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Gleanings from Here and There

Divine Unity--True Conception of Philosophy

By O. M. J.

'SAY: Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds: no associate has He: and this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit.'—The Holy Quran, VI 161-164.

Believe it to the world at large. O Prophet! that each and every movement of your life—your thoughts, your words, your deeds—in fact, your very life and your very death—has got but one dominant all-pervading object—the service of the Lord *Rabbul 'Alamin*, the Creator, Sustainer, Nourisher and Evolver of the whole universe. Promotion and furtherance of whatever is conducive to the realization of His Supreme Purpose—evolution of the universe—is the be-all and end-all of your life. This goal is not one of your own choice. The Divine hand has fixed it for you and at the same time chalked out the path leading thereto. Yours is simply to submit to His Will, and you of all men are the foremost to do so.

This, in other words, is the sum and substance of the above Divine Words which found utterance thirteen centuries since, through the blessed lips of the greatest man that ever lived under the sun. This Quranic verse, if closely scrutinized, will be found to set forth in clear terms all that constitutes the very essence of the doctrine of Divine Unity. To profess faith in One God, to associate none with Him, or to address Him with prayers in times of need or distress—all this is unitarianism, no doubt, but hardly of a very high order. Messenger after messenger came from the Lord with the selfsame message of Divine Unity each time, but it needed the master touch of the hand of our Holy Prophet Muhammad—on whom be peace and blessings of Allah—to unearth the deep wisdom underlying this doctrine. At his appearance polytheistic tendencies received a death-blow. So far as the coarser forms of polytheism are concerned, such as idol-worship, nature-worship or man-worship, they were, in a way, renounced by their own votaries, but the mere extinction of this primitive form of polytheism by no means implied true unitarianism.

Let it be borne in mind that in laying so much emphasis on the doctrine of Unity, the Divine Being was not, as it may seem, judging from a human standpoint, prompted by any sordid motive of jealousy in that He lost His temper when another was set up as His equal or co-partner. He is above these considerations. He is self-sufficient. Should the whole world sing hymns to Him, it will add not a jot to His infinite glory, nor will it detract a little from it should there be not a single soul to worship Him. As a matter of fact, the worship of One God is the true good of man himself. We must not forget the fact that upon a person's

conviction in the Unity of God lies the realization of the Highest Good of man, there would have been no such injunction as to worship none besides Him.

Unity of Godhead, properly conceived and lived up to, goes a long way to cultivate in us the moral and spiritual qualities which may be summed up in the word "character." Formation of character is, in fact, the sole purpose of man in this earthly life, which depends to a very large extent on the doctrine of Divine Unity—not the so-called Unity which contents itself with mere abstention from idol-worship, or at best finds manifestation in certain rituals and devotional practices. True conception of Divine Unity—of such a conception counts in the formation of character—lies much. Our hopes and our fears, our aspirations and our apprehensions, our good and our evil, must have one pivot to turn upon—namely, the Divine Being. False hopes and fears, which we foolishly attribute to ourselves tend to enslave and demoralize us. They make us stoop to what is mean and unworthy. A true Unitarian looks up to the Lord as the sole source of Good. "Do not fear them (men) but fear Me"—the Quranic injunction—is his guiding principle. Armed with this spiritual weapon, he manages to walk manfully straight and keeps his head up. External pressure, however overwhelming, is too weak to bend him to its own will. For Truth he stands and for Truth he falls.

It was to inculcate this very lesson that the Quran came to tell us: "And for the Lord are the treasures of the heavens and the earth." Is it not a fact that many of us fall a victim to the lure of riches and reward? The voice

(Continued on page 7)

BOARD OF KATHIS

Mr. M. I. M. Haniffa, B.A. (Lond.)
 Advocate, Unanimously Elected President

Mr. M. I. M. Haniffa, was unanimously elected president of the new Board of Kathis at a meeting held at the Registrar-General's Office, Colombo, on 13th January, 1940. Mr. Haniffa counts over ten years practice as an Advocate and often acts as an Additional Magistrate Colombo. He is the Lecturer in Muslim Law at the Ceylon Law College and has served on several Committees and Commissions on the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Ordinance and the Muslim Intestate Succession and Wakfs Ordinance.

THE
STAR OF ISLAM
 wishes
 one and all of you
 a very happy
 Eid-ul-Adha

Saudi Arabia

Sympathies of Hedjazian Ambassador with the Allies

"Al Muqattam" writes that the appointment of Fawad Hamza as Saudian Ambassador at Paris indicates the friendly relations between the two countries. Hitler's plan to influence the Saudian Government; by extending to Khalid Bak Abul-Waleed the political and economic concessions does not seem to have proved successful, and its proof is Fawad Hamza Bak's appointment at Paris.

The "Daily Tau," in welcoming Fawad Hamza Bak, writes that he was the best friend of France, that he has been in France several times and knows the French. He has a great experience of Eastern countries and their diplomacies. The paper adds that his knowledge entitles him to the post and his appointment by the King of Hedjaz shows that His Majesty realises the importance of friendly relations with France and that His Majesty's sympathies are with the Allies, because Islamic Countries and democracies cannot tolerate Nazism.

BOARD OF KATHIS

Appeals Decided on January, 13th 1940.

Colombo (Slave Island) 915—Sulailha Umma, daughter of Mohamed Idroos vs. Mohamed Ibrahim. Appeal dismissed.

Haji-Pilgrimage to Mecca

The Idea of Performances in the Pilgrim Kites

(By the Suni Movement of Ceylon, Kandy)

The fifth principal in Islam is Hajj—pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in the life time of an individual who can afford the journey.

There is a great meaning lying behind the performance of pilgrimage. However rich a man may be, when dead he shall be buried with a cloak of long cloth only. No other cloth is allowed in Islam, for this purpose. Pilgrims at Ka'ba have to wear unstitched long cloth. Therefore, this pilgrimage to Mecca incidently or emphatically reminds the pilgrim of his last journey.

To go on this pilgrimage it is incumbent on every Muslim who is (1) healthy and has a strong physis, (2) does not have fear in voyage and journey, and (3) has sufficient money to go on this pilgrimage.

Sufis interpret this to be full determination, doubtlessness and sufficient knowledge—necessities for a man to attain the purification of the heart.

The Performances

1. The wearing of the pilgrim garment (ihram), 2. Going round the Ka'ba (tawif), 3. Prayer at the Station of Abraham, 4. The great sermon (khutba), 5. Resting the night at the Valley of Mina, 6. Sacrifice in the Valley of Mina and 7. Throwing stones at the Evil One.

1. Rich or poor, powerful or weak, king or subject all have to wear the same white robe. This indeed reminds that all humanity have to enter the grave wearing the white robe only. This is clear to us in our daily life and is a sufficient lesson not to fall into vanities of this world.

2. Forgetfulness of self the pilgrim goes round the Ka'ba along with the other pilgrims fully absorbed in the thought of God.

3. In his prayer at the Station of Abraham the pilgrim, devoid of all belongings, the desire-nature (nafs) becomes controlled and then the pilgrim realizes that all wealth belong to Him and that on the judgment day (mahser) along with other pilgrims he stands before Him in prayer awaiting His command and Grace. This is implied so as to realize that all feelings, movements, words and action are His and it is moment that all creatures (kalq), are in repentance for what each has done and is in prayer.

4. The great sermon is where the pilgrim is told of the significance of Hajj. His mind is cleared of all doubts and purified to receive his commission to attain what he may.

