

ISLAMICA ZEYLANICA

1947

297
ISL

Islamica - Zeylanica.

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“Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety, who speaks of it praises the Lord, who seeks after it adores God, who dispenses instruction in it bestows alms, and who imparts it to others performs an act of devotion to God.”

PROPHET MOHAMMED.

EDITOR :
M. J. M MUHSIN.

*Muslim Students' Majlis,
University of Ceylon.*

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ISL





Islamica - Ceylanica.

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No. C. 5,
UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON
Colombo 3, 2nd August, 1947.

The Editor,

Muslim Students' Majlis.

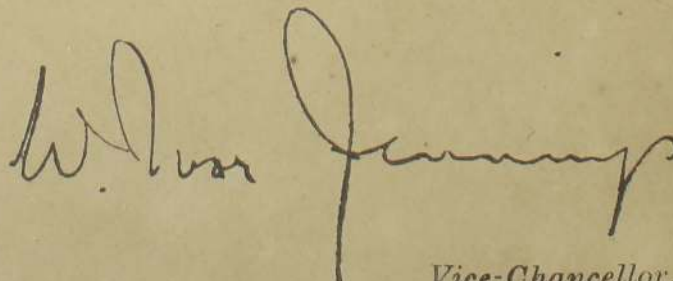
Dear Sir,

A popular novelist states in his autobiography that one of his trials is the gushing young thing who remarks "I have often thought of writing a novel myself", a remark which suggests that any fool can write a novel, only some fools do not. I remember my headmaster remarking that the more paper people had the less they had to write about. I remember, too, the remark of a Cambridge don to whom an undergraduate brought his first composition "Go away", he said, "and learn to read".

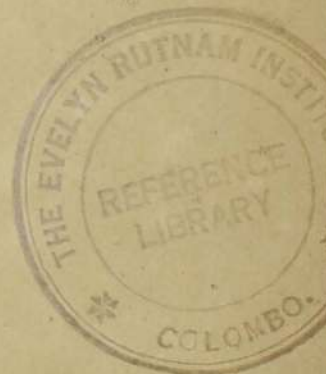
These comments would perhaps justify Mr. Punch in extending to budding authors his advice to those about to marry, "Don't". Presumably, however, the budding authors must bud somewhere and I see no reason why he should not bud in select company in ISLAMICA ZEYLANICA. If the result is a lemon or a ripe tomato instead of a flower he can follow the example of the candidates who fail at examinations and blame the examiners. After all, there are always more bloomers than blooms

Let the budding (or blooming) author not be discouraged, therefore. He will teach himself something even if he teaches nobody else. It is well known that university teachers often deliver courses of lectures on subjects on which they know nothing because they want to learn something. It is even better to write an article or a book, because though the lecturer is usually justified in assuming that his audience knows less than nothing the author has to assume that some of his readers may know a little. He must therefore be at least moderately sound and accurate. Writing disseminates knowledge among authors if not among readers, and when the authors are undergraduates it is the business of a university to encourage their fountain-pens to flow freely. It is always possible, too, that there will be a rose among the thistles.

Yours faithfully,



Vice-Chancellor.



PEACE



Uniform flat
A sterile desert
'Neath the glow of stars.'

Mussalmāns fraternal,
United, hopeful,
As the hawk hovers.

Faith profound
is their's. Look
The desert blossoms and flowers!

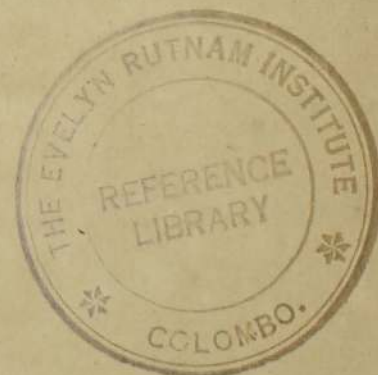
Prophet Greatest,
Allah's blessings on you ever fall!
Humanity's Guardian
All Nature at thy feet doth fall!
Reverence Him
Who showed the way to the goal!

The Silver Moon
Sheds heavenly beams
On the silver earth - smiling,
Smiling, at minarets and towers.

Heavenly, music,
Mussalman's prayers
Drown the din of the world.

Soft Music,
Lulls the silvery world to sleep,
Insha Allah - we have peace

Miss. A. Z. Sally.



From
The Editor's
Pen.



One of the objects of the Muslim Students' Majlis, founded in the year 1944 was the publication of a magazine devoted to the purpose of disseminating Islamic culture. This object has assumed importance in view of the fact that a majority of those professing the faith of Islam are not quite alive to the necessity for knowing their own religion, culture and traditions. The members of the Majlis felt that an annual magazine should be immediately started, comprising of articles on various aspects of Islam and allied subjects to interest and instruct Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In India many magazines are keeping the torch of Islamic learning bright, foremost among them being "Islamic Culture" of Hyderabad, Deccan. Our magazine has been brought up to line with this well known journal. The title "Islamica Zeylanica" was chosen to represent the central ideas of service to Islam and the Muslims of the Island in particular. We had to restrict ourselves to articles from the members of the University in accordance with the decision of the University authorities. The articles herein included were printed in the order in which they were received.

The past has a lesson for the Muslims of the day. We should not be satisfied with recollecting past glories but endeavour to live the past in the present. The youth of the community should diagnose the shortcomings and strive to remedy them if they are sincerely solicitous of the community's welfare. In this connection, Sir C. V. Raman's exhortation in an address to the students of the Mysore University is apt. He said: "If we wish men of other nations to respect us, we must abolish slothfulness and indulgence and substitute in their place a mentality disciplined by labour and self-restraint.....We must never forget that the richest rewards are the fruits of labour, study and thought. Self-determination will come, but we must prepare ourselves for it."

The great scientist's advice applies with equal force to the Muslims of this Island (*mutatis mutandis*). The Muslim poet of India, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, echoes the same advice:

“When one steadily burns the midnight oil,
 One gains access to the domain of knowledge and wisdom;
 The world of meaning which has no frontiers
 Cannot be conquered without a persistent crusade;
 The slave of the west anxious for display,
 Borrows from her only their dance and music;
 He barter his precious soul for frivolous sport,
 Self-indulgent, he grasps what is easy,
 And his weak nature accepts it with readiness;
 But the choice of what is easy in life
 Proves that the spirit has fled from the body!”

The only way in which we can oppose the downward tendency and brace up again the slackened sinews of the Muslims is by reviving the studies of Muslim literature and Muslim history. The modern Muslim can never plead the want of a shining light. The predecessors have left a name “to point a moral and adorn a tale” and both the moral and the tale are well-worth taking to heart. It is imperative we should direct our attention towards our neglected studies and our duties as well. For our duty it is to acquaint ourselves with our history, with the true interpretation of our religion. Though abandoned and neglected now, Muslim learning unquestionably engraved a deep mark on the history of the middle ages, since Muslims it was who occupied a hegemonic position with regard to intellectual movements. Our magazine is intended to foster a living interest in all matters pertaining to Islam and the Muslims. We feel that whilst studying and appreciating the cultural heritage of other communities and nations the Muslims should not be indifferent to or ignorant of their own. It is only by a proper study of one’s own culture and sympathetic understanding of other’s that a society of peaceful and right thinking peoples can be created. The Muslims should prevent a possible danger of intellectual isolation by absorbing the best of other cultures and assimilating them with what is theirs. Especially these days when a cultural reawakening in Asia has been ushered, the essential value of such a demand is very apparent.

I offer my grateful thanks to Mr. A. H. M. Cassim Humzah and Mr. M. H. M. Rally who formed the committee for this magazine and helped me immensely. On behalf of my committee, I have pleasure in thanking the Honorary and Life members for assisting us in many respects to publish this magazine. Our Lecturer in Arabic, Dr. S. A. Imam deserves a special word of thanks for his lively encouragement and for approving the articles with care and discretion.

The contributors of articles demand our heart-felt thanks for obliging us though pressed with heavy academic studies. Being student-contributors they claim no specialist’s know edge of deep research. Their literary efforts have been

stimulated more by a community of interests than any desire to share the fruits of painstaking study and labour. Our Vice-Chancellor was kind enough to send us a novel message indeed written in his own inimitable way and the Registrar to contribute a scholarly article on Semetic Theology. We thank both.

Finally we must not fail to mention and thank, Mr. B. G. N. Sariffodeen who kindly helped us in preparing the articles for the Printer, with clerical assistance.

Much should not be expected of this, our maiden publication. In-sha-Allah, our future issues shall show improved form. Founded on the basis of sincere service to our fellow-creatures, this effort must obtain the assistance of everyone who has the welfare of society at heart.

“ Every edifice is perishable save Love ”

(*Hafiz of Shiraz*)

The Editor.



Muslim Students' Majlis.

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To the Brave Voice of Pakistan

The cold numb frigid criterions are cast aside,
A hot, pulsing feeling surges, "Justice" it cries;
A star of Patience and Peace flickers bravely,
heralding an hour so bright.

While the malicious ocean sullenly sneers,
With hate and envy and pride.

Undaunted a white ship sails, on a tumultuous
ocean of rage,

Bound to the homogeneous shore - hasten
before it's late;

A venomous hiss rattles; but louder roars the
Voice of Right;

For the one above aids the righteous,
crumbling the edifice of Might.

Armed horsemen drive spears of calumny at
pilgrims clement and good,

The former want power and booty, while the
latter hate this food.

With faith unshattered they march to their goal,
martyrs of a true band,

"Peace" is the cry of these fortitudinous few,
While their sweat waters the sand!

A drop in the ocean is all they want, - their
Right - by all canons of law -

They are mocked, jeered, spat at, stoned, but
Unity drowns the caw,

The lowering horizon is clear - "Unite traitors
and spies!"

The ship's in the haven by the crescent's help -
the van's invincible - unite!

The harbinger gains ground - unite,
For freedom and Brotherhood's the prize.

A. Z. S.

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ISLAMICA - ZEYLANICA.

1947.

Islam - Its Philosophy.

IN this materialistic world of ours, there is a tendency to discard everything that transcends the boundaries of science as untrue, and give science alone the monopoly of Truth. Science to a large extent has discarded the philosophic approach to the Ultimate Reality, and has made life purposeless and barren. It is more concerned with our day-to-day problems and endeavours to emancipate mankind from the fetters of Nature. In this, none can deny the fact that it has achieved marvellous success. It has given mankind an unprecedented control over Nature and has made life comfortable and secure.

Whatever may be said to the credit of science it has its shortcomings in its approach to Truth. Scientific method in dealing with Reality is objective. The knowledge we derive through sense-perception, obviously does not exhaust the Universe. With all our powers of reason, and the knowledge and experience accumulated throughout ages, can we know the significance of life? What is its purpose? What are its secrets? Science

though it provides much of life's comforts, ignores these questions. Luckily, philosophy and religion come to our rescue, and try to solve these problems of the soul, and reconcile the life of the phenomenal world with that of the world of spirit. However, the gulf between science and religion is gradually narrowing "In this materialistic world of ours," says Einstein, "the serious scientific workers are the only profoundly religious people."

In Islam, no one aspect of life is isolated or considered without reference to the other. The various aspects of man's life-social, religious, political and economic-are all co-ordinated under one definite system. The State, the Individual and Government, are not treated separately. Islam is a blending of the various elements of life into one harmonious whole.

Vision and power combined, are essential to the spiritual expansion of humanity. Vision without power may bring moral elevation, but no lasting culture. Similarly, power without vision

results in destruction and tyranny. The chief object of life is the attainment of the ethical ideal Islam puts forth. The construction of a definite type of polity is essential as a means to that end. Hence the State according to Islam, "is only an effort to realise the spiritual in a human organisation." Islamic political theory is concerned with the raising of humanity to the highest well-being both materially and morally.

Religion seeks a closer contact with the Ultimate Reality. Islam is not only a religion, or a name for a set of beliefs or some forms of worship. It is a philosophy of life, with a complete code for the guidance of the individual's life from the cradle to the grave, and then to the world beyond. The Quran lays down the broad principles of life embracing all aspects of human activity.

The essence of religion is faith, and the aim of religion is the "transformation and guidance of man's inner self and outer development." The goal of life is the realisation and perfection of the individual self, which depends on the developments of human faculties in the right direction. Islam provides the details of law, a complete code of creed and morals and a definite social order. "Islam is not a departmental affair, it is neither mere thought; nor mere feeling; nor mere action; it is an expression of the whole man." The end of Islam is the perfection of humanity. The 'Shariat' will tell us what is right and what is wrong.

Islam does not require one to renounce the temporal world in the interests of a world of Spirit. "Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interests of a world of Spirit situated elsewhere. To Islam matter is spirit realising itself in space and time." There is a definite relationship between the world of matter and that of spirit. "It is the mysterious touch of the ideal that animates and sustains the real, and through it alone can we discover and affirm the ideal..... The life of the ideal consists, not in the total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions, but in the perpetual endeavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it, to convert it to itself and to illuminate its whole being." Islam thus reaches a dynamic view of the Universe.

The ethical ideal of Islam is the spiritual expansion of humanity. "Enjoin right and forbid wrong" is the standard of conduct. This presupposes an ideal society based on the principles of equality, social justice and human brotherhood. This world-unity is founded on the principle of 'Tawheed' (Unity of God). God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life. According to Islam knowledge must begin with the concrete. It is the intellectual capture of and power over the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect of man to pass beyond the concrete. In fact the Quran itself is highly empirical towards reality. Besides inner experience the Quran finds two other

sources of knowledge, Nature and History. It sees signs of the Ultimate Reality in the sun, the moon, the lengthening out of shadows, 'the alternation of day and night', 'cycle of days of success and reverse among peoples' - in fact, in the whole of nature as revealed to the sense-perception of man.

The Quran, recognising that the empirical attitude is an indispensable stage in the spiritual life of humanity, attaches equal importance to all regions of human experience, as yielding knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, which reveals its symbols both within and without. In the interests of securing a complete vision of reality, therefore sense-perception must be supplemented by what the Quran describes as 'Fuad' or 'Qalb' i. e. a kind of inner intuition.

The Ego or Person is the centre of life in man. Personality is a 'state of tension'; the moment it ceases, relaxation follows. The development of the Ego is not possible without an ideal. Life is a ceaseless activity after the perpetual desire. "Man is a restless being engrossed in ceaseless pursuits of fresh scopes for self expression and realisation." He is a "creative activity, an ascending spirit who, on his onward march rises from one state to another." The idea of personality sets forth a standard of value—a problem of good and evil. Hence, that which strengthens personality is good; that which weakens is bad. "The Ego is fortified by love which means the desire to assimilate and absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and the

endeavour to realise them. Love individualises the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realise the most unique individuality individualises the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker."

The Ego passes through three stages in its onward movement towards uniqueness, (i) obedience to the law, (ii) self-control, the highest form of self-consciousness of Ego-hood, and (iii) Divine-Vicegerency. The Vicegerent of God is the completest Ego on earth. The goal of humanity is a combination of the highest power and the highest knowledge.

"Art thou in the stage of life,
death, or death-in-life?
Invoke the aid of three witnesses
to verify thy station,
The first witness is thine own
consciousness,
See thyself, then with thine own
light,
The second witness is the
consciousness of another Ego
See thyself, then with the light of
an Ego other than thee,
The third witness is God's
consciousness-
See thyself then, with God's
light....."

Jāwid Nāme

All life is individual in character. The Universe as an organised association of 'individuals' is in a state of organic growth. Man plays an important part in process of evolution. The ethical idea of

Islam is not self-negation but self-affirmation. The Prophet said, "Create in yourself the attributes of God." Thus, man has, as his ideal the most unique individual. The individual draws closer and closer to God until he is the perfect person. Success lies in the struggle against all material forces, which hinder the progress of man. The true person masters the environment

and consequently absorbs God into the Ego. Life is thus a 'forward assimilative movement'. "And verily towards thy God is the limit", says the Quran.

(The sentences within inverted commas are from Dr. Iqbal's writings unless stated otherwise.)

