



STUDIES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
ISLAM AND  
CHRISTIANITY



BY THE SAME AUTHOR  
MOSLEM MENTALITY

STUDIES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
ISLAM AND  
CHRISTIANITY

*PSYCHOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL*

BY

LOOTFY LEVONIAN

M.R.A.S.

DEAN OF THE NEAR EAST SCHOOL OF  
THEOLOGY, BEIRUT

LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD

MUSEUM STREET



Library IAS. Shimla

Rare 297.1972 L 579 I

FI



00013075



Rare  
297.1972  
L579I

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
in 11-point Bembo Type  
BY UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED  
WOKING

TO  
EDWARD AND DOROTHY CADBURY

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MY IN-  
DEBTEDNESS TO THEIR INTEREST AND SUPPORT  
IN THE PUBLICATION OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE  
FOR THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST  
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK



# CONTENTS

| CHAPTER                                                                               | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| INTRODUCTION                                                                          | 9    |
| I                                                                                     |      |
| A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF ISLAM<br>AND CHRISTIANITY                                    |      |
| I THE PRIMITIVE SEMITIC MIND                                                          | 17   |
| II THE HEBREW MIND                                                                    | 21   |
| III RŪH (SPIRIT) IN EARLY ARABIC USAGE<br>AND IN THE QUR'ĀN                           | 27   |
| IV THE CONCEPTION OF RŪH IN ORTHODOX<br>ISLAM                                         | 34   |
| V SŪFĪ TEACHING ON RŪH                                                                | 41   |
| VI THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF THE<br>PROPHET                                       | 54   |
| VII ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS TEACHING IN THE<br>LIGHT OF ISLAM'S CONCEPTION OF<br>THE SPIRIT | 59   |
| VIII DISCUSSIONS ILLUSTRATING THE ISLAMIC<br>CONCEPTION OF RŪH                        | 74   |
| IX THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE AS BETWEEN<br>ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY                         | 81   |
| X WHAT IS EVANGELISM?                                                                 | 100  |

## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between Islam and Christianity constitutes an important issue in most parts of the world, but especially in the countries of the Near East. In the past, most unhappily, there has been much confusion due to misjudgments on both sides, and these again, to a great extent, arise from misunderstandings of the opposed points of view. For example, when the Christian declares his faith in Christ Jesus by employing the term "Son of God," the Moslem interprets this in a purely physical sense, and consequently judges the Christian to be a polytheist. Or when the Christian religion teaches that "God is Spirit," this seems to the Moslem a very heretical statement, owing to Islam's extremely peculiar conception of "the spirit." Thus Islam and Christianity have persistently differed in the psychological content of their terminology, and this has inevitably caused a sharp conflict in their mutual relations almost from the outset.

Similarly, there has been profound misunderstanding with regard to the history of Islam, especially in its relation to Christian communities. To the latter, the history of Islam has seemed to be mainly a terrible series of bloodshed, war and massacre, and this has naturally induced an attitude of antagonism towards their Moslem neighbours. It is evident, therefore, that for right relationship and mutual help, there must be a correct understanding of all

these questions; and to further this has been the purpose of this volume.

Religions, then, may be studied from profoundly different points of view:—with regard (for example) to their history, their conception of God, or (again) their ethical principles. Together with these, however, a close psychological study is demanded, dealing with the mental attitudes and the subconscious—or even unconscious—assumptions of the adherents of each system.

In the past, Islam and Christianity have been compared and contrasted primarily from the viewpoint of their respective ideas of God and their moral codes. But they have never been considered psychologically; and the result of this omission is that our understanding of their relationship has always been seriously inadequate. It must, I believe, be clearly recognized that Islam and Christianity differ fundamentally both in their conception of “the spirit” and “the spiritual,” and in their ideas about Man and his essential nature; and the realization of this contrast is absolutely essential for the accurate comprehension of their religious teaching and mutual relationship. Their religious beliefs, therefore, must be studied in the light of these divergent psychological conceptions; this task is undertaken in the First Section of the present volume, the Second being devoted to the historical aspects of the situation, including in this, however, the religious controversies between the two great religions.

The contents of the book were originally presented at the assemblies of the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, and later at the Selly Oak Colleges; and while



they make no claim to be exhaustive in the study of these problems, they indicate a new direction and a new attitude in the relationship between Islam and Christianity; therein lies the justification for their publication and presentation to the general public.

I wish to thank Dr. H. G. Wood, Director of Studies at Woodbrooke, for valuable suggestions, Miss Mary Pumphrey for corrections in the style, and Dr. H. L. Gottschalk, Curator of the Mingana Collection of Oriental MSS. at the Selly Oak Colleges Library, for reading the proof sheets.

LOOTFY LEVONIAN

SELLY OAK COLLEGES,  
SELLY OAK, ENGLAND

1939



II

MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN CONFLICT IN  
THE NEAR EAST (HISTORICAL AND  
RELIGIOUS)

| CHAPTER                                   | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| XI THE ATTITUDE OF MOSLEMS TO CHRISTIANS  | 110  |
| XII THE ATTITUDE OF CHRISTIANS TO MOSLEMS | 123  |
| XIII THE RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM | 129  |
| XIV THE WAY TO RECONCILIATION             | 137  |
| XV THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY                | 146  |
| A GLOSSARY OF ARABIC TERMS                | 155  |
| INDEX                                     | 157  |

I

A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF  
ISLAM AND  
CHRISTIANITY



## CHAPTER I

### THE PRIMITIVE SEMITIC MIND

A missionary living in the desert in the closest contact with a very primitive Semitic tribe, but with no technical knowledge of either anthropology or psychology, once wrote to me as follows:

"I was not long in this place before it seemed to me that we were in danger of dealing with these people on the basis of generalization about Islam and Moslems. I found that I had to ask myself not what the Qur'ān and Hadith taught, but what part of their teaching had these people appropriated for themselves, and what were the points which the mullahs made use of when teaching the people. . . . Take the problem of the spirit. From what we have at hand I should say that their conception of the spirit is material, although of a different kind from ordinary flesh or matter. It seems to me that they have no conception of the spirit as non-corporeal. To even imagine anything, they must have a shape or body to it, albeit it may be invisible for some reason. Food is placed in the cemeteries for the dead, hence the spirits of the dead must have appetites. . . . These people are materialists of the first order!"

This missionary has here indicated one of the most essential traits in the Semitic mind:—its tendency to materialize and to think always in terms of the concrete.

Everywhere in the Semitic world examples of this concretizing tendency are to be found. Anyone living among them will see that their belief in sacred trees and streams, in springs, animals, rocks, stones, hills and persons, is universal and simply taken for granted. Similarly, records of travel and descriptions of customs by scholars like Robertson Smith and C. M. Doughty contain many examples of such beliefs. Consider, for instance, their custom of making peace with one another by sharing food together; Doughty, in his classic *Arabia Deserta*, describes this as follows:

"These flitting-houses in the wilderness dwelt in by robbers, are also sanctuaries of 'God's guests.' Perilous rovers in the field, the herdsmen of the desert are kings at home, fathers of hospitality to all that seek to them for the night's harbour. The guest entered, and sitting down amongst them, they observe an honourable silence until he has eaten somewhat at the least, and by 'the bread and salt' there is peace established between them." Then Doughty adds a further fact which is extremely significant. "The peace is established only for a time, that is counted two nights and the day in the midst, whilst their food is in him"; merely for the time, that is to say, while this particular meal is supposed to remain in his body.<sup>1</sup> Now why is this so?

The explanation at once becomes clear if we realize that bread or food, for the Semite, is no mere chemical compound composed of carbohydrates, proteins, etc. For it has an immaterial quality also; and since, by eating it, the

<sup>1</sup> P. 228.

two men share this quality between them, they therefore remain friends so long as the food is retained! Perhaps this belief is common to all people in the animistic stage; Sir J. G. Frazer says that "the savage commonly believes that by eating the flesh of an animal or man, he acquires not only the physical but even the moral and intellectual qualities which were characteristics of that animal or man."<sup>1</sup>

For the Semite, therefore, every object is the abode of a "spirit"; and the idea of a spiritual entity devoid of a material body, or again of a material object without a "spirit," is quite unintelligible to him. For the Semite, in other words, "the spiritual" is always materialized; every "spirit" is an entity of a quasi-material nature which abides in matter, and may be transmitted from one thing to another.

