall not satisfy for soul at all, nor shall any ransom be taken, neither shall they be helped" (S. ii. 45). The orthodox bring in reply this Tradition: "The Prophet said, 'My intercession is for the men of my following who have committed great sins.'" If this Tradition is disputed, they then say that the verse in the Qurán just quoted does not refer to Muslims at all, but to the infidels. The orthodox hold that the Prophet will intercede for Muslims who commit the greater sins, and this is clear from the Quran, Sunnat, and the Ijmá'-i-ummat. Thus God said, "Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His own permission?" (S. ii. 256). It may here be remarked that this verse only proves that intercession may be "by permission," not that Muhammad is an intercessor in his own right; a dogma which cannot be proved from the Qurán, though Traditions may be quoted to support it. According to a Tradition related by Anas, the Prophet said, "In the day of resurrection Musalmáns will not be able to move; they will be greatly distressed and say, 'Would to God that we had asked Him to create some one to intercede for us, that we might be taken from this place, and be delivered from tribulation and sorrow.'" The Tradition goes on to state how they sought help from Adam and the prophets of the old dispensation, who one and all excused themselves on account of their own sinfulness. "Then," said the Prophet, "the Musalmans will come to me, and I will ask permission to go into God's presence and intercede for them."

The second advent of Christ is a sign of the last day. "Jesus is no more than a servant whom We favoured . . . and he shall be a sign of the last hour" (S. xliii. 61). He will not, according to the Quran, come as a judge, but, like

other prophets, to be judged.¹ “We formed with them (*i.e.*, prophets) a strict covenant, that God may question the men of truth as to their truth (*i.e.*, how they have discharged their prophetic functions)” (S. xxxiii. 7, 8). He will come to bear witness against the Jews who reject him: “In the day of resurrection, he will be a witness against them” (S. iv. 158).

It is necessary to believe in the pond of the Prophet called Kausar. This faith is founded on the verse “Truly we have given thee an abundance” (S. cviii. 1.). Bukhári says, “The meaning of Kausar is the ‘abundance of good’ which God gives to the Prophet.”

There are many degrees of felicity in heaven to which the believers are admitted. The Prophet, according to Trimízi, said there were one hundred. Some of these may possibly be meant by the eight names they give to Paradise. (1.) Jannatu’l-Khuld. “Say: Is this, or the Garden of Eternity which was promised to the God-fearing, best?” (S. xxv. 16). (2.) Jannatu’s-Salam. “For them is a Dwelling of Peace with their Lord” (S. vi. 127). (3.) Daru’l-Qarár. “The life to come is the Mansion which abideth” (S. xl. 42). (4.) Jannatu’l-‘Adan. “To the Faithful, both men and women, God promiseth gardens and goodly mansions in the Garden of Eden” (S. ix. 73). (5.) Jannatu’l-Mawá. “Near which is the Garden of Repose” (S. liii. 15). (6.) Jannatu’n-Na‘ím. “Amid delights shall the righteous dwell” (S. lxxxii. 13). (7.) Jannatu’l-Illiyún. “The register of the righteous is in Illiyun” (S. lxxxiii. 18). (8.) Jannatu’l-Firdaus. “Those who believe and do the things that are right, they shall have the Gardens of Paradise for their abode” (S. xviii. 107).

Hell is said to have seven divisions. “Verily hell (Jahannam) is the promise for them one and all; it hath seven portals, and at every door there is a separate party of them” (S. xv. 44). The Quran, though it mentions the

¹ Ahmad bin Hayat, a Mu‘tazila, taught that Christ would judge men at the last day. (“Milal wa Niḥal,” by Sharastání, p. 42.)

names of these divisions, does not state what classes of persons will be sent to each; but Muslim commentators have supplied the needed information.¹ They classify them thus:—(1.) Jahannam, for sinners who die without repentance. This includes Muslims, for “There is not one of you who will not go down to it (hell)” (S. xix. 72). (2.) Laza, for the infidels (*i.e.*, Christians). “For Laza, dragging him by the scalp, shall claim him,” &c. (S. xcvi. 5). (3.) Hutamah, a fire for Jews, and according to some for Christians. (4.) Sa‘ír, for devils, the descendants of Iblís, for “Those who devour the property of orphans unjustly only devour into their bellies fire, and they broil in Sa‘ír” (S. iv. 11). (5.) Saqar, for the Magians; also for those who neglect prayer. “Taste ye the touch of saqar” (S. liv. 47). (6.) Jahím, a boiling caldron for idolaters; also for Gog and Magog. “Thou shalt not be questioned as to the followers of Al Jahím” (S. ii. 113). (7.) Háwiyah, a bottomless pit for hypocrites. “As for him whose balance is light, his dwelling shall be Háwiyah” (S. ci. 8). It is said that heaven has one division more than hell, to show that God’s mercy exceeds His justice.

At the last day hell will be brought to the seat of judgment. “And hell on that day shall be moved up” (S. xxxix. 24). In the Tafsír-i-Husainí it is said that seventy thousand angels with seventy thousand chains will hoist heaven up. The commentator Ibn-i-‘Abbas, and most others, believe that this passage is to be interpreted literally. Muhammadans are to enter hell. “No one is there of you who shall not go down into it” (S. xix. 72).

The Mu‘tazilas say that heaven and hell are not in existence now, but will be created after the day of judgment; for they maintain that if both are now in existence, they must be destroyed with the heavens and the earth at the last day. The orthodox declare that both do exist

¹ There is nothing in the Qurán to justify this classification of those who go to hell. The Quran simply says that a separate party will be at each door.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

pious and good actions are foreseen, willed, predestinated, decreed by the writing on the preserved table, produced and approved by God; that the unbelief of the unbeliever, the impiety of the impious and bad actions come to pass with the fore-knowledge, will, predestination and decree of God, but not with His satisfaction and approval. Should any ask why God willeth and produceth evil, we can only reply that He may have wise ends in view which we cannot comprehend."

There are three well-defined schools of thought on this subject of predestination:—

First, The Jabriáns, so called from the word "jabr," compulsion, deny all free agency in man,¹ and say that man is necessarily constrained by the force of God's eternal and immutable decree to act as he does.² They hold that as God is the absolute Lord, He can, if He so wills, admit all men into paradise or cast all into hell. This sect is one of the branches of the Ash'ariáns, with whom on most points they agree. There are several subdivisions of the Jabrian sect; those who say man has absolutely no power at all over his actions; those who say he has the power, but cannot exercise it, and those who, like the Ash'ariáns, hold the dogma of Kasb.

Secondly, The Qadríans, who deny Al-Qadr, or God's absolute decree, say that evil and injustice ought not to be attributed to God, but to man, who is altogether a free

¹ "The honour of man lies in being under compulsion, not in having a share in free will." (Gulshan-i-Raz.)

² "The Prophet of God said that Adam and Moses (in the world of spirits) maintained a debate before God, and Adam got the better of Moses, who said, 'Thou art that Adam whom God created and breathed into thee His own spirit, and made the angels bow down before thee, and placed thee in Paradise; after which thou threwest man upon the earth, from the fault which thou didst commit.' Adam replied, 'Thou art that Moses whom God selected for His prophecy and to converse with, and He gave thee twelve tables, in which are explained everything, and He made thee His confidant and the bearer of His secrets; then how long was the Bible written before I was created?' Moses said, 'Forty years.' Then said Adam, 'Didst thou see in the Bible that Adam disobeyed God?' 'Yes.' 'Dost thou reproach me on a matter which God wrote in the Bible forty years before creating me?'"

agent. This sect is generally considered to be a branch of the Mu'tazila body, though in reality it existed before Wásil quitted the school of his master Hasan. As Wasil, however, followed the opinions of Mábadu'l-Johní, the leading Qadrían divine, the Mu'tazilas and Qadríans are practically one and the same. Sharastaní describes their views thus:—"Man is free and is the creator of his actions—good or bad—and merits in the next world the reward or the punishment of what he has done."

Thirdly, The Ash'aríans, of whom I have already given some account, maintain that God has one eternal will, which is applied to whatsoever He willeth, both of His own actions and those of men; that He willeth that which He knoweth and what is written on the preserved table; that He willeth both good and evil. So far they agree with the Jabríans; but then they seem to allow some power to man, a tenet I have already explained when describing their idea of "Kasb." The orthodox or Sunní belief is theoretically Ash'arían, but practically the Sunnis are confirmed Jabríans. The Mu'tazila doctrines are looked upon as quite heretical.

No subject has been more warmly discussed in Islam than that of predestination. Imám Abú Hanífa puts the matter thus:—"Works are of three kinds; those ordered by God (*farízah*); those which are good (*fazílah*); those which are evil (*ma'síyah*). The first came into existence by the direct order of God, by His decree, desire, power, creation, knowledge, and grace, and are written on the 'preserved table;' the second (*fazílah*) are not by direct order (*i.e.*, not *farz*) of God, but are by His decree, and are also written on the 'preserved table;' the third (*ma'síyah*) are not by order of God, but by His decree, yet not of His decree; by His appointment, though He has no pleasure therein; by His creation, though not of His grace. He knew of them, and they too are written on the 'preserved table.'"

The following abstract of some lengthy discussions will present the points of difference.

The Ash'aríans, who in this matter represent in the main orthodox views, formulate their objections to the Mu'tazila system thus:—

(i.) If man is the causer of an action by the force of his own will, then he should also have the power of controlling the result of that action.

(ii.) If it be granted that man has the power to originate an act, it is necessary that he should know all acts, because a creator should be independent in act and choice. Intention must be conditioned by knowledge. To this the Mu'tazilas will reply that a man need not know the length of a road before he walks, or the structure of the throat before he talks.

(iii.) Suppose a man wills to move his body, and God at the same time wills it to be steady, then if both intentions come to pass there will be a collection of opposites; if neither, a removal of opposites; if the exaltation of the first, an unreasonable preference.

(iv.) If man can create an act, some of his works will be better than some of the works of God; *e.g.*, a man determines to have faith: now faith is a better thing than reptiles, which are created by God.

(v.) If man is free to act, why can he not make at once a human body? why does he need to thank God for grace and faith?

(vi.) But better far than all argument, the orthodox say, is the testimony of the Book. "No mischance chanceth either on earth or in your own persons, but ere we created them it was in the Book" (*i.e.*, of eternal decrees), (S. lvii. 22). "Thou truly canst not guide whom thou desirest, but God guideth whom He will" (S. xxviii. 56). This verse is said to have been revealed on the following occasion. When Abu Talib was about to die, the Prophet said: "O uncle! say the Kalima, 'There is no God but God,' and I will testify to God concerning it on thy behalf;" but Abu-Jahl and 'Abdu'llah bin Abí said to the dying man, "What! dost thou turn from the sect of Abu'l-Matlab?"

The Prophet ceased not to urge him to confess the faith of Islam, but the old man said, "I am of the sect of Abú'l-Matlab, and I refuse to say the Kalima." Then replied the Prophet, "By God, until prohibited, I will seek pardon for thee." Then this verse was revealed, showing that God alone could will the change the Prophet desired.¹ We now return to the quotations from the Quran. "All things have we created under a fixed decree" (S. liv. 49). "When God created you and that ye make" (S. xxxvii. 94). "Some of them there were whom God guided, and there were others decreed to err" (S. xvi. 38). As God decrees faith and obedience, He must be the causer of it, for "on the hearts of these hath God graven the Faith" (S. lviii. 22). "It is he who causeth you to laugh and weep, to die and make alive" (S. liii. 44). "If God pleased, He would surely bring them, one and all, to the guidance" (S. vi. 36). "Had God pleased, He had guided you all aright" (S. vi. 150). "Had the Lord pleased, He would have made mankind of one religion" (S. xi. 120). "God will mislead whom He pleaseth, and whom He pleaseth He will place upon the straight path" (S. vi. 39). Tradition records that the Prophet said, "God is the maker of all makers and of their actions."²

The Mu'tazilas took up the opposite side of this great question and said:—

¹ Şahihü'l-Bukhârî on Sûratu'l-Qişâş.

² Ibn Kah, commenting on the verse, "When thy Lord brought forth their descendants from the reihis of the sons of Adam and took them to witness against themselves, 'Am I not,' said He, 'your Lord?' they said, 'Yes, we witness it'" (S. vii. 171), goes on to say, "God formed all the prophets and saints into one class, and the martyrs into another. The pious men, also, were separated into one, and the wicked into another. One class was formed of the obedient servants, while the unbelievers, viz., the Jews, the Christians, the Magians, the Hindus, &c., were likewise divided into several parties; next, they were shaped into forms, that is, the shape in which he was to appear in the world was predestined for each one." This passage is quoted with approval by the Wahhabî author of the Taqwiyatu'l-Imán.

(i.) If man has no power to will or to do, then what is the difference between praising God and sinning against Him; between faith and infidelity; good and evil; what is the use of commands and prohibitions; rewards and punishments; promises and threats; what is the use of prophets, books, &c.?

(ii.) Some acts of men are bad, such as tyranny and polytheism. If these are created by God, it follows that to tyrannise and to ascribe plurality to the Deity is to render obedience. To this the Ash'aríans reply that orders are of two kinds, immediate and mediate. The former, which they call "Amr-i-takwíti," is the order, "Be and it was." This comprehends all existences, and according to it whatever is ordered must come to pass. The latter they call "Amr-i-tashri'í," an order given in the Law. This comes to men through prophets, and thus is to be obeyed. True obedience is to act according to that which is revealed, not according to the secret intentions of God, for that we know not.

(iii.) If God decrees the acts of men, He should bear the name of that which He decrees. Thus the causer of infidelity is an infidel; of tyranny a tyrant, and so on; but to speak thus of God is blasphemy.

(iv.) If infidelity is decreed by God, He must wish it; but a prophet desires faith and obedience, and so is opposed to God. To this the orthodox reply, that God knows by His eternal knowledge that such a man will die an infidel. If a prophet intends by bringing the message of salvation to such an one to make God's knowledge become ignorance, he would be doing wrong; but as he does not know the secret decrees of God, his duty is to deliver his message according to the Ḥadís: "A prophet has only to deliver the clear message."

(v.) The Mu'tazilas claimed as on their side all verses of the Quran in which the words to do, to construct, to renew, to create, are applied to men. Such are the verses: "Whatever is in the heavens and in the earth is God's, that He may reward those who do evil according to their deeds:

and those who do good will He reward with good things" (S. liii. 32). "Whoso shall have wrought evil shall not be recompensed but with its like; but whoso shall have done the things that are right, whether male or female, and is a believer, these shall enter Paradise" (S. xl. 43). Say: "The truth is from the Lord; let him then who will, believe; and let him who will, be an infidel" (S. xviii. 28).¹ "Those who add gods to God will say: 'If God had pleased, neither we nor our fathers had given Him companions.' Say: 'Verily ye follow only a conceit, ye utter lies'" (S. vi. 149). The Tradition is also very plain. "All good is in Thy hands, and evil is not to Thee." The Mu'tazilas also held that it was incumbent on God to guide all men and make them good; to which statement their opponents replied by saying that no one can predicate of God that anything is incumbent to Him.

The Ash'arians have one famous text which they bring to bear against all this reasoning and evidence. It is: "This truly is a warning; and whoso willeth, taketh the way of his Lord; but *will it ye shall not*, unless God will it, for God is knowing, wise" (S. lxxvi. 29, 30). To the Tradition they reply: (1.) That there is a difference between acquiescence in evil and decreeing it. Thus the expression "God willeth not tyranny for His servants," does not mean that God hath not decreed it, but that tyranny is not one of His attributes: so "evil is not to Thee" means it is not an attribute of God; and (2.) the Hadís or Tradition must be explained in accordance with the teaching of the Qurán.

The Muslim philosophers tried to find a way out of the difficulty. Averhoes says: "We are free to act in this way or that, but our will is always determined by some exterior cause. For example, we see something which pleases us, we are drawn to it in spite of ourselves. Our

¹ The orthodox commentator 'Abbás says: "This verse refers to the decree, 'He whom God wills to believe certainly will do so, and whom He wills to be an infidel will be one,' and not at all to man's free will." (Tafsír-i-Husainí, vol. ii. p. 9.)

will is thus bound by exterior causes. These causes exist according to a certain order of things which is founded on the general laws of nature. God alone knows beforehand the necessary connection which to us is a mystery. The connection of our will with exterior causes is determined by the laws of nature. It is this which in theology we call 'decrees and predestination.'"¹

I have already shown how, as Islám grew into a system, the Muslims fell into a Cabbalism, and a superstitious reverence for the mere letters and words of the Quran. With this declension came a still more distorted view of the character of God. The quotations made from the Quran in the last few pages will have shown that whilst some passages seem to attribute freedom to man, and speak of his consequent responsibility, others teach a clear and distinct fatalism. The great strength of Islam lay in the energy with which Muhammad preached the doctrine that God was a Divine Ruler, one who would deal righteous judgment, who "taught man that which he knew not." As the system became more complex and dogmatic, men lost the sense of the nearness of God. He became an unapproachable being. A harsh unfeeling Fate took the place of the Omnipotent Ruler. It is this dark fatalism which, whatever the Qurán may teach on the subject, is the ruling principle in all Muslim communities. It is this which makes all Muhammadan nations decay. Careless of self-improvement,² heedless of the need of progress, the Muslim nations, still independent, are in all that relates to the higher aspects of intellectual and civilised life far behind the nations of the West.

The subject of 'Ilm-i-'Aqaíd, or the science of dogma, properly ends here, but most Muslim treatises include in this branch of the subject a few practical remarks. I

¹ "Mélanges de Philosophie, Juive et Arabe," par S. Munk, p. 458.

² Thus the poet Faiẓi says: "Before thou and I were thought of, our free will was taken from our hands; be without cares, for the Maker of both worlds settled our affairs long before we were made."

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

one says to him, "Wilt thou die in the faith?" he should reply, "I do not know; God knows." Except when speaking of prophets, or of those of whom the prophets have spoken, such as Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman, and 'Alí, it must not be said of any one, "He is gone to Paradise," for God only knows his state. Prayer must be said for a deceased Muslim whether he was a good or bad man. To give alms, to read the Quran, to perform other good works, and to apply the merit thus gained to the souls of the dead, is a pious and beneficial act. This opinion, however, though very common, seems to be in direct contradiction to the following statements of the Quran: "He who commits kufr (infidelity), on him is his kufr," *i.e.*, the result of it (S. xxx. 43). "No burdened one shall bear another's burden" (S. vi. 164). The Tafsír-i-Husainí says, "Every one must bear the punishment of his own sin."

NOTE TO CHAPTER IV

MUSLIM PHILOSOPHY

I HAVE shown in the preceding chapter how the earlier scholastics, or the Mu'tazilas, as they are called, were finally crushed by the orthodox party. The later scholastics, or the philosophers, form the subject of this note. The Khalif Mamún (813-833 A.D.), a notorious free-thinker, was the first to give an impulse to philosophic researches.¹ It was then that Greek philosophical works were translated into Arabic. The Greek author most patronised was Aristotle, partly because his empirical method accorded with the positive tendencies of the Arab mind better than the pure idealism of Plato, and partly because his system of logic was considered a useful auxiliary in the daily quarrels between the rival theological schools. It was quite natural that Aristotle should be thus followed. "The Musalman mind was trained in habits of absolute obedience to the authority of fixed dogmas. The Muslims did not so much wish to discover truth as to cultivate their own intellect. For that purpose a sharp and subtle systematist like Aristotle was the very man they required."² The Moors and Spanish Jews were devoted students of the Peripatetic philosophy. Some idea of the range of subjects then discussed may be gained from an account given by the Arab historian, Masoudi, of a meeting held under the presidentship of Yahya, one of the famous Barmecide family.³ Yahya thus addressed the meeting: "You have discussed at length the theory of concealment (Al-Kumun) and manifestation (Al-Zahur), of pre-existence and creation, of

¹ "The latest stronghold of paganism was the University of Athens. It was suppressed by the Emperor Justinian I. in 529 A.D. Its teachers fled into Persia, and there laid the foundation of the later literary period of Islám under the ruling family of the 'Abbassides." ("Church History," by Kurtz, vol. i. p. 240.)

² Kingsley's "Alexandria and her Schools," p. 160.

³ "Les Prairies d'Or," tome sixième, p. 368.

duration and stability, of movement and quiescence, of the union and separation (of the Divine substance), of existence and non-existence, of bodies and accidents, of the approval and the refutation (of the Isnads of the Traditions), of the absence or the existence of attributes in God, of potential and active force, of substance, quantity, modality and relation, of life and annihilation. You have examined the question as to whether the Imam rules by divine right or by popular election; you have had an exhaustive discussion on metaphysical subjects in their principles and corollaries. Occupy yourselves to-day with the subject of love," &c.

The translation of the works of Aristotle, as indeed of all the Greek authors, was made by Syrian and Chaldean Christians, and especially by the Nestorians, who, as physicians, were in high favour with the liberal Khalífs of the 'Abbasside dynasty. In some cases the translation into Arabic was made from Syriac versions, for in the time of the Emperor Justinian many Greek works had been translated into the latter language. The most celebrated translator was the Nestorian physician Honein-Ibn-Ishak (died 876 A.D.), a man profoundly acquainted with the Syriac, Greek, and Arabic languages. He was at the head of a school of interpreters in Baghdád, to which his son Ishak-ben-Honein and his nephew Hobeisch-Al-Asam also belonged. In the tenth century (A.D.) Yahya-ben-Adi and Isa-ben-Zara'a translated some works and corrected earlier translations of others. It is to these men that the Arabs owe their chief acquaintance with Aristotle and Plato.

The study of Aristotle spread rapidly amongst the Muslim people, especially amongst the heretical sects. The orthodox looked with grave suspicion on the movement, but could not for a while stay the impulse. The historian Makrizi says: "The doctrine of the philosophers has worked amongst the Muslims evils most fatal. It serves only to augment the errors of the heretics and to increase their impiety."¹ It came into contact with Muslim dogmas in such subjects as the creation of the world, the special providence of God, and the nature of the divine attributes. To a certain extent the Mu'tazilas were supported by the philosophical theories they embraced, but this did not

¹ "Mélanges de Philosophie, Juive et Arabe," par S. Munk, p. 315.

diminish the disfavour with which the orthodox looked upon the study of philosophy. Still it grew, and men in self-defence had to adopt philosophic methods. Thus arose a later system of scholasticism. The earlier system was confined mainly to matters of religion; the later school occupied itself with the whole range of philosophic investigation, and thus went farther and farther away from orthodox Islam.

The Muslims themselves did not write books on philosophy in the earlier period. Men of liberal tendencies imbibed its teaching, but orthodoxy finally gained the day over the earlier scholastics, and in the form known as that of the Ash'arían School became again supreme. The great intellectual movement of the philosophers proper, the later scholastics (*Mutakalliman*), lasted longer, but by the end of the twelfth century (A.D.) the whole Muḥammadan world had again become orthodox. Şaláhu'd-dín (*Saladin*) and his successors in Egypt were strong supporters of the Ash'aríans.

The period now under review was one prolific of authors on grammar, rhetoric, logic, exegesis, traditions, and the various branches of philosophy; but the men who stand out most prominently as philosophers were then, and are now, considered heretics. Strictly speaking, one should not speak of Arab, but of Muslim philosophy, for, curiously enough, only one famous philosopher, *Al-Kendi*, was an Arab.

Al-Kendi was born at Basrah, on the Persian Gulf. He died about 870 A.D. He was a very scientific man, but a thorough rationalist in theology. He composed commentaries on the logic of Aristotle. In his great work on the unity of God he has strayed far away from Muslim dogmas.

Al Farabí, another philosopher patronised by the 'Abbassides, seems to have denied not only the rigid and formal Islamic view of inspiration, but any objective revelation at all. He was for a while under the influence of Súffism, and held that intuition was a true inspiration, and that all who had acquired intuitive knowledge were real prophets. This is the only revelation he admits. He received his philosophic training at Baghdad, where for a while he taught; but finally he went to Damascus, where he died, 950 A.D.

Abu Síná, better known as *Avicenna*, a man of Persian origin, was a philosopher of great note, but of him it is said that, in spite

of the concessions he made to the religious ideas of his age, he could not find favour for his opinions, which ill accord with the principles of Islam. He was born near Bukhará in the year 980 A.D. For a while he taught medicine and philosophy in Isfahan.

Ibn Badja (Avempace) was one of the most celebrated Muslim philosophers of Spain. He was born at Saragossa towards the end of the eleventh century. He is distinguished for having opposed the mystical tendencies of the teaching of Al-Ghazzalí, and for maintaining that speculative science alone was capable of leading man to a true conception of his own proper nature. He was violently attacked by the orthodox divines, who declared that all philosophical teaching was "a calamity for religion and an affliction to those who were in the good way."

Al-Ghazzalí was born A.D. 1059 in Khurasan. He was a famous Muslim divine. He adopted scholastic methods. For a while he was President of the Nizamiah College at Baghdad. He travelled much, and wrote many books to prove the superiority of Islam over all other religions and over philosophy. The first result of his wide and extensive study of the writings of the philosophers and of the heretics was that he fell into a state of scepticism with regard to religion and philosophy. From this he emerged into Suffism, in which his restless spirit found satisfaction. On Suffism, however, he exercised a very notable influence; but the scepticism which he still retained as regards philosophy rendered him a very formidable opponent to those who were trying to bring Islam into accord with philosophic theories. His works, "Tendency of Philosophers" and "Destruction of the Philosophers," had an immense influence. In the preface to the latter book he speaks of "those who arrogate to themselves a superior intelligence, and who, in their pride, mistaking the precepts of religion, take as a guide the authority of certain great men, instead of revealed religion." It is, however, and with some show of reason, supposed that Al-Ghazzalí did not really object to all that he condemned, but that to gain the orthodox he wrote what he did. Indeed, Moses of Narbonne states that Ghazzalí later on in life wrote a book, circulated only amongst a few select friends, in which he withdrew many of the objections he had raised in the "Destruction of Philosophers." Be that as it may, it is acknowledged that he dealt a blow to philosophy from which in the East it has never

recovered ; that is, as far as the Muslim world is concerned. His course marks a reaction of the exclusively religious principle of Islam against philosophical speculation, which, in spite of all accommodation, never made itself orthodox.

In Spain philosophy still found an ardent defender in Ibn Rashíd, better known as Averhoes. This celebrated man was born at Cordova in the year 1126 A.D., or about 524 of the Muhammadán era. He came of a noble and learned family, whilst he himself must ever occupy a distinguished place amongst the Muslim philosophers. "Without dispute he was one of the most learned men of the Muslim world, and one of the profoundest commentators of Aristotle. He knew all the sciences then accessible to the Muslims, and was a most prolific writer."¹ He had a great reverence for Aristotle, and considered him to be the man among all men whom God permitted to reach the highest summit of perfection. He looked upon him as the founder and perfecter of scientific knowledge. One of his most famous works was the "Refutation of the Destruction of Philosophers." Notwithstanding his philosophical opinions Averhoes claimed to pass for a good Muslim. He held that the philosophic truths are the highest object of research, but that only a few men could by speculation arrive at them, and that, therefore, a divine revelation through the medium of prophets was necessary for spreading amongst men the eternal verities which are proclaimed alike by philosophy and religion. "He said that a positive religion was required to meet the religious needs of the multitude, but the philosopher might reach and maintain the truth independently of any revealed religion."² He also held, it is true, that the orthodox had paid too much attention to the letter, and too little to the spirit, and that false interpretations had educed principles not really to be found in religion. This profession and a rigid adherence to outward forms of worship, however, did not save him from suspicion. He was accused of preaching philosophy and the ancient sciences to the detriment of religion. He was deprived of his honours and banished by the Khalíf Al-Mansúr to Lucena, near Cordova. In his disgrace he had to suffer many insults from the orthodox. One day on entering the mosque with his son he was forcibly expelled by the people. He died

¹ "Mélanges de Philosophie, Juive et Arabe," par S. Munk, p. 429.