(Continued on page 8)

Women's Section

ANECDOTES OF THE SAINTS

Shaik-ul-Akbar

By MISS LUBNA KHALEEL

ALI IBNUL MUHAMMAD-I-TAI, a direct descendant of Hatim-Tai, the famous philanthropist, was childless at the age of fifty. One day he went to that great Saint, Shaik Abdul Qadir Jilani, and asked him to pray to Allah to grant him a son. After some time, the Saint said that a child will be born, and to name him: Muhiyuddin, the reviver of religion. Furthermore the Saint prophesied that the child would become a great sufi saint and author of many books on Hadith and Tafsir.

In the last year of the life of the renowned Saint of Baghdad, Shaik Abdul Qadir Jilani, a child was born to Ali-Ibnul Muhammad Tai. The child from his younger days showed an inclination for study and was of a pious nature. As he grew up he studied at Ashbilia and from there he went to Seville in 560 A.H. Later at Cordova he completed his studies of the standard books under Abdul Hasan-Ibnul Hudyak. Here, he lived for a very long time, till the year 595 A.H., when he began to travel to the East, living in turn in Egypt, Aleppo, Baghdad, and Asia Minor. For seventy-eight years he travelled far and wide, in quest of knowledge and experience. At the foot of Mount Qasum, which is now known as Saliha, lies the grave of that great sufi saint, ibni-alil Arabi.

It is said that on one of his travels on horse back, he was accosted by an unknown Shaik thus:—"From where do you come, and what is your destination, and what have you to obtain on the road?" The young rider immediately replied "From knowledge towards the reality (in the knowledge of god) so that both sides are obtained." The unknown Shaik whom the rider met for the first time was Shaik Sudrudin. This answer of the rider gives the gist of his whole philosophy.

It is also related that the Shaik lived in a grave for several years in Al Maghrib, and that when he came out of his heart was illuminated. During his travels he used to write books, which he usually left at the places at which they were written.

The Shaik served under an old lady saint, Fatima Binti, who was ninety-five years of age at that time. It is said that she had the sight of God in everything in the world. She had the full command of the Surathul Fatihah, for whenever she summoned that sura, it came out in human form and carried out her wishes.

The sincerity of the Shaik, his eloquence, and his colossal fecundity as a writer, won for him many admirers and supporters. But as generally the case, he had many enemies too. He was denounced during his life time, as a kafir, and was even called a zindiq, which means one who spread unbelief under the guise of religion. In spite of all these, his admirers were many. They gave him the title of Shaik-ul-Akbar, a title by which he is at the present day remembered—Shaik Shuhrawasy, Jelaludin Rumi, and other illustrious savants were his contemporaries. His important works on Tasawuf are Futuh-at-i-Ma'kiyyah, Fusul Hikam, etc. Thus Ibn Arabi was not only a mystic of the greatest spiritual gifts and achievements but a scholar of the widest information and knowledge. His works impressed deeply the Moslem minds; from Morocco to Java, and from Kazan to S. India.

During the month of Muharram, in the year 627 A.H., the Shaik while living in the city of Damascus had a dream. The Prophet (O.W.B.P.) appeared to him with a book in His hand, and commanded him to publish the book for the benefit of mankind. The Shaik named the book Fusul Hikam, and says that he is only a reproducer of that book. This book gives the abstract of the whole philosophy of the Shaik.

He lay stress on tasbeih and tawizh in his Fasi-Muhyiah. He shows that there is no asceticism in Islam. Concerning fasting, he says that it is not merely to starve the body for physical benefits, but to obtain spiritual beneficences. Furthermore he refers to the ceremonialisms as prescribed by the Quran, and practised by the Prophet as the backbone of Islam. Thus a revival of the teaching of Shaik-ul-Akbar seems to be very necessary in these days.

Children's Corner

The First Pledge of Akaba

DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS,

The Holy Prophet returned to Mecca sorely stricken in heart. He lived here for some time, retired from his people, preaching occasionally, but confining his efforts mainly to the strangers who congregated in Mecca and its vicinity during the season of the annual pilgrimage, hoping to find among them some who would believe in him, and carry the truth to their people.

One day, whilst thus sadly but yet hopefully working among these half-traders, half-pilgrims, he came upon a group of six men from the distant city of Yathrib conversing together. He asked them to sit down and listen to him; and they sat down and listened. Struck by his earnestness and the truth of his words, they became his proselytes; and returning to their city, they spread the news, with lightning rapidity; that a Prophet had risen among the Arabs who was to call them to God, and put an end to their dissensions, which had lasted for centuries.

The next year these Yathribites returned, and brought six more of their fellow-citizens as deputies from the two principal tribes who occupied that city.

On the self-same spot which had witnessed the conversion of the former six, the newcomers gave in their adhesion to the Holy Prophet. This is called first pledge of Akaba, from the name of the hill on which the conference was held.

The pledge they took was as follows: "We will not associate anything with God; we will not steal nor commit adultery, nor fornication; we will not kill children; we will abstain from blood and slander; we will obey the Prophet in everything that is right; we will be faithful to him in weal and woe."

After the pledge, they returned home with a disciple of Mohammed to teach them the fundamental doctrines of the new religion, which rapidly spread among the inhabitants of Yathrib.

Your friend,
THE EDITOR.

- (1) The daily obligatory prayers and
- (2) The special congregational Prayer on Fridays.

To be continued)

Simple Lessons In Islam

BY
HIS HOLINESS MAULANA MOHAMED
ABDUL ALEEM SIDDIQUI

and.

H. I. M. HANIFFA, B.A. (Lond.), Advocate

Performance of Prayer

9. Q. What acts are considered blamable if done during prayer?

A. The following acts are considered blamable if done during prayer:—

- (1) Turning the face round unnecessarily.
- (2) Lifting of the eyes to heaven.
- (3) Taking hold of one's hair or one's clothes
- (4) Unnecessarily putting the hand into the mouth.
- (5) Standing on one foot when accomplishing the *Qiyam*.
- (6) Retaining urine or stercoral matter.
- (7) Performing devotion in the presence of a repast one wishes to eat.
- (8) Spitting in front of one, or to the right side.
- (9) Placing the hand in the hip.
- (10) Bending the head excessively when performing *ruku*.
- (11) Praying at the public baths, or on the road, or at a place where ordure is deposited, etc.

10. Q. In what language should all recitals be made in Prayer?

A. All recitals in Prayer must be made in the Arabic Language.

VI.

Classification of Prayer

I. Q. How is Prayer classified?

A. Prayer is classified into:—

- (1) *Fard-al-'Aiyen*
- (2) *Fard-al-Kifaya*
- (3) *Sunnat-ul-Mu'akkada*
- (4) *Sunnat-u-Ghairil-mu'akkada* and
- (5) *Nafil*.

Fard-Al-Aiyen Prayers

2. Q. What is a *Fard-al-aiyen* Prayer?A. *Fard-al-Aiyen* Prayer is one which is obligatory on each and every Muslim.3. Q. What are the *Fard-al-Aiyen* Prayers?A. The *Fard-al-Aiyen* prayers are:—

Letters To The Editor

The Editor,
The "Star of Islam",
Colombo.

Inquiry on Sufism

Dear Sir,

I shall thank you if you or any of your readers interested in "Sufism" or "Philosophy" enlighten me on the following in which I am immensely interested :-

1. Is life after death similar to the experience realised on this Earth?
2. If it is not the similar earthly experience what is the other experience realisable, and where?
3. What is really meant by the "End of the World"?
4. What is meant by "Eternal Punishment"?
5. Is Allah personal or impersonal?
6. What relationship exists between the Theory of Karma and Theory of Resurrection?

As I am a novice entering into the fold of Islam, I shall be pleased if the answers to these questions are supported by chapter and verse from the Holy Quran and the Hadis.

Yours etc.,
C. VAITYLINGHAM.

Colombo, 2-1-40.