A. M. M. SAHABDEEN

Islam and Ceylon

"DURING the middle ages, the history of Islam is the history of civilization itself" says an eminent scholar. Same can be said of the modern age too. Although there is no Islamic empire as such the influence of Islam is felt in almost every corner of the world. According to H. G. Wells "through the Arabs it was and not by the Latin route, that modern world received that gift of light and power." Ceylon, otherwise known in Arabic as Serendib, too had its share of Islamic influence felt.

To trace the spreading of Islam in Ceylon is to go back to the history of the origin of the muslim community in Ceylon. There are various views expressed by numerous writers as to the origin and development of the muslim community in Ceylon. But the majority of writers on the subject have agreed that moors of Ceylon are the descendant of the Arabs

who in the 9th century were ² 'the masters of half the world'. One ³ writer described them thus "by the aid of Quran the Arabs conquered a world greater than that of Alexander, greater than that of Rome and in as many tens of years as the latter had wanted hundreds to accomplish her conquest; by the aid of which they alone of all the Semites came to Europe as Kings, whither the Phoenicians had come as tradesman, and the Jew as fugitives or captives."

The Arab traveller Ibn Batuta refers to the presence of muslims in Ceylon. He says that Abu Abd Allah was the person who made known the way for him from India to the mountains of Serendib and who wandered about the mountains in the Island of Ceylon. Ibn Batuta relates the story of miracle of this Sheik. "The Sheik was in the company of thirty 'fakeers' who of extreme hunger

1. Stanislas Guyard : Encyclope die des Sciences Religienses.
2. Dr. Lucien Ledere : Historie de la Medicine Arabe.
3. Emmanuel Deutsch.

consulted the Sheik whether they could eat the flesh of elephants. The Sheik positively refused. Impelled as they were by hunger they transgressed his command and killed a small elephant which they ate. But the Sheik refused to partake and all fell asleep at night. Meanwhile elephants came in a body and smelling them put them to death. Then the elephants came to the Sheik and smelled him but did not injure. One of the elephants, however, wrapt his trunk about him and lifting him on his back carried him to some house.

The people were much astonished at this sight and they gave great credit to the Sheik. From then onwards they began to honour the "fakeers" contrary to the practice of the infidel of India." Further Ibn Batuta describes at length the courtesy extended to him by the king of Buttala, Arya Chakarti of Ceylon, for his pilgrimage to Adam's Peak.

According to one source Hasheem and members of his family were the first colonisers (muslims) to arrive in Ceylon in the 7th or 9th century owing to the tyranny of the Caliph Abdul Malek Ben Mervan. Some historians see a parallel to this in the arrival of Puritans in 'Mayflower' on December 1620 in North America for religious and political freedom. Another source maintains that in the 22nd year of Hejera (604 A. D.) four vessels left Yemen with four families in them in the time of Omer Kathab and Sad-Ur-deen son of Mohamed who was in one of the four vessels landed in Beruwala. Even the famous sailor, Sind-

bad had made references to the fabulous wealth of the maritime Provinces of Ceylon. These and other facts go far to show that those Arabs and the natives of Ceylon were on excellent terms of friendship.

In the process of time the nucleus of a small colony was formed here and from this sprang a flourishing community known as 'Sonahar'. By the 13th century the moors were in the zenith of their power. There is evidence in history of Ceylon that there was a Moorish King ruling from Kurunegala who was killed in tragical circumstances. At this time there was perfect amity among the Sinhalese, and Moors in Ceylon as it prevails today. In those days the Mussalmans helped with money whenever others were in awkward and trying circumstances. The Moors of Beruwala were the people who at the request of a King brought the ancestors of Salagma people from Saliapatanam for the purpose of spinning and weaving. Meanwhile Colombo had grown into an important port. Ibn Batuta referring to Colombo as one of the largest and finest cities of Serendib mentions the "vizier, Prince of the Sea, named Djalesty", who had about five hundred Abyssinians. There were many views on the formation of the word Colombo. Some say it is a Sinhalese word while some others suggest an explanation that it has come from the Tamil word 'Puculam' meaning 'flower pond'. During the course of time it has become Culampu which has been Europeanised as Colombo.

The Muslims of Ceylon are scatter-

ed all over the Island—the main concentration being in the Eastern Province, in Colombo, Puttalam, Galle and Mannar and in some districts in the up-country. They have inhabited the places which are advantageous for them for their trade. Hence is the large concentration of Muslims in the maritime provinces of Ceylon. When the geographical distribution of the Muslims are analysed there emerges a factor that the majority of the Muslims inhabit the either side of a river around a ferry through which the commercial activities of the ancient days were carried on.

The main purpose of the coming of the Arabs to Ceylon was for trade. At the time of the Portuguese invasion of Ceylon in the sixteenth century these Muslims had secured a virtual monopoly of the export and import trade and the majority of them are still engaged in trade though a considerable number—perhaps as many as one-third—are occupied as cultivators in the Eastern Province. From the time they settled in Ceylon they performed the functions of the middlemen specially in Barter system thereby amassing large fortunes. There were shopkeepers, few exported arecanut to South India and fewer still became planters during the time when “King Coffee” was prosperous. Now there are Muslims in every corner of the island running either a Tea-kiosk or retail dealer’s shop selling essential commodities. There is a ⁴ Sinhalese proverb to support this theory meaning that there is no

village in Ceylon not visited by a Moorman or a crow”. ⁵ Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam says of them “They (moors) are the most enterprising and speculative race in Ceylon. Their chief occupation is trade and as traders it is difficult to surpass them. They are ubiquitous and active, in the metropolis as in the remotest village.” The moor retail dealer’s position in the economy of the village has been affected by the success of consumers co-operative Movement but he has no axe to grind.

As far as the language of the Muslims in Ceylon is concerned, the Moors have adopted Tamil as their mother tongue although their mother tongue ought to be Arabic while Malays have their own language. However it cannot be inferred from this that there are no Moors who have adopted Sinhalese as their mother tongue to suit the environment. The Muslims in predominantly Sinhalese areas can speak Tamil and Sinhalese fluently. These people use large number of Sinhalese words and phrases in their colloquial Tamil. Perhaps in the course of time it may form a dialect of Tamil !.

True to the instinct inherited from the Arab forefathers the Muslims largely engaged in trade and collected fortunes while the education suffered. The Moors have neglected their secular education and have not in that respect kept abreast of the other communities. When an

4. Dictionary of Sinhalese Proverbs.

5. In his report on the Census of 1901.

ordinary trader had to look after the education of his children he had to face pecuniary embarrassment as a result of which he neglected his children's education and encouraged them to take to trade. To add to this the education of girls was discouraged as irreligious. Another reason why muslims are backward in education is that an ordinary muslim child has to study so many languages. The first thing he has to learn is the Holy Quran in Arabic; then Tamil or Sinhalese as the case may be or both. Yet another factor was the persecution of muslims by the Portuguese and the Dutch who were unable to convert the Muslims to their faith in which case only educational facilities were provided. Ceylon as a whole and Muslim community in particular have to be thankful to the present Minister of Education who gave Ceylon Free Education from the Kindergarten to the University. Even with the Free Education system there are Muslims who will not be able to acquire higher education as tuition fees constitute only a part of one's educational expenditure.

At this stage, the Ceylon Muslim Scholarship Fund came to the rescue of the Muslims in this respect and filled the gap, by helping the community. The Muslims of Ceylon have to be grateful to Mr. A. M. A. Azeez for his valiant efforts in initiating this Fund which has given an impetus to the educational progress of the Muslim community of Ceylon. It is the bounden duty of a parent to educate his sons and daughters. Our Holy Prophet Mohammed (on whom be peace) said,

"Acquisition of Knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim, male or female."

One of the darkest chapters in the history of Ceylon Muslims commenced with the arrival of the Dutch in Ceylon by whom the liberty of the Muslims was curtailed in every way. There was not a single Lawyer in this island in 1825, and the situation has been improved since then. Even to-day there is only one (Muslim) elected representative in the Legislature besides two nominated Muslim members.

The loyalty of the Muslims could not be doubted. A Portuguese historian de Conto, says, that "the moor natives of Ceilayo of whom there would be some fifty villages fought with as much courage and willingness as the Portuguese themselves. They always served with much loyalty upon which they greatly pride themselves, they being the only ones in India who were never found of deceit." The only obstacle in the way of political advancement of the Muslims of Ceylon is the insidious attempt to divide the Ceylon Muslims, ⁶ numbering 422,087 (to be exact) into many camps which should be discouraged.

In Ceylon as in other countries Islamic principles are adhered to without deviating from them. In this respect Muslim Theologians play an important role. But the extreme conservatism of some of the Theologians is barring the educational progress of Ceylon Muslims. And stil there are Muslim Theologians

6. Census 1946.

who are against a muslim acquiring knowledge in English!

Every Muslim is proud of the fact that there is no social distinction within his community and Islam preaches Universal Brotherhood. In a Mosque there is no distinction shown between a poor and rich follower of Islam. Even the burial of the dead among the Muslims is different from that of the rest of the island. All the Muslim dead bodies are wrapped in pure white cloth again showing no distinction of any kind, and buried in graves over which no monuments whatsoever, can be built.

Muslims in Ceylon have adopted some of the customs of the Tamils and

Sinhalese - the customs which are not opposed to the principles of Islam. Yet there are Muslims in Ceylon who for various reasons go as far as to perform devil dancing which will mean a violation of the fundamentals of Islam.

Ceylon, the Pearl in the Indian Ocean, needs the co-operation of its inhabitants irrespective of whether they are Buddhists, Hindus, Christians or Muslims for its progress towards freedom and economic prosperity. The followers of Islam in Ceylon too should contribute their share without which any achievement is incomplete.

M. M. UWISE



Islam's Contribution to Chemistry

by "One. Twenty-six"



ALCHEMY the science by which one endeavours to take the properties from minerals and give them properties which they did not possess is said to be derived from Egyptian *Kamit* or *Kemit*, "the black" or as some have thought, from Greek *chyma* "molten metal", while *kimiya* in Arabic means a substance, the means by which the transmutation of metals may be affected. So it is quite probable that "Alchemy" is derived from Arabic *alkimiya* since one of the fundamental assumptions of Alchemy is that all metals are in reality

the same, and consequently a transmutation of one into the other is possible.

Alchemy rested on the following assumptions of the Greeks and the Egyptians :- (a) that all metals are in reality the same and that consequently a transmutation of one into the other is possible, (b) that gold is the purest of all metals and silver next to it and (c) that there is a substance capable of continuously transforming base metals into pure metals and this substance was known as "philosophers's stone". These conceptions had the merit of provoking experiments but were

unfortunately accompanied by an inordinate tendency to theorize.

The Arabs took to this study at the time of the Umayyads and these alchemists relied very often on the alchemical writings of Greek authors like Hermes, Trismegisters, Ostone, Zosimus, Krate etc. The knowledge of their writings passed to Arabia after the conquest of Egypt (in 640 A. D.) by the Arabs and many of the Greek writings on alchemy are said to have been translated into Syriac or Arabic or both. Indeed it is recorded that the teacher of Khalid Ibn Yazid was a monk Marianus by name and that translations were prepared for him by Istifan-al-Kadim. Although they failed to attain their object, through it they became familiar with the treatment of metals and minerals. They also made considerable advances in technical and pharmaceutical sciences. The alchemists with the exception of a few after much experimental research assumed that metals differ from one another in accidental qualities and that it is possible to make the corresponding changes but it could not be carried out for practical reasons. Alchemy although long discredited and unsuccessful with the limited means of experiments has an experimental justification and the transmutation of chemical elements is now an accomplished fact.

The oldest Arab alchemist is Khalid Ibn Yazid whose writings are lost with the sole exception of a poem from which it is evident that he aimed at making gold. Prof. Ruska rejects the

theory that Khalid Ibn Yazid was the first of his race to study and compose alchemical books, but according to Fihrist, a Muslim encyclopedia of the tenth century, Khalid Ibn Yazid was the first to make this science popular in Islam. His fame is eclipsed by the next alchemist Abu Musa Jabir Ibn Hayyan (Geber). Although Jabir was a disciple of Khalid Ibn Yazid, yet he is considered to be the first to whom the title of alchemist may be applied.

About a hundred alchemical works are ascribed to Jabir, the most important ones being "Great Book of Properties", "Book of the Composition of Alchemy" and "The Book of Seventy". He defines Chemistry as that branch of natural science which investigates the properties and generations of minerals and of substances obtained from animals and plants. Hearsay and mere assertion according to Jabir have no authority in Chemistry. "*It must be taken as an absolute rigorous principle that any proposition which is not supported by proofs is nothing more than an assertion which may be true or false. It is only when a man brings proof of assertion that we say "your proposition is true"*". From this statement it is apparent that he has clearly stated the importance of experiments. Thus he made considerable advances both in theory and practice.

Physical processes such as filtration, distillation, crystallisation, sublimation, solidification, pulverisation, calcination, amalgamation and solution at high pressure and temperature which were known to the alchemists were improved by Jabir. In "The Book of Seventy" he describes

processes for the preparation of Steel, refinement of metals, and for dyeing of cloth and leather. He prepared many inorganic substances like verdigris (basic copper carbonate), litharge (plumbous oxide) and arsenious oxide. He prepared cinnabar (mercuric sulphide) by heating equal parts of mercury and sulphur, though the proportion required is 200 of mercury to 32 of sulphur; it should be noted that a considerable excess of sulphur is necessary for the reaction to take place smoothly. He also knew the preparation of pure vitriols, alums, saltpetre, liver of sulphur (by heating sulphur with alkali), sulphuric acid, nitric and hydrochloric acid and he knew that gold was soluble in a mixture of hydrochloric acid and nitric acid (aqua regia). He was acquainted with citric acid and many other organic substances.

The next alchemist Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zackariya-al-Razi (Rhazes) who appeared about hundred years after Jabir has written many books on alchemy. Although dependent on the same source as Jabir, Razi excels him in his exact classification of substances and in his clear description of chemical processes and apparatus. While Jabir and other alchemists divided mineral substances into "bodies" (metals) "souls" (non-metals) and "spirits" (liquids and volatile substances), Razi classifies alchemical substances as vegetable, animal or mineral which comes from him into modern speech. He divided minerals into spirits, bodies, stones, vitriols, boraxes and salts. He distinguished volatile "bodies" and

non-volatile "spirits" placing among the latter sulphur, mercury and arsenic. Mercury and lead were regarded by him as most nearly related to gold and from the periodic classification it can be seen that these are the two common metals which stand closest to gold in atomic mass and structure.

Razi was followed by many other alchemists like :—

1. Ibn Umail-al-Tamimi whose principle work is Miftah-al-Hikma-al-Uzma (Key of the Greatest Wisdom)
2. Al Farabi who wrote on the the necessity of the art of arts.
3. Maslam Ibn Ahamad Majriti who wrote al-Ulama (The Scholars)
4. Abu'l Hakim Muhammad Ibn Abdal Malik-al-Salihi-al-Khawarizin-al-Kathi who wrote (a) Kitab-al-Anwar wa'l Mufatih (Book of Light and Wisdom), (b) Mafatih-al-Rahman (Key of the Benevolent God) and (c) Anwar-al-Hikma (Light and Wisdom)
5. Abu'l Hassan Ibn Musa Ibn Arfa Ra's who wrote Shudur-al-Dhahab (Golden Particles)
6. Abu Qasim Muhammad Ibn Ahamad-al-Iraqi who was one of the last alchemists wrote Al-Muktasib fi Zirat-al.Dhahab

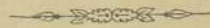
(knowledge acquired concerning the cultivation of gold or The Results of Golden Labour) from which it is apparent that the intrinsic interest of Iraqi's chemistry lies in the clarity of his thought and the logical precision of his argument, supported at every point by experimental facts; many of which he himself observed.

In the middle ages long after the conquest of Spain by the Arabs, the knowledge acquired by the Arabs from the Greek and Egyptian sources and extended by themselves percolated to Spain and then into many other European countries and in the thirteenth century, after many of the Arabic works were

translated, alchemy rose to a position of considerable importance. "Out of the incoherent body of mystical doctrines," says Holmyard in his "Chemistry up to the Time of Dalton", "which represented chemistry in the Alexandrian school, the Muslims had extracted a definite scientific system in which experimental fact and theoretical speculation were for the first time brought into their true relation..... The practical applications of Chemistry were acknowledged to be an important factor of the whole, so that Europe was to start its chemical studies with a firm basis of facts, a coherent body of doctrines and a realization of the value of chemistry to every day life, ready to hand. For this privilege of our ancestors let us haste to pay our homage to the followers of the Prophet".