In the Semitic languages, in fact, there is no word which expresses exactly and unambiguously the "spirit" or "spiritual." To the Western mind, "spirit" and "spiritual" denote the antithesis of matter and the material; they always mean the immaterial, the non-physical. To the Semitic mind, on the contrary, the spiritual never forms such an antithesis to the physical. To Greco-Western mentality, still further, the primary entity is the spirit and the spiritual, whereas to the Semitic mind, on the other hand, the primary entity is the body and physical existence. To grasp this quite clearly is to comprehend Semitic religion accurately, while to fail to do so is seriously to misunderstand the religious conceptions of the Semites; and one of the principal reasons why there is so much

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*, 2nd ed., II, p. 353.



wholly superficial thinking about Islam is that people have completely failed to apprehend this basic characteristic of the Semitic mind. That "God is Spirit," therefore, is the simplest of all truths in Western religion; for Islam, on the contrary, it is a most repulsive principle. But the sole reason for this is the difference in the Semitic conception of "spirit" and "the spiritual."

## CHAPTER II

### THE HEBREW MIND<sup>1</sup>

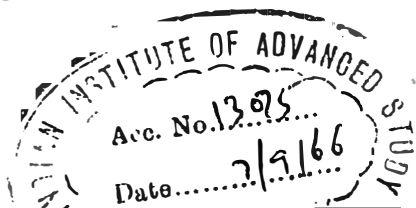
Dr. G. A. Smith has pointed out that "Hebrew may be called primarily a language of the senses. The words originally expressed concrete and material things and movements and actions which struck the senses and started the emotion."<sup>2</sup>

This is perfectly true. Hebrew thought is throughout practical and realistic. There is, for example, no word in Hebrew to differentiate between "house" and "home," the word "bait" denoting both a house and a household; the Hebrew cannot think of a home apart from an actual house. Similarly with "blood," which we regard as a compound of certain chemical elements; but it is not so conceived by the Hebrew mind. It is, rather, the source of life itself. "For the life (nefesh) of the flesh is in the blood" (*Lev. XVII, 2*). It is, in truth, life itself: "the blood is the life (nefesh)" (*Deut. XII, 23*).

In *Ex. XXIV, 5 ff.*, again, we read that Moses sprinkled half the blood of the victim on the altar, and half on the people, to confirm the covenant of the people with

<sup>1</sup> For a further discussion of this subject the reader is referred especially to Principal H. Wheeler Robinson's article on "Hebrew Psychology" in *The People and the Book*, edited by A. S. Peake; W. O. E. Oesterley's and Theodore E. Robinson's *Hebrew Religion*; and Pedersen's *Israel, Its Life and Calling*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Cook, *The Old Testament, a Reinterpretation*, p. 103.



Jehovah; while in both the Deuteronomic and the Priestly code the blood of the sacrifice was forbidden to the people. "The blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of Jehovah thy God; and thou shalt eat the flesh" (*Deut.* XII, 27). Still further, "the fat is Jehovah's" (*Lev.* III, 16). In *Ex.* XVIII, 12, too, "Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Jethro before God." This last phrase is most significant:—"to eat bread before God," or in the presence of God. It was, in fact, a communion service with God; and it is very probable that the original meaning of the Passover, also, was that it should be a communion meal with the purpose of uniting the people to God, because they all shared the same meal; thus God ate and drank, exactly as Jehovah "smelled the sweet savor" of Noah's burnt offerings. Jehovah, therefore, is not purely spiritual. He sits enthroned; Jahweh is in Mount Sinai; Jahweh is in the Ark, which is itself even addressed as "O Jehovah" (*Num.* X, 35 f.). Jehovah is in Mount Zion, and in the Temple which is His Holy abode.

How much futile theological discussion could have been avoided if only this quite simple principle of Hebrew psychology had been clearly appreciated:—that blood is synonymous with life; blood is life itself; it is the person himself. In the same sense, the Hebrew could never conceive of Jehovah, and of communion with Him, on the purely spiritual basis; for true communion, some concrete thing was indispensable. Jehovah and the people, therefore, had to share the same actual meal.

This concretizing characteristic of the Hebrew mind may be seen equally vividly in other words also. Consider, for example, the conception of a "name." A name, to Hebrew mentality, is not merely a means of distinguishing one person from another; it is, rather, the person himself—his soul. Quite similarly, the Arabs say that "Names are sent down from Heaven." They represent the character, the soul, of a person; so that to know the name is to know the person. The name, in other terms, is the power of the soul. To speak "in the name of God," then, is to speak on behalf of God and in His power; to invoke the name of God upon something is to employ the power of God and to change its character. So, too, if a man changes his character he must have a new name, and to take a new name is to acquire a new character.

All this is equally true about "word." A word is not merely something composed of the letters of the alphabet in order to signify an idea, but it has a mysterious power in itself. The words of a blessing do not simply express kindly sentiments; they veritably create a blessing, precisely as the words of cursing create a curse in the soul of the person execrated. The Hebrew "dabar" (word) also implies an action, an event; "The word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please" (*Is.* LV, 2). When the Prophets speak the word of Jehovah, then, it is literally effective.

But the most important example of this concretizing characteristic of the Hebrew mind is to be seen in its conception of the spirit and the human soul. The word

"spirit," (*rūach*), appears more than 350 times in the *Old Testament* and with many different meanings. Originally it meant a natural wind, although the Hebrew thought that the wind was due to direct causation by God, and thus the distinction between the natural and the supernatural was entirely removed. It is in this sense that David enquires of Jehovah regarding the attack on the Philistines, and is guided by "the sound of the rustling in the tops of the mulberry trees" (*II Sam.* V, 23 f.). Similarly in *Hos.* XIII, 15, the East Wind and the spirit of Jehovah are identified: "The East Wind, the spirit (*rūach*) of Jehovah, shall come from the desert." In *Job* IV, 9, again, the destruction of the harvest is thus described: "By the breath of God they perish, By the *rūach* of His anger they are consumed;" while in *Ex.* XV, 8, "By the *rūach* of thy nostrils the waters were heaped up." The Wind, therefore, is the breath of God.

In other contexts, *rūach* is employed to explain such unusual psychic phenomena as the strength of Samson, the ecstasy of primitive prophecy, Saul's anger, the divine energy giving new life to the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, or the *élan vital* in man; the human soul, also, in a later passage: "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a steadfast *rūach* in me" (*Ps.* LI, 10).

This holds true likewise as regards the word "*néphesh*," a very common term in the *Old Testament*; originally this meant "breath," but it also means either the principle of life, as in "Deliver my *néphesh*, Oh Jehovah!" (*Ps.* VI, 4), or the emotions, as in "Thou mayest eat flesh after all the desire of thy *néphesh*" (*Deut.* XII, 15), or self or life, as

in "Let my néphesh, and the néphesh of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight" (II *Kings* I, 13). Here, then, there is no distinction between the psychical and the physical, a man's breath being thought of as his "soul" or "self." As in Arabic, "nafs" (person, soul) and "nafas" (breath) are from the same root. In Hebrew it was the same, although later on another word (neshāmah) was used specifically to denote "breath."

In this respect the creation story is significant. In *Gen.* II, 7 we read: "God formed man of the dust of the ground (the body), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." In this account Man is conceived as essentially a body, but he is animated by the breath blown into his nostrils; while the last word of the *Book of Psalms* is "Let every breath praise Thee." There is, therefore, no distinction whatever between the breath of a man and his soul:—a man's breath is his soul; and to the question, "What is Man?" the Hebrew answer would be, Man is a body infused with a breath-soul. In this important respect, the Greeks thought of Man primarily as "soul" with a body; the Hebrews, on the other hand, regarded him primarily as "body" with a breath-soul. As Professor H. Wheeler Robinson has stated this, "For the Greek, man is an incarnated soul; for the Hebrew, man is animate body." This is the accurate Hebrew idea of human personality; the soul has a quasi-material quality which penetrates all a man's possessions, such as his hair and voice, his skin and clothes, his house, etc. In consonance with this, the mantle of Elijah possessed the power of his soul, so that with it Elisha was able to perform the same miracle

as Elijah (II *Kings* II, 8, 14); and this implies that the soul is invisible, yet at the same moment visible.

This intimate interrelationship of the body with the soul is equally evident in the Hebrew conception of death. Death is the going out of the breath, and as separate from the body the soul has no life; to burn the body, therefore, would be to destroy the soul also. That is why the Hebrew was so very careful in guarding the graves of the dead. About the condition of man after death in She'ol various ideas prevailed, but there was no belief in life without a body. Belief in the resurrection of the body was a Jewish dogma, so that when, in due course, the Hebrew apocalyptists developed a doctrine of immortality, they conceived of this as being a resurrection of the body animated by the same, or by some other, spirit.

It was not at all easy, however, to harmonize the belief in the resurrection of the body with the immortality of the spirit; a compromise was therefore made by conceiving an intermediate state for the purification of the body. Even St. Paul never quite abandoned this idea of life associated with a body of some kind, so that in speaking of the resurrection he is still troubled by the question, "How are the dead raised, and with what manner of body do they come?" and he answers this by saying, "with a spiritual body," without explaining, however, exactly what he means by these words.