Performance of Prayer at Jummah Time

Sir,—Mr. Hassen states in your popular journal of the 13th instant that no muslim would dare to challenge on the above subject as he had quoted a Hadeeth from the "Saheehul Muslim." It is conspicuous that this is challengeable as the Imam's opinions are different and varied.

Some Imams are of opinion that it is Haram (forbidden) to pray after the Imam's ascent to the pulpit while some allow such prayers to be performed. As this is a matter of vital importance to the muslim public (although a simple matter to your correspondent as he states) and hence it should be dealt with it is hoped that your correspondent would explain why Imam's opinions on this topic are varied, through the medium of your esteemed journal.

Thanking you Sir, for the space allowed.—Yours etc.,

A. M. SHAFI.

"Moonlight,"
Alutgama, 15-1-40.

The Hadji Festival

By MASTER M. SALIH HASHEEM

Once an year the happy Hadji Festival falls,
Without the usual fuss of Muezzins calls.

No vain talks nor tales nor contemplations,
Of the same old discussions amidst the congregations.

Both friends and foes do meet this day,
Nicely dressed and perfumed in Mosques and gay.

Letters and epistles of congratulation sent by post.
Visitors and guests gladly received by host.

Between the educated pals of the "Star of Islam,"
Ideas and notions written with their own palm.

How to will and win up to the next Hadji,
By regularly enterprising with their psychio sakhly.

Mussalmans in the world will progress well,
If they propagate the Quranic messages that tell.

How to live for country and King,
And the way to defeat his foes and win.

To editors and orators Peace and Goodwill I convey,
Let them fight the Islam's battle in their own way.

The Eid Festivals

By Z. H. Sathayan

Like all other religions, Islam having realized the necessity for relaxation, recreation, a break from the monotony of the routine of life as the need for affording its followers occasions for coming in contact with one another, introduces two annual festivals. Thus it has not overburdened the Islamic social system with too many of them, nor did it leave human nature altogether uncatered for. These two festivals are "Eid-ul-Fitr" and "Eid-ul-Adha," the one celebrated on the first of Shavval the tenth month of the Muslim year, the other on the tenth of Dul-Haj the twelfth month. It is not my aim here to discuss the origin and details of the rites attached to these festivals, rather am I concerned with their distinctive features in relation to the festivals of other religions which I leave to my bretheren who are more educated and more versed than I.

The first characteristic distinctive of the Muslim festivals is the ennobled and sublimated atmosphere which pervades them. This feature is peculiar to Islam for Islam is the only religion which, by intertwining the worldly with the religious, has succeeded in sublimating all that is worldly. Islam knows that all social functions, if dissociated from the remembrance of Allah, are liable to get out of hand and to degenerate into reckless indulgence. It has, therefore, enjoined before everything else at these festivals, the saying of prayers and the glorifying of the Lord. Those who have witnessed Muslim festivals will bear out the statement that the manner of them is in sharp contrast with the way in which the festivals of other religions are celebrated. It is truth and nothing but truth, to say that it is the Muslim festivals alone among all festivals which have not deteriorated into mere revels.

It may come as strange to non-Muslims to learn that the happiness of a Muslim is confined to the saying of prayers; for these prayers are not only a means of bringing Muslims together to one place, but also they ennoble and uplift all who assemble to remember the name of Allah for a holy purpose.

The second great peculiarity of Islamic festivals lies in their origin, independent of all astronomical considerations, seasons and other. They are not celebrated to appease an angered deity. They are not connected with the birth and death of a personage. They do not mark the changes in the stars. The "Eid-ul-Fitr" is a token of thanksgiving to God the Almighty for enabling us to perform our duty of fast which we owe to Him and to ourselves; while the "Eid-ul-Adha" is celebrated throughout the world with the sole aim of uniting ourselves in prayer with all those who are more fortunate in being able to perform the pilgrimage ceremony in Mecca. It is but in a subsidiary way that the great sacrifice of Ishmael by Abraham is also commemorated.

Concluding thus my article on the "Eid-Festivals," I wish The "Star of Islam," its Editors and Staffs its patrons, contributors and subscribers, its readers and all concerned in its welfare an Eid-Mubarak and our best "Assalamu Alaikum."

MUSLIM MARRIAGES**Validating Omissions of Kathis**

The non-observance of certain requirements of the law in the registration of a large number of Muslim marriages has necessitated the introduction of new legislation to validate those marriages.

The combined effect of section 21 (3) of the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Ordinance, read with the rules in the Third Schedule to that Ordinance, is that a Kathi who holds an inquiry under section 21 (2) for the purpose of authorising a marriage must be assisted by three Muslim assessors. This requirement was not observed in the case of the marriages referred to in the Schedule to this Bill.

The object of a Bill published in last Friday's Gazette is to declare that the failure or omission of any Kathi to empanel Muslim assessors to assist him at any inquiry held by him before he authorised any marriage or the registration of any marriage, which is referred to in the Schedule, shall not affect the validity of the marriage or of the registration thereof. Provision is included to indemnify any such Kathi.

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The Star of Islam
A CULTURAL WEEKLY

COLOMBO: JANUARY 20, 1940.



Turkey's Ordeal

THE series of disasters which has so suddenly stricken Anatolian Turkey has evoked the spontaneous sympathy of the whole civilized world, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Within the short space of a few days, nearly 40,000 persons have lost their lives, 20,000 have been seriously injured and over 30,000 houses destroyed and ruin and havoc have laid waste of over 60,000 square miles of fertile land. All Muslims cannot but feel the deepest sorrow for Turkey in her terrible distress, which, we hope, will take a more tangible shape in the offer of financial help from the Muslims of Ceylon. But there is a spiritual significance behind this disaster, which Muslims should note and take to heart. On the conclusion of the Great War of 1914-1918 the outlying provinces of Turkey were partitioned and "mandated," and the subjugation of Anatolia was handed over to the Greek Army, while the Sultan himself was virtually a prisoner in his palace at Istanbul which was then in the occupation of the Allied troops. The subsequent events are a matter of history; the rise of MUSTAPHA KEMAL PASHA and his spectacular victories over the Greek Army, which was driven back into the sea at Smyrna at which port it had disembarked with a fanfare of trumpets, a few weeks before. Then came the astounding Treaty of Lausanne, under which the Treaty of Sevres was torn up and the present President of the Turkish Republic had the proud satisfaction of getting terms which could only have been awarded to a victor. But after this treaty the whole Muslim world gasped with surprise at the startling changes which KEMAL PASHA inaugurated. The Khalifate was abolished, the Islamic religion was disestablished and ceased to be the State religion, Mosque property was confiscated, and some of the principal mosques were transformed into museums, including the famous historic Mosque of St. Sophia. The Islamic head-gear was tabooed, and steps were taken to modernise the Turks. Purdah disappeared and the Turkish girls began to learn Swedish exercises and to practise modern dancing. Can it be denied that these were revolutionary steps which broke the

hold of the Islamic religion on the Turkish people? It was a heavy price which GOD ALMIGHTY exacted from the Muslims for their past apathy and superstitious practices in the observance of their religion. It was GOD'S Will, and the Muslims were so aghast at the time that some began to suspect that these changes were probably due to some secret clauses in the Treaty. In accordance with the principles of Islam, the Muslims ground their teeth and bore this disaster with a stoical fortitude. But now the second act of this drama of Nature has just been unfolded and there is a lesson in it for us Muslims.

No Muslim can doubt that the series of disasters which overtook Turkey so rapidly in quick succession can only be in accordance with a great plan of the ALMIGHTY GOD. The disasters, earthquake, floods, storms, wolves, etc. are all of the types frequently referred to in the Holy Quran. See for instance the Surathul Hud (Chapter 11).