² "Church History," by Kurtz, vol. ii. p. 101.

in Morocco in 1198 A.D. Thus passed away in disgrace the last of the Muslim philosophers worthy of the name.¹ In Spain a strict prohibition was issued against the study of Greek philosophy, and many valuable works were committed to the flames. Soon after the rule of the Moors in Spain began to decline. The study of philosophy came to an end, and liberal culture sank under the pressure of the hard and fast dogmatic system of Islam. In Spain,² as in Baghdad, orthodoxy gained the day. Here are the words of a thoughtful Musalman: "It must always be borne in mind that, in spite of the enormous progress made by Muhammadans in the early centuries of their power, learning has never been popular among them as a nation, and science only nourished when there happened to be a man willing to protect it."³ There was much of doubtful value in the speculations of the Muslim philosophers, but they were Muslims, and if they went too far in their efforts to rationalise Islam, they also tried to cast off what to them seemed accretions added on by the Traditionalists and the Canonical Legists. They failed because, like the earlier scholastics, they had no gospel to proclaim to men, no tidings to give of a new life which could enable wearied humanity to bear the ills to which it was subject. Another strong reason was that the orthodoxy against which they strove was a logical development of the foundations of Islam, and these foundations were too strongly laid for any power other than a spiritual one to uproot. They were men of good position in life, voluminous writers, profound admirers of Aristotle, and "more or less devoted to science, especially to medicine." Yet they did not advance philosophy, and science they left much as they found it. They pre-

¹ *Après lui, nous ne trouvons plus chez les Arabes aucun philosophe véritablement digne de ce nom.* ("Melanges de Philosophie, Juive et Arabe," par S. Munk, p. 458.)

² Muslim rule in Spain is often referred to as an instance of the height of culture and the liberality of sentiment which may exist in a Muhammadán state. I have shown that the culture was not due to the teaching of the Arab Prophet and his Companions, and with regard to the liberality it is well to remember the words of G. H. Lewes. He says: "The Arabs, though they conquered Spain, were too weak in numbers to hold that country in subjection otherwise than by politic concessions to the opinion and customs of the people." ("History of Philosophy," vol. i. p. 36.)

³ "Causes of the Decline of the Muhammadán Nation," by Nawab Muḥsinu'l-Mulk, p. 65.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

uncivilised races. "It has not taken captive any race possessing a great literature, nor has it given birth to any work of which the world demands a translation ; and precisely as individuals have shown themselves possessed of speculative genius have they departed from the rigid orthodoxy of the Quran."

Now and again a liberal-minded Khalif arose, but a system such as Islam survives the liberal tendencies of a generation. From the close of the twelfth century (A.D.) downwards it would be difficult to point to any Muslim philosopher, much more to an Arab one, whose work is of any real value to the human race. For four hundred years the contest raged, a contest such as Islam has never since seen. This great effort to bring it into accord with the main stream of human thought, to introduce into it some element of progress, utterly failed. The lesson is plain. Any project of reform in Islam which admits in any degree its fundamental principles must fail. Revolution, not reform, is the only hope for the permanence of an independent Muslim state when it enters into the circle of civilised nations.

CHAPTER V

THE PRACTICAL DUTIES OF ISLÁM

THE practical duties of Islám are five in number, and are called *Irkán-i-dín*, or pillars of religion. They are (1) *Tashahhud*, the recital of the *Kalimah*; (2) *Salat*, the five stated daily prayers; (3) *Rozah*, fasting, especially in the month of *Ramazán*; (4) *Zakat*, the legal alms; (5) *Hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca. These are all *farz* duties, being based on a *Nass-i-Zahir*, or clear sentence of the *Quran*, a proof deduced from which is called *dalíl-i-qata‘i*, or strong proof.

The authorities, however, specify other religious duties which good Muslims should perform. Such are the seven duties which are *wajib*, or duties based on the more obscure texts of the *Qurán*, called *Khafi*, or hidden sentences, a proof derived from which is called *dalíl-i-zaní*. These duties are (1) to make the ‘*Umra*, called the lesser pilgrimage to Mecca, in addition to the *Hajj*; (2) obedience to parents; (3) the obedience of a wife to her husband; (4) the giving of alms after a fast; (5) the offering of sacrifice; (6) the saying of *Namaz-i-witr*, a term which will be explained later on; (7) the support of relatives. The duties numbered as (4) and (5) are *wájib* orders to the rich, but only *mustahab* to the poor: that is, it is meritorious if they perform them, but not sinful if they leave them undone.

The duties next in order as regards authority are the *Sunnat* ones. They are three in number, and are based either on the practice of the Prophet, or are *fitrat*, that is, practices of previous prophets, the continuance of which *Muhammad* did not forbid. They are (1) circumcision;

(2) shaving off the hair from the head and the body; (3) the paring of the nails. In addition to these there are actions which are mustahab. They are those which Muhammad sometimes did and sometimes omitted. There is a still lower class of action which are mubah. These are works of supererogation. If omitted there is no fear of punishment. Unlawful actions and things are (1) Harám, actions and food forbidden either in the Qurán or the Traditions; (2) Makrúh, actions the unlawfulness of which is not absolutely certain, but which are generally considered wrong; (3) Mufsid, actions corrupting or pernicious. It is necessary to bear these terms in mind, as they will now frequently occur.

1. TASHAHHUD.—This is the recital of a confession of faith, such as, “I testify that there is no God but God; I testify to His unity and that He has no partner; I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger;” “There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the apostle of God.” The power contained in this latter confession is great. It embodies the very spirit of Islam; it is the rallying-cry for its armies; it sounds forth each morning from thousands of minarets in many lands; it has been and is said with fervour, pride, and exultation by hundreds of millions of the human race. The power of Islám, its proclamation of the Unity, is here seen in closest contact with what is to Muslim theologians the equally fundamental truth, the apostleship of Muhammad, a dogma which retards the healthy development, explains the narrowness, and causes the prostration of Islam, as the world around grows luminant with the light of science and truth, of faith and reason.

2. SALAT OR NAMAZ.—All the books on Fiqh (Law) which treat of these Irkan-i-dín give in connection with Salat the rules regarding the necessary purifications. Tahárat or legal purification is of three kinds: (1) Wazú, the lesser lustration; (2) Ghusl, the greater lustration; (3) Tayammum, or purification by sand.

(1.) Wazú is an ablution made before saying the ap-

pointed prayers. Those which are "farz" are four in number, viz. :—To wash (1) the face from the top of the forehead to the chin, and as far as each ear; and (2) the hands and arms up to the elbow; (3) to rub (masah) with the wet hand a fourth part of the head; also (4) the feet to the ankles. The authority for these actions is the text, "O believers! when ye address yourselves to prayer, wash your hands up to the elbow, and wipe your heads, and your feet to the ankles" (S. v. 8). The Sunnis wash the feet: the Shí'ahs are apparently more correct, for they only wipe, or rather rub (masah) them. Against the practice of the Shí'ahs the following Tradition is quoted: "'Abdu'lláh bin 'Amrú said, 'The Prophet was behind me in a journey, then he came up with us. We were late for the Şalátu'l-'Asr. We quickly made the wazú, and rubbed (namsah) our feet. Then the Prophet called out with a loud voice, 'Alas! for the heels in fire (of hell).'''" In these ablutions, if the least portion of the specified part is left untouched, the whole act becomes useless and the prayer which follows is vain. The greatest value is attached to wazú in the Traditions. Thus in the Sahihu'l-Bukhari we read: "My people will be summoned at the day of judgment with foreheads, arms, and feet resplendent with the effects of wazú."

The act of making wazú, however, has not been allowed to remain in this simple form. The Sunnat regulations regarding it are fourteen in number. They are (1) to make the intention of wazu, thus: I make this wazu for the purpose of putting away impurity; (2) to wash the hand up to the wrist, but care must be taken not to put the hands entirely into the water, until each has been rubbed three times with water poured on it; (3) to say one of the names of God at the commencement of the wazu, thus:¹ "In the name of the Great God," or "Thanks be to God for the religion

¹ There is a Tradition to the effect that "the whole body of him who says the name of God when making wazu will be clean; whereas, if he says it not, only the part washed will be pure."

of Islám ;” (4) to clean the teeth ; (5) to rinse the mouth three times ; (6) to put water into the nostrils three times ; (7) to do all the above in proper order ; (8) to do all without any delay between the various acts ; (9) each part is to be purified three times. This is founded on a Tradition recorded by Bukharí: “Wazú once in farz, it may be done twice or thrice, but not more than three times: wise men dislike waste and the doing more than the Prophet did.” This establishes the Sunnat practice of making wazú three times ; (10) the space between the fingers of one hand must be rubbed with the wet fingers of the other ; (11) the beard must be combed with the fingers ; (12) the whole head must be rubbed once ; (13) the ears must be washed with the water remaining on the fingers after the last operation ; (14) to rub under and between the toes with the little finger of the left hand, drawing it from the little toe of the right foot and between each toe in succession. Imam Sháfi‘í, holds that (1) and (7) are farz duties and that (12) should be done three times. Imam Malik considers (8) to be farz.

The lesser sins are forgiven after wazú. The Prophet said, “He who makes wazú according to my wazú (*i.e.*, three times), and then makes two rak‘ats, without being defiled between: all his former sins will be forgiven.”¹ The greater sins are only pardoned after repentance.

The actions connected with wazú may be done in silence, or prayer may be repeated. Such a recital is a mustahab, not a Sunnat or farz order. It is not obligatory. A specimen of these prayers is given in a note.²

(2.) Ghushl is an ablution of the whole body after certain

¹ Şahíhu’l-Bukharí-Kitábu’l-wazú.

² Before commencing the wazú, say: “I am going to purify myself from all bodily uncleanness preparatory to commencing prayer, that holy act of duty, which will draw my soul near to the throne of the Most High. In the name of God, the Great and Mighty. Praise be to God who has given us grace to be Muslims. Islám is a truth and infidelity a falsehood.”

When cleaning the teeth, say: “Vouchsafe, O God, as I clean my teeth, to purify me from my faults and accept my homage. O Lord, may the

legal defilements, and should be made as follows. The person should put on clean clothes and perform the wazú; then he should say, "I make ghusl to put away impurity." All being ready, he should wash himself in the following order. He must pour water over the right shoulder three times, then over the left three times, and, lastly, on his head also the same number of times. The three farz conditions are that (1) the mouth must be rinsed, (2) water be put into the nostrils, and (3) the whole body be washed. If one hair even is left dry the whole act is rendered vain and useless. All other particulars are Sunnat or mustahab.

There are obvious reasons why an explanation of the physical causes which vitiate a purification, or of the cases in which ghusl is required, cannot be given here. Every standard Muslim work on Fiqh, or law, deals fully with the subject. Nothing is more calculated to show the student of Islam how much the Sunnat rules in the practical life of Muslims. The Traditions have raised the most trivial ceremonial observances into duties of the greatest importance. That there may be spiritually-minded men in Islam is not to be denied. Ghazzalí says: "Prayers are of three kinds: prayers pronounced with the tongue only; prayers undistracted by evil thoughts; prayers offered with such fervour that the mind can hardly be recalled from thoughts of God. But the marrow of prayer is when the object of prayer possesses the heart, and prayer is effaced and ceases, and the sayer of prayer attends no more to prayer nor to his own heart. Even if the thought of his own self-abasement should occur, it is a defect." In the *Gulshan-i-Raz*, a Şúfí

purity of my teeth be for me a pledge of the whiteness of my face at the day of judgment."

When washing the nostrils, say: "O my God, if I am pleasing in Thy sight, perfume me with the odours of Paradise."

When washing the right hand, say: "O my God, on the day of judgment place the book of my actions in my right hand, and examine my account with favour."

When washing the left hand, say: "O my God, place not at the resurrection the book of my actions in my left hand." Similar prayers are said at each act.

poem, the writer says that prayer is only effectual and a joy when all idea of the individual being or self is altogether lost, and no distinction between God and the soul is recognised.

Still a system of religion which declares that the virtue of prayer depends practically on an ablution, and that that ablution is useless unless done in the order prescribed, is one well calculated to make men formalists and nothing more. It comes to this, that, if a man when making wazú washes his left hand before his right, or his nose before his teeth, he cannot lawfully say the daily Namaz enjoined on all Muslims. None but those who have studied Muslim treatises on the subject can conceive of the puerile discussions which have taken place on points apparently trivial, but which from their connection with the Sunnat are deemed by learned Muslims of great importance.

(3). Tayammum, or purification by sand, is allowable under the following circumstances. (1) When the water cannot be procured except at a distance of one kos (about two miles); (2) in case of sickness, when the use of water might be injurious; (3) when water cannot be obtained without incurring danger from an enemy, a beast, or a reptile; and (4) when on the occasion of the Namaz of a feast-day or the Namaz at a funeral, the worshipper is late and has no time to perform the wazú. On ordinary days this substitution of tayammum for wazú is not allowable.

The ceremony is performed as follows. The person says: "I make tayammum to put away impurity;" then, "I seek refuge near God from cursed Satan. I commence in the name of God, most Merciful and most High, whose praises are in the religion of Islam." He then strikes the sand with open hands, rubs his mouth, and at last the arms to the elbows. Not one hair must be left untouched or the whole ceremony is useless. The farz acts are to make the intention of tayammum, to rub the mouth and the hands. "If ye are sick or on a journey, or if one of you come from the place of retirement, or if ye have touched women, and

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

the Musallí, one who says the Salát, must stand and the words he is to say are given in Muslim books. The following account will give some idea of a Namáz or service.¹

The Mu'azzin² calls out loudly in Arabic the Takbír:—

“Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!” (*i.e.*, God is great!)

All who hear it respond:³

“Allahu Akbar! Alláhu Akbar! Alláhu Akbar! Alláhu Akbar!”

The Mu'azzin says:—

“I confess there is no God but God; I confess there is no God but God.”

Each of his auditors replies:—

“I confess there is no God but God; I confess there is no God but God.”

Mu'azzin:—“I confess Muḥammad is the apostle of God.”

Auditor:—“I confess Muhammad is the apostle of God.”

Mu'azzin:—“Come to prayer.”⁴

Auditor:—“I have no power or strength but from God most High and Great.”

Mu'azzin:—“Come to do good.”

Auditor:—“What God wills will be; what He wills not will not be.”

¹ It is taken from the *Širātu'n-Naját*, pp. 30-33.

² As the use of bells is unlawful, a man is employed to call the people to prayers. When the Musalmáns were first gathered together for prayer at Madína, there was no one to call them, so they talked about this one day, and some said, “Get a bell like those of the Christians;” others, “Get a trumpet like those of the Jews.” ‘Umr then said, “What! is there not a man among you who can call to prayers?” The Prophet then said, “O Billál! stand and make the call to prayer” (*Šaḥīḥu'l-Bukhári. Kitábu'l-Azán*).

³ “The auditor should repeat what he hears” (*Šaḥīḥu'l-Bukhári. Kitábu'l-Azán*).

⁴ In wet weather the Mu'azzin, instead of saying, “Come to prayer,” shouted “Say the Salát in your houses” (*Saḥīḥu'l-Bukhári, p. 184*).

Hishámí, a *Tábi'*, says that he heard from Yahyá that some Muslims stated their practice thus: “When the Mu'azzin said, ‘Come to prayer,’ we replied, ‘There is no power nor strength but from God,’ and added, ‘We heard our Prophet say like this’” (*Šaḥīḥu'l-Bukhári, p. 162*).

If it is the time of morning prayer, the Mu'azzin adds the words: "Prayer is better than sleep," to which the response is given: "Thou hast spoken well." "Alláhu Akbar" and "There is no God but God" are then repeated twice, and so the Azan ends.

The Iqámat (literally, "causing to stand") is a repetition of the Azan, but after the words, "Come to do good," the statement "Prayer has commenced" is made.

These preliminaries being now over, the Namaz can commence. It is as follows:—

The Musallí or worshipper stands with his hands close to his side and says in a low voice the Niyyat (intention):—
"I have purposed to offer up to God only, with a sincere heart this morning (or, as the case may be), with my face Qiblah-wards, two (or, as the case may be) rak'at prayers, farz (or sunnat or nafl, as the case may be)."

Then follows the Takbír-i-Tahrímah,¹ said with the thumbs touching the lobes of the ears. The palms of the hands are placed towards the Qiblah. The fingers are slightly separated from each other. In this position the Musallí says "Allahu Akbar!"

The Qíam, or standing position. The palm of the right hand being placed on the back of the left, the thumb and little finger of the former seize the wrist of the latter. Both hands are then placed below the navel,² the eyes are directed towards the spot where the head of the worshipper will touch the ground in prostration, and the Ṣana is said. It is:—

"Holiness to Thee, O God! and praise be to Thee!

Great is Thy name! Great is Thy greatness!

There is no God but Thee!"

The Ta'awwuz is then said:—

¹ According to some authorities, this and the other Takbírs of the Namáz are authorised by the third verse of the 74th Surah: "Thy Lord—magnify Him" (wa rubbaka fakabbír).

² The followers of Imám As-Sháfi'í and the women of all sects place the hands upon the breast. The feet should be about four inches apart; women stand with the feet close together.

“I seek refuge near God from cursed Satan.”

Then follows the Tasmíyah:—

“In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.” Then follows the Fatihah,¹ or first chapter of the Quran:—
“Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds! the Compassionate, the Merciful! King on the day of reckoning! Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. Guide Thou us on the straight path: the path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious: with whom Thou art not angry, and who go not astray.”

After this the worshipper can repeat as many chapters of the Qurán as he likes. Some verses he must repeat. The Súratu'l-Ikhlás (S. cxii.) is generally said:²—

“Say: He is God alone: God the Eternal, He begetteth not, and is not begotten; and there is none like unto Him.”

The Takbír-i-Ruku'—Allahu Akbar!—is said whilst the Musallí makes an inclination of the head and body, and separating the fingers a little, places his hands upon his knees.

The Tasbíh-i-Rukú is said in the same position. It is:—

“I extol the holiness of my Lord, the Great!

I extol the holiness of my Lord, the Great!

I extol the holiness of my Lord, the Great!”

The Tasmíyah is then said with the body erect, but with the hands placed on either side. Thus:—

“God hears him who praises Him: O Lord, Thou art praised.”³

The Takbír-i-Sijdah—Allahu Akbar!—is then said as the Muşallí, or worshipper, drops on his knees. He then places

¹ The second rak'at begins here: all that precedes is only repeated at the first rak'at.

² One day the Prophet said to his companions, “What! have you not the power to read one-third of the Qurán in one night?” They replied, “It is very difficult to do so.” His Excellency then said, “Very well, read the Suratu'l-Ikhlás; the reward for so doing is equal to that for reading one-third of the Qurán.” It is for this reason that it is generally recited in the Namáz-i-Tahajjud. (Zawábítu'l-Furqan, p. 6.)

³ In a mosque the Imám says the first sentence alone; the people the second.

his hands, with the fingers close to each other, upon the ground. He must rest upon his toes in such a way that they point to the Qiblah, not on the side of the feet, which must be kept straight behind him. The elbow must not touch the side,¹ nor the stomach the thigh, nor the thigh the calf of the leg. The eyes must be kept bent downwards. Then he touches the ground first with his nose, and then with his forehead, taking care that the thumbs just touch the lobe of the ears.² All this being carefully attended to, the Muṣallí can say the Tasbîh-i-Sijdah thus:—

“I extol the holiness of my Lord, the Most High!

I extol the holiness of my Lord, the Most High!

I extol the holiness of my Lord, the Most High!”

He then raises his head and body, sinks backwards upon his heels, places his hands a little above his knees, and whilst doing so says the Takbír-i-Jalsah³—“Allahu Akbar!”

After a slight pause, a second prostration or Sijdah is made, and the Takbír-i-Sijdah and the Tasbîh-i-Sijdah are repeated as before. Then, when in the act of rising up, the Musallí says the Takbír-i-Qíám—“Allahu Akbar!”⁴

This concludes one rak‘at. The second rak‘at begins with the Fatihah, so that after saying the Takbír-i-Qíám a Musallí would have to begin again at that place and repeat all that he had just finished; the only change being that after the Fatihah he recites different verses of the Quran to

¹ Bukhárí says that one day when the Prophet was making Sijdah, he so opened his arms that his armpits appeared in view.

² Women in the Sijdah keep all the limbs of the body close together, and put both feet at right angles to the body. If their face is Qiblah-wards it is sufficient.

³ Here the Shí‘ahs say: “I rise and sit by the power of God.”

⁴ It is a grievous sin for the worshippers to raise up their heads before the Imám rises up, a fact made known to them by his repeating the Takbír-i-Jalsah. Thus, on the authority of Abu Huraira, one of the Companions, we have this Tradition. “The Prophet said, ‘What! does no one of you fear when he lifts up his head before the Imam does? God will make his head like that of a donkey.’” (Saḥíhu’l-Bukhárí. Kitábu’l-Azán.)

those he said in the first rak'at. After two rak'ats have been said, and after the last, though it be an odd number, the Musallí, unless he is a Shí'ah, places his left foot under him and sits upon it. He then places his hands above his knees, as for the Takbír-i-Jalsah, and with his eyes directed towards his lap says the Attahiyát:—

“The adorations of the tongue are for God, and also the adorations of the body, and almsgiving! Peace be on thee, O Prophet! with the mercy of God and His blessing. Peace be on us and upon God's righteous servants!”

Then raising the first finger of the right hand he says the Tashahhud,¹ which is as follows:—

“I testify that there is no deity but God; and I testify that Muḥammad is the servant of God and the messenger of God.”

Then at the end of all the rak'ats the Muṣallí, whilst in the same posture, says the Darúd, which is:—

“O God! have mercy on Muhammad and his descendants,² as Thou didst have mercy on Abraham and his descendants. Thou art to be praised and Thou art great. O God! bless Muḥammad and his descendants, as Thou didst bless Abraham and his descendants. Thou art to be praised and Thou art great.”

Then comes the Du'a, which may be in the worshipper's own words, though he usually says:³—

“O God our Lord, give us the blessings of this life, and also the blessings of life everlasting. Save us from the torments of hell.”

Then turning the head to the right the Musallí repeats the Salam: “The peace and mercy of God be with you.”

Then turning the head to the left he says: “The peace and mercy of God be with you.”

At the close of the whole ceremony the worshipper raises

¹ This is said at the close of every two rak'ats.

² The Shí'ahs stop here and omit the rest.

³ The Shí'ahs omit the Du'a and say: “Peace be on thee, O Prophet, with the mercy of God and His blessing. Peace be on us and on God's righteous servants.”

his hands as high as his shoulders, with the palms towards heaven or towards his own face, and offers up a *Munajat*, or supplication, either in Arabic or in his own language. The hands are then drawn over the face, as if to convey the blessing received from above to every part of the body.

The appointed periods of prayer are five¹ in number, in proof of which the following text is quoted: "Glorify God when ye reach the evening (*masa'*), and when ye rise at morn (*subh*); and to Him be praise in the heavens and in the earth—and at twilight (*'ashí*) and when ye rest at noon (*zuhr*)" (S. xxx. 17). The commentators say that *masa'* includes both sunset and the period after sunset, that is, both the *Salatu'l-Maghrib* and the *Salatu'l-'Ishá*. Again, "Celebrate the praise of thy Lord before the sunrise and before its setting, and in some hours of the night and in the extremes of the day" (S. xx. 130). *Baizávi* says that the "hours of the night" are the *Salátu'l-Maghrib* and the *Salátu'l-'Isha*, and that "before the setting of the sun" includes *Salatu'z-Zuhr* and *Salatu'l-'Asr*, and that the expression "extremes of the day" is simply an emphatic way of urging the necessity of the morning prayer, *Salatu'l-Fajr*, and of the evening prayer, *Salátu'l-Maghrib*. Some commentators, however, say that the words "extremes of the day" mean noon, when the day is divided. In that case the prayer would be, *Salatu'l-'Ishraq*, which is a *nafl* or voluntary *namáz*. There is also a reference to a stated period of prayer in the following verse: "Observe prayer at early morning, at the close of the day, and at the approach of night" (S. xi. 116).

These daily *Namáz* are *farz*, *sunnat*, *witr*, and *nafl* prayers. *Farz* are those distinctly ordained by God, such as the five stated periods of prayer. *Sunnat*, a certain number of *rak'ats* which are added, because it is said the Prophet repeated them. *Witr rak'ats* are an odd number

¹ "The Zoroastrians had five stated times of prayer. The Sabæans observed seven times of prayer daily, of which five correspond with those of Islam." ("Religion of the Crescent," by St. Clair Tisdall, p. 174.)

of rak'ats, 3, 5, or 7, which may be said after the last prayer at night, and before the dawn of day. Usually they are added to the Salatu'l-'Isha. Imam Abú Hanífa says they are wájib, that is, ordered by God; though they are not authorised by any text in the Quran, but by Traditions, each of which is generally received as a Hadís-i-Salíh, and so witr rak'ats are also regarded as being of authority. Imam Sháfi'í, however, considers them to be sunnat only, a term already explained. The Traditions referred to are: "God has added to your Namaz one Namáz more: know that it is witr; say it between the Salatu'l-'Isha and dawn." Bukhárí says: "The Prophet said the witr rak'ats before going to sleep." This fixes the time. He also said them before dawn. Thus 'Áysha said: "Every night the Prophet made one witr Namaz, and made his witr last till morning." On the authority of Buzar, a Traditionist, it is recorded that the Prophet said: "Witr is wájib upon Muslims," and in order to enforce the practice he added: "Witr is right; he who does not observe it is not my follower." The Prophet, the Companions, Tába'in, and the Taba-i-Taba'in all observed it. The word witr literally means "odd number." A Tradition says: "God is odd; He loves the odd." Musalmáns pay the greatest respect to an odd number. It is considered unlucky to begin any work or to commence a journey on a day the date of which is an even number. The number of lines in a page of a book is nearly always an odd number.

Nafil prayers are voluntary ones, the performance of which is considered mustahab, or meritorious. Tabari and other historians say that Harúnu'r-Rashíd made one hundred nafil rak'ats every day.¹ All these prayers are precisely the same in form. They simply consist in the repetition of a number of rak'ats, of which I have already given a single illustration in full. A Muslim who says the five daily prayers with the full number of rak'ats will repeat the service I have described fifty times in one day. If in

¹ Ibn Khaldún, vol. i. p. 32.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

	No.	TIME.	THE NAMES OF THE TIME OF PRAYER.			THE NUMBER OF RAK'ATS SAID.					
			Arabic.	Persian.	Urdu.	Sunnat-i-ghair-i-mukada.	Sunnat-i-mukada.	Farz.	Sunnat after Farz.	Nafl. 1	Witr.
The five periods of prayer.	1	From dawn to sunrise.	Şalátu'l-Fajr.	Namáz-i-Şubh.	Fajr Kí Namáz.		2	2			
	2	When the sun has begun to decline.	Şalátu'z-Zuhr.	Namáz-i-Peshín.	Zuhr Kí Namáz.		4	4	2	2	
	3	Midway between No. 2 and 4.	Şalátu'l-'Aşr.	Namáz-i-Dígar.	'Aşr Kí Namáz.	4		4			
	4	A few minutes after sunset.	Şalátu'l-Maghrib.	Namáz-i-Shám.	Maghrib Kí Namáz.			3	2	2	
	5	When the night has closed in.	Şalátu'l-'Ishá.	Namáz-i-Khuftan.	'Ishá Kí Namáz.	4		4	2	2	7 ²
Three periods, which are voluntary.	1	When the sun has well risen.	Şalátu'l-'Ishráq.	Namáz-i-'Ishráq.	'Ishráq Kí Namáz.						8
	2	About 11 o'clock A.M.	Şalátu'z-Zuhá.	Namáz-i-Chast.	Zuhá Kí Namáz.						8
	3	After midnight.	Şalátu't-Tahajjud. ³	Namáz-i-Tahajjud.	Tahajjud Kí Namáz.						9 ⁴

¹ There are some Nafl rak'ats besides these, such as the Tahayyatu'l-masjíd, two rak'ats for the honour of the mosque. They should be said on entering it, according to the tradition, "When any one of you enters a mosque, make two rak'ats before you sit down" (to say the regular prayers). (Şahíhu'l-Bukharí. Kitabu's-Salát.)