### CHAPTER III

#### “RŪH” (SPIRIT) IN EARLY ARABIC USAGE AND IN THE QUR’ĀN

Lane has devoted six pages of his *Dictionary*, of three columns each, to the varied usages of “rūh” and its derivatives in Arabic, in the various stages of which language this word has had many different meanings. To-day “rūh” and “nafs” are used with almost equal frequency for Man, “rūh” denoting the human spirit and “nafs” his soul. But this is due only to late Christian religious and philosophical influences; it is not genuine Arabic usage. For in early pre-Islamic Arabic Literature *nafs* denoted soul, while *rūh* meant only wind or breath, and was never employed for “soul” until the era of Umayyad poetry. In genuine Arabic, as with *rūach* in Hebrew, *rūh* was used solely for wind, the plural “*arwāh*” meaning “winds.” Only in post-Qur’ānic literature are *nafs* and *rūh* equated, both alike being applied to the human spirit.<sup>1</sup>

A missionary working in the Jezirah district of Syria, in the course of conversation with the people, was surprised to find that they interpreted the Qur’ānic verses, indicating Jesus’ birth from the Spirit of Allah, by reading the text as “*min rīh Allah*,” instead of “*rūh Allah*,” that is from “the wind or breath of Allah,” instead of “from His Spirit.” This is a very interesting incident, being

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Article “Nafs” in *Encyclopedia of Islam*.



perhaps a relic of the earliest and original usage of rūh with the meaning of wind.

In the Qur'ān, again, the meaning of rūh is indefinite and obscure. It occurs in twenty passages, being employed in so many different ways that even the authoritative Moslem commentators are dubious about its exact meaning, and feel themselves compelled, therefore, to give more than one explanation to the same verse. They are, in fact, not certain whether the spirit is material, or spiritual, or has some other character; and when the Prophet was questioned about this, he closed the discussion by saying:

"And they will ask thee of the Spirit. Say: the Spirit proceedeth at my Lord's command; but of its knowledge, only a little to you is given" (Sūra XVII, 87).

Actually then, in Islam, rūh is a foreign word borrowed from the Hebrews, and therefore mysterious in its meaning. It has never been used in the Qur'ān to mean soul or human spirit, although later theologians have employed it in that sense. For soul the Qur'ān uses the term nafs.

In his Tractate on *The Holy Spirit in Qur'ān and Bible*,<sup>1</sup> the Rev. C. G. Mylrea has examined the twenty passages in the Qur'ān in which rūh appears, and has divided them into the following four groups:

1. References in which the word spirit is generally identified with the angels, especially with Gabriel.
2. Instances which identify the spirit with creation, and especially with Man.

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Spirit in Qur'an and Bible*, by C. G. Mylrea and Shaikh Iskandar, Madras; cf. also Article, "Rūh in the Qur'ān," *Moslem World Quarterly*, vol. xxii, No. 4.

3. References identifying the spirit with inspiration.
4. Contexts in which the Spirit is identified with Jesus.

The following, again, are from Rodwell's translation of the *Qur'ān*:

*Section I: The Spirit and Gabriel:*

1. "Therein descend the angels and the spirit by permission of their Lord for every matter."—Sūra XCVII, 4.
2. "On the day whereon the spirit and the angels shall be ranged in order, they shall not speak, save he whom the God of Mercy shall permit and who shall say that which is right."—LXXVIII, 38.
3. "The angels and the spirit ascend unto him."—LXX, 4.
4. "Verily from the Lord of the Worlds hath this Book come down from the Lord of all creatures; the faithful spirit hath come down with it upon thy heart."—XXVI, 192-3.
5. "Say, the Holy Spirit hath brought it down with truth from thy Lord."—XVI, 104.

*Section II: The Spirit and Man:*

1. "I shall have fashioned him and breathed of my spirit into him."—XV, 29.
2. "And he breathed of His Spirit into him."—XXXII, 8.
3. "When I have formed him and breathed of my spirit into him, then worshipping fall down before him."—XXXVIII, 72.

*Section III: The Spirit and Inspiration:*

1. "He will cause the angels to descend with the Spirit on whom He pleaseth among His servants."—XVI, 2.
2. "They will ask thee of the Spirit. Say: The Spirit proceedeth at my Lord's command."—XVII, 87.
3. "He sendeth forth the Spirit at His own behest on whomsoever of His servants He pleaseth."—XL, 15.
4. "Thus have we sent the Spirit to thee with a revelation at our command."—XLII, 52.
5. "On the hearts of these hath God graven the Faith and with His own Spirit hath He strengthened them."—LVIII, 22.

*Section IV: The Spirit and Jesus:*

1. "And to Jesus, son of Mary, gave we clear proofs of his mission, and strengthened him by the Holy Spirit."—II, 81, 254.
2. "And His Word which he conveyed into Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from himself."—IV, 168.
3. "I strengthened Thee with the Holy Spirit."—V, 109.
4. "And we sent our spirit to her and he took before her the form of a perfect man."—XIX, 18.
5. "Into whom we breathed of our spirit."—XXI, 91.
6. "And Mary the daughter of 'Imran who kept her maidenhood, and into whose womb we breathed of our Spirit."—LXVI, 12.

The comments of Moslem commentators on some of these verses are highly illuminating:

- XCVII, 4. The commentary of al-Jalālāin identifies this spirit with Gabriel; al-Zamakhsharī also says that in this text the spirit signifies Gabriel, or a party of angels unseen by the ordinary angels except on the night of al-Qadr (the night of Power). Al-Tabarī, on the other hand, asserts that commentators are not at all clear about the real meaning of the text; the majority, however, think that the spirit who descends is Gabriel.
- LXXVIII, 38. Al-Baidāwī maintains that “The spirit is an angel who is entrusted with the charge of the spirits. It may also refer to Gabriel, or to some being greater than the angels;” and while al-Jalālāin holds that it refers to Gabriel, al-Tabarī adds: “It is also related from Mujāhid: ‘The spirits are a creation in human form; they eat and drink, and possess hands, feet and heads; they eat food and so are not angels;’ and from Ibn Khālid, who said, ‘The spirits resemble men, but are not men.’” Abū Sālih, again, contends that “The spirits are a creation similar to man, but they are not men.”
- XV, 29. Al-Baidāwī comments as follows: “I breathed of my spirit into him, so that it permeated the organs of his body and he became alive. Now as the spirit depends for its existence on the ethereal vapour which radiates from the heart, and after receiving vital force permeates through the arteries, God made its connexion with the body by means of a breath.”
- II, 81. “The Holy Spirit here refers to Gabriel” (al-Baidāwī).
- “The Holy Spirit here means Gabriel” (al-Jalālāin).

V, 109. "With the Holy Spirit" means "with Gabriel" (al-Baidāwī).

"The Spirit here means Gabriel" (al-Jalālāin).

XIX, 17. Baidāwī converts the story of Mary and Gabriel into that of the encounter between a man and a woman, accompanied by the exciting of her passion. The spirit or breath, by which Mary conceived, is here regarded as the material breath of the angel, in the form of a man, communicated to Mary.

XXI, 91. "The Spirit here is Gabriel who breathed into the fold of Mary's robe, and she conceived" (al-Jalālāin).

On XV, 29, which refers to the creation of man, Tefsiri Tebyan comments that when God told the angels that He would create man from mud, He fashioned his form, and then infused into his body the spirit which He created, and thus body and spirit were fused together. . . . He made the spirit run into all parts of the body. God has said, "From my spirit I breathed." It is out of respect for man that He says: "From my spirit"; and He says "my," because God created the spirit and therefore possesses it. It does not mean, however, that the spirit, which is a part of man, has been taken from the Divine spirit; it is only out of respect for the spirit that God calls it "my spirit."<sup>1</sup>

From these comments, then, it is quite evident that, in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my Article on "The Birth of Jesus," *Moslem World Quarterly*, July 1925, regarding the comments of Turkish writers.

the Qur’ān, spirit or rūh has no purely spiritual meaning. The physical and the spiritual have been confused with each other, the spirit having a quasi-material character, while rūh is employed to denote either angels, or the breath of God, but never in the purely spiritual sense.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONCEPTION OF RŪH IN ORTHODOX ISLAM<sup>1</sup>

In dealing with rŭh in his *al-Risālat al-Laduniyya*<sup>2</sup> al-Ghazālī expresses the orthodox view as follows: "Know that those who have discussed the matter have explained this precious substance in various ways, and hold different opinions about it. The Scholastic theologians, skilled in the art of dispute, consider the soul (*nafs*) to be a body (*jism*) and say that it is a subtle body associated with the coarse body, and see no difference between the spirit and the flesh, except in respect of subtlety and coarseness. Others consider the spirit to be an accident (*'arad*), some physicians also inclining towards this view; others, again, take the blood to be the spirit."