Verses 94 and 95 read as follows:—

"And when our decree came to pass We delivered Shuaib and those who believed with him by mercy from Us, and the rumbling overtook those who were unjust, so they became motionless bodies in their abodes."

As though they had never dwelt in them."

Turkey was at the zenith of its power, for four great nations were soliciting her for her favours and Great Britain and France had just concluded a pact of mutual assistance with her when GOD'S hand was disclosed.

Says Allah in Chapter 6, verse 6:

"Do they not consider how many a generation We have destroyed before them, whom We had established in the earth as We have not established you, and We sent the clouds-pouring rain on them in abundance and We made the rivers to flow beneath them, then We destroyed them on account of their faults and raised up after them another generation."

Chapter 11, verse 114 is as follows:—

"And who is more unjust than he who prevents men from the mosques of Allah, that His name should be remembered in them and strives to ruin them? As for those it was not proper for them that they should have entered them except in fear; they shall meet with disgrace in this world, and they shall have great chastisement in the hereafter."

There can be no doubt that it was a great mercy of God that He did not destroy the whole Turkish people, as He did when He dealt with the Spanish Muslims long ago. Perhaps it is a greater mercy of Allah that this disaster took place in the

From The Mimbar

THE BLESSINGS OF THE HADJ
Prophet Ibrahim's Sacrifice Of His Son

Translation of a Sermon Delivered on the 12th January, 1940. At The Masjidul Jamiah, Slave Island

By KATHEEB B. B. BAHAR

PRaise be to Allah unto whose presence all faces turn, whose likeness all thoughts failed to picture, Whose attributes all eloquent words failed to express, and of Whose Being all comprehensions of the wisest brains fell short. I praise Him and one who praises Him gains.

I bear witness that there is no god, worthy of being worshipped, but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger sent as a shattering proof of His (Allah's) might, a guidance to happiness, a chastisement to the infidels, and as a blessing to the god-fearing. So, His Book caused all other books to vanish and His light extinguished all other lights. From all pulpits the Arab and Muslim spoke of His praise. May Allah bestow His blessings and peace on Muhammad, on His relatives and His followers.

O mankind! Verily Allah glorified and praised be He, hath chosen out of the year some specified days and hours for you in which is a forgiving of your sins and an increase of reward for your pious actions, provided there is the purposes indicate earnestness to Allah. In them is a guarantee for those who seek only Allah's bounty. Whoever is thankful will be of the protected and whoever is ungrateful Allah is above all needs from the earthly ones.

These, may Allah bless you, are ten days terminating with the Eid by which the month of Thul Hadj precedes the other months. These are followed by the days of departure (of the pilgrims from Mina). In these He gathers His pious and obedient servants and hears and fulfils their prayers. There Allah's chosen people flock in from every corner of the earth in response to the call of Prophet

Ibrahim. Allah tried him in a like month by commanding him to sacrifice his son with his own hands. He obeyed his Lord by the sacrifice of the love of his heart for His pleasure. He took his son out to where he was ordered and informed him of the command. They both submitted willingly and prepared to execute the command. He made him lie on the ground and taking the knife in his right hand bent down to sacrifice him, praising Allah, while the angels prayed for them, the beasts grieved for them, the sky rained above them and the earth trembled beneath them. Allah, the most merciful, seeing their sincerity and their patience on the face of the impending calamity called him saying "O Ibrahim! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision. Lo! thus do We reward the good. Lo! this verily is a clear task."

The Angel Jibreel came with the animal for the offering and Prophet Ibrahim sacrificed it praising and glorifying Allah. Allah caused this to be an example for his successors to follow and to be a perfect blessing.

O servants of Allah! Respect the sanctity of these days by avoiding sins. Let him who finds the means for an offering do it with a good intention. Let all those who are journeying to the hereafter not forget to make provisions for it. Magnify the offerings consecrated to Allah. And whose magnifies the offerings consecrated to Allah, it surely is from devotion of the hearts. Allah the Almighty says,

"By the Dawn
And ten nights,
And the even and the odd,
And the night when it departeth,
There surely is an oath for
Thinking man". Sura 89 verses 1-5.

May Allah help us all to perform what pleaseth Him that He may accept the slightest of our actions and be pleased with us however we may be. Verily Allah is Forgiving, Generous and Merciful.—Ameen.

(Translated by Moulvi M. A. Latif)

Musings Of A Pensioner-XXIV

Re-Interpretation of the Holy Quran

Clothing Of Soul In Bodies

By M. T. AKBAR, K.C., B.A., LL.B. (Cottab),
Formerly Senior Puisne Justice of Ceylon.

MY Muslim readers will now realise that my main object in these random desultory notes is to show the inexhaustible treasures that are lying hidden in each line of the Holy Quran, and also to make it clear that the Book must be re-interpreted in the light of modern knowledge. It was Lessing who pointed out that with regard to true Revelations "when they were revealed they were certainly not yet truths of reason, but they were revealed in order to become such." I am only recommending that we should follow the examples of the great Sufi teachers, like Imam Ghazzali, Shaikh Mubayudin Al Arabi, and others who interpreted the Quran in the light of the knowledge then available. I am here stressing the same subject referred to in the opening sentences of my article in the first number of this paper.

Origin Of The Universe

In concluding my last article I pointed to the fact that there was continuous reaction between this third-dimensional world and the other higher dimensional worlds, for all these latter may be grouped together. They can be so grouped according to the Holy Quran, for it is this life that determines the future. (See Chapter 29, verses 124-127). So much importance does Islam attach to this life, that it is amusing to see how uncertain science has been and is with regard to man's position in the Universe. The Quran is definite that he is God's vicegerent on this earth and that the whole universe has been made subservient to him and his needs. (45-12 & 13; 7-54). According to Ptolemy, the earth was stationary and the heavenly bodies revolved round it. The earth became insignificant after Copernicus, and as astronomical science advanced the earth became more and more negligible till at last at the beginning of the 20th century man became less than dust and the earth was a tiny grain of sand in the shores of time. Sir James Jeans and others however think that the earth is unique, in that its creation was due to a most extraordinary occurrence which it will be most difficult to match. A stray star happened to trespass in the neighbourhood of our sun and thus did our planetary solar system come into being. Let me give a short extract from Professor Norton's article on the Cosmic Process—

"A so-called 'chaos' of disseminated dust or gas may have segregated under gravitation into vast assemblages of matter from which galaxies arose as it curled into stars. Thus controls deep seated in the nature of matter, energy and space-time brought the cosmic voyage on the galaxy, a unit so common that galaxies similar to our own Milky Way are estimated to number one hundred million in that limited sphere of space sounded by the telescopes of the present.

"Among these galaxies there is traceable a sequence of form and composition which may well mark the track of cosmic evolution from the amorphous galaxy to the globular, the elliptical, the lenticular, and on through successive types of spirals. The evolution of the star is still far from clear, but evidently it may include the blessed event of parentage—if, indeed, the relationship of planet to sun is not fraternal instead of filial. In either case, from the view point of values we may regard the sun-planet two some as the goal of stellar evolution. Life now becomes possible in the material universe. No organism can exist in the furnaces of stars or in the cold of interstellar space. It is

only on a planet whose surface is continuously energised by its sun that life can find foothold and evolve. No doubt many stars fail to reach this goal. Of the oak's summer harvest of tens of thousands of acorns all but one or two may fail to grow to trees. But nature's prodigality is but the expression of nature's inexhaustible will to gain her ends.

"The evolution of life upon a planet is a slow process, requiring aeons. But the life of a star is far longer still. So vast is the store of radiant energy in our sun that it has flooded the earth with light and heat much the same as now for millions of years of geologic time and can continue to do so for millions of years to come. Thus it is brought to pass the seeming miracle that for a thousand million years our planetary home has been so conditioned that its temperature has never exceeded on either side the narrow limits within which life is possible.

