

ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY

Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim

This book presents Islam as a universal religion based on reason and the religious experiences of the Prophets. It gives a viewpoint that guarantees the preservation of all essential values, in the present-day conflict of ideologies

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The Fundamental Beliefs and Principles of
Islam and their Application to Practical Life

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PAKISTAN

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INTRODUCTION

Attempt shall be made in this book to bring out and elucidate the basic concepts of Islam. Islam is the oldest as well as the youngest of all the great religions professed and partially practised by large portions of humanity. Islam is as old as God and His creation. Before humanity appeared on the scene it was the religion of the universe and the creatures that inhabited it, and it continues to be the religion of Nature. According to the creed of the Qurán, the first Man of Knowledge was a Muslim. He was created with infinite potentialities to assimilate Divine attributes in order to fit himself as the Vicegerent of God on the earth. His previous state was a paradisial condition in which he lived the life of Nature, adapted by instinct to his environment from which he gained his sustenance by instinctive efforts. The transition from that Nature was a shock of maladjustment. Some other religions start the life of humanity with what is termed the Fall of Man. The Qurán, too, uses that term for the transitional jerk which granted Man free-will, with possibilities of going against Nature and the God of Nature. The Christian version of the legend depicts the expulsion of Man from Paradise because of having eaten the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. According to the Qurán it was not knowledge but ignorance that drove him out ; it was the misuse of the free-will granted to him that caused his Fall. But the Qurán does not base its superstructure on the Fall. Sin or Grace, Virtue or Vice are not inherited. Man's

responsible existence started with his free-will and his endowment of knowledge. Humanity is not tainted with any original sin because of the disobedience of the primeval Progenitor. Faith in the Moral Order which Islam enjoins presupposes free-will. If man were born with an incorrigible congenital bent towards sin, the Creator would be more diabolical than divine. Such a God would neither be good nor just. The Qurán, therefore, emphatically repudiates the false doctrine of the Original Sin, transmitted by inheritance. In the moral realm 'no one carries the burden of another.' "Men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn" (IV-32). Humanity starts with the emergence of free-will which may manifest itself as disobedience to God or Nature or the laws of his being. Man does not start life with perverted instincts. All of his instincts, like the instincts of the animal, are instruments of the preservation of life ; only with false knowledge and perverted free-will disorder sets in. "The nature of Allah in which He has made men : that is the right religion" (XXX-30). The Prophet said, "Man is born with divinely gifted nature ; he brings no creed with him ; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian." It is not any inheritance of perverted instincts, but the social inheritance which presses him to follow artificial man-made creeds. Islam is not a creed in this sense ; it is the religion of Nature. Nature within him, rightly adjusted to the nature without him, will harmonise him with himself and with God.

Islam is not a creed which originated with Muhammad. The Prophet held that from Adam downwards all the genuine religious teachers, commis-

sioned by God to preach and practise truth, have professed only one and the same religion for which the Arabic word is Islam. Islam means Peace, and it also means Surrender to the Will of God. These two meanings have a common psychological root. God means the Universal Creative and Preservative Will of Existence ; God stands for Harmony and anything that stands for Conflict is anti-God. No man can be at peace with himself or with others or with his environment in general unless he voluntarily surrenders his will to the Universal Will. Sin is nothing but self-centred particularity. It is egotism that refuses to recognise that the good of all is the good of everyone. There is no other religion besides Islam which has a connotational designation. Christianity is named after Christ, Buddhism is the creed of Buddha and Zoroastrianism is the religion of Zaratusht. Muhammad forbade that the religion preached by him should be named after him. He said, 'it is not only my religion ; it was as well the religion of Christ and Moses and innumerable other prophets raised among other people.' "And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them" (XXXV-24).

Islam, being the Religion of Harmony, it promulgated the doctrine of the unity of religions. Islam, however, considers theistic religion only as true religion, so its doctrine of the unity of religions covers only those creeds in which the oneness of God was realised ; all else is barbarity and ignorance which degrades man to such an extent that he becomes sub-human. The Qurán says, "They are as cattle ; nay they are in worse error" (VII-179). In the sense in which the term is used by the Qurán, Islam is a universal

religion. Wherever there is true religion there is no monopoly of salvation. The Qurán says that Abraham was not a Jew and Christ was not Christian ; their religion was the same primeval and eternal Islam, the religion of the identification of human and divine will to attain that perfect harmony which is the ideal urge and goal, not only of humanity but of entire creation. "And the Jews say, the Christians do not follow anything (good) ; and the Christians say, the Jews do not follow anything (good)" (II-113). Both of them assert for their respective groups the monopoly of salvation. The Qurán categorically repudiates all ideas of monopoly in truth or salvation. Salvation or Peace here and hereafter is for him who submits himself to God and does virtuous deeds. These are the only essentials of religion according to the Qurán. Belief in the Moral Order or the law of Moral Compensation along with belief in God, the Source of the Moral and Natural Order, completes the faith of man if he is also the doer of good deeds. All the rest of Islam is a system of corollaries that follow logically from this basic outlook. Anyone within the pale of orthodox Islam or outside it who has this outlook has attained Truth. The Qurán, in more than one place, has in so many words laid stress on this attitude. "Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve" (II-62). This is not mere religious tolerance which is a very negative attitude ; it is a positive injunction to extend the Brotherhood of Faith to all those who have the essentials of faith although they may differ in their

laws and ritual. Like every other creed or discipline, Islam too has its ritual but it gives a very subordinate and secondary place to all ritual. Taking one instance out of many, it is enjoined on every Muslim to turn towards the direction of the Central Holy Temple of Islam, the Kaaba while offering prescribed prayers. But fearing lest it be considered as part of the essence of prayers the Qurán says there is no special virtue in this that you turn your face to the East or the West ; it says, " And Allah's is the East and the West, therefore whither you turn, thither is Allah's purpose " (II-115) ; " It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East or the West " (II-177).

Islam was not satisfied with preaching only broad principles, it was considered essential to create a system and a discipline which should embody those principles in individual and social life. It is a complete code of life based on a definite outlook on life. No teacher of a great religion was afforded by history the opportunity to pass through all the essential phases of social, economic and political existence. He started as a poor shepherd and worker ; then travelled as a young man with commercial caravans ; then acted as a commercial agent, then led an ideally happy life as a husband and a father ; then cried as a persecuted warner against the injustice of man. He conquered his enemies primarily by love, and, when necessity compelled, used the minimum physical force to overwhelm the savage persecutors ; then, having conquered them, forgave them with open-hearted generosity, for which history offers no parallel. He set up a state from a scratch among a people who had no political experience beyond their tribal organisations, and pro-

mulgated laws that were more advanced and more humane than his contemporary world dreamed of. Then he dealt with international relations in peace and war and finally completed his work having chalked out a system of social justice based on liberty, fraternity and equality embodied not only in a moral code but in a definite framework of economic justice. The same golden thread of humanity and simplicity runs throughout the web and woof of the variegated pattern of his many-sided life. At the end he was the same simple and modest poor man as he had started. Does history offer any parallel to this life, which looks like the life of all humanity concentrated in an individual existence ?

Islam as a system of life is a mirror of the life and outlook of Muhammad. His scripture too may be taken as his biographical sketch and a code of his ethics and conduct. A person once asked Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, to describe the morals and manners of Muhammad, to which Aisha replied : " Don't you read the Qurán ? that reflects the morals of Muhammad."

The rapid and all-round progress and spread of Islam and its assumption of world leadership in civilisation and culture was due to the definiteness of its healthy outlook and its embodiment in a progressive system. It spread rapidly because it offered equality before law and social justice to large groups of humanity who had suffered under all types of tyranny. After the lapse of some centuries the original momentum weakened and the liberal and progressive system of Islam, too, was fossilised into various specimens of orthodoxy. Islam's legal system had progressed with the changing conditions and the great jurists had conti-

nued to promulgate systems of law and practice for adjustment to new conditions, trying to adhere scrupulously to the spirit of Islam which was identical with the spirit of social justice. Islamic life had originated in a system but it remained an open system so long as the life-urge of the Muslim peoples was creative and progressive.

The Muslims believe that the essentials of Islam are eternal and so is the system called Shariat. Attempt will be made in this book to bring out the universal and eternal character of Islam. The belief of the author is that the essential framework of the Shariat too, which can be studied from the teachings of the Qurán and the authentic sayings and practices of the Prophet, rests on eternal verities. It is a creed that can never become outworn. It is not like the creeds that have their day and cease to be. Human history is a limbo of outworn creeds and discredited dogmas. But Islam does not insist on belief in any dogma which is to be believed without evidence or against the dictates of reason, observation and experience. It is said that science has killed all religious dogmas but it is itself based on the unity and uniformity of existence, which according to Islam is a corollary from the Unity of God. The God of Islam is a rational God, who manifests existence according to measure and according to immutable laws. Could this belief be discarded even by a rationalist materialist? Islam says matter is only an aspect of existence which is a manifestation of something akin to the human spirit. Has not materialistic Naturalism already died a natural death? Even the matter of the materialist, having been reduced to abstract energy and abstract mathematics, has been reduced to mental

symbols. Is not probing into the depths of the mind and proving its undreamt of potentialities leading man towards Spirit and away from the blind mechanism of matter? Has not the doctrine of evolution in its various presentations driven man more and more towards creative and ameliorative tendencies of existence? Can the essentials of morality be successfully contradicted even by the apparent relativity of morals and manners? Is not the essential unity of humanity being established in spite of the conflicts of individuals and groups? Can it ever become irrational to believe that the gradations of existence extend above the material, vital and the mental level? Can it ever be demonstrated that the soul is a product and an attribute of the body and perishes with it? Can it ever be demonstrated that our spatial and temporal existence is co-extensive with entire being? Can it ever be contradicted that life must strive towards more and more comprehensive harmonies or that particulars live and move and have their being in the universals and all the universals are ultimately unified in one great Infinite Universal?

The future of Islam is the future of religion in general. If religion has a survival value, Islam is bound to survive. Muslim peoples everywhere have begun to suffer from the same malady from which all orthodoxies have always suffered. The universal elements of Islam have got inextricably mixed up with the accretions of ages. Into a religion without dogmas, dogmas have installed themselves. Muslims too have become monopolists of salvation, a misbehaviour against which they were warned by the Qurán. Legal systems too have become fossilised and blind obedience to the rulings of jurists is considered an essential part

of faith. It is happening to them what happened to others before them ; they have forgotten the difference between eternal laws and changing regulations. Life means change. As long as an organism lives it changes in its external adaptations. Life is creative and is a self-enriching diversity. Islam was a simple faith in essential virtues and in the Unity of God. All its early self-preservative wars were fought to end fanaticism. It preached freedom of conscience and respect for other creeds ; it offered protection to others and equal civil liberties even to those who differed in their convictions. It offered unstinted praise to the virtuous followers of other creeds. It is a religion which accepts life and wants to get the best out of it by virtue, reason and effort. Nietzsche classified religions as those that say yes to life and those that say no to life. Islam says yes to life, but it can be enjoyed only with restraint and limitations which are natural and rational and which the Qurán calls the limitations of God. A creed that embraces entire life and opens before it unlimited vistas, shall it ever become outworn ?

No movement in the world drops as a bolt from the blue ; even a revolutionary movement has some connections with the immediate or even a remote past ; reformist movements too have much that has its roots in the cultural heritage of a nation. It is in a nation or a people that a new dispensation is preached. The social, economical and historical background acts upon and is reacted upon by the new movement. Then there are differences in the psychology of the peoples. Different peoples react differently even to similar philosophies of life. As a creed or a movement spreads among widely different peoples, sometimes it is chang-

ed as much as it changes them. All these historical, social and psychological factors are inherent in the relativity of life. The origin and the early setting of Islam too is not an exception to this. There is much in that early setting that is inheritance from the past not only of the Arabs but of the Israelites and the Semitic people in general. The religious outlook of Islam has an Israelite background which is evident throughout the Qurán. Islam calls itself the creed of Abraham and all the other Israelite prophets. So far as the fundamentals of religion are concerned Islam claims no originality. In much of its ritual and religious practices as well as in many of its laws and injunctions, the superstructure is raised on earlier deep-rooted traditions. A Muslim is asked to believe in not only what has been revealed to Prophet Muhammad but to all the prophets among all the peoples that have gone before him ; it is a great believer in the continuity of human culture and the essential unity of its fundamentals.

If a new religion is preached to a people it must be made understandable to them ; a truth in order to be perceived must be apperceived, that is to say, brought into relation with the previous knowledge and experience of the percipient. The vehicle of communication must be the language of the people. These simple truths have been enunciated by the Qurán itself. " And We did not send any apostle but with the language of his people " (XIV-4). " A book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qurán for a people to know " (XLI-1). Now a language is an expression of the life and psychology of a people ; it embodies in its words and expressions their outlook on life. Therefore we must find much

in the Qurán which is rooted in the psychology of the people. No reform is so radical that it compels a nation to start with a *tabula rasa*, an absolutely clean slate. A reform is generally a revolt against the *status quo* and an attempt at counteracting contemporaneous concepts and practices. In the terminology of the famous German philosopher Hegel, one might say that it is an antithesis that springs out of the inevitable inner contradictions of a thesis, but the thesis or the previous state is not completely annihilated ; it acts along with its antithesis to create a new synthesis. This is a general law of life and the progressive realisation of its values. This law is recognised by the Qurán when it says that "Whatever communication We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it" (II-106). Good and Evil are absolute but their historical manifestations are changing and relative. According to the Qurán only God and the Moral Law are absolute and faith in them is the quintessence of all Truth and all Religion. All else is relative. Creeds that cannot distinguish between the relative and the absolute become outworn when they have lived out their utilities. The Qurán holds that the laws and customs, conventions and ritual of nations are changing and relative, determined and dictated by changing circumstances. The Qurán says "Everything is perishable but He" (XXVIII-88). In order to survive spiritually man must hitch his wagon to the Immutable Absolute which should become the law of all change. The Eternal Islam that remained fundamentally the same from Adam to Muhammad, could not be a system of laws and practices or modes of worship because all these elements varied from epoch to epoch. If the relative

and the absolute taken together in one indivisible whole could be called a creed then no creed could be eternally abiding. The glory of Islam is that it distinguished the universal from the changing particulars. The unity and universality of religion which is one of the basic concepts of Islam is also a guarantee of its eternal survival. It is this distinguishing feature of Islam which made the modern sage Bernard Shaw pronounce the verdict that fundamental Islam would be the religion of the future. Shaw is a mortal enemy of all orthodoxies and all systems of vested interests. As a creative evolutionist he believes in life eternally recreating itself but all the same he believes that Islam has an abiding value and a future. Naturally he is not thinking of the orthodoxies that the Muslims have developed, in which certain dogmas and attitudes have become fossilised and which like all the pre-Islamic orthodoxies have ceased to distinguish between the abiding and the changing aspects. Islam had a reference to the past; a reference to the future. The Islam that can abide must be an outlook on life that could abide for all times, or, in other words, which should be above the vicissitudes of times. Even while chalking out a system of life it should not give a closed and sealed system incapable of progressive adaptations. It should leave the development of life open on every side. The road to infinite knowledge must be open; the road to the conquest of Nature through understanding must be open; the way to the unity of humanity and to one world must be open. All gods must be dethroned to make way for the worship of the Invisible, All-Powerful Creator and Sustainer. All intermediaries between God and Man must be brushed aside so that Man may stand face

to face with Life Eternal. Even a supra-rational revelation or intuition must not be contrary to Reason and to Nature which manifests it. Henceforth man shall not worship man and no professionally religious priesthood shall be recognised. The Universal Brotherhood of Man, transcending all castes and creeds and colours, must be striven after. Man must say yes to life and embrace it with a life-enhancing embrace. All avenues of economic tyranny must be blocked and social justice restored. The more gifted in every line of life must be made to part with their surplus for the uplift of the less gifted. The diversity of humanity must be woven into a pattern of unity. Justice must be established between the master and the servant, between the employer and the employed, between man and woman. The weak must be protected against the tyranny of the strong. Freedom of worship and freedom of conscience which does not take unsocial forms must be protected. Instead of laying emphasis on the Fall of Man, the doctrine of the Ascent of Man must become an essential part of a living faith. The Ideal Man in the Qurán is conceived to be a being before whom the visible and invisible powers of Nature, *i.e.*, the angels, must prostrate because of his superior knowledge which makes him God's Vicegerent on earth. The Qurán says that everything in the heavens and the earth is destined to be controlled by man on the condition that he is true to his real self and identifies his will with the Universal Will. Islam means the conquest of peace and happiness and the attainment of power through surrender. This surrender is not to be a surrender to any natural force or to any mundane power. His real self, according to the Qurán, is a

divine self because God breathed His own Spirit into his clay. His nature is an implicit covenant with his Creator and the fulfilment of that Eternal Covenant is Life Eternal.

Man is a goal-seeking animal. His life becomes a failure when he sets up wrong goals before himself. Islam has set up a goal before man which he can approach eternally. God is the source as well as the goal of life and God is the name of eternal knowledge and eternal goodness. Knowledge and Love are the ultimate values to which Islam reduces all the values which together constitute the Good Life. God is Life and the fact of life at every stage is more life and higher life. Knowledge is symbolised as Light, and God, says the Qurán, is "the Light of the Heavens and the earth" (XXIV-35). This light becomes wisdom in the human being and 'whoever is granted wisdom he is granted an abundant good.' The love of God which creates and sustains all life becomes a source of all true knowledge and in this way Knowledge and Love, though conceptually distinguishable, have a common root. The Qurán says, "Most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do the good" (CIII-2). All success except in this direction is only an illusion which covers up an essential failure.

Islam started as a religion and created a state and finally became a culture. The religion was summed up in theism and virtuous life and the state was an instrument to protect and promote good life. Islam as a culture and civilisation incorporated into itself a good deal that humanity had already created through the millenniums and discarded that which would not fit into the framework of its ideals. As the momentum of the original ideas weakened, many

un-Islamic ideas and ways of life also insinuated themselves into the lives of Muslim peoples. The simple democratic socialism of Islam received a set-back when monarchical and feudal states were set up. The revolutionary movement of original Islam was assailed by many counter-revolutionary forces. But even with all these set-backs it remained the leader of humanity for about eight centuries. Having lighted the torch of modern civilisation the Muslim peoples, crushed by un-Islamic priesthood and autocratic monarchies, became listless and stagnant. Modern civilisation incorporated into itself many fragments of Islamic ideology. The last two centuries saw the rise of non-Islamic nations. The West rose in power because it discarded those outlooks on life which had hampered its growth for more than a millennium. Christianity was refined by rationalism and humanism. The power that applied science and capitalistic industrialism put in the hands of the West overcame very easily the degenerate political structures of Muslimdom. Muslims that had led the world remained backward everywhere. The missionaries and politicians started the fallacious propaganda that as Muslim peoples everywhere were stagnant so Islam, which is a common denominator of their culture, they must be held responsible for their backwardness. These propagandists forgot the simple historical fact that Islam which they denounced as reactionary had made the Muslim peoples the vanguard of all progress. They attributed their own material power and prosperity to Christianity but how would they explain the fact that the Christian civilisation of more than a millennium created only the Dark Ages? Islam was identified by these propagandists with stereotyped and

fossilised orthodoxies and degenerate political systems. This was really not Islam but a flagrant negation of it. Far from being outlived, Islam had never been fully lived. Even in its glorious epoch, it had compromised too much with un-Islamic ways of life. The West had advanced by moving to some extent on the road that had been pointed out by Islam. The West made knowledge free as Islam had made it free when it worked as a living force ; it tried to democratise its governments, though it did not rise to that pitch of Islamic socialism in which the ruler chosen by the people was really the first servant of the state. Whatever wrong there is among the Islamic peoples is due not to the tenets of Islam but a direct result of discarding its principles of progress and social justice ; and whatever good was achieved by the rising nation was the product of essential Islamic principles.

The present world situation is that no nation in the world is living a fully Islamic life. Muslimdom is only partially Muslim but so is the West partially Muslim. The world has yet to wait for a nation that would lead a fully Islamic life. Islam presents healthy and practicable ideals ; it is not a mere utopia, but ideals cannot be actualised in a final setting by any one nation or by any single epoch. Actual life of human societies could aim only at progressive realisation of those ideals. The first actualisation of those ideals in the initial epochs of Islam was also circumscribed by historical necessities. Progressive realisation would shape things differently from epoch to epoch in the light of the ideals to be attained.

The Renaissance of Muslimdom would not be achieved by any blind imitation of the West nor can

it be achieved by sticking in details to systems of law that do not apply to changing conditions. Muslims shall have to rethink about the fundamentals of Islam. They should cease to suffer from that inferiority complex which tries to conform Islam to whatever the West brings forth. Islam has much to teach to the Muslim peoples as well as to the West. Islamic concepts of liberty, fraternity and equality are far more real and progressive if properly understood and applied. The social and political structures of the West are crumbling shall we take the pattern of the house that we want to build from the structures that are sagging because they violated eternal laws? The West built its power and prestige on nationalism and *laissez faire* industrial capitalism which led to imperialistic exploitation and imperialistic wars. Its structure of a spurious democracy was shattered by fascism and communism. Shall we worship the state or racial and territorial nationalism putting patriotism in place of God? Shall we worship the dialectical materialism of the Communists which makes life as a regimentation for production and distribution? Man is a worshipping animal; he creates gods and makes idols which he worships so long as they appear to grant him favours but shatters them when they do not serve his purposes. The materialistic West lost all faith in the true God of justice and humanity and installed other gods in His stead; but these wishful creations would give it no abiding satisfaction. These gods are impelling their votaries to invent world-destroying weapons that could wipe away entire humanity during a few hours. Life in these nations is becoming cramped, distorted and perverted. Nobody seems to know what life is meant for. Man is

at war with himself, with others and with his entire environment. Shall we borrow any life-giving panacea from this vast asylum of violent lunatics? Shall we follow recipes of the physicians who have not been able to heal themselves?

The only way of regeneration of the Muslim as well as the non-Muslim world is to understand and put into practice those universal principles of life which are embodied in the Islamic outlook and try to fit their life into that framework of Reason and Justice which was divinely given to man. This book is an humble attempt at the elucidation of that ideology. It shall be based mostly on quotations from the Qurán and the authentic sayings of the Prophet. The precepts and examples of the Prophet and those of his companions who imbibed his teaching would also be utilised. All sectarian controversial matter has been eschewed and Islam is presented in its broad basic principles. It is a philosophy as well as a way of life. Let the Muslims try to understand and appreciate their own heritage before they are able to compare it with other philosophies and other schemes of life.

Chapter I

OBSTACLES TO BELIEF

This book is intended to make the fundamentals of religion understandable and acceptable to a class of intelligentsia who not having been brought up in the religious tradition doubt either the necessity or the rationality of religion; and it is few who have been trained to think philosophically about the ultimate problems either of morality or of existence in general. Our theologians have lost touch with the heritage handed down to us by great thinkers, some of whom were, at the same time, men of great religious experience. The theologians were considered to be the guardians of religious truth and specialists whose verdict must be accepted as a true exposition of religion but the scientific advance during the last two centuries has left the theologians in the lurch; even the moral consciousness of the theologians had lagged behind the conscience of the elite of the age. The result of the progress of scientific Rationalism was materialistic Naturalism. Nature, was studied in terms of mechanism and mathematics; there was no place in it for any will or purpose. During the course of evolution of religious consciousness, the multiplicity of gods of arbitrary wills was replaced with the idea of One Creator who was Omnipotent and Omniscient and this One God had a will and a purpose. But the Reality for Naturalism had neither will nor purpose. There was no *ought* in it; there was only a *must*

of purposeless mechanism; the laws of mass and energy produced their effects irrespective of any good or evil; they were amoral and beyond good and evil. The scientific outlook with this world-view gripped almost all intellectuals of every nation, the uniformity of Nature and its deterministic causation had no place for a Good God and a Directing Will. God was banished from the Universe; He was not needed. Laplace took his book on astronomy to Napoleon in order to flatter the Emperor and get praise or prize for himself. Napoleon glanced through the book and remarked, "How is it that I do not find the name of God in your books?" Laplace replied, "Sire, He was not needed." Laplace was not much wrong within the limits of mathematical physics or astronomy; to mix up theology with astronomy might vitiate both. It is a good precept. 'Take not the name of Lord thy God in vain.' To talk of divine dispensation and interference during the course of an experiment in a laboratory would tend to vitiate the experiment. Science deals with inter-phenomenal relations where, for the time being, it would be good if God is not interposed. For the scientific understanding of Nature, God has often been the gapfiller of ignorance; He was the easy explanation of all happenings. The development of Naturalism had to narrow down its sphere of work and its outlook for the purpose of concentration on phenomenal inter-relation. For the scientific outlook only two vital factors were left: mechanistic Nature on the one hand and scientific Reasoning on the other. This Nature and this Reason were the sole realities; they mirrored each other; nothing else existed and nothing else counted. Scientific Reason

was the only instrument to grasp truth; what could not be weighed and measured became non-existent. God and moral values were imponderables and so was the human mind itself. Consciousness which had discovered scientific truths was itself banished from reality; it was neither a noumenon nor a phenomenon, but was called an epiphenomenon, an ineffectual by-product of the mechanistic causation of the brain cells. Life and Mind must be explained away in terms of matter, which was assumed to be the Ultimate Reality.

The scientific outlook in spite of its narrowness and one-sidedness did enormous service not only in increasing man's knowledge of Nature and control over it, but its overflow into other spheres of culture was also beneficial. From times immemorial the essential ideals of religion had got mixed up with pseudo-scientific, mythological and legendary explanations of the workings of Nature. The fundamental intuition of man that all Truth is one and inter-related led him to mix up things hopelessly; facts were intertwined and confused with values in a most distracting manner. A man who believed in religion was also expected to believe in all the myths about creation in which the religious truths had been wrapped. The man of science when he revolted against religion, his revolt was mainly caused by the clash of his ascertained knowledge of Nature with the myths or allegories in which he was expected to believe as literal truths about cosmological and historical facts. The service done by Science to humanity consists partially in freeing the essentials of religion from pseudo-scientific

myths. With the advance of Science the relation between Science and Religion tends to be clarified and the issues become more and more distinct.

The science of every age builds up a philosophy on its top as a superstructure of over-beliefs. Mechanism and Naturalism built up a metaphysics of denials. As Nature was impersonal and scientific reason dealt with Nature impersonally, therefore any personality in man or in the universe was an illusion. All Nature is mathematical and as there is no will in triangles and circles and their properties follow from them logically and not volitionally therefore, the will in man must be an illusion. All Nature is deterministic, governed by an inexorable Necessity; free-will is an illusion. This is the philosophy of Mechanism and Naturalism.

Mechanistic Naturalism was still in full swing when Biology also began to develop. Vegetable and animal kingdoms were studied more closely with the precision of the scientific method. Revolutionary hypotheses were brought forward. The first shock of any great scientific discovery has always had the effect of dislodging man from his assumed privileged position in the universe. The first shock always makes him lose his balance and it takes some time before he is able to effect a reorientation; initially he loses his bearings. This is what happened when the Ptolemaic astronomy was proved to be wrong by Copernicus and the heliocentric theory established itself by dislodging the geocentric theory. Man had always considered his abode, the Earth, as the center of the universe; the whole drama of creation

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revolved round his abode and himself; God was specially concerned with him and the history of the earth. The religious outlook was so intertwined with this view of the solar system and the heavenly bodies that the shaking of this astronomical hypothesis meant for many the utter destruction of religious belief. But after some time humanity always some how regained its balance and even clergymen began to say, 'What does it matter to the salvation of man, whether the Earth goes round the sun or the sun goes round the Earth; it is not an essential part of religious belief; Faith lies elsewhere and is secure from all astronomical hypotheses.' Similar to the repercussions of the Copernican astronomy, the reactions of the Darwinian hypothesis were disturbing to religious belief. The Darwinian hypothesis of the origin of species along with the discoveries of geology created a great stir in the religious belief of the West. The age of the world was not six thousand years and it was not made in six days and the species of plants and animals were not created with their present structures which were the result of the countless ages of the struggle for existence, of chance variations and the survival of the fittest, where fitness only means brutal capacity to exterminate the opponents ruthlessly and to get adjusted to the environment somehow. Darwin himself made no direct attack upon religion but religious doubts sometimes disturbed him, as it is related about him that the sight of the resplendent feathers of the peacock chilled his spine with the doubt whether all this beauty could really be explained away as the product of natural selection. But the hypothesis gripped the whole intellectual world. The geology and

biology that had become integral parts of religious belief were lightly waived aside. Religious belief had again to be shifted to safer ground where it could not be attacked by this overwhelming evidence. Copernicus had destroyed the centrality of the Earth and thereby disturbed man's privileged position; Darwin further destroyed his dignity by making him a descendant of sub-human creatures and a little more favoured animal than the beasts. Mathematical Astronomy and Physics required no God and made man a helpless and deterministic part of Nature. God was not required and man had no special importance. Evolutionistic Biology presumed to explain plant and animal life with all its order and adaptation and beauty as a product of naturalistic forces that were beyond good and evil; there was no ordering Cosmic Consciousness; man, his morality and his values to which he attached eternal and objective importance, were explained away as instruments in the ruthless struggle for existence. Between themselves physics and biology seemed to have done away with religious belief and killed it for all times. But is religion really destroyed once for all and has it now become honestly impossible for a rationalist and a scientific freethinker to believe in religion in any shape? We find, however, that religion is not destroyed and some of the most intellectual men thoroughly acquainted with the achievements of science and appreciating its genuine contribution, still sincerely believe in God with all the implications of such belief. How that is possible will gradually become clear during the course of our exposition in this book.