² The Musallí may say five or three witr rak'ats instead of seven.

³ The Prophet one night said this Namáz in his own room, but in such a position that he could be seen by those who passed by. For two or three nights people stopped and said prayers after him. After this, he retired to a hidden part of his room where he could not be seen, and so could not be made Imam of the Namáz. He said that he so retired because he did not wish to make this Salát a farz one. ("Şahíhu'l-Bukharí," p. 184.) This is a very good illustration of the Sunnat-i-F'ilí. This Tahajjud Namáz is said to be most advantageous. Abu Huraira relates how the Prophet said: "Shaitan fastens three knots upon the back of each one of you who sleeps, and he beats the whole night with these knots and says 'Sleep on;' but if the man awakes and remembers God, one knot is loosened; when he makes wazu another knot is untied; then he wakes in the morning happy and in good spirits; but if he does not do these things, he wakes up unhappy and in dull spirits." (Şahíhu'l-Bukharí, p. 289.)

⁴ The Shafi'is say that only one may be said, and support their view by

it is said be a town in which a Qází (judge) dwells. (2.) There must be in the town a ruler or his deputy. (3.) It must take the place of the Salatu'z-Zuhr, with which it agrees, except that two farz rak'ats instead of four are recited. The nafl rak'ats are omitted. The four sunnat rak'ats which precede and the two which follow the farz ones are said. (4.) One, or, according to the followers of Imam Shafi'í, two Khutbahs or sermons are preached. These are delivered by the Imam after the four sunnat rak'ats are recited, and before the two farz ones. The Khutbah should consist of the praise of God, prayer, and injunctions to piety. (5.) There must be a congregation of three persons besides the Imam. The Shafi'ítes say there should be at least forty worshippers. (6.) The Azán, or call to prayers, must be made to all without distinction of rank.

Any person who is qualified to act as Imám at the other prayers can conduct this Namaz. The Imám (precentor) and Khatíb (preacher) is usually, but not necessarily, one and the same person. The Khutbahs should not be long, for Muhammad said that long sermons and short prayers would be a sign of the degeneracy of the latter days. When two Khutbahs are said, the Imam sits down to rest before the delivery of the second. The worshippers may then offer up a Du'a, or private prayer. Some, however, say that this practice is bid'at (innovation), and consider it a very bad act. According to the Traditionists Bukharí, Abú Daúd, and Tirmízí, it is a mustahab act to wear clean clothes on Friday.

The preacher, standing on the second step of the mimbar or pulpit, with a large club or staff in his hand, delivers his sermon.¹

the Tradition, "A man said to the Prophet, 'O Prophet of God! how is the Tahajjud Namaz to be said?' He replied, 'Say two rak'ats, or if you fear that morning is near, say one with rak'at.'" (Sahihu'l-Bukharí, p. 224.)

¹ In countries under Muslim rule he holds a wooden sword reversed. The position of standing is a Sunnat order, based on a Tradition by Ibn 'Umr, recorded by Bukharí: "The Prophet delivered the Khuṭbah standing, then he sat down."

The following is a specimen of the Khuṭbahs.

SERMON ON THE EXCELLENCE OF FRIDAY.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Praise be to God, the King, the Holy, the Great, the Knower. He has opened our hearts through the blessing of Islam. He has made Friday the best of days. We testify that there is no God but God, the One without partner. This confession saves those who make it from danger and from darkness. We testify that our Lord Muhammad is His servant and His Apostle sent to all mankind. May the mercy and peace of God be on him, his descendants, and on his Companions. O men! O believers of God! I advise you and my own soul thus: "Obey God! Know, O servants of God! that when Friday commences the angels assemble in the fourth heaven, and Gabriel (on whom be peace) is Mu'azzin, Míká'il the Khatíb, Israfil the Imam, and 'Izrá'il the Mukabbir,¹ and all the angels join in the Namáz. When it is over Gabriel says: "I give the reward due to me as Mu'azzin to the Mu'azzins of the sect of Islam; Míká'il: "I give mine to the Khatíbs;" Israfil: "I give mine to the Imams;" 'Izrá'il: "I give mine to the Mukabbirs." The angels say: "We give ours to the company of the Muslims." The Prophet said: "The night and day of Friday last twenty-four hours, and each hour God releases a thousand souls from hell. Whosoever makes 'ghusl' on Friday, God will give him for every hair on his body the reward of ten good deeds. Whosoever dies on a Friday meets with the reward of a martyr."

Certainly the best and most eloquent speech is the Holy Quran, the Word of God,—the King, the Great, the Knower. His word is true and righteous. When thou readest the Qurán say: "O God! protect me from cursed Satan."

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

When ye are summoned to prayer on the day of the assembly, haste to the commemoration of God and quit your traffic. This,

¹ One who says, "Alláhu Akbar—God is Great."

if ye knew it, will be best for you. And when the prayer is ended, then disperse yourselves abroad and go in quest of the bounties of God; and that it may be well with you, oft remember God. But when they get a sight of merchandise or sport, they disperse after, and leave thee standing alone. Say: 'God hath in reserve what is better than sport or wares. God is the best provider'" (S. lxii. 9-11). God by means of the Holy Quran will bless us and you. And by its verses and teaching will reward us and you. God is Almighty, Generous, Merciful, Eternal, Holy, Clement.

Here ends the first sermon: after a short pause the preacher commences the second.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Praise be to God, the Creator of the earth and heavens, the Maker of light and darkness. I testify that there is no God but God. He is one. He has no partner. Know, O believers! that this confession will save you from trouble and calamity. I testify that Muhammad, who wipes out error and infidelity, is the servant and Apostle of God. The mercy of God be on our Lord Muhammad, the Lord of Creation, and on his descendants, and on his Companions be grace and honour. O servants of God! I advise you and my own soul thus: Obey God! Fear God, who created life and death and who scrutinises our good actions. O God! be pleased with Abú Bakr, the righteous, the Sahibu'l-Ghár,¹ and with Omar Ibnu'l-Khattab, the chief of the holy men, and with Osman the possessor of two lights, who was martyred when reading the Holy Quran, and upon 'Alí Murtuza, the destroyer of infidels and sinners. O God! be pleased with the great Imams Hasan and Husain. Be pleased with their mother Fatimahu'z-Zahra, the chief of women, and with Hamzah and 'Abbas, the uncles of the Prophet. Also be pleased with all the Ashab (Companions). O God! help those who help the religion of Muhammad, and make us of their number. Make those wretched who corrupt it, and keep us aloof from all such. O believers!

¹ A reference to his presence with Muhammad in the cave (ghár) when they fled from Mecca to Madína. See Surah ix. 40.

truly God orders you to do justice and to show kindness to your kindred. He orders you to abstain from infidelity and from the greater and the lesser sins. God warns you. God is the Most High, the Most Glorious. God is Great!"

The collection of Khutbahs from which the above have been translated contains a considerable number on a variety of subjects, such as prayer, the resurrection, worldliness, the various feast and fast day, &c. The form in all is very similar. The exordium and the conclusion are practically the same. A few sentences in the middle refer to the special subject of the sermon. The second of the two sermons is always the same; it is practically an invocation of blessings on certain persons. Both are said in Arabic. What would answer to our idea of a sermon, such as an explanation of some doctrine, or an exposition of some passages in the Quran, is not part of the public worship in the mosque, but would be done in an ordinary assembly, in any convenient place, by a Mulla, or any learned man who could collect an audience.

(ii.) *Salátu'l-Musáfir*.—Prayers said by a traveller, that is, one who makes a journey of not less than three days. Should he stay in any one place fifteen days, he must say the usual Namaz; if less, he may say as few as two farz rak'ats. He may omit all others, except the three witr rak'ats at the *Salátu'l-'Ishá*.

(iii.) *Salátu'l-Khauf*.—Prayers of fear. This is a Namáz said during the time of war. When there is imminent danger from the approach of an enemy, the Imam should divide the army into two bodies; one of which should be placed in a position towards the enemy, the other should recite, if they are on the march, one rak'at; if stationary in a place, two rak'ats. This division will then march towards the enemy, and the first division will recite as many rak'ats as may be required to complete the Namaz. The first division of troops will omit the *Fatihah* and the other verses of the Quran recited after it, but the second division will supply the omission. If the enemy are so near that

the cavalry dare not dismount, then each man will recite a rak'at or rak'ats for himself, and make the ruku' and sijdah by means of signs. If he cannot turn towards the Qiblah, he is, under the circumstances, allowed to face any direction most convenient. During the recital of the Namaz he must not fight or allow his horse to move, lest the prayer should be rendered void. It is written in the Quran, "When ye go forth to war in the land, it shall be no crime in you to cut short your prayers, if ye fear lest the infidels come upon you. . . . And when thou, O Apostle! shalt be among them, and shalt pray with them, then let a party of them rise up with thee, but let them take their arms; and when they shall have made their prostrations, let them retire to your rear: then let another party that hath not prayed come forward, and let them pray with you" (S. iv. 102, 103).

(iv.) Salatu't-Tarawih.—This is a special set of twenty rak'ats, of Sunnat obligation, recited every night during the month of Ramazán. They must be said after the farz and sunnat, and before the witr rak'ats at the time of the Salatu'l-'Ishá. 'Abdu'r-Rahmán, a Traditionist, states that one night in Ramazán he went with the Khalíf Omar to the mosque. They saw some persons saying the Namáz alone, and some reciting it in groups. Omar said, "If I gather them all together, so that they may recite it after one Imam, it will be good." He did so, and the next night the people of their own accord came in great numbers and united together. Then said Omar, "This bid'at is good." This is good authority for the institution, for the Prophet said, "Follow my Sunnat and that of the Khulafa-i-Rashidín." There is also a Hadis-i-Sahih to the effect that "God has made the fast of Ramazán farz, and its qíám¹ sunnat." The Prophet was anxious that the Tiráwih Namaz should not become farz, and therefore, after going

¹ Qíám is one of the positions in a Namáz, and is here used by synecdoche for it. In Mecca the Salatu't-Tarawih is called with reference to this Tradition the Salatu'l-Qíámiah.

to the mosque on three successive nights in Ramazán, he stayed away on the fourth, giving as his reason for so doing that he feared that, if he went every night, it might be considered a farz, and not a sunnat duty. The number of rak'ats is fixed at twenty, as that was the number recited by Muhammad and by the Khalíf Omar. The Shí'ahs do not say these prayers, or even enter the mosque on such occasions, as after every four rak'ats an eulogium is repeated on the four Khalífs, the first three of whom they hate.

(v.) Salatu'l-Kusúf and Salatu'l-Khusuf.—Prayer said when an eclipse of the sun or of the moon takes place. In the former case, the Imam recites with the congregation in the mosque two rak'ats. A Tradition recorded by Bukhárí and related by 'Abdu'lláh bin 'Amrú states that "in the time of the Prophet, when there was an eclipse of the sun, it was notified that certainly the Namáz was to be said in the congregation." In this Salat the Azan and the Iqámat are both omitted. No Khutbah is said. After the rak'ats are completed those present remain in prayer (du'a) until the eclipse is at an end. The Namáz during an eclipse of the moon is the same as that during an eclipse of the sun, with this exception, that the rak'ats need not be recited in a congregation. A Muslim can say this Namáz privately in his own house. The practice is founded on the Prophet's saying, "When you see an eclipse, then remember God; pray (du'a) and recite the Namáz until it becomes light again."

(vi.) Salátu'l-Istisqa.—Prayer in time of drought. When there is a scarcity of water, each person should, with face Qiblah-wards, offer up prayer to God. This can be said at home and in private. Care must be taken that no Zimmí¹ is present. The reason given is that this is a prayer for a blessing, but God sends no blessing on a company in which a Zimmí is present. These prayers are

¹ That is, a non-Muslim who is allowed to reside in a Musalmán state on payment of a special tax.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

It is recited in the open space in front of the mosque, or in some neighbouring spot : never in the graveyard.

When all are assembled the Imam or leader says : " Here begins the Namáz for the dead." The company present then stand up in rows with faces turned in the direction of Mecca. The Imám stands a little in front, near the head or waist of the corpse, according as it is that of a male or female. Then all assume the Qíám or standing position, and recite the Niyyat as follows : " I recite Namáz for the sake of God, and offer prayers (Du'á) for this deceased person, and I follow the Imám " (who is about to officiate). Then all at the first¹ Takbír put the hands to the lobes of the ears and say : " God is Great ! "

Then they say the Saná : " Holiness to Thee, O God ! and to Thee be praise ! Great is Thy Name ! Great is Thy greatness ! Great is Thy praise ! There is no God but Thee ! "

Then follows the second Takbír : " God is Great ! "

Then all say the Darúd-i-Ibrahím : " O God, have mercy on Muhammad and upon his descendants, as Thou didst bestow mercy, and peace, and blessing, and compassion, and great kindness upon Abraham and upon his descendants." " Thou art praised, and Thou art Great ! " " O God, bless Muhammad and his descendants, as Thou didst bless, and didst have compassion and great kindness upon Abraham and upon his descendants."

Then follows the third Takbír : " God is Great ! "

The Du'a is then repeated : " O God, forgive our living and our dead, and those of us who are present, and those who are absent, and our children and our full-grown persons, our men and our women. O God, those whom Thou dost keep alive amongst us, keep alive in Islám, and those whom Thou causest to die, let them die in the Faith." ²

¹ The Sháfi'ites raise the hands at the recital of each of the four Takbírs ; the other sects do so only at the first.

² If the deceased was a child or a mad person, they say : " O God, make him (or her, as the case may be) a guide for us, and make him a cause of our gaining a future reward. O God, save him and make him an intercessor for us."

Then follows the fourth Takbír: "God is Great!"

Then all say: "O God, give us good in this world and in the next, and save us by Thy mercy from the troubles of the grave and of hell."

Then each one in a low voice says the Salam, as in an ordinary Namaz.¹

The Namaz is now over, and the people make another Du'á thus: "'O our Lord! suffer not our hearts to go astray after that Thou hast once guided us, and give us mercy from before Thee; for verily Thou art He who giveth' (S. iii. 6). O God, Thou art his Master, and Thou createdst him, and Thou didst nourish him, and didst guide him toward Islam, and Thou hast taken his life, and Thou knowest well his inner and outer life. Provide intercessors for us. Forgive him, for Thou art the Forgiver, the most Merciful." ²

Then going towards the head of the corpse, they say:—"No doubt is there about this Book (Quran). It is a guidance to the God-fearing, who believe in the unseen, who observe prayer (salat), and out of what we have bestowed on them expend (for God), and who believe in that which hath been sent down to thee (Muhammad), and in what hath been sent down before thee; and full faith have they in the life to come: these are guided by their Lord; and with these it shall be well" (S. ii. 1-4).

Then coming towards the feet of the corpse, they say:—"The Apostle believeth in that which hath been sent down from his Lord, as do the faithful also. Each believeth in God, and His angels, and His Books and His Apostles: we

¹ The Imám makes the Niyyat (intention) in his mind that the Salám may be on his guardian angels, and on the worshippers who are behind him; each worshipper makes the Niyyat that the Salám may be on his guardian angels, on his fellow-worshippers, and on the Imam.

² A deceased Muslim is called "maghfúr lahu," *i.e.*, one who is not only absolved from sin, but is also admitted into Paradise: the term is derived from "ghafar," which adds to the meaning of "afu" (he absolved) the further idea of a participation in the joys of heaven.

make no distinction between any of His Apostles.¹ And they say: 'We have heard and we obey. (We implore) Thy mercy, Lord; for unto Thee must we return.' God will not burden any soul beyond its power. It shall enjoy the good which it hath acquired, and shall bear the evil for the acquirement of which it laboured. O our Lord! punish us not if we forget or fall into sin; O our Lord! and lay not on us a load like that which Thou hast laid on those who have been before us;² O our Lord! and lay not on us that for which we have no strength, but blot out our sins and forgive us, and have pity on us. Thou art our protector; give us victory therefore over the infidel nations" (S. ii. 285, 286).

The chief mourner then gives the Izn-i-'Amm, that is, he says: "All have permission to depart."

Some then proceed homewards, others go with the corpse to the graveyard. When the bier is lifted up, or when it is placed down near the grave, the people say: "We commit thee to earth in the name of God and in the religion of the Prophet."

If the ground is very hard, a recess (lahd) is dug out in the side of the grave. This must be high enough to allow the corpse to sit up when the angels Munkar and Nakir come to interrogate it. If the ground is soft, a small grave is excavated at the bottom of the larger one. The corpse is then placed in the lower one. The idea in both cases is that the corpse must be in such a position that it can have free movement. The body is placed with the face towards

¹ This contradicts verse 254 of this Súra. Muslims explain it thus. We accept all prophets, and as regards *faith* in them make no difference, though as regards *dignity* we recognise the distinction indicated in the 254th verse.

² That is, the Jews and Christians, on whom, it is said by the Muslim commentators, many strict ceremonial observances were incumbent. The word often used to express the idea of the burdensome nature of ceremonial observance is takhlif, trouble. Practically, Muslims are not free from these "loads," a fact which finds expression in the word used for a pious man—a mukhallif, one who has to take trouble in the way of performing religious duties.

Mecca. When the bands of the shroud have been loosened the people say: "O God, deprive us not of the heavenly reward of the deceased, place us not in trouble."

Each person then takes seven clods of earth, and over each clod says "Bismillah" (in the name of God), and the Suratu'l-Iklás (cxii.), and then places each clod by the head of the corpse. Unburnt bricks, bamboos or boards having then been placed over the smaller grave, the persons present with both hands throw clods of earth three times into the grave. The first time they say: "From it (earth) We created you;" the second time, "And into it will We return you;" the third time, "And out of it will We bring you a second time" (S. xx. 57). Then they say this Du'a: "O God, I beseech Thee for the sake of Muḥammad not to trouble the deceased."

When the attendants are filling up the grave they say: "O God, defend the deceased from Shaitān (devil) and from the torments of the grave." When the grave is completely filled up, one man pours water three, or five, or seven times over it, and then plants a green branch on it. One of the mourners then draws near the middle of the grave and recites the Talqín (instruction): "O servant of God, and child of a female servant of God. O son of (such an one),¹ remember the faith you professed on earth to the very last; that is, your witness that there is no God but God, and that certainly Muhammad is His Apostle, and that Paradise and Hell and the Resurrection from the dead are real; that there will be a day of judgment, and say: 'I confess that God is my Lord, Islam my religion, Muhammad (on whom be the mercy and peace of God) my Prophet, the Qurán my guide, the Ka'bah my Qiblah, and that Muslims are my brethren.' O God, keep him (the deceased) firm in

¹ The name of the mother is here inserted, The mother's name is chosen in preference to that of the father, as there can be no doubt as to the maternity of the child. For the same reason it is said that at the Last Day each man will be summoned as such an one, son of such a mother. This simple fact reveals a sad state of morals, or at least a disbelief in the virtue of women.

this faith, and widen his grave, and make his examination (by Munkar and Nakír) easy, and exalt him and have mercy on him, O Thou most Merciful." The other persons present then offer a Fatihah.¹

After this they may, if they like to do so, read the Suratu'l-Ya Sín (xxxvi.) and the Súratu'l-Mulk (lxvii.). It is not common to do so. Then, retiring forty paces from the grave, they again offer a Fátihah, for by this time the examination of the deceased has commenced. The first night is one of great trouble to the deceased, so alms should be given liberally that night in his name. In order to relieve him as much as possible, two nafl rak'ats of a Namaz should be said. After the Fatihah in each rak'at, the worshipper should repeat the Ayatu'l-Kursi, the throne verse (S. ii. 256), three times; then the Súratu't-Takísur (cii.) eleven times; then the Súratu'l-Iklás (cxii.) three times.

After the Salám and the Darúd, the worshipper lifts up both hands, and with great humility prays that the reward of the service just concluded may be bestowed on the deceased.

(viii.) Salátu'l-Istikhára.—This is a Namáz, consisting of two rak'ats, said before undertaking any special work. After each rak'at the person says this Du'a: "O God, make me know what is best for me, and keep me from evil, and bestow good upon me, for I have no power to know what is best for me." He then goes to sleep, during which period he expects to receive a special inspiration (Ilham) which will give him the needed directions and guide him aright as to the matter in hand.

(ix.) Salatu't-Tarawih.—This consists of twenty rak'ats recited each evening during the month of Ramazan. An account of these will be given in the next chapter when the ceremonies connected with the Ramazan fast are described.

The account given of the various forms of Salat will

¹ The idea is that the reward of this act is transferred to the person on whose behalf it is made.

show how mechanical they are. These forms admit of no variation, whether used in public or in private. Dean Stanley well remarks: "The ceremonial character of the religion of Musalmans is, in spite of its simplicity, carried to a pitch beyond the utmost demands of Rome or of Russia. Prayer is reduced to a mechanical act, as distinct from a mental one, beyond any ritual in the West. It is striking to see the figures along the banks of the Nile going through their prostrations at the rising of the sun, with the uniformity and the regularity of clockwork; but it resembles the worship of machines rather than of reasonable beings."¹

3. ROZAH, THE THIRTY DAYS' FAST OF RAMAZAN.—Fasting² (which is called in Arabic, *Sum*) is defined to be abstinence from food, drink, and cohabitation from sunrise to sunset. The person should say: "O Lord, I intend to fast to-morrow for Thy sake. Forgive my past and future sin." When the fast is ended he says: "O God, I fasted for Thy sake and had faith in Thee, and confided in Thee, and now I break (*iftar*) the fast with the food Thou givest. Accept this act."

It is a *farz* duty to keep the fast during the thirty days of the month Ramazán. This is laid down in the words of the Qurán: "O believers! a fast is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you." "As to the month Ramazan, in which the Quran was sent down to be man's guidance, and an explanation of that guidance, and of that illumination, as soon as any one of you observeth the moon, let him set about the fast" (S. ii. 179–181). The *Ijma'* is also unanimous on this point. Young children and idiots are excused. Sick persons and travellers may postpone the fast to another time. "He who is sick or upon a journey shall fast a like number of other days. God

¹ "Eastern Church," p. 279.

² The Prophet said "Fasting is a shield. There is a special door of Paradise; it is called *Rayyán*, and only those who fast can enter by it; when all such have entered it will be fastened." (*Şahîhu'l Bukharî-Kitábu's-şum.*)

wiseth you ease, but wiseth not your discomfort, and that you fulfil the number of days" (S. ii. 181). This is called a qaza fast, that is, a fast kept at another time in lieu of one which has been omitted.

If a person makes a vow that, if God grants a certain request, he will fast (*rozah-i-nazr*), or if he fasts by way of atonement for some sin committed (*rozah-i-kafarah*), in both cases it is a *wajib* duty to keep the fast. Some hold that the former is a *farz* duty, and base their assertion on the verse: "Let them bring the neglect of their persons to a close, and let them pay their vows" (S. xxii. 30).

All other kinds of fasts are *nafl*, a term already explained. Such are the fasts kept on the 10th day of Muharram; on the *Aiyam-i-Bíz* (bright days)—the 13th, 14th, and 15th day of any month, on the 15th of Sha‘ban, that is, the day following the night called *Shab-Barát*, and on the 30th of each month in which there are thirty days. A *nafl* fast may be broken if the person who intended to keep it receives an invitation to a feast. According to Bukharí, a woman may not make a *nafl* fast without the consent of her husband. The reverse is not the case, for "Men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God hath gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them" (S. iv. 38). It is said that one day a woman came to the Prophet and said that her husband had slapped her. The Prophet wished to punish him for doing so improper an act, but he was prevented by the descent from heaven of the verse just quoted, which is held to be conclusive evidence of the inferiority of women. The verse also contains the words "chide those (wives) for whose refractoriness ye have cause to fear; remove them into beds apart, and scourge them." It is *mustahab* to fast some days in the month Shawwal, for Muhammad is reported to have said: "Whosoever keeps the fast of Ramazan and some seven days in the preceding month of Shawwal, it is as if his whole life were a fast."

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

expiation of this shall be the maintenance of a poor man" (S. ii. 180). This seems to make fasting a matter of personal option, and some Commentators admit that at first it was so, but they say that the words have been abrogated¹ by the following sentence, which occurs in the next verse: "As soon as any one of you observeth the moon, let him set about the fast." Others say that the negative particle "not" must be understood before able, in which case the words within brackets must be omitted. Others explain the expression "those who are able" as equivalent to "those who have great difficulty therein," such as aged and infirm persons. This seems to be the best interpretation, and is the one which practically is acted on.

In the case of women with child, mothers giving suck to their children, sick persons whom fasting at this particular time might injure, it is sufficient if they keep it at another time; that is, they must when convenient make a qaza fast. In these cases the Sadaqah is not required. The Quran says: "He who is sick or upon a journey shall fast a like number of other days" (S. ii. 181). There are five days in the year in which it is unlawful to fast. These are 'Īdu'l-Fitr, Baqr'īd, and the three following days, viz., the 11th, 12th, and 13th of Zu'l-Hijjah. If during the month of Ramazan a person arrives at maturity, or an infidel becomes a Muslim, each must keep the fast during the remaining days of the month.

To take the Saharí, or meal taken just before sunrise in the month of Ramazan is a Sunnat act. The great Traditionists, Bukharí, Muslim, and Tirmízí, all agree that the Prophet said, "Eat Saharí because there is a blessing in it. The difference between our fast and that of the men of the Book (Christians) is the partaking of Saharí." The meal eaten immediately after sunset is called Iftar, or the break-

¹ There are others who maintain that this is a muhkam statement, and cannot therefore be abrogated. They hold that it must be restricted to the aged and to persons who have chronic diseases. (Tafsír-i-Ḥusainí p. 30; Tafsír-i-Faizu'l-Karím, p. 120.)

ing of the fast. In India it is the custom to eat a date first, or, if that fruit is not procurable, to drink a little water. In Turkey an olive is chosen as the fruit with which the fast should be broken.

The distinctive feature of a Muhammadán fast is that it is a fast during the day only. The rich classes, when not strictly religious, by turning day into night avoid much of its rigour. They, however, frequently break the fast, though any such action must be done in secret, for popular opinion all over the Musalman world is strongly against a man who does not, outwardly at least, observe the fast of Ramazán. In this matter it may be said, "Pecher en secret, n'est pas pecher, ce n'est que l'éclat qui fait le crime." Those who have to work for their living find the observance of the fast very difficult, for however laborious may be their occupation, they must not swallow any liquid; yet, as a rule, the lower classes observe it strictly.¹

4. ZAKAT.—There are two terms in use to express almsgiving. The first is Zakat, or the legal alms due, with certain exceptions, from every Muslim. The second is Sadaqah, or offerings on the feast-day known as 'Ídu'l-Fitr, or alms in general.² It is the first of these that has now to be considered.