Omar Khayyam and His English Translator.



SHIYATHUD Din Abul Fatah Omar bin Ibrahim belonged to a family of Khayyami or tent-makers (Arabic Khimantent). He was born at Nishapur in 1048 A. C. Endowed by nature with a quick intelligence, a retentive memory and a healthy constitution, he attained proficiency in many branches of learning under a scholar named Abu Hamid bin Mansur. His early years were spent at Balkh. When 18 he lost his father and had to interrupt his studies for a period to find a means of livelihood. A small tract he wrote on the solution of an algebraic

problem brought him to the notice of a rich and influential Shafi doctor at Samarkand. The tract has been identified by research scholars to have been on the Extension of the Indian method of extracting square roots and cube roots for extracting the root of higher order. This gentleman patronized Omar's education, introduced him to the Sultan Malik Shah and at the age of 27, had him appointed head of the observatory in Ispahan in 1074. Like the great mathematicians of the west, Newton, Newcomb, Lalande and Laplace, Omar distinguished himself as a

mathematician and astronomer while a youth of 25. He was reckoned in his time as second to Avicenna in sciences. But he combined besides this, other qualifications. He was the most informed Quran reader, an authority on the Traditions, proficient in history and languages. At the age of 30, he had developed poetical talents :

My evil fame has soared above the skies,
My joyless life above its thirty flies ;
But if I could, I'd drink a hundred toasts
For life so safe and freed from wedlock
ties.'

After a long period of ceaseless court-intrigue and crafty diplomacy he retired from public life and remained in seclusion.

' Seclusion is the only friend I find
To good or bad folks my eyes are blind;
First I must see how I shall fare at last,
Then think of others, if I'm so inclined.

He died in 1123. Omar was a Royal Astronomer and mathematician of repute but after the lapse of centuries his name is being cherished not for his scientific speculations but for those beautiful quatrains he wrote and preserved for his delight at leisure hours. He is more famous in the West than in his own country—thanks to the elegant translation of Edward Fitzgerald. " It was in the year 1859 that Fitzgerald launched without name his tiny craft, laden with what purported to be renderings of verses by a Persian writer, up to that time, in Europe

at least, almost quite unknown " ¹ For the great bulk of English readers the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam means the one particular translation done so wonderfully well by Fitzgerald when the Victorian era was at its most self-centred and self-sufficient stage of development. As is the case with all translations, this work made very little mark on its first appearance. For the translator of poetry and vision always stands between us and the original. In the case of this translation, however, the translator had given to it such a reconciling beauty and flavour of its own that the cultured did not take long to realise it. To realise how large a liberty Fitzgerald gave himself one should compare his version of the first verse in the Rubaiyat of 1859 with the amended form in 1868 :

' Awake for Morning in the Bowl of
Night
Has flung the stone that puts the
Stars to flight,
And lo ! the Hunter of the East
has caught
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of
Light.'

The later version runs :

' Wake ! For the Sun behind yon
Eastern height
Has chased the Session of the
Stars from Night,
And, to the field of Heaven
ascending strikes
The Sultan's Turret with a shaft of
Light.'

“Both are charming—many, I think, would hold that the latter is the better; but the existence of variants so widely different informs us definitely that Fitzgerald's rendering is an inspired paraphrase rather than a translation. He was westernizing, the better to acclimatize, his importation from Persia in the eleventh to England in the nineteenth century” says Laurence Housman.

The literal translation of another quatrain in comparison with Fitzgerald's will indicate the genius of the translator:

‘When life runs thus in Naishapur and
Balkh (does it matter where we are?)
When the cup of life always fills, what
matters if it be bitter or sweet
Drink wine for this same Moon that
shines on us
Shall wax and wane when we are no
more.’

Fitzgerald sets it aglow with a spark of poetic fancy.

‘Whether at Naishapur or Babylon
Whether the Cup with Sweet or Bitter
run
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by
drop
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by
one.’

As one reads this paraphrase of the Rubaiyat so full of ease and grace, so supple in its diction and imagery, one forgets that it is a translation. Fitzgerald by his superlative tact, had been able to catch the spirit in a western garb, though.

“East is East and West is West
and never the twain shall meet”

He had translated with such musical melancholy that in its English dress it outcharmed the Persian original and became an English classic. A chronic indolent, an astute critic of literature, a lover of solitude and mystery, a dreamer whose visions were haunted with a gloom and sensuousness—these were the qualifications of the translator. The translation of Faust presented far less difficulty to Coleridge in as much as the work belongs to the English genius; Fitzgerald had no literary propinquity with the creator of the original and yet he takes a rare poetic ornament of mediaeval East, refashions it with wonderful craft to the form of the West and retains the spirit of the original.

It is the common belief of an average reader, ignorant of Persian art of poesy and the use of imagery that the Rubaiyat is an embodiment of an Epicurean philosophy, “Eat, drink and be happy for tomorrow we die.” The poet is considered to be a heretic who was revolting against the temperate teachings of his faith and was consciously alive to the inexorable blow of death. His philosophy in the poem is construed to be a clarion call to mortals to live the short span of one's life most merrily unmindful of that

‘Undiscovered country from whose
bourne
No traveller returneth.’

It was this “ostensible ideology, which the English renderings of Fitzgerald

reflected, that appealed to the western mind of that period in England, imbued as it was with the doctrines of Mill, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndale and Darwin." 2

A superficial philosophy of a simple hedonist was far from the mind of the poet. Omar was a true believer of Islam—a Sufi of pure living and deep meditations. Thus of God he says :

‘He is, and nought but Him exists, I
know,
This truth is but Creation’s book will
show ;
When heart acquired perception with
this light,
Atheistic darkness changed to faithfully
glow.’

His life was the life of a mystic, baffled by the world, trying to seek an answer to ever-recurrent problems of life. Time, Space and the world they make have engaged the attention of men through all ages. Their speculations have brought forth a host of secular sciences. Omar’s reflections on this subject are neither scientific nor metaphysical. He calls the Charkh-i-Falak (the Wheel of Time) as a Fanus-i-Khiyali (an Imaginary Lantern).

‘Methinks this wheel at which
we gape and stare,
Is Chinese lantern, - like
we buy at fair;
The lamp is Sun and paper
shade the world,

And we the pictures whirling
unaware.’

Persian poetry is capable of interpretation in the material as well as mystic sense :

‘Ah, Moon of my Delight who
knows no wane,
The Moon of Heaven is rising
once again;
How oft hereafter rising shall
she look
Through this same Garden
after me - in vain.’

‘Come, fill the Cup and in the
Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of
Repentance fling;
The bird of Time has but a
little way
To fly - and lo, the Bird is
on the Wing.’

“The Persians identify the mortal and the Divine love and see in their beloved an image or revelation of God Himself. This makes their poems ambiguous and difficult of comprehension. Apostrophes to Love, Wine and Beauty often, with them, bear a frankly two-fold sense, material and spiritual.” 3

Omar’s constant complaint in his Rubaiyat is the transitoriness of life. Every quatrain expresses this idea in a unique way:

2 Sir Akbar Hydari in preface to “Nectar of Grace”

3 Edward Carpenter in “Iolaus- an anthology on friendship”

1. The Worldly Hope men set
their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes - or it prospers;
and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's
dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or
two - is gone.
2. Ah, make the most of what
we yet may spend,
Before we too into the dust
descend;
Dust into Dust, and under
Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song;
sans Singer and - sans End !
3. Into the Universe, and
why not knowing
Nor *whence*, like Water
willy - nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along
the Waste,
I know not *whither*,
willy - nilly blowing.
4. A Moment's Halt - a
momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well
amid the Waste

And lo :- the phantom Caravan
has reached
The NOTHING it set out from-
oh make haste.

5. Oh, threats of Hell and Hopes
of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain-
this life flies,
One thing is certain and
the rest is lies;
The flower that once has
blown for ever dies.

Khayyam's wine is the wine of
Divine ecstasy. His mysticism is that of
a philosopher and his intoxication that of
Divine love. In a world where life pre-
sented so many questions and was
shrouded in mystery "Why, not knowing,
nor whence I know not, whither"-
his search was for spiritual ecstasy so
that he might reach Him who knew the
answers, for "He that toss'd thee down
into the field, He knows about it all, He
knows - He knows."

TAMAM SHUD.

M. J. M. Muhsin.

"The moving Finger writes ; and, having writ
Moves on : nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a word of it"
Omar Khayyam

ARAB MEDICINE.

IN an age when no monarch with the rare exceptions of Charlemagne and Alfred the Great troubled himself in the slightest about the education of his subjects or the progress of science and literature, we find Caliphs after Caliphs, after Vizier, Vizier, establishing schools and libraries for the public benefit, and filling their courts with physicians and philosophers. Their remarkable generosity to the former would alone entitle them to the gratitude of the profession; even had the Arabs themselves made no scientific discoveries, they would at least deserve the praise of having encouraged others to do so. Whithington ¹ writes, in this connection citing an example of medical fees :—
 “A Nestorian physician received from an Arab prince so large an amount, in a single payment that he was able to found and endow a hospital therewith.” Then again from the same source :- “Another who was a bishop was presented by a Moslem Emir with a sum equal £ 2000 together with slaves and horses; but he returned them all due to a vow he made to practise gratis.”

In the year 632 there issued from the deserts of Arabia a people not entirely uncivilised, classed by more cultured neighbours as barbarians, armed with the tremendous forces of religious enthusiasm. Their display of physical vigour was followed by an intellectual activity hardly less wonderful. We shall see how soon

the rich and flexible tongue of Arabic was destined to become the scientific idiom of Near East just as Latin grew into the medium of scientific understanding in the West. It was this people who now took from the hands of unworthy successors of Galen and Hippocrates the flickering torch of Greek medicine. If they failed to restore its ancient splendour, they at least, prevented its extinction, and they handed it back after five centuries burning more brightly than before. In the memorable words of Dr. Sherwood Taylor ² “The light of Greek thought, though somewhat refracted in its passage through the Arab mind, came to illumine that of mediaeval Europe. Great advances in learning result, it seems, from the mingling of alien cultures, and Greek learning came to a second flowering where East met West.

The cradle of Arabic medicine was the Nestorian school at Jundeshapur in south-west Persia, where the first distinguished Arab physician, Harets bin Kaladah received his education. A contemporary of the Prophet, he was the first scientifically trained man in Arabia. After practising with success at the Persian court he returned to Arabia, and became the medical adviser to our Prophet himself, who recommended him to his successor, the first Caliph, Abu Bakr.

1. Whithington = Medical History.

2. Dr. S. Taylor — Diffusion of Greek Medicine = The Moslem Carriers.

*Age of Translation from about
750 to about 900 A. C.*

THE TRANSLATORS. The first of the five centuries (750 - 1250) during which Arabic writers represented the highest form of civilised medicine, was devoted to translation. History is almost silent about the scientific aims at the court of the Ummayyad Caliphs. But the rise of Abbasid dynasty inaugurated the epoch of greatest power, splendour, and prosperity of Islamic rule. There was a wonderful revival of learning under the enlightened Caliphs al-Mansur, Harun ar-Rashid, al-Ma'mun and al-Mu'tasim. The task of translation of Greek wisdom was taken up notably at Jundeshapur. The ninth century was the period of greatest activity in the task of translating. During the reign of Caliph Al-Ma'mun (813 - 833) the new learning reached its first climax. This monarch created in Baghdad a regular school for translating. Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, a gifted physician of erudition was the dominating figure of this century of translators. This Arab Christian spoken of as the Erasmus of the Arabic Renaissance, translated almost the whole of the immense corpus of Galenic writings comprising 100 Syriac and 39 Arabic versions of Galen's medical works. His disciples among whom his son Ishaq and nephew Hubaysh were most prominent produced 13 Syriac and 60 Arabic translations. Thus was transmitted to the Islamic world the whole legacy of the voluminous of the Greek scientific writers. The sciences were introduced into Islam through the medical schools and therefore it is not

surprising that their medical studies were worthy of attention. Hunayn's own compositions, for instance, were as numerous as his translations. The most renowned of his books were the Questions on Medicine and Ten treatises on the Eye—the earliest systematic text-book of ophthalmology known. The former a manual in the form of query and answer (prototype of the present day catechism series) was very much in favour with the students and this kind of medical literature had done much to give Arabic medicine its scholastic aspect.

*The Golden age from about 900
to about 1100. A. C.*

At the end of the period of translating, the Arabic physicians stood on a firm foundation of Greek science. Their work so far had been learned but not very original. Having seen to the propagation, they now took upon themselves the work of advancing that knowledge. From this time on they begin to rely upon their own resources and develop from within. From the hands of Christians and Sabians the medical sciences now passed into the possession of Muslims chiefly Persians. In place of pandects compiled from antique sources we find imposing encyclopaedic works in which the knowledge of former generations is carefully classified and set against that of the modern.

The first and the greatest of the writers of this new school is surely al-Razi (Rhazes, to the Latin west) 865-925. A Persian Muslim born at Rai near modern

Teheran Rhazes was undoubtedly the greatest physician of the Islamic world and one of the greatest physicians of all time. He studied in Baghdad under a disciple of Hunayn bin Ishaq. His erudition was all-embracing and his scientific output remarkable, amounting to over 200 works, half of which were medical books. As a physician he practised with a liberality to his poorer patients which, in spite of his fame kept him in comparative poverty, and with a boldness and originality which gained him the title of "The Experimenter." Rhazes is the most independent and therefore the most interesting of the Arabic writers on medicine. His writings on medicine included many short missives (Aphorisms) and others which treated separate diseases like stone in the bladder and kidney, common ailments, in the Near East. Here is an interesting case recorded in his Third book of Aphorisms³ which tended to justify his title.

"A young fellow who was with me at Jerusalem complained of palpitation melancholy and causeless fears. After trying many things, I told him to eat hawk's flesh flavoured with marjoram and cloves, to drink white wine instead of water and to inhale aromatic odours. Thereby he acquired fortitude and audacity, and so I cured him."

This and similar other cases given by Rhazes form the nearest approach to clinical histories to be found from the time of Galen to the "consilia" of the fourteenth century.

His most celebrated work is the treatise on smallpox and measles which is the oldest existing on record. It gives the first clear account of these two diseases that has come down to us, showing an observing spirit and deep clinical insight. His greatest medical work however is al-Hawi or "comprehensive book" where he cites all the Greek, Syrian, Arabic, Persian and Indian authors, and at the end gives his own opinions and experiences and preserves many striking examples of his clinical insight. This work in 1395 formed the most valuable of the nine volumes composing the whole library of the Medical Faculty of Paris. By 1542 five editions of this vast and costly work appeared and its influence on European medicine was thus very considerable.

A prominent contemporary of Rhazes was the writer known to the west as Isaac Judaeus (855 - 955). The books of Isaac chiefly his treatise "on Urine" dominated medicine for many centuries. Very remarkable is his little tract, "Guide for Physicians."⁴ It shows a high ethical conception of the medical profession. Some of the aphorisms in this work are worthy of record:— "Should adversity befall a physician, open not thy mouth to condemn, for each has his hour" "Neglect not to visit and treat the poor, for there is no nobler work than this" "Comfort the sufferer by the promise of healing, even when thou art not confident, for thus thou mayest assist his natural powers." "Treating the sick is like

3. Dr. Greenhill's translation.

4. Max Meyerhof M. D. = Legacy of Islam.

boring holes in pearls, and the physician must act with caution lest he destroy the jewels committed to his charge." "Let not thine own skill exalt thee and seek not honour in another's shame" Though he lived for a century he never married declaring that so long as his work on "Fevers" survived he needed no other offspring.