"The planet runs certain risks from its dominate mate. A sun may begin to pulsate. It may explode. It may collide with another star, or come quite too close to it for the planet's comfort or existence. But the fact that in all geologic time no such accident has happened to our sun warrants an optimistic view. The stages in the history of a star are so incomprehensibly long that life on a planet may have time to complete its evolution before a fatal accident occurs or the sun sets in final extinction.

"The geologic evolution of such a planet as the earth is also on a scale commensurate with that of the evolution of life upon it. The earth's surface is constantly worn away by water and wind. The waste of the land is constantly being carried to the sea. If the levelling of the lands were unopposed they long since would have disappeared beneath a universal ocean. But continents and mountain ranges are still uplifted and sea floors subside because the earth's internal heat is not yet dissipated. If early in its history the earth had lost that heat, and movements of its crust had ceased, organic evolution might never have got beyond the fishes of a universal ocean, if even earlier all water on the earth had not been resorbed."

Thus the pendulum has swung back to its former position and the earth and man have regained their pristine importance.

Connection of this Life With The Higher World

Let me quote from the Quran verses to show the interpenetration of this world and the higher world and that Blake was right when he said:

"A Robin Red breast in a cage
Puts all heaven in a rage."
But here too in the Quranic sense all heaven is in a rage because man has put the robin in the cage. It is not owing to the suffering of the robin, irrespective of man's callousness, that the whole of heaven is affected; the whole of nature is as a matter of fact red-toothed and red-clawed.

Again Blake was right from the Quranic point of view when he said:

"A horse misused on the road
Calls to heaven for human blood."
The world was created according to Islam for a human ethical purpose and not for a general moral purpose affecting all living creatures, as Professor Melamed distinguishes in his Spinoza and Buddha.

The Quran in several places draws attention to the fact that God has created everything in pairs (43-12; 36-36; 51-47 to 49); even the heavens and the earth are described as a pair. My readers will remember the many passages referring to a dead earth and how the earth is quickened and brought to life by rain, enabling vegetation to spring up and flowers to bloom.

But let me refer to a reaction between man and the higher world. Chapter II, verse 186 is as follows—

"And when my servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right path."

In another place Allah says: "Remember Me and I will remember you" and in a third place "Call on Me and I will respond to you." In fact Allah says He is nearer to man than his jugular vein and that He intervenes between a man and his heart.

Verse 36 of Chapter 41 assures man that "He answers those who believe and do good deeds and gives them more out of His Grace."

Verses 7 and 8 of Chapter 40 refer to the greatest angels praying for mercy and protection for the true believer and if it is remembered that angels in the Quran stand for the ministers or vehicles through whom or which God executes His will, the close interpenetration of the two worlds will be appreciated.

Chapter 35, verse 10 is as follows—

"To Him do ascend
(All) Words of Parity;
It is He who exalts
Each Deed of Righteousness.
Those that lay Plots
Of evil,—for them
Is a Penalty terrible;
And the plotting of such
Will be void (of result)."

I ask my readers in all sincerity if I have not demonstrated part at least—a very small part—of the treasures unfolded in the pages of the Holy Quran. Any proposition, law or statement cannot be true unless it is in accord with the Holy Quran, and *Sunnat* of the Holy Prophet.

In the words of the Quran—if I am right in interpreting the word *Callimath* as the words of the Quran—

"Say—
"If the ocean were
Ink (wherewith to write out)
The words of my Lord,
Sooner would the ocean be
Exhausted than would the
words
Of my Lord, even if we
Added another ocean
Like it, for its aid". (18-109).

Man's Free-will and Development of Personality

I assume that my readers are familiar with the innumerable references in the Holy Quran to man's freedom of action. The very verses referring to the creation of Adam show that God gave Adam (*i.e.* man) free-will to act as he chose when he warned Adam not to approach the tree of knowledge. "If you do good, you will do good for your own souls, and if you do evil, it shall be for them." Says the Quran (17-7).

Verses 19 and 20 of the same chapter read as follows—

"And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer; (as for) these, their striving shall be recompensed. All do We aid—these as well as those—out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is never confined."

Etheric Bodies

As I have attempted to explain earlier in this series man was created by God to develop a personality which will be able to withstand the shock of meeting God on the day of resurrection. As in Christianity, the Quran hints at a resurrection of the soul embodied in a body—though the exact nature of this body is only referred to indirectly.

In chapter 56, verses 4-50 Allah says—

"And they used to say
'What' when we die
And become dust and bones,
Shall we then indeed
Be raised up again?
(We) and our fathers of old?
'Yes, for those of old
And those of later times
All will certainly be
Gathered together for the
meeting
Appointed for a Day
Well-known.
Then will ye truly—
O ye that go wrong
And treat (Truth) as False-
hood!—
Ye will surely taste
Of the Tree of Zaqqum."

Verses 60 to 62 of the same chapter are as follows—

"60. We have decreed Death
To be your common Lot,
And ye are not
To be frustrated.
61. From changing yours Forms
and creating you (again)
In (Forms) that ye know not.
62. And ye certainly know already
The first form of creation:
Why then do ye not
Celebrate His praises?"

The Quran further refers to those who are slain *Bi Sabeelillah* as not being dead but as being alive.

The nature of the etheric, or subtle body which will clothe the soul after death is referred to indirectly in verses 1, 3 and 4 of Chapter 50.

"So the Unbelievers say
This is a wonderful thing!
'What' when we die
And become dust (Shall we
Live again?) That is
A sort of Return
Far (from our understanding)
We already know
How much of them
The earth takes away;
With Us is a Record
Preserving (a full account of
the wastage)."

The famous German Philosopher Leibnitz was of opinion that in the *monad's* progress after death the soul would require embodiment in some sort of body, though not similar to the material body. In the hypothesis of a subtle body, L. J. Belton M.Sc. has in the *Hibbert Journal* of October, 1938 summarised the evidence and arguments in favour of such a hypothesis. In this article he wrote as follows—

"Are we to think of the etheral body as the seat of mind or soul? To assert this would be to confuse the issue. Yet it is an error which is constantly being made. The soul, *ex hypothesi*, uses the etheral body *transmissively*, just as it uses the physical body *transmissively*, and is not to be equated with any of its instruments. Thus when Andrew Jackson Davis clairvoyantly described the process of dying, he spoke not of the soul vacating the body (as people mistakenly do) but of an etheral emanation which detached itself from the physical frame until it stood forth, to use his own words, "a bright, shining

(Continued on page 7)

THE GREATNESS OF THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

World's Greatest Benefactor

By HAFIZ MUHAMMAD FAZLUR RAHMAN ANSARI,
B.A., B.Th. (Jr.)

MUHAMMAD was born in a country where the storm of evils was raging strong, yet he led an unexcelled life of purity and uprightness even before his call to prophethood. His nation was sunken deep in idolatry, and the lust of wine and gambling, but he himself never throughout his whole life even once bowed before an idol, or touched wine or indulged in gambling.

May not this one fact prove that he was a born Divine Teacher if there ever was any in the whole history of mankind?

Prior to his advent every attempt at reforming the Arab nation had failed. Christianity, Judaism and the movement of the Hunccefs had not been able to eradicate even to a small extent the evils of Arabia. Let Dr. Zwemer and those of his way of thinking revise their opinion that the Arabs were "ready to rally round any banner that led to national deliverance," (Arabia, the Cradle of Islam: p. 160), and let them read carefully the remarks of an avowed enemy of Islam, Sir William Muir. He says:

"The prospects of Arabia before Mohammed were as unfavourable to religious reform as they were to political union or national regeneration. The foundation of Arab faith was a deep-rooted idolatry which for centuries had stood proof with no palpable symptom of decay against every attempt at evangelization from Egypt and Syria."