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It may be said in adverse criticism of religion that religion has been saving itself by constant retreat and rear-guard action. It holds tenaciously to certain beliefs as essentials but when those beliefs become untenable through the advance of knowledge the ground is shifted and belief taken to a safer stronghold. But why accuse religion only of this constant shifting of the ground when something it held to be true has become untenable? Scientific method is considered to be the method of the discovery of truth par excellence and it is believed to be concerned with an objective reality. Has not the progress of Science been from error to error or if you please from lesser truth to greater truth? Science started with myths and legends and superstition; so did religion. The progress of humanity has been shedding untruths or mythological explanations from both. It is true that both have been retreating equally before the advancing knowledge of man. Every advance in science characterises a former hypothesis as an illusion or a myth which explained certain phenomena to some extent for some time. Who can say that Science even at present is completely free of myths and mysteries? With all the limitations of human knowledge and experience, the hypothesis of pure mechanical naturalism is now being gradually superseded. The great biologists say that life cannot be explained in terms of purposeless mechanism; it has a causation *sui generis*. Psychologists like William James came to the conclusion that mind is more than mere biological life; mental causation and the relation of body to mind cannot be explained in merely biological

terms. This may be called either the Retreat of Science or the Advance of Science; it all depends on how you view it.

Science was for centuries mixed up with superstition and magic, and wild speculation, more the product of the imagination of child-humanity than of observation, experiment and reason. Every epoch has done something to free it from these encumbering accretions. Now it is claimed that Science has finally found its ultimate postulates; the scientific outlook and the scientific method are established once for all. After this there may be new discoveries and new orientations but the fundamental thesis of an ordered Nature amenable to the causal category and mathematical reasoning would not change. An Einstein may alter the view of time and space and may replace Newtonian physics with some more satisfactory explanation; he may replace absolutism by relativity but even the law of relativity is a law subject to causation and mathematical reasoning and hence absolute, because it is the very nature of law to be absolute. Science would go on advancing indefinitely and as the infinity of Nature is inexhaustible so will be the increasing discovery of its secrets. But the ultimate postulates of science are established once for all and it is not considered derogatory to science that its earlier theories were replaced by some more satisfactory explanation with the perpetual advance of observation and experiment.

Why should not religious advance be construed in the same manner? Science expresses a fundamental human need, so does religion. Science studies

phenomenal facts and their interconnection and as science it need not step over the bounds that it has set for itself. Religion is concerned with value judgments. Science tells us how things happen and in what order; religion tells us the whence and why of these happenings. Science is concerned with only one value, the value of phenomenal truth, the discovery of laws and uniformities. With other values it has no direct concern. Beauty or Goodness or Love and Happiness are not its concern. Nor do absolute beginnings and absolute ends concern it. When it begins to speculate on absolute beginnings and ends it steps into the domains of metaphysics or religion. For science the Ultimate Reality behind phenomena must ever remain unknowable as demonstrated by Kant and Spencer; and from the strictly scientific view-point no such trespass into speculation is allowable. As a Persian poet has put it in a beautiful simile., "Nature is an old book whose title page and introductory leaves giving the purpose of the book and the name of the author have fallen away, and similarly the leaves at the end have dropped off." You can read it only in the intervening pages and make guesses about its authorship, its purpose and the end of the theme. But it is in the nature of man to consider all Reality as one and all knowledge as one, however we may be compelled by our limitations to effect a division of labour and a watertight partition of spheres. Great scientists have always, somehow, not been able to resist the temptation to speculate on the ultimate problems of existence.

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We have said that Science has reached its ultimate postulates but reaching them does not mean the end of enquiry; on the other hand, it is only a stable basis for all future advance and the voyage of discovery continues. Could we not say similarly that religion too has reached its ultimate postulates; spiritual progress is indefinitely open to mankind but the fundamental basis of belief won't change.

This is the claim of Islam. Man reached the fundamental religious truth that One God exists and that God is a creative sustaining and loving God, and human morality is a necessary corollary from this fundamental hypothesis which must develop into Belief, Knowledge, Realisation and Action. All Reality is one and is governed by an order which is at once rational and moral and preserver of all real values. The Quran gives this as a fundamental postulate. In whomsoever this belief has entered his heart and soul and is not merely a confession by the tongue, he has attained to Truth and Well-being here and hereafter. "Whoever submits himself to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from the Lord, and there is no fear for him nor shall he grieve" (2:112). There are a number of sayings of the Prophet which corroborate it. "Show me a man who from his heart believes in God and I will guarantee salvation for him." Such a man may not necessarily remain a sinless man all his life. There is famous Hadith related by the saintly companion of the Prophet, Abu Zar, that the Prophet said that if a man believes there is only One God to be worshipped he is saved and shall enter Paradise.

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Abu Zar interrogated, 'even if he has committed great sins'; he enquired thrice and the Prophet answered thrice, 'yes, even if he has committed great sins. 'The Prophet in all probability meant that such a man may slip into sin now and then, but his heart being in the right place and his outlook on life being true and sound, there is little chance of his becoming an habitual and a hardened sinner. Islam teaches that religion reached its ultimate postulate when it taught humanity to worship one Good God and man has to assimilate His attributes of goodness within human limitation. It is generally known that *La ilaha-ill-Allah* and *Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah* (P.B.U.H) sums up the religion of Islam; that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is His Prophet. But every Muslim knows that the essential belief is the belief in One God; the Prophet is a clarifier and practiser of that belief and not an end unto himself. He is a servant of God like all the prophets and like all good and believing men. Whoever believes in God also believes and reveres all the great and good men who have shown the Path of Righteousness to man. No Muslim is a true Muslim who believes in one prophet and not in the other; and the test of true prophethood laid down by Islam is believing, preaching and practising the Unity doctrine. Science has reached its ultimate postulates only recently, but according to Islam religion reached it long ago; with Theism begins true religion and with Theism it ends; and the One God was revealed long ago to every civilised nation. "And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them" (35:25). This is a doctrine of the fundamental unity of religion in its essentials. Different

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people have followed different laws and customs and adopted different modes of worship at different times but the belief in One God was the abiding element of truth. Whenever this truth faded from the minds of a people they became ignorant and unjust, and social injustice and tyranny practised by them brought upon them the wrath of God. The wages of sin is death and nations that lose the vision of truth perish; vice begins to preponderate over good, ultimately leading to destruction.

When comparing science with religion, some people assert that science is universal, provable, demonstrable and its results exactly predictable while about religion the world is divided into hostile groups. Truth must be universal while religions as believed and practised by different groups contradict one another. The Quran has dealt with this question repeatedly and given clear answers. It says Religion too is concerned with Universal Truth; there is only one Religion and all the religions are sects of it; that one True Religion is Belief in the Unity of all Reality and Belief in Moral Order or the essential difference in Good and Evil, the results of which appear both here and hereafter. In whatever creed Islam has found individuals living on this belief it has unstintedly given praise to them and promised them the highest rewards of good life. All religions have a tendency to become fossilised and hardened into orthodoxies claiming monopoly of truth and salvation, barring the door of Paradise to all others who do not profess certain doctrines or follow certain rituals, customs or conventions. Islam was aware of this tendency that

dogmas are the living faith of the dead that have become the dead faith of the living. In order to warn humanity against this tendency it defined the fundamentals of religion once for all; wherever they are found, truth and well-being are there. Among the communities with which Islam came into direct contact, the Jews and the Christians both claimed monopolies of truth and salvation; those who did not subscribe to their dogmas and doctrines or their mode of worship were destined for perdition.

Let me give a few quotations from the Quran to prove what Islam considers to be true and universal religion and how it repudiates all claims to monopoly. "And they say: None shall enter Paradise except he who is a Jew or a Christian. These are their vain desires. Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful. Yea! whoever submits himself entirely to God and he is the doer of good to others, he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for him nor shall he grieve. And the Jews say the Christians do not follow anything good and the Christians say, the Jews do not follow anything good, while they recite the same Book; similar to them are the utterances of those who have no knowledge: (2:111:112:113). God is not the monopoly of any particular people or creed. To Him belong all directions; the conventional or ritualistic turning of faces to this or that direction is relatively immaterial. "And Allah's is the East and the West, therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allah's Face. God is Ample-giving and Knowing" (2:115). According to the Quran living a virtuous life or doing

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good to others is the chief aim in all religious beliefs and practices. Conventional differences are of little account except as customs and uniformities binding a particular group socially. "And every one has a direction to which he turns, but (the essential thing is) hasten to do good works; wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; surely Allah has power over all things" (2:148). There is another verse in the Quran which not only gives the basis of a universal religion but mentions the followers of other creeds explicitly along with the Muslims as upholders of truth and deserving of the attainment of highest well-being, if they only conform to the fundamentals. It is a basis that would unite all the theists of the world who believe in a moral order and as a corollary believe in survival and requital. It is again essentially theism and virtue. "Surely those who believe (i.e. enter the fold of Islamic life) and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve" (2:62). Islam is full of praises of other scriptures and whenever it mentions an essential element of religion it says you will find it also in other scriptures. It calls other scriptures Light and Guidance in which essentials of religion are given. It enjoins on all Muslims to revere all prophets, who have anywhere at any time, preached the doctrine of One God and social justice.

Islam accepts and responds to the demand of Reality that all Reality is one and therefore all Truth

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should be one. It invites humanity to the fundamentals of one faith which has no sectarian elements and which makes all modes of worship as of secondary importance. There is no doubt that Islam organised society on a definite plan and created its own conventions; but it has the fullest appreciation of the life of those who somehow have stood outside that system but still have a hold on the essentials.

Chapter II

NATURALISM AND SUPER-NATURALISM

We must examine more closely the reasons of the weakening of religious belief in the East as well as the West. The East has been a cradle of all great religions and the lives of Oriental nations are still presumed to be guided by religious beliefs. But this is a mistaken idea; we must not confuse religion with religiosity, narrow orthodoxy or superstition. Religious life in all its genuineness has always been rare; men usually are guided by mere instincts of biological self-preservation and follow in a utilitarian spirit the customs and the positive morality which they have received through social heredity. The common man believes in a customary manner and ritualism and religious practices in their outward observances are the only staple food of his spiritual life. The forces of modern civilisation have weakened the religious belief of even the common man; the old customary order has been disturbed and no new order has yet taken its place. The stress and strain of modern life, developed after the industrial revolution, has tended to destroy man's time-honoured outlook on life and his values have undergone a catastrophic transformation. The old communal bonds are either destroyed or are in the course of rapid dissolution. Along with the communal nexus, the family bonds are also weakened. Those aspects of religion that were bound up

with family and community life have gradually waned; modern civilisation has intensified the struggle for existence, and the prevalent code is, 'every one for himself and devil take the hindmost.' Transformation of human life in all its aspects as the result of these changes is a vast and many sided subject with which it is not our purpose to deal in this book, which is meant primarily for the rationalists who find it difficult to believe in the fundamentals of religious faith because of the naturalistic outlook developed by epoch-making advances made by science. The modern intellectual's faith in Naturalism is firm and well-established. When he is told that religion deals with the supernatural, his initial reaction is that of disbelief and disgust. For him all is Nature and the supernatural belongs to the sphere of imagination and superstition. When he wants to understand religion within the bounds of Naturalism and Rationalism, the most he can get at and appreciate is the morality taught by all great religious teachers, and he says, for me morality is enough. If religious belief was a prop for morality and social justice I can believe in the latter and try to embody it in my life, without bothering about the supernatural props which are not needed by me and which do not exist.

But, is Naturalism a sure and stable support even for common-sense morality? With the rise of science during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a wave of great optimism had spread over the West. The understanding and control of Nature was convincing man that with Science and Rationalism most of the evils of life

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will be overcome and a scientifically ordered existence would usher in a millennium. The Golden Age did not lie in the past; it is to be achieved by science in the future. The illusion of the progress of morality also had taken hold of the minds of these optimists. Particularly Western Europe had begun to scoff at the brutalities of the past and had deluded itself into the belief that morally too it had become more sensitive and refined. But the two great wars waged by economic imperialism and fanatical nationalism have made the pendulum swing to the other extreme. The doctrine of the Darwinian struggle for existence and might ultimately justifying itself as right, created philosophies of Racism, Nazism, and Fascism. The great naturalist Nietzsche had set the ball rolling by his plea for the advent of the Superman who will come into being by riding rough-shod over all the previously accepted moral values and by utter repudiation of Love and Social Justice. Power is the essence of life and Power justifies itself. Love and Mercy and Justice and rights of the common man--Liberty, Fraternity and Equality--are all disvalues that must be abandoned; they are the hallmarks of slave-morality. Master-morality must perform the revaluation of all these values in the interest of the Superman, who will be a law unto himself. The God Who embodied all these values of Love and Mercy was considered dead. His Superman, his Zarathustra meeting the crowd was astounded at their ignorance that they had not yet heard that God was dead. This was Naturalism developing logically as Evolutionary Biologism. On the other hand, physics and chemistry were busy devising the deadliest of weapons which could

wipe away all humanity in the shortest possible time; all the Naturalists in various spheres were competing for the quickest destruction of opponents. Religion used to be blamed for brutal fanaticism and it was claimed if Naturalism took its place with Reason enthroned as God, all will be well with the world. All these optimistic dreams of inevitable progress were shattered by the two great Armageddons.

Religion was attacked by Naturalism, ultimately to the great benefit of religion. The core of religion was separated from spectral half-beliefs, and pseudo-scientific beliefs which had incorporated themselves into the religious organism. Religion henceforth must stand on its own ground and cease to interfere with the explanation of facts of Nature. Rationalism in general which developed alongside with the development of science, also did lot of good in the various spheres of culture; even materialism benefited humanity by sweeping away a lot of ancient rubbish. The human mind was freed to face Nature alone and on its own terms. Science was no longer the hand-maid of Theology. Religions based on miracles ceased to appeal to the rational mind, nor could creeds based on mysteries or historical dramas enacted centuries ago form the basis of a belief in the abiding values of existence.

But Naturalism itself having accomplished its task began to deteriorate from within. Its view of Nature and human Reason was too narrow and onesided; so was its view of causation. What is called the law of causality was really the regularity of interphenomenal uniformities and these regularities differed from sphere to sphere of

existence. The causation that worked in matter was transformed when matter was organised into life or life assimilated matter and changed it according to its own requirements. The mistake of Naturalism lay in its limited and defective view of causation. Frantic attempts were made to explain the organism and its workings on mechanistic principles. It was said that the world of science was the sphere of applied mathematics and all biological processes must be reduced to mechanical and chemical terms. But the hypothesis was so untenable, so cramping and contrary to all observation of the laws of life that a revolt took place within the citadel of Naturalism itself and it was ultimately recognised that the organic could not be explained by the inorganic and the two belonged to two different dimensions of being, governed by their own distinctive categories of causation. A rift was thus introduced between biology and physics and the unity of scientific view of the world was broken up.

The intensive study of the human mind further revealed that mind was more than merely a biological instrument. Mechanistic physics had reduced the human mind to an epiphenomenon, an ineffective by-product of the working of the brain cells that were governed by the laws of physical action and reaction; the stimulus and the response were both mechanically determined. Biologically too, consciousness had no more significance than as help for the will to live. As it was gradually realised that the organic could not be explained in the terms of the inorganic, similarly the fact slowly dawned upon human

consciousness that mind was neither a passive spectator nor merely an instrument for the maintenance of bodily existence.

But was it a gradual advance towards supernaturalism? The terms Naturalism and Supernaturalism are both vague and misleading and it is a matter of paramount importance that they should be clearly defined before we could come to any useful conclusion about their mutual relationship. If, by Nature, is meant the ordered existence of all that exists including matter, life, mind and any supramental life, if it exists, then it means the entirety of actual existence in all its grades including the Life Divine, if it is a reality. Taking this broad and comprehensive meaning nothing could be beyond Nature and the supernatural would be merely a negative concept having no reality corresponding to it. But Naturalism as developed during the last century had a very narrow scope; it meant only materialistic or mechanistic Naturalism for which matter and energy or something which was both matter and energy was the sole reality. For it only the measurable and ponderable was real. It was not Science in general but this kind of Naturalism which was not a science but a metaphysics that militated against religion. Religion in general is based on the Unseen as it is postulated in the very first lines of the Quran. The Unseen is so, for us and not for God; for God the Seer all is Seen. Narrow and stunted Naturalism could not believe even in the existence of the mind whose intellectual construction it was, because the mind was Unseen. Religion revolted against this

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Naturalism for which all Unseen was unreal, because the belief was suicidal for the mind itself. The view of Nature in order to be rational and tenable must include all the grades of existence governed by various categories of causation.

If we want to retain the term supernatural at all we should define it like this. Nature has a graded existence, four grades of which are observed and experienced by us: Matter, Life, Animal mind, Human mind. Life is supernatural for matter, animal mind is supernatural for life and human mind is supernatural for all the grades below it. The laws of the lower order do not apply to the higher, though the higher takes up into itself the lower, assimilates and transforms it to its own categories of causation. This is our realm of common experience and there is nothing irrational in the religious belief which extends the gradations of being still further and asks us to believe that Nature is not exhausted in our experienced gradation; it extends from matter to God and if the lower is taken up, transformed and transcended by the higher and not superseded and annihilated by the emergence of the higher, then entire Nature must be somehow absorbed in the Nature of God Who is immanent in it and also transcends it. In the sphere of the Mind, time has a significance but space has no meaning although in the realm of matter both time and space are the warp and woof of its existence. What prevents us from believing that there may be dimensions of existence where our time too is transcended? Even in our mental sphere we are cognizant of realities that are

timeless, as the mathematicians believe that the axioms of mathematics are timelessly true.

This is the supernaturalism in which all true religions ask us to believe. This is also the belief in the Unseen. The supernaturalism which means arbitrary interference with the working of Nature at a particular level is repudiated by Islam. Any extraordinary happening emanating from the spiritual powers of a specially gifted prophet or saint is nothing supernatural except in the sense that causation at a higher level has modified the effects of causation at a lower level of being.

In Islam we have this wider concept of Nature, physical Nature is pointed out as a great Divine Manifestation and Islam firmly believes that the working of physical Nature also shows enough signs of rationality, method and adaptation for goodness, to give a knowledge of God to those who ponder with pure reason without any narrow prejudices or cramping hypotheses. Then it appeals to us to study the adaptations in the organic realm; "the study of the anatomy of the camel alone is sufficient to convince one, of the rationality of Nature." The Quran calls all Nature the Nature of God. As it is said about man, "the nature of Allah in which He made man" (30:30). Then it says, "In your own souls too there are Signs; why don't you see"? (51:21). The stars moving in their orbits with measure and exactitude are also pointed out as Signs of God. The Quran calls itself a Book of Wisdom; it never asks us to believe without giving the rationale of that belief. We are asked to study the Seen very carefully because this study would lead us to a belief

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in the Nature of the Unseen. The Unseen is in a direct line with the Seen and the law of gradation with gradually transcending causalities continues to work from matter to God. This is Islamic Naturalism, which you may also call super-natrualism in the sense in which we have defined it.

Chapter III

THE QURANIC VIEW OF CAUSATION

The Quran says that God is the Cause of all causes, and the Ultimate Cause of all existence. He is the Being as the foundation of all Becoming; He is the Stable Reality which creates and supports all change; "He is the Beginning and He is the End; He is the Outer Appearance and He is the Inner Reality" (57:3). He is the phenomena and He is the noumena. He is immanent as well as transcendent. He is immanent in the universe by His Power and Reason and Knowledge but He transcends the universe in that the universe in any phase at any one time and collectively in all phases at all times is only a limited and partial expression of His creative will. The Universe and God are not completely identified as the artist is always more than his productions though he is in a way immanent in any piece of art which is an objectified form of his inspiration. The relation of God's immanence to His transcendence can never be completely understood or visualised. The Infinite and the Eternal can never be expressed in special and temporal categories. There is nothing like him either in things or in our mental and material categories.

The universe or Nature is God's volitional creation because He is a Creative Will. Creation in time can never be completely understood because time itself is a created category, but the attribute of creativeness being an

essential attribute of God, some sort of creation must be considered as co-existent with Him. The infinity of His attributes must create an infinity of worlds or universes; our material universe with all its immensities of time and space may be only one of His creations. The universe as we know it may not be eternal.

The God of Islam being rational would never create any chaos nor did He find any chaos preexisting as formless matter which He in-formed by His Will. It follows from the attribute of God as Hakim, the Wise and the Rational, that whatever He creates must embody and manifest the quality of Reason. Reason denotes order and purpose and truth. So the Quran reiterates the doctrine repeatedly that God created the world in truth and with a purpose and not in vain sport. The chief Quranic argument to prove the existence of God is the teleological argument from law and order in Nature. Nature is a reign of law and not a product of capricious wills. The rational unity of Nature follows from the rationality of its One Creator.

But according to the Quranic conception of God and Nature and their mutual relation there is no necessary interphenomenal causation. No event in its own power is a sufficient cause of another event. In events which appear to be related as causes and effects what we can really know empirically without any unwarranted hypothesis is a habitual sequence. Even if we use the word causation for necessary and uncontradicted sequences we have to believe according to the Quran that the reality of all causation is the Will of

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the Creator. Having created an orderly Nature God has not abdicated His Will. Materialistic physics asserts that physical causation is blind and mechanical and attempts are made to explain away even Life and Mind as processes of mechanical causation. The attempt is bound to fail as the organism and its purposive working could never be satisfactorily explained by the mechanical laws of matter and energy. Causation in the organism is now definitely separated from merely mechanical causation. Organic creation and growth are goal-seeking processes. But all organic life works in the realm of matter. So in any organism we see two types of causation overlapping and working side by side but as Life stands higher in the scale of being than Matter, material causation is subordinated to vital causation; mechanism is subordinated to purposive and goal-seeking activity. If sequence in material events were the result of absolute and inviolable causation, life in it could not exist. This means that causation from a superior stratum of being can alter and modify the working of causation on a lower level of existence.

Our normal experience manifests to us only three strata of existence: Matter, Life and Mind. The types of causation in all the three strata are different and unique. The processes of consciousness are as different from merely vital processes of vegetable and animal organism as the vital processes are different from the processes of matter. As material causation is superseded by vital processes so vital processes are subordinated to mental processes wherever mind has emerged in any grade.

Human mind influences the working of the human body to an incalculable extent. The interaction of mind and body can never be understood in any terms or categories which apply to matter or organic life. In Man we see all the three types of causation working side by side and acting and interacting on one another. Science is still grappling with the baffling problems that are created by the parallelism and interaction of three different types of causation in one entity. If we adopt the view that existence is graded with realms superimposed on one another, the higher modifying the working of the lower to fulfil a higher purpose, it offers us a universal law of existence. As to how the one acts on the other may never be explained by logical or theoretical reason but the difficulties of logic cannot stultify the obvious facts of life. The most reasonable attitude is to establish facts and bow before them for the understanding of reality.

Now there may be other grades of being above the mind. The average man, including the scientist, has no experience of anything above the mind, but all great religions talk of the Soul or the Spirit above the mind. Men of mystical experiences of all epochs and of all nations born and bred in different religious traditions and following different spiritual disciplines are unanimous in their assertion that there are grades of existence above our psychological mind and every realm above the mind is governed by its own causation and by its own categories. As life cannot be comprehended by material categories and mind cannot be understood by the laws of organic processes so the dimensions of being and

consciousness above the normal conscious mind are governed by laws which cannot be subsumed under the causal categories of our conscious and logical mind which derives its data mostly from the senses. It would be sheer recalcitrance to waive aside the unanimous experiences of all the prophets and saints and others endowed with special faculties and lump them together as illusions or hallucination. Some of these mystics like Ghazali were men of a robust intellectual calibre, as much away from mere emotionalism as any sober logician or scientist. Ghazali says about supramental perception of a higher grade or reality that one who experiences it finds it more solidly real than the experience of senses or the conclusions of logic. It is not a state of mere feeling but a knowledge imparting state, but the perceptions and knowledge of this state is not describable in sensible or logical categories. As the eye cannot hear and the ear cannot see so the mind cannot apprehend what the supramental states of consciousness reveal. It could be described only by analogies which become very easily misleading.

Now if there is a realm above realm with different dimensions of being and consciousness, each governed by its own causation and each superimposed on the realm or realms below it modifying the working of the lower realms for the fulfillment of higher purposes, these ascending realms must ultimately culminate in God. At the level of Divinity too there must be a special type of causation working through and modifying all the realms below; God must be acting as Cause of all causes. If life

can modify the working of matter and mind can modify the working of life why could not the superior realms modify the working of all the realms below, for the fulfillment of higher or universal purposes. Nature is allowed to follow its sequences so long as life does not come on the scene to adapt it to its own purposes and life proceeds causally according to its own distinctive laws so long as mind does not think it fit to subordinate it to its own ends and so on and on we ascend to God. He must have the Will and the Capacity to adapt to His own ends whatever lies below Him. What is religiously called a miracle does not mean violation of the laws of Nature. If the entirety of all grades of existence be called Nature then the word supernatural would become meaningless. No laws can be broken; but one law can interfere with the working of another law and the effect is modified accordingly.

Islam does not believe in miracles in the popular sense of the term as temporary suspension of the work of natural laws. It only extends to God what we see in our empirical grades of existence—the right to have a causation which could work, when necessary, on all the realms below. If He has endowed man with a limited free-will which works on life and matter for its own ends, He Himself being infinitely free could not be hampered by the different types of causation created by His own Will. No creation can limit the Creator absolutely. When and how natural working is modified is a matter of experience and valid evidence, but there is nothing inherently

impossible in God constantly working in the life of all creatures when and how He wills.

According to the Quran the entire creation is a realm of Reason and Order, but Reason and Order work differently at different levels of existence. "And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure" (25:21). Chaos and chance have no place in His creation. If man were endowed with real insight he would find no flaw in the universe; where he observes disorder he should know that he has not yet seen aright. Creation at every step is an ordered realm. Modes of causation change from realm to realm but the reign of law is everywhere, however, different the laws may be that work on different planes. God is the Cause of all causes; causation in phenomenal existence is God-established sequence which can be modified only by the working of higher laws.

NATURE AND MIRACLES

From the view of causation thus elucidated we can appreciate the revolutionary step taken by Islam about determining the basis of religious belief. The popular mind in all religions based its beliefs mostly on the supernatural. It could not discover God in the normal habitual working of Nature. A prophet or a saint was supposed to have established his truth and genuineness by performing acts which violated the order of natural sequence and temporarily abrogated the law of causation. To the ignorant man it proved that he was a man of God who could successfully persuade God to perform a

magical act. It was supposed that a man specially commissioned by God is neither born normally nor lives normally nor dies normally. The philosophers had developed the concept of a rational order of the universe but the religious mind had been moving on a different path. It was a crude conception of Divine arbitrariness and interference that appealed to the popular mind as a proof both of the existence of God and the truth of His messengers. The popular mind all over the world still bases its religious belief on miracles. The Quran repeatedly states what it was that people demanded from the prophets. They said that they would not believe in the truth of a revealed book unless they saw the angels coming down from the skies bringing the book with them. They wanted signs that should astound and overwhelm them. Whenever they want a supernatural sign the Quran directs their attention to the natural phenomena. The Quran says you want extraordinary signs but even if you are shown such signs they will not generate in you that type of belief which could really regenerate you. Those who cannot discern God in the workings of normal nature shall never be able to see him in the abnormal. Similarly Islam asserts that those who are spiritually blind in this world shall be blind also in the life hereafter. There is no scripture of any great religion in which observation of Nature and its rational working are so emphatically and profusely recommended as proofs of the existence of God. Entire Nature is presented as a Great Miracle. "And in the earth there are signs for those who are sure and in your own souls (too); will you not then see" (51:21). To those who are in doubt about

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resurrection the Quran points out the phenomenon of quickening the earth after it is dead. "And He it is who sends forth the winds bearing good news before His Mercy, until, when they bring up a laden cloud, We drive it into a dead land, then bring forth with it of fruits of all kinds; thus shall we bring forth the dead that you may be mindful" (7:57). Existence is a rhythm of life and death, an alternation of two states that potentially contain each other. Islam wants to remove from the human mind the fear of death and points out the phenomena of Nature which show that death is not a final state of annihilation. "Surely Allah causes the grain and stone to germinate; He brings forth the living from the dead and He is the bringer forth of the dead from the living; that is Allah! How are you then turned away" (6:96).

The Quran takes up the scientific and philosophical conception of nature as a rationally ordered whole and wants to make it the pivotal point of its argument for the existence of God, the nature of existence and the place of man in Nature. It wanted to draw away humanity from the supernatural to the natural as the way that leads to the understanding of life and God. When it points to material nature, it very often points to the order in the astronomical world. The phenomenon of vegetable growth is repeatedly referred to as a very obvious sign of the nature of life and how it is preserved in passing from state to state. The vegetable kingdom enjoys its own kind of immortality; animal immortality may be allied to it. Nature that preserves and revives organic life would not let man only perish. Life, having

reached the state of Mind where, besides the bodies, egos or selves are generated, may be trusted to preserve these selves even as individual egos. The laws of preservation may be different at different stages of being; in the vegetable and the animal kingdom it may be corporate survival or the survival of the species only as individuality has not yet emerged. With the emergence of the individual selves or egos, God as the Life Force may make the selves, as selves survive the decay of the bodies with which they were associated. The Creative Force does the work for preservation and survival but the mode of this preservation must be different at different stages of existence as the law of causation is different at different stages. The Quran's simple way of stating is that the Creator that created you out of nothing once is capable of continuing you in another type of existence because the first creation has not exhausted Him.