In the Eastern Caliphate there arose a generation of prominent physicians of whom the Persian Muslim, Haly Abbas (to the Latins) d. 994 deserves pride of place. He composed an excellent and compact Encyclopoedia "The Whole Medical Art" (al-Kitab al Maliki) which deals with the theory and practice of medicine. This was superseded however by the canon of great Avicenna. Abu Ali-al-Hussain Sina universally known as Avicenna to the West (980 - 1037) concentrated the legacy of Greek medical knowledge with the addition of the Arabs' contribution in his gigantic 'Course of Medicine' (al-Qanun fi't -Tibb). This deals with diseases affecting all parts of the body, from head to foot, also special pathology and pharmacopoeia. With Avicenna "the Prince and chief of physicians" Islamic medicine reached its zenith in the East. To this day veneration surrounds the tomb of this great physician at Hamadan in Western Persia.

Western Caliphate.

While the eastern Islamic world was gradually acquiring supremacy in medi-

cine, Western Islam also developed as a centre of this science.

In Spain during the glorious reign of the Caliphs Abdur - Rahman III and al-Hakam II, Cordova, capital of the Western Caliphate was worthy of its ancient Phoenician name Carta-Tuba, 'the great city.'

Christians who penetrated to Cordova in pursuit of "Saracenic studies" rarely escaped being accused of unlawful dealings with those powers of darkness by whose aid alone the infidels could have acquired wisdom. Gerbert the Frank studied medicine among other things in Spain and taught it at Rheims. We meet him again as Pope Sylvester II and find that not even the chair of St. Peter could save one of its most learned and pious occupants being considered the servant of Satan.

Such a civilisation could not fail to produce physicians comparable to those of the east and Rhazes, Haly Abbas and Avicenna might have found worthy competitors in Abulcasis, Avenzoar, and Averroes.

The Muslim Abdulkasim Khalaf bin Abbas, of Zahra, near Cordova, (known to the Latins as Abulcasis) was court physician to Al-Hakam II and he died at the ripe old age of 101 in A. C. 1013. His name is associated with a great medical Vade Mecum (al-Tasrif or 'Method') written in 30 sections the last of which deals with surgery, an art till then neglected by Islamic authors, which marked an epoch

in medical history. It was at once the first independent work on surgery, and the first illustrated treatise on that art; and helped to lay the foundations of surgery in Europe.

Ophthalmology was another branch of Medicine which reached its height about A. C. 1000. The Christian oculist 'Ali ibn 'Isa of Baghdad and the Muslim 'Ammar of Mosul left two excellent treatises, which were the best text-books on eye-disease until the first half of the 18th century when the Renaissance of ophthalmology set in France. They knew the treatment of cataract by the lowering of the crystalline lithotripsy, the treatment of haemorrhage by irrigations of water and the use of caustics, setons, and cauterization by fire.

Abu Merisan Abdul-Malik ibn "Zuhr was the greatest physician of the twelfth century next to Rhazes, the most original of the Arabs. His chief work is the Facilitation of Treatment known by its Arabic name of Al-Taysir. It gives proof of remarkable independence of thought, and besides describing pericarditis and mediastinal abscesses Avenzor (as he was known to the west) may perhaps claim the distinction of discovering the itch-mite (*Acarus scabiei*). He says after describing in detail but "through the goodness of God there are many things which will cure this disease" and though Avenzoar does not mention sulphur he specially recommends an application containing oil of bitter almonds. Avenzoar was the first who conceived the idea of broncho-

tomy and furthermore he diagnosed cancer of the stomach.

"The Muslims of this time held high distinctions in surgery and relied on the prescription or lancet of their physicians or on the bandage and scalpel of their surgeons; at a time when the peasant, fever stricken or overtaken by accident, hied to the nearest saint-shrine and expected miracles." (Seyed Zaidi — Europe's Debt to Islam). Abu Rayhan Muhammed al Biruni 973 - 1048 called the Master (al-Ustadh) a Persian, physician, astronomer, mathematician, physicist, geographer and historian is perhaps the most prominent figure in the *phalanx* of these universally learned Muslim scholars who characterize the Golden Age of Islamic science. He moreover composed a pharmacology (sayadala).

Hospitals and Institutions.

Hospitals were founded very early in the annals of Arabic Medicine probably on the models of the old celebrated academy-hospital of Jundeshapur. From the Persian name for this is derived the title used for a hospital throughout the Islamic World (Bimaristan). Caliph Welid founded the first Muslim Institution for sick as early as early as A. C. 707 with special arrangement for the blind and lepers.

On 14th of June 918 Sinan bin Tsabet opened the hospital founded by the lady Scidet in the Jahya market-place at Baghdad. Sinan was head physician but received no pay. The great Rhazes was requested to choose a site for one of

these hospitals. He ordered pieces of meat to be hung up in various parts of the city, declaring that the one in which putrefaction last appeared would mark the most suitable spot.

In Cairo the first hospital was founded by Ahmed ibn Toulun the first independent ruler of Egypt about A. C. 872 at a cost of £ 30,000 and still existed in the fifteenth century.

In Baghdad the first hospital was created at the order of Harun-ar-Rashid at the beginning of the 9th century and five others were installed during the tenth. Travelling hospitals (e. g. mobile Red Cross and X-ray units of the present times) were known in the eleventh century.

The Emir Nureddin founded a hospital that had never its like in the world. This contained besides an Ophthalmic clinic, a medical library and a lecture room; where the tall emaciated figure of Nureddin (Light and Defence of the Faith) himself might be sometimes seen among the listeners (says Khalid Daheri a contemporary chronicler).

Mansuri hospital at Cairo was founded by Sultan Al-Malik al Mansur with an endowment of £ 25,000 and well provided for from the King's Stores. This

patient received at his departure five pieces of gold (50 Sh) that he might not be obliged to return to work immediately.

The Islamic chronicles give very exact information concerning the administration of these institutions. The chief physicians and surgeons gave lectures to students, examined them, and gave diplomas (Ijaza). Then again arrangement were made for practical instruction. The hospitals were divided into two sections, for men and women, and each had its own wards and a dispensary. Many physicians were trained by an apprenticeship in the practice of a master often their father or uncle. Others journeyed to foreign towns in order to follow the lessons of some celebrated practitioner. A report from Spain says that a physician at Cadiz, installed in the parks of the governor a botanical garden in which he cultivated rare medicinal plants brought back from his travels.

The followers of the Prophet looked upon the dissection of human bodies with still greater horror than did the mediaeval Christians, and their religious guides held that even the question as to its legality was itself doubtful. Yet it was an Arab writer who first pointed the imperfections of the Galenic Anatomy.

logical studies in an ancient cemetery in the North-West of Cario. He checked and corrected Galen's description of the bone-jaw and of the sacrum. He noticed that the lower jaw consists of one bone and not of two as described by Galen. A diligent seeker in Anatomy, he tells us that he examined 200 lower jaws in every possible way, and got others to verify and they all came to the same conclusion. He also observed that the sacrum is composed of a single bone, and expressed his intention of writing a book of revised anatomy comparing Galen with Nature.

The Arabs invented the Apothecary whom they called "Sandalani" the sandal wood forming a common ingredient both of internal medicine and outward applications. An ambitious or fortunate apothecary sometimes developed into a physician as is shown by the following anecdote which also exemplifies the importance which the Arabs paid to Uroscopy. Issa al-Sandalani was standing one day at his shop door in Baghdad, when a harem attendant went by carrying a urine glass to a neighbouring physician. "Whose is that?" asked Issa "Some old woman's." "Say rather the mother of a mighty prince", replied the joking apothecary. The Caliph al-Mahdi heard the story, and when his favourite wife presented him with a son, the fortunate Issa was astonished to receive £ 150, two robes of honour, and most important of all an appointment at the palace. He was equally prosperous under Al-Mahdi's son Haroun-Al-Rashid. That immortal Caliph, disgusted with the corpulence of his cousin Issa bin Jiafer bin Al Mansur, declared

he would give £ 5000 to anyone who would make him thin, and that the patient should pay an equal sum. Issa, the apothecary got the money, but his mode of treatment has unfortunately not been preserved.

Arabia Felix was the land of myrrh and frankincense, and we owe to the Arabs the introduction of several new remedies. The first Pharmacopoeia was issued from the hospital at Jundeshapur but of more importance are the works on Materia Medica ascribed to Mesuë the younger. These formed the foundation of the Western Pharmacopœias, were published in more than thirty editions and were consulted up to the beginning of the last century. Besides the above mentioned services to Medicine the Arabs so carefully described several new diseases, that it was probably through them that first regulations as to medical education were copied and above all that it was their writings which mainly contributed to that brilliant though abortive revival of learning which marks the thirteenth century.

There exists no doubt about the stupendous progress made by modern Science which is also the basis for progress in the realm of Medicine. When one studies the lines on which modern chemical science has evolved one is dazzled by the brilliant fillip given to its evolution in the West by the early Arab Alchemists. These Alchemists as the name would suggest were concerned with the transmutation of the baser metals into gold. It was in the wake of these

alchemical works that these early Arabs discovered Sulphuric Acid as well as Nitric Acid. The germ of the idea-Alchemy-however, prevailed and later took germination and held on in the west. In those early days the method was the method of the Alchemist, the quest was gold, the end of all scientific research was material prosperity measured in terms of precious gold - but this goal was still far off. Something more precious than gold itself was distilled off those early Alchemical stills. This something could neither be bought nor sold at any market-place. No

robber could steal this precious gold this quintessence of alchemy bequeathed unto us in modern times in the form and shape, colour and weight, of a pure and simple store of "Knowledge". This then for us is the gold of the alchemist and science today is in a great measure indebted to those early Arab Alchemists, who in their turn could philosophically utter with us "For aint there as much Gold in KNOWLEDGE"

M. S. GHOUSE.

SULTANA RAZIYA.

The only queen in the history of Muslims in India.

"**W**AS a great sovereign, sagacious, just, beneficent, the patron of the learned, a dispenser of justice, the cherisher of her subjects, and of warlike talent, and was endowed with all the admirable attributes and qualifications necessary for kings." So wrote Minhaj-us-Siraj, the contemporary Muslim historian about the only queen in the history of the Muslims in India. She was Sultana Raziya.

The period A. D. 1206 - 1290 saw for the first time the consolidation of Muslim power in India. For roughly eight long decades the Muslim Turks had ruled India with Delhi as their Capital, and their dynasty commencing from Qutb-ud-din Aibak and ending with Kaiqubad has been called, the dynasty of the Ilbari

Turks, or by some, the Slave Dynasty, so called as they originally came to India as servants taking service under the earlier Muslim conquerors and then gradually displaced their masters by sheer dint of personal ability and strength of character. To mention some of the more important rulers of this dynasty, they are Qutb-ud-din Aibak, Iltutmish, Raziya, and Ghiyas-ud-din Balban. These sultans spared no pains and left no stone unturned in their attempt to establish a strong and centralized government in the areas under their sway. We have ample contemporary historical evidence which shed a flood of light on the day-to-day activities of these sultans. Efficient government was their primary motive and in their attempt to make the existing government efficient they committed

such acts of severity as condemning to death the turbulent chieftains without any trial that historians to-day have misinterpreted this to mean as something arising out of cruelty in their character. Vincent Smith is one of them, in whose character-sketches of the sultans one finds little or no justification. Although some of the acts can be interpreted as cruel yet the pure and unbiased motive behind such acts is plain and simple. It was the burning desire to maintain a strong government for the entire good of the people. It is, however, the opinion of the Cambridge historians that their rule "was not a homogenous political entity." 1 Yet Sir Wolsey Haig rightly remarks that the rule of this slave dynasty could be favourably compared with the rule of the Normans in England. It has also been conjectured by some scholars that had the abler rulers of the calibre of Qutub-uddin, Iltutmish and Raziya, come in rapid peaceful succession one after another, then perhaps the whole of India, both north and south, would have come under their sway and the history of their rule in India would be something quite different from what it is to-day.

Sultana Raziya was the third of the great rulers of this Turkish dynasty. She was the daughter of Iltutmish. The eldest son of Iltutmish had died while being the governor of Bengal during his father's life time; and Iltutmish as a ruler with vision and foresight avoided the nomination of his sons to his throne, as they were weak and lacked the qualities of an

able ruler, and instead, chose his daughter Raziya to succeed to his throne after him. This choice, however did not quite please the Muslim nobles who did not want the task of government to fall into female hands. Derogatory to the wish of the late sultan they chose the eldest surviving son Firuz, who being addicted to low tastes and ill habits was not fit for the task. The affairs of the state deteriorated under him and the nobles very soon realized their mistake. They promptly put Firuz in prison and placed Raziya on the much coveted throne of Delhi. She stayed the rot that had set in during her brother's period and which was now eating into the body politics of the country. This happened in 1236. A. D. With Sultana Raziya begins a new chapter in the history of the Turks in India—a chapter full of life and light.

Endowed, as she was with all the qualities of an able ruler, she found no difficulty in bringing the different parts of the Sultanate together. Over Punjab and Hindustan she established her supremacy, and even the distant provinces of Bengal and Sind accepted her suzerainty. "From Debal to Lakhnauti and Damrillah all the maliks and Amirs manifested their obedience and submission" 2

A section of the nobles under the leadership of Junaidi, the wazir of the kingdom, attempted to organize a permanent opposition against the Sultana but Raziya quickly won them over by her clever tactfulness and diplomacy.

1. Vide Camb. Hist. Vol. III.

2. Thabaqati - Nasiri — Minhaj - us - siraj.

In all, her reign lasted roughly three and half years. Though it was a short period of rule for any Sultan, yet it was one which was quite eventful. Sultana Raziya may be said to have accomplished in three and half years what others did in, say, thirty years. She dispensed justice herself in open court. She rode on horse back through the public high-ways, stopping now and then, here and there, inquiring of the living conditions from the people. In this respect she may be compared with the Caliphs of Islam who went out either in true person or in disguise studying the reactions of the subjects to the government enforced on them. All this Raziya did without observing the popular mode of purdah, which she felt was a real hindrance to her functions as an able and practical ruler. She is even supposed to have led her armies personally to battlefield and dressed herself in the garments of men in an attempt to play the King in all spheres. The nobles, who at one time refused to bow down to the authority of a woman, now, however tolerated her even when she discarded her purdah. This may be a very interesting and instructive observation to us, Muslims living in this year of grace nineteen hundred and forty seven, to whom this institution of purdah is a matter of so great controversy.

Fate had however decreed, if we may say so, that Raziya's shall not be a long, peaceful reign. Signs of stir appeared and trouble soon broke out when Raziya

showed special favours to her Abyssinian slave, Jalaluddin Yaqut by name, who had been raised to the rank of master of stables. She would often extend her soft tender hands to Yaqut that he might lift and place her on the saddled horse; and some records even point to the number of occasions on which she and Yaqut rode alone and spent many happy hours together. Certainly there is no justification at all for us to associate anything bad with this attitude of Raziya, for we know from records that her private life had been clean. She was God-fearing and Ferishta, another historian even comments on her ability to read the Holy Quran fluently with correct pronunciations. Nevertheless, different writers have commented differently on this attitude of Raziya which showed undue favour and inclination of mind towards Yaqut-an attitude which offended the Muslim nobles to such an extent that they organized themselves into a permanent opposition to the queen. The popular prejudice arising out of this unhappy situation eventually brought about the queen's tragic downfall. Herein appeared the first crack in the mighty edifice created by the forceful personality of Sultana Raziya.