On the authority of the Qurán and the Ijmá'-i-ummat it is declared to be a farz duty for every Muslim of full age, after the expiration of a year, to give the Zakat on account of his property, provided that he has sufficient for his subsistence and is a Sahib-i-Nisab, or one who possesses an income equivalent to about £5 per annum. The Quran

¹ Burton says that when, in the disguise of a Musalmán doctor, he was in Cairo making preparations for the Hajj, he had but one patient who would break his fast to save his life. All the others refused, though death should be the consequence.

² "The former are called Zakát, either because they increase a man's store by drawing down a blessing on him, and produce in his soul the virtue of liberality, or because they purify the remaining part of one's substance from pollution, and the soul from the filth of avarice; the latter are called Sadaqah, because they are a proof of a man's sincerity in the worship of God." (Sale's "Preliminary Discourse," Sect. iv.)

says: "Observe prayer (Salát) and the legal impost (Zakát)" (S. ii. 40). The Khalíf 'Umr Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azíz used to say: "Prayer carries us half-way to God, fasting brings us to the door of His palace, and alms procure us admission." The three conditions without which Zakat would not be compulsory are Islam, Hurriyat (freedom), and Nisab (stock). The reason for this is that Zakat is said to be a fundamental part of 'Ibadat (worship), and that, as the infidels cannot perform acceptable worship, they have nothing to do with Zakat. Hurriyat, or freedom, is necessary, for slaves hold no property. Nisab, or stock, is required, for so the Prophet has decreed.¹ When the Nisab is required for daily use, the Zakat is not taken from it; such as a slave retained for personal service, grain for food, weapons, tools, books, household furniture, wearing apparel, horses for riding, &c., for one Tradition records that the Prophet specially exempted all these; whilst another, given on the authority of Bukhári, says that for slaves employed in domestic service only the Sadaqah-i-fitr² should be given. If a person owes a debt, the amount necessary for its liquidation must be deducted from his property and the Zakat given on the balance. If it is a debt due to God, such as an offering due on a vow, or to be given in atonement for the neglect of some religious duty, it must not be so deducted from the property on which Zakat is due.

When the Nisab is in gold or in silver to the value of about £5, then one-fortieth part is due. "A woman with a child, on whose arms were heavy golden bracelets, came to the Prophet. He inquired if the Zakat had been given for them. On receiving a reply in the negative he said, 'It is easy for God in the day of judgment to make thee wear bracelets of fire.' The girl then took them off

¹ The Prophet told the men of the tribe 'Abdu'l-Qáís that they should give one-fifth of their property (Sahíhu'l-Bukhári, p. 22). It is said, however, that this order applied to that tribe only, and was not of general application.

² That is, food or money sufficient to provide one meal for a poor person.

and said, 'These are for the service of God and of His Prophet.'" On all rikáz or buried treasure found by any one, and on costly metals extracted from mines, one-fifth of the value must be paid, whether the land be Khárijí—rented at its proper market value, or 'Usharí—possessed by the payment of a tithe. If the rikaz is found in Daru'l-Harb, a country under a non-Muslim Government, the whole belongs to the finder; if it is on his own land, or if on unclaimed land, he must pay the one-fifth. Should the treasure consist of coins bearing the mint stamp of a Musalman Government, the finder must, if he can, find the owner and return them to him; if they were coined in a mint belonging to the infidels, after having given one-fifth as Zakat, he may retain four-fifths for himself.

Pearls, amber, and turquoise are not subject to any deduction, for the Prophet said, "There is no Zakat for stones."

As regards cattle the following rules have been laid down. For sheep and goats nothing is given when the number is under forty. The owner must give one for one hundred and twenty, two for the next eighty, and one for every hundred after. The scale for buffaloes is the same as that for sheep. For camels, horses, and cows, special elaborate rules are laid down, but the general principles are the same. Donkeys and mules are exempt, for the Prophet said, "No order has come down (from heaven) to me about them."

If a stock of merchandise exceeds the Nisáb (£5, 4s.), Zakát must be given on it and on the profits at the rate of two and a half per cent. Honey, fruit, grain, &c., although less than five camel-loads, must, according to Imam Abu Hanífa, pay one-tenth; but the Sahibain and Imam Shafí'í say that if there is less than the five camel-loads no Zakat is required.

The Zakat should be given to the classes of person mentioned in the following verse. "Alms are to be given to the poor and the needy, and to those who collect them, *and*

to those whose hearts are won to Islám, and for ransoms, and for debtors, and for the cause of God, and for the wayfarer' (S. ix. 60). The words italicised, according to the Tafsír-i-Husainí, Baizáví, and other authorities, are now cancelled or rather they are allowed to fall into disuse, for the term *saqit*, which is the one used, is not so strong as the word *mansukh* (abrogated). The reference is to the Arab chiefs who were beaten by the Prophet at the battle of Honein (A.H. 8). This victory is referred to in the 25th verse of this Surah, "God has helped you in many battle-fields, and on the day of Honein." Abu Bakr abolished this giving of Zakat to converts, and the Khalíf Omar said to these or similar persons, "This Zakat was given to incline your hearts towards Islam. Now God has prospered Islam. If you be converted it is well; if not, a sword is between us." No Companion has denied this statement, and so the authority for the practical suspension of this order is that of the Ijma'-i-ummat. It is well that an appeal to unworthy motives should be abolished, but no commentator, so far as I know, makes that a reason for the cancelling of this order. It is always placed on the ground of the triumphant nature of Islám, which now needs no such support. Contemptuous indifference, not any high moral motive, was the cause of the change. In addition to the persons mentioned in the verse just quoted, Zakat may be given to assist a Mukátib, or slave who is working in order to purchase his freedom. Persons who are too poor to go on a Jihad or to make the Hajj must be assisted. The Zakat must not be given for building mosques,¹ for funeral expenses, liquidating the debts of a deceased person, or to purchase a slave in order to set him free. It is not lawful to give the Zakat to parents or grandparents, children or grandchildren, or for a husband to give it to his wife or a wife to her husband, or a master to his slave. Abú Yúsuf and Muḥammad, disciples of Imam Abú Hanífá, maintain

¹ Mosques are usually endowed. The property thus set apart is called waqf. This supports the various officials connected with a mosque.

that a wife can apply the Zakát to her husband's wants, and quote this tradition: "A woman asked the Prophet if she could give the Zakat to her husband. He answered, 'Give; such an act has two rewards: one for the giving of charity and one for the fulfilment of the duties of relationship.'" It should not be given to a rich man or to his family. The descendants of Hashim and the descendants of the Prophet should not be the recipients of the Zakat. The Prophet said: "O Ahl-i-Bait (men of the house), it is not lawful for you to receive Zakat, for you get the one-fifth share of my fifth portion of the booty." So some say that the Syeds are excluded; but they demur, and reply, that as they do not now get a portion of the spoil of the infidels, they should receive alms. Zakat must not be given to a Zimmí. It is meritorious only when given to Muslims.

In Muhammadan countries there are officers whose duty it is to collect the Zakat; in India the payment is left to each person's conscience. Whilst there is not much regularity in the payment, due credit must be given for the care which Musalmans take of their poor.

The Sadaqah forms a different branch of this subject. A full account of it will be given in the section of the next chapter which treats of the 'Idu'l-Fitr.

5. THE HAJJ.—The Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, is a farz duty, and he who denies this fact is considered to be an infidel. "Proclaim to the people a pilgrimage. . . . Let them pay their vows and circuit the ancient House. This do. And he that respecteth the sacred ordinances of God, this will be best for him with the Lord" (S. xxii. 28, 30, 31). "The pilgrimage to the temple is a service due to God from those who are able to journey thither; and as to him who believeth not, verily God can afford to dispense with all creatures" (S. iii. 91, 92). The commentator Baizávi says that the words "are able" in this verse were interpreted by the Prophet to mean the possession of food to eat and an animal to ride, from which statement Imám As-Shafi'í argued that a man who could

not go in person might send a substitute. On the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas the following Tradition has been handed down. “The Prophet said: ‘God has made the Ḥajj farz.’ Then Aqra bin Hábis, standing up, said: ‘O Prophet, is it to be made every year?’ His Excellency said: ‘If I say yes, it will be a wajib duty to do it annually; but that ye are not able to bear, so the Hajj is necessary only once; whatever pilgrimage may be made to Mecca in addition is nafl.’”¹

The Hajj must be made by every free Muslim, sound in body and of full age, who is able to pay his expenses, after duly providing for the support of his household till his return. If a slave or a child should make the Hajj, the former on attaining freedom, and the latter on coming of age, must again go on pilgrimage. If a woman, whose residence is at a distance of more than three days’ journey from Mecca, goes on pilgrimage, she must be accompanied by her husband or by a near relative. “A certain man came to the Prophet and said: ‘My wife is about to make the Hajj, but I am called to go on a warlike expedition.’ The Prophet said: ‘Turn away from the war and accompany thy wife in the Hajj.’” Imám Abu Yúsuf considered that a wealthy man who delayed more than a year in making the Hajj was a sinner. Imam Muhammad and most others would allow him to postpone it for some years; but if death should overtake him before he made the pilgrimage, he would be accounted a sinner.

Connected with the Hajj there are three actions which are farz, and five which are wajib; all the rest are sunnat or mustahab. The farz requisites are: (1) to wear no other

¹ In consequence of some proposed regulations concerning the pilgrimages in the year 1895, a large number of Indian Musalmans combined and sent a memorial to the Governor-General of India, in which they say: “The Hajj is regarded and universally believed as an obligatory (*i.e.*, farz) performance by all Muḥammadans. In fact, we believe it to be the *surest way to salvation and paradise.*” Thus a pilgrimage to an old heathen shrine and the kissing of a small black stone atones for a life of evil and opens the door of heaven.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

The Hájís from all parts of the Muslim world at length arrive, weary and worn, at one of these stages. They divest themselves of their ordinary clothing, perform the legal ablution, say a Namaz of two nafl rak'ats, and then put on the Ihrám. The Hají faces Mecca, makes the niyyat, and says, "O God, I purpose to make the Hajj; make this service easy to me, and accept it from me." He then says the Talbíyah¹: "Here I am! O Allah! Here I am! Here I am! There is no God but Thee! Truly, praise and bounty, and the kingdom are to Thee! No partner hast Thou! Here am I!" The persons who reside permanently in any of these Míqat, or stages, can assume the pilgrim's garb in a place called Hal, near to Mecca, or in the city itself, whilst the inhabitants of Mecca can put on the Ihram in the precincts of the temple.

The Hají must now abstain from worldly affairs and devote himself entirely to the duties of the Hajj. He is not allowed to hunt, though he may catch fish if he can. "O Believers, kill no game while ye are on pilgrimage" (S. v. 96). The Prophet also said: "He who shows the place where game is to be found is equally as bad as the man who kills it." Bukhárí, in the chapter on the Hajj, says that game killed by others may be eaten, and records the following Tradition: "O Prophet, I have slain a wild ass, and some of it yet remains with me. Thy people fear to eat of it lest they be put away from thee.' He said, 'Let it be for the people;' and they were Muħrimúm" (*i.e.*,

Ihrám than the places named in the text. The farther from Mecca it is assumed, provided that it be during one of the two months preceding Zu'l-Hijjah, the more meritorious is the act.

¹ Talbíyah means the repetition of "Labbaik," a phrase equivalent to "I am here." The Talbíyah can be said in any language, though Arabic is preferred. It usually is as follows: "Labbaik, Allahumma, Labbaik! Lá Sharíka laka, Labbaik! Inna-l-hamda wa-n-ní'mata laka, w'-al-mulk! Lá Sharíka laka, Labbaik!" It is a sunnat duty to repeat the Talbiyah often; to repeat it once is shart, *i.e.*, a positive condition. Ibn 'Abbás says: "I heard the Prophet say, 'He who dies engaged in the functions of the Hajj shall be raised saying the salutation Labbaik.'" ("History of the Khalífs," by Jalalu'd-dín As-Syutí.)

they had assumed the *Ihrám*). The *Hájí* must not scratch himself, lest vermin be destroyed or a hair be uprooted. Bukharí relates how a pilgrim killed a louse, and had in consequence to sacrifice a goat, or to fast three days, or to feed six persons. It is said to be a *farz* duty to do one of these three things when such insects are killed at this time. Should the *Hájí* feel uncomfortable, he must rub himself with the open palm of his hand.¹ The face and head must be left uncovered, the hair on the head and beard unwashed and uncut. "Shave not your heads until the offering reach the place of sacrifice" (S. ii. 192). On arriving at an elevated place, on descending a valley, on meeting any one, on entering the city of Mecca or the *Musjidu'l-Haram*,² the *Hájí* should continually repeat the word "Labbaik, Labbaik." As soon as he sees the *Ka'bah*³

¹ The object of these minute details is that the "Truce of God" may be kept. The five noxious creatures, however, may be slain, viz., a crow, a kite, a scorpion, a rat, and a mad dog. ("Šahíhu'l-Bukhári," vol. i. p. 458.)

² The *Musjidu'l-Harám* is the large mosque in Mecca. The *Ka'bah* (cube) is a square stone building in the centre. This is also called the *Qiblah*. The *Ka'bah* is an oblong massive structure, eighteen paces in length, fourteen in breadth, and some thirty-five in height. About seven feet from the ground, on the eastern side, there is a door which is opened only two or three times a year. It is built of grey Meccan stone, shaped into irregular-sized blocks, joined together with cement. The *Hajru'l-Aswad* is the black stone fixed in the corner of the *Ka'bah*. This stone, which is probably an aerolite, is about seven inches in diameter, and of an irregular oval shape. There is a tradition recorded by Ibn 'Abbás to the effect that it came down from Paradise, a stone whiter than milk; that it has been turned black by the sins of men who have touched it; that on the day of judgment it will have two eyes to see and a tongue to speak, and so will both see and bear witness in favour of those who have touched and kissed it.

³ It is said to have been rebuilt ten times. A full description will be found in Burton's "Pilgrimage to Madína and Mecca," vol. iii. ch. 26. It is far too long to quote, and it cannot be condensed. The 'Ulama consider the *Ka'bah* a sacred place. They quote the verse: "Verily the first house built for mankind (to worship in) is that of Beccah (Mecca)—Blessed and a salvation to human beings. Therein are manifest signs, even the standing-place of Abraham, and he who entereth is safe" (S. iii. 90). The word "therein" is said to mean Mecca, and the "manifest signs" the *Ka'bah*, which contains such marvels as the footprints on Abraham's plat-

he must say the Takbír and the Tahlíl. The Traditionalist 'Ata says that at this stage the Prophet used to lift up his hands and pray.

On entering the enclosure the Hají says the Labbaik, Takbír, and the Tahlíl, then a Du'a, followed by a Namaz of two rak'ats at the station of one of the four Imams. On arriving near the Hajru'l-Aswad (black stone) the Hají again says the Takbír and the Tahlíl, after which he kisses the stone. If, on account of the crowd, he cannot get near enough to do this, he must touch it with his hand or with a stick, and kiss that with which he has thus touched the stone. At the same time he says: "O Allah, (I do this) in Thy belief, and in verification of Thy book, and in pursuance of Thy Prophet's example—may Allah bless and preserve him. O accept Thou my supplication, diminish my obstacles, pity my humiliation, and graciously grant me Thy pardon." Then he again repeats the Takbír and the Tahlíl, the Darúd and the Ta'ríf (prayer for and praise of Muhammad). He then encompasses the Ka'bah seven times, saying, "In the name of Allah, and Allah is Omnipotent! I purpose to make the circuit seven times." This is called the Tawaf. The Hají runs round three times at a rapid pace, and four times he proceeds slowly. A permanent resident in Mecca does not perform the Tawaf. The Hají then presses his stomach, chest, and right cheek against the portion of the Ka'bah wall called Al-Multazim, and raising up his arms on high, says, "O Allah, Lord of

form, and is the spiritual safeguard of all who enter it. In addition, other "signs" are the preservation of the black stone, the miracles put forth to defend the House, the terrible death of the sacrilegious, and the fact that in the Flood the big fish did not eat the little fish in the Harám. Invalids recover their health by rubbing themselves against the Kiswat (the covering of the Ka'bah) and the black stone. One hundred thousand mercies descend on it every day, &c. Portions of the Kiswat are highly valued as markers of the Qurán. Waistcoats made of it are supposed to render the combatant invulnerable in battle.

Another traveller says: "The curtains of the doors and the screens of the four sides fetch, when sold, about £300; those of the inner shrine about £600." ("Pilgrimage to Mecca," by the Begum of Bhopal, p. 101.)

the Ancient House, free my neck from hell-fire, and preserve me from every evil deed; make me contented with that daily bread which Thou hast given to me, and bless me in all Thou hast granted!" He then says the Istighfar: "I beg pardon of Allah, the Most High, the Living, the Eternal, and to Him I repent."

The Hají next proceeds to the Maqám-i-Ibráhím¹ (place of Abraham) and then recites two rak'ats called Sunnatu't-Tawáf. Some water from the sacred well Zamzam² is then drunk, after which the Hájí returns to the Hajru'l-Aswad, and again kisses it.

Hájí Burton thus describes one shaut or circuit:—

"We began the prayer, 'O Alláh (I do this) in Thy belief and in verification of Thy Book, and in faithfulness to Thy covenant and after the example of Thy Prophet Muhammad. May Allah bless and preserve him!' till we reached the place Al-Multazim, between the corner of the black stone and the Ka'bah door. Here we ejaculated, 'O Allah, Thou hast rights, so pardon my transgressing them.' Opposite the door we repeated, 'O Allah, verily the house is Thy house, and the sanctuary Thy sanctuary, and the safeguard Thy safeguard, and this is the place of him who flees to Thee from (hell) fire.' At the building called Maqám-i-Ibráhím we said, 'O Allah, verily this is the place of Abraham, who took refuge with, and fled to Thee from the fire! O deny my flesh and blood, my skin and bones to the (eternal) flames.' As we paced slowly round the north or Irak corner of the Ka'bah we exclaimed, 'O Allah, verily I take refuge with Thee from polytheism, and disobedience, and hypocrisy, and evil conversation, and evil thoughts concerning family, and property, and progeny.' When we passed from the Mízab, or spout, we repeated the words, 'O Allah, verily I beg of Thee faith which shall not decline, and a certainty which shall not perish, and the good aid of Thy Prophet Muhammad—

¹ The Maqám-i-Ibráhím is a small building, supported by six pillars about eight feet high, four of which are surrounded from top to bottom by a fine iron railing, while the space between the two hinder pillars is left open; within the railing is a frame about five feet square, said to contain the sacred stone on which Abraham sat when he built the Ka'bah.

² It is said that when Ishmael was thirsty Gabriel stamped with his foot and a spring gushed forth. This is now the sacred well Zamzam.

may Alláh bless and preserve him ! O Alláh, shadow me in Thy shadow, on the day when there is no shadow by Thy shadow ; and cause me to drink from the cup of Thy Prophet Muhammad—may Allah bless and preserve him !—that pleasant draught, after which is no thirst to all eternity, O Lord of honour and glory.’ Turning to the west corner, or the Ruknu’sh Shamí, we exclaimed, ‘O Allah, make it an acceptable pilgrimage, and a forgiveness of sins, and a laudable endeavour, and a pleasant action (in Thy sight), and a store which perisheth not, O Thou Glorious, O Thou Pardon-er !’ This was repeated thrice, till we arrived at the Yemani, or southern corner, where the crowd being less importunate, we touched the wall with the right hand, after the example of the Prophet, and kissed the finger-tips. Between the south angle and that of the black stone, where our circuit would be completed, we said, ‘O Allah, verily I take refuge with Thee from infidelity, and I take refuge with Thee from want, and from the tortures of the tomb, and from the troubles of life and death. And I fly to Thee from ignominy in this world and the next, and implore Thy pardon for the present and the future. O Lord, grant to me in this life prosperity, and in the next life prosperity, and save me from the punishment of fire.’”

The next important step is the running between the Mounts Safa and Marwah. According to Bukharí, some of the Ansárs, on assuming the Ihram, were troubled because the idol Minát was near to Safa, and therefore they did not like to go there. They spoke to the Prophet about it, and then this verse came: “Verily Safa and Marwah are among the monuments of God ; whoever then maketh a pilgrimage to the temple or visiteth it, shall not be to blame if he go round about them both” (S. ii. 153). There is also a Tradition to prove its farz obligation. Thus: “‘Abid said one day to ‘Ayesha, ‘I am young ; tell me the meaning of the verse about Safa and Marwah. I do not see in it anything beyond the fact that I *may* go round them.’ ‘Ayesha replied, ‘It is not as you think ; had it been so, it would have been revealed thus: He shall not be to blame if he *do not* go round about them both.’” At first the custom was given up, for the instincts of the early Muslims showed

them it was wrong; but a time-serving policy prevailed. Thus 'Asim spoke to Anas about it, and he said, "We considered it an order in the days of ignorance (*i.e.*, pre-Islamic days), and when Islam came we gave it up, then this verse (S. ii. 153) came." Starting from Mount Safa, the Hají runs seven times between its summit and that of Mount Marwah. He runs, moving the shoulders, and with head erect, like soldiers charging in battle. The reason for this is, that the infidel Meccans mocked the Companions of the Prophet, and said that the climate of Madína had made them weak. This bold way of running was adopted to disprove the calumny, and so has become a Sunnat practice. The prayer to be said during the Sa'í (running) is: "O my Lord, pardon and pity, and pass over that (sin) which Thou knowest. Verily Thou knowest what is not known, and verily Thou art the most Glorious, the most Generous. O our Lord, grant us in both worlds prosperity, and save us from fire." The Hájí should also quote passages from the Qurán. This Sa'í must be done after an important Tawaf, either the first or a later one.

On the seventh day the Imam must preach in Mecca, and instruct the pilgrims in the ritual of the Hajj. He preaches again on the ninth and eleventh days.

On the eighth day the Hají goes to Mina, a place three miles distant from Mecca, where, with all the other Hajís, he says the usual Namáz, and there spends the night.¹ This is a Sunnat observance.

On the morning of the ninth day, starting after the Šalátu'l-Fajr, the Hají goes to Mount 'Arafat.² On arriving

¹ "Many find this inconvenient, and so pass on to 'Arafat during the afternoon of the eighth day."—BURTON.

² The following legend is current about 'Arafát. "When our parents forfeited heaven by eating wheat, which deprived them of their primeval purity, they were cast down upon earth. The serpent descended at Ispahán, the peacock at Cabul, Satan at Bilbays, Eve upon 'Arafát, and Adam at Ceylon. The latter determining to seek his wife, began a journey, to which the earth owes its present mottled appearance. Wherever he placed his foot—which was large—a town arose; between the strides will always be country. Wandering for many years, he came to the Mountain of

there he says, "O God, I turn to Thee, I put my trust on Thee, I desire Thee; pardon my sin, accept my Hajj, show mercy to me, supply my need in 'Arafat; Thou art powerful over all." He then says Labbaik, the Takbír, and the Tahlíl. The noontide and the afternoon Namaz are said together there: they are thus shortened. This done, he should stand upon the mountain near to the place the Prophet is said to have occupied. This is called the Wuqúf (standing), a necessary part of the Hajj. He must also listen to the sermon delivered by the Imam, explaining what still remains of the ritual of the Hajj, *i.e.*, how the Hajís are to stand in Muzdalífah, to throw the stones in Miná, to make the sacrifice, &c. All the time the Hají should constantly shout out the Talbíyah and the Tahlíl, and weep bitterly. He then proceeds to Muzdalífah, a place situated about half-way between Mina and 'Arafát, where he should pass a portion of the night. Whilst there, he must say the Salatu'l-Maghrib and the Salatu'l-'Isha together, for Bukharí records how the Prophet, on arriving there, "said the Salatu'l-Maghrib; then each man made his camel sit down, and the Salatu'l-'Isha was said." It is thus a Sunnat practice, and is an illustration of the term Sunnat-i-Filí. After a visit to the mosque Masharu'l Haram, he should collect seven small pebbles and proceed to Mina.

When the morning of the tenth day, the 'Ídu'z-zuha, or, as it is sometimes called, the 'Ídu'l-Azha, arrives, he again goes to Mina, where there are three different pillars, called respectively the Jamratu'l-Akabah, commonly known as the Shaitanu'l-Kabír¹ (great devil), the Wasta, or middle pillar, and the Al Ula, or first one. Holding the jamár, or pebble, between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, the Hají throws it a distance of not less than fifteen feet and

Mercy, where our common mother was continually calling upon his name, and their recognition gave the place the name of 'Arafát. They lived here till death took place."—BURTON.

¹ "The Shaitanu'l-Kabír is a dwarf buttress of rude masonry about eight feet high by two and a half broad, placed against a rough wall of stones."—BURTON.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

by his time-serving policy, adopted to gain the Meccans to his side, has confirmed an idolatrous practice which otherwise would probably have been extinct long ago. Şafá and Marwah were hills held in superstitious reverence by the Meccans. The early Muslims had some doubt about retaining them as sacred places: then came the revelation to the Prophet, "Safa and Marwah are among the monuments of God; whosoever then maketh a pilgrimage to the temple or visiteth it, shall not be to blame if he go round about them both" (S. ii. 153).

The 'Umrah can be made at any time except the eighth, ninth, and tenth of Zu'l-Hijjah. It is usually done before the pilgrims start homewards.¹ Its ceremonies differ but slightly from the Hajj. The Ihram must be put on, and the obligations of abstinence which it entails must be observed. The usual course is then to make the Ziárat, or visit to the tomb of the Prophet at Madína. Henceforth the pilgrim assumes the honourable title of Hájí, and so is, ever after, a person of some consequence among the community in which he dwells. Among the Sunní Musalman the Hajj cannot be performed by proxy, though it is esteemed a "good work" if some one who can afford it sends a pilgrim who otherwise could not go. The Shí'ahs, however, seem to allow it to be done by proxy.

It is certainly very curious to find the old pagan customs, superstitious and silly, of the Hajj incorporated into a religion which professes to be monotheistic in principle and iconoclastic in practice. The explanation probably is that Muhammad was an ardent Arab patriot, and in his great anxiety to unite the Arab tribes into a nation, strong to resist their surrounding foes, he could not afford to do away with a centre and a custom so dear to all Arabs as the Ka'bah and the Hajj. It was the one thing the scattered tribes had in common, and the

¹ The Mu'tazila writer Nizám says that the Khalíf 'Umr (Omar) forbade the joining of the 'Umrah with the Hajj. (Sharastání in "Milal wa Niḥal," p. 40.)

one thing which appealed to the national sentiment. It was a compromise, well adapted at the time to secure the allegiance of the Arabs to Islam, by giving a national character to it; but it has been a source of weakness since, for its continued observance emphasises the great Islamic principle that laws, regulations, and customs suited for the Arabs of the seventh century are binding on Muslims everywhere in the nineteenth. Christianity took just the opposite course. It quickly freed itself from the narrow limitations of Judaism. It left Jewish ceremonies and circumcision behind in Palestine. It never aimed at being a national religion, and so became naturally a universal one. Thus it can flourish under all forms of civil government, for it is dependent on none. It exists independently of the state, and survives all forms of political organisation.