In the Quran we find no appeal to the supernatural as a basis of belief. Man must outlive his demand for miracles and proceed from Nature and Reason to God. From the worms to the stars, he is asked to observe the course of nature and note in it Reason as well as Beneficence. Let him study the marvellous adaptations of life and the rationale in the working of Nature everywhere. The Quran says that even the study of anatomy of the camel and its wonderful adaptations to its surroundings will lead man to believe in a rational and good God. This was surely a great step in the evolution of religious belief. Here humanity has emerged out of its childhood and has come of age. Tolstoy after his religious

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awakening wrote that "Popular Christian belief bases its religious convictions on the immaculate birth of Christ but to me every child that is born normally of parents is a sufficient miracle for believing in God." This is exactly the Islamic attitude.

Nature, as we observe it, is only a fragment of the totality of existence but Islam believes that we can legitimately draw valid conclusions from it, pointing to the nature of the unseen. Inductive reasoning proceeds from the particulars to the general and deductive reasoning draws conclusion from self-evident premises. The Quran uses deductive as well as inductive reasoning. For those who consider the existence of God self evident it draws conclusions about Nature and Man about life here and hereafter. For those who have not this belief already from other sources, it uses the inductive method of studying the particulars of the phenomena of Nature and draws general conclusions from them about the existence and nature of the Creator. One can proceed from God to Nature or from Nature to God; whether we ascend or descend, it is the same road. This is the meaning of the words of the Quran that God is the Beginning and God is the End; God is the Outer Appearance and God is the Inner Reality. We can start from God as the Creator and Originator and proceed towards His creation to discover in it Reason and Goodness; God as the Final Cause then would be the ultimate explanation of everything. "To thy Lord does everything tend; He is the End." If, on the other hand, we

start with the study of creation we find the power and goodness of God immanent in it.

Islam is the first great religion which has laid such a great emphasis on Nature so that rational humanity may start seeking Him here first. Besides external nature it turns man's attention to his own nature as well. "It is in your own souls too; why do not you see it?" (51:21). Having laid such a great emphasis on the study of Nature within and without it sums up its teaching in one place by asserting that Islam is identical with Nature. "Then set your face upright for religion in the rights state--the nature of Allah in which He has made men, there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know" (30:30). Not only the study of Nature is prescribed for understanding the ways of God but it is said, as Nature is Truth, the right religion must be identified with it. Some people talk of the conflict of science and religion, science representing the study of Nature and religion dealing with supernatural realities. Islam resolves that conflict by identifying itself with Nature. How can a religion which prescribes the close study of Nature, in order to discover the rationale of it, conflict with science? Here is a complete identification of Reason, Nature and the Will of God and the right religion is defined as belief in this identification. If religion becomes perverted and science becomes narrow, then naturally they would be at loggerheads. But when science means discovering the uniformities and unity of existence and religion also means the discovering of the One among

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the Many they can walk hand in hand supplementing and supporting each other.

It was this ideology of Islam which made the Muslims the great investigators of Nature and appreciators of all philosophies which attempted to discover the meanings of life.

Chapter IV

ISLAMIC THEISM

THE UNSEEN

Belief in the Unseen is the fundamental postulate of Islam and hence the very first line of the Quran lays it down as a condition precedent, as a *sine qua non* of Divine Guidance. The Quran affirms that no one can step on the path of Truth and Righteousness who does not accept this as a postulate. The question at once arises as to why one should be asked to accept postulates without proof. Whoever has studied logic or any science should not expect from religion what is not legitimately expected from science or mathematics in general. All science is a study of the Seen on the basis of certain beliefs based on the Unseen. The Law of Causation or the Uniformity of Nature is the fundamental axiom of all science. The scientist starts with the belief that there is a universe subject to a reign of law in every aspect and every detail. But the universe as seen and experienced is an infinitesimally small part of the totality of existence. How does a scientist assert about an Infinite Whole what he experiences only in a very finite part? Every scientist must believe that the Unseen is immensely greater than the Seen.

The Unseen for science is of two kinds: (1) The immensity of the unexperienced phenomenal world; (2) The postulate of the universality and uniformity of causation which as a postulate is a matter of faith. Plato

was a great protagonist of the theory that the phenomenal world, the Seen, is based on the Unseen. He averred that all physical existence is based on numbers but the numbers and geometrical relations are based on the Unseen. Nobody can ever see an ideal point or an ideal circle but all actual points and lines and circles as drawn in the spatial world are imperfect imitations of their ideal prototypes. He held the same view about all the general and abstract ideas; they belong to the realm of the Unseen but all perceptible reality participates in them. Nobody has ever seen Absolute Beauty, Absolute Truth or Absolute Justice but they form the Unseen foundations of all existence. Here we find the greatest leader of Idealism and Intellectualism putting forward the belief in the Unseen as the basis of all intellectual apprehension and sensual perception.

It has become customary to compare and contrast religion with philosophy on the one hand and science on the other, and asserting in a very shallow manner that religion compels you to believe in the Unseen while science deals only with perceptible and verifiable realities and philosophy deals with only logically demonstrable reasoning or speculative thinking. We have seen above how all the three are constructed on the foundations of Belief in the Unseen. Reason itself is founded on the belief in the rationality of existence which is again a belief in the Unseen because the rationality of the totality of existence could never become a perceptible or a demonstrable fact.

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All philosophy starts in Wonder and ends in Wonder; so does all science and so does all religion. It is said that in the parentage of religion we find Fear besides Wonder. We might put Hope as well as a third progenitor of religion. In the primitive stages of human evolution Hope and Fear and the sense of Mystery or Wonder and the ideas about the Unseen are vague and superstitious. In the evolution of knowledge as well as of religion they become more and more exalted, more and more deep and are progressively purified. It is a false view of most of the genetic philosophies that the essentials of a phenomenon are to be traced in its earliest origin. Mathematics and science also had crude origins and progressed gradually by the method of trial and error until they reached a stage where they claimed to be super-personal and objective. No one doubts the objectivity of science because of its earlier crude and superstitious beginnings. Astronomy developed out of Astrology and Chemistry out of Alchemy. If one asserts that true religion, which Bacon says should be built upon the rock and not be tossed upon the waves of times, also emerges out of nature-worship and propitiation of tribal gods, why should it be considered as less true and less objective? The Unseen of religion has been constantly contaminated with vague imaginings or vivid emotional visions as the Unseen of the sciences is strewn thick with exploded theories. In its attempt to rationalise or visualise the Unseen, science has proceeded from error to error but, in spite of this, faith in its objectivity is not shaken. Religion too has progressively purified, rationalised, and exalted its Unseen and errors of judgment or imagination have not

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shaken the belief in the objectivity of the Unseen. Science would crumble if it gives up its belief in the Unseen; similarly no religion would be possible without it. The functions of this belief in the Unseen, in science and in religion do not always coincide; religion demands a personal attitude towards it as a way of life and science wants a working hypothesis for the understanding of phenomenal existence.

It is claimed that science has revealed a stage in which its attitude towards the Unseen, is now free from superstition. A similar claim is put forward by the Quran on behalf of religion. It repudiates all pretheistic conceptions of the Unseen as based on vain desires, false imaginings and uncertain guesses. Purification of the idea of the Unseen is identical with the exaltation of the idea of a Supreme Being which is the Source of all power, Love and Knowledge.

In many of the fundamental aspects of science and religion the test of truth may be similar. It is said that the truths of science are to be judged pragmatically and the benefits of it estimated in the terms of human welfare. Theism as presented by Islam has been pragmatically tested and found that it works in knowledge as well as life. The developed Unseen of Science is based on the Unity of Existence; the idea works admirably in scientific advancement. Theism is also based on the belief in the Ultimate Unity of the Source of All Existence. It is said science freed human beings from superstitious fears of imaginary gods and demons; so has the belief in a powerful rational and loving God freed men

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from unreal fears. Epicurus wanted to abolish belief in gods to make men free from fear. Theism succeeds in this much more than Epicureanism and materialism.

The progress of the Spirit is from the seen to the unseen, from the outward to the inward, from appearance to reality. The perception of man starts with his body and the cognisance of external nature. For millenniums he defied the forces of Nature, or it would be the same thing to say that he humanised them; anthropomorphism was an inevitable necessity. Man found in external nature a replica of his own emotions and urges, though the forces of nature appeared to him to be more powerful than himself. When he tried to understand the nature of elemental forces he saw his own biological self mirrored in them and the only way to deal with them was to propitiate them. For long his gods were the images of his own desires. Then there came a stage when besides deifying the forces of nature he began to deify his heroes—men endowed with extraordinary powers. It was believed that such men possessed great natural and supernatural forces. Great rulers and great conquerors were deified. Even when the idea of one Supreme Ruler and Creator of the world had emerged, some nations began to identify Him with some great Spiritual Heroes. This is the stage of incarnation. 'It was believed that the Great Being, the Great Source of Existence, became completely embodied in such persons; they were revered and worshipped as Visible God. Man was still incapable of conceiving an Unseen God, so even after having reached the idea of One God, man was not satisfied unless he

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could see Him in a tangible form. Buddha, Krishna, Rama and Christ were also taken to be God Almighty Himself who had condescended to become man for the benefit of humanity. Their oneness with the Ultimate Reality was taken to be so complete that it was believed as perfect identity. They ostensibly possessed all the attributes of God. Instead of being taken as pure specimens of humanity and moral and spiritual models or teachers of truth they were to them the Infinite God having put on temporarily the garb of finiteness. In the Bhagwat Gita Krishna is alleged to assert that "when religion becomes corrupt I assume the shape of a human being and descend to the world to bring it back to the pristine purity of Truth."

When Islam emerged on the stage of history most of the civilised nations of the world were found in the grip of polytheism and incarnationism. The greatest service that Islam rendered to humanity was the exaltation and purification of the concept of God. Islam strived to deliver humanity from a multiplicity of false gods on the one hand and from incarnationism on the other, to bring man back to the Unseen God. "Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends (all) vision" (6:105). He is the Creator Who is immanent in His creation but He also transcends all His creation. The fundamental relation of all creation and creatures to their Creator is that of voluntary or involuntary obedience. The highest and the purest of human beings are also creatures and the oneness of the creatures with the Creator is achieved by complete self-surrender which is the literal meaning of

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Islam. This self-surrender is found in all Nature. According to Islam the earth and the heavens and all that they contain are Muslims. The earth that is spread, the trees that grow, the rivers that flow, the birds that sing and the meanest worm that crawls, all glorify their Creator in a tongue that man does not understand. Their living according to the nature with which they are endowed is their worshipful self-surrender and their silent wordless prayer. All creation is the manifestation of God but God has no body. "Nothing is like Him" (42:2). All similes applied to Him are imperfect. Nobody can comprehend Him completely in His Essence. He is the nearest of the near and the beyond of the beyond. The universes embody His Will without exhausting it. "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth" (24:35). But all light as revealed to the imperfect organs of our sight is a mere shadow as compared to His Light. His Light is self—luminous and non—spatial. His is the East and His is the West but His Light is neither eastern nor western. From the Great God every thing springs and to Him it tends. He is the Fountain of Power and Knowledge and Love. He comprehends all creation by His Power and His Knowledge and "My mercy encompasses everything" (7:156), and His "garden the extensiveness of which is in the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth" (57:20). He manifests Himself as natural and moral order, as beauty, as conscience and as love. Islam forbids to have any images made of Him in any kind of material media although the mind cannot help making symbolical images of Him. All mental images of Him are to be taken as symbolic. He is the Seeing and the Hearing God but

His Sight and His Hearing are incomprehensible in their essence and reality. He is the Ideal of all knowledge, all power and all goodness but the Ideal is never completely actualised. It is in this ideal sense that He is to be adored as the Great Unseen although He is the Source of all that is seen. He always transcends all that is actualised. He is the Great Mathematician; everything that He manifests is measured and numbered but He is not to be identified with numbers as the Pythagoreans did. According to Islam His Supreme Manifestation is in the great and pure souls of His servants who offer Him willing and loving obedience--His prophets that he raised in every nation. All of them and the best of them are only relatively perfect in comparison with the rest of humanity but when compared to God, their perfection is imperfect and their goodness is only a shadow of the goodness of God, as we find in the New Testament when someone called Christ good he replied that "not I but my Father in Heaven is good." This is what Islam asserts about all the great prophets. None of them dare stand in his own right as Divinity. All experienced goodness is imperfect and hence not to be completely identified with God.

Belief in such an Unseen God is a fundamental postulate of Islam. Islam wanted to lift man from the actual to the ideal and all that is ideal must by its nature always remain unseen. A completely comprehended God is not God and a completely actualised ideal is no ideal. This is what Plato meant by his Realm of Ideas which can never be an object of perception but must ever remain identified with pure Reason; only Reason could

contemplate itself completely. But the God of Islam cannot be identified with logical reason; according to Islam, God is rational and our reason, when pure, participates in His Reason but His Reason is not completely immanent in our logical reason which moves from premises to conclusions and from particulars to an hierarchy of gradually ascending universals. His Reason could never be completely comprehensible to our reason and transcends it as much as His Hearing and His Seeing transcend what with us is hearing and sight. In all our values and ideals He is immanent but humanity is not His sole interpreter nor any one human being can pretend to be His sole interpreter. He is the Source of Law according to which existence is manifested but His Will is a Law unto itself. He creates what He wills and guides His creatures as He wills. His Will according to Islam is not arbitrary but it is not exhausted by the laws according to which He makes and guides His creation.

The Unseen God which Islam presents is meant to free human beings from the limitations of physical and biological existence. By making God the Unseen Source of all ideals it makes human life evolutionary and dynamic. Man could never become the paragon of existence, the crown of creation and the vicegerent of God on earth unless he is delivered from the thralldom of the actual and lifted to the heights of the Unseen Ideal. So long as he is dominated and terrified by the real or imaginary forces of nature he sinks even below the animals. As the Quran says, "They are like animals, nay, straying away from nature and truth, they are worse

than the animals." Polytheism according to Islam is worse than the worst of sins and most unforgivable for it not only insults God but degrades man to the lowest depths and abases him most abominably. Man, according to the Quran, is endowed with the best of mental and physical nature but by his worship and fear of imaginary gods he sinks lower than the lowest. Islam is zealous not only of the honour of God but of the dignity of man. He was destined to be the lord of creation working as a vicegerent of the Great Lord and he was endowed with faculties which would make all nature subservient to him but this potential master has come to cower before those very powers that were meant to be his slaves. The monotheism of Islam is a belief with two facets: the purification of the idea of the Infinite Ideal, the Almighty God and restoration of the dignity of man. It is asserted by some ignorant materialists that religion created a slave mentality in man. There is no doubt that an all perverted religion makes slaves of men in one way or another. But in all true religions it is meant to make men free; it frees them from within and it frees them from without. It frees them from their own chaotic desires and inordinate passions and makes them lords in their own inner realms and it frees them from demoralising fears of imaginary gods.

When Islam says, "And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him" (17:23). The prohibition extends also to worship of man by man. No human being could in reality be the master of another human being far from being worshipped as God.

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Islam, therefore, directs its forces as much against incarnationism as polytheism. Believing in One God is of no avail if that One God could become a triple God by a curious logic or metaphysics or if that One God is supposed to have a unique son coeternal and co-existent sharing perfectly in all his perfect attributes and capable of taking on human form and suffering humiliation and persecution to carry away on his shoulders the sins of humanity. The Quran says, "Every soul is held in pledge only for what it earns" (74:38). "No bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another" (6:165). The Lord of Judgment accepts no compensations and substitutes. In moral retribution there shall be no vicarious suffering.

The fallen man began to worship those very spiritual guides who presented themselves as only humble servants of God, with the result that the Great Unseen Ideal was again degraded. The lower instinct of worshipping the seen in preference to the Unseen overcomes misguided humanity over and over again. Islam has once for all made the clear and unequivocal announcement that man in the interest of his spiritual advancement and emancipation and in order to be restored back to his dignity of ruling over the entire creation in the name of the Creator, shall not worship any human being, however great he may be in any respect; he must reserve his worship for the Unseen God. By complete self-surrender to the Unseen God he shall attain Peace (Islam means both self-surrender and peace) and be "free from all fear and all grief," because having identified his will with the Will of the Lord by complete self-

surrender he becomes free from all fear and because all that is really valuable is preserved in the Existence of Great Preserver, why and for what should he grieve?

Advancement towards this Ideal guarantees eternal progress in self-betterment because we are asked to strive to embody in our lives the attributes of God, which, being Infinite, man could continue to progress eternally. The Unseen God of Infinite Knowledge and Power and Love continues to work in the soul as an aspiration. Spiritual progress shall ever be an aspiration and never a complete fulfillment, because the Unseen God alone is eternally Perfect.

Chapter V

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Islam has laid the greatest emphasis on the Unity of God. There is only One God. The world shows endless diversity, variety and multiplicity; creation is manifold but the Creator is One. Apart from religious belief one could arrive at the Unity of the essence of Existence by way of logic or by way of our experience of the world or our own souls. It is a postulate of science that we live in a universe and not a multiverse. The remotest star in the heavens is related causally to the cold under our feet. As Carlyle has put it, the co-operation of the entire universe is involved in the growth of a single blade of grass. The flower in the crannied wall is so related to the universe, to God and to man that the poet is convinced that if he could know it all in all he would know what God and man is. This concept of the unity of existence is a fundamental postulate of science as well as of all true religion. The Quran has a simple argument about it: that if there were more than one God you would have seen discord or disruption in the universe; or nothing could have existed with any stability and no laws could have worked. For science, also, Nature is unitary and uniform and all its immense diversity is threaded on the unities of laws and all these unities ultimately are derived from an all-embracing Unity. In science all verified experience substantiates this hypothesis but science is concerned with the explanation of the phenomenal world only.

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Religion begins where science ends. Religion asserts that the noumenal world is also a Unity though the noumenal world is not presented to us as a fact of sensible experience. Plato proceeded by way of logical reason to construct a pyramid of ideas. The diversity of the physical world is the infinitely broad base of the pyramid and the multiplicity of the ideas is reduced as we ascend higher and higher in the scale until we reach the apex where there is only one idea, the Idea of ideas which he designates as the Good, from which all other ideas are derived and through which the phenomenal world also exists by participation in these derived ideas. Philosophy arrives at the necessary postulate of the Unity of Reason. The physicist identifies the Totality of Existence with the phenomenal world and does not consider it justified to step beyond it. The Platonic philosopher identifies Reality with Reason and considers it impossible to step beyond Reason because here the intellect has reached an ultimate. Reason must rest at this terminus; it cannot jump over its own shoulders. But for religion the Unity of the Universe and the Unity of Reason both point beyond themselves to an Ultimate Unity from which this dual unity of mind and matter emerges. The human mind psychologically is also a unity. Whatever be the nature of the mind or the soul one fact is incontrovertible that it is essentially a unity of experience or apperception. According to Islam all the worlds are linked by one Law or one creative Will because the Creator is One. Professor Hoffding, the learned historian of philosophy, says that in the West, belief in monotheism has received a great support from the advancement of science which is based

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on the unity of existence which it verifies at every step. The monism of science and the monotheism of religion come very close to each other. Man started with a multiplicity of gods indifferent or hostile to one another and ultimately reached the idea of One God. Explanation of natural phenomena also started with unrelated diversities until it reached the idea of a universe in which the remotest of phenomena are ultimately subject to the same law and interlinked by causation.

Besides Reason and the World, God also manifests Himself in the moral consciousness of man. Kant said that two things filled him with awe: the starry heavens above and the moral law within. In both these realms he tried to discover and affirm the unity and the uniformity of Law. He found it difficult to unite these two unities in a fundamental unity from which both of these emerged and left it to the sphere of belief beyond knowledge, convinced of the essential limitations of sensible and intelligible knowledge, holding fast to his thesis that religion begins where philosophy ends. According to Islam all true religion is monotheistic and all the great prophets were monotheists. In the line of religious development of the Israelites, the Quran makes a special reference to Abraham who presented monotheism in a clear and emphatic form and the Prophet (P.B.U.H) repeatedly asserted that He treaded the Path of Truth as treaded by Abraham who repudiated idol-worship and the worship of natural phenomena as gods. In Hinduism too we see a long and gradual development from polytheism and nature-worship to monotheism or spiritual monism.

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though a large body of Hindus could not step beyond incarnationism. Similar is the case with Christianity. Christ was a monotheist of the purest order and a number of true Christians always remained Unitarians but the doctrine of Trinity vitiated the monotheism of Christianity, importing into it the error of incarnationism and postulating three co-eternal and equal beings who are one and at the same time three. The assertion being unintelligible is designated as The Great Mystery. Islam sees neither the need nor the truth of this belief and the Quran repeatedly repudiates it. Zoroaster too was essentially a monotheist though the purity of his monotheism has been vitiated to some extent by the belief in two relatively independent and hostile principles of Light and Darkness with Yazdan and Aharman pitched against each other.

The case of Buddhism is slightly different. Buddhism is generally believed to be a Godless religion. Buddha talked of the spiritual regeneration of the kind which could be achieved by understanding and following the moral law which for him was the law of mercy and the negation of all selfish and physical desires. He repudiated the Hindu Pantheon but preached neither for nor against the belief in one God. But his Nirvana, though described in negative terms as a state in which all the pains and limitations of life and all its fears and griefs are eliminated, is an absolutely positive state of Divinity, as is vouchsafed by the experience of great mystics of all ages and all creeds and the human soul could attain to a unity with that Divinity, though that Unity is

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indescribable in any human categories for which unity and diversity are terms borrowed from the spatial and temporal world. We could safely take Buddha as a monotheist in the mystic sense, though the negative attitudes towards life of Buddhistic philosophy apparently took an un-Islamic turn.

We cannot say what purification or clarification of the Buddhistic doctrines has taken place in recent times but so far as Hinduism is concerned one could safely assert by studying the Hindu reformist movement from Ram Mohan Roy to Mahatma Gandhi, that reformed Hinduism is becoming more and more monotheistic. Swami Ram Tirath, Swami Vivekanand, Swami Dayanand, Ramakrishna Parmahans and a number of other moral and religious reformers are all monotheists of one complexion or another, some with a more personal and others with a more impersonal God, approaching from the side of philosophy or mysticism.

Islam never claimed to be the first teacher of monotheism; it asserts that the belief is as old as humanity and religious truth. Islam claims that all the great prophets preached this fundamental truth and all the scriptures originally contained it in a pure form. But this belief was contaminated over and over again and prophets were raised among all nations to restore this very faith. The fundamental unity of all religions is one of the essential tenets of Islam. Great and true religions differed in their ritual and ceremonies and laws and customs which varied with varying circumstances but belief in the Unity of God was common to all and

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according to the Quran this belief along with a life of virtue constitutes the essence of all true religions.

It appears to be a great proof of the truth of Islam and its great triumph that reformers and thinkers in all religions are busy either repudiating or explaining away all that ran counter to this great belief and digging out from their scriptures proofs of monotheism, claiming that it was originally their true religion; all the rest were concocted theologies and accretions.

The Unity of God, considered by Islam as the basis of all true religion, does not stand alone merely as a metaphysical belief about Reality. It's significance for life is deep and wide. As we have already mentioned, it is a belief when science meets religion though science does not necessarily move forward towards One God but rests with the unity of phenomenal and manifested existence. Scientific monism is not necessarily monotheism but is a great step towards it. By repudiating the belief in the multiplicity of independent gods with arbitrary will creating and interfering with the phenomena of Nature at every step, monotheism becomes a great ally of the scientific mode of explanation. From the Unity of God follows as a corollary not only the unity of existence but unity of humanity as well. We have already said that the essential unity of all religions is a fundamental tenet of Islam; that too is a consequence of the Unity of God. Islam derives another corollary from the Unity of God and that is the unity of humanity. The Quran has repeatedly asserted that all humanity is one and all human beings have been created from one Being, and God breathed His

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own soul into Adam who in various places in the Quran is identified with humanity or the human species. Islam does not contemplate making humanity uniform in every respect; on the other hand it asserts that linguistic and other differences in the modes of life in different nations are significant signs of God, but it is emphatic in the assertion that fundamentally all humanity is one and all nations should try to agree on fundamentals, the most essential of which is that there is only One God and all men and all creatures are His family. The brotherhood of man is a direct corollary from the Unity of God. The unity of moral law too is a corollary from the Unity of God. However nations may differ in their customs and modes of living there must be one objective morality for all. Double standards of morality, one for one's own nation and another for the foreigners, should not be tolerated. Nietzsche talked of master-morality and slave-morality as to differentiate between the masculine and the feminine moral codes. Islam emphatically lays down that as all humanity is one, its moral code also must be one. The unity of morality follows from the unity of humanity and the unity of humanity follows from the Unity of God.

In the delineation of the attributes of God, the quality of Unity is the most emphasised in the Quran. This is a quality which is comparatively easy of apprehension. But with respect to other attributes a fundamental difficulty arises. How could the Infinite be knowable by the finite mind; how could the Absolute be comprehended by the relative? To know the world quantitatively and qualitatively, man is endowed with an

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organism with specific senses mainly devised to serve his biological ends. Even his reason is rooted in his senses and the demands of his organism and serves as an extension to his senses; his reason too is an instrument in his struggle for existence and adaptation to his environment. His senses and his reason are finite and relative dealing with finite and relative situations. Man with his great advancement in scientific and logical reasoning cannot completely grasp the nature of an atom nor the growth of a blade of grass. Is it not then presumptuous for him to pretend to know the attributes of the ultimate source of all life and existence? Then there is another difficulty. The language of man is the language of his senses; ultimately all words have a sense reference. How could the qualities of God be described in human language, the God who is neither in Space nor in Time nor could He become the object of our senses? For us, our highest values and our most ultimate concepts are limited by the nature of our minds and bodies; how could we thus get beyond our own personalities and their relations to life and existence? Shall we then despair of all knowledge of God or pretend to know Him as He is? Both these alternatives would destroy all true religion and land us either in utter moral and intellectual nihilism or degrade the ideal of God by making Him a known God, a God Who would be less than the knower because the known is encompassed by the knower. Religion, therefore, could neither be based on the complete ignorance of God nor complete knowledge of Him. Like all ultimate truth the knowledge of God too is paradoxical for human reason; it cannot be logically formulated nor

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psychologically comprehended. There is an element of agnosticism in all true religion and even in the deepest religious experience. The attempt to comprehend God by reason always ends in negations. As Spinoza said, all definition is limitation. All the great saints and prophets have admitted the incomprehensibility and ineffability of the Divine Essence. Knowledge as we know it is a subjective-objective relation; how could we have knowledge of that which is neither a subject nor an object nor their mutual relation?

We shall try to make clear the position of Islam in this respect. God is not entirely knowable in His essence but His reality lies in the direction of ultimate values. As the Quran says, "His are the most excellent names" (59:24). As compared with the attributes of God our values are finite approaches and symbols. A true symbol is one which can serve as a pointer to a reality. Man is compelled to talk in symbolical terms. We have first to divest God of all disvalue; this is what is meant in religious language as the glorification of God; let us refrain from attributing to Him what we should hesitate in attributing to a perfect human being or to any perfect being. For us perfection is an unapproachable ideal but it is a necessary attribute of God. We have to believe in God as the Creator and Sustainer of all values although values for us must remain human values. Plato gives us three ultimate values: Truth, Beauty and Goodness. In his dialectic he has tried to demonstrate that all that is valuable in human life and existence in general can be embraced by one or more of these values. Although in his

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classifications goodness is one of the three ultimate values he says the Highest Idea, the source of all other values is The Good. In this respect Plato's dialectic is corroborated by the deepest religious consciousness. One might think that love and happiness or even power are also felt by human beings as intrinsic and ultimate values and they do not appear in the triad of Plato. But a little consideration would make it obvious that love cannot stand by itself and ideally it must be based on one or more of these three values and happiness is a condition of the realisation of these values; it is a by product of this realisation. Love may also be comprehended in the value of goodness. Power too cannot stand alone in its own right; it is valuable only when exercised in subordination to truth and goodness, or beauty.

Islam says God is Truth; He creates with truth and demands that His creatures live with truth. Then it is said God is Beautiful and loves beauty; He creates a thing and then makes it beautiful. As to goodness, the Quran is strewn with His attributes of goodness variously described as providence, as mercy and forgiveness, and as love. According to the Quran God's mercy covers everything and therefore one might say that for Islam too, as for Platonism, the highest value may be characterised as The Good. Religion can be saved from complete agnosticism only in the belief that our highest efforts in the realisation of these values are in tune with Reality. God is the guarantee of the reality and objectivity of our highest values. Hoffding's great book on the philosophy of religion gives the essence of religious belief as the

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conservation of values. To me it appears that religious belief could not be characterised in better terms. It is quite possible to believe in Plato's three ultimate values but believe them to be subjective and human only without any absolute and cosmic existence. One may arrive at the position that they are real values for humanity but there is no proof or guarantee that they are embedded in ultimate reality. This was the position adopted by the Sophists in the time of Socrates and Plato. For religious belief these values in their perfection belong to the essential attributes of God and when a man moulds his life according to them he is participating in a limited way in the attributes of God. Religious belief consists in the conviction that these values, as superpersonal and objectively real, are conserved in existence and in the Being of God.

All religion becomes anthropomorphism and anthropopathism, i.e., conceiving of God in the analogy of the human form and conceiving of his feelings in the form of human feelings unless we adopt the thesis of Islam propounded in various places in the Quran that human terms applied to ultimate spiritual realities must always be conceived as symbols. Take for instance the most fundamental attribute of God from which all else must emerge, i.e., the quality of Being or Existence. For us whatever exists, exists either in space or in time or in both. But God is neither spatial nor temporal. He created time and space and therefore cannot be contained by them. All the questions arising out of God's Infinity, if based on spatial or temporal categories, involve human

reason in antinomies and if pushed in any direction must involve us in absurdities. And yet, religiously, we have to believe that God exists and He is Infinite but His Existence and His Infinity must be different from ours. Even the Unity of God must be of a nature different from our mathematical and spatial unities. How creation emerges out of His Will must also be a mystery to us because no creature, being an Absolute Creator, can comprehend the Divine act of creation. Creation in time must be taken symbolically, as the Quran says that time with God is something quite different from our conception of it. As Rumi says, "The real nature of the attributes of perfection can never be understood except by analogies and by the effects of those attributes in manifested existence." We see the effects of God's love and goodness and conclude therefrom that God is loving and good, but the real nature of love in the Being of God can never be grasped by us except in so far as analogies could help. But one should beware of taking symbols for realities because that would lead to anthropomorphism and idolatry.