On the other hand, al-Baijūrī, in his *Hāshiya* on the matn of Abū Shujā<sup>3</sup> describes the relation of rŭh to the body as "a subtle body running in the body like the running of water in green wood." Thus both rŭh and body are corporeal, with the sole difference that one is fine and the

<sup>1</sup> I should like to acknowledge the kindness of the Editors of *The Moslem World Quarterly* in permitting me to make many quotations from Professor Duncan Macdonald's two Articles on "Spirit in Islam," published in the January and April numbers, 1932, as reprinted from *Acta Orientalia*, 1931. This chapter is mainly based on these Articles.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1343, p.7.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1307, Vol. I, p. 261.

other coarse; while in his Treatise *al-Fark bain al-Firāk*,<sup>1</sup> al-Baghdādī, says that "The life of Allah is without rūh, and all arwāh (spirits) are created."

Ibn Hazm, again, in referring to the creation of the spirits, says that Allah created these before the angels were commanded to prostrate themselves before Adam, and that they exist in al-Barzakh in the nearest heaven until the angel blows them into the unborn child.

Turning next to the Mu'tazila theologians, al-Jubbā'i maintained that "rūh is a body," while al-Nazzām taught that man himself was rūh, the body being only an instrument; but he also held that the rūh was a fine substance which flowed in the body like the essential oil in the rose, or like the butter in milk.<sup>2</sup>

The author of the *Dictionary of Technical Terms* asserts that: "Opinions about rūh differ. Many theologians said that they did not know the truth of the matter, and no description would be correct; rūh is one of those things which is kept concealed from us, since God has said: 'They will ask thee of the rūh; say, the spirit proceedeth at my Lord's command and its knowledge was not given to you except a little' (XVII, 87). It is related, too, that the Jews said to the Quraish, 'Ask Muhammed about three things, and if he lets you know about two but hides the third, then he is a prophet.' They asked about the 'People of the Cave,' about Alexander, and about Spirit. Forty days later Muhammed spoke of the first two, but refrained from

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1328. This writer died A.H. 1037.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Article "Mu'tazila" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*. Al-Nazzām died A.H. 231.



speaking of the third, and this verse was revealed to him." Still further, in outlining the opinion of different writers on this question, he quotes the statement that "Rūh is jism latīf, a fine or subtle matter, like the latīfat (fineness) of the air, or the butter in the milk, or oil in the nut."<sup>1</sup>

This, then, must be recognized as the fundamental position of Islam about rūh:—Spirit is corporeal; or in Western Christian terms: according to the teaching of orthodox Islam, Spirit is non-spiritual.

Subsequently this orthodox Islamic standpoint was questioned by these philosophical theologians who denied the corporeality of the spirit and called it simply "substance" (jawhar), as well as by some of the Mu'tazila school and the great Sūfis (mystics); none of these, however, changed the fundamental position of orthodox Islam.

The fullest presentation of the principle of the corporeality of the spirit is found in the Kitāb al-rūh of Ibn Qiyyim al-Jawzīya, who died in Damascus A.H. 751 (A.D. 1350). Ibn Qiyyim was a pupil and editor of Ibn Taimīya, the great Hanbalite who attacked the cult of pilgrimage to the tombs of saints, interpreted the Qur'ān literally, died in prison in Damascus in A.D. 1328, and became the spiritual founder of the Wahhabite movement initiated by Muhammed ibn 'Abd-al-Wahhāb in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Ibn Qiyyim's book, already published twice at Hyderabad,<sup>2</sup> is written in the form of twenty-one questions and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Muhammed 'Alī al-Tuhānawī: *A Dictionary of the Technical Terms*, edited by A. Sprenger and W. N. Lees, Calcutta, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> Second edition, 1324.

answers, together with ample discussion. These enquiries relate to the soul or spirit, the soul of man, its condition after death, its destiny before and at the time of judgment, etc. I shall, however, confine my remarks to only a few of these questions and their answers, which suffice to show quite clearly the corporeality of the spirit.

The Fourth Question then is: Do souls die with their bodies? Ibn Qaiyim's reply is that, for the soul, death is only its separation from the body.

The Fifth Question follows: Have they any "form" (*shakl*, *sūra*)? Ibn Qaiyim maintains that this cannot be answered by those who assert that the soul is incorporeal, such as al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī. It is a self-existent essence (*dhāt qa'ima binafsiha*) which ascends and descends, joins and separates, goes out, comes and goes, moves and rests.<sup>1</sup>

The Nineteenth Question, again, runs: what does a man indicate when he says "I"? . . . Ibn Qaiyim states that "Man" means the body and the *rūh* both together, and rejects all other views as false. He defines *rūh*, moreover, as "a body" (*jism*) different in quiddity (*māhiya*) from the sensible body, of the nature of light (*nūrānī*), lofty (*'ulwī*), light (*khafīf*), living, moving, penetrating the substance of the (physical) limbs (*jawhar al-'a'dā'*), and running in them as water runs in the rose, oil in the olive and fire in charcoal. So long as the limbs are sound, still further, so as to receive the impressions proceeding from this subtle (*latīf*) body, it remains intertwined (*mushābik*) with them and gives them these impressions of sense and intentional (*'irādīya*) movement. But when-

<sup>1</sup> P. 58.

ever the limbs are corrupted (*fasaa*) owing to coarse admixtures (*al-'akhlāt al-ghalīza*) overpowering them, thus becoming unable to receive these impressions, it goes to the world of spirits (*'ālam al-arwāh*). There follow one hundred and sixteen proofs of this position, derived from the Qur'ān, tradition, ghost stories and logical arguments.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, Question Seventeen: Is the Qur'ānic *rūh* eternal, or originated and created? For Ibn Qaiyim there is nothing eternal and uncreated except Allah himself; there are (in other words) only two things in existence: Allah and his creation. But certain Qur'ānic texts and traditions had been quoted and explained in such a way as to bring the *rūh* into a unique relation to Allah, maintaining that the *rūh* is of the Command of Allah (*min 'amr rabbi*), and that Allah "breathed" (*nafakha*) into Adam some of his *rūh*; and as a result of this, some have held that the *arwāh* of men are light from the light of Allah, and life from his life. Ibn Qaiyim, however, calls these contentions heretical (*sinf min al-zanādiqa wa-sinf min al-rawāfida*).<sup>2</sup>

Al-Qaiyim also criticizes those who hold that *rūh* is neither created nor uncreated; alluding to ibn Hanbal's principle, that "Whosoever says that the *rūh* is created is a heretic; whosoever says that it is eternal is an unbeliever," he gives twelve positive proofs that it is created. He then deals with the Qur'ānic basis of those who hold the opposed doctrines; and asserts that they, like all innovators (*muttadi'*), follow the obscure (*mutashābih*) passages of the Qur'ān, rather than those that are clear and certain

<sup>1</sup> P. 284.

<sup>2</sup> P. 230.

(muhkam). To this he adds that the rūh of Allah, poured out in His breathing, is an entity separate from Allah, and is created. In man, therefore, there is no element of divinity at all; he is owned and there is no lordship (rubūbiya) in him.

On pages 230-233 of the same work (to continue) Ibn Qaiyim discusses the question of the birth of Jesus, and the significance of Jesus being Kalimat Allah (the Word of God). Appealing to the texts of the Qur'ān on this issue, he replies that if Jesus is rūh min Allah (a spirit from God), then he is uncreated; likewise Adam also. He proceeds to refute all these views as being inconsistent with the dogma that all spirits are created, and gives new interpretations to the verses of the Qur'ān. This whole section, in fact, is so typical that I append a full translation:

"Did you hear what God says in the Qur'ān about 'Isā?"

"Verily 'Isā the Christ, son of Mary, is the Apostle of God and His word which he conveyed into Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Himself (Sūra IV, 168; III, 40); and the word which He conveyed into her was when he said to him, 'Be,' and 'Isā came into existence with 'Be.' 'Isā was not 'Be,' but came into existence with 'Be': 'Be' is a word (qawl) from Allah, and 'Be' is not created. The Nasāra and the Jahmīya have falsified God in the case of 'Isā. The Jahmīya said: 'The Spirit of God and His word, and His word is created.' And the Nasāra said, 'Isā is the Spirit of God and His word from His essence,' as though to say that this cloak is from this cloth. We say that 'Isā became existent by the Word, but 'Isā himself is not the Word. The Word is the saying of God the Most High; it

is 'Be' and His saying. . . . So it is clear that the spirit of Christ is created as are other spirits, and that God has appropriated to him the spirit which He sent to Mary, and he is His Servant and Apostle; but this does not signify that he is eternal (*qadīm*) and uncreated."