"Causes are sometimes conjured up," he adds further, "to account for results produced by agent apparently inadequate to effect them. Mohammed arose and forthwith the Arabs were roused to a new and spiritual faith; hence the conclusion that Arabia was fermenting for the change, and prepared to adopt it. To us calmly reviewing the past, pre-Islamic history belies the assumption."

Those who think that the success of Islam was brought about by economic causes may well ponder over the findings of H. M. Hyndman. He says in *The Awakening of Asia*, p. 10: "For centuries before the coming of Mohammed, the Prophet of Allah, the Arabs had been the poor, proud, hard-living and hard-fighting men of the desert and its oases that they are today. If economic causes and desire for material domination had been their main incentives to war and conquest there was as much reason for their outbreak, and apparently many better chances of their success, before than after the advent of Mohammed."

The first link in the Divine Scheme entrusted to Muhammad was the reformation of Arabia which was to form the base for world-reformation. Twenty-three years before his death Muhammad stood like a solitary star on a dark horizon. But reviewing the history of the world from the day when the clarion call of Islam first echoed in the valley of Faren, one is deeply impressed by the uniqueness of transformation brought about by this Greatest Prophet of all time.

"To the Arab nation," says Carlyle, (Heroes and Hero-Worship: Chapter on "Hero as Prophet"). "Islam was a birth from darkness into light; Arabia first became alive by means of it. A poor, shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in its deserts since the creation of the world; a Hero-Prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe: see, the unnoticed becomes world-notable, the small has grown world-great, within one century afterwards! Arabia is at Granada on this hand, at Delhi on that, glancing in valour and splendour and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world."

These Arabs, the man Mohammed, and that one century—! It is not as if a spark had fallen on a spark, on a world of what seemed black, unnoticeable sand? But lo! the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high, from Delhi to Granada!"

But it was not the "birth from darkness into light" of the Arab nation alone. This re-birth was shared by the world at large, because it was through the Muslim Arabs that modern science and modern philosophy and modern aversion against credulity and superstition came into being. In fact, the revolution which Muhammad brought about was a unique revolution in the history of mankind, and the merit of stressing the need of education and of exhorting humanity to cultivate scientific learning is a unique merit, which none amongst the founders of religions shares with him. A few of his injunctions in this connection may be quoted here with advantage. He said:

"The acquisition of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim—male and female."

"Seek knowledge even though (you have to go to seek it) in China."

"Teach science: he who teaches it fears God; he who seeks it adores God; he who spreads it distributes alms; he who possesses it becomes an object of veneration and of benevolence. Science saves from error and sin; it clears the way to paradise. It is our companion in travel our confidence in the desert, our society in solitude. It guides us in the pleasures and pains of our life and serves as an ornament in the company of our friends. It is through it that the Almighty elevates man who are destined to pronounce on what is true and what is good."

Consequently, soon after the demise of the Master the pious and enlightened followers had crossed the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, and had pitched the banners of their unique civilization in China on one side

and in Spain on the other. With an astonishing rapidity nation after nation had joined the fold of the glorious Arabian Teacher. Great seats of Islamic culture were founded at Baghdad and Cairo and in Spain, and from these seats of scientific, philosophical and spiritual learning emanated that light which illumined the dark world of Europe and brought about the Western Renaissance.

Again, it is not only as the Father of Modern Civilization (of course minus its faults, which are un-Islamic) that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on him be peace and choicest blessings of Allah!) stands as the greatest man in the history of mankind but it is also pre-eminently as the inaugurator of universal religious rousing and reformation. Who can deny the fact on historical grounds that the post-Islamic movements of reformation in several great religions of the world—particularly Christianity and Hinduism had and have Islam as their source of inspiration and model? The fact that even the founders of religious fraternities in recent times,—Guru Nanak, the Head of Sikhism, Mirza Ali Muhammad Bab, founder of the Babi movement, Mirza Baha Ullah, founder of the Bahai movement, Mirza Ghulam

Ahmad of Qadian, founder of the Qadiani or Ahamadiyya movement, had to bow their heads ungrudgingly before his greatness speaks volumes in itself. Muhammad claimed to be the Last Prophet—a prophet after whom no prophet of any status or type is to come, and subsequent history and the all-comprehensiveness of his religion eloquently prove the validity of his claim.

Humanity was reborn with the advent of Muhammad, as he himself proclaimed, a few months before his departure from this world. In his soul-stirring sermon at Arafat on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, before an assembly of 2,000,000 followers, the band of people who were to inaugurate world-civilization:—

"O People! the world has come again on the same point as it was when God had created the earth and the heavens (i.e. a new era has dawned)."

Glorious was the mission of Muhammad, and glorious were his achievements. Humanity will ever remember him as her greatest Benefactor.

With him be peace and blessings of Allah for all time to come!

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THREE LIONS

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Clarification of Islam Needed in Japan

By Professor N. H. Berlas, M.A.,
Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, Tokyo

Japan is so much isolated from the mainland and lies so far to the east that the Arabs could not reach the country and deliver the messages of Islam to the people. As a consequence the Japanese have been ignorant of the teachings of Islam. The responsibility for the ignorance of these people should be borne by the Muslims themselves as the Japanese are quick to adopt foreign beliefs and customs when presented to them. As long ago as the second century of the Christian era Confucianism reached Japan from China, and Buddhism was introduced here in the 6th century. These two faiths together with the native faith of Shintoism have so much blended into the character of the Japanese that they affect their daily life in every detail. Christianity came here with the penetration of the western powers in the latter part of the 19th century and has taken a firm root in the land. As a matter of fact it was introduced here in the 6th century, but was uprooted in the next century on account of political machinations of the missionaries. The western civilization which reached here under the guise of Christian civilization has thoroughly converted the Japanese.

The whole history of Japan reveals the marvellous capacity of the people to adopt foreign things and adapt them to their own needs. It is rather a peculiar circumstance that Islam has escaped the attention of such an alert nation.

The Chinese and the Koreans might have taken advantage of the flourishing civilization in impressing them with the splendour of the Chinese empire at the time they introduced Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan, and the magnificence of Europe and America might have similarly influenced the people when the west knocked at their door. The Muslims missed their chance when the Muslims power was at its height. But Islam has a greater chance in the modern world, as this is the age of reason and Islam is a rational religion.

Failure of the Muslims to enlighten the Japanese on Islam did not deter them from acquiring a little knowledge of its doctrines, but in their search they went to the West. The West has only recently awoken from the spell of bigotry and prejudice which for centuries has been the chief weapon of Christian missionaries with which to fight Islam and rationalism. Almost all the books on Islam published in the West have been written by Christian clergymen, and were meant for propaganda purposes. Most of the information they possess is misleading and a libel on Islam. The Japanese derived their information from such books and published it in their own language thus misleading the whole nation.

Misrepresentation of Islam is carried on in such a manner as is likely to prove very injurious in future. All the history books published by various authors for use in secondary schools contain false statements concerning the life and teachings of Muhammad (May God bless him), thus prejudging not only the present generation but future generations too against Islam. In fairness, the Japanese cannot be charged with bad faith nor accused of intentional false propaganda against Islam. They have obtained their information from where it was easily

available, i.e., the West, the torchbearer of knowledge. So it is really the Western authors who are to blame, and not the Japanese.

The burden of responsibility for correcting the wrong done falls on the shoulders of the Muslims themselves. They shall supply correct information on Islam to the Japanese in the language intelligible to them so that the harm done by false propaganda may be counteracted. A continuation of false teachings in schools is bound to have far-reaching effects. So much is certain that it can never be conducive to friendly feelings between the Japanese and the Muslims, but it bound to produce hatred in the minds of the Japanese against Muslims who in their turn are sure to react. Statesmen should rise to the occasion and try to remedy the disease slowly eating into the minds of the younger generation. From my personal contact with responsible Japanese I can safely assert that they are alive to the danger and are willing to rectify the mistake.