We see that the Quran uses analogies and symbols in profusion but warns us at the same time that the descriptions are to be taken as symbols. Not only the attributes of God but the Day of Judgment and rewards and punishments are depicted in vivid metaphors and imagery. Human language must employ physical terms; supra-physical or supramental, realities dealing with modes of existence in which our categories do not hold may have their own modes of experience and

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communication but they are not open to us on our present plane of existence. As the poet Ghalib has well put it." When we talk of apprehension of Divine Realities we cannot help using the symbolism of the wine and the cup; we want to depict the feelings of the lover and use the word dagger to denote how he is smitten by it." Symbolism when it becomes vivid and rich has a tendency to be taken as a substitute for reality. Therefore, the Quran warns us against this tendency by pointing in clear terms that they are analogies. About paradise it is said that "A likeness of the garden which the righteous are promised: there flow beneath it rivers, its fruits are perpetual and plentiness" (13:35). And lest paradise be taken as a particular place it is said that paradise is co-extensive with the entire heavens and the earth. Similarly having depicted God as seeing, hearing, speaking, grasping, controlling and being pleased or displeased the Quran says, "Vision comprehends Him not and He comprehends all vision (6:104)"; "Nothing is like a likeness of Him (42:11)."

In the Muslim history of theology there has been only one sect with a limited number of followers at a particular period which believed literally that God was corporeal. They were called Karramiya (after the founder Muhammad Karram) or Mujassma from *jism* meaning body, but the main body of Muslim theologians and mystics have always maintained that the nature of God's attributes as they exist in Him cannot be known. We have to argue from their effects to their causes which cannot be comprehended. This was the view of Abul

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Hasan Ashari, the leader of Sunni orthodox Ilmu Kalam, of Rumi the great Sufi and of Shah Waliullah, the great philosophical theologian and practical Sufi. In mystic visions, sometimes God is felt as if He had a physical attribute as the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) (P.B.U.H) in a vision felt a touch of Divine hands between his shoulders but it is universally accepted that visions are symbolical and sensualise non-sensual realities.

Having understood, then, the view-point of Islam about the nature of Divine attributes that they are infinite perfections of our highest and ultimate values and their essential nature in the Divine Being cannot be comprehended and that it is from their effects in general existence and in our own life that we get a partial knowledge of them, we will now proceed to describe those attributes of God which are given by the Quran as His fundamental attributes from which His other attributes may be derived.

Chapter VI

THE ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES

According to the Quran the first and foremost attribute of God is Rabb which means provider, sustainer and cherisher. The word has no English equivalent and in some of the English translations it is translated as the Lord, which is a very poor and inadequate rendering: perhaps the word Providence comes very near to it. Raghib Isphahani, the famous lexico-graphist of the Quran, defines the word as 'fosterer of a thing', who develops it from one state into another until it attains completion." It is an amplification of the mere idea of creation; mere creation does not necessarily connote any purpose. Schopenhauer conceived of perpetual creation as an act of a cosmic Blind Will, which is beyond good and evil and is purposeless. Then there may be creation in mere sport as some schools of Hindu philosophy call creation the Sport of God, a concept which is refuted in the Quran in definite terms. "And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them for sport" (21:16). The word Rabb which combines in its significance the qualities of a sustainer, a cherisher and a fosterer gives us the purpose and the direction of the Divine Will to create. God does not create and leave the things to shift for themselves or to become the sport of chance. Life becomes the Force of Creative Evolution when it is conceived as creating with a purpose and providing the means of development at every stage. The

quality of being a Rabb makes God a dynamic Divinity and not a static Absolute. God becomes immanent in the universe as a Creative and Evolutionary purpose. The essential qualities of all life is growth to attain an end; all life is goal-seeking. A Living God, therefore, must manifest Himself as a sustainer and a developer. The Darwinian hypothesis of life makes it a product of chance variations and adaptations to the environment in a blind and ruthless struggle for existence where Nature is presented as red in tooth and claw. The beautiful and rational adaptations of life visible in ascending gradations from the amoeba to man are presented as the products of blind forces. According to Islam all life is teleological and behind all teleology is God Whose wisdom is manifested in the eh systems of stars and planets in the heavens whose mathematically exact motions are repeatedly given in the Quran as great signs of the existence of a rational God Whose powers are unlimited but He manifests everything in an appointed measure to sustain a thing or to develop it towards a goal fixed by the nature of a thing. The growth of life out of dead-looking matter is pointed out in numerous places in the Quran as the greatest miracle and proof of the existence of God and as a proof also of survival and immortality. A God Who is essentially a Creator and a Sustainer cannot lightly see His creation destroyed. The Life-force is not exhausted in the creation of an individual organism only once. God Who is characterised as Rabb cannot be adequately described by any symbol or analogy. He is more than a mere manufacturer of an article and is more than a mere master who demands service and obedience from a

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servant for his own convenience and who depends as much if not more on the servant than the servant depends on him; nor could the analogy of father be considered adequate because the relation of the father to the son is much too external and some of the modern psychologist claim to have discovered some kind of veiled and subconscious hostility in this relationship. Perhaps the mother and her relation to the child would be a more satisfactory symbol. The child develops in the womb of the mother and is literally a flesh of her flesh and bone and for a considerable period is an organic part of her own organism. Even after the child is born its sustenance is derived entirely from the mother for as long as it is suckled by her. The mother in this respect is to a much larger extent the creator, sustainer and fosterer of the child than the father. Some religions adopted the symbol that the fatherhood of God because in a patriarchal age all authority was vested in the father who was an absolute owner and dispenser of all the means of subsistence and had a power of life and death over all members of his family, as he possessed and exercised this power over his slaves. As a matter of fact, therefore, the symbolism of father and son was almost equivalent to that of master and slave. To symbolise the relation of God to His creatures both symbols were inadequate though both were used for lack of anything better. As we have said, the symbol of motherhood would have been more satisfactory but a patriarchal civilisation could not have employed it. There is a hadith of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) that while sitting with some people he asked them if they could imagine a mother throwing her child into the

flames of a burning pile and they replied that it was impossible. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said, "Then remember that God's love for His creatures was immensely greater than the love of the mother for her child." This saying of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) illustrates what I have said about the superiority of the symbol of motherhood. If all attributes as expressed in words are symbolical and one is constrained to use some symbol, then Rabb is far superior to Ab, the father. The power of the creator, the capacity of absolute sustainer and guide to perfection, the love of the mother, and the love and supporting care of the father are all gathered together in the concept of a Rabb. The limitations of fatherhood and masterhood and even motherhood are transcended in the quality of a Rabb.

The question arises whether the belief in God as Rabb is justified by our experience of existence. The fact that existence is a cosmos and not a chaos proves that existence is an ordered and a rational whole and, as we have already mentioned, it is not a postulate of religion only but of science as well. Our empirical knowledge offers us a spectacle of construction as well as destruction; as a matter of fact the two go hand in hand and the one is almost everywhere implied in the other. But our evolutionist philosophers assert that existence as a whole has an evolutionary trend; fitness survives and unfitness is gradually eliminated. The universe is sustained by inviolable laws which are knowable by reason and they could not have been knowable by reason if they were not themselves the manifestation of reason.

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The law of self-preservation also holds in the world of matter and in the realm of life and mind as well. It is said that matter preserves itself under all changes; nothing is utterly destroyed; all apparent destruction is only change of shape. There is a universal law of the conservation of energy, therefore the quality of Rabb as a preserver is witnessed in every atom. Out of the nebulae have gradually evolved suns and stars and moon's ordered in orbit and systems and all their movements are calculable because everywhere there is the reign of law, the rule of number and measure. It is sometimes asserted by gross materialists that this law is mechanical and blind and therefore instead of pointing towards the existence of a rational and good God, it positively negates any such idea. But some of the great scientists like Eddington and Jeans and Haldane who have tried to construct philosophies on the basis of the findings of modern science, have reached the conclusion that they are driven to believe that the universe is created and sustained by a Great Mathematical Mind. Haldane the great biologist, proceeds further and says that the world of facts is also based on the world of values and at least one great value of Truth is the basis of all scientific knowledge; but Beauty and Goodness also are essential super-personal and objective values and existence is rationally conceivable only in terms of an Absolute personality. Everything that exists, exists because it is sustained and it is sustained not only by its own nature and its impulse of self-preservation but because everything else is so ordered that the universal order helps to sustain it. As Emerson has put it, the whole universe globes itself into a

drop of dew or as Carlyle has put it, the entire existence co-operates to make a blade of grass grow. Look at the conditions that make life possible; if anyone of those conditions were absent life would disappear. If several conditions were not provided in a definite measure, a thing would not exist or work. Is this infinite adaptation the product of blind mechanism? It is blindness itself not to see the laws that tend to these adaptations. Nietzsche, who could never step beyond Nature to the All-Wise and Good God Who is the author and sustainer of it, said, "There is more wisdom in the construction and operation of the body than in all the libraries of all the world." In the Quran among all the other arguments for the existence of God, the argument from teleology, the fulfillment of purposes and adaptations in nature stands out most prominently although the Quran enjoins the observation of our own selves too. "And in the earth there are signs for those who are sure and in your own souls too" (51:21). "With us there are stores of everything but We do not manifest them except in a definite measure" (21:15). "Surely we have created everything according to a measure" (45:49). The Quran repeatedly asserts that entire existence is subservient and can be made subservient to human life. Not that everything is created for the sake of man but man and nature are so constituted that everything that exists can be made to serve the purposes of human life, if man exercises rightly his prerogative of knowledge. To know Nature is to conquer it. Matter and life are interdependent. In the phenomenal order life emerges out of matter though matter does not create life; both life and matter are

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created by the Will of God and having a common origin they are mutually adapted and interdependent. There is infinite wisdom in the life of an organism and there is infinite wisdom in its adaptation to the environment. If the environment were not already so constituted that it could serve the purposes of life, there would have been no life. Is it not providence then that before life emerges matter is already so organised that it is capable of supporting life? The Darwinists exulted that they had ousted the Creator from the biological realm, by explaining away all purposiveness and all beauty as the product of a blind struggle for existence. They explained away development by the hypothesis of chance variations. But they forget that the importation of chance into causation was vitiating the very basis of all science. They also ignore the fact that the law of the survival of fitness points towards reason more than towards blind mechanism. Law is akin to reason or it may be considered as its equivalent. From what physics called blind mechanism they advanced towards the law of the survival of the fittest. But the law of the survival of the fit may also be religiously construed. Why does life support the fit and eliminate the unfit? If life supports the advance towards fitness, how could this trend of life be derived from blind mechanism? Blind mechanism means that it is indifferent to all values; but life according to Darwinism could not be blind to all values because it values itself and values fitness in it and gives it a survival value. Darwin himself was not an atheist; towards the existence of God he had an agnostic attitude. But a biographer has related it about him that he said that

whenever he saw the beauty of the feathers of a peacock a cold shiver ran down his spine with the doubt if this beauty could really be the product of chance variations and sexual selection only. Islam would accept the hypothesis of the struggle for existence but deny that this struggle is blind. According to Islam all resistance is a test for the fitness of existence. Destruction may be made a necessary step towards construction, but destruction is a means only and construction is the aim and the goal. All individual life is born and grows and decays. Decay is as much a law of all physical existence as is growth. The Quran repeatedly points out, "Look then at the signs of Allah's mercy how He gives life to the earth after its death" (30-50). "He brings forth the living from the dead and He is bringer forth of the dead from the living" (6-96). And the whole cycle of life and death in its entirety is given as a sign pointing towards a Rabb who is essentially a preserver, a fosterer and sustainer. This can only mean that during all this phenomenon of apparent death and destruction the essential values are always preserved; only that which proves worthless is destroyed. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest is not antagonistic to religion but forms a part of its essential teaching. "The wages of sin is death." Unfitness according to religion is incapacity to participate in the essential and abiding values of life. Paradise is a survival of the fit and hell is a destruction of the unfit. The Darwinian concept of fitness is narrow and even scientifically untenable as compared to the struggle for existence and the survival of the fit as we find in religion.

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It is unfortunate that those thinkers who were impressed by the Darwinian hypothesis laid more stress on the aspect of struggle in Nature than on this aspect of co-ordination and co-operation and most wonderful adaptation to circumstances which we find in the maintenance and development of life. Why should the creation of static and changing species be considered a greater sign of the power and providence of the Creator than evolutionary emergence of better and more developed species? If with changing circumstances new types more fitted to live, come into being and the law of life is the preservation of suitable traits by heredity, it shows that God is not merely a creator but a creative evolutionist; creation and evolution become identical. From this point of view God becomes not only a creator and preserver of values but an enhancer of values. Therefore, it is said in the Quran that God is an Enhancer and a knower or is a Conscious developer. This follows from his quality of being a Rabb.

We have hitherto confined our attention to physical adaptations of biological life and tried to show that the conditions of life and its provisions at every step cannot be conceived as products of chance and point to the existence of a wise and beneficent providence. We now turn to another aspect of providence which the Quran calls Hidayat or Guidance. It means that things or creatures are not left to shift for themselves to grope their way blindly until they accidentally stumble on to a suitable mode of existence. The law of Guidance is also a universal law and it operates in all realms from matter to

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mind. We have already pointed out that it is not justifiable to call even the mechanism of matter as blind. All matter follows fixed law or obeys the laws inherent in its nature. Even the realm of matter is not a realm of chance; it follows implicitly the destiny of its own nature. According to the Qurān every type of existence is a mode of life; matter also is living in its own way. Everything in the heavens and the earth submits to God and proclaims the glory of God in a tongue which we do not understand. Matter too is guided. From the atom to the stars there are systems that are pre-ordained. Who compel billions of atoms in a crystal to arrange themselves into beautiful geometrical figures? None of those apparently unconscious atoms transgresses the limits prescribed for it. If the atoms do not consciously organise themselves, they are somehow guided. The Quran repeatedly turns our attention to the courses of the heavenly bodies; we are asked to ponder over the precision with which they move in their orbits. Islam says that it is the result of Guidance from God and obedience on the part of the creature. All Nature is perpetual submission to the Will of God and is a continuous prayer. Every atom and every star is a Muslim. Islam, therefore, is not the creed of a particular group of humanity but is the religion of winds that blow and the rivers that flow. The type of Guidance and Submission varies from creature to creature and from realm to realm. Matter is guided in one way and plant and animal life in another way and mind is guided in a different manner. Matter is guided by what we understand as mathematical and mechanical laws, plant life is guided by the laws of growth and animal life is

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guided by instinct. When man comes on the scene and mind emerges, we notice a transition from instinct to reason. Along with reason there emerges that most mysterious privilege and trial of man called free-will. With reason and free-will comes uncertainty. This new endowment is a gift as well as a peril. To man there are always two ways open and he can choose to follow any one of the alternatives. But the endowment of reason does not mean that Divine Guidance is now withdrawn from him. Reason, if applied properly, is itself the best of guides; misguided reason sinks below the instinctive level but properly guided reason raises him above the angles. About the misguided it is said in the Quran that they descend not to the animal level but sink below it because the animal following the God-given instincts is not misguided. Islam does not claim to be an ultra-rational creed; it is one of its postulates that reason rightly exercised leads to the recognition of God. But man is not only pure reason; he is also a will which is a double-edged weapon; it can be wielded to understand rightly the laws of nature and life and follow them in practice but it could also be used to violate the laws of truth and lead one to be used to violate the laws of truth and lead one to destruction. The Quran says that the way of truth and falsehood and of virtue and vice are pointed out to man by his observation and experience and by his reason and ultimately by revelation. Revelation which according to the Quran is a supreme source of guidance may be natural, instinctive or supra-rational. Animal instinct too is called in the Quran, guidance by revelation, as it is said, "And your Lord revealed to the bee saying; make

hives in the mountains and in the trees" (16:68). The revelation granted to the prophets is a special gift which clarifies and justifies the ways of God to man; it is more than mere intellectual apprehension. Intellectual guidance was not enough for man, therefore the apprehension of Divine Realities was made possible to specially gifted individuals to strengthen their conviction by a direct comprehension in order that they may create conviction in others by their truthful and virtuous lives and by the power that is born of direct experience.

So we see, as there is a gradation of being an hierarchy of creatures so there is a gradation of guidance and all things and beings get the guidance necessary for them. The religion of every creature is the nature with which it is endowed and so long as it follows its own nature it is on the right path. Islam is called in the Quran nature with which God has endowed man; it is not based on miracles or incomprehensible mysteries. Islam is the nature of man rightly understood and voluntarily followed. Islam is not the name of a particular creed. All religion is one as the God of religion is one and that one religion is the religion of nature with which man is endowed. As the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said, "Every child is born bringing with it only its own human nature; it is the parents which make him a Jew or a Christian or a Zoroastrian." This is a direct and emphatic contradiction of the Christian doctrine of original sin. No nature created by God is sinful. Christian theology asserts that Adam sinned and the sin of Adam became an integral and inheritable endowment of human nature. Every child is a

born sinner. Even good actions and pure lives cannot wash away that hereditary taint. Nothing but belief in Christ's incarnation and vicarious suffering and death as the Great Ransom and Atonement can avail; without this all souls will perish as damned as they were born damned. How could such a horrible doctrine be consistent with belief in a loving providence is beyond comprehension. God first damned all humanity to the end of time ordaining ineradicable sin for countless children yet unborn and then conceiving as the only means of their salvation that His Only Son should suffer and be sacrificed to atone for the sins which neither he nor others had committed. Christian theology boasts of having presented God as Love while other religions had presented only a hard and unforgiving task-master. But strange is the love of this God which first damns for uncommitted crimes and then manifests itself by damning one of the purest of human beings identified with God Himself by this strange theology. Such a doctrine cuts at the root of all true religion and makes life a very cruel bargain. Islam is untiring in repudiation of this absurd belief which degrades both God and man and explodes the entire basis of the moral law. According to the moral law as expounded by Islam, there are neither vicarious rewards nor vicarious punishments. The moral burden of one soul cannot be carried by another. In the spiritual realm there is no ransom or atonement. Every soul is responsible only for its own deeds.

While every atom and plant and animal comes into being and lies according to its own nature, why

should man, the paragon of creation and the crown of things, be born with a perverted nature? According to Islam, God's providence, mercy and love are manifested best in the best of men who submit implicitly to the guidance of God. There is no doubt that reason as well as free-will is capable of perversion and in a large number of cases they are perverted, but this perversion is not inherent which could be remedied only by belief in irrational doctrines. Man does commit mistakes and sins, but the worst of all also do good deeds. A forgiving God does not immediately punish us for every mistake and the Quran says if God were such a ready punisher nothing alive would have been left on the face of the earth. Man's reason and revelation are the guidance granted to man and the ways of righteousness are always open to him. Guidance is there, if he only rightly reflects and knows his true self and his true nature. Neither his true self nor his true nature is fundamentally perverted. Guidance is a universal Divine Law and follows from God's nature as Rabb.

If we could draw out all the connotations of God as Rabb, Sustainer, Cherisher and Fosterer, many other attributes separately mentioned in the Quran would follow as corollaries. But the important attributes which are implied in it are given separate names in the Quran for the purpose of emphasis and clarification. Such are the two important attributes often coupled together because they both signify two sides of the same quality. Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim are both derived from Rahmat, which like Rabb is difficult to translate in one word.

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Raghib defines it as tenderness requiring the exercise of beneficence, thus comprising the idea of love and mercy. Both of them are of a measure denoting intensity of a quality. Rahman means a being in whom love, mercy and grace form an essential part of his essence, and Rahim signifies the constant manifestation and exercise of this quality. The two words may be understood as stating the static and dynamic aspect of the same quality although from another point of view all tributes have reference to action. All attributes of the Creator must be creative; none of them could rest in itself statically. The Creator as Ar-Rahman creates out of love; all real love is active and creative and as Ar-Rahman He exercises that love in forgiveness and mercy when His creatures having done wrong turn to him for forgiveness or He Himself saves them out of His abundant Grace.

The attribute Ar-Rahman, as eternal creative love, is used for God only, sometimes as a proper name but the attribute Rahim, as meaning merciful and forgiving, can be shared by human beings also. The Quran uses this double attribute together and enjoins on the Muslims to use it repeatedly while beginning anything; it signifies that Islam conceives of God mainly and fundamentally as Loving and Beneficent. As already pointed out, the word Rahman, from which both these words are derived, is untranslatable by any single English word. The meaning includes love, goodness, mercy, tenderness and grace. None of these words alone would do justice to its full connotation.

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If one may ask the question why does God create and having created why does He perpetually cherish and foster His Creation, the answer is found in His quality of Rahmat. The Neo-Platonists said that God is Light and the universe is an overflow from that Infinite Foundation; it is the Effulgence of Eternal Sun. The Quran too has used that simile in a most beautiful manner, but Rahmat is the oft-repeated attribute. For the Neo-Platonists this Effulgence is involuntary, because from them the source of all being is devoid of will, which is considered by them to be a creative quality. The God of Islam is a Willing God; it is His will which is creative and the motive-force of that Will is Rahmat. Active Love. God had been conceived by the philosophers either as impersonal Reason or an Ineffable Absolute devoid of all qualities. Plato only among the great ancient philosophers having identified God with Reason called Him the Idea of Ideas--for him ideas only being essentially real--also called Him the Good, making the Good as the reality of all existence, identifying all real existence with Reason and Goodness. If Plato be taken as a paragon of idealistic metaphysics, we may draw the conclusion that the highest intellectual apprehension of Ultimate Reality identified God with goodness. Similarly in the spiritual development of the Israelites when we reach Christ, the stern Jehovah has become a Loving God. When somebody called Christ Good he said, "Not I but my Father in heaven is good." The whole trend of the life and teaching of Christ is towards love and mercy. When the Quran praises the true Christians, it mentions the quality of love and mercy as their distinguishing feature. It was Christian theology

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which distorted and perverted this concept of love in the doctrine of original sin, vicarious suffering and atonement. True Christians who have more of spirituality and less of theology manifest the trait of love and mercy in their lives.

Islam has synthesised in itself the highest achievements, both of Hebraism and Hellenism. The God of Islam is rational; He creates with Reason and Truth; creation is rational and therefore intelligible by Reason; Reason can easily and smoothly proceed from Nature to God by close observation and correct reasoning. Science looks for only theoretical and mathematical Reason in the universe but religion proceeds further towards values of life which go hand in hand with the rational working of Nature. The Quran completely identifies Reality with Reason and Reason with the Good which is the *summun bonum* comprising all other values. The Good is the genus and all other values are the species of it. Numerous quotations from the Quran would bear this out. "Say: To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth? Say: To Allah; He has ordained mercy Himself" (6:12). "My mercy encompasses everything" (7:156). "And if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to count them; most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful" (14:34). It is said about paradise that it is coextensive with the heavens and the earth; as the heavens and the earth comprise all creation, it means that the bounty of God is manifested in everything because everything has come into being because of creative love. Then it is said in various places that His bounty and His beneficence are

not confined to rewards for virtue only; they extend even to the sinners. "All do We aid--these as well as those--out of the bounty of your lord and the bounty of your Lord is not confined" (17-20). "And He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect" (30-21).

It is sometimes objected that a Loving God could not be a God of retribution and punishment. This is a very superficial objection. In all true discipline, pain and punishment are not the results of angry vengeance but the instruments of rational Love. Spoilt children are those who were never punished because the love of their parents was blind and destructive of the very objects of their love. The Quran is full of rewards of virtue and punishments of vice. The punishment of vice is a necessary part of the moral order but the infliction of punishment for the sake of punishment and infliction of pain for its own sake would be utterly irrational. The graphic pictures of hell are as allegorical as the sensual imagery of the paradise. The fundamental truth meant to be emphasised is the inevitability of the good consequence of virtue and the bad consequences of vice, both in this life and in the life hereafter. The imagery belongs to the realm of imagination but the moral order is real. The human mind is so constituted that even for spiritual and moral truths we are compelled to use material and sensual imagery. Even the philosophers who talk in terms of pure reason and the mystics, who feel or perceive that spiritual realities are non-material, non-sensual, non-spatial and non-temporal, use material and

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sensual imagery profusely because they cannot help it. The mind and the spirit have no language of their own; all language is borrowed from the senses.

We find in the Quran very significant statements about the nature and mode of punishment. It is said in various places that with God good and evil are very exactly weighed but God is not quick to punish. It is stated that if He were quick in requiting evil with evil, no living being would be left on the earth. In a number of places whenever it is stated that if He were quick in requiting evil with evil, no living being would be left on the earth. In a number of places whenever it is stated that God punishes severely, it is uttered in the same breath that He is very merciful and beneficent. On the face of it, it looks like a contradictory statement but if we ponder a little we can understand that it means only this that punishment is reformatory and the Loving God punishes out of love.

Chapter VII

DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE AND DIVINE GOODNESS

If we want to put in a nutshell what Islamic Theism means by God, we could say, it is Omnipotence combined with Goodness. Mere Creative Energy and 'Elan Vital would not make God; the Creative Energy must be consciously and purposefully directed towards Goodness. The Blind Will of Schopenhauer, creating fitfully without rhyme or reason, is the opposite of Theism. Empirically we see order in the universe but it may be a mechanical order, a product of the laws of mass and energy having no consciousness and no aim. Our unreflective experience presents great difficulties in the way of belief in God because of certain flaws in our concepts of Omnipotence and Goodness.

Let us try to understand what we can rationally mean by Omnipotence. It means God is All-Powerfull; He can do what He likes or wills; no power external to Himself can stand in His way. If such a Power exists whose essential attribute is Goodness, the problem of evil at once stares us in the face. There is cosmic evil as well as moral evil which has to be explained. In Nature we see construction as well as destruction; there is life as well as death and decay; human life too is full of moral as well as physical evil. If God is Omnipotent and Good why is evil in any shape allowed to exist? It is argued. "If God were

good He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy and if God were Almighty He would be able to do what He wished. But the creatures are not happy, therefore God lacks either goodness or power or both." The answer to this problem can be found only in a correct analysis of the idea of Omnipotence. The Quran asserts that God has the power to do whatever He wills or pleases; there is nothing to counteract His Will. Whenever He wishes to create anything "He only says to it, Be and it is" (3-46). But the Quran also says that this Will is subject to its own laws; it is a rational Will. This imposes limits on omnipotence which are self-imposed by the nature of the Creator and by the necessities of creation. "And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, but We do not send it down, but in a known measure" (15-21). He acts according to prescribed uniformities. Without laws and uniformities there would neither be Nature nor Life. But the laws impose no limitations on the omnipotence of God; they are themselves expressions of rational power. There are possibilities and impossibilities inherent in the nature of thought as well as of things. A thing cannot be and not be at the same time; contradictory qualities cannot exist simultaneously in the same aspect of a thing at the same time. If Number is one of the expressions of Gods rationality, even God cannot make two and two five. It is true that everything is possible with God but thinghood denotes a possibility; an inherent contradiction is not a thing, therefore it is not possible even with God. If omnipotence means capacity to work without any laws or to make laws and violate them arbitrarily, Islam

repudiates the idea of such an omnipotence. Nature is a system of uniformities and Reason has its own possibilities and impossibilities. The God of Nature and Reason is not a blind or an arbitrary will. God creates that He wills but His will is purposeful and whatever He creates exhibits a rationale; creation is the objectification of His will. Contrary cannot be brought into being by omnipotence. There may be happenings that are not easily understood by known laws, but there may also be one type of causation modifying the effects of another type of causation. This is the view that we must take of happening called miracles. They are not the results of a violation of the laws of causation in general, but modifications of effects by the working of another system of laws. Working according to laws is the essence of rationality and if rationality is good we cannot object to the implacability and inexorableness of the laws of Nature. If a saint or a Prophet is sitting under a crumbling roof or wall, it might fall on his head, the laws of gravitation paying no heed to his piety, and a sinner knowing the structure to be dangerous may save himself by keeping away from it. Superficial religiosity would say that God should have saved the saint and let the sinner be crushed. This means that God Who created a system of nature should disregard and violate its working in the interest of individuals in their manifold situations. In that case Nature would cease to be Nature; it would be reduced to a chaos of arbitrary will, Who would consider such a God to be omnipotent and good or rational who could either not create a system or having created it would interfere with it at every step to suit the

conveniences or whims of His innumerable creatures? Rationality means a system. An Omnipotent Being who is also rational can will only rationally. If he repudiates his rationality by his arbitrariness he ceases to be a good and rational Creator which is the Islamic conception of God. The Quran says that in Nature there is no flaw or evil. It is only our desires and conveniences that attribute good or evil to the happenings of Nature. Nature is a system of changes according to laws. Life and death are relative terms; they only denote changes in the forms of being; God incessantly brings life out of death and death out of life and the whole process conserves the fit and does away with the unfit. It is dominated by the preservation of values and the survival of the fittest. These variations are not chaotic and unplanned. Life proceeds from weakness to strength and after having developed to a definite measure it descends to weakness again; there are ascending and descending curves of development and decay but during all these changes nothing essential is irretrievably lost because the whole is planned and directed by a knowing God. The ignorant unbeliever says, if God is almighty and good, death and decay should not exist, but the Quran points towards these phenomena as a proof for the existence of a knowing and good Creator. "Allah is He who created you from a state of weakness, then He gave strength after weakness, then ordained weakness and hoary hair after strength; and He is the knowing, the powerful" (30-54). After defining the phenomena of the rise and fall of life, to mention the two attributes of God, knowledge and power, is very significant. It means that the whole process is

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consciously planned and serves a definite purpose which could not be contrary to knowledge and power. "Do you not see that Allah sends down water from the clouds, then makes it go along in the earth in springs, then brings forth therewith herbage of various sorts, then it withers so that you see it becoming yellow, then He makes it a thing crushed and broken into pieces? Most surely there is a reminder in this for the men of understanding" (39-21). "We created everything, then ordained for it a measure" (25-2). "Our Lord is He who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal)" (20-50).