Some writers have traced and spoken of her relationship with the Abyssinian slave as something criminal.³ But contemporary Muslim chroniclers like Minhaj-us-Siraj and Ferishta do not subscribe to this view. Minhaj writes that the Abyssinian slave only "acquired favour

in attendance upon the Sultan" ⁴ while Ferishta remarks that "a very great degree of familiarity was observed to exist between the queen and Abyssinian." ⁵ Thomas a much more modern writer casts a slur on the character of the queen without sufficient justification. "It was not that a virgin queen was forbidden to love - she might have indulged in a submissive Prince Consort or revelled almost unchecked in the dark recesses of the palace harem, but wayward fancy pointed in a wrong direction, and led her to prefer a person employed about her court, an Abyssinian moreover, the favours extended to whom the Turki nobles resented with one accord." ⁶

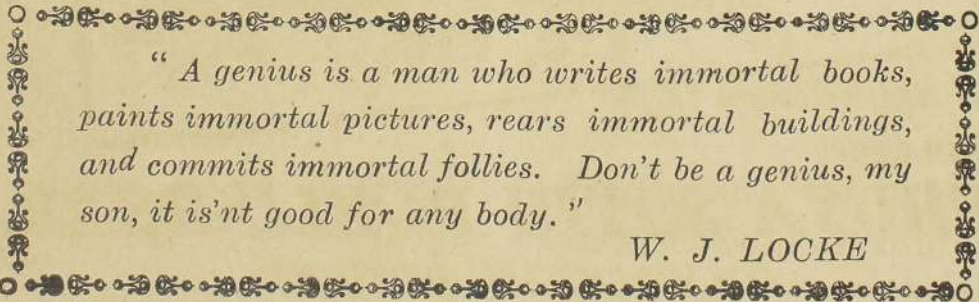
Everywhere nobles, and people instigated by the nobles were now seething with bitter hatred towards the queen. Altuniya, the governor of Sirhind ignited the whole situation when he first raised the standards of revolt, and the gigantic consuming flames so produced gradually devoured the authority of the

queen, Raziya however marched in person with a huge army to suppress the rebel nobles. But she was at last overwhelmed, the slave was slain and she was herself imprisoned under Altuniya. Her brother Muizuddin Bahram was declared Sultan. Raziya however made a final attempt to win back her throne by marrying Altuniya and marching with him against her brother. This was of no avail. On 13th October 1240 she and her husband were defeated and later slain. This incident clearly shows how much popular prejudice can do in the making or marring of persons. Thus ended the life under very tragic circumstances of the noble queen whose reign of three and half years in India was marked by distinct progress, peace and prosperity in striking contrast to the earlier period of stagnation and chaos of her immediate predecessor. To her goes the credit of attempting to make Muslim rule in India a living reality.

M. H. M. RALLY.



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4. Tabaqati Nasiri - Minhaj - us - Siraj - translated by Maj. Raverty, Vol. 1
 5. Ferishta - Briggs Vol. 1 Pg. 220.
 6. Chronicles of the Pathan kings of Delhi - Thomas.



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 and commits immortal follies. Don't be a genius, my
 son, it is'nt good for any body."*

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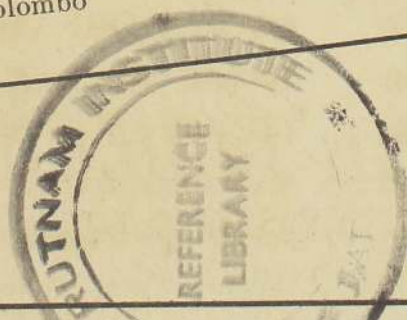
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DIVINE PERSONALITY.

Dominant Emphases in Islam and in Christianity

BY

A. M. K. Cumaraswamy Esqr. B. Sc. (Lond.)

(Registrar, University of Ceylon)



HERE is nothing polemic about this note. It is written in response to a friendly request by the Editor, and it is written by a Christian who believes that the three great monotheistic religions of the world which derive their ethos in some measure through the Mosaic Law have a unique contribution to make to the religious thought of man-kind. The transcendence of God, Most High, and His utter other-ness are of the *esse* of the theology of the Semitic religions, and while scholars and devotees may challenge the validity or value of this emphasis, they would concede without difficulty that this element is practically absent in the religions of the Graeco-Roman world, and hardly present in the religions of India or China. One does not wish to be dogmatic, but one would assert one's conviction that the sense of the numinous does not "*belong*" in the religions of China and India.

Indian religious thought has fought shy of a personal Deity, by a mistaken fear that an anthropomorphic deity might be the ultimate crystallisation. The difficulty of adequately translating, into Sinhalese or Tamil or into any Indian language, the English words *personal* and *personality* is evidence of the fact that this conception of other-ness is ab-

sent in the religious philosophy of India, except to the extent that Semitic thought has made some infiltration. It is not to be wondered at that an appreciation of this other-ness is only possible where prophets exist and where revelation is a feature. Where there is no vision, the people perish. In Sure XVIII—The Cave - the Quran makes this admonition;—"There are those who *believe* not in the signs of the Lord, or that they shall ever meet Him. Vain, therefore, are their *works*; and no weight will we allow them on the day of resurrection. This shall be their reward - Hell. Because they were *unbelievers*, and treated my signs and my Apostles with scorn."

While the Lord of the Universe is too big a Being for our comprehension, He is compassionate and accessible to seeking souls. Communion with the Most High and mystical experience are the goal of the seeking soul, but anything savouring of absorption is derogatory to God's absolute majesty. Pantheistic monism, so dear to one school of Hinduism, is repugnant to Judaism, to Islam and to Christianity. In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, we read of the Prophet's vision of God. The Seraphim cover their faces with two of their wings, and one cries unto another - "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord

of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory." Isaiah's reaction is not one of elation, but of prostration - "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: and mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

Thus far is common ground in the three theologies of Semitic origin. But the Jews and the Muslims part company with Christians, when the latter claim on the strength of revelation that Transcendent Deity is only one aspect of God-head, and that Incarnation and Indwelling are Divine entrances into the human plane.

Islam avoids these emphases as detracting from God's supreme and unique transcendence, though the Quran extols Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary and lends solid support for the belief that Jesus had no earthly father. This nevertheless is a moot point among our Muslim friends, as also the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Christian formulations strike Muslim theologians as dangerously compromising God's One-ness and His other-ness, while the Muslim *emphasis* of the Transcendental strikes Christians as sterilising the splendour of Divine Supra-personality.



IBN BATTUTA IN CEYLON



[*Ibn Battuta (1304-1369) was a Moorish traveller who visited Ceylon in 1344. (745 A. H.). He is held a globe trotter of great repute. His work provides entertaining reading as regards the historical and religious background of his century. He is the supreme example of le geographe malgre liu, whose geographical knowledge was gained entirely from personal experiences and the information of chance acquaintances. The people of Ceylon can reconstruct before their mind's eye a true picture of the affairs of Ceylon in the fourteenth century as narrated by a Muslim traveller of the age, who was an eye-witness of all what he wrote. Histories and biographies cannot claim to be as realistic as works of travellers of the age. The following extract is reproduced from "Ibn Battuta-Travels in Asia and Africa (1325-1354)" translated and edited by H. A. R. Gibb (Broadway Travellers - Ed. I. Z)*]

WE set sail without an experienced pilot on board, the distance between the island and Ma'bar (Coromandel) being a three days' journey, and travelled for nine days, emerging on the ninth day at the island of Saylan (Ceylon). We saw the

mountain of Sarandib there, rising into the heavens like a column of smoke.¹ When we came to the island, the sailors said "This port is not in the territory of the sultan whose country can safely be visited by merchants. It is in the territory of

1. The "mountain of Serendib" is Adam's Peak. Serendib is the old Arabic and Persian name of Ceylon (commonly derived from the Sanskrit *Simhala-dvipa*, Lion-dwelling-island), which was gradually replaced by the Pali form *Sihalam* = Saylan = Ceylon.

Sultan Ayri Shakarwati, who is an evil tyrant and keeps private vessels." ² We were afraid to put into this harbour, but as a gale arose thereafter and we dreaded the sinking of the ship, I said to the captain "Put me ashore and I shall get you a safe conduct from this sultan." He did as I asked and put me ashore, whereupon the infidels came to us and said "What are you?" I told them that I was the brother-in-law and friend of the sultan of Ma'bar, that I had come to visit him, and that the contents of the ship were a present for him. They went to their sultan and informed him of this. Thereupon he summoned me, and I visited him in the town of Battala (Puttalam), which is his capital. It is a small and pretty town, surrounded by a wooden wall with wooden towers. The whole of its coasts are covered with cinnamon trees brought down by torrents and heaped up like hills on the shore. They are taken without payment by the people of Ma'bar and Mulaybar, but in return for this they give presents of woven stuffs and similar articles to the sultan. It is a day and a night's journey from this island to the land of Ma'bar.

When I entered the presence of the infidel Sultan Ayri Shakarwati, he rose to me, seated me beside him, and spoke most kindly to me. He said "Your companions may land in safety and will be my guests until they sail, for the sultan of

Ma'bar and I are friends." He then ordered me to be lodged and I stayed with him three days, enjoying great consideration which increased every day. He understood Persian and was delighted with tales I told him of kings and countries. One day, after presenting me with some valuable pearls, he said "Do not be shy, but ask me for anything that you want." I replied "Since reaching this island I have had but one desire, to visit the blessed Foot of Adam." (They call Adam Baba, and Eve they call Mama.) "That is simple," he answered, "We shall send an escort with you to take you to it." "That is what I want," said I, then I added "And this ship that I came in can set out in safety for Ma'bar, and when I return you will send me in your own vessels." "Certainly" he replied. When I related this to the captain, however, he said to me "I shall not sail until you return, even if I wait a year on your account," so I told the sultan of this, and he said "He will remain as my guest until you come back."

The sultan then gave me a palanquin, which was carried by his slaves, and sent with me four Yogis, whose custom it is to make an annual pilgrimage to the Foot, three Brahmans,³ ten other persons from his entourage, and fifteen men to carry provisions. Water is plentiful along that road. On the first day we encamped beside a river, which we crossed on a raft, made

2. The old Sinhalese kingdom of Ceylon was invaded about 1314 by the Pandyas, whose own kingdom at Madura in Ma'bar, which had existed since at least the third century B. C., was in the hands of the Muhammadans. The leader of the invaders was Arya Chakravarti, but Ibn Battuta's patron was more probably a later general of the same name, who in 1371 erected forts at Colombo and elsewhere. The seat of the Pandyas was in the island of Jaffna.

3. The hollow on the summit of Adam's peak, venerated by the Muslims as the imprint of Adam's foot, was equally venerated by the Brahmans and the Buddhists, as the mark of Siva's and Buddha's foot respectively.

of bamboo canes. Thence we journeyed to Manar Mandali (Minneri-Mandel), a fine town situated at the extremity of the sultan's territories. The inhabitants entertained us with a fine banquet, the chief dish at which was buffalo calves, which they hunt in a forest there and bring alive. After passing the small town of Bandar Salawat (Chilaw) our way lay through rugged country intersected with streams. In this part there are many elephants, but they do no harm to pilgrims and strangers, through the blessed favour of the Shaykh Abu 'Abdallah, who was the first to open up this road for the pilgrimage to the Foot. These infidels used formerly to prevent Muslims from making this pilgrimage and would maltreat them, and neither eat nor trade with them, but since the adventure that happened to the Shaykh, as we have related above⁴, they honour the Muslims, allow them to enter their houses, eat with them, and have no suspicions regarding their dealing with their wives and children. To this day they continue to pay the greatest veneration to this Shaykh, and call him "the Great Shaykh."

After this we came to the town of Kunakar, which is the capital of the principal sultan in this land.⁵ It lies in a narrow valley between two hills, near a great lake called the Lake of Rubies, because rubies are found in it. Outside the town is the mosque of Shaykh 'Othman of Shiraz, known as the Shawush; the sultan and inhabitants visit

his tomb and venerate him. He was the guide to the Foot, and when his hand and foot were cut off, his sons and slaves took his place as guides. The reason for his mutilation was that he killed a cow. The Hindu infidels have a law that anyone who kills a cow is slaughtered in the same fashion or else put in its skin and burned. As Shaykh 'Othman was so highly revered by them, they cut off his hand and foot instead, and assigned to him the revenues of one of the bazaars. The sultan of Kunakar is called the Kunar, and possesses a white elephant, the only white elephant I have seen in the whole world. He rides on it at festivals and puts great rubies on its forehead. The marvellous rubies called *bahraman* (carbuncles) are found only in this town. Some are taken from the lake and these are regarded by them as the most valuable, and some are obtained by digging. In the island of Ceylon rubies are found in all parts. The land is private property, and a man buys a parcel of it and digs for rubies. Some of them are red, some yellow (topazes), and some blue (sapphires). Their custom is that all rubies of the value of a hundred *fanams* belong to the sultan, who pays their price and takes them; those of less value belong to the finders. A hundred *fanams* equal in value six gold dinars.

We went on from Kunakar and halted at a cave called after Usta Mahmud the Luri, a pious man who dug out this

4. Vide *Islamica Zeylanica* pp. 4-5.

5. Kunakar is certainly Kornegalle (Kurunagala), the residence of the old dynasty of Sinhalese kings at this period. The name Kunar is explained as Sanskrit *Kunwar*, "Prince."

cave at the foot of a hill beside a small lake. Thence we travelled to the Lake of Monkeys. There are in these mountains vast numbers of monkeys. They are black and have long tails, and their males are bearded like men. Shaykh 'Othman and his sons and others as well told me that these monkeys have a chief, whom they obey as if he were a king. He fastens on his head a fillet of leaves and leans upon a staff. On his right and his left are four monkeys carrying staves in their hands. When the chief monkey sits down the four monkeys stand behind him, and his female and young come and sit in front of him every day. The other monkeys come and sit at a distance from him, then one of the four monkeys addresses them and all the monkeys withdraw. After this each one brings a banana or a lemon or some such fruit, and the monkey chief with his young and the four monkeys eat. One of the Yogis told me that he had seen the four monkeys in the presence of their chief beating a monkey with sticks and after the beating pulling out its hair. We continued our journey to a place called "The Old Woman's Hut," which is the end of the inhabited part, and marched thence by a number of grottoes. In this place we saw the flying leech, which sits on trees and in the vegetation near water. When a man approaches it jumps out at him, and wheresoever it alights on his body the blood flows freely. The inhabitants keep a lemon in readiness for it; they squeeze this over it and it falls off them, then they

scrape the place on which it alighted with a wooden knife which they have for the purpose.

The mountain of Sarandib (Adam's Peak) is one of the highest in the world. We saw it from the sea when we were nine days' journey away, and when we climbed it we saw the clouds below us, shutting out our view of its base. On it there are many ever-green trees and flowers of various colours, including a red rose as big as the palm of a hand. There are two tracks on the mountain leading to the foot, one called Baba track and the other Mama track, meaning Adam and Eve. The Mama track is easy and is the route by which the pilgrims return, but anyone who goes by that way is not considered by them to have made the pilgrimage at all. The Baba track is difficult and stiff climbing. Former generations cut a sort of stairway on the mountain, and fixed iron stanchions on it, to which they attached chains for climbers to hold on by.⁶ There are ten such chains, two at the foot of the hill by the "threshold," seven successive chains farther on, and the tenth is the "Chain of the Profession of Faith," so called because when one reaches it and looks down to the foot of the hill, he is seized by apprehensions and recites the profession of faith for fear of falling. When you climb past this chain you find a rough track. From the tenth chain to the grotto of Khidr is seven miles; this grotto lies in a wide plateau, and near by it is a spring full of fish, but no one catches them. Close to

6. These chains are still in existence.

this there are two tanks cut in the rock on either side of the path. At the grotto of Khidr the pilgrims leave their belongings and ascend thence for two miles to the summit of the mountain where the Foot is.

The blessed Footprint, the Foot of our father Adam, is on a lofty black rock in a wide plateau. The blessed Foot sank into the rock far enough to leave its impression hollowed out. It is eleven spans long. In ancient days the Chinese came here and cut out of the rock the mark of the great toe and the adjoining parts. They put this in a temple at Zaytun, where it is visited by men from the farthest parts of the land. In the rock where the Foot is there are nine holes cut out, in which the infidel pilgrims place offerings of gold, precious stones, and jewels. You can see the darwishes, after they reach the grotto of Khidr, racing one another to take what there is in these holes. We, for our part, found nothing in them but a few stones and a little gold, which we gave to the guide. It is customary for the pilgrims to stay at the grotto of Khidr for three days, visiting the Foot every morning and evening, and we followed this practice. When the three days were over we returned by the Mama track, halting at a number of villages on the mountain. At the foot of the mountain there is an ancient tree whose leaves never fall, situated in a place that cannot be got at. I have never met anyone who has seen its leaves. I saw

there a number of Yogis who never quit the base of the mountain waiting for its leaves to fall. They tell lying tales about it, one being that whosoever eats of it regains his youth, even if he be an old man, but that is false. Beneath the mountain is the great lake from which the rubies are taken ; its water is a bright blue to the sight.