All these quotations, then, indubitably show, once more, that the fundamental position of Orthodox Islam is that *rūh* is corporeal; or in other words, spirit is non-spiritual.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a further study of the Islamic teaching on "spirit" the reader is referred to Shaikh al Abyārī, *Bāb al Futūh fī ma'rifat ahwāl ar-rūh* (Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1304).

## CHAPTER V

### SŪFĪ TEACHING ON RŪH

The rise of Sūfism—that is, of Moslem mysticism—in Islam is an extremely interesting phenomenon. From the early centuries of Islam, indeed, we find mystical and ascetic tendencies which have persisted until to-day; the various Dervish orders, all over the Moslem world, provide the best proof of this. Because the human soul can never remain satisfied with a merely transcendent and abstract God, Moslems have turned repeatedly to mysticism; and while it is true that mysticism has, on the one hand, saved Islam from dualism—from any antithesis between God and the universe—it has, on the other hand, led it into a speculative monism which ultimately annihilates personality both in God and man.

The early Sūfis accepted the corporeality of the rūh. In his *Kaṣḥf al-Mahjūb*, al-Hujwīrī, who died A.H. 465, asserted that rūh is corporeal, but is a subtle entity—a fine created substance (‘ain) or body (jism) placed in the sensible body like sap in green wood,<sup>1</sup> while another Sūfī said: “Rūh is a light, fragrant breath through which life subsists, while the soul (nafs) is a hot wind (rīh) through which the motions and desires exist.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Article “Nafs” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. J. Arberry, *The Doctrine of the Sūfis*, p. 52; translated from the Abū Bakr al-Kalābadhī’s *Kitāb al-Ta‘arruf li-madhhab ahl al-tasawwuf*.

‘Abd al-Razzāq, who died 887/1482, pointed out in his *Dictionary of the Technical Terms of the Sūfis*<sup>1</sup> that “In the usage of the people, rūh is the human abstract latīfa, but according to the physicians it is the latīf vapour produced in the heart for the strength of life, feeling and motive, and this is called by them nafs or soul.”

Somewhat similarly Ahmed Nekerī, in his *Encyclopedia of Science*, says: “Nafs is the latīf vaporous substance, (Jawhar bukhārī); some have described it as a spiritual substance, neither matter nor material, neither within the body nor outside, but uniting the body like the union of the lover with the beloved. Al-Ghazālī again, when questioned about rūh and nafs, replied by saying that rūh is rīh (spirit is wind), and nafs is nafas (soul is breath): then, said the enquirer, ‘in that case if a man breathes out, his soul goes out; and if he passes wind, his spirit goes out’: at which the whole company broke into laughter!”<sup>2</sup>

But the ablest critic of this conception of the corporeality of the spirit is undoubtedly the great orthodox Sūfī in Islamic theology, al-Ghazālī, who died 505/1111. Al-Ghazālī had an enquiring mind, combined with a genuine spiritual experience, and could therefore never feel himself in agreement with any such corporeal explanation of the spirit. In his *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*<sup>3</sup> he describes his own experience as follows:

“Then, after I had persevered in withdrawal from the

<sup>1</sup> Edited in the Arabic original by Sprenger, Calcutta, 1845.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. his *Kitāb Jāmi’ al ‘Ulūm*, Vol. I, Part III, Hyderabad, A.H. 1329.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1303, p. 38; quoted in Professor MacDonald’s *Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, p. 190.

world and in the solitary life for almost ten years, it became plain to me and certain that man is created with a body and a heart. I mean by 'heart' his spiritual essence, which is the locus of the knowledge of God, as opposed to the flesh-and-blood organ in which dead bodies and the lower animals share. . . . The Prophets are the physicians of the diseases of hearts; and the only use and authority for reason ('aql) is that it should take us by the hand and commit us to prophecy, as the blind are committed to their guides and the sick to their physicians."

I shall now quote three of al-Ghazālī's contentions in order to show his conception of the spirit:

1. From his Treatise al-Madnūn al-Saghīr,<sup>1</sup> commenting on Sūra XVI, 2, "I fashioned him and breathed of my spirit into him":

"When the embryo in the womb becomes fit to receive and to hold the spirit, as the wick which is soaked with oil becomes fit to receive fire and hold it . . . the spirit is bestowed on it from the bounty of God." This is the "fashioning."

He continues with an allegorical explanation of "breathing":

"It is like the outpouring of the light of the Sun upon every object that is capable of illumination at the removal

<sup>1</sup> This is a little tract of only twelve pages, but is exceedingly interesting with regard to al-Ghazālī's teaching on Spirit, and consists of questions and answers on the higher aspects of spiritual problems. Professor Duncan MacDonald has given an outline of this tract in his Article in *The Moslem World Quarterly*, October 1919. The quotations cited here are translations from the Cairo Edition, A.H. 1309.



of the veil (hijāb) between it and the Sun . . . or like the polish of a mirror; for as the mirror whose face is covered does not receive the image, even if the object or figure is in front of it, but when it is polished the image is produced in it, likewise when the embryo is fashioned, rūh is produced in it by the Creator of rūh, but with no change whatever in the Creator."

"The outpouring also is not like the pouring of water from a vessel to the hand, which involves the separation of a particle of the water from the vessel to join the hand . . . nor even like the rays of the Sun, as when some have erroneously thought that a ray from the body of the Sun separates itself and joins the wall. This is wrong. The light of the Sun is the cause of the production of a thing which resembles it in quality of light, although much weaker as it is seen on the coloured wall. The same is true with regard to the image reflected in the mirror. It does not mean that a particle from the object or person separates itself and joins the mirror, but that the real entity is the cause of the production of an image like it in the mirror. There is no joining nor separating between them, but a simple causal relationship."

To the query "What is rūh?" he replies:—"It is not permitted to the Apostle of God to disclose the solution of the mystery of the spirit, except to those who are capable of understanding it, and if thou art capable, hearken! The rūh is not a thing abiding in the body like water in a vessel, nor an accident ('arad) abiding in the heart and brain, like the abiding of blackness in the black, or knowledge in the knower; but it is a substance (jawhar),

because it knows itself and its Creator. . . . It is not a kind of matter (*jism*), because matter can be divided, but *rūh* cannot be divided. . . . It is neither inside the body nor outside, neither joined to it nor separated from it . . . it is free of abiding in space, which is the characteristic of material things.”

Similarly, to the enquiry, “Why is the Apostle forbidden by Allah to disclose the mystery of *rūh* and expose its truth? as it is said in the Qur’ān, XVII, 87, ‘Say, the Spirit proceedeth at my Lord’s command,’” his reply is:—“Because men are of two classes—the common and the select; those who are common do not understand even the attributes of Allah; how then can they understand the human spirit? Such are the Karramites<sup>1</sup> and the Hanbalites, who made God a body (*jism*) because they cannot think of any entity (*mawjūd*) except some object at which you can point. The Ash‘arites and the Mu‘tazilites, however, have made some progress from this commonness, and so they can conceive of an entity which is not in any spatial direction . . . but they will not extend those qualities to anyone besides Allah; and if you point this out to them they will curse you, and say that you are assuming for yourself the specific qualifications of God, as if you were ascribing divinity to yourself. . . . In this they err; likewise in their objection that this is to make comparison (*tashbih*) between Allah and man, and to ascribe to the *rūh* the most specific of the qualities of Allah. Alas! we speak of man as living and knowing, as powerful, hearing,

<sup>1</sup> The Karramites are also called Mujassima (corporealists), who declared God to be corporeal.

seeing and speaking; and such is the Most High also; yet in this there is no comparison, because these are not the specific qualities of Allah. Likewise being free from place and direction is no specific quality of God. His most specific quality is His being eternal (qayyūm)—His existing in and through His essence, while everything else exists through Him. God exists in His own essence, and not through aught else; everything else exists through Him, and not in its own essence. The existence of God is in His own essence, and not derived; all other existences are derivative.”

“What then does God mean when He says that He breathed from His rūh into men? Does this mean that a particle from Allah was poured out, as when one gives something to a beggar and says, ‘I bestowed upon him some of my property’? But this would mean the partition of the essence of God, which is wrong. It is like the Sun saying, ‘I bestowed upon the earth some of my Light,’ which means that the resultant light is in some sense of the same genus as the light of the Sun, though it is extremely weak in comparison with the Sun’s own light.”

To continue: “Is the spirit created or pre-existent (qadīm)? We say that rūh is uncreated, in the sense that it is limited by neither quantity nor space, because it cannot be divided and is non-spatial; but at the same time we say that it is created, in the sense that it is produced (hādith) and not pre-existent (qadīm). The human spirit is produced at the time of the fitness of the embryo to receive it, as the image is produced in the mirror together with the production of the polish.”

What, again, is the meaning of the saying that God Most High created man in His image?