So we see it is omnipotence which works according to a plan. The power to do everything does not include power to contradict its own nature. As this omnipotence is rational it works for goodness because the Rational includes the Good as we find in the Platonic philosophy. The Real is the Rational and the Rational is the Good. "And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create both of them but with the truth, but most of them do not know" (25-38, 39). Islam believes in rational omnipotence and rules out the idea of any Will or Power which is blind or arbitrary. Omnipotence of this type must necessarily be good; from such a point of view there could be no flaw in Nature. The working of Nature is flawless; it is only our ignorance which sees change where it cannot discern the law and calls that evil, which does not suit its transient desire or convenience. "Who created the seven heavens alike; you see no incongruity

in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again, can you see any disorder" (67:2). The Quran asserts that there is no natural or cosmic evil; Nature is not a battlefield of Aharman and Yazdan. The whole process is planned by an almighty and knowing power; it is good and tends towards goodness; death and decay are phases in the process of the fulfillment of a plan; only that is dispensed with which ceases to have value. God retains His Omnipotence by promulgating laws and observing them. Islam denies the existence of cosmic evil; the problem arises out of ignorance or the narrowness of vision; real insight into the working of Nature would find no fault with it. So the question that if God is Omnipotent why does He allow evil to exist in nature, is answered by the Quran by the denial of evil in nature. Nature works according to universal laws which are no respecter of persons. These laws are rational and work for good. If sometimes their working does not suit our personal convenience we call it evil. The problem of evil in nature is not raised by nature itself but by importing our narrow anthropomorphism and anthro-popathism into Nature. Our narrow human relativity and our human passions create a problem which is not raised by any contradiction in the nature of things themselves. Nature in general is a system of uniformities and nobody can deny that these uniformities called the laws of Nature exist. But these uniformities cannot always work according to our desires or according to our limited and contradictory wishes. The best attitude towards Nature is the understanding of its workings and resignation to whatever it brings forth. The scientist has no quarrel with Nature; he brings only

loving understanding to meet it and is resigned to its workings. His only value judgments is Truth. This was the attitude of Stoics to Nature which they identified with cosmic Reason or God. As Marcus Aurelius said, "What is good for thee is good for me, O Universe." The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said, "Don't vilify the Dahr (Universe, Existence, Time) because God says, 'I am Dahr'." Islamic Theism does not identify God with Nature; God is immanent in it by His Sustaining Power and Knowledge but He also transcends it as the artist transcends his work of art though he is also immanent in it because it is the objectification of his own creative will. If God is good then Nature too is good; only goodness can come out of goodness. In order to develop this attitude towards Nature we have to broaden our conception of goodness to cosmic dimensions; it is only then that Nature will appear to be flawless. Any fragmentary stand-point would discover only blots and patches. The cosmic picture must be viewed by a comprehensive vision approaching the Divine view of it. It is the faith of Science that nature is subject to the law of causation, and where we do not yet detect the law, it is due to our lack of knowledge; a wider knowledge would reveal the working of law. Islamic Theism demands no greater faith so far as Nature is concerned. Where we do not yet understand we have not to vilify Nature but to pray for more light and more light is granted in firmness of faith.

A number of Darwinian Evolutionists presented the picture of Nature as red in tooth and claw and as a ruthless struggle for survival. But the other side of their

hypothesis was that Nature produces more and more fitness and the survival of the fit is the developing force in Nature. Life is a movement from lesser to greater fitness; but, is any construction possible without some kind of destruction? Transformation means passing away of one state and coming into being of another state. Those who want that a good God should have maintained and developed life without decay and death are demanding an impossibility. You cannot eat your cake & have it. Childhood may be sweet but in advancing towards youth it has to give way. In all its development there seems to be an element of ruthlessness but this ruthlessness is only apparent; the real thing is the developing of life-urge. The Darwinian Evolutionist says that Evolution disproves the existence of a good God but Islamic Theism considers the survival of the fit as a strong proof of the existence of a good God. There are many verses in the Quran enunciating clearly this essential feature of Nature that it makes the fit survive and removes the unfit that is thrown up in the process of becoming. "He sends down water from the clouds, then water courses flow (with water), according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam, and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of making ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does Allah compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it tarries in the earth" (13-17). God the Fosterer does not bring into being things this which stay put in one state; life is a development from stage to stage; the lesser has to be replaced by the

greater and the lower by the higher. The law of decay and death is another name of the law of change and development. Man starts life with material elements and then develops from stage to stage until he is gifted with senses and reason. "This is the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Merciful, who made good everything that He has created, and He began the creation of man from dust, and breathed into him of His spirit, and made for you then He made his progeny of an extract of water held in right estimation. Then He made him complete the ears and the eyes and hearts, little is it that you give thanks" (32-6,8,89). We see in this verse that Power is joined with Mercy, and Omnipotence with Goodness, in the process of creation and development. If the materialistic evolutionist asserts that life started with matter first manifesting itself in mud, the Quran, in a way, corroborates him but corrects him by saying that matter by itself is not the creator; it is itself created and is a phase in evolutionary creation. The Quran says about the heavens that they were in an early stage only a confused mass and later developed into distinct bodies and life became possible only with water. The heavens were originally only a nebular vapour, an incandescent smoke. While looking at Nature and its course of evolution you may either emphasise the aspect of destruction or of construction. That Nature has always been busy with construction nobody can doubt about it, but construction always entailed destruction too; you cannot have the one without the other. But the survival of fitness and the stability of the well-adjusted is a pointer towards goodness which is the original and primeval

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creative urge. Islamic Theism upholds the law of development and enunciates the principle that the useless is taken away and the useful survives. Far from being a denial of God it is a strong proof of the existence of a Creator who is good. The so-called evil of Nature and its ruthlessness is the destruction of the unfit which is necessary for the advancement of life.

The question why there is evil in life becomes really tantamount to asking why there is life at all. Life is inconceivable without change and without change and without resistance to be overcome. Struggle results from the overcoming of obstacles. If a flying bird were to resent the resistance of air which it has to overcome with great effort in order to fly, it does not know that it is the resistance of air which makes flight possible. Resistance is created by Nature as a correlate with wings designed to overcome it. The goodness of God is manifested in the creation of both. What we call good and evil are the concave and convex sides of the same surface; you cannot have the one without the other.

THE MORAL EVIL

Having disposed of the question of evil in nature we come now to the evil in human life. By evil we mean pain and suffering and the destruction of values. For Nature only the Creator is responsible and we have seen that He cannot be blamed for what he has created or for the methods He uses for its maintenance and development. In Nature whatever is, is right because other alternatives are not conceivable; nobody can

suggest or imagine any improvement on the laws of Nature.

But when we reach Man the problem is lifted to another level because here human will supervenes on the working of Nature. Evil, as conceived and felt by man is of two kinds: (1) The suffering caused by his own acts; (2) The suffering caused by those happenings for which he could not be held responsible and which are out of his control.

Man is endowed with a free-will. If he were merely a part of Nature which is determined by fixed laws he would not be different from matter and plants. This mysterious gift makes him different from the rest of creation and also makes him potentially the lord of it. How undetermined free-will emerges from deterministic Nature ruled by Necessity is not understandable by any scientific hypothesis. But it is such an undeniable fact that the very act of denying it asserts it, because the denier feels that he is not compelled to. Entire human life is based on the assumption of denying it but is denying it freely, free-will?

Our sense of moral obligation, our approbation and disapprobation of our own acts or the actions of others, our systems of law, our sanction, our rewards and punishments are all based on this postulate of free-will. If we were the children of physical Nature only, free-will would neither be possible nor intelligible. It is by free-will that we transcend Nature and step into the Realm of Ends which is the Realm of the Spirit. God is free and when He made us in His own Image and breathed His

own Spirit into us as the Quran teaches, He made us also free. But freedom is a double-edged weapon; it means the capacity of following either the right or the wrong path. The distinctive feature or aim is that he can revolt even against His Creator. The first exercise of man's free-will against God is what is theologically described as the Fall of Adam. His life as a human being really begins with that Fall which was symptomatic of his exercise of free-will. If the granting of freedom to man is an act of a Loving Fosterer, then any evil that may result from it cannot be attributed to lack of goodness in the Creator. We could be perfectly good as automatons and move in our prescribed orbits with the precision and regularity of the planets or glorify the Lord like the angels who cannot disobey Him, but with his free-will man can rise above the angels or sink below the animals. If he chooses to sink below the animals, he suffers the consequences and God could not be held responsible for his suffering. The Quranic attitude towards human suffering has two sides. There are sufferings that man brings on himself by willful violation of the laws of well-being. Attaching suffering to wrong-doing proves the rationality and goodness of God. But what about underserved suffering? Most highly moral and spiritual men suffer at the hands of vicious men as well as at the hands of Nature. The Theistic view about this kind of suffering is that souls can be purified and exalted only in the school of adversity and suffering. It brings out the noblest qualities of man and tests his character. Character can be built only by the overcoming of resistance. A noble soul may suffer either as a result of some wrong done by others or as a result of the workings

of Nature. In all cases the right attitude towards life would purify and strengthen a man's character. Our idea of the nobility of the soul is connected with sufferings of both kinds. Against underserved suffering man can bring his qualities of patience and fortitude. If he proves his worth thereby, this undeserved suffering cannot be called an unmixed evil; it becomes an instrument of positive good. If God had attached pleasure to virtue and pain to vice in all cases, the human soul could not rise to the heights of nobility for which it is destined. If the wages of virtue were always paid in cash in terms of physical pleasure and the wages of sin always paid readily in physical pain, virtue would be reduced to a calculable hedonistic bargaining. If the accumulation of pleasures is not the sole aim of life then suffering of both types is a potential good. The immoralities and cruelties of humanity are there to be resisted and overcome so that we may rise higher than merely natural beings. As Longfellow has aptly put in his Psalm of Life:

"Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way
But to act that each to-morrow
Finds us farther than to-day."

The Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H) was asked who among men suffer the most, and he replied that the prophets suffer the most. Now, how is it that these prophets who suffer the most still retain the strongest faith in the goodness of God? An unbelieving man when he suffers in any way that he considers as underserved

brings a charge of irrationality against life; and a man of little faith has his faith shaken either in the omnipotence or the goodness of God. Belief in the twofold purpose of suffering as punishment for the violation of law or as something to be combated with patience and fortitude and with the utmost striving to remove it by rightly directed effort, removes the suspicion from the mind that either there is no good God or if He exists He has no power over evil. This was the kind of rickety faith that J. S. Mill acquired by a faulty knowledge of life and a narrow logic. He said there is evidence of the existence of a God who is good and strives for goodness but He is not omnipotent or powerful enough to remove all evil.

Chapter VIII

ISLAMIC VIEW OF RELIGION

What is the meaning of religion according to Islam? The answer to this question is facilitated for us by the word Islam itself. Islam means peace as well as submission. The purpose of life is to live it well; in other words, well-being. In the call to prescribed prayers at given times during the day and the night the muezzin cries: "Come towards prayers; come towards well-being." The purpose of life is life itself lived in a manner that is progressively purified, edified, harmonised, enriched, strengthened and elevated. As Longfellow has beautifully put it, the purpose of life is not enjoyment or suffering but is to so live it that each tomorrow finds us further than to-day; self-betterment is the essential aim. Life is full of conflicts within and without; in every phase of it, it is a battle-field. The struggle of good against evil or of the better against the good is an essential and inevitable fact of human existence in a much larger measure than it is of the creation below him. Life in its phenomenal setting offers harmonies as well as disharmonies and the purpose of human existence and the object of all moral struggle is to overcome disharmonies either to mend or to end them. The craving for peace is inherent in human nature; hence every being naturally craves for Islam or peace. Peace, well-being and happiness are three different names of the same state.

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The second meaning of the word Islam, i.e., self surrender, is closely connected with its first meaning; it defines the attitude that has peace as its fruit. Now the question arises if we are asked to submit, to whom is this submission due? Islam says it is submission to God and then it defines God to Whom we have to submit. If the conception of God is narrow or false then the attitude of submission far from leading to well-being would make life narrow and perverted. Every worshipper assumes the complexion of the object of his worship. The God we are asked to submit to is Wise, Rational and Good and His chief trait is Love and Mercy. The submission to such a God implies, in attitude and in action, regulation of our lives. God according to Islam, is not a dogma but an ideal and a regulative force of life. God is the guarantee of our highest values. When the Quran says that God created man so that he may worship Him—worship in its essential significance means no verbal praise and begging for benefits but living in accordance with the will of God. Every right action is an act of worship. When we are true to ourselves and good to our families and to our neighbours, our life is worshipful because in fulfilling the ideals of our own nature we are submitting to the Will of God as manifested in our own natures. If God is Truth, the pursuit of all truth is an act of submission to God and hence an act of worship.

The attainment of peace or well-being necessitates, firstly, creation of harmony within our own selves. Man is endowed with a number of instincts and emotions which are the raw material of life and its driving

forces. They are not evil in themselves because a Good God does not create evil. The Quran asserts that nothing has been created in vain. Human instincts therefore are not to be identified with the Devil. Man is not created in original sin inherited from his progenitor, Adam. He is born with the raw material of life and a free-will and God shows him the alternatives of action. His free-will becomes sinful and devilish when an instinct in him becomes selfish and aggressive. All aggression is transgression of the limits prescribed by Reason which is the distinctive human faculty granted to man so that he may make his instincts work in subordination to it. Reason in man is the Voice of God and submission to Reason is submission to God. The only way to achieve internal peace, therefore, is by an act of submission. Only when the instincts submit to Reason do we achieve peace. Only life of Reason and Virtue can secure us the peace and happiness which is an intrinsic craving of our nature.

The man who thus becomes at peace with himself becomes at peace with his neighbours also, as Shakespear has put it: "To thine own self be true and it shall follow as the night the day that thou canst not be false to any one else." Only the man whose life is guided by Reason and Virtue is true to his real self. By submitting his desires to the authority of Reason he has not submitted himself to any external authority but to his own higher self; and his higher self is Divine as the Quran says, God created Adam and then breathed into him His Spirit. Submission to God, therefore, according to Islam is

not submission to any external authority but to our own natures in which God has constituted us. The laws of virtue, called in the Quran "the limits prescribed by God," are the laws for our own well-being. "Whoever does good, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is against it" (41:46). By the violation of a law, the law or the legislator does not suffer; it is the violator who incurs the penalty of violation. Christian theology presented the doctrines of original sin, vicarious punishment and a suffering God and joined on to it atonement by Christ as a remedy. The Quran emphatically repudiates all these dogmas and doctrines as being irrational and opposed to the fundamental moral order on the one hand and as being derogatory to God and man and to Christ himself on the other hand.

Man is so constituted that he must crave and strive for peace and he also desires to be free. Obedience to an ideal only can make man free. The wrong-doer believes that he is free to break a natural law and fancies that he has asserted his freedom when he has broken a law. But he fails to understand that in breaking the law he has really broken himself. Virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment. As Emerson has put it, "the thief steals only from himself." Religion then, according to Islam, is nothing more than this that a man should actively and effectively believe in God as the Creator of a rational and moral order in the universe and in human life and as the origin and promulgator of laws which are the laws of the preservation of values and the maintenance and enrichment of well-being. It is his duty

to discover this God within himself and within the universe in general. Islam believes that such a God truly exists and can be discovered by observation and by Reason both theoretical and practical. We benefit by Nature by understanding and submitting to its laws. If we understand our moral and social nature we shall also discover laws therein, submission to which will guarantee well-being for us. It is only in this sense that Islam means submission.

One might say that the scientist discovers the laws of Nature without reference to God. So one might assert about the moral order and the laws of human well-being that morality too is possible without any direct reference to belief in God. Don't we know scientists who are atheists and even moralists who are atheists? Islam would reply that they too are seeking God and following the laws of God without knowing it. It is a proof of truth and reality that they assert themselves even when you do not acknowledge their existence. If a man believes in the efficiency of virtue, for the attainment of harmony and peace and development, to that extent he surely is living in truth. He is submitting to God without knowing it. If the scientist proceeds on the postulate that the universe is governed by law and reason and not by chaos and chance, he too has glimpsed the unity of God in His creation. His act of scientific research is an act of submission to God according to Islam, because it is repeated in a hundred places in the Quran that the wise and good people are those who ponder over the rationality of creation. From the study of Nature to belief

in God there is only one step and Islam says that no man's search is complete until he has reached God. Morality and all human values get a cosmic support in the Theism of Islam. All truths pushed to their legitimate ends lead to God ultimately. Belief in God makes life real and earnest and gives it a secure foothold. If a man believes in truth and beauty and goodness but does not believe in their objective and eternal reality his belief and his life accordingly shall have no firm basis. Man in the search for truth is really searching for God and the man striving for internal and external harmony is seeking for that peace which is the goal of all true religion. The only true religion therefore is the belief in omniscient and omnipotent goodness or belief in the conservation of values. The end is the ultimate attainment of harmony by living in tune with the universe and with the Being whose manifestation the universe is. Understanding the laws of God and submitting to them, thereby regulating, harmonising and elevating life, is the goal of life and all true and healthy religion. No other religion is true. Wherever this is found, God's truth and God's peace are there. Therefore the Quran says whoever believes in God and directs his whole personality in submission to Him has attained the truth. "Such are the people who are free from fear and grief."

Religious life is the life of surrender; the surrender of the less real to the more real, of personal desires to impersonal Reason, of the valueless to the valuable, of the temporal to the eternal, and of the particular to the universal. Belief in God is the comprehension of the

Eternal and an all true knowledge has a reference, direct or indirect, to action, all life will be guided and transformed by it. All knowledge is potential power and real knowledge of the Rational and the Good must mould life according to Reason and Love enlightened by Reason. Surrender in this sense is the only means of the preservation and enhancement of life. Islam means only this belief and attitude; all else will follow from it. Whatever runs counter to it debases existence and annihilates it. Belief in God, therefore, is not a speculative guess or a mere hypothesis nor could it be called a dogma. It is a question of life and death. Believe and live or disbelieve and perish. The Quranic rage against polytheism or the worshipping of any other being or beings besides God is not the fight of one dogmatic creed against another or the preference of one metaphysical theory to another. The pursuit of truth or beauty or goodness is a pursuit of ultimately valid and super-personal realities which are all essentially one.

When giving the fundamentals of Faith, the Quran often couples with it the doing of good deeds. It means that the mere profession of Faith in words or a vague intellectual apprehension is not enough. To use an old Greek distinction between knowledge and opinion, Faith not resulting in good deeds would be mere opinion incapable of becoming a driving force in action. In the Quran we find a distinction created between a Muslim and a Momin. Muslim is one who has become a member of the Muslim Brotherhood by professing the tenets of Islam and obeying its laws and conventions. Faith or

belief is something more than this; it enters the heart and begins to mould life from within. External observance without internal conviction is of little value. Making belief in God is the core of religion, Islam amplifies it by attaching to it some corollaries which must follow from it. If these corollaries cannot be derived from this basic Belief then there is something deficient in the Belief itself.

According to the Quran the essential derivatives from Belief in God are the following:

(1) If a God exists He must be nearer to us than anything else including our own selves. This nearness must become a matter of direct intuition and experience. It follows from this that prayer is a genuine and effective approach to Him. It is realisation of this nearness which is meant by the Quran promising the vision of God as a reward of leading a pure life. Realisation of contact with God must elevate us and cure all our ills because He is the Source of Light and Life, which must flow into the soul of man which has opened its doors for receiving it. Prayer at its highest is the remembrance of God, which means fixing our gaze at the ideal of life and its highest values. The relation of God with man is not one-sided; it is a reciprocal relation. The call is heard and responded, though the mode of hearing and response may not be intelligible to us. All genuine prayer is not for material or individual benefits or for the fulfillment of our lower desires but for guidance to the right path; it is an aspiration for more Light. Those who believe in God must, therefore, believe in prayer because a non-

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responding Impersonal Absolute is a product of metaphysics and has no place in religious life.

(2) Although the whole creation is full of the messages of God which in the Quranic terminology are called the 'Signs' of God and although Reason in its purity is also a great guide, the Quran points out another mode of Divine Guidance which is called Revelation granted to specially exalted souls. As Reason supplements the senses, so Revelation supports as well as supplements Reason. Reason understands but the man to whom Revelation is granted directly perceives higher realities and the Unseen becomes for him a matter of perception by faculties which are more developed in him than in others. As we have geniuses in all arts and sciences and all genuine advance is due to their special intuitions and perceptions so there are spiritual geniuses whose powers tower much above the common multitude. If God exists and Guidance is one of His essential traits, then He must create some gifted beings who should serve as guides towards Him. Spiritual life is improved and elevated more by example than by precept; humanity therefore stands in dire need of spiritual exemplars. Such spiritual exemplars are called the prophets. Belief in the prophets therefore follows as a corollary from belief in a Good and Guiding God.

(3) With the belief in prophethood the Quran joins a belief in the unity of prophethood and the unity of religion. The Quran says that prophets have been raised among all peoples and the fundamental message of all the prophets was one, that people should believe in an

omnipotent good God as the Creator and the Sustainer and be themselves good and just. He is the real Master they should acknowledge Him as the Supreme Lord and worship no other being. The Quran has repeated in brief the histories of a number of prophets, all of them delivering the same message. All great religions preach the same basic truths. The difference in the teachings of different prophets is a difference of rules and laws and customs due to different times and varying circumstances. The spirit and essence of Revelation have been the same although the body and the garb has been changing. Belief in the Prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) includes belief in all the prophets upon whose revelations the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) set His seal. He sifted the essential from the inessential; he revered all the scriptures in so far as they had preserved the teaching of the Unity of God and justice towards men; he refused to accept as genuine anything that ran counter to this belief or was derogatory to God or man.

(4) In the realms of the Unseen are beings that serve the purpose of God; they are called angels. The exact nature of the angels and their mode of work can never become for the common man a matter of direct experience. The prophets and the saints see and feel that such agents are at work. All Nature works through agencies that fulfil the purposes of the Lord. We see in Nature innumerable agencies at work but, as we said in the beginning, it is an essential postulate of Islam that life as seen and experienced is not the whole of life; the Unseen exists and is much greater than the Seen. What

wonder, therefore, if there are invisible beings both good and bad, that work for good or evil. The agents for good are called the angels. In the prophetic experiences they are so much in evidence that the conviction about their reality and their functions becomes an integral part of such experiences.

(5) Belief in life after death also follows from belief in a creating and preserving God. Human life would be a mockery if it started with the body and ended with it. If the human ego were transitory and evanescent all its values would end in dust and smoke. If self-preservation is the law of all existence and Nature shows such astounding and mysterious ways of preserving itself in all its changes from phase to phase and if the essential elements of nature abide in spite of incessant phenomenal mutability, the essentials of the human ego too must abide. It must somehow continue to preserve its identity in all its developments and retrogressions. All life evolves and nothing essential is destroyed. As we have already stated, belief in the conservation of values is the essence of all religious belief. The most valuable entity we know of is the human ego. The life of the human ego is a drama of the struggle of good and evil. Whatever it thinks or feels, or does modifies its life either for the better or for the worse. As the Quran says, every good and every evil done by man is minutely calculated and exactly weighed. The balance of the Spirit is a very sensitive balance. The constant changes in the soul are the automatic effects of the lives that we live. Islam says that the life of the ego will continue even after the dissolution of the body and

the ego will carry with it in other planes of existence the cumulative effects of all that it has lived. The law of rewards and punishments works constantly even in this life though it may not always be obvious. In the life after death these effects will become more patent, perhaps because the removal of the gross physical envelopment would make the soul's vision clearer. Belief in life after death, belief in the moral order and the law of recompense or retribution follow one from the other. If a preserving God exists, life must be preserved to evolve into better and better existence, until all evil is eliminated and the soul's voluntary surrender becomes its natural state. The prophet (P.B.U.H) (P.B.U.H) said that ultimately hell would be empty.

We see, thus, that although the Quran gives as essential religious belief, the belief in one Good God only, the other articles of Faith which it joins on to it follow logically from this belief. If a Good God who is a Rabb exists, then the moral order too must be real. If the moral order is real, good and evil must produce their effects which we call reward and punishment. Moral order would not be real if life is destroyed with the body. So there must be resurrection and a Hereafter. There must be God's agencies for the good called angels who are invisible for our normal physical senses but whose working becomes a matter of experience and perception to those gifted with superior spiritual vision. God must create exemplars called prophets who should lead mankind to Him by precept as well as example. There should be no fundamental inconsistency in the teachings

of these prophets because they are all inspired by the same God who wants to impart to humanity the same fundamental truths. This gift must be granted to the whole of humanity. All great religions, therefore, must be fundamentally and essentially true. That in which they differ is either contingent and circumstantial or interpolatory. These are the essentials of all true religion and these are the essentials of Islam. The fundamental and true element in all religions preached by all the prophets is called Islam. If God exists then there could be no other true religion except this. This is the broadest and the most catholic Faith; there is nothing sectarian or parochial about it. Although The prophet (P.B.U.H) brought into being a community with a prescribed discipline and regulated its life according to the principles of justice, he never considered those God fearing and good men who had somehow not entered the fold of the Faithful as deprived of salvation. Such a narrowing of God's Grace never entered His mind. The Jewish community bitterly opposed Him and left no stone unturned to nip Islam in the bud; they intrigued with the polytheists and contrived even to kill Him. They had to be fought against with vigour and their power finally smashed to make incipient Islam safe but The prophet (P.B.U.H) never ceased praising Moses and glorifying the Jewish Scriptures as Light and Guidance. Good and believing men among the Jews receive their due meed of praise with an open heart. Similar is the attitude of Islam towards Christ and the Christians. Islam has the highest praise for Christ and it makes an attempt to remove from his name everything falsely attributed to him.

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considering the doctrine of sonship, original sin and atonement as theological perversions and accretions. It considers Christ as one of the purest of souls and one of the greatest of prophets. Belief in the prophethood of Christ is an essential article of Faith with every Muslim. True Christians also receive a sincere appreciation for their honesty and mercy and their love of God and devotion to Him, although monkish asceticism is discountenanced as a way of life or a correct approach to God. Although Islamic corollaries of Faith, the discipline established by it and its enactments are recommended as a completely satisfying way of life, yet those who stand outside this scheme and follow other forms and regulations are not excluded from salvation if they have in them the fundamentals of Faith. "Those who believe (or Muslims) and the Jews and the Christians and the Sabeans, whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good, they shall have their reward from the Lord and they shall be freed from fear and from grief" (2-62).

This is the clearest enunciation of the religion of humanity. In several places in the Quran, only belief in God and virtuous life is given as essential for salvation. But, as demonstrated above, sometimes necessary corollaries like belief in the moral order and Judgment are attached thereto. It is not the fundamentals of Faith but theologies, orthodoxies and emphasis on the secondary aspects of creeds that divide humanity into mutually hostile camps becoming a source of intolerance and persecution. The Quran says that so far as forms and conventions are concerned, different communities turn

towards different directions, but these are not the absolute essentials; the essential thing is the doing of good deeds. When the Muslims are enjoined to turn their faces to the Kaaba while offering ritual prayers they are explicitly reminded that this does not necessarily constitute righteousness. "God's is the East and God's is the West." "In whichsoever direction any one turns his face, there is the Presence of God." There is no doubt that Islam, as propounded and practised by the Prophet (P.B.U.H), is not merely a belief but a system of life with its own organisational forms and enactments. But there is no rigidity in this system; in many ways it is an open system with latitudes for adaptations to different circumstances and diverse needs. The Lord of the worlds knew that entire humanity would never follow any one system in all its details. It is repeated in the Quran that if God had willed He could have brought the whole of humanity within one religious fold but He has not so willed. Diversity in religious practices shall continue to the end of time. The nations and communities of the world are, all the same, invited to agree to certain fundamentals for universal peace and goodwill. "O followers of the Book! come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate with Him, and that some of us shall not take others for lords, besides Allah" (3-63). Islam no doubt has its own organisation for beliefs and practices which, with the passage of time, has hardened into a rigid orthodoxy but whoever keeps in mind the Quranic fundamentals of Faith can never allow himself to become narrow to the extent of denying the good in other

religions or denying salvation to those who, though following other conventions, still have in them the basis of all true religion: Belief in God and a Life of Virtue. This is the religion of humanity which can unite all nations. It is a religion without dogma and without mysteries. No superstitious beliefs and no law-breaking magical miracles are essential to support it. The way to all rational development is open; there is nothing in it which can ever conflict with the verified facts of science nor does it contain anything which would shock the moral conscience of mankind. Its principles are firm and stable; their application only can vary and must vary with changing and developing life.