We travelled thence to Dinawar, a large town on the coast, inhabited by merchants. In this town there is an idol, known as Dinawar, in a vast temple, ⁷ in which there are about a thousand Brahmans and Yogis, and about five hundred women, daughters of the idol. The city and all its revenues form an endowment belonging to the idol, from which all who live in the temple and who visit it are supplied with food. The idol itself is of gold, about a man's height, and in the place of its eyes it has two great rubies, which, as I was told, shine at night like lamps. We went on to the town of Qali (Point de Galle), a small place eighteen miles from Dinawar, and journeyed thence to the town of Kalanbu (Colombo), which is one of the finest and largest towns in Ceylon. In it resides the wazir and ruler of the sea Jalasti, who has with him about five hundred Abyssinians. Three days after leaving Kalanbu we reached Battala again and visited the sultan of whom we have spoken above. I found the captain Ibrahim awaiting me and we set sail for the land of Ma'bar.

7. Dinawar (which is properly the name of a medieval town in Kurdistan, to the N. E. of Kirmanshah) here stands for Dewandera, the site of a famous temple of Vishnu (destroyed by the Portuguese in 1587), near Dondra Head, the southernmost point of Ceylon.

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ARAB HISTORIANS

BY

M. J. M. M.



HISTORY is a subject which furnishes one of the most copious departments of Arabic literature. Wustenfeld collected a list of Arab historians of the first century A. H. and found it to amount to 590 authors. The work of many of the Arab historians is colossal in magnitude. Tabari (*d.* 310) proposed to dictate to his students a book that would cover 30,000 pages but when his students held that life would be too short for such a stupendous work, he reduced it to the size in which we have it now. The titles of the work of Al Madaini (*d.* 225) fill more than five pages while those of Ibn Asakir start with a history of Damascus in a hundred volumes. Tabari's work, vast though it is, cannot compare with that of Dhahabi of the eighth century. Such is the colossal size of Arab historical works.

History began with the *Maghazi*-history devoted to the story of Prophet Muhammad's wars. Pre-Islamic history as such never existed. History of the pre-Islamic Arabs was their poetry. "Poetry is the register of the Arabs" is a saying that conveys the means which poetry served as a record of their history. Battles, genealogies, names of places and tribes - all these found a place in the poems and extraordinarily retentive being the memory which they possessed, these poems were inscribed in their minds and

served as historical records to be passed from generation to generation. Arab history proper, therefore starts with the study of the Prophet's Holy Wars and his sayings (Hadith). The most renowned traditionist of the Ummayyad period was Az Zuhri (*d.* 742-A.C.) Besides the collection of Hadith literature which was mostly due to the necessity to obtain information about the Law Giver so as to establish Muslim Law of which Hadith forms an important part, firmly and true to the preachings of the Prophet, there were sporadic attempts at story-telling that resulted too soon in collections of a historical character. The Yemenite Ubayd b. Sharyah who on the invitation of Caliph Muawiyah went to Damascus, composed a book *Kitab ul Muluk wa Akhbar ul Madin* (The book of kings and the history of the ancients). This book was widely in circulation when Masudi (*d.* 956) wrote his books. Unfortunately few of those works composed under the Ummayyads have been preserved. The majority of the earliest historical writings dates from the Abbaside period.

Hence, the first subject matter for history came from the oral legends and anecdotes of pre-Islamic days, and the traditions gathered around the Holy Prophet of Arabia.

Prof. de Goeje speaks of Ibn Uqba's (*a.* 758) Magazi and Abu Mikhnaf's Monograph on Important Events from the time of Hazrat Abu Bakr to that of Welid II as the oldest historical works known to us. All that we know of them is from the extracts which later writers have made and used in their works. These two works belong to the last days of the Ummayyads. The oldest historical work of the Abbaside period is the chronologically arranged collections of traditions relating to the life of the Prophet-Sirat ur Rasul-Allah. Its author Ibn Ishaq (767 A. C.) composed it at the instance of Caliph Mansur. The original is lost. The book that has come down to us is the one that passed through the hands of Ibn Hisham (206 A. H.) who without interfering with the text has enriched it with critical and philological notes. He devotes particular attention to the examples of ancient poetry and critically analyses its formation, structure, use of words and subject like a philologist.

It is worth considering why the Abbaside Caliphs thought it fit to instruct learned scholars to compose these histories. The Caliphs claimed the right to rule the Muslims by virtue of their affinity with the Ahl-Bait and religious feeling had to be sustained, for them to rule peacefully. Histories, therefore, of the Prophet's sayings and deeds would indirectly bring back to the minds of the Muslims past memories of their beloved Prophet and this would add to the glory of the dynasty, for busying itself with religious work. Persian models of history

were also existing at this time such as Khuday-nama or Book of Kings which Ibnul Muqaffa turned into Arabic in the eighth century and it is but natural for the Abbaside Caliphs to work in that direction so as not to be in any way behind the Persians whom the Muslims had subdued and brought under their sway.

Waqidi is a historian of the same time as Ibn Hisham. He gathered together an immense collection of biographical and historical material on the history of Islam right up to his own time. In the history of the companions of the Prophet, he shows notable advance on his predecessors. Without restricting himself to the life of the Prophet and the history of Islam, he deals with foreign countries and peoples because foreign conquests had now opened new vistas of knowledge to the authors. Fihrist states that Waqidi wrote 28 books. His Kitabul Maghazi - a great historical work - was continued by his disciple Ibn Saad who wrote Tabaqat. Madaini, younger than Waqidi, wrote a history of the Caliphs. He was especially conversant with the history of the Eastern lands of the Caliphate. The Fihrist enumerates 111 titles of books written by him on the history of the Prophet, of the tribe of Quraysh, and of the Caliphs. His name indicates his connection with Ctesiphon (Madain).

Among the first formal historians was Ibn Qutayba (*a.* 889). His Kitabul Ma'arif is a manual of history. Another, Dinawari wrote Al Akhbar-ul Tuval, a universal history from a Persian point of view.

Al Ya'qubi, a contemporary of Dinawari produced a work which preserved the ancient Shi'ite tradition in an unfalsified manner. Ahmad b. Yahya al Belathuri (*d.* 892) a Persian wrote an account of the early Muslim conquests (Kitab Futuh-ul Buldan) and a chronicle based on genealogy - Kitab Ansab-al-Ashraf (The Book of Lineages of Nobles). He enjoyed the special favours of Caliph Mutawakkil. Gradually history is found to become more and more extensive. Narrow view of history gives way to a universal treatment such that it will contain information on matters that would interest the cultured. The Muslim's pet subjects like the Prophet's life and Muslim conquests are now superseded by a more comprehensive study of history. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Tabari (838-923) stands pre-eminent and foremost among those Arab historians who viewed history in such a light. His fame rests mainly on his remarkably accurate and elaborate history Akhbar-ul Rusul wal Mamalik (15 volumes Leyden) and his commentary on the Quran Jami'ul Bayan fi Tafsir-al-Quran (30 vols. Bulaq). Like most Muslim historians Tabari arranges the events chronologically tabulating them under successive years of the Hijra. His history begins with the creation of the world and goes down to A. H. 302 (915). This monumental work in Arabic on universal history served as a source for later historians like Miskawaih, ibn Athir and Abul Fida. His commentary of the Qur'an likewise became a standard work for later commentators. An idea of his industry and enthusiasm for learn-

ing may be gained from the popular tradition that during forty years Tabari wrote forty sheets everyday as stated by Yaqut in his Mu'jam.

In the person of Masudi (*d.* 956) we have the first historian to introduce the historical anecdote. A traveller of fame, Masudi's style of writing is both delightful and instructive. He doesn't in anyway worry his reader with names of authorities but he writes on all those wonderful and rare things he had seen, heard and read and weaves around them most interesting anecdotes. His Akhbar-uz Zaman which covered 30 volumes, he redacted into a work of smaller compass, Muruj-uz Zahab (Golden Meadows). Masudi is styled the 'Herodotus of the Arabs'. Instead of grouping events around years, as had been done in the past, he grouped them round dynasties, kings and peoples - a treatment followed by Ibn Khaldun and other historians of note. Throughout his work he shows a lively interest in non-Muslims and Muslims. Certainly his historical works stand unrivalled in their combination of instruction and amusement.

Arab historians definitely improved in the quality and scope of their output until they reached a high hall mark of excellence in Tabari and Masudi but after Miskawaih (*d.* 1030), the author of Tajaribul Umam, started on a rapid decline. Ibn-al Athir produced another work Usd-al Ghabah (lions of the thickets) a collection of 7500 biographies of the companions. His contemporary Al-Jawzi (1186-1257)

wrote *Miratul Zaman fi Tarikh-al Ayyam* a universal history from Creation to 1256. To this late Abbaside period belongs Ibn Khallikan (*d.* 1282) the first Muslim to compose a dictionary of national biography *Wafayathul A'yan*. Before him Yaqut had published his *Mujamul Udaba* and Ibn Asakir had written the biographies of distinguished men of Damascus in 80 volumes.

Biographies have to be considered as important as purely historical works because biographies are but histories of the men who participated in historical events. The line which separates biography from history is imperceptible and faint. Where the person whose career is recorded is a sovereign, the distinction vanishes since the sovereign is the state according to the oft-quoted adage of Louis XIV. Nor is the distinction between history and biography marked where the biography is that of a Vizier, because a Vizier was more an administrator than the nominal Caliph. The works which narrate the lives of the Viziers hence must also be regarded as histories of their times. The literature which consists in collected biographies is abnormally large. More frequently the collectors confine themselves to a particular group of persons—poets, physicians, jurists of some particular schools, Traditionalists and the like.

Khatib of Baghdad composed a history of the eminent men of the city.

Ibn Qifti composed *Tarikhul Hukama*, lives of philosophers and sages.

Ibn Abi Usaibiya wrote a history of physicians *Tarikhul Atibba*. This work

sheds light on the health administration of the times.

Suyuti produced *Tarikhul Khulafa*.

Tha'alabi composed his *Yatima-thud-Dahr* where the poets are grouped according to their countries.

Dhahabi wrote *Thazkirathul Huffaz* besides *Tarikhul Islam*.

Subki provided a mine of information in his *Tabaqat-ul-Shafi'yyat-ul-Kubara*.

Utbi (*d.* 1030) composed *Kitabul Yamini*, celebrating the glorious reign of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna.

To this list should be added the works on religious sects and divisions like Shahrastani's *Kitab Milal Wal Nihal* and Ibn Hazam's work under the same title. All these and innumerable others in the form of provincial histories such as Beruni's *Kitab-ul Hind* have all in different ways added to the knowledge of history as conceived by the Arabs.

The Mamluk dynasty, the last of the medieval Arab dynasties had to its credit a galaxy of historians among them being Abul Mahasin ibn Tagribardi (1411-69) whose *Al Nujum-al-Zahira fi Muluk Misr wal Qahira* was a history of Egypt from the Arab conquest till 1453. Suyuti also wrote a history of Egypt *Husn-al-Muhadara fi Akhbar Misr wal Qahira*. The most eminent of the Mamluk historians was Maqrizi (1364-1442) His title to fame rests on *al Khitat* dealing with Egyptian topography, history and antiquities. Two other prolific writers of this period

were Nuwayri (d. 1332) and Qalqashandhi who composed *Nihayat-al-Arab fi Funun-al-Adab* and *Sub-hula'sha* respectively. Abul Fida (1273-1331) epitomised the voluminous history of Ibnul Athir. One historian Ibnul Tiqtaqa should not be omitted in this connection for his simple presentation of a Muslim history, *al Fakhri*. "Its simplicity" says Nicholson, "has made it popular. Besides Quran I do not know of any book that is better fitted to serve as an introduction to Arabic literature."¹

The historians of the Western Caliphate come on the scene last. Naturally enough they over-shadow past historians in form and technique. The greatest historical thinker of Islam Ibn Khaldun (1332 - 1406) though born in Tunis descended from a family that had long been

settled in Spain. His prolegomena (*Muqaddima*) which forms the first volume of a huge general history *Kitabul Ibar* (*Book of Examples*) entitles him to a place of unique honour in the annals of history. "By the consensus of all critical opinion Ibn Khaldun was the greatest historical philosopher Islam produced and one of the greatest of all times" says Hitti.² A contemporary of Khaldun, Lisnudin ibn-al-Khatib was the greatest political figure of the period. Of the sixty odd works penned by him the most important is the extensive history of Granada, *al-Ihatah fi Tarikhi Garnatha*. Al Maqqari devotes the second half of *Nafh-al-Tib* to the life and works of Ibn Khatib. This work by Maqqari is the principal authority for the whole literary history of Muslim Spain.

1. A Literary History of the Arabs p. 454.

2. History of the Arabs.



*Hold fast to the ways of Truth,
Rid thyself of the fear of kings and nobles;
Do not forsake justice in anger or in joy
In poverty or in affluence;
Sovereignty is not achieved in this world or the next,
Except through the perfect discipline of the body and the mind.
Life is nought but the joy of soaring,
The nest is not congenial to its nature;
Live, hard as the diamond, in the path of religion,
Concentrate the heart on God and live without fear!*

SIR MUHAMMAD IQBAL

MALAYS IN CEYLON¹

by

'MURAT'

IN this little island of Ceylon, inhabited by a variety of communities, the existence of the small community of Malays is quite naturally taken for granted. Many of us do not know their early history, perhaps due to lack of enough literature on the subject. The writer of this article, aware of his limitations, bases it on some available materials to serve as an introduction to more exhaustive studies.

The Malays of Ceylon came originally from the islands of the Dutch East Indies, mainly from Java - hence their other appellation, Javanese. In early history the Malay were a busy commercial power in Eastern waters. Their *prahus* traded in spices and camphor, plying the waters even to ports of the African coast and the Persian Gulf. Hamban (Sampan) totta and Galle were probably their ports of call. In the early years of the Christian era, they seem to have embraced Brahmanism and to have assimilated Indian (Aryan) culture, judging by the survival of the familiar Sanskrit honorifics, which are so much in vogue in Ceylon at the present day. Somewhere in the thirteenth century they came under the sway of the Tartars. Marco Polo records that when in 1280, he visited Java, that island was a part of the

Great Cham's empire. Their natural position of vantage and strategy and the abundance of natural wealth and resources attracted the attentions of the Arabs, Portuguese and the Dutch. Towards the end of the fifteenth century the Malays came under the influence of Arab merchants who preached Islam, not at the point of the sword but by peaceful means.² The following extract from the 'Preaching of Islam' will sum up the whole story :

" Many of the facts of history regarding the conversion of Malays to Islam are wholly unrecorded, and what can be gleaned from native chronicles and the works of European travellers, officials and missionaries is necessarily fragmentary and incomplete. But there is evidence enough to show the existence of peaceful missionary efforts to spread the faith of Islam during the last six hundred years.... preaching and persuasion rather than force and violence have been the main characteristics. The marvellous success that has been achieved has been largely the work of traders who won their way to the hearts of the natives by learning their language, adopting their manners and customs and began quietly and gradually to spread the knowledge of their religion by first converting the native women they

1. The writer acknowledges his debt to Jubilee Book of the Colombo Malay Cricket Club (1934)

2. Read 'Preaching of Islam' (1935) T. W. Arnold pp. 363-40.
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married and the persons associated with them in their business relations. Instead of holding themselves apart in proud isolation, they gradually melted into the mass of the population, employing all their superiority of intelligence and civilization for the work of conversion and making such skilful compromises in the doctrines and practices of their faith as were needed to recommend it to the people they wished to attract. In fact, as Buckle said of them "The Mahometan missionaries are very judicious".

When the Portuguese and Dutch assumed power in the Eastern islands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they found the Malays to be a warlike, martial race.

Malays are mentioned in Ceylon history as early as the year 1236 when they made an incursion to the southern parts of the island under the leadership of prince Candrabhanu. This prince is supposed to have visited Ceylon on two occasions. Regarding the second visit says the Mahavamsa : "... and they ran hither and thither about the country in great fury and laid waste the whole of Lanka. And as the fury of a flood of water had laid waste the place that fire and lightning had already destroyed even so did the Malays harass Lanka that Magha and others had already harassed."