"The meaning of the words, 'God created man in His own image' is spiritual, not corporeal. It means that the essence of the spirit is self-existent; it is neither an accident ('arad) nor a body (jism), nor a spatial substance abiding in space or having some direction, neither joining together the body and the world nor separate, neither inside the bodies of the world nor outside; all these are in the essence of God. 'He who knows his soul knows his Lord.' If God had not brought together in humanity all the likeness of the world, so that man became a microcosm, a lord in his own world, we would have known neither the world, lordship, reason, power and knowledge, nor any other divine qualities. Thus, by its likeness, the soul of man becomes a staircase to the knowledge of God."

2. In his Treatise, *al-Risālat al-Laduniyya*,<sup>1</sup> after describing the animal spirit, he continues: "There is another meaning of the spirit that is special to man. This is the rational soul and the restful spirit; this spirit is neither a body nor an accident, for it is from the command of God Most High, as He said, 'The spirit (proceedeth) at the command of my Lord' (Sūra XVII, 87). . . . Now the command of the Lord is neither a body nor an accident, but a divine power . . . simple substance, free from materiality . . . this spirit does not die with the death of the body, for God the Most High calls it to His door and says: 'Return unto thy Lord' (LXXXIX, 27-30). It is only separated from the body, and because of its separation

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1343, p. 8.

from the body the bodily and the natural powers cease to function and their activity is stilled, and that stillness is death . . . this substance does not abide in any place, nor dwell in any habitation; and the body is not the habitation of the spirit, nor the abode of the heart; but the body is the instrument of the spirit, the implement of the heart and the vehicle of the soul. The spirit is neither attached to the particles of the body, nor detached from it, but is favourable to the body, is useful and beneficial to it.”<sup>1</sup>

3. Finally, in *Ihjā ‘ulūm al-dīn*, al-Ghazālī, explaining the meaning of *nafs*, *rūh*, *qalb* and *‘aql*, says:<sup>2</sup>

“A. *Qalb* (heart). It has two meanings:

- a. The cone-shaped flesh, located on the left of the chest, with cavities containing the black blood, which is the spring of the spirit and its source.
- b. A spiritual, divine subtle entity (*latīfa*), which has a certain relation to the physical heart; this *latīfa* is the essence of man (*haqīqat*). It understands and knows, etc. . . . It is related to the physical heart, but men have wondered at this relationship. Its relation resembles that of accidents (*‘arād*) to matter, of qualities to what they qualify, of the user of an instrument to the instrument. But we avoid explaining this relationship, for two reasons: (1) This is a question concerned with the science of revelation (*mukāshafa*), whereas our subject in

Quoted with slight changes from the translation by Margaret Smith in the *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, April 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Translated from *Ihjā*, Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1334, Part III, p. 3.

this book is the science of practice (mu'āmala).  
 (2) The complete manifestation of this relationship would mean the disclosing of the secret of the Spirit; and since on this the Prophet himself has not spoken, it is not for others to speak about it. There is a hadīth from Ibn Mas'ūd, in which the Prophet declines to answer the question of the Jews about the spirit. When we speak about qalb in this book, therefore, we mean this subtle (latifa) thing, and our purpose is to describe its qualities and conditions, not its essence (haqīqat) in itself; for the science of practice (mu'āmala) requires the knowledge of its qualities and conditions, not of its essence."

"B. The Spirit (rūh). This has also two meanings:

- a. A subtle entity (jism latif) whose source is the cavity of the physical heart, which is distributed by arteries to the other parts of the body. Its running in the body, and the flowing of the lights of life, and of feeling and seeing, of hearing and smelling, from it into the organs, resemble the flowing of the light from a candle into the corners of a house. There is no corner of the house which is not lit by a candle moving along the walls; now the spirit is like the candle, and the running of the spirit, and its internal movement, are like the movement of the candle light on all sides of the house, owing to the motion of the moving body.

This is what physicians understand by heart; it is a subtle vapour (bukhār latīf) which is ripened by the warmth of the heart . . .

- b. It is the latifa which knows and understands, just as we have already explained it to be one of the meanings of qalb; and this is what God meant in His word: 'The spirit is from the amr of my Lord'; it is a wonderful and divine amr, whose essence is beyond the understanding of many minds."

Thus al-Ghazālī's position is that, essentially, human rūh is immaterial; it is a spiritual substance, and has no corporeality whatever. It also contains some spark of the divine, so that there is a likeness between the human spirit and God: God and man are therefore akin. In these respects, al-Ghazālī is certainly the most spiritually minded theologian in Islam. Yet even he is most cautious in carrying this idea of the spirituality of the human soul to its logical conclusion. For if God and man are akin, the fundamental Islamic dogma of "difference" (mukhālafa) between God and man must be abandoned. But al-Ghazālī struggles against this danger, and endeavours to find a *via media* which harmonizes both truths. In his Creed, therefore, he repeats the orthodox doctrine and affirms that "Nothing is like God, and God is not like anything. . . . There comes about in the world neither seen or unseen, neither good nor evil, faith nor unbelief, except by His Will. What He wills is, and what He wills not is not." Plainly, this does not permit of much kinship between God and man. Again, if the spirit is not body, it must have life

apart from the body, whereas al-Ghazālī protests against the idea that the body is perishable and only the soul is immortal, and entertains the possibility of the reunion of the soul with its (new) bodily frame.<sup>1</sup> In his *Risāla Laduniyya*,<sup>2</sup> referring to death, he says: "The spirit is not corruptible, is not destroyed, does not pass into nothingness, does not die, but is separated from the body; and (he adds) it waits, or expects to return to it on the Day of Resurrection, as it is stated in the Law."

Again, on *Ihjā*, he discusses the meaning of death.<sup>3</sup>

"Know that men have false ideas about death. Some people believe that death is nothingness, that there is no resurrection, no reward nor punishment for goodness and wickedness, that the death of man is like that of animals. This is the opinion of the atheists, who do not believe in God and the Last Day. . . . Others think that the spirit remains, and is not extinguished by death, and that those who are rewarded and punished are the spirits without bodies, so that bodies do not rise at all. All these beliefs are false and far from the truth. . . . The meaning of death is only change of condition. The spirit remains after the separation from the body, and is either rewarded or punished; and the meaning of its separation from the body is the cessation of its control over the body, owing to the release of the body from obedience to the spirit. The members of the body are instruments for the use of the spirit for seeing, hearing, etc. . . . all these (functions)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. T. J. de Boer, *History of Philosophy in Islam* (tr. E. R. Jones), p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1343, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1334, Part IV, pp. 421 ff.



belong not to the members but to the *rūh* itself, and these remain with the *rūh* after the separation from the body. . . . But what it did by means of the members remains idle, owing to the death of the body, until the time when the spirit shall return to the body; and it will not be far from the truth to say that the *rūh* returns to the body in the grave, or that it will wait till the Day of Resurrection; and God knows how He will judge His servants."

Similarly, in his *al-Madnūn al-Kabīr*, he says: "The return of the soul to the body, after its separation (death), at the Resurrection is a possible event and not impossible. This is nothing astonishing, because the soul's combination with the body in the beginning is a more astonishing phenomenon than its return to it after the separation."<sup>1</sup> Turning to his *Tahāfut al-falāsifat*, we find him referring to those who deny the resurrection of bodies, the return of spirits to the bodies, the existence of any actual fire, of Paradise and beautiful damsels; and he himself interprets all these as being similitudes addressed to the common people, to enable them to understand punishment and reward, adding: "Most of these things are not contrary to the Law . . . in fact it is contrary to the Law to deny the resurrection of bodies, physical pleasure in Paradise and torture in the Fire, as described in the *Qur'ān*. What objection can there be to combining the two types of pleasure, the spiritual and the physical? To deny these things would be to deny the power of God."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1309, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Al-Ghazālī, Tahāfut al-falāsifat*, Texte Arabe, Beirut, 1927, pp. 344, 354 ff.

Thus even the most spiritually minded theologian of Islam has not rid himself completely of the idea of the corporeality of the rūh, and has not attained the conception of the pure spirituality of the human soul. It is certainly true that his sincere and inquiring mind finds itself wholly in disagreement with the materialistic conceptions of the scholastic theologians of Islam, against which he protests most vehemently; yet he never dares to grasp, and to carry to its logical conclusions, the reality of the spiritual in its complete purity and simplicity.

It is true, in conclusion, that he affirms the spirituality of God; yet he speaks of "The Tablet and the Pen preserved in Heaven for God's writing, worthy of His finger and hand," and finally leaves the question by calling all these also spiritual substances.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Al-Madnūn al-Saghīr, p. 12 (Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1309).