The non-religious moralist asks, why should not morality, love of mankind or social justice be enough? Why join on to it the belief in God which is difficult to establish by reason and experience? To this Islam would reply that belief in God is true knowledge of Reality. Man is a reality-seeking being. If he is ignorant about the ultimate origins and ends of life, he is essentially blind. So far as Reality is concerned, such a man is living in the dark. Truth is Light and Life and Ignorance is Darkness and Death. Without firm faith in God man gets only flashes of truth. "The lightning almost takes away their sight, whenever it shines on them, they walk in it, and when it becomes dark to them, they stand still" (2-20). Morality gets its justifications and a firm hold on life only by the belief that love and justice belong to the Essence of Existence and Values are embedded in Reality. Without this belief our virtues too become a shadow-show and in

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the background remains the tragic sense that all is vanity and wishful thinking. Religion says that Truth and Virtue are not illusions based on wishful thinking nor are they merely pragmatic aids for biological existence or physical survival of the species. They are guarantees of survival but of a higher order. They are Eternal Verities.

Faith in the broadest sense includes all that is good in life. As the prophet (P.B.U.H) said, 'Faith has over sixty branches and modesty is a branch of Faith' (Bukh. 2:3). In another Hadith we find: Iman (Faith) has over seventy branches, 'the highest of which is the belief that nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah and the lowest of which is the removal from the way of that which might cause injury to any one. "One of you has no Faith unless he loves for his brother what he loves for himself" (Bukh. 2:7). Bukhari has collected a number of sayings of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) wherein Faith is simply defined as the doing of good deeds. When a man therefore, either by dint of his own nature or by training or by beneficial social influences, becomes just and virtuous he has in him a good part of the Faith.

Belief in Islam is not a simple assent to a dogma; all beliefs have reference to action. Truth is that which works and for Islam all belief which has no reference to action is spiritually valueless. Beliefs and ensuing actions form a co-ordinated whole. Good actions become a part of Faith and out of the numerous branches of Faith, good deeds by themselves, even devoid of any metaphysical background, form a very substantial portion of it. A man who professes Faith in God and the Belief has entered the

core of his being and he leads a virtuous life is a Momin or believer in the fullest sense. According to Islam he is a complete man because he combines right knowledge with right actions. But sometimes mere professions of Faith are divorced from good actions and similarly it happens sometimes that virtuous deeds in a man's life stand by themselves without a conscious and explicit belief in God. In both these cases religion or the well-being of man is incomplete. Faith is tested in deeds. If it is merely a verbal profession or based on hearsay or an opinion and has not yet entered the heart of man, it snaps at the testing time when a man is required to exercise control over himself or make sacrifices for the cause in which he professes to believe.

It appears from numerous verses in the Quran that it considers Faith without deeds as meaningless. Its thesis is that true Faith must issue in good deeds; if it does not issue in good deeds it is mere opinion or verbal profession. Truth leads towards good deeds and good deeds prepare a man for the reception of Truth. There are few places in the Quran where Faith is mentioned alone without coupling it with good deeds. "Those who believe and do good deeds" is an oft-repeated expression. Good deeds are the test of Faith and even standing by themselves, unenlightened yet by explicit knowledge, they have a value. The Quran talks of the weighing of deeds in the invisible, spiritual balance; it is good and evil that are weighed and not this or that belief. The chief aim is that there should be a preponderance of good deeds over wrong actions. The Belief in God confirms a man in

his virtue and is a deep-rooted support, but virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment. Wherever virtues is found, it is a part of Faith, professed or unprofessed in specific terms, and wherever evil is done, it emerges from a practical lack of Faith. Man is to be judged by what his practical attitudes towards life are, and not merely by what he professes to believe. Morality forms a large part of Faith in action, though it may not be enough and soul-satisfying without Faith in the Creator and Preserver of all Values.

PRAYER

Prayer follows logically from the concept of God as the Life and Light of the universe. Every one of us lives and moves and has his being in God; all that exists, exists through Him. If life is not a fortuitous concourse of atoms consisting only of stresses and strains of mass and energy mechanically formed and unformed by the laws of thermodynamics; it has a goal and a purpose which has its source in Reality, then the consciousness of that purpose is necessary, in order to mould life according to it. Man is part in order to mould life according to it. Man is part of a Whole and that Whole is God. If the Whole, as manifested in creation, is an organic whole, the relation of the whole to the part differs essentially from that of the parts to the whole in a piece of matter. A limb or an organ is alive fulfilling its function so long as it is in vital coordination with the life of an organism. As we have a physical organism, in which the parts are organically related to the whole, so we have a moral and spiritual

organism which is not so obvious and perceptible as the physical organism. The individual is organically related to human society; he derives his mental and moral life from this organism. An individual in his atomic and isolated individuality is an abstraction that has no concrete existence. The essential reality of the life of an individual is super-individual and super-personal. We are parts of several different types of wholes in the different aspects of our existence. We are, at the lowest parts of the material universe and it is our duty to understand the nature of this whole and adjust our material lives in subjection to its laws. Similarly we live on the biological plane and have to adjust ourselves to the laws of organic growth, nutrition and assimilation, in order to live healthy physical lives. The reward of biological wisdom is physical health, the feeling of vitality and the joy of life which ensues from it. Every organ of the body living in unison with the whole organism is engaged constantly in the perpetual give and take of life. Similar are the laws of the social organism. The Quran says that all human beings are the multiplication of one soul and it follows from this that all humanity is one social organism. Saadi the philosopher-poet has interpreted this Quranic teaching in these words, "Human beings form one body and individuals are limbs and organs of it; when one part suffers, its painful effects must necessarily be felt by all other parts". Realisation of the oneness of humanity is the highest point of morality and is a necessary condition for the well-being of man.

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Ascending higher up, we reach the idea of a Spiritual Organism whose life is Godliness. We are parts of the material universe, parts of the biological world, and parts of the social organism which ultimately embraces the whole of humanity, but in our innermost selves we are parts of that Spiritual Organism which we call God, who is the Life of this Organism. We as individuals derive our being and functions from Him. Every organ by living in tune with this Organism truly lives. Whenever there is anything wrong with any part of the body the life of the whole organism rushes to its aid.

Prayer refers to the life of the Spiritual Organism which supports and imparts its life to the individuals who endeavour to keep themselves in vital relation with the central creative urge. The branch which severs its connection with the tree begins to wither; so we, as spirits, begin to wither if we get disconnected from the Tree of Life which is God. Prayer is the realisation of our oneness with God; from this realisation we can derive real sustenance. God is a Cherisher and Nourisher but He can cherish or nourish us only if we keep our vital connection with Him. The party which realises its oneness with the whole participates in the life of the Whole. The results of this participation must become evident in every part of our being. Prayer is a mode in which the finite gets in touch with the Infinite. When we read in the Quran that God infused His own Spirit into us when He created us, it means only this that the soul of the Spiritual Organism, i.e., the Life of God established an intimate and vital relation with every individual human being.

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If we had led an unconscious existence, we could have existed in God as the embryo exists in the womb deriving its sustenance automatically, without any effort of will. But man is endowed with consciousness and free-will. He becomes sometimes unconscious of his origin and forgetful of the Source from which alone he could derive spiritual sustenance. In order to live vitally and completely and perform his functions properly, he has to realise his connection with the Universal Spirit. Therefrom he gets Light and life.

As religious ideas and religious attitudes vary from the lowest to the most exalted, so does the prayer of one man differ from the prayer of another. The Type of prayer depends ultimately on the idea of the God to whom one prays. There are savages and barbarous human tribes whose fears and hopes are personified and deified and the imagination creates gods with various natural powers and attributes. As the Quran says, "Have you seen him who takes his low desires for his god"? (25-43). At this stage prayer gives only a spurious psychological satisfaction. Among some tribes, if a god, after repeated entreaties and offerings, does not seem to respond and grant the objects prayed for, he is dragged down with a rope round its neck and publicly disgraced. Even after man has reached the idea of One Omnipotent and Omniscient God who hears and responds and is Beneficent, the man with an undeveloped spiritual attitude prays for minor material benefits and wants God to change the course of Nature for the transient and individual benefit of the worshipper. If God heard all such

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prayers, human life and existence in general would be reduced to utter chaos because personal human desires are neither consistent in themselves nor do they conform to the course of Nature on whose uniformities all life is based. The Muslim, therefore, is taught to pray, not for what he considers to be right and desirable for his own self, but for guidance on the right and straight path that leads to the goal of well-being. The straight path is further defined as the path trodden by those who have been blessed. The test of the rightness of the path is that it leads to the goal and the goal, as defined by the Quran, is the goal of well-being or blessedness here and hereafter. Though man is not prevented from praying for many other things about the rightness of which he is convinced, the prescribed prayer that he is asked to repeat many times during the day and the night, is only for guidance on the straight path. Who knows always with any certitude what is the right thing to pray for, because the value of human desires and purposes is very uncertain. The Quran says, "It may be that you dislike a thing, while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you" (2-216). As Rumi says, "God in His mercy does not hear the prayers which, if granted, would injure the man."

There are believers as well as unbelievers who argue about the futility of prayers. There are those who believe in God but say that God would not alter or modify the course of Nature in order to please an individual. All happenings are the results of natural causes, and the right way to attain an end is to have the knowledge of

causes which could produce the desired effects and to act according to that knowledge. This view, which is correct within certain limits, errs in its view of causation. We have already discussed the subject of causation earlier in this book. For every sphere and grade of existence the type of causation changes. It is a matter of our common experience that material causation is modified when life acts on matter, and vital causation is modified when mind acts upon physical life. Causation at a lower plane is sometimes subject to the causes that work on a higher plane. This action and interaction of lower and higher causation is also subject to definite and universal laws that cover the relations of all types on causation. Therefore there stands nothing in the way of prayer being effective, if supra-metnal powers could be brought into action by concentration on those powers and by seeking their aid to modify the working of something below, in the interest of the realisation of higher ideas which do not violate the causation below but make it serviceable for superior purposes. It would be futile to pray for the alteration of the course of Nature or a change of weather simply because it would suit some of our transitory purposes. But if general human welfare and the realisation of a great purpose is desired, then the powers above may be expected to respond if a genuine spiritual effort is made.

There is another class of religious men who think that an all-knowing, good God knows best as to what is good to bring about, therefore it is useless to remind Him or to persuade Him to do it. According to this view,

prayer is unwarranted presumptuousness on the part of man to inform God of something which is desired and then to persuade Him to do it. But this objection is based on a misconception of the Will of God and other wills human and superhuman. Where a being is endowed with freedom of the will it may be a rule of Destiny itself that certain effects are conditional on the exercise of free-will in a particular direction. Human and superhuman spheres of existence are not subject to mechanical automatism. All great religious souls agree in this conviction of Tennyson that more things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of.' Belief in the necessity and efficacy of prayer is an essential part of Islam. It is one of the pillars on which the entire superstructure of all religious life is built. Prayer, if rightly offered, is bound to result in the enhancement of power for the good. If the assistance of higher powers is to be enlisted, prayer should be motivated by higher interests. It should not be an expression of vain desires based on selfishness and ignorance. If one desists from making all legitimate efforts and asks God to do for him what he should have done himself, he should not expect God to be so obliging. A good God would not help him to increase his indolence and ignorance. Man has first to do the right and his best and then trust in God for the results.

All genuine prayer is for the improvement of one's spiritual condition and the spiritual condition of others, so that all may be lifted to the level of those whom God has blessed, and to avoid being dragged down to the condition of those whose spiritual degradation has drawn

upon themselves the inevitable retribution called the wrath of God. The essence of the right kind of prayer is given in the opening verses of the Quran in simple utterances which it is impossible to improve upon, and this is the chief prayer of the Muslims: "All praise is due to God, the Sustainer and Fosterer of the Worlds; the Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Requital. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path, the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not those on whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray." (1-1, 2,3,4). There is a sustainer and Fosterer of the world whose help is to be sought in order that our life may be sustained and fostered. In minor matters, in the daily intercourse of life, human beings serve each other and also seek and require each other's help. But in vital matters of spiritual life the help of God only can avail and direct service is to be offered to Him only. Prayer, at its highest, is a prayer for Light and Life, Light for guidance on the right path, and the goal is the blessedness of rightly guided and rightly lived life. We have to seek help from above that we may not go astray and miss the goal. In the call for prayers the caller cries, "Come towards Falah" which means the attainment of the summum bonum, intrinsic values. What is sought for is the complete unfolding of all the potentialities of the self, complete self-development or self-realisation. In the call to prayer, the exhortation to come to prayer is immediately followed by the reason for prayer which is given as Falah or the attainment of well-being. Prayer, therefore, is a great instrument for self-realisation. Without prayer one might attain to partial

well-being or gain some material or transitory benefits, but if the human spirit is not attuned to the contemplation of the Highest, the ultimate human destiny is not realised. In another place the Quran says, "Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers" (23-1,2).

God is the Soul of our soul and the Life of our life. We are not involuntary emanations from Him; we are organically related to Him. 'He is nearer to us than our own jugular artery.' He is the light of the heavens and the earth.' But light is of no avail without sight; if we do not open our eyes, there is darkness for us, even during the effulgence of the midday sun. Prayer is nothing but the opening of our mental eyes for the reception of the Light into our spirits. That Light is also Life. It is possible to guide our lives to some extent by the light of reason and by our own natural instincts, as it is possible to see within a narrow range by artificial light during the night, which is also ultimately derived from the sun. Man, when he prays, is turning towards the Sun of all suns, the Source of all Light and Life. He is connecting himself with a great Power-House whose currents will bestow untold power and energy. He will not walk gropingly but go straight ahead. Materialistic rationalists and atheists assert that the efficacy of prayer cannot be demonstrated. People pray for innumerable things and the percentage of cases in which life grants them the objects of their desire is small as compared to unanswered prayers. Therefore, the efficacy of prayer cannot be established statistically. It is a fact that spiritual truths cannot be completely

established logically or empirically. Apart from empirical proof, the will to believe is a potent factor in religious life. As we have already said, there are as many kinds of prayers as there are types of men. If men pray for the alteration of the weather and the weather takes its meteorological course, it only demonstrates the vainness of a particular type of prayer; or if people pray for individual gains and those gains are not secured, it again proves nothing about the efficacy of prayer at its best, when it is rightly diverted towards spiritual objects. No religion gives a guarantee that God will grant you whatever you ask of Him. Generally our desires are only ripples on the surface of life and they do not create any tides in the affairs of men. Islam says that we should pray to be guided on the right path and nobody can assert that a man who is sincerely desirous of being guided aright on the paths of virtue is not helped by concentrating the forces of his personality on the realisation of his desire. It might be said that the effects of prayer are psychological only; concentration on any desire would tend towards its realisation by the focussing of internal forces and the moulding of circumstances accordingly. The law is a non-moral law; it holds good about good as well as evil desires. The Quran takes note of this psychological fact also and asserts unequivocally that whoever craves for and strives for the goods of this world, he too shall secure his object; the soul gets what it strives for, but meeting success in material and physical pursuits only is really a failure in the attainment of the real object of life. The value of these goods is illusory and evanescent. Such a success often deprives a man of eternal values; the more

he succeeds in accumulating worldly power with injustice, the farther he deviates from the path of real well-being. So we see, that there are laws working also below the level to which genuine prayer refers. If a person investigates the laws of matter and thereby controls the forces of Nature, he shall surely meet with success whether he believes in God or not. An atheistic scientist believes in the laws of material Nature only, and when he works on the basis of that belief, his expectations are fulfilled and his belief is justified and rewarded. But the reward does not go any further than that. If he has neglected to study the laws of the moral order and has actually disbelieved in ideal values, he may do himself and humanity more harm than good by manipulating his knowledge for evil and destructive purposes.

Prayer is meant primarily to strengthen a person's moral behaviour and spiritual attitudes. The Quran therefore asserts the efficacy of prayer by saying that prayer, if rightly offered, would prevent a person from evil thoughts and evil deeds. In the help thus received there will work doubtlessly psychological factors too; but Islam says that supplemental factors too will lend additional strength. God is a power for the Good and therefore a person praying for goodness has an Eternal Force on his side. If the cause is real, then a person striving in His way must be helped. Some people have a wrong conception of prayer and consider it to be contrary to effort as if he who prays is a beggar and hence inferior to the man who strives instead of praying. This is a very incorrect and unjust view. All human actions originate in desire and

will; our acts are the objectifications of our volitions and our wishes. Prayer, as an exaltation of our desires and their purification, is a necessary step in the right action. Prayer does not dispense with action; on the contrary it is a mental and volitional preparation for right action. As Islam always enjoins good deeds with Faith so it always enjoins prayer along with the maximum of effort that a person can bring forth for the attainment of a good end. "And seek assistance through perseverance and prayer" (2-45, 46). In the Quran, the injunction to pray is often coupled with the doing of good to humanity. As good deeds are the true test of Faith, so the genuineness of prayer too is to be established by good deeds. "So woe be to the praying ones who are unmindful of their prayers and who do good only in order to be seen by others and who withhold alms" (107:4,7).

Prayer, according to Islam, has manifold objects. It establishes one's contact with the Unseen, the Infinite Power for Good which creates and sustains all existence; this is the object of prayer par excellence. This contact has a purifying effect on the heart: it moralises and spiritualises our emotions and instincts. As the Quran says, "Prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (force)" (24-45). Abu Huraira says that he heard the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) say, "If one of you has a stream at his door in which he washes himself five times a day, what do you think about his cleanliness? Would it leave any impurity on him?" The companions replied. It would leave no dirt on him. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) said, "This is

the example of the five prayers with which God washes away all the evils of a man." So frequently renovating and strengthening his contact with the Source of Being, a man purifies and strengthens himself. Contact with God strengthens his contact with goodness. Like everything else in Islam, prayer too is a dynamic reality and has a direct reference to action. It is not begging instead of striving; it is imploring the aid of a Real Power to strive in the right direction.

Spiritually developed people have always held that prayer is also a source of knowledge. When we talk of knowledge in the religious sense, it does not mean knowledge of the uniformities of material phenomena but knowledge of good and evil, knowledge of God or knowledge of Reality. A man who prays devoutly, stirs within himself all the conscious and subconscious forces; his confused thoughts about the right course in a situation get clarified and he gets light. Emerson was right when he said that no man ever prayed heartily without learning something, or when Luther said that to pray well is the better half of study. When we approach the Truth earnestly we are sure to get it reflected in our souls, by calming our emotions and suppressing our lower desires and by rising above the conflict of passions and Reason, in its objectivity and purity, is allowed to manifest itself. Prayer itself may be a passion but it is a supra-physical passion which suppresses and supplants all lower passions which make the human soul a perturbed stream, in which the stars of heaven cannot be

reflected. Prayer is a mode of rising above our petty selves.

Surah Fatihah, the prayer par excellence of the Muslims which gives the essence of the best prayers that could be offered, needs a closer analysis. It gives the quintessence of Islam and prayer at the same time. It is at once a creed, an attitude towards God and man and the world in general, and the best way of the realisation of freedom. It opens with praise to the Fosterer of the worlds. Why should God be praised? Does He relish being flattered by a devotee? Is He fond of encomiums like an absolute monarch? If any weakness of this nature could be attributed to God, He would sink lower than those virtuous human beings who do good for the sake of good and not for beings praised. The real significance of praising God is quite different. When we are praising God, we are really praising certain attributes whose appreciation would enlighten us and lift us in the scale of being. When we praise God for being the Fosterer of the worlds, its immediate effect on our lives would be that we too should try to be like Him in cherishing and fostering all the values of life. The aim of life is to fulfil and not to destroy anything that is real. When we call Him the Fosterer of all the worlds, we are declaring the unity of all existence which is united in God. Worlds do not exist apart as indifferent or hostile to one another. In certain religions and philosophies the world we despised as the embodiment of Evil; the lower world was a God-forsaken world. Matter was identified with Darkness and Flesh with the Devil. In ancient mythologies and cosmologies

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we find existence divided into a heavenly world and a sublunary world. The heavenly world was inhabited by gods or angels and the earth was a vale of woes and tears. The concept of God as Lord and Fosterer of all the worlds repudiates the distinction 'between God-favoured and God-despised parts of existence. Everything in existence is created with a purpose, and the purposes of entire existence are inter-connected. Man lives in more worlds than one; he is a microcosm in whom every aspect of the macrocosm is represented. He is matter, life, mind and spirit at the same time and the purpose of his existence is to go on subordinating the lower to the higher order, not by crushing or annihilating the lower but by understanding its nature and by making it subserve higher purposes. As God is the Cherisher and Fosterer of all the worlds, we too must try to cherish and foster every aspect of the world with which we have to deal. Matter is not to be despised nor is the body with all its natural instincts to be considered a hinderance to the development of the spirit. We live in a co-ordinating and co-operating universe which has received its unity and harmony. As all the other worlds have their unities, the world of humanity too is a unity. This unity too is to be fostered by the worshipper of the Lord of the worlds. Praising of this aspect of God means, therefore, keeping before our eyes, with understanding and appreciation, the chief purpose of life which is the fostering of all eternal and intrinsic values embodied in every plane of existence. The Quran does not conceive of any existence as dead and inanimate. It says that all that exists in the heavens and the earth praises and glorifies the Lord in a tongue

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which you do not understand. There is nothing like dead matter; everything lives and has its being in God.

After praising God as Rabb, as Fosterer of the Worlds, we praise Him for being Beneficent and Merciful. The words Rahman and Rahim, untranslatable by simple words in English, comprise of goodness, love, mercy, blessing and grace. If the word Love could convey all this meaning we might say that we are asked to praise God as Love. It is Love which creates Life and Light and Beauty; it is a Dynamic and Creative Urge. Love would cherish and not destroy anything that it has created. The Quran says that "My Mercy encompasses everything" (7-156). In another place it is said that "paradise is co-extensive with the heavens and the earth" (57:20). It is related in the life of The Prophet (P.B.U.H) that a messenger of Heraclius was sitting with The Prophet (P.B.U.H) when this verse of the Quran was recited about paradise being co-extensive with all existence. The messenger objected saying where is hell then? The Prophet (P.B.U.H) replied, "Where is the night when the day dawns?" Praying to Rahman and Rahim and praising Him for these qualities would engender in us the qualities of love and mercy. Thus does prayer become a creative force for good. Man would exercise himself to look at creation and at his fellow-beings from this angle of vision. If he looks for these qualities he would gradually begin to find them where their existence was not obvious before, and where he sees a lack of them he would strive to create them. Life is not only finding what is good but also creating what is good. Life and Love are not static but dynamic.

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Lest one should think that Divine Love, like human love, is a moral holiday which knows no law, we are reminded of the Lord Who is also the legislator and the Judge. In the human sphere most often love is lawless as law is loveless. But in the nature of God law and love are identified. The moral order is a creation of love. Divine Love is not egoistic; it does not foster itself but its objects. As the best parents are those who show their love to their children by disciplining them morally, attaching rewards and punishments to good and evil, in order to foster good behaviour so that the children may grow up to be more loving and more lovable, so Divine Love has instituted the moral order where good and evil produce their natural consequences. If bad actions were always forgiven, they would ultimately destroy the personality of the order. Some creeds boast of having replaced Law with Love; but it is a misconception of the natures of both. Law without love becomes a tyranny and love without law becomes blind and destructive. The law in the physical universe upholds it; without law there would be chaos. The Love of God manifests itself in material creation as Law, Order and Beauty, and in man it expresses itself primarily as a Moral Order. There is Law within and Law without, both authoritative and majestic. Kant was expressing a genuine sentiment when he observed that two things filled him with awe, the starry heavens above and the Moral Law within. We are therefore asked to keep in mind this attribute of God that He is the Lord of the Day of Requit. He has instituted the laws of Compensation and Retribution. The Quran says that good and evil are weighed minutely in the

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balance of life; they always produce their effects, however invisible and imperceptible they may be to an eye spiritually untrained. But God is not quick to punish in a manner which may signify revenge. The Quran says, "Were Allah to punish men for what they earn, there would not be left on the back of the earth any creature, but He respites them till an appointed term" (35-45). In the life of man the effects of evil are counteracted by the good that he does; there is no sin which can irretrievably attach itself to his soul. After having done wrong, the moment he sincerely turns to God and repents, showing his repentance in actually turning away from evil, he regains his disturbed equilibrium and starts afresh with the benefits of experience gained. We are asked to repeat the attributes of God as Love and Law so that knowing the nature of Reality we should make a synthesis of the two in our own lives. The test of the rightness of a law is that it is motivated by love. Love is intrinsic but law is instrumental. In ideal well being, there ought to be no clash between the two but if in a certain situation the two appear to clash then law is to give place to love which itself may be viewed as a higher law.

Chapter IX

WORSHIP AND SERVICE

Recognising God as the Promulgator of the moral order and the judge of good and evil, we are asked to synthesise the concepts of love and justice. According to the Quran the two concepts include each other. If God is a loving and just God then Him only must man serve, obey and worship. Sura Fatihah proceeds then with the words "Thee do we serve and There and do we beseech for help" (1-4). The word '*Ibadat*' in Arabic has a much wider significance than is conveyed by the word, service. It means whole-hearted obedience as well as worship. It means the total surrender of will to the will of another; hence the word '*Abd*' means a slave, whose life and will are at the disposal of his master. Islam which means total surrender to the will of God necessarily leads to that type of action and attitude which is denoted by the word '*Ibadat*'. In human relations we witness something approaching surrender either in the case of lovers or in the case of slaves. Human relation to God is ultimately indefinable and hence is expressed only in analogies. Lovers are in a different category from slaves but they love to call themselves the slaves of love because of self-abnegation demanded by love. What is demanded of us by God is voluntary and loving service. If God is our Ideal, we are asked to serve Him only. If the Ideal is the sum total of all the values of life then surely no man can rightly serve anything else. When we serve other things

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besides the Ideal we go astray and jeopardise our lives. When we serve our individual instincts without subordinating them to the Ideal we create chaos in our lives. If we serve money or power we are not true to our higher selves. When we serve other human beings out of fear or out of love for material gain we do injustice to ourselves and to others. When we superstitiously serve gods of our own making or the forces of Nature, being overawed by them, we are injuring the dignity of humanity. True freedom lies only in the service of the Ideal. The man who serves many ideas and diverse urges, mutually hostile and uncoordinated, disrupts the harmony of his being. Life cannot be lived completely unless all our ideas and urges are merged in a single all-embracing Ideal whose service should be completely satisfying by doing justice to all the aspects of our being. The tragedy of human life is that man is dominated by false fears and is tempted by illusory gains which draw him away from the Ideal. Exclusive service of God means identification with the will of God. Total surrender also means not the negation of our personality but its fulfillment; it is the only way of self-realisation. It means the conquest of life and happiness; we stoop to conquer.

In modern times we see a revolt against religion actuated by various ideas and motives. Nietzsche who preached the gospel of self-assertion and the superman, classified morality as master morality and slave morality and inveighed against Christ as the preacher of slave morality. Religions also he classified, as those that say yes to life and those that say no to life. His superman will

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be above the values of love and justice; he will repudiate humility and mercy as vices; he will revalue all the values preached and practised by the prophets and the saints. The superman will love power only and enhance it ruthlessly at all costs. He shall serve nobody except his own will; he will be a law unto himself. As Louix XIV said, "I am the State, he will say I am the Law, I am the Life; God is no man." If we search the teachings of Nietzsche for the revaluation of values we find only one value replacing all other values; that is Power-----Power for stronger biological living. When he says that the present man must be superseded by a new species he is contemplating not a superman but a super beast who is not guided by love or reason or justice but is urged onwards by a thirst for more physical fitness and power over his surroundings.

There are others who say that religion was born out of ignorance and fear, and man by his knowledge and effort must conquer both. They assert that religion concocted by the exploiters of humanity; man henceforth shall not serve any power except the dignity of his own humanity.

All such objections are nullified when we keep in mind the Islamic conception of God, and the service and worship that is due to Him. God is a Creative Being; He is a Life-force. Being Rabb, the Cherisher and Fosterer He is a God of Development, a Guarantee of the preservation of life and its values. When we are asked to serve God we are asked to serve and advance Reason and Justice in life. There is no commandment which is not in the

interest of our own advancement. According to Islam every act of rightful living is an act of worship. The entire creation is meant to worship God and does worship God voluntarily or involuntarily, consciously or unconsciously. According to the Quran even enjoying the good things of life, procured by rightful effort, is an act of worship. "Say: who has prohibited the embellishments of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?" (7:32). All working of Nature is worship and service. "Do you not see that Allahs is He whom obeys whoever is in the heavens and the earth, and the sun and the moon, and the stars and the mountains and the trees"? (12:18). The movement of the heavenly bodies in Nature's act of worship and all growth is the service of God. (Al-Rahman, 1). "The seven heavens declare His glory and the earth (too), and those who are in them: and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, except that you do not understand their glorification" (17:44). All creatures in the heavens and the earth are obedient to Him. We are asked then to serve and worship Him whom all Nature serves and obeys. According to Islam, then, obedience to the laws of our own nature is worship and service of God. We are not asked to obey a power external to us because of fear. The Quran says that true religion is 'your own nature as divinely created and ordained. The Ideal then, that we are asked to serve exclusively, is also the Ideal of entire creation. Service of God is living in tune with the Infinite and harmonising ourselves with the laws of our own being.

This is then the creed that says yes to a life which is more than biological existence. All life is God created, God-guided and God-nourished. Every aspect of existence can serve the purposes of our life; man is destined to command all existence. But he can do this by knowledge and obedience to law. As we learn from the story of Adam presented by the Quran, Man rose above the angels because of his knowledge and he fell because of disobedience. We rise through knowledge only when we obey the dictates of knowledge; thereby we become masters and not slaves of existence. The morality of the masters is not imposed on them from without; it springs from their own nature. Surrender to God the Ideal is freedom in the true sense. We must refuse to be slaves to any partial aspect of existence or to any being other than God, however threatening it may appear. Man is enslaved by man; he is also enslaved by his own ignorance. He has a tendency to serve any power by which he is enslaved. Truth is deliverance from all types of slavery.