The detailed account as given in Cullavamsa³ may be summarised as follows :

"In the eleventh year of the reign of King Parakrama Babu II, a king of Javaka, called Candrabhanu, landed with an army at Kakkhala, on the pretext that they were Buddhists and therefore came on a peaceful mission. The soldiers of Javaka who used poisoned arrows, treacherously occupied the passages across the rivers, and having defeated all those who opposed them, devastated the whole of Ceylon. But the regent Vira Bahu defeated them in several battles and forced them to withdraw from the land. A few years later, King Candrabhanu again landed at Mahatirtha and his army was on this occasion reinforced by a large number of Pandya, Chola and other Tamil soldiers. After some initial successes, the Javakha army was surrounded and completely defeated by the Ceylonese troops under Vijaya Bahu and Vira Bahu. King Candrabhanu somehow fled with his life leaving behind his family and treasures in the hands of the victorious enemy.⁴

The first regular Malay regiment formed by any foreign power in Ceylon was that by the Portuguese in the year 1505. A Portuguese historian has written that most of the successes of the Portuguese was due to their Malay soldiers. It

3. Cullavamsa i. e, the later continuation of Mahavamsa ed. Geiger, Ch. 83, vv. 36-48 ; Ch. 88, vv. 62-75.

4. The date of these events has been variously interpreted. But Dr. Coedes has established on good authority that the two invasions of Candrabhanu took place in 1236 and 1256. Coedes further points out that the account of Cullavamsa is corroborated by the Pali work *Jinakalamalini - Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East* vol 2. - Vide *Suvarnavipa Part I Political History* by Dr. R. C. Majumdar p. 198.

The reader is directed to consult this book for further information about the relationship between Ceylon and Java in days bygone. The second part deals with the cultural history.

is believed that two-thirds of the Portuguese army were Malays under their own commanders. In 1638 another regiment was formed with Malay commanders under the Dutch who had immense confidence in them. The Malays had their stronghold in Colombo, Chilaw, Puttalam, Kalpitiya, Galle and Trincomalee. Many of them rose to positions of eminence under the Dutch. The latter had in their Navy a Malay admiral named Raja Parmana (Preena) who distinguished himself in naval engagements in Eastern waters.

In 1723, forty-four Javanese princes and chiefs who had rebelled against the Dutch in Batavia were banished to Ceylon. Cordiner writes concerning these men and their descendents; "A considerable number of free Malays reside in Ceylon. Many of them are princes and men of rank who have been banished from their native country, Sumatra and Malacca by the Dutch Government there. They are of lighter colour, more inclining to copper than that of any other native of India - broader and more robust, but not taller than the Ceylonese. Their heads are compressed and their noses flattened, their hair either cut short or fastened with a comb. Their dress is graceful in the Turkish or Persian style. The men wear a coloured handkerchief about the head, a closed waist-coat buttoned round the neck, long white silk drawers and long open gown, fastened close at the wrists and half way up the arm with nine gold buttons to each sleeve. Sometimes they put on sandals, but more frequently walk with their feet bare. The women wear a kind of short boddice

which binds up their breasts, a long piece of muslin like that of the Malabars, and a loose plaid or mantle thrown over one shoulder like the sash. The Malay soldiers wear the same uniform as our king's regular regiments, excepting the article of shoes which have not yet been afforded them. Their native officers, however, wear boots and dress in other respects in the same manner as their English commanders. They all profess the Mohammedan religion and are now peaceable and obedient subjects of the British Government."

Slave Island became the principal residential quarters of the Malays during the latter Dutch period when the Kaffir slaves were removed from there and the place was transferred over to the Malay regiment. These Kaffir slaves were employed under the Dutch. It is not correct to say that Slave Island was the home of Malay slaves because there isn't on historical record any evidence to any foreign power bringing Malay slaves to Ceylon. On the other hand, history always refers to the Malays as valiant and brave soldiers.

In 1796 when Ceylon was ceded to the British by the Dutch, majority of the Malays returned to the Malay states, when granted an option by the British either to remain or leave for Malaya. Those who remained enlisted for military service under the new masters, British and served with distinction until they were disbanded in 1873. Slave Island was also preferred by the Malays for residence because this part of Colombo was the barracks and

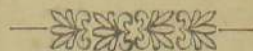
parade grounds of the British. Those who left, sailed in two batches, one on Wednesday 2nd December, 1807 and the other on Sunday 9th January, 1808.⁵

An English historian gives the following description of the Malays in Ceylon. "As soldiers the Malays cannot strictly be compared with any oriental corps, uniting in themselves with slight modifications all the qualifications of the high European soldier with many striking peculiarities of their own. Thus while they combine to a remarkable degree the bravery of the Frenchman, with the stern will of the English and the endurance of the German, they are no less remarkable for their aptitude for every description of military manoeuvre and the facility with which they can pursue stealthily-made tactics. For fidelity and attachment to the service to which they enlist they are without a rival and the vindictiveness by which they are said to be distinguished is fatal only to their enemies."

Today the Malays number 24,834 souls.⁶ They are "inheritors of three great civilizations, Aryan, Mongolian and Semetic - combined to enlarge their consciousness ; these great streams of culture have been organically assimilated into their being and have become one with the inner spring of their nature." The Malays have a language of their own, the written script being Arabic. They are all Muslims by faith and are represented in proportion

to their numbers in many walks of life. They are the most accomodating type of people one can hope to meet. Modest to a fault, resolute and valiant in their work, their racial characteristics are distinctively pleasing. Mr. E. Reimers, a Government Archivist of Ceylon in the early twenties wrote: "Due, perhaps to their innate modesty and the unobtrusiveness of the community as a whole, no one has ever asked who the Malays are, or where they have come from and at what period in the island's history. Yet the Malays in general, and the Ceylon Malays in particular can look back on a history as proud and as full of incident as that of any of the peoples of the immemorial East."

The following extract from an article which appeared in a past number of the "Muslim", Singapore describes the Malays very faithfully: "For the last five centuries they have been Mohammedans of an orthodox and simple type, not fanatical as a rule, indeed rather tolerant of the alien beliefs of foreigners, they have many pleasing characteristics. A Malay of whatever class has generally speaking the instincts of a gentleman. He is sensitive himself but he respects the feelings of others. He is courteous in manner, rather reserved and shy. Towards Europeans he is almost uniformly friendly. He is now becoming acutely conscientious of his shortcomings and is keenly anxious of qualifying himself by educating and otherwise to take a more active part."



5. 'The Truth' Vol. III. No. 5. 'Malays in Ceylon' (2nd instalment) by J. W. A.
6. The Census 1946.

ISLAM - A SYNOPSIS*

by

"A STUDENT OF ARABIC"



THE religion preached by Muhammed, the great prophet of Arabia is not Muhammadanism as is generally supposed by many, particularly the Western authors, but Islam. Some writers call this system Muhamadanism on the analogy of such designations as Christianity after Christ, Buddhism after Buddha and Zoroastrianism after Zoroaster or Confucianism after Confucias, the Chinese sage. But this name is practically unknown to the Muslims themselves. It is neither found in Holy Quran nor in the Traditions of the Prophet (Hadith). On the contrary, * the accepted term as explicitly stated in the Holy Quran thus :

"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (Sura 5 Verse 3) ¹

is Islam. So far from the system being named after its founder the founder himself is called a Muslim :

"I am the first of the Muslims" (6 : 164)

In fact, all the prophets of God since Adam to Prophet Muhammad have been regarded as Muslims in the Holy Quran :

"And the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons and so did Jacob : O my sons ! Allah has chosen the religion for you, therefore die not unless you are Muslims" (2 : 132)

This verse demonstrates the Muslim's belief that Islam was taught by all prophets of the world to different sets of people at different periods in the world's history and the Prophet of Arabia, Muhammad, was its last and perfect exponent, sent by the All Merciful Allah to the whole world (Rahmatun-lil-Alamin).

Among the great dispensations of the world, Islam significantly bears a name which indicates the very essence of its spirit. The root of the word Islam 'Salama' means *to enter into peace* ² and a Muslim is he who *makes his peace with God and man*. Peace with God is the outcome of a complete submission to His Will while peace with man does not only imply refraining from evil but the active performance of virtuous deeds that would benefit the other human beings. Says the Holy Quran :

"Yea, whoever submits (*astama*) himself entirely to Allah and he is

* All the quotations from the Holy Quran are from the Translation by Moulana Moulvi Muhammad Ali.

1. Hereinafter the quotations from the Quran will be stated thus 5 : 3 i. e. Sura 5 Verse 3.

2. Al-Mufridat fi Gharibil Quran-Imam al-Raghib.

the doer of good to others (*muhsin*), he has his reward from his Lord and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve (2:112)

Islam is thus a religion of peace. Its basic doctrines of the Unity of Creation and of the brotherhood of the human race are conducive to the achievement of peace in the world.

Islam is the last of those mighty movements which have revolutionised and changed the destinies of nations. It is also an all-inclusive religion, demanding from its followers faith in all those religions which went before it and were emanations from the same Divine Source. Muslims must believe in all the prophets:

“Who believed in that which has been revealed to thee (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before thee” (2:4)

and

“Say, we believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to us and that which was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and to the other prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any two of them” (2:136)

Islam thus becomes an all comprehensive religion within which are included all the religions of the world. Its Sacred

Book is described as an embodiment of all the teachings that prophets preached in diverse ages and climes:

“Pure pages wherein are all the right scriptures” (98:2,3)

Islam may be classified broadly into the theoretical or its doctrines and the practical. The basic faith of this religion is the short Kalima *La-ilaha ill-Allah: Muhammad-ur-Rasul-Allah*—‘Nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of the Divine Being’. Besides this, a Muslim must believe in the Angels, the Books, the Prophets and the Last Day; “One should believe in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the revealed Books and the Prophets” (2:177)

All articles of faith are in actuality principles of action. Allah is the possessor of perfect attributes and a belief in Allah requires the pursuit of such qualities. So the Muslims should make the attainment of Divine attributes their goal. The Prophet said: “*Takhallaqu bi-akhlaq Allah*”—“Create in yourselves the attributes of God.” Iqbal declared: “He who comes nearest to God is the completest person—not that he is finally absorbed in God. On the contrary he absorbs God into himself”³ Then, belief in the angels implies obedience to the dictates of good impulses because angels are the agents who create good impulses. Belief in devils is not prescribed as it cannot be

3. “The secrets of the self” introduction p. XIX

“Iqbal boldly replaces the traditional notion of surrendering one’s will to God with abjectly, the new immanence of absorbing God’s will into one’s own”.

-Wilfred Cantwell Smith; “Modern Islam in India” p. 131

a principle of action. The Revealed Books should be followed for the development of latent faculties, for the glow of the inner spark, while belief in the prophets should inspire a longing and a desire to model one's life on their's devoted to the service of humanity. Finally, belief in the Hereafter should remind Muslims of the continuity of life when the seeds of action in this temporal sojourn shall be reaped in the fullness of time.

Lot of misconceptions seems to exist about the Islamic belief of predestination. It is the opinion of a majority that a Muslim is a boneless individual who depends for everything on God and fights a losing battle against natural forces in his life; that he is satisfied with burdening God with responsibility for all his chances and mischances. The correct Islamic conception of **Qadr** or measure is not in accordance with this view of predestination for which the Arabic terminology is **Jabr**. The **Jabariyya** or believers in predestination have been recognised as a heretical sect. "A strict predestinarian who believes that man has no control at all over his actions would deny the very basic principle of religion, the responsibility of man for his actions. The orthodox position has been the *via media*. Man has a free will but that will is exercised under certain limitations. It is only the Divine Will that can be called an absolutely free will, a will under no limitations but everything created and

therefore everything human is subject to **Qadr**, to a divine measure of things, to limitations imposed upon it by a Higher Controlling Power. Man is the possessor neither of absolute knowledge, nor of absolute power, nor yet of absolute will. All these attributes belong properly to God. Human knowledge, human power and human will are all subject to limitations" ⁴ "Glorify the name of thy Lord, the most High, who creates and then makes complete and who makes thinks according to a measure (**Qaddara**) then guides them to their goal" (87:1-3) "Who created everything, then ordained for it a measure (Taqdir)" - (25 : 2)

The fundamental religious ordinances of a practical nature are prayer, zakat or poor rate, fasting and pilgrimage. Prayer is recognised as the foremost pillar of faith as it is prayer which marks the spiritual progress of man and becomes ultimately his *mi'raj*, highest spiritual ascent.⁵ It helps man to realise the divine in him and urges him to do selfless service to humanity. Zakat is charity towards fellow beings, denoting all acts of kindness and benevolence to alleviate the sufferings and miseries of the less fortunate. Besides wealth, the very faculties endowed in man are gifts of the Creator meant to be used for the service of His creatures. Benevolence is one of the two mainstays of religion frequently mentioned together in the Holy Quran.

4. "The Religion of Islam" — Moulana Muhammad Ali p. 351

5. "Prayer is the *Mi'raj* of Believers" — The Holy Prophet.

“Woe to the praying ones who are unmindful of their prayers, who make a show (of prayers) and withhold acts of charity.” (107 : 4 - 7)

Every possessor of wealth is expected to contribute annually one fortieth of his wealth to a fund which is managed by the state or by the Muslim community in the absence of a Muslim state, and this should be utilised to help the poor, the distressed and the suffering lot of humanity. Islam sets out to solve the economic problem while at the same time developing the loftier sentiments that the human breast is capable of expressing. Islam offers the true solution to a problem, that verges on capitalism or socialism, two extremes of economic distribution. It ensures to the worker the reward of his work in accordance with the merit of the work and also by allotting to the poor a share in the wealth of the rich. Thus H. A. R. Gibb says towards the close of “Whither Islam” “Within the Western world Islam still maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites. Opposed equally to the anarchy of European nationalism and the regimentation of Russian communism, it has not yet succumbed to that obsession with the economic side of life which is characteristic of present-day Europe and present-day Russia alike. Its social ethic has been admirably summed up by Professor Massignon of Sorbonne, Paris : ‘Islam has the merit of standing for a very equalitarian conception of the contribution of each citizen by the tithe to the resources of the community; it is hos-

tile to unrestricted exchange, to banking capital, to state loans, to indirect taxes on objects of prime necessity but it holds to the rights of the father and the husband, to private property, and to commercial capital. Here again it occupies intermediate position between the doctrines of bourgeois capitalism and Bolshevist communism.”⁶

Fasting according to Islam is primarily a spiritual discipline. There is also a moral discipline underlying fasting, for it is the training ground where man is taught the greatest moral lesson of his life—the lesson that he should be prepared to suffer the greatest privations and undergo the hardest trial rather than indulge in that which is not permitted to him. The social value of fasting is even more effective. The rich sit at tables laden with dainties which to the poor would be a luxury and ignorant of the pangs of privation and hunger do not realise their bitter sting. Fasting leads them to such a realisation.

The final practical concept of Islam, pilgrimage is devised to destroy all vestiges of monkery and asceticism in its teachings (“And as for monkery, they innovated; we did not prescribe it to them 57:27) Pilgrimage is a period of asceticism where the pilgrim cuts himself off from the mundane activities of the world and turns his face to the sacred Ka’aba within its vicinity at Mecca. He sets forth for this purpose from his country, through all the hardships of travel and setting foot on the soil which produced

6. pp. 378 - 379.

his Prophet, the Muslim experiences ecstatic trances in the contemplation of divine mercy to mankind.

A Muslim's spiritual development keeps pace with his secular activities. Prayer, fasting, zakat, pilgrimage - all these find expression not in a cave "far from the madding crowd" but amidst the

crowd. Islam, while leading man through the highest spiritual experience, does not interfere in any marked degree with the regular course of his life. Without any neglect of his secular duties, a Muslim purifies himself of all the dross, human flesh is subject to by a conscientious practice of his religious injunctions and by leading a life in keeping with their spirit.