The constant reference to the Prophet's sayings and practice, as an authority for many of the details of the *irkan-i-dín*, shows how largely Islam is based on the *Sunnat*.¹ With regard to the differences of opinion which

¹ A remarkable confirmation of all I have said on the fixed and formal nature of Islám, and of the authority of the *Sunnat*, is afforded in a recent issue of a Muslim newspaper published in Cairo. Describing the opening of a new mosque in London, the editor refers to some speeches made by some Musalmán gentlemen on the occasion, and says:—"Both seem to have spoken at the opening proceedings in favour of adapting Islám to European ideas. I do not know what meaning they attach to the phrase, but I do know that no adaptation or alteration of Islám will be accepted by any Muslim people. Islám as a religion, as a guide to man in life, in his duties to God and man, is divine and perfect. To say that it needs adaptation is to say that it is neither divine nor perfect, and no Muslim can or will admit either assumption. Islám as it is is perfect, and as wonderfully adapted to the needs of man in England or in the Arctic regions as it is to the Bedowins of the Arabian desert, and the fact that it is so is one of the striking proofs of its divine origin. It is written, 'There is no change in the words of God,' and therefore the Qurán and the *Sunnat* are for ever and for all men unchangeable."—*Egyptian Herald*, February 22, 1896, p. 4.

This statement proves most conclusively (1) the unalterable nature of the law and dogmas of Islam, (2) the inspiration of the *Sunnat* called "The words of God," (3) the co-ordinate authority of the *Sunnat* with the Quran

the great Imáms hold on some of the details, it is most difficult to decide which side holds the correct view. Such opinions are always based on some Tradition, the value of which, if disputed, it is almost impossible to determine. It is sometimes said in praise of Musalmans that they are not priest-ridden; but no people in the world are so Tradition-ridden, if one may use such an expression. Until this chain of superstition is broken there can be no progress and no enlightenment; but if ever it is so broken, such an Islam will cease to be the Islam, for this foundation of the Faith and the edifice erected on it are so welded together that the undermining of the one will be the fall of the other.

as a basis of Islám. Nothing that I have said in this and preceding chapters on these points is at all stronger than this latest published opinion from a high authority in the Muslim world.

NOTE TO CHAPTER V

THE following Fatvá was publicly given in the Great Mosque, Triplicane, Madras, February 13th, 1880:—

“In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.”

QUESTION.

“O ‘Ulamá of the religion and Muftís of the enlightened Law, what is your opinion in this matter? A person having translated a juz (one-thirtieth part) of the noble Quran into the Hindustani language, has printed it. The translation is defective; moreover, the Arabic text is not given. In order to give the translation the same authority as the original, he has retained the usual signs and marks of the Arabic editions: such as, toí, qaf, jím, lá, mím, and O.¹ At the end of the juz he has added a translation of the Tashshahud, Qanúd, Sana, Ta‘awwuz, Tasmí‘, Tashibat, Rukú‘, and Sujud, and has said that all these must be read in Hindustani. He further states that in the translation he has retained the rhythm of the original, and that in eloquence and style it is equal to the Arabic. He has also added rubrical directions as to the ritual of the Namáz, and has stated that to those who do not know Arabic it is a wajib and a farz duty to recite the translation; otherwise they commit sin and the Namáz is vain. As regards the past, he considers that the ignorant are forgiven, but he maintains that the ‘Ulamá of these days must answer for the neglect they show in not telling the people to use translations of the Quran. Further, in support of his views he adduces a Hadís-i-sahih, according to which the Prophet said to a Companion, Salman-i-Farsí: ‘Read a translation of the Quran in the Namáz.’ He claims, as on his side, the four great Imams. He himself understands Arabic, yet he says his Namaz in Hindustani, and influences others to do

¹ For an explanation of these words see the Appendix on ‘Ilm-i-Tajwid.

likewise. He has been spoken to, but he takes no heed, and strives to spread his sect all over India.

“Now, what is the order of the noble Law with regard to such a person, and what is the decree in the case of those who follow him, or who circulate his opinions, or who consider him a religious man and a guide, or who consider the translation to which reference has been made to be the Holy Quran, or who teach it to their children? O learned men, state the Law in this matter and merit a good reward.”

THE ANSWER.

“After praising God, and after imploring His mercy and peace on Muhammad, be it known that the person referred to is an infidel, an atheist, and a wanderer from the truth. He also causes others to wander. His assertion that his opinions are in accordance with those of the four Imams is utterly false, because according to Imam Shafi‘í, Imam Malik, and Imam Hanbal it is illegal to use a translation of the Quran when saying the Namaz, whether the worshipper is ignorant of Arabic or not. Thus Imam Navarí, a disciple of Shafi‘í, says: ‘It is unlawful in any case to use Persian¹ in the Namáz.’ Faqí ‘Alí, a disciple of Malik, says: ‘Persian is unlawful.’ To these opinions Káfi, a disciple of Hanbal, adds his testimony: ‘To recite in the Namaz from a translation of the Quran is unlawful.’ Moreover, from the Quran itself, the recital of it in Arabic is proved to be a divine command (farz). The term Quran, too, means an Arabic Quran, for God speaks of it as a revelation in Arabic. The words ‘recite so much of the Quran as may be easy to you’ prove the duty of reciting it; whilst the words ‘an Arabic Quran have we sent it down’ show that the Qurán to be used is an Arabic one. Imám Abú Hanífa and his disciples, the Sahibain (Imam Muhammad and Imam Abu Yusuf), consider that, if a person can recite only a short verse in Arabic, it is not lawful for such an one to use a translation. If he cannot read the Arabic character, he must learn by heart such a sentence as ‘Praise be to God, Lord of the people.’ Until he learns this he may use a translation.²

¹ Persian was the foreign language with which the early Muslims were brought most into contact; but the objection applies equally to any other language.

² A concession of no practical value, as any one with the power of speech could learn these words in a very short time.

In the Tanwíru'l-Absár it is written: 'It is a farz duty to read one verse, and to learn it by heart is farz-i-'ain' (*i.e.*, incumbent on all). In the Masíhu'l-Azhar it is written: 'If a person says the Namaz in a language other than Arabic, he is a madman or an atheist.' With regard to the statement made by Imam Abu Hanífa that a person might use for a time a translation, it is well known that he afterwards recalled that opinion. The statement made by the person complained of regarding Sulmán-i-Farsí is not correct. In the Nihayah (commentary on the Hidayah) it is written that some Persians wrote to Sulmán, and requested him to send them a Persian translation of Suratu'l-Fatihah. He complied with their request, and they used it in the Namaz *until they could pronounce Arabic properly*. The Prophet on hearing of this circumstance made no remark. This account, however, is not trustworthy; but granting that it is true, all that it proves is that, until some Arabic words can be remembered, a translation may be used. No Imam has ever allowed that to read a translation is farz or wajib. So if the person referred to says that it is farz to read his own translation, then it follows that to read the original Arabic will not be farz, but will be unlawful. Now such an opinion is infidelity. The person is a Káfir, for he tries to make out that the 'Ulama of all preceding ages, who have instructed the people, from the days of the Prophet till now to read Arabic in the Namaz, are sinners. Further, he rejects the statement made by learned canonists and listens now to no advice. He reads his translation in the Namaz and causes others to read it. He boasts that his translation is equal in style to the original. He has translated the Du'a-i-qunút, Saná, and the Tasbíhat of the Ruku' and Sujud, and has said that these translations should be used in the Namaz. Thus it is plain that he wants to abolish the use of Arabic in the prayers. The result of such a course would be that soon a number of different translations would be circulated, and the text, like that of the Taurait and the Injíl, would be corrupted. In the Fatawa-i-'Alamgírí it is written: 'Whosoever considers that the unlawful is lawful or *vice versa* is a Kafir.' 'If any one without apparent cause has enmity with one of the 'Ulama, his orthodoxy is doubtful.' 'A man who, after committing a fault, declines to repent, though requested to do so, is an infidel.' In the Tahqíq-i-Sharh-i-Husainí it is written: 'To translate the Quran into Persian and to read that is unlawful.' In the Fatawá-

i-Maḡlúbu'l-Múminín it is said : 'Whosoever intends to write the Qurán in Persian must be strictly forbidden.' In the Itqán it is written : 'According to Ijma', it is wrong to speak of the Quran as having rhymes.'¹ In the Fatawa-i-Tatar Khaná it is said : 'To translate the Arabic into Persian is an act of infidelity.'

Our decision then is that the usual salutations should not be made to this person. If he dies, he must not be buried in a Musalman cemetery. His marriages are void and his wives are at liberty, according to the rule laid down in the Miftahu's-Sa'dat. To doubt of the infidelity of such a person is itself infidelity. As by the proofs of the law here adduced the 'Ulamá have declared such a person to be an infidel, it follows that all those who assist him or who consider his claim just, or who circulate his opinions, or who consider him to be a religious person and a fit guide for men, are also infidels. To send children to be taught by him, to purchase newspapers which advocate his views, and to continue to read his translation is unlawful. In the Fatawá-i-'Alamgírí, in the chapter entitled Murtaḡ, it is written : 'Whosoever has doubts of the present infidelity and of the future punishment of such an one is an infidel.' God says in the Quran : 'Be helpful to one another according to goodness and piety, but be not helpful for evil and malice ; and fear ye God' (S. v. 3). In another place God says, 'Whosoever acts not according to God's order is an infidel.' Now, what greater disobedience can there be than this, that a person should say that the recital of the Arabic Quran in the Namaz is not lawful, and that the recital of his own Hindustani translation of it is incumbent (farz)? Our duty is to give information to Musalmans, and God is the best Knower."

This was written by a learned Maulaví, and signed by twenty-four other leading Maulavís of the city of Madras.

This Fatva, an authentic copy of which was for some time in my possession, is of very considerable importance, as showing how unyielding the law of Islam is to the varied circumstances of the countries in which it exists. The law enjoining the Arabic language as a medium of worship was suited for the Arab people, and the principle involved would seem to be that the vernacular language of a country should be used by the Muslims of that

¹ This is because by so doing it would seem to ascribe to it similarity to human composition.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

CHAPTER VI

THE FEASTS AND FASTS OF ISLÁM

I. MUHARRAM.—Muharram, the name of the first month of the Muhammadan year, is also the name given to the days of mourning spent by the Shí'ahs in commemoration of the martyrdoms of 'Alí and of his two sons, Hasan and Husain. The historical events thus referred to have been already described in the third chapter, so that it is only necessary now to give an account of the ceremonies connected with the Muharram. They differ slightly in different countries. The following is a description of an Indian Muharram.

Some days previous to the feast, the 'Áshúr Khána (literally, ten-day house) is prepared. As soon as the new moon appears, the people gather together in the various 'Ashur Khanas, and offer a Fatihah over some sherbet or some sugar in the name of Husain. The Fatihah concludes thus: "O God, grant the reward of this to the soul of Husain." The sherbet and sugar are then given to the poor. Then they mark a spot for the Áláwa, or hole for the bonfire which is to be lit. Every night during the festival these fires are kindled, and the people, both old and young, fence across the fire with swords or sticks, and jump about calling out "'Alí! Noble Husain! Noble Husain! Bridegroom! Bridegroom! Friend!"

The 'Áshúr Khána is generally a temporary structure, or some large hall fitted up for the occasion. Sometimes the walls are draped with black cloth, bordered with texts of the Quran written in a large and elegant style. The place

is brilliantly illuminated. On one side stands the Ta'ziyahs or Tabúts, structures made of bamboos covered with tinsel and profusely ornamented, and often very costly. They are intended to represent the mausoleum erected on the plains of Karbalá over the remains of Husain. Sometimes the Ta'ziyah is constructed to represent the Prophet's tomb at Madína. At the back of the Ta'ziyahs several articles are placed, similar to those supposed to have been used by Husain at Karbala,—a turban of gold, a rich sword, a shield, a bow and arrow. The Mimbar or pulpit is so placed that the speaker can face Mecca. The 'Alams or standards, which are commonly made of copper and brass, though occasionally of gold or of silver, are placed against the walls. The usual standard is that of a hand placed on a pole. This is emblematic of the five members who compose the family of the Prophet, and is the special standard of the Shí'ahs. These standards have many different names, such as the standard of the palm of 'Alí, the Lady Fatima's standard, the standard of the Horse-shoe, to represent the shoe of Husain's swift horse, and others too numerous to mention. Mirrors, chandeliers, and coloured lanterns add lustre to the scene.

Every evening large crowds of people assemble in these 'Ashur Khanas. In the centre, on a slightly raised platform, a band of singers chant the Marsiyah, an elegiac poem in honour of the martyred Husain. It is a monotonous performance, lasting about an hour; but it has a wonderful effect on the audience, who, seated on the ground, listen patiently and attentively. At each pause the hearers beat their breasts, and say "Husain! Husain!" Real or simulated grief often finds expression in groans and tears, though the more violent expression of the anguish felt is reserved for a later ceremony.

This over, the Waqi'a Khan (literally, narrator of events) ascends the Mimbar or pulpit, and seats himself on the top, or on a lower step. He proceeds to relate the historical facts, adding many curious stories gathered from the vast

heap of Traditions¹ which have cast such a halo of glory around the martyr. Sometimes he becomes very excited, and the audience is stirred up to great enthusiasm. I once passed an evening in an 'Áshúr Khana. The first Waqí'a Khan was a Persian, who delivered a very eloquent oration in his own tongue. It was calm but effective. He was succeeded by an eloquent old gentleman, who spoke rapidly in Hindustani at the top of his voice, then rose up, ran down the steps, and casting off his turban, rushed in and out amongst the audience, vociferating vigorously all the while. The effect was marvellous; old and venerable men wept like little children, whilst from the adjoining Zanana was heard the bitter weeping of the women, who, though not exposed to view, could hear all that was said. After a while the assembly rose and formed two lines facing each other. A boy then chanted a few words, and the whole assembly began, slowly at first, to sway their bodies to and fro, calling out " 'Alí! 'Alí! Husain! Husain!" Each one then began to beat his breast vigorously. The excitement at last became intense, and the men in the rows looked like so many wild creatures.

In some cases blood has been known to flow from the breast, so severe is the self-inflicted beating.² This continues till they are well-nigh exhausted, when the whole company goes away, to repeat the performance over again in some other 'Áshúr Khána. A devout person will visit several

¹ I give one or two as an illustration of the extraordinary things that are said and believed:—"When Al Husain was murdered, the world stood still for seven days, and the sun upon the walls appeared as a saffron-coloured sheet, and the stars struck one upon the other. The sun was eclipsed that day, and the horizon was red for six months after. Not a stone was turned in Jerusalem that day but blood was found beneath it." (As-Syuti's "History of the Khalífs," p. 211.)

² The following is a description of Muharram as seen in the Persian quarter of Erzeroum:—"The devotees, clothed in white robes, go in procession through the city at nightfall, carrying swords, with which they gash their heads. At first the wounds are slight, but as the actors become excited, they are dangerously severe. The ghastliness of the sight is naturally increased by the contrast between the blood-stains and the white garments." ("Turkish-Armenia," by Rev. H. T. Tozer, p. 411.)

each evening. During the day some pious Shí'ahs recite the Quran.

During this season women who can read visit the Zanánas and chant Mursiyahs to the ladies of the harem, by whom this season of Muḥarram is celebrated with great earnestness.

For the first six days nothing else takes place, but on the seventh day the 'Alam-i-Qásim is taken out in public procession. This is to represent the marriage of Qásim, the son of Hasan, to the favourite daughter of Husain, just before the death of the latter. The event is now commemorated by the bearing of Qásim's standard in procession. It is usually borne by a man on horseback. If it is carried by a man on foot, he reels about like a drunken man to show his grief. The crowd shout out "Bridegroom! Bridegroom!" After perambulating the principal thoroughfares, the people bring the standard back to its own 'Áshur Khana. As the standard which represents Qásim is supposed to be a martyr, it is then laid down, covered over, and treated as a corpse. Lamentation is made over it as for one dead. Sherbet is then produced, and a Fátihah is said, after which the standard is again set up in its own place.

The Neza, a lance or spear with a lime on the top, to recall to remembrance the fact that Yazíd caused Husain's head to be thus carried about, is taken in procession from one place to another. The Na'l Sáhib (literally, Mr. Horse-shoe) is the representation of a horse-shoe, and is meant to remind the people of the swift horse of Husain. Vows are frequently made to this standard. Thus a woman may say to it, "Should I through your favour be blessed with offspring, I shall make it run in your procession." If she attains her wish, the child, when seven or eight years old, has a small parasol placed in its hand and is made to run after the Na'l Şahib.

If two 'Alams or standards meet, they embrace each other, that is, they are made to touch. A Fatihah is then said, and the respective processions pass on their way. The

Buráq, supposed to be a fac-simile of the horse sent by Gabriel for Muḥammad to make the night ascent to heaven, is also taken out.

On the evening before the tenth day, which, according to the Muslim mode of computing time, is the tenth night, the whole of the Ta'ziyahs and the 'Alams are taken out in procession. It is a scene of great confusion, for men and boys disguised in all sorts of quaint devices run about. It is the carnival of the Musalman year.

On the following day, the 'Áshúra, they kindle the fires in the Aláwas, and say a Fatihah in each 'Ashúr Khana. After this the 'Alams and the Ta'ziyahs are taken away to a large open spot near water, which represents the plain of Karbalá. Another Fatihah is said, and the ornaments and decorations are taken off the Ta'ziyahs, the frameworks of which are then cast into the water.¹ Sometimes they are reserved for use the following year. The water reminds the people of the parching thirst which Husain felt before his death. Only the 'Alams, not the Buráqs nor the Na'l Sahibs, are immersed. The people then burn incense, recite the Marsiyahs, return home, and say a Fatihah over the 'Alams, Buraqs, &c. On the evening of the 12th, they sit up all night reading the Quran, reciting Marsiyahs and verses in praise of Husain. On the 13th day a quantity of food is cooked, which, when a Fatihah has been said over it, is distributed to the poor. Some very pious Shí'ahs celebrate the fortieth day after the first of Muharram. It is on this day, according to some accounts, that the head and body of Husain were reunited. It is known as the 'Íd-i-sar wa tan (head-and-body feast).

The Sunnís do not, except as spectators, take any part in the Muharram ceremonies. Indeed, where the ruling power is not strong, there is often much ill-feeling aroused by the enthusiasm excited for all that concerns 'Alí and his family.

¹ During the first ten days they are supposed to contain the bodies of the martyrs, but now being empty, the Ta'ziyahs become mere ordinary frames, and can be destroyed. ("Qanun-i-Islam," p. 146.)

The three first Khalífs are often well abused, and that no Sunní can bear with patience. The breach between the Sunní and the Shí'ah is very wide, and the annual recurrence of the Muharram feast tends to keep alive the distinction.

The tenth day, the 'Ashúra, is, however, a Sunnat feast, and, as such, is observed by all Sunnís. It is considered to be a most excellent day, for on it God is said to have created Adam and Eve, His throne, heaven, hell, the seat of judgment, the tablet of decree, the pen, fate, life, and death. The Sunnís about three o'clock in the afternoon of this day prepare sherbet and khichrí—a dish composed of boiled rice and pulse mixed with clarified butter and spices. A Fatihah in the name of Husain and of those who were martyred with him is then said. A Namaz of some nafl rak'ats is said, and sometimes a du'á is added. On this day also they go to the burial-grounds and place flowers on, and say Fatihah over the graves of their friends.

Indian Musalmáns have copied in their feast many Hindu ceremonies. The procession of the Ta'ziyahs and the casting of them into the water is very similar to the procession at the Hindu feast of the Durga Puja,¹ when on the tenth day the Hindus cast the idol Durga, the wife of Siva, into the Ganges. The oblations offered at different shrines are similar to those offered by the Hindus, such as rice, clarified butter, and flowers.

The Muhammadan form of worship was too simple for a country in which an allegorical and idolatrous religion predominated, addressing itself to the senses and the imaginations rather than to the understanding and the heart; consequently the Musalman festivals have borrowed from it a variety of pagan rites and a pompous and splendid ceremonial. While this has done much to add to the superstition of the Musalmáns in India, it has no doubt softened their intolerant spirit. Though the Sunnís consider the Shí'ah observances as impious, they look on with the contempt of indifference.

¹ This feast is known in South India as the Dassara. The idol is thrown into a tank.

The fact that the British Government punishes alike all who break the peace may have something to do with this. Still the Sunnī and the Shí'ah in India live on much better terms, and have more respect for each other, than the Turk has for the Persian or the Persian for the Turk. Thus Wálí begins one of his poems with a brief encomium on the three first Khalífs, and then bestows an eulogy on 'Alí and his sons Ḥasan and Ḥusain, whom he calls "Imáms of the world."

The following is a prayer used in a Fátihah for 'Alí:—

"I pray, That God may deign, for the sake of that pure soul, the ornament of the book of nature, the first of mortals after the Prophet, the star of mortals, the most precious jewel of the jewel-box of virtue, the lord of the high and the low, he who occupies a distinguished place on the bridge of eternity, the mihrab¹ of the faith, he who sits upon the throne of the palace of the law, the ship of the sea of religion, the sun of the firmament of glory, the power of the arm of the Prophet, he who has merited access to the tabernacle of the Divine Unity, the most profound of all religious people, the resplendent brightness of the marvels of God, the father of victory, the Imam of the gate of heaven, the cup-bearer of the water of Kausar, he who has merited the praise of Muhammad, he who is the best of men, the holy martyr, the chief of Believers, the Imam of the Faithful, 'Alí, son of Abu Talib, 'Alí the victorious lion of the Most High—I pray that God, for the sake of this holy Khalíf, may favourably hear the vows which I offer to Him."

The following prayer occurs in a Fátihah said for Ḥasan and Ḥusain:—

"I pray, That the eternal God may deign to accept the vows which I make for the repose of the glorious souls of the two brave Imams, the martyrs well-beloved by God, the innocent victims of wickedness, the blessed Abu Muḥammad Al-Ḥasan and Abu

¹ The Mihráb is a niche in a wall which indicates the position of Mecca. The face is always turned to it when prayers are said, so that the expression in the prayer means that 'Alí is to be the object towards which the Faithful look.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

hastened to offer to God their vows and prayers for the repose of the Prophet's soul." Others, however, maintain that he died on the second of the month, and, as there is some doubt on the subject, many persons make a *Fatihah* every day, from the first to the twelfth of the month inclusive. Those who keep the feast as *Bara Wafat* observe the ceremony called *Sandal* on the previous evening, and the 'Urs, that is, the prayers and the oblations, on the twelfth. The *Sandal* consists in making a perfumed embrocation from sandal-wood. This is then placed in a vessel and carried in procession to the 'Id-gah,¹ or to the place where *Fatihah* will be said. It is then distributed to the people. It is a sort of public notice on the eve of a feast-day or of a saint's day, that on the morrow the usual prayers and offerings will be made in such and such a place. On the morning of the twelfth, the *Quran* is read in the mosque or in private houses: then food is cooked and *Fátihahs* are said. The *Wahhabis* do not observe this day, as, in their opinion, it was not kept by the *Companions* of the Prophet.

Some persons possess a *Qadam-i-Rasúl*, or footstep of the Prophet. This is a stone with the impression of a footstep on it.² It is a sacred thing, and on this day the place in which it is kept is elegantly decorated. When a company has assembled, some persons appointed for the purpose repeat the story of the birth, miracles, and death of the Prophet. Portions of the *Quran* are read and the *Darúd* is said.

¹ The 'Id-gáh is usually built outside of the town, and consists of a long wall of masonry with two minarets and a large raised open court. There is a *Mihráb* in the wall, but no proper *mimbar* or pulpit, three raised steps doing duty for it. Sometimes, however, a mosque is used as an 'Id-gáh.

² Tradition records that the Prophet, after the battle of *Ohud*, was one day ascending a hill in a rage. The heat of his passion was such that the mountain softened into the consistence of wax, and retained, some say eighteen, others forty impressions of his feet. When rebuked by *Gabriel* for his anger, the Prophet inquired the cause of his rebuke. *Gabriel* told him to look around. The Prophet, seeing these impressions of his feet on the stones, was astonished. His anger instantly ceased (*Qánún-i-Islám*, p. 152).

In Madras, and in some other parts, it is more customary to keep this day, not as the anniversary of the death of the Prophet, but as the "Jashn-i-milad-i-Sharíf," the "Feast of the noble birth." The practical duties are the same. Instead of the Qadam-i-Rasúl, the Ásar-i-Sharíf is exhibited. This relic is supposed to be a real portion of the hair of the Prophet's beard. It is said to possess the miraculous property of growing again when a portion is broken off. On this day it is put into rose-water, which those present then drink and rub on their eyes. Great virtue is attached to this proceeding. In the Ásar Khana or relic-house, Fatihahs and Darúds are repeated. The observance of this festival is neither wajib nor sunnat, but mustahab. It is generally kept, and it is a very rare thing to meet a person who does not believe in the miraculous growth of the Ásar-i-Sharíf.

4. SHAB BARÁT.—This feast, the name of which signifies the "Night of the record," is held on the fourteenth day of the month Sha'bán. The 'Arafah or vigil is kept on the preceding day.¹ It is commonly, but erroneously, called Shab-i-Barat instead of Shab Barat.

The word Barat signifies a book or record. It is said that God on this night registers in the Barat all the actions men are to perform during the ensuing year. On the thirteenth day food is prepared for the poor and a Fatihah for the benefit of deceased ancestors and relatives is said over it. When all in the house are assembled, the Suratu'l-Fatihah is read once, the Suratu'l-Iklas (cxii.) three times, the Áyatu'l-Kursí once, and then the Darúd. After this a prayer is offered, in which God is asked to transfer the reward of this service, and of the charity shown in the gift of food to the poor, to the souls of deceased relatives and friends of this family. This petition is offered in the name of the Prophet. The men then go to the mosque, and after the Salatu'l-'Isha they repeat a number of nail rak'ats. This over, the Súratu'l-Ya Sín is read three times.

¹ The Baqr-'Íd is the only other feast that has an 'Arafah.

The first time, the intention is that the worshipper may have a long life; the second time, that his means of subsistence may be increased; the third time, that he may be protected from evil. The Suratu'l-Dukhan (xliv.) is then read with the same intentions, after which any other portions may be read. Those present then rise and go to the various cemeteries. On the way they purchase flowers to place on the graves. A Fatihah is then said for the benefit of the Arwah-i-Qubur, the souls of those there buried. The very pious spend the whole night in going from one cemetery to another.

These observances are neither farz nor sunnat, but nawáfil, works of supererogation. Still though they are bid'at, they are esteemed good, and so are called Bid'at-i-Hasana, or "excellent innovation." The general merry-making of the fourteenth day has no religious signification. The night of the fifteenth is the Guy Fawkes night of Islam. Large sums of money are spent on fireworks, of which more are let off on this feast than at any other.

The following prayer occurs in the Fatihah: "O our God, by the merits of the Apostleship of Muhammad, grant that the lamps which are lit up on this holy night may be for the dead a pledge of the light eternal, which we pray Thee to shed on them. O God, admit them, we beseech thee, unto the abode of eternal felicity."