Last year I was asked to speak on Muslim tolerance by the Oriental Culture Society of Tokyo. I had occasion to point out during my speech that Japanese school histories taught such false things as Muhammad going out to propagate Islam with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, and appeal to the Society to use their influence with the authorities to start research into Muslim history and correct such defamatory statements against a civilization which has been a bulwark in the history of the world. I am thankful to Mr. Kuro Nakamura, the founder and director of the Society, for taking up the matter in hand. He did not only publish my full speech in "The Japanese Abroad," the organ of his society, but also moved the matter in the winter session of the Imperial Diet of which he is a member. He interpellated both the Minister of Education and the Minister of Overseas. Here is a rendering of his latter interpellation which has a wider bearing and which has been published in Japanese in the April number of his magazine.

"The other day I had honour of putting an interpellation to the Minister of Education in connection with the customs, religions, and so forth of foreign nations, and today I have to do the same to the Minister of Overseas. In order to expand ourselves we have to emigrate into and deal with the countries not inhabited by the white people, but by the coloured races, such as Africa, the Near East, the Far East, as well as the islands of the South Pacific Ocean. These countries are inhabited mostly by the followers of Muhammad whose religion is misunderstood by the world at large, to the great grievance of the Muslim world. Muslims are said to have converted people with the sword in the right hand and the Koran in the left. This is believed by most of the people thus making them hate Muslims. This misrepresentation is made by the white races for making mischief. In truth, Muslims discourage fighting, and they believe in the brotherly love of the whole human race. I know very little about religious affairs, nor have I made any special study of the subject, but I can affirm with confidence that text books used in the Japanese Middle Schools have this misleading statement. Hence I advise authorities to make a thorough study of this fact and make corrections if they find any misrepresentation. The Department of Overseas Affairs and the Department of Foreign Affairs should co-operate with the Department of Education in rectifying these mistakes."

It is very gratifying to note that representatives of all the departments concerned sympathised with the plea put forward by Mr. Nakamura and promised to take suitable action. Now it rests with the Muslim world to supply the data for research and rectification.

Yemen—French Mission's Visit

Imam And European Powers

A French Military Mission has arrived in Hodeida, the first Harbour of Yemen, says the Special Correspondent of the "A. B. Patrika," Calcutta. The authorities there on behalf of the Imam gave them a cordial welcome and great reception after which the members of the Mission proceeded to Sanaa to meet the Imam.

The visit, it is understood, is supposed to be very important but great secrecy is maintained as regard the object of the visit. It is surmised in the Arab political circles that the island Shaikh Said, near the Yemen coast situated in the middle between the French and the Italian harbours, Djibouti and Massawa respectively at Red Sea, has now come again for a fresh negotiation between the French and Yemen.

Former Dispute

The question of Shaikh Said Island, it may be recalled here, had, some time ago, become a subject for considerable dispute between Yemen and Italy. Italy as it was stated, was demanding from the Imam trade concession and establishment of a Political Agency in the island. Negotiation in the subject had been, for several times interrupted.

The Imam, on many occasions, had expressed that Italy was keeping an eagle's eye over Yemen and was trying to establish a Naval Base for her troops in the Island of Shaikh Said. It is also reported that negotiations between the British, French and the Imam were started some time ago for maintaining the neutrality of the island. Since the British had declared war against Germany, it is presumed that the visit of the mission is now connected with the same.

It may also be recalled here that during this current year valuable presentations, including best model Italian motor cars, have been presented to the Imam by Rome and in return to this the Imam despatched 20 tons of Yemen coffee to Signor Mussolini.

Musings of a Pensioner-XXIV

(Continued from page 5)

image, a little smaller than its physical body, but a perfect prototype or reproduction in all except its disfigurements." I quote these words for what they are worth: what is important for us to realise is that, given our assent to the reality of an ethereal body, this ethereal body also is an instrument of the soul, not the soul itself. It is probable that—at least for the purpose of what we call "manifestation"—the soul, or vital principle, always requires embodiment and cannot be conceived save in its relationship to its vehicle or vehicles."

"It was with good reason that Dr. van Mourik Brockman, Professor of Theology at Utrecht University, declared a few years ago that "most problems of theology and psychological research can only be solved by the working hypothesis of the astral body." A mass of testimony can be cited in support of the theory whose cumulative weight is extraordinarily impressive. Confessedly, the idea of a subtle body is not of itself a religious concept, but an admission of its reality does bring us one step nearer and understanding of the final mystery of life and death."

Gleanings from Here and There

(Continued from page 1)

of our conscience gets strangled, under pressure of temptation, and we commit the most ignoble offences—offences detrimental to the best interests of our community, country or religion. Let us, therefore, once for all, take to heart the Divine Word that the keys to all the treasures of the world lie in His hand. Let not, therefore, the riches of the rich or the might of the mighty shake us from the path of Truth for real felicity is the gift of no other than the Lord.

Trials and tribulations are another factor in the forces that determine our conduct for good or evil. Does not the prospect of troubles and afflictions—overawe us into stooping to what is mean and base? To forestall us against this, surely, the Quran has this to warn us: "And most surely We will test you with some 'that of fear.'" In other words, the tests bring us a self-struggle in which our capabilities are put to the test. From the Lord and our own powers, we must create our own good. We mistake them for afflictions, but they are Divine blessings in disguise. The object is to cultivate in us those powers of patience, perseverance, and steadfastness which constitute the very essence of all greatness. Does history record a single instance of a great man who had not to go through the ordeal of overwhelming hardships? The Arabic word "Lillah" (for Allah) in this verse is significant. In its root form—*lillah*—it denotes the process of healing and purifying gold of what it does not contain. Likewise afflictions come to serve as a crucible and give us a strength of character—character shorn of all flaws and failings. The verse ends with the words: "And give good news to the patient ones—those who, when a calamity befalls them, say: Surely for the Lord we are and to the Lord we go" (1, 115). Obviously, the "good news" is given to such people for the reason that in undergoing hardships with resignation they gain in point of character. And what could be a more enviable possession than character? But this gain does not fall to the lot of those who glibly repeat these words. Nay, it is born of that frame of mind which, when actually thrown into the furnace of afflictions has the mettle to say with equanimity: "For the Lord we are and to the Lord we go." Pain and pleasure are mere passing shadows, having nothing to do with the reality of things. Were the avoidance of one or the achievement of the other the object of our life, we would no doubt feel the sting of all the troubles that befall us. But if, on the contrary, Allah is the sole purpose of our life—if we live for Allah, suffer for Allah and die for Allah—calamities lose all their fearfulness.

There is yet another thing which deteriorates our character—the love of false honour. High-sounding titles and exalted offices of state, for instance, have in these days led many to stoop to low depths of degradation. Such title-hunters or office-seekers, prostrate themselves, so to speak, before the false self-made deity of imaginary honour, and are not slow to sacrifice at its altar the best of their national and religious interests. To safeguard against this human weakness the Quran warned us in the words "For the Lord is the honour and for His Apostle." The honours we are madly after are, in sooth, worthless trash. Real honour and real glory are those of the Lord and His Apostle. We must not betake ourselves to the ways leading to national detriment in the vain hope of winning thereby some sort of worldly honour. Let us strive to establish His glory on earth; and take it from me that the Lord will restore our lost honour to us. Do not

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Gleanings From Here and There.