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF THE PROPHET

This typically non-spiritual conception of rūh is also to be plainly discerned in the doctrine of the person of Muhammed, as this was developed in later Sūfī thought. For example 'Abdu'l-Karīm al-Jīlī, who was born in A.D. 1365, identifies Muhammed with the Logos in the following terms:

"You must know that the Perfect Man is a copy of God. That is so because God is Living, Knowing, Mighty, Willing, Hearing, Seeing and Speaking; and Man too is all these. . . . Further, you must know that the Divine Names and Attributes belong to the Perfect Man by fundamental and sovereign right, in virtue of a necessity inherent in his essence, for it is he whose Idea (haqīqat) is signified by those expressions and whose spiritual reality is indicated by these symbols; they have no subject in existence whereto they should be attached, except the Perfect Man, who cannot possibly see his own form but in the mirror of Allah; and he is also a mirror to God, for God laid upon himself the necessity that His Names and Attributes should not be seen save in the Perfect Man."

Al-Jīlī proceeds to describe the Perfect Man as "A microcosmus reflecting the divine powers as in a mirror." He is a copy made in the image of God. Certainly all men are

potentially perfect, but few are actually so—only the prophets and saints; and since their perfection varies in degree, according to their capacity for receiving illumination, one of them must stand out above all the rest. This is the Prophet Muhammed, the absolutely Perfect Man. This writer holds, still further, that in every age the Perfect Men are outward manifestations of the essence of Muhammed, which has the power of assuming whatever form he will. Muhammed, therefore, is the first-created of God and the archetype of all other created individuals.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Ghazālī again, in his *al-Madnūn al-Saghīr*, discusses the issue as follows:

“Muhammed said, ‘I am the first of the prophets by creation, and the last by mission.’ Here, however, creation means predestination, not literal creation, because before his mother conceived him, he was not existent and created. . . . As in the saying, ‘First the idea, and then production’: or like an architect, who first makes the model of the building and then carries it in actuality . . . so it is with the office of the prophet. This began with Adam, but it grew in perfection until it reached its full perfection in Muhammed . . . like an instrument which is complete with five prongs, while either four, or six, prongs would mean imperfection. . . . Muhammed was a prophet by predestination, before the completion of the creation of Adam. . . . Know that God predestines first, and then creates or brings into being. Predestination (*taqdīr*) is first written by God on the Preserved Tablet, as an architect draws his plan first on a sheet of paper, and thus the house

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, pp. 82 ff.

becomes existent in a certain sense. This, then, is the meaning of the pre-existence of Muhammed. It is by predestination, not by creation."

This idea was further developed in the form of a pre-existent Light of Muhammed, which was revealed in all the Prophets from Adam to Jesus, and finally in Muhammed himself, while according to the Sūfis this "Light" exists to-day in the Walis or saints. As Bāyazīd Bistāmī said: "That which the prophets have may be compared to a skin containing honey. A single drop trickles from it, and that drop is the portion of the saints, while to our Prophet—on whom be peace!—belongs all the honey in the skin."<sup>1</sup>

This conception of the Divine Light may also be found in the doctrine of the Imamate held by the Shī'ahs. It is usually supposed that what differentiates the Shī'ahs from the Sunnī Moslems is their acceptance of 'Alī as the legitimate Caliph in the Succession to Muhammed; but this is not quite accurate. What actually distinguishes the Shī'ahs from the Sunnīs is their doctrine of the Imamate; and this forms the basis of the entire Shī'ah conception of religion, according to which religion consists in the true knowledge of the Imām. Thus the Shī'ites are also called Imāmiyah, because they believe that the Imām is the bearer of a part of God, having a divine "light-substance" in him; while after his death or "concealing," this divine part passes into the next Imām. Some regard it as being hereditary, and transmitted from father to son; others again, believe that the "light-substance" may pass to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. A. Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Sūfism*, pp. 60 ff.

another person by a sudden illumination. The fundamental idea, however, is that God took a ray of light from the splendour of His own glory and united it to the body of Muhammed, the first thing that God created being this "light" of Muhammed, which then descended to 'Alī, and was transferred from him to the true Imāms.<sup>1</sup> Their claim for 'Alī as being the legitimate Imām, therefore, rests on 'Alī's family relationship to Muhammed, since he was his first cousin and also the husband of his daughter Fātimah. But this indubitably indicates a quasi-material conception of the divine light passing from one person to another, and thus (as al Majlisī says) making all Imāms free from all sin, whether great or trivial, by virtue of this divine light-substance in them. One hadith, in fact, says that the Prophet's body never cast a shadow, because it was full of light.

It is abundantly evident from this brief survey of Moslem psychology, then, that the typical Islamic conception of the spirit is essentially corporeal. It is true that later Islamic thought, under the influence of the Aristotelian conception of the body as an organ or tool of the mind, and also owing to contact with Eastern mystical teaching, has questioned the validity of this corporeal conception of spirit; but this development has never been carried to its logical conclusions, and has never dominated Moslem theology. Consequently, according to Moslem orthodox doctrine, spirit belongs essentially to the realm of the physical; the human spirit, like all others, is created and has a corporeal substance. Islam, to repeat most em-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Donaldson, *The Religion of the Shi'ites*.

phatically, always thinks definitely in concrete and physical terms, rather than in spiritual; or, in other words, Islam's very conception of the spiritual is, actually, non-spiritual. This principle is basic in Moslem mentality, and is therefore of crucial importance for the right understanding of all Islamic religious institutions.

## CHAPTER VII

### ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS TEACHING IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAM'S CONCEPTION OF THE SPIRIT

From the viewpoint indicated in my preceding Chapters, it will obviously be highly illuminating to view Islamic religious doctrines in the light of this extremely peculiar conception of the spiritual which prevails in Islam, and to trace out how it has affected its beliefs, its ethics and its ritual. For in order rightly to understand Islamic religious institutions, we must examine them from this standpoint which, as I have just remarked, is basic to the Moslem mind.

*WHAT IS ISLAM?* In the *Sahih* of Muslim,<sup>1</sup> who died A.H. 201, A.D. 815, which is undoubtedly one of the most authoritative sources dealing with Moslem Hadith (traditions), it is related by 'Omar ibn al-Khattāb, the second Caliph, that one day a man, wearing white clothes and with black hair, who was sitting by the Prophet, knelt to him and, placing his hand on his thigh, said, "O Muhammed, tell me, what is Islam?" The Apostle of God replied:

"Islam demands that you should confess, 'Verily there is no God save Allah and Muhammed is the Apostle of Allah,' that you should perform the *Salāt* (ceremonial

<sup>1</sup> *Sahih* Muslim, Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1349, Part I, p. 22.



prayer), and bring Alms and Fast in Ramadān, and make Hajj (Pilgrimage) to the House, if the way is possible to you."

Then he asked, "Tell me, what is the Faith (īmān)?" And he said, "That you should believe in Allah, in His angels, His Books, His Apostles, the Last Day, and that you should believe in his decree both of good and evil."

These words, then, contain the Articles of Faith to be believed, and the duties to be practised, by every Moslem. They are the very foundations on which Islam is erected, and are quite concrete and definite. Vocal confession, the recital of daily prayers (salāt), Almsgiving, observance of the Fast and the performance of the Pilgrimage—these are all actions which a Moslem can literally carry out, and find therein satisfaction.

The associated questions: what is Faith? or who is a true believer, and who an infidel? have caused endless discussion among Moslem theologians. Some have held that Faith is intellectual assent to everything the Prophet has taught concerning religion, while others have urged that intellectual belief must be combined with vocal confession; others, again, have maintained that to inward belief and vocal confession works must also be added. But to the further enquiry whether this faith is annulled by any sinful acts, either trivial or great, which believers may commit, orthodox Islam's answer is: "No! at all!" For it is one of the leading principles of Islam that faith and wicked works may be combined (al-Djwharī, p. 43); and even al-Ghazālī asserts that a true believer, by committing one or

more great sins, does not thereby cease to be a believer. The Khawārij and some of the Mu'tazila sect, on the other hand, have opposed this doctrine, the Khawārij regarding every sin as infidelity, and the Mu'tazila by saying that a wicked believer is neither a believer nor an infidel, but is in an intermediate state. Nevertheless, the orthodox Moslem belief is that a Moslem, even though he may lead a wicked life, never thereby becomes an infidel deserving eternal fire.<sup>1</sup>

This attitude is fully confirmed by the *Risāla al-Birkawī*:<sup>2</sup> "Faith and Islam are one. If a believer commits even great sins, such as murder or adultery, he does not thereby become an unbeliever." This is simply because faith primarily concerns believing, or doing, certain concrete and tangible things; this is its most important aspect. I remember, in this connection, a Moslem friend answering my question, "What should I do to become a Moslem?" by saying: "It is very simple; say, 'I believe in God and Muhammed His Apostle.'"