5. RAMAZAN AND 'IDU'L-FITR.—From the earliest days of Islam this month has been held in the greatest esteem by Muslims, for it was in this month that Muhammad used to retire for meditation, year after year, to the cave of Hira, situated on a low hill some few miles distant from Mecca. In the second year of the Hijrah it was ordained that the month of Ramazán should be kept as a fast (S. ii. 181). The Muslims had hitherto observed as the principal fast the Áshura, the tenth day of Muharram. This fast was probably connected with the Jewish fast on the tenth day of the seventh month. "Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it

shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls," &c. (Leviticus xxiii. 27). When Muhammad first went to Madína, he hoped to win over the Jews to his side; but after he failed, he took every opportunity of making Islam differ as much as possible from Judaism. This was the reason why the Qiblah was changed, and that, in the second year of his residence at Madína, the fast of Ramazan was appointed. The reasons assigned by learned Muslims for the selection of this month are that in Ramazan God gave to the previous prophets the revelations connected with their names, and that in this month the Quran was sent down from the Secret Tablet in the seventh heaven to the first or lowest one, and that on the Laylutu'l-Qadr, or "Night of power," the first revelation was made to Muhammad. To illustrate the sacredness of this month the Prophet used to say that in it "all the gates of Paradise are open, and the gates of hell are shut, and the devils are chained by the leg." "Only those who observe it will be allowed to enter by the gate of heaven called Rayyan." Those who keep the fast "will be pardoned all their past venial sins."

In making the fast one for the day, and not for the night, Muhammad doubtless had reference to the verse: "God wisheth you ease, but wisheth not your discomfort" (S. ii. 181).

The special ceremonies connected with the Ramazan are the Taráwih Namaz and 'Itikaf (retirement). In the Sahihu'l-Bukharí it is said that 'Itikaf was kept as a ceremony by the Pagan Arabs before the days of the Prophet. "Thus 'Umr binu'l Khattab said, 'O Prophet, certainly I vowed in the days of ignorance that I would perform 'Itikaf at night in the Musjidu'l-Haram.' The Prophet replied, 'Fulfil thy vow and keep 'itikaf at night.'" The Tarawih prayers have been described already. Each night in Ramazan one-thirtieth part (sípara) of the Quran is recited in the mosque. The duty of performing the 'Itikáf is a Sunnatu'l-mukada, a very strict duty. The Mu'takif,

one who makes 'Itikáf, must remain apart in a mosque used for public services, and there meditate. Bukharí says that the Prophet made 'Itikaf the last ten days of each Ramazan, and that the practice was continued by his wives after his death. Usually a man should thus sit and meditate one of the days between the twentieth and the thirtieth of Ramazán. If his meditation is disturbed by any illegal interruption, another day should be devoted to it. Some theologians hold that 'Itikaf is farz-i-kifayah, that is, if one person of a community does it, the obligation does not rest on the others. If, however, a person makes a vow in Ramazan, then 'Itikaf is considered wajib. 'Itikaf can be performed at any time other than the last ten days of Ramazan, but then it is only mustahab, a work of supererogation. All the sects except the Shaff'ites hold that the Mu'takif must fast with intention. He must not go out of the mosque except for necessary purposes, and for making the legal wazú and ghusl. At night he may eat, drink, and sleep in the mosque: acts quite unlawful at other times. He may speak with others on religious matters, and if a man of business, he may give orders with regard to the purchase and sale of merchandise,¹ but on no account must any goods be brought to him. It is highly meritorious for him to read the Quran in an audible voice. By such an act he becomes a man of penetration, whose words are as powerful as a sharp sword.²

When the thirty days have passed the fast is broken. This act is called Iftár, and the first day on which food is taken is called the 'Idu'l-Fitr—the "Feast of the breaking of the fast." On that day the Sadaqah is given before the Namáz is said in the mosque. The Sadaqah of the 'Idu'l-Fitr is confined to Muslims: no other persons can receive these alms. In South India the Sadaqah consists of a gift

¹ This is based on the following tradition:—One day 'Áysha, when in the mosque, was speaking about the purchase of a female slave. The Prophet said, "Buy her and set her free," and then ascended the pulpit (Sahíhu'l-Bukharí).

² That is, his blessing or his curse takes effect (Qánun-i-Islám p. 170).

of sufficient rice to feed one person. When this has been done, the people go to the mosque, saying, "God is great! God is great!" The Namaz is like that of a Friday, except that only two rak'ats are said, and the Khutbah which is said after the Namaz is sunnat; whereas the Friday Khutbah is said before the farz rak'ats, and is itself of farz obligation. After hearing the sermon, the people disperse, visit each other, and thoroughly enjoy themselves.

A very usual form of the Khutbah of the 'Īdu'l-Fitr which is preached in Arabic is as follows:—

SERMON ON THE 'ĪDU'L-FITR.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Holy is God, who has opened the door of mercy for those who fast, and in mercy and kindness has granted them the right of entrance into heaven. God is greater than all. There is no God save Him. God is great! God is great! and worthy of praise. It is of His grace and favour that He rewards those who keep the fast. He has said: "I will give in the future world houses and palaces, and many excellent blessings to those who fast." God is great! God is great! Holy is He who certainly sent the Quran to our Prophet in the month of Ramazan, and who sends angels to grant peace to all true believers. God is great! and worthy of all praise. We praise and thank Him for the 'Īdu'l-Fitr, that great blessing, and we testify that beside Him there is no God. He is alone. He has no partner. This witness which we give to His Unity will be a cause of our safety here, and finally gain us an entrance to Paradise. Muḥammad (on whom be the mercy and peace of God) and all famous prophets are His slaves. He is the Lord of genii and of men. From Him comes mercy and peace upon Muhammad and his family, so long as the world shall last. God is greater than all; there is none beside Him. God is great! God is great! and worthy of all praise. O company of believers, O congregation of Muslims, the mercy of the True One is on you. He says that this feast-day is a blessing to you, and a curse to the unbelievers. Your fasting will not be rewarded, and your prayers will be stayed in their flight to heaven until you have given the ṣadaqah. O congregation of believers, to give

alms is to you a wájib duty. Give to the poor some measures of grain or its money equivalent. Your duty in Ramazan was to say the Tarawíh prayers, to make supplication to God, to sit and meditate (itikáf) and to read the Qurán. The religious duties of the first ten days of Ramazan gain the mercy of God, those of the second ten merit His pardon; whilst those of the last ten save those who do them from the punishment of hell. God has declared that Ramazan is a noble month, for is not one of its nights, the Laylatu'l-Qadr, better than a thousand months? On that night Gabriel and the angels descended from heaven: till the morning breaks it is full of blessing. Its eloquent interpreter and its clearest proof is the Quran, the Word of God most Gracious. Holy is God, who says in the Quran: "This word of God comes down in the month of Ramazan." This is a guide for men, a distinguisher between right and wrong. O Believers, in such a month be present; obey the order of your God and fast; but let the sick and the travellers substitute some other days on which to fast, so that no days be lost, and say: "God is great!" and praise Him. God has made the fast easy for you. O Believers, God will bless you and us by the grace of the Holy Quran. Every verse of it is a benefit to us and fills us with wisdom. God is the Bestower, the Holy King, the Munificent, the Kind, the Nourisher, the Merciful, the Clement.¹

"The assemblies of the ladies on this 'Íd are marked by all the amusements and indulgences they can possibly invent or enjoy in their secluded state. Some receiving, others paying visits in covered conveyances; all doing honour to the day by wearing their best jewellery and splendid dress. The Zanana rings with festive songs and loud music, the cheerful meeting of friends, the distribution of presents to dependents, and remembrances to the poor; all is life and joy, cheerful bustle and amusement, on this happy day of 'Íd, when the good lady of the mansion sits in state to receive presents from inferiors and to grant proofs of her favour to others.²

¹ Khutbahá-i-Mutarjam, p. 104.

² "Observations on the Musalmáns of India." Mrs. Mír Hasan 'Alí, p. 192.

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

and to gain the goodwill of the Arabs. Muhammad could not, at that date, make the pilgrimage to Mecca; for as yet there was a hostile feeling between the inhabitants of the two cities; but on the tenth day of the month Zul-Hijjah, at the very time when the Pagan Arabs at Mecca were engaged in sacrificing victims, Muhammad went forth from his house at Madína, and assembling his followers, instituted the 'Idu'z-Zuha or Baqar-'Id. Two young kids were brought before him. One he sacrificed and said: "O Lord! I sacrifice this for my whole people, all those who bear witness to Thy unity and to my mission. O Lord! this is for Muhammad and for the family of Muhammad."

Great merit is obtained by all who keep this feast. 'Ayesha relates how the Prophet once said: "Man hath not done anything on the 'Idu'l-Azha more pleasing to God than spilling blood; for verily the animal sacrificed will come on the day of resurrection with its horns, hair, and hoofs, and will make the scale of his good actions very heavy. Verily its blood reached the acceptance of God before it falleth upon the ground, therefore be joyful in it."

Musalmáns say that the Patriarch Abraham was ordered to sacrifice Ishmael, and that he made several ineffectual attempts to cut the throat of his son. Ishmael then said to his father: "It is through pity and compassion for me that you allow the knife to miss: blindfold yourself and then sacrifice me." Abraham acted upon this advice, blindfolded himself, drew his knife, repeated the Bismillah, and, as he thought, cut the throat of his son; but, behold, in the meantime Gabriel had substituted a sheep for the lad. This event is commemorated in this feast.

On the day before the feast, the 'Arafah or vigil is kept. Food of various kinds is prepared, over which a Fatihah is offered, first, in the name of the Prophet; secondly, in the names of deceased relatives, and of others for whom a blessing is desired, or from whom some favour is expected. The food is then sent as a present to friends.

On the morning of the feast-day, the devout Muslims proceed to the 'Id-gah, or, if there is no 'Id-gah, to the principal mosque, repeating on the way the Takbír, "God is great!" and "There is no other God save the one true God: God is great, praise be to God." At the time of making wazú, the worshipper should say: "O God, make this (*i.e.*, the sacrifice I shall offer to-day) an atonement for my sin, and purify my religion and take evil away from me."

The service at the 'Īd-gáh or in the mosque consists of two farz rak'ats, as in the Salatu'l-Jum'a, after the Khutbah is delivered. It will, however, be seen from the following sermon that it is mustahab to say four more rak'ats.

SERMON ON THE 'ĪDU'Z-ZUHÁ.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Alláhu Akbar! God is great. There is no God but God. God is great! God is great and worthy of all praise. He is holy. Day and night we should praise Him. He is without partner, without equal. All praise be to Him. Holy is He, who makes the rich generous, who provides the sacrifice for the wise. He is great, without an equal. All praise be to Him. Listen! I testify that there is no God but God. He is alone without partner. This testimony is as bright as the early dawn, as brilliant as the glorious feast-day. Muhammad is His servant who delivered His message. On Muhammad, and on his family, and on his Companions may the peace of God rest. On you who are present, O congregation of Muslimín, may the mercy of God for ever rest. O servants of God! our first duty is to fear God and to be kind. God has said: "I will be with those who fear Me and are kind."

Know, O servants of God! that to rejoice on the feast-day is the sign and mark of the pure and good. Exalted will be the rank of such in Paradise (Daru'l-Qarar), especially on the day of resurrection will they obtain dignity and honour. Do not on this day foolish acts. It is no time for amusements and negligence. This is the day on which to utter the praises of God (Tasbîh). Read

the Kalímah, the Takbír, and the Tamhíd. This is a high festival season and the feast of sacrifice. Read now the Takbíru't-Tashríq. God is great! God is great! There is no God but God! God is great! God is great! All praise be to Him! From the morning of the 'Arafah, after every farz rak'at it is good (mustahab) for a person to repeat the Takbíru't-Tashríq. The woman before whom is a man as Imam, and the traveller whose Imam is a permanent resident (Muqim) should also repeat this Takbír. It should be said at each Namaz until the Salatu'l-'Asr of the feast-day (10th). Some, however, say that it should be recited every day till the afternoon ('Asr) of the thirteenth day, as these are the days of the Tashríq. If the Imam forgets to recite, let not the worshipper forget. Know, O believers, that every free man who is a Sahib-i-Nisab should offer sacrifice on this day, provided that this sum is exclusive of his horse, his clothes, his tools, and his household goods and slaves. It is wajib for every one to offer sacrifice for himself, but it is not a wajib order that he should do it for his children.¹ A goat, a ram, or a cow should be offered in sacrifice for every seven persons. The victim must not be one-eyed, blind, lame, or very thin.

If you sacrifice a fat animal, it will serve you well, and carry you across the Sirat. O believers, thus said the Prophet, on whom be the mercy and peace of God: "Sacrifice the victim with your own hands; this was the Sunnat of Ibrahím, on whom be peace."

In the Kitabu'z-zadu't-Taqwa, it is said that on the 'Íd-ul-Fitr and the 'Ídu'z-Zuha, four nafl rak'ats should be said after the farz Namáz of the 'Íd. In the first rak'at after the Suratu'l-Fatihah recite the Súratu'l-A'la (lxxvii.); in the second, the Suratu'sh-Shams (xci.); in the third, the Suratu'z-Zuha (xciii.); in the fourth, the Súratu'l-Ikhlás (cxii.). O believers, if ye do so, God will pardon the sins of fifty years which are past, and of fifty years to come. The reading of these Surahs are equal as an act

¹ Still it is mustahab, or a meritorious act so to do. It is also said that, if a minor is possessed of property, his father or his guardian may purchase at his expense an animal and sacrifice it. The child may then eat as much as it can. The remainder of the meat must be exchanged for something which the child can use, such as clothes, shoes, &c. (Núru'l-Hidàyah, vol. iv. p. 60).

of merit to the reading of all the books God has sent by His prophets.

May God include us amongst those who are accepted by Him, who act according to the Law, whose desire will be granted at the last day. To all such there will be no fear in the day of resurrection; no sorrow in the examination at the day of judgment. The best of all books is the Quran. O believers! may God give to us and to you a blessing for ever by the grace of the noble Quran. May its verses be our guide, and may its wise mention of God direct us aright. I desire that God may pardon all believers, male and female, the Muslimín and the Muslimat. O believers, also seek for pardon. Truly God is the Forgiver, the Merciful, the Eternal King, the Compassionate, the Clement. O believers, the Khutbah is over. Let all desire that on Muḥammad Muṣṭafá the mercy and peace of God may rest.

The worshippers then return to their respective homes and offer up the sacrifice, for it is a wajib order that every Muslim should keep this feast and sacrifice an animal for himself.¹ He need not fear though he has to incur debt for the purchase of an animal, for it is said that God will in some way help him to pay the debt. If a camel is sacrificed, it should be one not less than five years of age; if a cow or sheep, it should at least be in its second year, though the third year is better; if a goat, it must not be less than six months old. All of these animals must be without a blemish or defect of any kind. It is a sunnat order that the head of the household should himself slay the victim. If, however, from any cause, he cannot do so, he may call in a butcher; but in that case he must place his hand upon that of the butcher when the operation is performed. If the victim is a camel, it must be placed with the head towards Mecca. Its front legs being banded together, the sacrificer must stand on the right-hand

¹ The sacrifice must be made after the Namáz, for the Khalíf Al-Mámún relates a tradition to the effect that "he who offereth sacrifice before he prayeth, assuredly it is a flesh-offering which he hath anticipated before its time; but he who performeth sacrifice, after he hath prayed, verily he fulfilleth the ordinance" (Syúti's "History of the Khalífs").

side of the victim, and plunge the knife into its throat with such force that the animal may fall at once. Any other mode of slaying it is unlawful. Other animals must be slain in the same way. Just before slaying the victim the following verse of the Quran should be repeated: "Say! my prayers and my worship, and my life and my death are unto God, the Lord of the worlds. He hath no associate. This am I commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims" (S. vi. 163). The operator also adds: "O God, from Thee and to Thee (I do this), in the name of God. God is great!" Then having slain the victim he says: "O God, accept this for me." The first meal taken should be prepared from the flesh of the animal just slaughtered, after which the members of the family, the neighbours, and the poor should receive some portions.

It is considered highly meritorious to sacrifice one animal for each member of the family; but as that would involve an expenditure few could bear, it is allowable to sacrifice one victim for the household. In extreme cases, men may combine together and make one sacrifice do for the whole, but the number of persons so combining must not exceed seventy. Some authorities limit the number to seven. This feast is strictly observed by all Muslims wherever they may be.

The Baqar-‘Id and the ‘Idu’l-Fitr constitute the ‘Idain, the two great feasts of Islam. A country in which Musalmans could not observe them both would at once become Daru’l-Harb, or House of Enmity, in which it would be the duty of every Muslim to join in a Jihad against the Infidel rulers of the land.

This completes the account of the principal feasts of the Muslim year.

Among other practices borrowed from the Hindus must be placed the pilgrimage made by Indian Musalmans to the shrines of Saints,¹ the ceremonies connected with them, and

¹ There is, however, some authority for this practice. Ibn Mas‘úd relates the words of the Prophet thus: "I had forbidden you to visit the

the festivals instituted in their honour. Properly speaking, the Sunnís have but two festivals—the Baqar-‘Íd and the ‘Ídu'l-Fitr, but many others are now observed. Of these I have described several. It only remains to notice a few of the festival days which are peculiar to India.

The title of Pír given to a Musalman devotee is equivalent to the term Guru amongst the Hindus. A man who seeks to be a “religious” takes a Pír as a spiritual guide. “Follow,” says the poet Walí, “the footsteps of thy Pír like a shadow.” After death these Pírs are venerated as Walís or Saints. The Pírs, when alive, are frequently resorted to for a ta’wíz or charm, and the aid of their prayers is often invoked. The sepulchre of a Walí is called a Dargáh, shrine; Mazar, place of pilgrimage; Rauzah, garden. The professional reciter of the Qurán at such places is called Rauzah Khán. As a rule, processions are made to the shrines, and flowers, sweetmeats, and food over which a Fátihah has been said are offered. Usually the Fátihah is *for* the Saint, not *to* the Saint. It is considered a very meritorious act to give land for the erection of such shrines and to endow them. An account of many of these Saints is given in the Bara Masa by Jawán and the Árayish-i-Mahfil by Afsos. The following selection will give an idea of the customs prevalent:—

I. FESTIVAL OF MADAR.—Sayyid Badru’d-dín Kutbu’l Madár is said to have descended from the Imam Husain. He was born at Aleppo about A.D. 1050, and received from Muhammad permission to “hold his breath” (habs-i-dam). Thus he was able to live to a good old age. He is said to have had 1442 sons, but some people explain this by saying that they were his spiritual children. Jawán in his account of the festival states: “The tomb of Madár is at

graves; but now ye may visit them, for they detach your mind from this world and remind you of the world to come.” The Traditionist, Muslim, states that the Prophet wept at the grave of his mother, and said: “I begged leave from my Lord to ask forgiveness for her, but it was not granted me: then I begged leave to visit her grave, and it was granted me; visit therefore the graves, for they remind you of death.”

Makanpúr, a place about forty miles from Cawnpore. On the seventeenth of the month Jamadá'l-Ulá an immense crowd fills the village, which is illuminated at night. Fires are lighted, around which Fakírs dance, and through which they leap, calling out "Dam Madár, Dam Madár" (breath of Madár). An order of Fakírs, called Madária, look to this Saint as their patron. In distant places where this feast is kept they set up an 'Alam or standard in honour of the Saint, and perform ceremonies common to such days, and pass the night in celebrating his praise.

2. FESTIVAL OF MU'INU'D-DÍN CHISTÍ.—The tomb of this Saint is in Ajmír. He was a Syed descended from Husain, the son of 'Alí, and was born in Sajistán about the year 537 A.H. His father died when he was about fifteen years old. Soon after this he fell in with a famous Fakír, Ibráhím Qanduzí, through whose influence he began to seek the Taríqat, or mystical road to the knowledge of God. When he was twenty years of age he received further instruction from the famous 'Abdu'l-Qádir Jílání. After the conquest of Hindustan by Shahábu'd-dín Ghorí, Mu'ínu'd-dín retired to Ajmír, where he died in the odour of sanctity, 636 A.H. Pilgrimages to this tomb have been and are very popular. Even Akbar, sceptic though he was as regards orthodox Islam, made a pilgrimage to this shrine, and offered vows that he might have a son who would live to manhood. Hindus also visit this tomb, and presents from rich men of this class are not unusual.

3. FESTIVAL OF SÁLÁR MAS'ÚD GHÁZÍ.—There is some doubt as to the nationality of this Saint. Some say he was a Husainí Syed, others that he was a Pathán and a martyr. His tomb is situated in Oude. Afsos thus describes the pilgrimage. "Once a year great crowds of people gather from all parts. They carry red lances and beat thousands of tambourines. The 'Urs is held on the first Sunday of the month Jíth (May—June). The people believe that this was his wedding-day, because it is said that he had on wedding garments when he was killed. This belief once led a certain

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

god of the sea. There can be no doubt that this god of the sea is Khizr, the patron of the waters."

The following prayer is recited in the Fátihah of Khizr : "To obtain purity of heart, and the benediction of Him who hears the vows of mortals, and who alone can keep from them all evils, I rest upon the merits of Khaja Khizr, the great prophet Elias."

5. THE FEAST OF PÍR DASTGÍR SAHIB.—This is held on the eleventh day of the month of Rabí'u'l-Akhir. The Sunnís hold this Saint in great reverence. He has no less than ninety-nine names. His tomb is at Baghdád. On the tenth of the month the ceremony called Sandal is performed, followed on the next day by the 'Urs, when the Maulad, or the account of the circumstances connected with the birth of the Saint is read ; Qasa'id or elegiac poems are recited ; the Darúd is repeated and Fátihahs are said. The Quran is also read through. Vows are frequently made to this Saint, and in time of any special visitation, such as cholera, a flag is carried about in honour of this Pír by some of his devotees, to whom presents of food are offered. A Fatihah is then said over them. He is said to appear to his followers during their sleep and to give them directions. Ja'far Sharíf, the compiler of the Qánun-i-Islám, speaking on this point says : "The author speaks from personal experience, for at the time of need, when he was oppressed in mind concerning things which he desired, he used to repeat constantly the ninety-nine names of the Pír and vow before the Holy God, imploring His assistance by the soul of Dastgír ; and through the mercy of the Almighty, his Excellency Ghausu'l-A'zam (Dastgír) presented himself in his sleep, and relieved him of his perplexities and vouchsafed his behests."

Syed Ahmad Kabír Rafáí, the founder of the Rafáí Darwishes, was a nephew of this Saint.

6. FESTIVAL OF QADIR WALÍ SAHIB.—This is the great Saint of Southern India. The 'Urs is celebrated on the tenth day of Jamádá'l-Ukhrá. The shrine is at Nagore, a

town situated four miles north of Negapatam. The Sandal and other ceremonies are similar to those described already. He is the patron saint of sailors, who in times of difficulty vow that, if they reach the shore in safety, they will offer a Fatihah in the name of Qadir Walí. The common people have a profound faith in the power of the Saint to work miracles. The story of the following one is frequently related: "A vessel springing a leak was about to founder, when the captain made a vow that should Qadir Walí stop the leak, he would offer in his name the value of the cargo. At that time the Saint was being shaved, but being miraculously acquainted with the perilous position of the captain, he cast away the looking-glass which he held in his hand. The glass attached itself to the hole in the bottom of the ship, which then came safely to land. The captain, in due course, presented his offering to the Saint, who requested him to return the glass to the barber. The captain was astonished at this request, and inquired what glass was meant. He was then directed to look at the bottom of his ship. He did so, and discovered how the Saint had saved the ship."

This festival affords a curious illustration of the way in which Hindu influences have acted on Islám, and how even Hindus pay regard to Muslim Saints. Qádir Walí is said to have been a Fakír who lived on the charity of both Hindus and Musalmans. Indeed, both parties claim him as belonging to their respective religions, which may be accounted for by the fact that in his preaching to mixed audiences he suited his addresses to both classes of his hearers. After his death a small mosque was erected on or near his tomb. The fame of the Walí gradually grew, and a Hindu Rajah made a vow that if he were blessed with the birth of a son, he would enlarge and beautify the mosque. His wish was fulfilled, and the present elegant structure is the result. So famous has the shrine of the Saint now become that the Musalmans there say: "First Mecca, then Nagore." The same reason which induced the Hindu Rajah to make a

votive offering years ago still influences large numbers of people. On Thursday evenings, the commencement of the Muhammadan Sabbath, many Hindu women resort to the shrine of the Saint. Thus is the Hindu connection still kept up with the festival of this Musalmán Saint.

There are many other Walis and Pírs to whose tombs pilgrimages are made, and in memory of whom many superstitious observances are still kept up; but all such pilgrimages to a Dargah (shrine) are no necessary part of Islám. In all parts of the country there are the shrines of Saints who have a local reputation and whose annual festivals are more or less observed. Still it is not necessary for me to give a further account of these. This brings me to the close of my subject.

In the preceding chapters I have endeavoured to set forth the main features of the Faith of Islam, and the religious duties it enjoins. I might now go on to show its relation to Judaism and Christianity, the elements it has drawn from them, and the distortions it has made in the borrowing, as well as the protest it raised against much that was corrupt in the Christianity with which it came in contact. I might also enlarge upon its moral and social effects, and the character it produces in the individual and the state.¹ But these subjects would lead me far beyond my present purpose, and so I must content myself with having given a representation of the Faith of Islam from its own authorities.

¹ Muslims believe these effects to be perfect. A number of Musalmáns held a meeting at Poona in December 1895, to consider whether they should take part with Hindus in a conference to consider the question of social reforms. It was resolved not to do so on this ground:—"In the face of the Quran, it is altogether needless for the Musalmáns to join in any purely sectional conference, for Islam is a perfect exponent of social emancipation and human progress in all its aspects."—*Madras Weekly Mail*, December 5, 1895.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

‘ILM-I-TAJWÍD.

THE Qurán is the great bond of union between all the sects of Islam. Men may differ on the exposition of some difficult passages; in the details of its exegesis there is some variety; but all reverence the letter, though they may not all imbibe its spirit. It has given rise to a vast and varied literature. Its decision is final in all controversies of faith. Side by side with it has grown up a vast body of tradition, on which the Sunnat—a most important factor in the faith of Islam—is based; but the most interesting of all studies to the young Muslim is still the Quran, its grammar and its commentaries. Every Muslim must learn some portion of it by heart, and to learn the whole is an act of great merit. This feat, however, will be of little value unless the Hafiz, when reciting it, observes all the rules and regulations framed for such an act. This recital is called *tilawat*, but before anyone can do this correctly he must have some acquaintance with what is known as ‘*Ilm-i-Tajwíd* (علم تجويد). This includes a knowledge of the peculiarities of the spelling of many words in the Quran, of its various readings, of the *Takbír*s and responses to be said at the close of certain appointed passages, of its various divisions, punctuation and marginal instructions, of the proper pronunciation of the Arabic words and the correct intonation of different passages. It must be borne in mind that the orthodox view is that the Quran is uncreated and eternal, that it

contains no human element whatever, that no act of worship brings a Muslim so near to God as tilawat, the act of reading or reciting some portion of this book.¹ The Traditionist Tabrani says: "Whosoever teaches his son to read the Quran will receive a heavenly crown." Tirmizi hands down a saying of the Prophet to the effect that "whosoever reads only one letter does a good act which will meet a tenfold reward." The ceremonial acts to be observed before the reading commences are the legal ablution (وضوء) and prayer (دعاء). The Quran itself says: "Let none touch it but the purified." The usual prayer is, "I seek God's protection from cursed Satan," followed by the invocation, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Pleasant verses should be read in a cheerful tone, those which speak of threatenings and punishment should be recited with awe. If the reader cannot cry, he should assume the appearance of one in great sorrow. Whenever the words of those whom Muslims call Kafirs are quoted in the Quran, the reader should recite them in a low tone of voice. Such quotations are the following: "The Jews say, 'Ezra (Ozair) is a Son of God,'" and "the Christians, 'The Messiah is a Son of God'" (S. ix, 30). After reading the verse "Adam disobeyed his Lord, and went astray" (S. xx, 119), the reader should not pause, but quickly pass on to the following words, "Afterwards his Lord chose him for himself, and was turned towards him, &c." The idea is, that as Adam is one of the Anbiya Ulu 'l-'Azm, the six chief prophets, the stress should be laid on God's forgiveness of his fault and not on his disobedience.