Man is a worshipping animal. If he will not worship the True God he will worship the idols of his own creation. There is no greater calamity for a man than to worship things that are not only below God but even below himself. He who serves and worships any thing or being except God, degrades himself. Worship in Islam is not a magical act to bring about supernatural intervention in a causally regulated world. It is not flattering an Infinite Power to win favours from Him merely by asking. It is dedication to the Spirit of Life. It is the winning of independence by the repudiation of all

powers except the one that gives us life, purifies us and exalts us.

SALAT
THE PRESCRIBED PRAYERS

We have seen that prayer is a common feature of religious life at all stages. With the deepening of the ideal of God the meaning of prayer is also deepened. Islam being the purest form of monotheism has deepened and broadened the meaning of prayer on which it is impossible to improve. Islam considers prayer to be the dividing line between Belief and Unbelief. Islamic prayer is purified of all low and irrational elements and is prescribed as a great help in the building up of character by remembering God. In the Quran prayer is called Remembrance; it is primarily that and not supplication for ephemeral benefits. If God is the Source as well as the Ideal of all existence, prayer then means keeping the Highest before our eyes and measuring our conduct by that eternal criterion. In the din and bustle of life, in the clash of emotions and interests, in the stress and strain of immediate urges, in the clamour for selfish gains, we are apt to forget the Ideal. Mere profession of Faith or vague intellectual assent is not enough. It is the habitual effort to approach the Ideal and embody it in our lives that builds up character.

The necessity and efficacy of prayer in general are recognised by all the theistic creeds, but Islamic prayer has certain distinguishing features. Man is required to remember God always in all his attitudes and actions which thus remembrance transforms into worship. No

action performed in conformity with the will of God is mean. As the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said. "The honest wage-earner is a friend of God." Islam visualises the entirety of Good life as a perpetual prayer but during the day and night five prayers are prescribed as a matter of discipline. The prescribed prayers are congregational. Individual prayers, when a man is alone with his God, are additional, supplementary and voluntary, but the prescribed fixed prayers during specified hours of the day and night are congregational and compulsory. They are prescribed as a duty, as man must be exercised in the performance of duty. Let us see how many elements are combined in these prescribed congregational prayers.

(1) Physical cleanliness is essential. There should be no impurity sticking to any part of the body or to the apparel. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. A person who offers prayers dutifully at different hours spread over the day and part of the night will necessarily be always clean. Before prayers he must wash those parts which generally become dirty by ordinary work, or natural necessity.

(2) Then the social factor comes in with all its moral and psychological advantages. When a number of persons pray together in unison, the religious emotion is heightened. As Petronius observed, prayers travel more strongly when said in unison, or as Madame de Staël testifies, "To pray together, in whatever tongue or ritual, is the most tender brotherhood of hope and sympathy that men can contract in this life."

(3) Besides the cumulative heightening of the force of prayer, the Islamic Salat is a discipline in democracy. Equality before God is reflected as equality among men. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the powerful and the weak, must stand together, shoulder to shoulder, all equally humble before God. Islamic congregational prayer is a great leveller. This equalisation of opportunity is what human society has to aim at. In the mosque the Muslims become a classless society. If they forget to actualise that ideal outside the mosque, it only mean that the prayer has not yet entered their souls as it ought to. But the ideal is there, if it is allowed to work in their lives.

(4) Co-ordination of effort is another advantageous aspect. All movements are performed in unison; they rise together, bow together and prostrate together. This is a lesson that in all the great things of life requiring joint effort they have to work as a team; the individual will have to be subordinated to the social will.

(5) It also establishes the principle of leadership. There is no hereditary or ordained priesthood in Islam; professional priests are not envisaged. The best man in the congregation is asked to lead the prayers; he must be considered best from the point of view of knowledge and piety. This is a lesson for the choice of leaders. They are not to be chosen because of their wealth or social position or because of belonging to a particular profession but solely on the basis of knowledge and character. Age too is not an essential factor. There were cases during the lifetime of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) when in an illiterate

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congregation a child was asked to lead the prayers because he was the only one who could recite some verses of the Quran. Once a leader is chosen, he is to be implicitly obeyed in all movements, as the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said, 'Obey your leader even if he is a negro.' 'Islam has embodied military discipline also in its congregational prayers. At the call for prayers hundreds and thousands of people sitting or moving about helter-skelter, immediately fall into serried ranks. Physical movement is also a help for a healthy mental attitude as even the atheistic Nietzsche observed that sedentary thinking is not to be trusted and the healthiest thoughts are those produced during healthy physical movements.

(6) In Muslim prayer there is another element of unification. Every Muslim all over the globe turns his face towards one center, the Kaaba. This strengthens the sense of unity in a worldwide brotherhood. When the Quran ordered all Muslims to turn their faces towards the Kaaba while praying, it added that this did not form the essence of prayers but an additional help for unification, otherwise "God's is the East and God's is the West; in whichsoever direction you turn your face there is the Face of Allah; the chief thing is to strive for goodness."

(7) For the individual or congregational prayers no special places of worship like churches or temples are necessary. As the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said, "God has made the whole earth a mosque for us." Wherever at the time of prayers one or more Muslims find themselves,

there, they can pray singly or in company. No paraphernalia is required for worship.

Prayer is a direct communion with God; no intermediary is required; no intercession is sought from a prophet or an incarnation. In his prayers a Muslim prays for himself and for others including the Prophet (P.B.U.H) ; he prays for the Prophet (P.B.U.H) as well in gratitude for the guidance he has received from him; the Prophet (P.B.U.H) too is one of the servants of God who cannot intercede without His will. So a Muslim even in congregation is still alone with his God, even though fortifying his social self in a congregation.

The Islamic mode of worship indicates that Islam is pre-eminently a social creed. In every one of its injunctions there is a direct or indirect reference to society. It prohibits a man to seek his own salvation by isolating himself from society. There is no monk'ery in Islam. Prayer is not an end in itself but a means of personal and social uplift. It is meant to improve a person's social morality and it disciplines him to work in a democratic society guided by the end of general well-being. The Quran says that if these ends are divorced from prayer, it ceases to be prayer. In the Quranic teachings prayer is often joined with charity as a correlate. In the very beginning of the book we find the three essentials of religious life put together. "This book is a guide to those who guard (against evil), those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them" (2-2, 3). "Have you seen him who denies the fact of retribution. That is the one

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who treats the orphan with harshness, and does not urge others to feed the poor" (107:1,2,3). "Woe to the praying ones who are unmindful of their prayers" (107:4,5). As the prayer has a social reference, the person praying is asked not to use the first person singular but to use the plural in imploring God. "Thee only do we serve and Thee only do we implore for help." "Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help" (1:4).

After the congregational prayers, the gathering begins to serve all other purposes of life. Problems of general welfare are discussed. The leader addresses them on all vital topics. Political and economic questions are brought forward for discussion. Any person can stand up and present even his individual need before the community. The atmosphere of prayer is brought to bear on every question; the mood has been moralised and spiritualised and psychologically the air is full of truth and good will. A nation having this conception of prayer needs no other clubs or assemblies. In the beginning of Islam this was the only assembly of the Muslims; vital questions of war and peace were discussed there. The president of the republic presented his plans and gave his orders after the prayers. Any member of the congregation could openly question the president about anything that he considered to be questionable. By frequently coming together, every one got acquainted with every one else. There was no secret diplomacy in politics. Everything was above-board.

So we see how many elements of general welfare and community life were gathered together by Islam in its

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institution of congregational prayers. Prayer becomes an enlightenment and discipline for life, and a mainstay of individual and social morality. No great ceremony or ritual was required for worship; no images, no pictures, no priestly abracadabra; no gods or angels or spirits were invoked; no intercession of intermediaries demanded. Prayers are used only for moral and social uplift and as a preparation for life. The life hereafter gets a second place in comparison with the betterment of life here and now. The Muslim is asked to pray, "O God, grant us well-being in this life and in the hereafter" (2:201), because the hereafter is determined by what we make of life here. "He who is blind here shall be blind in the hereafter" (17:72). Islam is a religion for this life and not belief in transcendental mysteries or dogmas about another world. Islam has no dogmas; it is a way of life, determined by a philosophy of life, which teaches that life is worth living because its essence is rationality and all intrinsic values shall be preserved.

THE RIGHT PATH

We are asked to pray to be guided on the right path. But how to know what is the right path? All the disputes of philosophies and creeds and all the clashes of ideologies are concerned with the definition of the right path. Let us analyse the concept a little closely. A path is that which leads to a destination; it is a means to the attainment of an end. Human life is a Realm of Ends. At first sight it appears that human beings have innumerable ends and countless means for the attainment of those ends. But most of these ends are only

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derivatives from a few intrinsic values which are sought because of their self-evident goodness. Truth, Beauty and Goodness are sought not because of some ends outside themselves but because the human soul considers them and feels them as valuable in themselves. Plato formed the conception of a Supreme Good which should embody all the intrinsic values. Man strives ultimately for a summum bonum. Man is a finite being having the potentialities of Infinity and therefore nothing partial, limited or fragmentary can give him complete satisfaction. The concept of the Right Path is a correlative of the idea of the Right End. We should have some idea of the object of life before we begin to look for the path or paths which would lead to it. The word life is used in two different meanings. We are material and animal structures subject to the laws of self-preservation of these aspects. Man, like other animals, strives to maintain his organism. He wants food and protection from those elements that endangers his physical existence. If man were merely a physical organism, the object of his life would be merely to maintain it in health and strength and the path that would lead to it would be the path of physical fitness. But that would not distinguish him from other animals. The distinguishing feature of man is that he possesses a conscious, rational mind. The object of his life, therefore, must be the development of his rationality and personality. If this rationality were only a biological instrument in the struggle for physical existence it would give him no great advantage over the other animals, because they accomplish by instinct in a more direct and more successful manner what he is able to do with reason

only in a halting and clumsy way. The marvels of animal instincts are not even intelligible to human reason. The object or reason therefore could not be only an additional help in the maintenance of our biological existence. Reason develops a life of its own which transcends our physical needs. As Christ said, "although bread is necessary, 'we do not live by bread alone.'" The life of the Spirit begins where the life of the body ends; we start to be human only when we have fulfilled our bodily needs. So long as we are engaged in the satisfaction of our bodily needs only, we are classed with the animals and usually sink below them in the success achieved. As the Quran says of those who ignore the life of the Spirit, "They are as cattle, nay, they are in worse error" (7:179). Man is destined to lead two lives, the life of the body and the life of the spirit, but the two lives are to be harmonised. They can be harmonised by the subordination of the lower to the higher, not by the annihilation of the lower. All great religions recognise this double meaning of life. As Christ said, 'he who pursues life in its physical aspect only, shall lose life in the higher aspect and he who is prepared to lose the lower life, shall attain the higher life'. As we cannot form any concept higher than life, therefore we can say that the object of life is life, more life, higher life, more comprehensive life. The summum bonum therefore is the fulfillment of life with all its potentialities, which should be the realisation of the eternal values of life, and the actualisation of its possibilities.

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When the Quran contrasts higher with lower life it usually uses the terms life Here and the Life Hereafter. But the Hereafter is not a temporal or spatial concept; it is a judgment of values. The Hereafter penetrates the life lived here and now, and the life here is a preparation for that. The Higher is not higher in space or later in time. Islam believes in the survival of the human ego in time as well, but the higher and lower, here and hereafter, are determined by the type of life that is lived. The life of mere physical demands and animal urges has to be transcended in everyday living. When we pray, therefore, to be guided on the Right Path, it must be a road towards the realisation of supra-physical values.

Surah Fatihah gives a very simple criterion of the rightness of the Path; it is the path of the blessed, those who were granted all the intrinsic values of life.

We know very little of our physiological mechanism but we know what health, or its opposite, disease means. We know healthy persons by their life and activities. It is understood that an average man knows and feels what health is. There are certain ways of life that lead to physical health and we all know health as a great blessing. If we were merely physical beings, physical health would be our ultimate end and the path leading to it would be the right path; it would be the path of those who have attained health. But when we are thinking of a man as blessed, we are not primarily thinking of physical health, though complete blessedness should include it. We are bodies as well as souls; our blessedness must include spiritual blessedness. A man is

blessed if his reason is clear and strong and guides his life aright, and if his actions are permeated by love. The man blessed by God, therefore, must be a man of true knowledge; reason being his distinguishing feature, he could not be called blessed if his reason is deficient. As the Quran says, "Whosoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good" (2-269). Blessedness would, therefore, include physical health as well as mental well-being; an insight into truth is an essential component of blessedness. As man is a social being, he cannot be blessed merely in his separate individuality; a good life must radiate blessedness; goodness must be active and dynamic. Goodness therefore is a necessary element of well-being. A tree is known by its fruit and to the rightness of the Path too, we must apply a pragmatic test. The prayer we are trying to analyse does apply, this test. If blessedness means knowledge and goodness then we know that those who are blessed must have followed the right path. The blessed are those who have succeeded in the real meaning of the word success. If we want to know what the right Path is, the best way to get this knowledge is to study the lives of those who have succeeded. If a man wants to make money he closely watches the ways of the money-makers, those who have amassed fortunes, and he makes exemplars of them. If he imitates them he will surely make money. As the Quran says those who strive for the goods of this world, will get them because the general law is that man gets what he strives after. But if wealth only has been their aim they have neglected all the higher values of life and by their own efforts have deprived themselves of life in the higher sense; they have

clasped at a shadow and lost the substance. Real success has come only to the man who has developed knowledge and love and goodness based on the firm faith that they are real and abiding and they are rooted in the Source of Existence which he reveres and worships as God. He only can truly feel happy and secure and get the joy which is born of self-realisation and well-being. The Quran swears by the Times presenting all human history as a witness that "Most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good" (103:2,3). And the Bible puts the same truth emphatically in the words, "What doth it avail a man if he gaineth the whole world and loseth his soul?" BY soul here is meant all the supra-physical values that have their seat in God; they are not based on individual desires or material gains, nor are they tantamount to the maintenance of physical life only.

By looking at the lives of men we can know the true meaning of success or failure. We revere only those who have succeeded in the higher sense. Example is the most effective teacher, therefore we are asked to fix our minds on the mode of life of those who have been blessed. Following in their footsteps we shall be following the Right Path for which we pray. Man wants to be blessed but he does not know where true blessedness lies. As Rumi says, everyone hankers after gold but there are few who can distinguish gold from tinsel. All that glitters is not gold; so all that lures us, promising blessedness, does not fulfil the promise. After having pursued false clues we realise at the end that we have deviated from the goal of happiness, harmony and well-being.

Chapter X

THE ETHICS OF ISLAM

The science of Ethics may be defined in various ways. It is the study of what is right or good in conduct, or the study of good and evil. It tries to define the nature of right and good. What is the end or ideal at which men aim or ought to aim? Is there any supreme end in human life or the different ends pursued have no organic relation with one another? Since Ethics is the study of conduct as a whole and not of any particular kinds of conduct, it is not any special ends that it sets itself to consider but the supreme or ultimate end to which our whole lives are directed. If the ultimate end is determined then the special ends could be valued as advancing or retarding it or as indifferent to the ideal. There are many ends that human beings desire for their own sake; such ends are called ultimate good or intrinsic values. Knowledge and Beauty and Happiness, for instance, are desired not only as means to other ends but as intrinsically valuable whose goodness rests in themselves. It is the function of Ethics to provide general principles for estimating the real worth of these ultimate ends; what is the real worth of these spontaneous interests? Is the attainment of these desired objects good in itself or is there some ultimate criterion, some principle or set of mutually consistent principles by which we may determine the value of the satisfaction of our interests?

More than the theoretical discussion of philosophers about the nature of the summum bonum,

More than the theoretical discussion of philosophers about the nature of the *summum bonum*, religious belief has been the mainstay of morality. Scientifically, ethics is discussed apart from religious beliefs or metaphysical presumptions but any thorough discussion of the ultimate nature of the Ideal, which has to determine our good and evil, forces us to define our belief in the Ultimate Reality in which our lives are rooted and from which they spring. The ethics of Islam does not stand by itself but follows as a corollary from the foundations of religious belief.

What scientific Ethics calls the search for *summum bonum*, the Ideal End or the Ultimate Purpose, religion calls the Search for God. It is only a difference of terminology; Plato calls it the Good; Islam calls it God. So in the discussion of ultimate ends we will be using freely as equivalents, God, the Good, and the Ideal.

Islam, too, believes, like philosophic Ethics, that all ends must converge in one Ultimate End. Why should they do so, Islam has a simple answer for this. Life originates in the Unity of Existence which is a manifestation of the Unity of God. Even the material universe is a universe and not a multiverse. Nature, Life, and Mind are characterised by unity in diversity. In spite of all its multifariousness, existence aims at uniformities and the numerous laws of Nature are presumed to be derivatives from some One Law. Morality too must conform to the One Law of Unity in diversity. Human desires are multifarious and place before themselves numerous special ends. Man, as an individual, is an

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organic unity and as a social being he is part of a social organism; organic life denotes a unity and a singleness of an ultimate purpose. Consistency is the test of reality and of truth. The multiplicity of human desires cannot be left in a disjointed and chaotic condition; there must be a controlling principle and a controlling purpose. In Islam this is supplied by the nature of God.

In discussing the nature of God in the previous chapters we have established it on the basis of the teachings of the Quran that God is a Rational Creative Will. He is not the Absolute of the metaphysicians nor is He the will-less Reason of Aristotle nor the source from which creation emanates as an overflow, as is the teaching of Neo-Platonism. The God of Islam is teleologically creative. He is not Pure Thought, but Supreme Consciousness embodying in Himself the ultimate values of life and a guarantee of their preservation. The Quran says, "To Him belong the most beautiful attributes." So the postulate of Islamic Ethics is that the ultimate values of life like Love and Knowledge and Happiness are not temporary, subjective, relative and illusory products of a particular phase of evolution but objective and ultimate. They cannot be perceived in their perfection but as ideals we can approach them eternally. Our intrinsic and ultimate values are therefore given as essential attributes of God or the Ideal. These values emerging from a Unity must be organically related to one another. This was also the conviction of Plato reached by dialectic that his three ultimate values--Truth, Beauty

and Goodness--are really three facets of the same Reality which he called the Good.

Let us see how the idea of the good is determined by Islam, by looking at goodness as an attribute of God. God is a Creator, so goodness must be creative; there could be nothing like passive contemplative goodness; the good, therefore, is not a static but a dynamic conception; it refers not to mere knowledge but to deeds which strive to embody truth in actions. The Quran says that God the Creator is a Fosterer, a Merciful and Beneficent God; Love as an intrinsic value follows from the nature of Ultimate Reality. Moral action then must be motivated by fostering and cherishing, by creating ever richer harmonies of existence. Good is that which has a tendency to multiply and evil is destructive of others as well as of itself. The Quran says repeatedly that the punishment of evil is an evil equivalent to it, which means its negation, but the reward of good is multiplied manifold. "Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like of it, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly" (6-161). From this we derive a good definition of what we should understand by goodness and what is ultimately good. Good is creative and constructive; it maintains itself and the rest of life. The hedonists define good as that which is desired and that which gives pleasure. But this is a very poor definition because a perverted mind desires much that is injurious and self-destructive, and pleasure is sometimes attached to many things that destroy life and defeat the

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ends of pleasure itself. We know psychologically that pleasure is not always the motive of our action: the virtuous pursue their good aims in spite of incurring more pain than pleasure and the vicious also pursue their passions recklessly not because they give pleasure to them but because they have become imperious, uncontrollable urges which the doer himself sometimes knows are driving him to perdition. According to Islam, then, the attainment of desires is not the test of goodness. Goodness is the preservation of the values of life. But life is not merely physical or biological. We are more than our bodies; bodies are merely the instruments of our souls. Human life consists in the realisation of aims which transcend our bodily needs. In our bodily needs we are one with the animal world. Humanity begins with the transcendence of the physical. Goodness then is not only the preservation but the enhancement of our essential reality, our true selves.

Herbert Spencer and other evolutionary writers on Ethics say that moral principles are not objective and transcendental but are derived from the experience of the race, as successful modes of self preservation and racial stability. Islam would not dispute this definition of the good as preservative but its conception of man is not that of a physical organism only which has somehow to preserve itself by struggle, adaptation and procreation. The Evolutionists have rightly hit at the nature of the good as that which has a tendency to survive and makes those beings survive who practise it: only their conception of life and what is to be preserved is very

narrow. Islam says that the human soul is the Spirit of God Himself and man is created to assimilate more and more the attributes of God. Truth, Beauty, Love Peace and Happiness are intrinsic values because they are rooted in Ultimate Reality; we conceive them in their relativity but they are absolute as attributes of God. They have to be preserved by man and morality consists in the effort to preserve them.

Similarly, Islam would support the partial truth of hedonism that pleasure too is intrinsically desirable, by the acceptance of the thesis that ultimately virtue and happiness must coincide. But the direct pursuit of pleasure defeats its own end. Happiness must result as a by product of life rightly lived. Here we must meet an objection which asserts that almost all the great religions are hedonistic. This objection has arisen from the fact that religion when it depicts the rewards of virtue and the punishments of vice, uses sensualistic language. Paradise is conceived as the vision of unfulfilled desire which is physical. Now there are two ways of looking at these descriptions; they may be taken literally or they may be taken metaphorically. The grosser minds have always taken them literally but the Quran, notwithstanding, very vivid physical imagery, warns us that they are to be taken as analogies and parables. It says, "The analogy of Paradise promised to the righteous is that there flow in it rivers: its fruit is perpetual and its shade" (13:35). Again we have, "A likeness of the garden which the righteous are promised: there flow beneath it rivers, its fruits are perpetual and its plentiness" (13:35). Again there is a

warning against taking this sensual imagery as literal truth: "No soul knows what is hidden, for it to refresh its eyes; a reward for what they did" (32-17). And the Prophet himself said, "Allah says, I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and what the mind of man has not conceived" (Bukh. 59 : 8). And Ibn Abbas, the famous Companion and Commentator, is reported to have said: "In Paradise there are no foods of this life except the name."

But the Qur'an also uses spiritualised and etherealised imagery in describing the attributes of God and depicting the rewards and punishments of good and evil. The same Quran which depicts God as establishing Himself on a Throne also elsewhere calls Him "Light of the heavens and the earth" which is Self-luminous and non-spatial, neither of the East nor of the West. One of the essential attributes of God is Knowledge or Consciousness for which the best physical analogy is that of light. There are some philosophies that have conceived of God primarily as Light because they could find no better analogy. The great mystical metaphysics of Plotinus which has greatly influenced Christian as well as Muslim mystical philosophy, is chiefly based on the analogy of the Absolute as Light. The Quran too has used that analogy but warning us that it is not to be taken as physical light. One of the great rewards of virtue is described as seeing God or meeting one's Lord. Now God is Light and Life which embodies all values of existence. The chief reward therefore is the attainment of Life Divine in which a man does not become God but is in some way

identified with Him. The Quran says that this heightened consciousness results from the life of virtue. What the virtuous get is more Light, and this is the real craving of the great souls. Goethe's last words were "Licht, Mehr Licht," 'light, more light. All his life he had been striving through intellect and through art to get more light and to shed more light, and while departing he still gave expression to that craving, because there is always more and more of it. "On that day you will see the faithful men and the faithful women--their light running before them and on their right hand" (57:12). "O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and believe in His Apostle: He will give you two portions of His mercy, and make for you all light with which you will walk, and forgive you, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" (57:28).

The question often arises in certain weak moments in certain minds as to why one should practise virtue; material and physical pleasures are not necessary concomitants of virtue in this life. The spectacle of virtue suffering and vice having a good time has been before the eyes of man ever since he began to reflect. People ask what is the reward of virtue. One reply to this question which appears crude even to some refined minds is that in the life hereafter the balance will be redressed. God will proportion happiness to virtue and misery to vice; the virtuous there will rejoice and the vicious suffer unspeakable torments. As religion has to exhort all people to be virtuous and shun vice in the interest of personal and social well-being this kind of sermonising too has its place in the reformation of humanity at a

lower level. But as there are grades of intellectual apprehension, so there are grades of apprehension of moral and spiritual verities. The mind at lower levels which is yet in the grip of the senses has to be appealed to in terms of the senses. But as we rise higher, our conception of virtue and vice and the consequent rewards and punishments become more and more intellectualised. The Quran gives us moral wisdom at this higher level where it ceases to use sensual imagery. It gives a transcendental conception of God as a Reality which is not like anything. "Sight comprehends Him not but He comprehends sight" (6:105). "He is the Light of the heavens and the earth" (24:35). The reward of consummated well being is meeting and seeing this Lord of Light and Life. This seeing must be some sort of perception which transcends the division of subject and object; it may be identification with Eternal Reality for which we have neither adequate experience nor categories of understanding. This is often mentioned in the Quran as the highest reward of virtue. Harmony which is the spirit and Goal of existence is called peace in the terminology of the Quran. In peace the contending individuals and elements do not cease to exist; they get reconciled retaining their individuality but realising their identity of purpose. Natural beauty and art are the expressions of this peace which we call harmony. Intellectual understanding is peace, aesthetic contemplation is peace, and virtue and happiness are peace. So Paradise is called by the Quran 'Abode of Peace, wherein the greeting of the residents will be 'Peace, Peace'. The very word Islam means Peace, the

second meaning being surrender to the Will of God and the two meanings fuse together into the essence of all morality and spirituality which is the attainment of peace and harmony by surrendering the individual will to the Universal Will, whereby the finite participates in the life of the Infinite.

The answer of Islam, therefore, to the question as to what is the end or purpose of life and what is the reward of virtue, is that better and higher life is the reward of good life and happiness is an essential ingredient of the *summum bonum*. "Whoever does good, whether male or a female, and he is a believer. We will certainly make him live a pure, good and happy life and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did" (16:97).

One point needs some further elucidation. As already stated, whenever the Quran compares lower with higher life the higher life is termed 'The Life Hereafter,' in comparison with which life here and now, called the life of this world, is called the life of vain sport. It must be clearly understood that in the Realm of Spirit, time and space have no meaning", these are categories of the world of sense. If time exists at all gradations of being and all dimensions of consciousness, its nature must be different at different levels. As the Quran says the day with God is a hundred thousand years; it is not measured by the diurnal motion of the earth round the sun. It is similarly said in the Quran in more than one place that time sense of the people on the Day of Judgment would be quite different; the interval between their life on this earth and

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Judgment would be almost annihilated. "And on the day when He will gather them, it will be as though they had not stayed but an hour of the day" (10-45). Non-spatial and non-temporal reality is Unseen and therefore the nature of Judgment, after we leave this earthen frame and enter into new dimensions of being and consciousness, cannot be comprehended now. "God's is the Unseen, of the heavens and the earth and the matter of the hour of Judgment is but the twinkling of an eye or nigher still; surely Allah has power over all things" (16-77). Although life will survive physical dissolution and the ego will continue in other spheres carrying with it the effects of its good and evil, the nature of the Judgment in those spheres cannot be realised by us, but we have clear indications from the Quran that our time judgments do not apply there; they cease to have any validity with the cessation of physical existence. Physical time is an aspect of physical existence only.

So, we see that when religious terminology uses the terms of time and space and talks of the earth below and heaven above or uses the words Here and Hereafter, it is only using temporal and spatial terms for value judgments. The higher is not higher in space but in value. The great mystics of Islam understood it very clearly. Rumi says that "Love (the intuitive realisation of God) is not going up or going down in space but shedding the limitations of lower existence." And so Sarmad talks of space in connection with the Prophet's Ascension (Mi'raj); "He who has been initiated into the secret of Reality becomes more extensive than the heavens; Mulla

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says that the Prophet went up bodily to the heavens but Sarmad says the heavens entered him." So about time, when Islam uses the term Day of Judgment we have not to understand by Day anything that is a product of the solar system. We have been warned that the Day with God is not our day. When the Quran says that the day with God is a hundred thousand years, some commentators have interpreted it as an epoch, and accordingly six days of creation are taken to be six epochs. Others do not take these reckonings literally but metaphorically and the correct view seems to be that time outside our temporal realm either does not exist or its nature is quite different. The whole of the philosophy of Bergson is based on the difference between spatial time and what he calls creative duration which can be only spiritually apprehended by Intuition when Life enters into direct contact with Reality.

The rewards of virtue and vice., according to Islam, are both cash and credit. Surrender to the Ideal, with a firm belief in its reality, is a life both of virtue and inner happiness. Such a man is true to his real self and therefore attains inner peace which is real happiness and is different from a sum of pleasures. This inner happiness, the peace of the Lord, more than compensates for lack of material gain or physical pain or strain. As to the rewards of good and evil, the Quran says that they are recorded every moment and weighed in a very accurate and sensitive balance which does not err by the weight of an atom. The life of a man is not determined by this or that sin but by the balance of good and evil done

by him. He may have done countless wrongs, but if the good that he has done outweighs them, his life would be good on the whole and he will not be damned. We find in more than one place in the Quran that the Merciful God is not quick to punish; if He were quick to punish deviations from the right path, no living being would be left on the earth. Sin is not a thing that sticks to the soul ineradicably. "Surely good deeds take away evil deeds" (11:114). It is the nature of evil that sooner or later, it is destroyed either by good deed or by its own inherent destructiveness. "And say Truth has come and falsehood vanished; surely falsehood is a vanishing thing" (17:81).

One of the great services that Islam rendered to humanity was delivering it from the unnecessary and imaginary terror of sin. Nietzsche said that sin was a Jewish invention. There is no doubt that Jehovah as presented in the Old Testament seems to inspire more terror than love and punishes whole families and groups ruthlessly for real or imaginary sins, but sin, as something that enters the soul and is inherited from Adam downwards by every child that is born, is a Christian invention. It is one of the ironies of human ideologies that Christian theology could present God as Love and at the same time preach the doctrine of Original Sin. The Quran repudiates this doctrine most emphatically. Man, according to the Quran, is endowed with a divine nature with the gift of free-will which may lead him astray, but it is wrong to say that he is originally created to go astray. Talking of man the Quran

says "The Nature of God, in which He has made man." The Prophet elucidated this in his famous saying that "every child is born with natural endowments, which if kept pure and intact would lead him aright but it is the parents that make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian," which are deviations from the religion of Nature.