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set up idols of so-called honour. Hold fast to the principle that all honour lies in the hands of the Lord. Character, in brief, is an inestimable asset for man-kinship follows in the wake of character as the night follows the day! Character gives birth to the leaders of men. But how to cultivate character? Through the worship of the One Lord alone. The whole of the Quran aims at serving this one purpose—the development of a strong character in man. Our hopes and our fears, whether in respect of wealth or honour are the main-springs of all our movements. The Quran emancipates us from all dependence on others on this account. All treasures, it says, and all honour lie in His hands. Afflictions form a stumbling-block, but these, too, the Quran assures us, come to uplift and edify us, to give nerve to our character. Thus in inculcating the unity doctrines the Book strikes at the very roots of all our evil propensities.

Create this true spirit of Divine Unity in you. Throw all false fears off. Look up to God and Him alone for all good. Embrace calamities as a blessing from the Lord. Cultivate such a mentality, such an outlook on life, and rest assured no power under the sun can do you any harm. All the troubles now confronting you are the false values you have attached to things. You have set up false deities, in different forms, besides the One Supreme Lord. You tremble at the slightest frown of a mortal like yourself, thinking your welfare lies in his weak hands. Give up these false notions. Cast your mentality in the Quranic mould. Return to the ways of the Lord, and all honour, all power, will come to you as a matter of course.

Every religion came to tell us, more or less, what is worth striving after and what must be shunned; but Islam, of all others, enjoys a distinction of its own. It not only enlightens us on the why and wherefore of good and evil, but what is of immense practical value to us, it lays down a definite course, following which we may cultivate the one and eradicate the other. Here is one such practical guidance: "You shall never obtain virtue unless you spend in the way of the Lord of what is dear to you". To develop a character, we must part with what is dear to us in the path of Allah. The world saw many a system of philosophy, expounded from time to time, all aiming at the extirpation of evil; numerous religions and schools of ethics did their best to uproot the same, but Islam alone provided the master-key with which to solve this difficult problem.

What, after all, lies at the bottom of evil? Certain passions of our nature demanding satisfaction. Now, their gratification is bound up with certain other objects, which consequently win our fancy—not for their intrinsic worth but merely for their secondary value as ministering to the satisfaction of those cravings. But as it is, they become for us, in themselves, the object of our exertions. We strive to achieve them as if they were not only means towards some ulterior end, but a goal in themselves. And in our anxiety to get them we are prone, more often than not, to ignore the legitimacy, or otherwise, of the means we employ. By fair means or foul we must have the thing—this becomes the ruling passion with many. Evil is nothing else but such illicit acquisition to gratify our passions. But how to get rid of it is the question of questions. Obviously, we should cultivate in us the faculty of parting with things we have dearly and legitimately acquired—and this requires no small amount of doing.

When, however, such a faculty of cheerfully parting with our own honest earnings in the way of the Lord—the very idea of depriving others of their belongings becomes repugnant to us. It becomes a sort of a second nature with us to hate trespassing on the rights of others. Thus, it is that the Quran kills all germs of evil in man and gives him a character strong and stalwart.

In brief, you must habituate yourselves to spend your wealth, your comfort, your honour—all near and dear to you—and then you can claim to have realized the true significance of Divine Unity. When all else has ceased to be the object of your love, then, and then alone, you are a true votary of One Lord. This is the meaning of our formula of faith: *La ilaha-illallah*—there is no object of adoration besides the Lord. This is the true spirit of *Hijrat*—self-imposed banishment in the cause of Truth—which, when imbibed, makes one the recipient of Divine grace, of whom the verse says, "verily he achieved the highest Good."

All the devotional practices enjoined in the Quran are, in fact, calculated to impart this one lesson—the cultivation of the faculty of tearing off our affections from all else, in obedience to the Will of the Lord. His love should become the dominant passion with us. Our daily prayers, our fasting, our charity, our pilgrimage, aimed at the realization of that same grand object—separation from all near and dear, in the way of the Lord. There may be those who say their prayers regularly, keep fast, pay the prescribed charity without fail, and bidding farewell to kith and kin, undertake the pilgrimage, yet they have not realized the underlying purpose nor imbibed the true spirit. All this means so much labour lost, unless we learn the one lesson, how to sacrifice our cravings at the altar of One Lord. Prayer amounts to empty mechanical ritual and fasting to mere starvation should we lose sight of the true object in view. In fact, all these practices constitute a well-graduated course to give us the necessary training. At the call to prayer, five times a day, we instantaneously emerge out of our worldly pursuits and turn to our Creator. In the midst of a busy life, we exercise ourselves in throwing off everything, however much it may mean to us at the moment when the call to the Lord comes. The month of Fast takes us a step forward on the road. We give up, at the Lord's bidding, even what is indispensable to keep soul and body together. Charity takes us yet onward in the course of self-surrender and self-obnegation, and last comes the Hajj, i.e., Pilgrimage to the Ka'aba, in which is reached the last stage of his spiritual course of training—the culminating point of self-renunciation. We undertake a voluntary exile for a time, from our home and hearts for no other object than the Love of the Lord. No sooner do we step into the prescribed boundary around the Ka'aba than we discard even the last vestige of worldly attachments—dress. A couple of white sheets are all that we cover our bodies with. Thus wrapped up in two bare sheets, we humble ourselves before the Lord, prostrating before Him on dust. "Here we are! Here we are!" we shout in one voice, "Ready O Lord! to sacrifice our all at Thy bidding—our homes, our comforts, our wealth, our honour." This is the climax of that spirit of self-forgetfulness in the love of Allah which it is the sole purpose of Islam to inculcate. And then, having reached this highest pinnacle, we offer animal sacrifice, symbolizing thereby that we have no hesitation in killing all cravings, passions, and desires in submission to the Will of the Lord.

In conclusion, let me tell you that this is all but symbolism representing stages of spiritual advancement. Unless these practices are accompanied by their corresponding spiritual state

—cheerful resignation to the Lord in all things—they are worth little more than a farce. If, however, in spite of weaning our mind engrossed in worldly concerns from its average occupation being a difficult task, the true spirit is thoroughly imbibed, so that all our movements, all our thoughts, all our words—whether awake or asleep, sitting or standing or walking, in whatever condition and in whatever situation,—become for Allah, the Lord, the Creator, Sustainer, Nourisher and Evolver, we have achieved the *Summum bonum* of our life, as the Quran says: "Verily he achieved the Highest Good."

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Hajj-Pilgrimage to Mecca

(Continued from page 1)

5. Then the pilgrim rests in the Valley of Mina with full acceptance of God's will as to whatever place he may be assigned in the guidance of future life.

6. The sacrifice was a test on Prophet Abraham to signify his readiness to give up his belonging. So does a pilgrim at this stage willing to sacrifice even his self in the path of his beloved.

7. Throwing stones at the Evil One indicate that the attributes (sifat) that are lent to creatures (kalq) are divested or absorbed in Him (fana billah) and that the pilgrim is pure in heart, word and deed. This is the stage that the mind is able realize "All good and bad are from Him."

Prophet Abraham was three times tested to find his fullness in Tauhid. Firstly he was tested on his wealth—he gave away tremendous charity. Secondly he was tested on his attribute (sifat), his son. He sacrificed himself; thirdly he was tested on his self. He became a prisoner in the hands of Namrud and was thrown into the great fire. As he has realized his non-existence, he remained—La-fa-ila-illallah—and internally and externally show with his own eyes the merits of his faith.

When and then only Tauhidi Dhari, Tauhidi Sifati and Tauhidi Afali were full in him. Here God called him my friend (khalidullah).

To attain this stage of friendship, Prophet Muhammad (P. O. B.) laid out the practical observances with both the inner and outer meaning in them. Let us, therefore, observe all performances with realization of the meaning behind them.

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