The name of God is repeated twice in the following verse: "We will not believe till the like be accorded us,

¹ It is not necessary that the reader should know the meaning. He may be utterly ignorant of Arabic, but he must be able to pronounce it correctly, and he should observe all the legal ceremonies.

of what was accorded to the Apostles of God. God best knoweth where to place His mission” (S. vi, 124). As this is the only place in the Quran where the word Allah occurs twice without any intervening word, a prayer should be offered before the second Allah is pronounced.

The mosque is considered the most suitable of all places in which to read. The most auspicious days of the week are considered to be Friday, Monday, and Thursday. The best hour of the twenty-four is midnight or about 3 A.M.

It is considered a proper thing to go through the whole Quran in forty days, but on no account should it be completed in less than three, for that would necessitate a hurried perusal. It was the custom of the Companions of the Prophet (اصحاب) to recite four juz¹ every night. They were thus about seven or eight nights completing the whole task. The Khalif Osmán used to commence the Quran on Friday and finish it on the following Thursday.

A very popular division is known as the Famí ba Shauq (فم شة). The letters forming these words are the seven initial letters of the first Surah of each day's portion, thus :—

Friday ...	Súratu'l-Fátihah to the end of Súratu'n-Nisá (iv).
Saturday...	Suratu'l-Ma'idah ,, Súratu't-Taubah (ix).
Sunday ...	Súratu'l-Yúnas ,, Súratu'n-Nahl xvi.
Monday ...	Suratu'l-Bani-Isra'il ,, Suratu'l-Furqan (xxv).
Tuesday ...	Suratu'sh-Shuara' ,, Suratu'l-Ya-Sín (xxxvi).
Wednesday	Súratu's-Saffat ,, Suratu'l-Hujrat (xlix).
Thursday...	Suratu'l-Qaf ,, Suratu'n-Nas (cxiv).

The Khatam-i-Ahzáb (ختم احزاب) is simply another sevenfold division. There is also a threefold division called the Khatam-i-Manzil-i-Fíl (ختم منزل فيل). The

¹ A juz (جز) is one-thirtieth part of the Qurán.

word Fíl contains the initial letters of the first Súrah of each portion. Thus:—

First day....	Súratu'l-Fatīḥah	to the end of	Súratu't-Taubah (ix).
Second day	Súratu'l-Yúnas	„	Súratu'r-Rum (xxx).
Third day	Súratu'l-Lukman	„	Suratu'n-Nas (cxiv).

This, however, has been found rather irksome, and so a tradition is remembered which states that one day the Prophet said to his Companions, “What, have you not power to read the third part every night?” They replied: “It would be very difficult.” The Prophet then said, “Read the Suratu'l-Ikhlās (112); the recital of this is equal to that of one-third of the Quran.”

It is a Sunnat practice to read the whole Quran during the month of Ramazán. One juz is recited each night. Having settled what portion he is going to read, and having performed all the necessary preliminaries, the reader should repeat, not less than three times and as many more as he likes, the Darúd, “O God! have mercy on Muhammad and his descendants, as Thou didst have mercy on Abraham and his descendants. Thou art to be praised and Thou art great. O God! bless Muhammad and his descendants, as Thou didst bless Abraham and his descendants. Thou art to be praised and Thou art great.” Then should follow a prayer similar to this, “O God, I testify that this is Thy Book, sent from Thee on Thy Apostle Muhammad, and Thy word spoken by the mouth of Thy Prophet. Accept my perusal of it as an act of worship, make me read it thoughtfully. Truly Thou art kind and gracious.” Then he should recite the verses, “O my Lord! I betake me to Thee against the promptings of the Satans; and I betake me to Thee, O my Lord! that they gain no hurtful access to me” (S. xxiii, 99, 100), and also the two last Surahs, “Say: I betake me for refuge to the Lord of the daybreak against the mischiefs of His creation, and against the

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

give you clear running water?" say "God brings it to us, and He is the Lord of the worlds." At the end of the *Súratu'l-Mursalat* (lxxvii), after the words "In what other revelation after this will ye believe?" say "We believe in God, the Lord of the worlds." At the close of the *Suratu't-Tin* (xcv), after the words "What! is not God the most just of judges?" say "Yes, I am a witness for Thee."

In addition to these responses to be given at the end of the Surahs, there are others to be said after certain verses. Thus, after the 16th verse of the 3rd Surah, "There is no God but He, the Mighty, the Wise," say "I am a witness to this." After the 60th verse of the 27th Surah, "Is God the more worthy, or the Gods they joined with him?" say "Yes, God is the best, the Abider, the most Glorious, the most Honorable." After the 12th verse of the 53rd Surah, "Which then of the bounties of your Lord will ye twain (men and jinn) deny?" and after each repetition of this question in this Surah, say "O Lord, we deny no gift of Thine. To Thee be praise."

The 59th, 64th, 68th, 71st verses of the 56th Surah read thus: "Is it you who create them, or are We their creator?" "Is it you who cause its up-growth, or do We cause it to spring forth?" "Is it ye who send it down from the clouds, or send We it down?" "Is it ye who rear its tree, or do We rear it?" After each of these verses, say "Yes! it is Thou, O Lord!" After the 1st verse of the 87th Surah, "Praise the name of the Lord most High," say "Holy is my Lord, Most High." After the 7th verse of the 91st Surah, "By a soul and Him who balanced it," say "O God, bestow on my soul piety and purity. Thou art the best of all purifiers."

After the recital of certain passages in the Quran, a Sijdah must be made.¹ This is called the Sijdah-i-Tilawat. Imam

¹ The following is the ritual of a sijdah: The worshipper kneeling down, places his hands with the fingers close to each other, upon the ground. He must rest upon his toes, not on the side of the feet which must be kept

Abú Hanífa considers it farz, the other three Imáms, Málik, Hanbal and Shafi‘i consider it sunnat. The former also held that if a person accidentally overheard some other person reading these passages he must make Sijdah; the latter do not think it necessary in such a case. Hanífa also held that if in the Rukú‘ of a Namaz a Sidjah verse (ارت سجده) occurred, the worshipper might make this Sijdah after the Namaz was over; the others say that it should be done there and then.

When making the Sijdah the Takbír should be said, and on rising, the Salam, but not the Tashahhud. Imams Hanífa and Malik, however, say that the Takbír also should be said on rising up from the Sijdah.

Altogether there are fourteen Sijdah verses.¹

1. Súratu‘l-A‘ráf (vii), v. 205: “They praise and prostrate themselves before Him.”
2. Súratu‘r-Ra‘d (xiii), v. 16: “Unto God doth all in the heavens and on the earth bow down in worship, willingly or by constraint: their very shadows also morn and even!”
3. Súratu‘n-Nahl (xvi), vv. 51, 52: “All in the heavens and all on the earth, each thing that moveth, and the very angels, prostrate them in adoration before God, and are free from pride; they fear their Lord who is above them, and do what they are bidden.”
4. Suratu‘l-Asra (xvii), v. 109: “Glory be to God! the promise of our Lord is made good. They fall

straight behind him. The elbow must not touch the side, nor the stomach the thigh, nor the thigh the calf of the leg. The eyes must be kept bent downwards. Then he touches the ground first with his nose, and then with his forehead, taking care that the thumbs just touch the lobe of the ears. In this position he says the Tashih-i-Sijdah three times: “I extol the holiness of my Lord, the Most High!”

¹ Imam Malik rejects the three last and so reckons only eleven.

- down on their faces weeping, and it increaseth their humility.”
5. Súratu'l-Maryam (xix), v. 59: “When the signs of the God of Mercy were rehearsed to them, they bowed them down worshipping and weeping.”
 6. Suratu'l-Hajj (xxii), v. 19: “Whom God shall disgrace there shall be none to honour. God doth that which pleaseth Him.”¹
 7. Súratu'l-Furqan (xxv), v. 61: “When it is said to them, ‘Bow down before the God of Mercy,’ they say ‘Who is the God of Mercy? Shall we bow down to what thou biddest?’ and they fly from Thee the more.”
 8. Súratu'n-Naml (xxvii), v. 26: “God! there is no God but He! the Lord of the glorious throne.” Some, however, say that the preceding verse is the *Áyat-i-Sijdah*.
 9. Súratu's-Sijdah (xxxii), v. 15: “They only believe in our signs, who, when mention is made of them, fall down in *adoration*, and celebrate the praise of their Lord, and are not puffed up with disdain.”
 10. Suratu's-Sad (xxxviii), v. 24: “So We forgave him that (his sin); and truly he shall have a high rank with Us; and an excellent retreat (in Paradise).” Some, however, consider that the *Sijdah* should be made after the words of the preceding verse: “David perceived that We had tried him; so he asked pardon of his Lord, and fell down, and bowed himself and repented.”
 11. Súratu'l-Fussilat (xli), v. 38: “They who are with thy Lord do celebrate His praises night and day and cease not.”

¹ Imám Sháfi'í substitutes for the 19th verse the 76th: “Believers! bow down and prostrate yourselves, and worship your Lord and work righteousness that you may fare well.”

12. Súratu'n-Najm (liii), v, 62: "Prostrate yourselves then to God and worship."
13. Súratu'l-Infatar (lxxxiv), vv. 20, 21: "What then hath come to them that they believe not? and that when the Quran is recited to them they adore not?"
14. Súratu'l-'Alaq (xcvi), v. 18: "Nay! obey him not, but adore, and draw nigh to God."

Some persons add to the Tasbíh-i-Sijdah the following Du'a-i-Masurah (دعاء ماثوره), *i.e.*, a prayer used by the Prophet, the words of which have been handed down in the Traditions: "I prostrate myself for Him who created and formed me, and who opened my sight and hearing. God is the best Creator. O God, pardon me and have mercy on me."

Great care must be taken to read according to the pronunciation of the famous Qarís.¹ A mistake in this respect

¹ A Qarí is one who reads the Qurán, but the term is technically applied to the seven famous "Readers" and their disciples. The names of the seven are given in Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary, Vol. 2, p. 401. They are:—

1. Imam Ibn-i-Kasír, who died at Mecca 120 A.H.
2. Imam 'Asim of Kufah. He learnt the way of reading the Quran from 'Abdu'r-Rahmanu's-Salami, who was taught by the Khalífs Osman and 'Ali. 'Asim died at Kufah 127 A.H.
3. Imám Abú 'Umr was born at Mecca 70 A.H. and died at Kúfah 154 A.H. It is on his authority that the following important statement has been handed down: "When the first copy of the Quran was written out, and presented to the Khalíf Osman, he said, 'there are faults of language in it, let the Arabs of the desert rectify them with their tongues.'" The meaning of this is that they should pronounce the words correctly, but not alter the written copy. This accounts for the Rasmu'l-Khatt.
4. Imam Hamza of Kufah was born 80 A.H. and died 156 A.H.
5. Imam Kisaí had a great reputation as a Qarí, but none as a poet. It was a common saying, among the learned in grammar, that there was not one who knew so little poetry as Al-Kisaí. He is said to have died at Túsi about the year 182 A.H.
6. Imam Nani', a native of Madína, died 169 A.H. He was highly esteemed by the people of that city.
7. Imam Ibn 'Amir was a native of Syria.

is called lahan and is of two kinds: (1) Lahan-i-jalí (الجرر، حله), a clear and evident mistake, such as shortening or lengthening the vowel sounds (اعراب) or any word; (2) Lahan-i-Khafi (لحن خفى), a less apparent mistake, such as not making a distinction in sound between ج and ح, ت and ث, ز and س, ن and نا, ط and ت; if two of the same letters come together it is a mistake if both are not clearly sounded, e.g., each ح in وحه and each ع in فطبع على must be distinctly pronounced.

It is absolutely necessary that great attention should be paid to the tashdíd (تشديد), madd (مد), and other similar marks, an account of which can be found in any Arabic grammar. These diacritical marks, known under the general term of A'rab (اعراب), were invented by Khalíl Ibn-i-Ahmad, who was born in the year 100 A.H., and who died at Basra about seventy years after.

The marks and symbols peculiar to the Quran are many. No account of them, so far as I am aware, is given in any grammar of the Arabic language; and as they may have often puzzled the student of the Quran, I give them here in detail. They refer almost entirely to the various kinds of pauses to be made in reciting the Quran, and form in fact its punctuation.

The symbol for a full stop is O, when the reader should take breath.

The word سكته is written when a slight pause is made but no breath is taken.

The waqf (وقف) or pause is of five kinds:—

1. Waqf-i-lazim (وقف لازم), of which the sign is . . This is, as its name implies, a necessary pause. If no pause were made the meaning would be altered; e.g., Surah ii, v, 7: “Yet are they not believers (م) Fain would they deceive God,” &c. Here if there were no

waqf-i-lázim after the word ‘believers,’ it might seem as if believers would fain deceive God.

2. Waqf-i-Mutlaq (وقف مطلق), the sign of which is ط. This pause occurs in places where, if made or omitted, there is no alteration in the sense, *e.g.*, Súratu’l-Fatihah, “King on the day of reckoning (ط) Thee do we worship.”

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (ط) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ

Here the waqf comes after the word رَبُّ because the enumeration of God’s attributes ends here, and the expression of man’s need commences.

3. Waqf-i-jáíz (وقف جائز), the sign of which is ـ. This waqf is optional, *e.g.*, “She said, ‘Kings when they enter a city spoil it, and abase the mightiest of its people’ (ج) and in like manner will these also do” (Surah lxviii, 34). In this case, by putting the pause after ‘people,’ the remaining words do not form part of the quotation; by omitting it, they would, and Balqís, the Queen of Sheba, would be represented as saying, “In like manner will these also do.”

4. Waqf-i-Mujauwaz (وقف مُجَوِّز), the sign of which is ؛. This also is an optional pause, *e.g.*, Surah ii, 80: “These are they who purchase this present life at the price of that which is to come (ز) their torment shall not be lightened.”

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ (ز) فَلَا يَخَفُ
عَنِّمُ الْعَذَابُ

The particle ؛ usually connects a clause closely to the preceding one, in which case there would be no waqf; but on the other hand the verb يَخَفُ comes early in the clause, and in such a case should be preceded by waqf. To reconcile these two opposing principles the

pause is left optional. Such, at least, is the only explanation I have yet found of Waqf-i-Mujauwaz.

5. Waqf-i-Murakhkhas (وقف مُرَخَّص), the sign of which is ص. This is a pause which may be made when it is necessary to take breath. It comes between words which have no necessary connection with each other, *e.g.*, Súrah ii, 20: “Who hath made the earth a bed for you, and the heavens a covering (ص) and hath caused water to come down from heaven.” If this pause is made, the reader must commence at the beginning of the clause, that is, if he pauses after ‘covering’ he must begin after the pause at “who hath, &c.”

All the pauses now described are ancient: they have been recognized from the earliest times. In later days the Quran readers have invented several others. As these will be found in all Qurans now in use, I give a short account of them.

1. Qif (قف) “pause.” This frequently occurs, but in such places as to leave the meaning of the passage unaffected.

2. Qáf (ق:). This is the symbol for قَدْ قُلْتُ = “it is said.” The ق thus expresses the fact that some persons of authority have said that a pause should be made in the place where it is inserted. It is an optional pause.

3. Şalí (صلى) “connect.” This shows that there must be no pause.

4. Lá (لا). This is the symbol for لَا يُوقَفُ = “there is no pause.”

5. Sín (س). The initial letter of the word سَكْتَةٌ = “silence.” A pause may be made in the recital, provided that the reader does not take breath in this place.

6. Kaf (ك). This is the first letter of the word كَذَلِكَ = “in the same manner.” It then means that where .ء

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

that “He who observes Waqf-i-Ghufraán in the ten places in which it occurs, I will answer for his entrance into paradise.” The lesser sins (گناه صعدہ) of all who observe it are supposed to receive pardon. The ten places referred to by Muḥammad are:—

- (1) Súratu'l-Má'ida (v), v. 56: “O Believers! take not the Jews or Christians as friends” عَفَان .
- (2) Suratu'l-An'am (vi), v. 36: “Will He make answer to those who only listen?” عَفَان .
- (3-4) Suratu's-Sijdah (xxxii), v. 18: “Shall he then who is a believer be as a gross sinner (عَفْرَان) they shall not be held alike” غَفْرَان .
- (5-9) Suratu'l-Ya,Sin (xxxvi), vv. 11, 29, 52, 61, 81: “The traces they have left behind them” عَفَان “O the misery that rests upon my servants” عَفَان “Who hath roused us from our sleeping place” عَفَان “Worship me” عَفَان “Must not He who hath created the heavens and the earth be mighty enough to create your likes?” غَفْرَان .
- (10) Súratu'l-Mulk (lxvii), v. 19: “Behold they not the birds over their heads, their wing outstretching and drawing in?” غَفْرَان .

3. Waqf-i-Munazzal (وقف مُنَزَّل). This is also called Waqf-i-Jibra'il (وقف جبرئیل), because it is said that in the six or eight places where the pause is indicated, Gabriel paused when reciting the Quran to the Prophet.

4. Waqfu'n-Nabi (وقف النبی), “pause of the Prophet.” It is said that in some eleven or more places, additional to all that have been mentioned, the Prophet used to pause. It is now a meritorious act to observe this pause.

This concludes what may be termed the punctuation of the Quran, but there still remain several signs and symbols which need explanation.

1. ع. This is ع, the initial letter of عشر (10), and ب, the first letter of بصرى (Baṣrah). This symbol denotes that a Baṣra ‘Ashr ends here. As a Rukú‘ contains on an average about ten verses, it is here called by the term ‘Ashr, ten; so ع means that according to the Qarís of Baṣra a Rukú‘ ends where this symbol is placed.

2. خمس بصرى stands for Khams-i-Baṣra (خمس بصرى) and denotes that five Baṣra verses ended here.

3. ع.ش. كوفى denotes that a Kúfah Rukú‘ or ‘Ashr (ع.ش. كوفى) ended here: sometimes ع.ش. is written on the margin.

4. خمس كوفى denotes that five Kufah verses (خمس كوفى) ended here: sometimes خمس is written on the margin.

5. تب shows the end of a Baṣra verse.

6. لب shows the ending of a verse according to the Qarís of any other city than Basra.

The terms a Basra Rukú‘, five Kufah verses, &c., refer to the divisions made by the Qarís of Kufah or Basra. It is owing to this difference that the number of verses said to be in the Quran varies. The Kufah Qarís, following the قراءت (reading) of Imám ‘Aṣim, reckon 6,239 verses; the Basra Qarís make out 6,204; the Qarís of Shám (Syria) 6,225; the Meccan verses are 6,219; the Madína verses are 6,211. As Muslims when quoting from the Quran—if they give any reference to the portion from whence the extract is taken—name the Juz and the Rukú‘, not the Surah and verse, it is necessary that the former should be marked in the margin. A juz is one-thirtieth part of the whole. Each juz has a distinct name, the first word of each portion serving for that purpose.

The term ruku‘ literally means a prostration. The collection of verses recited from the Quran, ascriptions of praise offered to God, and various ritual acts connected with these, constitute one act of worship called a rak‘at. After reciting

some verses in a rak'at, the worshipper makes a rukú' or prostration. The portion recited is then called a rukú'. Practically it is a division, averaging about ten verses. The sign of it is ع written in the margin. Frequently it occurs with as many as three figures, thus ع^٣٩^٨. The ٣ (3) on the top shows that this is the third rukú' from the commencement of the Surah in which it occurs; the ٩ (9) in the centre gives the number of verses in this ruku'; the ٨ (8) at the bottom shows that this is the eighth ruku' in the juz. It is thus comparatively easy to verify a quotation if the juz and ruku' are named, but very few Muslim writers give such information. A verse or a few detached words are quoted, and it becomes an exceedingly difficult task to verify them. Every theologian is supposed to know the whole Quran by heart, and so it is considered quite superfluous to give "chapter and verse," or rather juz and rakú'.

It would be quite impossible to read the Quran correctly unless it were written with the strictest attention to the ancient copies. This act of copying it, with the rules thereof, is known as Rasmu'l-khatt (رسم الخط). The copyist should follow the recension made in the time of the Khalíf Osman. This rule is based on the Ijma' (unanimous consent) of the Companions. It is believed that the whole book was brought by Gabriel from the copy on the "Hidden Tablet" (الصحف), and that he who alters a pause, or a letter, or who, without in the least altering the sense, adds or takes away even a letter, is guilty of a very grave offence. The consequence of this is that the spelling of many words in the Quran follow special and peculiar rules, to which rules again there are many exceptions. The following are some of the rules of the Rasmu'l-khatt.

1. The \ of masculine plurals ending in ون and ين is

written above¹ the word if it occurs more than twice in the Quran, if the | is not followed by تشدید or همزة; e.g., .. not ضادفد.., نالمون not ظلمه .. There are two words which do not occur more than twice, and are therefore exceptions; e.g., ماكره in the 3rd juz, 13th ruku‘ and in the 9th juz, 18th ruku‘, راعدين in the 1st juz, 5th ruku‘, and in the 3rd juz, 13th ruku‘. There is one exception. The word لعذون, although it occurs only once, that is, in the 2nd juz, 3rd ruku‘, is not written لعذون but لعدون, as though it occurred more than twice.

2. Final | drops before an affixed pronoun, e.g., انجيينكم not انجيناكم.

3. The conjunction ان is never joined with the following word, e.g., ان شاء وان كنتم, not انشاء and انكتم.

4. The | of يا (O!) is never written, e.g., يادم (O Adam)! not يا ادم; يا ابا not يا ابا.

5. With the exception of five words, the lam (ل) of the definite article ال is joined by tashdíd to the initial lam of the following word, and only one lam is written, e.g., الليل

not الليل. The exceptions are اللعدين اللولو اللوات اللوامة اللعذون. هم اللعذون.

6. The | of the feminine plural ending in ات is written above, e.g., مومنت not مومنات; جنات not جنات, &c.

¹ Although I speak of the | as written above, yet it must be remembered that it is only placed there for convenience and in order that the readers may remember it. It is called خنجري الف (Khanjari Alif). Before the invention of the short vowels, &c. (اعراب) it would not have been written at all, and if a Quran were now to be written without اعراب (a thing never done) this would not appear.

7. In such words as ^حيحي and ^حيستحي (yastahyi) the final ^حي is sounded twice, though only written once. The second ^حي may be written of a smaller size and in red ink, thus showing that it was not in the original text. If, however, a pronoun is affixed, the ^حي is written twice, e.g., يحييكم.

8. The following words substitute و for ا without any change in pronunciation, e.g., مَنُوَّةٌ, مَشْكُوَّةٌ, حُدُوَّةٌ, زَكُوَّةٌ, صَلَوَةٌ. If, however, any one of these words governs another word in the possessive case the ا returns, e.g., صَلَاتِكَ 'thy prayers,' صَلَاةُ الْعَبْدِ, &c.

9. In such words as ^ححوارين, ^حنبيين the two ^حي are joined by تشديد, but in ^ححسنيين, ^حعليين they are separate; ^حسيئة and ^حخطيئة retain the second ^حي but place هَمْزَةٌ over it.

10. The words ^ححدل, ^حانسأل should have هَمْزَةٌ understood, but not written (except in red) before the (ح), thus ^ححداءل. It reads Jibra'il. The pronunciation ^حجذبنا (Jibril) has arisen from the readers forgetting this rule.

11. The ا in ^حمَسَاجِدِ خَصْمَانِ يُعَلِّمَانِ أَصْحَابِ بَنَاتِ قِيَامَةِ should be written above, thus ^حبِنَةُ قِيَامَةِ ^حيُحَصِّفَانِ تِلَاوَتِهِ, &c.

12. In ^حسَلُوا and the various forms of this verb هَمْزَةٌ is used without ا being under it. The usual form of the first would be ^حسَالٌ, the ا then becomes هَمْزَةٌ; but to write it thus would be wrong: the ا must not appear.

13. In the following words an ا appears at the end of each, though it is quite unnecessary and is not sounded, e.g., ^حليربوا - ^حاشكوا - ^حساتلوا - ^حيتلوا - ^حيرجوا - ^حادعوا - ^حيدعوا. There is

one exception to this rule. It occurs in the Súratu'n-Nisá,
 يعفو عنهم "He pardons them."

14. The following, though plural forms, have no **ا** **باو** and **جاو** in every place; **فاو** in the Súratu'l-Baqrá; **سعو** in the Suratu's-Sabá; **عتو** in the Súratu'l-Furqán; **تبرؤ** in Súratu'l-Hashr.

15. **ا** is in every instance inserted after **اولو**, *e.g.*, **اولوا العلم**, **اولوا اللباب**, &c.; **ذو** also takes **ا** after it in all places except six, viz., once each in Surahs Yúsuf, Múmin, Jamu'ah, Burúj, and twice in Suratu's-Sijdah.

16. The **لام جازه**, that is, the **ل** which means 'for,' is in four places written apart from the word it governs, *e.g.*, **فمال هولاء** in Súratu'n-Nisá; **مال هذا** in Súratu'l-Kahf; **مال هذا الرسول** in Súratu'l-Furqán; **فمال الذين** in Súratu'l-Ma'árij.

17. **ايها** appears three times without **ا**, *e.g.*, **ايها**. It is so altered once each in the Súrahs Taubah, Zukrúf and Raḥmán.

18. The words **داود**, **داون**, **داون** and similar words are pronounced as if there were two waws (**و**) in each, *e.g.*, Dawud, not Daud. The second **و** is sometimes written in red ink to remind the reader of this rule.

19. The **ا** of the pronoun **انا** is not pronounced by all the readers, so **لكن انا** becomes **لكننا**. Inám Náfi, a Qári, always pronounced it.

20. Foreign words are written thus: **اسحاق** - **ابراهيم** &c., **اسحاق** - **ابراهيم** not **سليمن** - **عمرن** - **هرون** - **لقمن** - **اسماعيل**. In the Súratu'l-Baqrá **ابراهيم** instead of **ابراهيم** occurs once.

21. The **ا** of **ظلمات** and each **ا** which comes after **ل** (*i.e.*,

-سلم - خلق - اسلم - نالمت (اسلام) is written above, *e.g.*, علم - كلم.

22. If a movable hamza is preceded by a quiescent letter the *ا* is not written under it, *e.g.*, ^{يسئل} not ^{يسئل}; ^{الفدة} not ^{الفدة}.

23. Some tenses are shortened, both in writing and reading, when with the next word there would be two jazms (جرم), *e.g.*, ^{يدعو} not ^{يدعو}, Súratu'l-Asra; ^{يدعو} for ^{يدعو}, Súratu'sh-Shuará'; ^{يدعو} for ^{يدعو}, Súratu'l-Qamr; ^{يدعو} for ^{يدعو}, Suratu'l-'Alaq; ^{يدعو} for ^{يدعو}, Súratu'l-Yúnus. In Súratu 'l-Húd there is one case where *ي* is dropped, although two jazms do not occur, *e.g.*, ^{يومي} for ^{يومي}.