THE CEYLON MOORS*

THE Ceylon Moors who number over 400,000 are permanent residents to whose ancestors this Island was known, centuries ago, as Serendib. They are the descendants of Arabs (not the Moors of Morocco) who were the cleverest geographers and hardy and enterprising navigators controlling the Eastern seas till the arrival of Vasco de Gama under the guidance of the Arab pilot Ibn-i-Maja in Calicut in the year 1498. They were, in their days, pioneers of civilisation in the East. Their connection with Ceylon began two centuries before the Christian Era. In the seventh century, there were permanent settlements of Arabs all along the coastal regions from where they penetrated inland for the purpose of trade and pilgrimage to Adam's Peak, which according to Muslim traditions, was the place

where Adam was cast after his transgression. Through integrity, business acumen and sheer force of character, the Moors were in the zenith of their power in the thirteenth century. In fact a Moorish King, Vathimi Kumaraya or Buwanaka Bahu II held sway in Kurunegalle. Sir Emerson Tennent says :

"the appearance of the Portuguese in Ceylon, at this critical period, served not only to check the career of the Moors, but to extinguish the independence of the native princes.....but for this timely appearance of a Christian power in the Island, Ceylon, instead of being a possession of the British Crown, might at the present day have been a Mohamedan Kingdom under the rule of some Arabian adventurer."

* Culled from 'The Memorandum of The Ceylon Moors' Association to the Chairman and Members of the Royal Commission on Constitutional Reform (January 1945)

However, the appearance of Vasco de Gama changed the trend of events completely. The advent of the Portuguese and subsequently the Dutch spelt ruin to the progress of the Moors. Actuated by religious fanaticism and commercial jealousy, the Portuguese and the Dutch subjected the Moors to every torture and annihilation to destroy the trade they had built up. The Dutch enacted many iniquitous laws to decimate trade and to harass and eventually exterminate the Moors. Religious freedom was denied to them and mosques were demolished. In spite of all these obstacles, the Moors persevered and brought out the best traits in their character to bring about a better understanding between the European races and themselves. The Portuguese historian, de Couto, says:

“The Moors, natives of Ceilayo of whom there would be some fifty villages, fought with us with as much courage and willingness as the Portuguese themselves, they being the only ones in India in whom we never found deceit.”

Wolf (Dutch), in his “Life and Adventures” records as follows:—

“These Moors have the art of keeping up their credit with the Company (Dutch) at large as well as with particular care among the Europeans and a Moor is hardly ever known to be brought into a Court of Justice. The Company often make use of their talents, particularly when it wants to levy a tax upon any article of commerce. Nobody understands the value of pearls and precious

stones as well as they do and the persons who are used to farm the pearl fishery always rely on their skill in this article as well as in arithmetic to inform them what they are to give for the whole fishery.”

During the Kandyan Rebellion of 1818, in recognition of the fidelity and attachment of the Moors to the British Crown, a Proclamation was issued exempting them from the jurisdiction of the Kandyan Chiefs. The characteristics noticed above are still extant in their descendants. At the time of the British occupation, there were only 7,500 Moors who “have through isolation in Ceylon, and intermarriage among themselves preserved their identity, where a less conservative community would have been merged in the indigenous population.” It cannot be denied that they have something to contribute towards the orderly progress of the country to which they are permanently attached.

During the time of the Sinhalese Kings, the commerce of the Island was entirely in the hands of the Moors. They were successful rivals, in spite of severe handicaps, to the Portuguese and the Dutch, in the export and import trade. After the establishment of British rule they were once more controlling the commerce of the Island. Unlike the Sinhalese or Tamils, confined to particular spheres of influence, the Moors carried their business activities even to remote villages in all parts of the Island, devoid of any means of communication or access

and thereby extended and enriched the trade of the country. Equally with Europeans, whose industry and initiative contributed in a large measure to the material prosperity of the Island, by the conversion of forests and inaccessible heights to smiling gardens and productive plantations, the Moors, who were instrumental in introducing various articles of commerce far and wide, can claim with confidence that their share is no less in the progress the country has made. While they were keen to make their sons proficient in business, the Moors sorely neglected their secular education. Consequently they were more concerned with their vocations and did not interest themselves in matters political. This short-sighted policy hampered the progress of the community in many directions. A strenuous effort was put forward later to overcome this handicap and now there are Moors in all professions and other walks of life, although the bulk of the people are still engaged in commercial pursuits and agriculture.

In order to preserve their identity and to maintain their national character, two theological colleges have been established through private munificence at Galle and Maharagama to teach Arabic and Muslim Theology. Zahira College, a first-rate secondary school, is run by Ceylon Moors. A hospital for the exclusive use of Muslims initiated by Ceylon Moors is an accomplished fact. Maternity homes, gifts of individuals or built by subscriptions from Ceylon Moors, is another feature to help the community. The

endowment of a property worth over 50 lakhs of rupees in the heart of the city of Colombo by a Ceylon Moor as a gift to the nation is unprecedented in the history of the Island. A movement to establish a centre for Islamic Culture is on foot also by the Moors. The gift of a valuable property in Alutgama by a Ceylon Moor has enabled the authorities to establish the first Training School primarily for Moor teachers. The object of all these movements is to maintain and preserve the individuality of Ceylon Moors.

APPENDIX

Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland Vol. I, Page 537

By SIR ALEXANDER JOHNSTON, Knt., V.P.R.A.S.
(Read, February 3rd, 1827)

The first Mohammedans who settled on Ceylon were, according to the tradition which prevails amongst their descendants, a portion of those Arabs of the house of Hashim who were driven from Arabia in the early part of the eighth century by the tyranny of the Caliph Abd al Melek ben Merwan, and who proceeding from the Euphrates southward made settlements in the Concan, in the southern parts of the peninsula of India, on the island of Ceylon and Malacca. The division of them which came to Ceylon formed eight considerable settlements along the north-east, north, and western coasts of that island; viz. one at Trincomalee, one at Jaffna, one at Mantotte and Manar, one at Coodramalle, one at Putlam, one at Colombo, one at Barbareen and one at Point-de-Galle.

..... By means of their different establishments in the southern peninsula of India, they introduced from thence into Ceylon, between six and seven hundred years ago, the first body of cloth-weavers that ever was settled on that island.

By means of the intercourse, which they kept up through the Persian Gulf and Bussorah, with Bagdad and all the countries under that caliphate, on the one side, and through the Arabian Gulf and Egypt, with all the Mohammadan powers settled along the coasts of the Mediterranean, and of Spain on the other side, they introduced from these countries into Ceylon many original works in Arabic on Mohammadan law, and many translations into Arabic of the most valuable of the Greek and Roman classics upon medicine, science, and literature. ¹ By means of the influence which they possessed with the sovereigns of Ceylon, they obtained from them the important privilege, that in the different ports in which they carried on their trade, all commercial and maritime cases in which a Mohammedan merchant, mariner or vessel was concerned, should be tried at the port itself, without delay or expense, by

a tribunal which consisted of a certain number of Mohammedan priests, merchants and mariners, and which was bound to proceed according to a maritime code of laws which universally prevailed among the Asiatic Mohammedans.

The Portuguese, on their first arrival on Ceylon at the conclusion of the fifteenth century, found that the Mohammedan traders, still monopolized the whole export and import trade of the island, and that they were, from their commercial and political power in the country, the most formidable rivals whom they had to encounter. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, the trade and affluence of the Mohammedans on the Island of Ceylon have been gradually though constantly, on the decline; owing in some degree, to the general decline of the trade and influence of the Mohammedan traders in every part of India, but more particularly to the systems of policy which have been respectively adopted by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English Government of Ceylon, and to the great improvement which has been made within the last three centuries in the science of navigation.

1. One of the principal Arabic works on medicine which they introduced into Ceylon was the work of Avicenna; they also introduced Arabic translations of Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Galen and Ptolemy, extracts of which were frequently brought to me while I was on Ceylon by the Mohammedan priests and merchants, who stated that the works themselves had originally been procured from Bagdad by their ancestors, and had remained for some hundred years in their respective families in Ceylon, but had subsequently been sold by them, when in distress, for considerable sums of money, to some merchants who traded between Ceylon and the eastern islands. Three very large volumes of extracts from the works to which I have alluded were presented to me by a Mohammedan priest of great celebrity in Asia, who died about twenty years ago on the island of Ceylon. These three volumes, together with between five and six hundred books in the Cingalese, Pali, Tamul, and Sanscrit languages, relating to the history, religion, manners, and literature of the Cingalese, Hindu, and Mohammedan inhabitants of Ceylon, which I had collected at a considerable expense, were lost in 1809, in the "*Lady Jane Dundas*" East-Indiaman, on board of which ship I had taken my passage for England.

The conduct which they, as a body, invariably observed with respect to the different measures which I adopted while I was Chief Justice and President of His Majesty's Council of Ceylon, gave me a very favourable opinion of their intellectual and moral character. In 1806 when I called upon their chiefs and their priests to assist me in compiling for their use, as I had done for that of each of the other classes of inhabitants in Ceylon, a separate code of laws, founded upon their respective usages and customs, I derived the most extensive and valuable informations from their local experience. In 1807, when I consulted them as to the best mode of improving the education of their countrymen I found them not only anxious to co-operate with me on the occasion, but willing to make, at their own expense, the most liberal establishments in every part of the Island, for instructing all the children of the Mohammedan religion in such branches of science and knowledge as I might think applicable to the peculiar state of society which prevailed amongst them. In 1811, when I publicly assembled them to explain the nature of the privilege of sitting upon juries, and of the other privileges, which I had obtained and secured for them under the great seal of England, by his Majesty's Charter of 1810, I received from them the most useful suggestions, both

as to the manner of rendering the Jury system popular amongst their sect, and that of attaining the real ends of justice, without militating against any of the feelings, or even the prejudices of the people. In 1815, when on my proposal they adopted the same resolution, which all the other castes on Ceylon had adopted, of declaring free all children born of their slaves after the 12th August 1816, I had every reason to applaud the humanity and liberality of the sentiments and views, which they not only expressed but acted upon, in the progress of that important measure.

In 1806, while collecting, as I have already mentioned, the various usages and customs of Mohammedan inhabitants of Ceylon, I directed my inquiries particularly to those customs and usages which could throw any light on the history of their early settlements and former commercial prosperity on that island, and their intimate connection and constant communication with the Calips of Bagdad, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries; and I was referred by all the Mohammedan priests, merchants, and mariners, by whom I was assisted in my inquiries, to the Cufic inscription of which the accompanying is the fac-simile, ² as the

2. A TRANSLATION

By Rev. SAMUEL LEE, A. M.

Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge

In the name of the compassionate and merciful God. There is no God but God. Mohammed is the prophet of God, May the blessing and peace of God be upon him. O God, pardon, have mercy upon, and pass away from (the sins of) a servant, the son of the servant, Khalid Ibn Abu Bakya (Takaya or Nakaya), (who) has left the world, and (who) was dependent on thee; but thou was sufficient without him, (who) has departed to thee, and thou art his best place of departure. O God pardon his sin, that his piety may remain, and grant him his last (reward), and that he may be justified. And protect thou, and multiply favour and security to him. And may he (God) appoint our excellent prophet supreme, that he may afford to us and show us the truth clearly; for he has admonished with the established word, and his decision has obtained, and his resistance is (as) the (depth) lake of reproach. Amen. Lord of Worlds. It was written on the second day (of the week) five nights taken out of (the month) Rejeb (*i. e.*, on the 5th of Rejeb) in the year 337. A. H. And in the vicinity he completed a security for religion with (other) conveniences, in the year 317. May God give blessing and peace upon his prophet Mohammed.

oldest record on the Island which alluded to the intercourse that had subsisted in former days between the Caliphs of Bagdad and the Mohammedans of Ceylon.

The following is the tradition which prevails in Ceylon as to this inscription. That it is supposed to be the most ancient Mohammedan inscription on the Island. That the Caliph of Bagdad, in the beginning of the tenth century, hearing that the Mohammedans, then established as traders at Colombo, were ignorant of and inattentive to the real tenets of their religion, sent a learned and pious priest from Bagdad to Colombo, with instructions to reform the Mohammedans of that place, by explaining to them the nature of their religion, and by making such establishments and erecting such a mosque at Colombo, as were likely to

ensure for the future, their strict observance of the real spirit of Mohammedan worship. That this learned and pious man, after having erected a very extensive mosque at Colombo, and accomplished the object of his mission, died, and was buried at Colombo, close to the mosque he had erected. That after his death some learned persons were sent from Bagdad to Colombo by the Caliph, for the express purpose of engraving this inscription on his tomb-stone, and that this stone had remained on his grave undisturbed for nearly eight hundred years, till the Dutch Dissawa, or collector of Colombo, about forty years ago, removed it, along with some other stones, from the Moorish burying-ground near Colombo to the spot where he was building a house and placed it, where it now stands, as one of the steps to his house.



THE HOLY PROPHET'S FAREWELL MESSAGE.

In the year 632, the Prophet of Islam made a farewell pilgrimage to Mecca. Before completing all the rites of the Haj, he addressed the assembled multitude from the top of the Jabal-ul-Arafat in words which yet linger in the hearts of true Muslims :

"Ye people ! Listen to my words for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you.

"Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until ye appear before the Lord, as this day and this month are sacred for all, and remember ye shall have to appear before your Lord, Who shall demand from you an account of all your actions. Ye people, ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you.....Treat your wives with kindness.....Verily ye have taken them on the security of God, and made them lawful unto you by the words of God.

"And your slaves, See that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves and clothe them with the stuff ye wear; And if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then part from them for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be harshly treated.

"Ye people, listen to my words, and understand the same. Know that all Muslims are brothers unto one another. Ye are one brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother, unless freely given out of goodwill. Guard yourselves from committing injustice.

"Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent, Haply he that shall be told may remember better than he who hath heard it."

A Unique Arabic Manuscript in Ceylon

BY

Dr. S. A. IMAM, M. A., Ph. D.

(Lecturer in Arabic, University of Ceylon.)

SOMETIME back I had drawn the attention of Orientalists to an important and, perhaps, a unique manuscript which I discovered in Colombo towards the end of 1945. This is a small manuscript with a commentary running to about 100 pages. It begins with 'Risala-al-Hakeem Bayyun (Yabbun?) by Al-Barhami (Al Barhamani?) Al-Hindi. Then follows the glorification of God and homage to the Prophet in traditional Arabic style. Then the contents run thus "and now to proceed this is a treatise of the philosopher, the gnostic (*Arif*) Abul Khair Bayyun Al-Barhami Al-Hindi." The translator says "When I read the admonitions of Bayyun - may God sanctify his secrets - in Al-Risala al Ma'nawiyya I gathered that the philosopher Abul Khair Bayyun al Barhami al Hindi had been asked by one of his disciples at Bait-al muqaddas to disclose those mystic names and explain the nature of creation thus, 'O Sage, shalt thou not explain to me of what substance is Matter composed?' He replied 'My child, that is a guarded secret and its knowledge is not easily attained. As regards the science it can be studied without complications. With patience, of course, it is within the reach, provided the student maintains an interest and lo! the Exalted God has screened it in order to protect it from those undeserving

ignorant.' The disciple said, 'Master, shalt thou not disclose it now? I trust I am most suited to acquire this knowledge and most vigilant in guarding it.' 'Yes, my child,' said the philosopher 'Thou fulfilllest the conditions, lo! in the beginning, Earth's smoke was mingled with water vapour.....'

After dealing with Creation the philosopher is reported to have explained how stones, metals and bronze came into existence. Then, he discusses chemical reactions and formation of stones of diverse hues. The reader confronts manifold difficulties when he proceeds further because of the allegorical language and most obscure terminology. To a lay-man it would appear that the text deals with questions of inter-family marriages, officiated by the dazzling Sun. Unconventional metaphors make reading most difficult.

The commentary begins under the title 'Sharh-al-Risala-lil-Jildaki (Issudeen bin Ali ibn Aidamir al Jildaki d. 743/1342)'². The commentator records on page 40 thus: "It appears that Bayyun the Brahmin, was one of the ancient philosophers of India, often quoted by Pythagoras, the author of 'Codes of the Republic' (*Mushaf-al-Jama'at*). As regards

¹ See University of Ceylon Review. Oct. '46

² See Brockelmann - I, 496. (The year of the author's death is provided, both after Hijrat and after Christ.)