Modern psychology has revealed the hell that is let loose in the subconscious mind of some religious people who possess a large degree of emotional intensity. A Muslim who understood the spirit of Islam, would be saved from these painful complexes. The God of Islam is a Forgiving God and He has so constituted man that he will do good as well as evil deeds. The difference in the lives of men arises from the balance of good and evil in their lives. Perfectly spotless saints and utterly black sinners with no modicum of good in them have perhaps never existed. Islam demands that a man should not become mad with despair if he has committed a sin. True repentance wipes away all sin. He should keep the Ideal before his eyes and constantly judge himself, so that evil does not overweigh in his life. The Quran says that despair is a sign of unbelief. The love and mercy of God cover everything and every being. According to the Quran, all sins can be wiped away by good deeds and repentance, except the sin of disbelief in the Reality of the Ideal. If a man ceases to believe in the reality of the Moral Ideal he is lost and cannot regain his true self unless he begins to believe in the Moral Ideal again. It is a Muslim belief that ultimately all souls will be saved and hell will become empty. It must repeat here what the Prophet

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replied to the messenger of Heraclius when he asked, "Your Quran says that Paradise is coextensive with the heavens and the earth, where will then hell be situated?" The Prophet replied, "Where is the night when the day appears?"

Man is not pure Reason; he is endowed with a number of instincts every one of which has a tendency to dominate him. When the soul is under the sway of an instinct and there is a ruling passion which would obey that instinct and not Reason, the self in this condition is termed by the Quran the Commanding or Compelling Self (Nafs-i-Ammarah). When conscience or a man's higher self admonishes him, this state of the self is termed the Admonishing Self (Lawwama). The highest state of the self is that in which it is completely harmonised and attains peace; then the self is called the Satisfied Self (Nafs-i-Mutmainnah). The ethics of Islam is the ethics of self-realisation and by self it means the complete self of man including his instincts and feelings. As man physically is an organism of many parts, each part endowed with a special function, so is the soul of man a spiritual organism in which every instinct has a definite function. Islam prohibits the complete suppression of any instinct. Man has to profit by all urges, but in subordination to his personal as well as social well-being.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

It is an indisputable fact in the history of thought that Ethics as a science was first developed by the Greeks. As languages are in existence long before

someone develops their grammar to understand and clarify the principles on which the language has been unconsciously constructed, so man's perception of the difference between good and evil preceded the science of ethics by millenniums. As language is a natural product of man's sociability so is his morality; the difference between good and evil springs naturally from human relations. It is on account of this that Islam designates morality and religion as Nature. It appears that Islam picks up humanity only at a civilised stage. When it says that prophets were sent to all peoples it already recognises human beings as organised into societies with a customary code of morals and manners. Again when it says that religion has always been one and the same in its essentials and all prophets and saints form one brotherhood, it is undoubtedly taking humanity at a particularly advanced stage when the idea of one Creator, the Judge of good and evil, has already emerged. We find communities of savages and barbarians even now scattered all over the globe, whose concepts of divinity are crude animism and totemism and whose morality consists only of tribal customs which have helped them to some extent in tribal self-preservation.

Religion and morality have been advancing and retarding either in parallel or have been interacting on each other. In Greece, we see in Homer, polytheistic and naturalistic religion intertwined with a dubious kind of morality as reflected in the character of his gods. As we approach the period of Greek glory in which this nation began to reflect on the nature of being and the place of

man in this Cosmos, we find that the ideas of social justice and of good and evil have already advanced considerably beyond their religious conceptions. Just before the time of Socrates we find moral confusion, much more in theory than in practice. The city State of Athens was a particularly advanced, refined and prosperous State enriched by commerce and by exploitation of slave labour. There never was greater freedom of thought and expression than we find in the time of Pericles who in his famous speech takes pride in the civilisation of his State where citizens have the greatest freedom to form their views, not only on the matters of State but about life in general, and express them without fear or hindrance. For a considerable period, this liberty did not disrupt the social and political order, because of the patriotism of the citizens and religious practices organised on the basis of polytheism. Just before Socrates, we see the Sophists inculcating a moral chaos in theory, which might have resulted in a practical chaos but for the emergence of intellectual geniuses like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. With these thinkers, Reason emerged for the first time in human history in all its independence and purity. They formed a clear concept of Nature as the embodiment of Reason and not of arbitrary and capricious wills. With them emerged the concept of the organised unity of the universe. Reason which was unconscious in nature became conscious and self-conscious in Man. The distinguishing trait of man is conscious Reason whose nature is unity and harmony. Man's theoretical Reason, which grasps the laws of things, and his practical Reason which

regulates his life are fundamentally one and the same. With Socrates and Plato emerged the idea of the identity of Reason with Reality and the identity of both with the Good which they considered to be the source of all Reality and Rationality. At this stage the Greek mind ceased to bother about gods or even one transcendent God of an arbitrary will, and identified the Ultimate Reality with Reason. It is said that the Greeks developed intellectually because they freed themselves from the he shackles of religion. In one way it is true; their traditional religion was polytheistic and a set of superstitions. When religion becomes corrupt and is left behind even the best conscience of its votaries, it is high time that the people turn their backs to it, if they want to live and develop on healthy lines. When beliefs and customs begin to corrupt them, a revolt against religion or indifference to it becomes a paramount necessity.

So far as the development of religious consciousness is concerned the history of two nations is very significant and instructive: the Hebrews and the Hindus. The Hebrews or the Israelites seem to have produced more prophets than any other people, which betokens intensity of religious consciousness. Originally their God, Jehovah, was a tribal god concerned mostly with the vicissitudes of life of his people whom he seemed to have chosen both for his favours and for his wrath. In the early stages their concept of God appears very crude and so is their political morality. Their morality is ruthlessly tribal, reflected in their own history and in the attributes and actions of Jehovah. Monotheism

is not of much value intellectually or morally if the concept of the one God is crudely tribal and anthropomorphic. If a nation chooses the worship of one God and throws away to be scrap-heap all the other gods, still it will not be much of an advance, if that One is parochial, narrow, irrationally self-willed, and moves like a savage by anger or revenge. The study of the Old Testament presents a slow but steady evolution of the idea of God as a Rational Just and a Benevolent Being whose attributes gradually become universal and transcend the welfare of the Isrealites only. The Quran seems to point to Abraham as the first monotheist among the Israelites who not only reached the idea of one God but had an exalted conception of Him. After him we see the idea of an impartially Just God. The God of Righteousness and Love developing till we reach Jesus Christ with whom God is Spirit and Light, and Life of all existence. The irrational terror of Jehovah is gone, and morality, developing through righteousness and justice, has reached Love as the ultimate concept and the final urge. Here we have reached pure monotheism and superior ethics, which preaches not only correct and conventional morality but wants to reform man's inner life by laying stress on the purity of motives. The Jewish emphasis on Law is supplemented and spiritualised by Love which should be the source and the judge of all Law. Jews, who considered all other nations as hostile and fuel for hell, are taught to love even their enemies and return good for evil.

The Hindus developed on somewhat different lines. Side by side with their polytheism we find reflections on the nature of existence. Brahmanic religion began to develop systems of metaphysics in which religion and philosophy were never quite separated. From polytheism they developed not so much monotheism as monism, the concept of an Absolute beyond life and existence, transcending all distinctions of good and evil. The Absolute stood beyond the moral order; human values were relative and transitory that had no place in God and must be ultimately transcended. Spatio-temporal life became an illusion and even gods became part of that illusion.

The concepts of a transcendental Absolute never influenced morality very much, or it may be asserted, that they affected it adversely. As William James said, Absolutism is a moral holiday. The Hindus developed pantheism and monism more than theism, and their social morality was perverted by the caste-domination of the Brahmans. The Dharam Shastra of Manu, which is their classical code of religion, laws and morality, is a standing monument of an Ethics that has not yet become universal and objective, but is based on class exploitation on which the seal of revelation has been set. In Buddhism, which is a development of Hinduism, we see a mighty attempt at reformation. Buddha wanted to lift his nation and ultimately all humanity from tribal to universal morality. He repudiated caste-distinctions and swept away the whole Pantheon of Hindu gods and mythology; he did away even with the ideal of one

anthropomorphic God, but his concept of existence was tainted with Hindu Mayaism and Absolutism which had taken firm root in the Hindu mind. Like Christ, he picked up only love and mercy as real sources of all morality. But his psychology and sociology were extremely defective, and so was his view of existence. So far as the nature of existence is concerned, his Enlightenment reached the conclusion that life is full of evil and the source of all evil is desire. He made no distinction between desirable ends and undesirable ends. All ends are illusory, and desires for all ends must be extirpated. Ending of life is the end of life. Life and woe are two sides of the same medal; you cannot have the one without the other. No amount of virtue can create well-being or happiness either in this or the next world; both worlds are illusory being the products of desire. There is a moral order in the universe which keeps beings entangled in transmigration. The purpose of spiritual enlightenment is to step out of this moral order. All life and all desire are evil and they must be completely transcended in order to reach an ineffable state of the Absolute called Nirvana in which there is no life, no distinction, no individualities. It is not the transvaluation of all values but the utter and ultimate negation of them. What is left to man in Buddhism is mercy, as the whole of morality and Nirvana as the end which he refused to define, because, as Spinoza said, all definition is limitation and Nirvana is the transcendence of all limitations. We have nothing positive left except the relief of suffering and abstention from

killing in any form. It is a poor substitute for belief in the values of life and is an extremely inane ethics which exalts the life negating Bhikshu as a model man who engages in no pursuit of life.

As such a negation of life and its values could not hold the human mind for long nor could hold society together, later on certain positive ends were justified and pursued. In a humanised form it produced many good results as we see from the laws and administration of Asoka. It was only by being inconsistent with its fundamentals that Buddhism could act as a morally uplifting force.

Christianity too drifted into certain life-fleeing trends. Buddhism as well as Christianity developed monkery and asceticism. The man who married and engaged in the lawful pursuits of life was considered to be less spiritual than the man who abstained from them. The world and the flesh were condemned. St. Paul said it was better to marry than to burn, meaning thereby, burning for fornication or adultery which would result if the Church prohibited marriage to all. If this danger were not there, celibacy would be spiritually the only desirable condition. This is also the Hindu and the Buddhistic view. The celibate Sadhu or Bhikshu is considered to be more spiritual, having avoided the contamination of the flesh. Nietzsche was right when he said religions are of two kinds: those that say yes to life and those that say no to life. Asceticism is saying no to life. It is flight from life, to save one's soul.

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This was the universally accepted view of spirituality and morality when Islam came on the scene of history. Heaven was separated from earth and spirituality was divorced from morality as well as life. The ideal man was the hermit, alone with his God, who, finding the world too much, had escaped from it and praised God in solitude. Islam found religion and morality divorced from life and its greatest contribution to the advancement of humanity is the conception of religion as well-being, as life well-lived with love and justice, fulfilling all the demands of human nature within the limits prescribed by reason and social well-being. With Islam, the purpose of life is better and richer life, intensely and completely lived, and harmoniously developed.

ETHICS OF INTEGRATION

There are more points of contact and fewer points of difference between Greek and Islamic Ethics. In Islam, the religious development of the Hebrews and the rational development of the Hellenes seem to have converged. On the surface, these lines of development appear to be the antithesis of each other. For the Greek, Ultimate Reality is pure, self-thinking Reason and the Hebraic God is primarily a Moral Will. One might say the one is static and the other is dynamic; one is speculative and the other is practical. Hegel, one of the greatest philosophers of all times, based his entire concept of existence on the idea of a dialectical movement of thought in nature and Mind, moving from a thesis towards antithesis, and then towards a synthesis which takes up the abiding value of

both and comprehends both by transcending their one-sidedness. The Greeks had gradually discovered the Logos which makes and regulates Nature. In this gifted people, Reason, inherent in Life and Nature, had become self-conscious. But the Reason that they discovered was a static reality and Nature was dynamic. Reason was will-less and was its own object and end. Plato and Aristotle, therefore both reached the conclusion that the Highest Reality was Idea or Reason and the changing world is created by the mixture of illusion and non-being with Reason which is only partially reflected in things. All particularity and individuality were changing, transient and illusory. God does nothing but contemplate His own Being; He does not bother with particulars and individuals, and as a matter of fact He does not know them. It is intrinsically impossible for God to know the particulars because the particulars are constituted by a mixture of non-being and God is Pure Being.

Now in the language of Hegelian dialectic, if we consider this rationalism as a thesis, then the Hebraic concept of God is an antithesis. Hebraic God is pre-eminently a Will directed by purposes. For the Greeks, will was almost a negation of Eternal Reason because there is nothing unrealised in Reason which it has to realise by willing. As we have stated already, the Will of Jehovah is conceived during a long course of development as very tribal, very anthropomorphic and very crude. In a number of cases, dealing with his enemies, Jehovah shows great cruelty and irrational wrath, visiting the sins of the father on three generations

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of his progeny. This will is gradually moralised, rationalised and universalised till we reach Christ who conceived of God primarily as Love. Now Love is not an attribute of the Intellect; it is a quality of feeling and will. We can say, therefore, that the Hebraic development at its culmination in Christ presents us with a Willing God who is not an Eternally Static Reality but is a doer of deeds and a rewarder of deeds. Among the Hebrews, whether we take Abraham or Christ, we find Theism exalted and purified. In this line of development there is less emphasis on Reason and Knowledge and more stress on virtue and on the gradually expanding idea of justice and love.

Both of these conclusions were partial and one-sided and the world needed an ideology or a religion, exactly the task performed by Islam. It presented the idea of Ultimate Reality as God that was Dynamic Reason, a Willing Reason, whose essence is Goodness or Love and who is an active worker Himself both in nature and in Man. From the point of view of Greek intellectualism, a Willing God is not conceivable. They had made ideas eternally static and did not know how to make them move themselves or the world. But the development of pragmatism in modern philosophy and the creative evolution of Bergson have brought forth the dynamic aspect of ideas into prominence. As William James says, every real idea has a direct or indirect reference to action, and an idea that has no reference to action has no meaning. Reality is changing, creative and dynamic. God is essentially a Creator and Reason is a derivative from

the Will. This is very nearly the point of view adopted by Islam. The Quran repeatedly points to Nature as a rationally and causally ordered whole; every phenomenon of Nature is a miracle which points to a Rational Creator. "Most surely in the creation of the Heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the clouds, then gives life to the earth after its death and spreads in it all kinds of animals and the changing of the winds and the clouds, made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand" (2:164). The Quran calls itself not a book of sermons or hymns but a Book of Wisdom, and at every step, when it enunciates a principle. It gives reasons for it and every exhortation ends with the words "and why don't you reflect." It is said that it is the men of knowledge who guard against evil. Then about wisdom it is said that it is the greatest of God's gifts. "And whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good" (2:269). "And in the earth there are signs for those who are sure and in your own souls (too); will you not then see" (51:21). It is Reason, Justice and Goodness all in one that are repeatedly pointed out as basis for belief in God and for direction in action. It is the synthesis of Hellenism and Hebraism; Reason becomes a Creative Goodwill.

The Muslims are called in the Quran 'the Nation of the Middle' It is a very significant designation. Before Islam there had been great nations that had hit at great truths but they had gone to extremes in their one-sided

development. The Hindus had developed the idea of Ultimate Reality to transcendental Monism and Absolutism but had lost touch with life. It was a partial truth; God does transcend all the changes, relativities and particularities of existence; He transcends all that we can possibly think or imagine about Him. He is the Beyond of Beyond. But the Quran says He is also the Nearest of the Near. In transcendental Absolutism the human soul was identified with God, as the Real Self of all selves but the individual must lose his individuality and identity to merge in God. In strict consistency there is no merger because the individual never really existed. So the transcendence of God and the potential divinity of man both took a turn that led to the negation of life resulting in quietism and asceticism and the belief that God could be realised by the individual in his solitary contemplation cut away from all relation with life. All this was exaggeration of truths and extremism. The truths of these concepts were taken up by Islam and incorporated in a complete harmony with other aspects of life. We find Islam following a middle path and synthesising all these truths. It is one of the oft-repeated theses of Quran that all great religions of civilised humanity were essentially true but were later on perverted. We see, historically, how this perversion takes place. It is the exaggeration of partial truths to the extent that they begin to impoverish life instead of enriching it.

We find some creeds in which there is complete identification of God with the Universe. For instance, Stoicism which flourished for centuries in the Roman

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Empire, whose beautiful expression we find in pious souls like Marcus Aurelius, who identified God with the Universe. It was a doctrine of complete immanence. The universe was the body of God and God was the Soul of the universe. This was also a step towards truth but the idea of God was degraded and, in a way, finitised. Islam says that the Creator is there in His creation but He is more than that, as the artist is always more than the products of his art, though every artistic creation is an objectification of his inspiration and urge. The 'Nation of the Middle was asked to believe in Ultimate Reality called God, both as transcendent and as immanent: He is Reason as well as Will and the highest manifestaion of Will is Love, Mercy or Beneficence which is revealed in a Creative Urge which not only creates but orders creation rationally in order to sustain, cherish and develop it; death and decay too are moments in the great creative process.

There is a beautiful and extremely pregnant verse which we find in the Bible as well as in the Quran. It says vicious men are those who cut asunder what God has joined. This verse has been narrowly interpreted both by Biblical theologians and by the Commentators of the Quran; they lost sight of its deep significance. The Biblical theologians interpreted it as prohibiting divorce; marriage being a sacrament in which God had joined man and wife, it is sinful to cut it asunder. Similarly Muslim theologians interpreted it in terms of simple legality. To me it appears that it contains the essence of all true religion and all true morality and its application

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extends to all sorts of social, political, and economic relations. All Nature is one, because its Creator is one; everything is connected with everything else closely or remotely. -- There was a time when Nature was cut asunder into high and low, into God-favoured and God-forsaken spheres. The ancients considered the heavens to be inhabited by gods and the stars were worshipped as gods. The sublunar world was a world of change and decay; the world must be despised so that heaven may be worshipped. Islam struck at the root of this division of Nature and pointed out to all natural phenomena from heavens to the earth in the same breath and in the same strain, as all equally manifesting, the power and beneficence of God and all exhibiting a rational order. The law that makes the planets move regularly in their orbits also makes the blade of grass grow; both phenomena are equally divine and equally miraculous. Those who understand these phenomena need no other miracle to believe in a Good and a Rational Creator and 'those who want wonders to convince them would not believe in spite of them, calling them hallucination or magic.' Islam joined again the aspects of Nature that had been cut asunder by man but were united in God, the Ultimate Reality.

Then we have the Naturalists who believe in Nature only, and the transcendental theists who believe in a God who is indifferent to nature or even despises it, as we find in the Middle Ages monks despising all Nature, including their own bodies as things concerned with the Devil, the World and the Flesh, which were identified.

Similarly, we find in India, Hindu asceticism despising all natural instincts. God and Nature were completely cut asunder. It was Islam which divinised Nature again and presented it as the most obvious testimony of a rational and creative love.

As external Nature was cut asunder into heaven and earth, the realm of light and the realm of darkness, the realm of God and the realm of the Devil, so man's own nature was split into soul and body, spirit and flesh, reason and instinct. The root of all asceticism is this split. Man was considered to be a meeting-point of God and the Devil, where his body and instincts represented the Devil. The body and all physical desires must be completely suppressed. The organic unity of mind and body, called man, was thus vivisected, deadening both parts. Islam came to the rescue of man even in this respect; it sanctified all his instincts, but prescribing the limits of their functions; they have not to be completely suppressed but regulated and controlled. All ascetic practices which injure or torture the body or cause unnecessary pain were prohibited. The Quran praises the Christian ascetics for their love of God and their turning to Him in preference to the world but says that they have drifted on a wrong path and have not understood the nature of that asceticism which lives the simple life, at the same time engaging in all the normal activities of life. Moral injunctions are called in the Quran 'the limits of God'; the exercise of instincts has to be limited and controlled in the interests of personal and social well-being. Instincts from the dynamics of life and the way of

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spirituality is the canalising of these forces into proper channels. It is the thesis of the Quran that God has created nothing in vain; our instincts and emotions were given us for special purposes and every one of them has a prescribed function. Man is an indivisible whole: his body is an organic unity, so his mind and body together form a higher unity. Man would be committing a wrong if he cut asunder his reason from his instincts, or his body from his spirit. The interaction of body and mind is a fact of experience, however unintelligible it may be for our theoretical reason. Every event in our body affects and modifies the processes of our mind and every passing idea or feeling reverberates in the whole organism whether we are conscious of it or not. Islam preached and practised again the maxim of a sound mind in a sound body which a perverted religiosity had forgotten to such an extent that the medieval monks thought it sinful to have a bath and lice were called the pearls of God, who must be allowed to multiply in the body and in the clothes. It is not reported how many monks and nuns died of typhus. Rough-hair shirts were worn as undergarments in order to make the body feel uncomfortable so that the spirit may be nourished. Hindu ascetic practices were still worse. It was one of the great services of Islam to humanity that it exploded the idea of this kind of spirituality and made it a duty to keep body and clothes perfectly clean, without which prayers could not be offered. Man's life is more than physical but body is the instrument of the spirit. The superstructure of human and divine values has to be raised on a physical substratum. All instincts have their functions as well as

their rights; all of them must function within limits so that none of them trespasses on the rights of others. What is prohibited is transgression and not the functioning of instincts. Morality is nothing but their right functioning; if they are suppressed, virtue becomes empty.

Islam is a religion of complete integration. For the first time in history we see the doctrine of the development of the whole man in complete integration with himself, with Society and with Nature, and the whole integration based on belief in a single Creator who is the Unity of all existence. Being is graded but all grades are teleologically and organically related. The doctrine of the unity of humanity is repeatedly presented in the Quran. "Be careful of your duty to God your Lord, who created you from a single being" (4-1). This is the doctrine of the unity and solidarity of humanity, whose "division into tribes and nations has no other purpose except as a means of recognition." For the first time in history tribalism and nationalism were abolished as sources of hostile divisions. All civilised humanity was invited to believe in a common purpose and live for it. Salvation or well-being was extended to all good men, irrespective of race or nation or secondary differences in rituals and conventions. All those who believed in one Good God and led virtuous lives, formed essentially one people who need not quarrel with one another about differences in details. This is given as the minimum of a common basis for civilized humanity. Islam not only preached it as a counsel of perfection but practised it and instituted a new

social order; it gave the chance of enjoying equal rights to the Arab and the non-Arab, to the Jew and the Gentiles, to the Negro, the downtrodden, and the outcasts of all nations.

Man is first integrated as an individual, by striving for harmony between his instincts and reason and then he is harmonised with the social group in which he lives; ultimately all social groups must be unified by belief in morality and the Unity of the Ideal, the God.

The Muslims in their later history developed a narrow orthodoxy which kept the door of international Brotherhood open only for those who entered the brotherhood of Islam and gradually ceased to extend the hand of brotherhood to the followers of other creeds. Islam considers only polytheism as the root of all evil which degrades Man and God and disrupts humanity by numerous hostile objects of worship. Polytheism is not a mere metaphysical belief, harmless to hold as a speculative hypothesis; it cuts into the lives of those who hold it. It makes them superstitious and lowers their morality and stands in the way of personal and social unity and well-being. Polytheists, worshippers of natural forces and imaginary deities, which according to the Quran are illusory creations of their own desires, are considered to be sub-human but even they may live in peace if they allow others to live in peace. All others, who believe in One God and One Morality for all, are invited to work in peace and amity for common human aims, and salvation is the reward of all such persons. "Surely those

who believe (i.e. have joined the Muslim community) and those who are Jews and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve" (2-62).

There have arisen many creeds in modern times, claiming to be creeds of Humanity, which could bring together all the good people of the earth, irrespective of their national or conventional difference. August Comte, the French philosopher, during the last century preached such a creed, where Humanity was to be worshipped in place of God, who had been deposed by Reason and Nature. Those who had done any good to humanity in advancing it morally or culturally were to be called Saints of Humanity. In imitation of the Catholic Church, he also made a calendar of Saints assigning different days to different saints of Humanity, for contemplation and remembrance. He believed Godless Humanity was enough; why bother about God who does not exist? He gathered a few followers for some time and then the creed died out, making no appeal to the deep-rooted instincts of man. Like many similar creeds it was still-born. Then we meet with Bahaism which has added nothing to the essentials of Islam except a New Prophet who also preaches the Unity of God and Unity of all religions. It is hailed as new revelation but there is nothing new about it. Islam teaches that there can be nothing new about the essentials of revelation. The essential truth of the Unity of God and Love and Justice to man have been preached by all great religions and by all prophets. Whenever the

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Quran talks of essentials, it says you will find them in the scriptures of all religions. Islam claims no originality and yet historically it is something very original. The belief in One God had been corrupted all over the world; pure Theism was almost extinct. The belief had rusted all over and Islam removed that rust, so that it may shine forth again in all its pristine glory. This in itself is a service to humanity of capital importance. "Allah is one, Allah is He on whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten and none is like Him" (112:1,2,3,4). He is not incarnated in any one being or even in the entire universe; He is beyond all limitations that we attribute to Him. He is the invisible but abiding Source of all life, all power and all values.

The being of God, notwithstanding complete transcendence, is by knowledge and power immanent in entire Nature and in the soul of man. All the three form an integral whole. The teaching of this integration makes the contribution of Islam original. The worshippers of Reason as an ultimate Reality were there before Islam; the identifiers of the Universe with God were also there like the Stoics. The preachers of utter transcendence like the Neo-Platonists and the Vedantists had also swayed a large portion of humanity. The concept of God as a Moral Arbiter had also been developed by the Jews. Moral principles were also not invented by Islam; morality had always been the concomitant of civilised humanity as is evidenced by the term Ma'ruf used by the Quran for virtue. It means 'the well-known and the obvious.' When the human soul is uncorrupted, virtue is the most

obvious thing for it; the prophets and the philosophers did not invent it. When Islam came on the scene, all these aspects of truth had been corrupted or abstracted and life had lost its wholeness; but only the Whole is wholesome. Men had cut asunder what God had joined and the main service of Islam was to reunite the sundered parts again. Islam was not eclecticism, only juxtaposing truths separately developed and preached; it was an organic unity; it was a creative synthesis. When you look to the parts only that Islam united, there seems to be nothing original in Islam; it can be justly claimed about every part that it was separately preached and practised by others. But when you come to the integration of those parts, the originality of Islam emerges as a creative synthesis, and a great step forward in evolution.

Let me point out another phase of social life in which great sundering, detrimental to social life, had taken place. All religions had developed priesthood; the men who were supposed to know the mysteries of religion and were initiated into the intricacies of ritual were a class apart, greatly venerated and worshipped. No function of life could be complete without the participation of these agents who were mediators between gods or God and men. According to these creeds, as there could be no direct approach to God, these intermediaries and intercessionists had a great hold on the souls of the ignorant, and held them in awe. Religion had become the monopoly of a class of exploiters. The Bhikshus, the Sadhus, the Jogies, the Brahmans and the catholic priests were the monopolists of spirituality; they held in

their hands the keys of heaven and hell because they only had access to the supernatural! Religion had been taken away from the everyday life of the people and deposited with the priestly class. This segregation of religion from life had divided society into watertight compartments, with the result that the priesthood as well as the laity were corrupted. Society is an organism, different parts of which God has joined; when society splits up into classes, the organism begins to lose health and finally every part decays.

Islam abolished priesthood altogether. The message of God was there for everybody to read and recite and hear and practise every day. God says, "Call me and I answer." "We are nearer you than your life-vein" (50:16). No intermediary is necessary and no abracadabra of ritual is required. You have to assume postures of respect and humility, submit your soul wholly to God and pray to be guided on the right path. That is all that Islam requires of man. Where is the need of the religious experts here who should be pampered as a superior class? In a congregational prayer whoever is the best and the most learned of you, let him lead the prayers. Racially he may be a Negro and as to age, he may be a child. The world before Islam had no conception of a classless society; whenever visitors or messengers from other lands came to look at Muslim society as created by the Prophet, the fact that struck them and astonished them most was its classlessness. A Roman messenger to the Prophet, when he returned again to his country, reported about the Muslims that the most curious thing about them was

that during the night in their prayers they became monks, and during the day they became soldiers and cavaliers; he could not conceive of men who could possibly combine these two functions. So the dignity of all professions was established and castes based on high or low work were abolished. The first successor of the Prophet, the great and gentle Abu Bakr, after having been elected as a Khalifa, was seen by Omar the Great, carrying bundles of cloth on his shoulders. He used to live by that trade. Omar told him he could not carry on this trade and administer a great realm at the same time; but Abu Bakr replied that he had to support his family. Omar implored him to accept an allowance from the public treasury to which he agreed, stipulating that it should be just sufficient for the simple needs of food and clothing. A number of great men in Islam, and learned scholars and theologians, followed ordinary professions which a Greek or a Roman or Hindu would have considered beneath him as menial work. All occupations were open to all and no stigma was attached to any profession. This re-establishing of social unity and equality was the reunion of those functions which God had joined but men had cut asunder before Islam.

"Let not men cut asunder what God had joined" (2-27). We now follow this text further into other spheres of social life. God had joined the life of the two sexes to co-operate in the birth, and bringing up of every child male or female. The proudest of men are born of women and the noblest man, whether Christ or Muhammad (P.B.U.H), is the son of a woman. The Prophet once saw a