24. In some words an extra *ا* is written but not pronounced in reading, *e.g.*, ^{لا انفصوا}: "Certainly, they would have broken away," Surah iii, 153; ^{لا إله إلا الله}: "Verily unto God," Súrah iii, 152; ^{لا ائدعناكم}: "Certainly we would have followed thee," Surah iii, 160; ^{لشاي} for ^{لشاي}: "of a thing," Súrah xviii, v. 23; ^{لا اتبعوك}: "They would certainly have followed thee," Súrah ix, 42; ^{لا اضعوا}: "Certainly they had hurried about among you," Súrah ix, 47.

25. In some words the همزة takes *ي* as ^{من نباي}, Súratu 'l-An'am; ^{من تلقاي نفسي} in Súratu'l-Yúnus; ^{من انتاي ذي} in Súratu'n-Naml; ^{من انائي} in Súratu't-Ta Ha; ^{من ورائي الحجاب} in Súratu'sh-Shuará'; ^{الداري} in Súratu'l-Hashr.

26. In ^{لا ملان}, "Certainly, I will fill," the *ا* is dropped and

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

Mazhab (sect) of Imám As Sháfi'í prefer this qirá'at. Imám 'Ásim had two famous disciples, Abu Bakr and Hafs. The qira'at of Hafs, or rather of 'Asim as made known by Hafs, is the one almost universally used in India. The qira'at of Nafi of Madína is preferred in Arabia, and is highly valued by most theological writers.

In many cases the sense is not at all affected, but the difference has given rise to many disputes. In the year 323 A.H. Ibn Shanabud, a resident of Baghdad, recited the Quran, using a qira'at not familiar to his audience. He was severely punished and had to adopt a more familiar 'reading.'

In order to show the nature of the changes thus made, I shall now give in a tabular form the various readings in two Surahs of the Quran. They afford a sufficient illustration of what is meant by the term qira'at.

Each of the seven Qarís had two Ravís, or disciples, from whose testimony the qira'at approved of by their master is known. The three Qarís of lesser note also had two disciples each. It occasionally happens that there is a difference of opinion between the two followers of some particular Qarí with regard to the reading their master preferred. In order to show this diversity of opinion, each Raví, as well as each Qarí, has a distinctive letter, which is technically known as the 'ramz' (رمز, pl. رموز). When both of the Ravís agree as to the reading preferred by their master, the ramz of the Qarí only is inserted on the margin of the Quran. It is not then necessary to add the ramúz of the Ravís, because it is only by their evidence that the qira'at of the Qarí is known. They never give an opinion of their own on the text, but only bear witness to the opinion of their master.¹ If, however, the ramz of one of

¹ All that a critical Muslim can now do is to ascertain the 'readings,' adopted by the Qarís; there can be no further emendation of the text, which is by the orthodox supposed to be perfect.

the two Rávis is given, it signifies that according to his testimony the qira'at he gives is the one approved of by the Qarí whose disciple he is. If the two Ravís differ in their evidence as to their master's opinion, the ramz of each Raví is given with the qira'at each contends for as the one approved of by his master.

In the tabular form I shall use the letter (ramz) by which each Qarí and each Raví is known, instead of continually repeating the name in full; but I must first give the letters (ramuz) alluded to. In the following table the distinctive letter will be inserted under the name of each Qarí and of each Ráví.

The seven Qárís and their disciples (راویان):—

Second Ráví.	First Ráví.	Qarí.
راویِ دویم	راویِ اول	قاری
وَرش ج	قالون ب	1. نافع مدنی ا
قذبل ز	بزی هه	2. ابن کثیر مکی د
سُوسی ی	دُوری ط	3. ابو عمر بصری ح
ابن ذکوان م	هشام ل	4. ابن عامر شامی ك
حفص ع	ابوبکر ص	5. عاصم کوفی ن
ابو عیسیٰ خَلاد ق	خلف بزاز ض	6. حمزه کوفی ف
دُوری ت	ابوالحارث س	7. کسائی کوفی ر

The three Qárís of lesser note and their disciples are thus distinguished:—

Second Ráví.	First Ráví.	Qári.
راوى دويم	راوى اول	قارى
ابن جمان	عيسى	1. ابو جعفر
ن	خ	ث
روح	رويس	2. يعقوب
ش	غ	ظ
ادريس	اسحق وراق	3. خلف كوفى
يس	حق	لف

In the following table the first column contains the words of which there are different readings; the second, the symbolic letters (رمو:) of the Qarís and Ravís who approve of the reading as given in the first column; the third column includes under the term *والباقون* (others) the names of all Qarís and Ravís not given in the second; the fourth column gives the reading preferred by the authorities represented in the third column. For example:—

مَالِكِ ظ ن ر ل ف | والباقون مَلِكِ

From this it appears the Qárís Ya'qúb (ظ), 'Ásim (ن), Kisá'í (ر), and Khalaf-i-Kufi (لف), approved of the reading *Malik* (مَالِكِ); whereas every other Qarí approved of *Malik* (مَلِكِ). As a general rule there are only two 'readings.'

سورة الفاتحة¹—Súratu'l-Fátihah.

مَالِكِ ظ ن ر ل ف | والباقون مَلِكِ
 الرَّحِيمِ مَلِكِ ي | والباقون الرَّحِيمِ مَلِكِ

¹ The Súratu'l-Fátihah is the opening Súrah of the first juz. I have introduced it here as it occupies such an important place in the Namaz. The Súratu'n-Naba is the first Surah of the last juz, or Juz-i-'Am (عم).

الصراط	والباقون	ز غ	السراط
صراط	والباقون	ز غ	سراط
عليهم	والباقون	ظ ف	عليهم
		د ث ب	عليهم
			و ¹

Súratu'n-Nabá.—سورة الذبا

هم	والباقون	د ث ب	هم
			و
الارض	والباقون	ج	ارض
خلقناكم	والباقون	د ب ث	خلقناكم
			و
نومكم	والباقون	د ب ث	نومكم
			و
الليل لباساً	والباقون	ي	الليل لباساً
فوقكم	والباقون	د ث ب	فوقكم
			و
وجئت النافاً	والباقون	ج ف	وجئت النافاً
فتاتون	والباقون	ج ي ث	فتاتون

¹ The و placed under the م signifies that the ؤ above it is to be read as a long vowel. It is in accordance with the Rasmu'l-Khatt to write و not و at the end of words where a صم (ء) would come.

وَفُتِحَتْ	والباقون	ا د ح ك	وَفُتِحَتْ
فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا	والباقون	ا د ظ ك ن	فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا
لَابِثِينَ	والباقون	ش ف	لَابِثِينَ
وَعَسَاقًا	والباقون	ع ف ر ل ف	وَعَسَاقًا
إِنَّهُمْ	والباقون	د ث - ب	إِنَّهُمْ
و			و
شَيْئِ أَحْصِيئِهِ	والباقون	ج	شَيْئِ أَحْصِيئِهِ
نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا	والباقون	ا ث د	نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا
و			و
وَكَاَسًا	والباقون	ي ث	وَكَاَسًا
وَلَا كِذَابًا	والباقون	ر	وَلَا كِذَابًا
رَبِّ	والباقون	ظ ك ن ف ر ل ف	رَبِّ
الرَّحْمَنِ	والباقون	ظ ك ن ف ر ل ف	الرَّحْمَنِ
وَالْمَلِكَةِ صَفَا	والباقون	ي	وَالْمَلِكَةِ صَفَا
أَن لَّهُ	والباقون	ي	أَن لَّهُ
شَاءَ	والباقون	ف م خ ل ف - ل	شَاءَ
أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ	والباقون	د ث - ب	أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ
و			و

APPENDIX B.

THE LAW OF JIHÁD.

THE subject of Jihád, or sacred war, does not properly belong to the questions considered in this book; but the method in which some of the more enlightened Indian Muslims deal with it is worthy of notice. I have already explained (pp. 193–199) their attitude towards orthodox Islám. The statements of Maulavi Cherágh ‘Alí, in his learned work, the *Critical Exposition of the Law of Jihád*, further illustrate what I have there said. I shall now briefly state the case, and then show how a liberal-minded Muslim writer deals with it.

There are two great divisions of the world—Dáru’l-Islám, where Muslim law and rule are supreme, and Daru’l-Harb, where non-Muslims exercise supreme authority. Strictly speaking, Muslims in a Daru’l-Harb should fight; but as this is in most cases difficult to do, the law doctors have laid down certain conditions under which a Dáru’l-Harb becomes, for all practical purposes, a Daru’l-Islám, and so a place where Muslims can live in peace. Speaking generally, a country is regarded as Daru’l-Islám when the public prayers, the Namaz, are said without let or hindrance, and the two great feasts, the ‘Idu’l-Fitr and the ‘Ídu’l-Azhá, are openly celebrated.

There are verses in the Quran which speak kindly of Jews and Christians, but these have been abrogated by later ones. Thus, the verse: “They who follow the Jewish religion and the Christian and the Sabeites, whoever of them believeth in God and the last day and doeth what is right, shall have their reward with their Lord: fear shall not come upon them, nor shall they be grieved” (S. ii. 59), is said to have been

abrogated by "Whoso desireth any other religion than Islám, that religion shall not be accepted from him, and in the next world he shall be among the lost" (S. iii. 79). So also, "Dispute not, unless in kindly sort, with the people of the book (*i.e.*, Jews and Christians), save with such as have dealt wrongfully with you" (S. xxix. 45), is abrogated by the famous "verse of the sword,"—"When the sacred months are passed, kill those who join gods with God, wherever ye find them, and besiege them and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush; but, if they repent and observe prayer and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way" (S. ix. 5). Other verses which inculcate the duty of Jihád are: "Fight for the cause of God" (S. ii. 245), and "O Believers! what possessed you that, when it was said to you 'March forth on the way of God,' ye sank heavily downwards? What! prefer ye the life of this world to the next?" (S. ix. 38).

The duty, being based on clear texts of the Qurán, is then a farz one, that is, one incumbent on all. The law-books are also clear on the point. In the Hidáya we read, "The destruction of the sword is incurred by the infidels, although they be not the first aggressors." The Kifáya, a commentary on the Hidáya, is plainer still: "Fighting against the infidels who do not become converts to Islám and do not pay the capitation tax is incumbent, though they do not first attack." This is supported by the text, "Fight against them till strife be at an end, and the religion be all of it God's" (S. viii. 40). The Sair-i-Qabír, a Turkish law-book, states it to be the duty of the Sultán "to see that the Musalmán frontiers are never lessened, that the infidels are called upon to embrace Islám, that true believers are urged to strive in the Jihád."

The summons to Jihád must be based on a legal foundation, and one leading principle is that the country in which it takes place should be Dáru'l-Harb. This has led to much controversy. Some years ago, preachers of a Jihád gave much trouble in India, and quiet orderly Musalmáns

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

The Muftí of Mecca, the head of the Ḥanífí sect, answered:—

“As long as even some of the peculiar observances of Islám prevail in it, it is the Daru’l-Islam.”

The Muftí of the Sháfi’í sect said:—

“Yes, as long as even some of the peculiar observances of Islam prevail in it, it is Daru’l-Islam.”

The Muftí of the Málíki said:—

“It is written in the commentary of Dasokí that a country of Islam does not become Daru’l-Harb as soon as it passes into the hands of the infidels, but only when all or most of the injunctions of Islam disappear therefrom.”

They all call India Dáru’l-Islám, but they carefully abstain from saying whether Jihád is lawful or not. Apparently they still leave it an open question.

The Calcutta Muhammadán Society has gone further, and has definitely stated that Jihád can by no means be lawfully made in a Dáru’l-Islám, which they declare India to be. They support their position by a reference to the Fatvá-i-‘Alamgírí, which states the conditions under which a Dáru’l-Islám becomes a Daru’l-Ḥarb. They are—

“(1.) When the rule of infidels is openly exercised, and the ordinances of Islám are not observed.

“(2.) When it is in such contiguity to a country which is Dáru’l-Harb that no city of Daru’l-Islam intervenes between that country and Daru’l-Ḥarb.

“(3.) That no Musalmán is found in the enjoyment of religious liberty, nor a Zimmí (an infidel who has accepted the terms of permanent subjection to Musalman rule) under the same terms as he enjoyed under the government of Islam.”¹

The question is, however, in an unsatisfactory state, for one well-known legal authority lays down the law thus:—

¹ These fatvás are given in Sir W. W. Hunter’s work, *Our Indian Musalmáns*.

“When a country of Islám falls into the hands of the infidels, it remains a country of Islam, if the infidels retain Muhammadan governors and Muhammadan judges, and do not introduce their own regulations.” According to this theory, India is Daru'l-Harb. In any case, the uncertainty of the law and the varying fatvas afford great opportunity to fanatics to give trouble to the ruling power, and to peaceably-minded Muhammadans.

This difficulty is, however, got rid of by the latest attempt to deal with the subject. Maulavi Cherágh 'Alí¹ maintains that all the wars of Muhammad were defensive, and that no argument for Jihád can be deduced from the Quran at all. This is delightfully simple, and if the 'Ulamá of Constantinople, and the learned professors in the great College of Al-Azhar in Cairo, would discard Abu Hanífa and his teaching, and cast away their legal textbooks, it would, no doubt, be a blessing to many a land and many a home. I have already shown (p. 195) this writer's attitude towards the canonical law, and so I need now quote only the following statement: “All the fighting injunctions in the Qurán are, in the first place, only for self-defence, and none of them has any reference to making war offensively. In the second place, they are transitory in their nature. The Muḥammadán Common Law is wrong on this point where it allows unbelievers to be attacked without provocation.”

Maulavi Cheragh 'Alí next deals with the meaning of the word Jihad itself. It is said that the classical meaning of *Jahada* and *Jahada* is that a person “laboured vigorously,” and that the meaning of “fighting an enemy” is a post-classical and technical one. The classical age² is that of the poets before the time of Muhammad, after whose death foreign words crept in and the language be-

¹ I regret to say that this highly cultured and liberal-minded Muhammadán gentleman died last year. He was one of the ablest men of the new school of Muslims in India.

² Muslim writers call this “the days of ignorance.”

came more or less corrupt. It is maintained that *Jahd*, *Jihád*, and their derivatives are to be rendered according to the classical usage of the term, when it would not mean "fighting in warfare," for which the Arabic words *Harab* and *Kital* do service. *Jahd* and its derivatives occur in thirty-six verses. Setting aside those which cannot possibly refer to war, the rest are said to be of two kinds. First, those which occur in the Meccan Surahs, and secondly those in the Surahs which were delivered at Madína. Maulavi Cheragh 'Alí asserts that those in the second class, which are generally interpreted to mean "fighting," should be used in the sense of "strenuous exertion," as is done in the earlier Surahs. "I fully admit," he says, "that in the post-classical language of the Arabs, the word *Jihád* was used to signify warfare;" but "it is obviously improper to apply the post-classical meaning of the word when it occurs in the *Qurán*." The argument used is that a purely conventional meaning of the word *Jihad* came into use after the time of Muhammad, and that the Canonical Legists have affixed that meaning to the word in the *Qurán*, and so have built up an entirely wrong system.

A careful analysis of all the texts bearing on the subject is made. Some present great difficulties, but it is laid down as a principle of interpretation that those which seem to declare the duty of *Jihad* must be read in connection with other passages in which the permission or the call to fight is only conditional. Thus: "When two commandments, one conditional and the other general or absolute, are found on the same subject, the conditional is to be preferred, and the absolute should be construed as conditional."

It is further stated that the wars of Muhammad were defensive, and that, therefore, the verses referring to them "are strictly temporary and transitory in their nature," for the circumstances were purely local. The ninth Surah is generally supposed to have been given at the end of the

ninth year of the Hijrah, but Maulavi Cherágh 'Alí, in opposition to Noldeke, one of the greatest Quránic scholars of the day, considers that the opening verses were delivered in the eighth year, while Muhammad was marching against Mecca, and that, therefore, they have a limited and local application, and not a general one forming a rule for all time. This is very ingenious, but it is in striking opposition to the law doctors, who hold them to be of general application, and to whom it matters little whether they were revealed in the eighth or the ninth year.

The next step in this most recent treatment of the subject is to substitute other readings for some of the words in the Quran. The verse, "Whoso fight for the cause of God, their works He will not suffer to miscarry" (S. xlvii. 5), is disposed of by the suggestion of another reading, *Kotelu*¹—"those who are killed"—for the word in the text, *Kátalu*—"those who kill or fight." If this explanation is not accepted, then it must be interpreted by other verses which mean fighting in self-defence, such as, "Fight for the cause of God against those who fight against you; but commit not the injustice of attacking them first" (S. xl. 186). This is the standard text to which all doubtful passages must be brought, and however difficult it may be to do so, they must, according to Maulavi Cherágh 'Alí, be interpreted in connection with it.

In order still further to prove the defensive character of the wars of Muhammad, a different reading of another verse is adopted. For "have fought"—*Yokáteluna*,—the words "have been fought"—*Yokátalúna*—are substituted, so that the verse reads not "a sanction is given to those who fight," but "a sanction has been given to those who have been fought" (S. xxii. 40). The passive form is adopted by the Qárís 'Amír and 'Ášim of Kufah as recorded

¹ This is the reading adopted by the Rávi Hafs, who has recorded the gira'at of 'Asim of Kufah. The Qarí Abu 'Umr also supports this reading. All the rest of the Qárís are against it, and support the text, "Those who kill or fight," which has, therefore, overwhelming authority in its favour.

by Hafs. All the other Qárís retain the active form. In the Commentary of Jalalu'd-din, this very verse is quoted as the first verse which descended from heaven to authorise Jihad, so that there is good authority for *Yokátelúna*—"have fought." However, it is only fair to say that Maulavi Cheragh 'Alí does not rest his case on a disputed reading, and the loss of the support he thought he had from this verse will not affect it much.

Such is a very brief outline of the most recent work on Jihád. It is undoubtedly the best position for enlightened Musalmáns to adopt, although it brings them into conflict with all the canonists of preceding ages, and with the views of commentators and theologians of all the various sects.

INDEX

- ABROGATION, 72-78
 Ablutions, 253-257
 Akhir-i-chár-Shamba, 313
 'Alam, 307, 309, 310
 Aláwa, 306, 310
 'Alí, proclaimed Khalíf, 91; death of, 92; character of, 92; divine right of, 94; Muḥammad's opinion of, 96
 Almsgiving (see Zakát)
 'Ámm, 60
 Anbiyá Ulul'l-'Azm, 209, 334
 Angels, 199; as intercessors, 200; Kirámu'l-Kátibín, 201; in charge of heaven and hell, 201; Hárut and Márút, 202; Munkar and Nakír, 204
 A'ráf, 227
 'Arafah, 315
 Architecture, 163
 Ásár Khána, 315
 Aṣur-i-Sharif, 315
 Al-Ash'arí, 179; doctrines of, 181-182, 236
 'Ashur Khána, 307
 'Áshura, 311, 316
 Attahíyát, 262
 Áyat, 66
 Azan, 259
- BÁB, call of, 135; commencement of mission of, 137; engages in controversy, 139; condemnation of, 141; character of, 142
 Bábís, sect of, 133; growth of, 139; persecution of, 141, 143-144; divisions of, 144; doctrines of, 146-149; prospects of, 152
 Bakar-'Id, 321-326
- Bárá Wafát, 313
 Barzakh, 228
 Behá'ulláh, 145, 146; writings of, 150; death of, 149; personal appearance of, 151
 Bid'at, 19, 316
 Books, sacred, number of, 206; attestation of Qurán to, 207; rejection of, 208
 Bridge (Şirát), 226
- CHRIST JESUS, accompanies Al-Mahdi, 99; a prophet, 209; sinless, 216; second advent of, 230
 Creeds, 165
- DALÁLAT, 65
 Darud, 262
 Dáru'l-Harb and Dáru'l-Islám, 359
 Darwishes, 118-120
 Du'á, 257, 262, 267
 Duties of religion, 251-252
- EZELIS, 145
- FAITH, 165
 Fasting (see Rozah)
 Fátihah, 260
 Fiṭrat, 251
- GHUSL, 255
 God, Wahhábí conception of, 161; attributes of, 166-167, 172, 185
- HADÍS (see Tradition)
 Haft Sifát, 167
 Hajj, 251; obligation of, 287; details of, 288-298
 Hájí, 288
 Hajru'l-Aswad, 291

- Harf, 66
 Hell, divisions of, 232; relation of Muslims and non-Muslims to, 241
- ‘IBÁDHIYAH, 96
 ‘Ibárat, 65
 ‘Id-gah, 314
 ‘Idu’l-Fitr, 316-320; sermon on, 319
 ‘Ídu’z-zuḥa, 296, 321-326; sermon on, 323
 Iftar, 282
 Ijtihad, its origin, 23; limitation of, 32; importance of, 34; full account of, 41-46
 Ijma‘, its meaning, 22-23; a basis of law, 25; authority of, 30
 ‘Ilm-i-Tajwíd, 333-358
 Imám, as Legists (Lesser Imams), 25-28; authority of, 37; as Pontiffs (Greater Imams), appointed by God, 95; immaculate, 95, 97; character of, 97; supreme, 98; names of, 99; as leader in prayer, 95, 267, 337
 Inámat, doctrine of, 97
 Imámities, 99
 Iman, 165
 Inspiration, kinds of, 47-48
 Iqtizá, 66
 Irkán-i-dín, 251
 Ishárat, 65
 Islám, foundations of, 1, 38; a theocracy, 39; unprogressive, 40
 Ismá‘ílians, 100
 Isnad, 82
 Istidlal, 65
 ‘Itikaf, 317
- JABRIANS, 183, 234
 Jihad, a farz duty, 360; Fatvás on, 361-362; modern explanation of, 363
 Jinn, 205
- KA‘BAH, 291
 Kalám, 187; disputes about, 189-191
 Kalimah words, 66; creed, 165
 Khafi, 62
 Khalif, Sultan not, 104-105; power of, 106
 Kháss, 59
 Khatib, 267
 Khuṭbah, 268-270, 319
 Kinayáh, 64
 Kurratu’l-‘ayn, 140
- LAW, finality of, 32; sacred and secular, 33, 39, 106
 Laylutu’l-Qadr, 2, 317
- MAHDI-AL, disappearance of, 99, 134; return of, 99; pretenders, 101; communication with, 134
 Majzúb, 116, 118
 Makruh, 252
 Mansukh, 73
 Marsiyah, 307
 Miracles, 217-219
 Mirzá Yahyá, 144; exiled to Cyprus, 146; personal appearance of, 151
 Mizán, 225
 Mounts Šafá and Marwah, 294, 298
 Muawwal, 60
 Mu‘azzin, 258
 Mufassar, 62
 Mufsid, 252
 Muhammad, words and deeds of, 15; an ideal Arab, 18; inspiration of, 49-52; sin of, 216; miracles of, 218; night ascent of, 219; an intercessor, 229
 Muharram, preparation for, 306; ceremonies of, 307-312
 Mujassimians, 183
 Mujáz, 64
 Mujmal, 63
 Mujtahid, 23, 25, 33
 Muhkam, 62
 Musjidu’l-Harám, 291
 Mustahab, 252, 254, 264, 267
 Mustarak, 60
 Mushabihites, 183
 Mushkil, 63
 Mushrik, 228
 Mutashábih, 64

Sorry, this page is
unavailable to Free Members

You may continue reading on the following page



Upgrade your
Forgotten Books Membership
to view this page now
with our
7 DAY FREE TRIAL

[Start Free Trial](#)

- Tayammum, 256
 Ta'ziyah, 307, 310
 Tilawat, 333
 Traditions, nature of, 16; collections of, 21, 83-84; classification of, 86-87; abrogation of, 88
 'UMR KHAYYĀM, youth of, 123; character of, 124; Ruba'iyāt of, 125-133
 'Umrah, 289
 'Urf, 33
 'Urs, 314
 Uṣul and Faru', 169;
- WĀHHĀBĪSM, origin of, 153-154; growth of, 155; decadence of, 156; in India, 156; basis of, 157; dogmas of, 158-160; result of, 162
 Wahī, 47
 Wājib, 257
 Wāqi'a Khān, 307, 308
 Wazū, 252
 Witr, 264
 ZĀHIR, 61
 Zakat, 251, 283-287
 Zamzam, 293, 297
 Zimmī, 272

CORRIGENDA.

- Page 49, footnote, *for* "Moulvies" *read* "Maulavis."
 ,, 54, line 25, *for* "Hafs" *read* "Ḥafṣ."
 ,, 60, ,, 7, *for* "Ṣulāt" *read* "Ṣalāt."
 ,, 124, ,, 29, *for* "rights" *read* "rites."

THE FAITH OF ISLAM

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

“The importance of a book of this kind is very great. It stands to the Korán as one of Dr. Tristram’s orations before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council does to the New Testament. Mr. Sell’s account of the gradual growth of the system of traditional authority, and the fruitless resistance to its paralysing influence, is deeply interesting, and will help English readers to understand more accurately the real difficulties of Islam as a State religion.”—STANLEY LANE POOLE in the *Academy*.

“This volume gives us more valuable information about the doctrines and polity of Islam than any book of moderate size that we are acquainted with in the English language. Mr. Sell’s exposition of the principles of Islam is derived from original and authentic sources and from long intercourse with learned students and teachers of Musalman law. His deductions from these principles appear to us unanswerable, and they are in agreement with the best authorities. . . . We trust Mr. Sell’s book will be widely read.”—*Spectator*.

“His book is no compilation from other European authors. He draws almost entirely from Muhammadan authorities, and gives us the result of his own observations as to the action upon men and society of the great religion which he has set himself to study. Moreover, he has executed his task in a manner which merits, upon the whole, very great praise. . . . Its special value lies in this—that it supplies materials serviceable for comparative purposes.”—*St. James’ Gazette*.

“Mr. Sell’s ‘Faith of Islám’ is a minute exposition of the tenets and doctrines of a religion which has an immense importance for Englishmen. In the work before us the practical and speculative ideas of Muhammadanism are so fairly and clearly discussed, and every detail of observance and doctrine so plainly set forth, that a diligent study of it will place the reader quite *au courant* with the ideas of Moslem theologians.”—*Saturday Review*.

“Mr. Sell has supplied us with a very valuable and interesting hand-book, enabling us to understand what Muhammadanism in India really is.”—*British Quarterly Review*.

“A very valuable and important contribution to our knowledge of the subject of which it treats.”—*Tablet*.

“This book will be a valuable aid to the politician as well as to the missionary, whose occupation calls for an understanding of the principles of Islam; while it possesses a considerable amount of interest for the general reader. It is a concise and yet complete epitome of the religious system of Islam; and as such is invaluable to the missionary, or to the official whose work lies amongst Musalmán peoples.”—*Madras Mail*.

“The work contains the best examination of Islám, as a system, and apart from the life of its founder and its historical relations, that we know of; while at the same time it is free from prolixity and admirably clear and readable.”—*Calcutta Review*, July 1881.

“It is a good compendium of the past and present facts of Islám, showing much that is good in combination with much that is evil. It only remains possible to nourish a faint hope that the publication of works of this kind may have an effect upon moderate and enlightened Moslems.”—*Pioneer*.

“This work is characterised by a considerable amount of thoroughness, and we confess that we have not seen any work that gives, in anything like the same compass, such a complete account of Muhammadan theology. We regard this as a very valuable work.”—*Bombay Guardian*.

“Mr. Sell has done well to give to the world the fruit of his researches. The book does not go over the usual ground. Those who are at work amongst Muhammadans will find it a very profitable volume.”—*Lucknow Witness*.

“As Mr. Sell has explained in his admirable work on ‘The Faith of Islam.’”—STANLEY LANE POOLE in “Studies in a Mosque,” p. 166.