This concretizing tendency in Islam, which we have already found to be so powerful, is equally evident in the familiar description of the Islamic Paradise with its running streams, shady trees and white damsels; but I need not enlarge on that subject. It is obvious, again, in the Moslem belief respecting angels who, according to a tradition initiated by Ā'isha, are created of light. Similarly Ibn Mājah asserts that "Angels are of a simple substance (created of light), endowed with life, speech and reason,

<sup>1</sup> Klein, *Religion of Islam*, p. 113; quotation from *Sharh al-Mawakif*.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Istanbul, p. 19.

and created with different forms and powers." Thus angels, too, are tangible creatures who may become visible to ourselves.

The Islamic doctrine of REVELATION AND APOSTLESHIP exhibits precisely the same features. For Islam, the Qur'ān is the revelation of God. It is said to have existed in the highest heaven from eternity, written on the Preserved Table near the throne of God, and thence to have been sent down to the lowest heaven in the month of Ramadān, on the night of al-Qadr (the night of Power), and then revealed, section by section, to Muhammed. For since Muhammed was a wholly illiterate prophet, it is quite clear that he could never have learnt the contents of the Qur'ān except through divine Revelation (*wahī*). This was communicated to the Prophet either through the mediation of the angel Gabriel, who came to him accompanied by a peculiar sound like the tinkling of bells; or by suggestions whispered, as it were, into the Prophet's heart; or, again, by the mediation of an angel in human form; or by an angelic apparition while the Prophet was asleep; or (finally) by direct communication to him from God.

A verse of the Qur'ān is called an Āyat, which means sign, wonder or miracle; in the same way an apostle is recognizable chiefly by his miraculous power. He must be able to do something extremely unusual and supernatural, and this is why Islam emphasizes the miracles ascribed to Muhammed; the greatest of all these being the Qur'ān itself:

"Do they say: 'He hath devised it himself?' Say: then

bring a Sūra like it" (X, 39). "Bring ten Sūras like it of your devising, and call whom ye can to your aid beside God, if ye are men of truth" (XI, 16). "The Qur'ān is no other than a revelation revealed to him; one terrible in power; (Gabriel) taught it him, endued with wisdom" (LIII, 4).

Al-Ghazālī, again, referring to the marvel of the Qur'ān, says: "The Qur'ān is one of the greatest of all things, the most eloquent, most precious and most sublime. It contains many difficult passages which cannot be comprehended by everyone, but only by those to whom God the Most Exalted has granted understanding of His Book. The Apostle of God (God bless him) has said: 'There is not a verse in the Qur'ān but has an exoteric, and an esoteric, sense, and its esoteric significance includes other esoteric meanings, up to seven;' or according to one tradition, 'up to nine.' The Apostle said also: 'Every letter of the Qur'ān contains a scope, and every scope contains a higher sense to which comprehension may ascend.' In the Qur'ān God the Most Exalted has given information about all kinds of knowledge of existence, either manifest or hidden, small or great, perceived by the senses or by intelligence."<sup>1</sup>

Concerning Revelation (wahī), he continues:

"When the soul has perfected itself the defilement of human nature passes away from it. . . . Then God the Most Exalted, by the grace of His favour, welcomes that

<sup>1</sup> Al-Risālat al-Laduniyya, Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1343, p. 13. Cf. also the translation by Margaret Smith in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, July 1938.

soul most ardently, and looks upon it with a Divine glance; from it he takes a tablet, from the Universal Soul a Pen, and inscribes upon it all His knowledge . . . and that soul acquires all knowledge . . . without study and reflection.”<sup>1</sup>

“The healthy souls are the prophetic souls which receive the (divine) revelation and the strengthening, and are able to exhibit miracles and supernatural power in this world of existence and corruption.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus the Qur’ān, being miraculous alike in its origin, contents and mode of delivery, is the revelation of God, and Muhammed is His Apostle, while the supreme test of revelation and apostleship in Islam is the miracle, the marvellous sign. All this, quite clearly, is external and concrete. The criterion is always and essentially non-spiritual.

But this non-spiritual aspect of Islam is best discerned in its teaching about Salāt—ceremonial prayer and worship. In the first place, bodily purification is one essential feature of worship in Islam. Of course genuine integrity is never ignored, but the most important consideration is that physical purification is an absolutely essential factor in true worship which, without this, becomes wholly void.

Purification is demanded equally by the Qur’ānic precepts and by the Hadīth: “O Believers! When you address yourselves to prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your heads, and your feet to the ankles” (Sūra V, 8): and Hadīth literature is full

<sup>1</sup> Al-Risalat al-Laduniyya, Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1343, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

of detailed discussions of purification. "Purity is one-half of faith." "The state of impurity prevents prayer: it puts a lock on the door of prayer." "God accepts no prayer without previous ablutions," etc. There are lengthy admonitions about the mode of purification, the kind of water to be used, etc. "He who performs his ablutions in the proper manner will be cleansed of his sins." All this is so important in Islamic worship that not only the Sunnī orthodox theologians and Doctors of Law, but even that most spiritually minded teacher al-Ghazālī, who is called *Hujjat al-islām* (the Authority in Islam), has emphasized it as essential. His great book, *Ihjā ulūm al-dīn*, contains a long section on worship, in which he makes every effort to keep the spiritual and the external equally balanced. He begins by this beautiful statement:

"Praise belongs to Allah, who overwhelms His creatures with His favours, and fills their hearts with the lights and duties of religion. . . . He differs from kings, for all His unique majesty and grandeur, in inspiring His creation to ask and supplicate. For He says, 'Is there any who supplicates? I will answer him!' and: 'Is there any who asks forgiveness? I will forgive him!' He differs from Sultans in opening the door and lifting the veil, and permitting His creatures confidential communion, whether in congregations or in solitary places. Moreover, He does not limit Himself to permission, but rather shows favour and kindness by inspiring desire and by calling. Any other than He is one of the weak kings, who do not freely grant private audience, except after the presentation of a gift or a bribe. O His praise! How great is His state, and

strong His authority, and complete His kindness, and universal His beneficence!"<sup>1</sup>

More glorious words in praise of worship have never perhaps been spoken. Yet written by this same al-Ghazālī, and in the following sections of the same Treatise, we find such words as these:

"The Messenger of Allah has forbidden, in worship, the raising of the feet; sitting on the shanks and certain other postures; turning up one's garment before or behind; placing the hands on the sides; suffering from the desire to micturate or from constipation," etc. In comparing these two passages, we feel as if we have fallen from Heaven to Earth. But this, none the less, is literal Moslem doctrine. The spiritual is not enough; the physical is equally indispensable.

But why is it that physical impurity pollutes the spirit and thus makes worship void? Once again an accurate comprehension of Moslem psychology is required. We have found that, in Moslem thought, the spirit itself is a quasi-physical thing; obviously, therefore, it may become polluted by physical uncleanness, and (conversely) purified by physical cleanliness. This elementary principle, in fact, is so firmly fixed in Moslem mentality that a Moslem simply cannot understand how Christians can ever worship without bodily purification!

Worship, however, demands other conditions also. For the worshipper must always turn to the qibla; wherever he may be, he must face toward the Sanctuary in Mecca,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. L. Calverley, *Worship in Islam*, or al-Ghazālī's *Book of Ihya*, on Worship.

otherwise his worship will be void; and the time of worship is equally important. An act of worship just after the rising of the sun, or just before its setting, is not only void but actually sinful; one must, on the contrary, worship before sunrise and after sunset. Similarly, there are fixed rules for kneeling and standing, for the position of the hands and head, during worship; and once again all these features plainly indicate the concretizing tendencies of the Moslem mind. Worship, therefore, is essentially something concrete, to be observed physically just as much as spiritually. Thus it is that only after having accompanied his Salāt by ablutions, at the prescribed times, and together with the observance of all other regulations, can a Moslem feel quite satisfied. All over the world this is their everyday experience.

This holds true, likewise, with regard to keeping the Fast during the month of Ramadān, Zakāt (the legal alms), and Hajj (the Pilgrimage to Mecca). These too are all duties to be performed, concrete actions to be literally carried out. But in all of them the external activities are emphasized far more than the spiritual qualities. How many minute regulations are stipulated for the right performance of all these religious acts, yet how little there is of the spiritual element!

This patently non-spiritual interpretation of the spiritual may be perceived just as clearly in Moslem doctrine about God. The most basic and fundamental principle in the Moslem conception of God is the dogma of Mukhālifah—that is, of difference. Allah, that is to say, is wholly different from everything else. This is also called the doctrine of



tanzih or "removing"—of removing the danger of confusing, or associating, Allah with anything else that exists; it is expressed in the popular Arabic chant, "Whatever comes to your mind, it is passing, and God is not that. "It is also Qur'ānic: "Nought is there like Him!" (Sūra XLII, 9).

This basic principle, still further, has profoundly affected the Moslem conception of God philosophically, religiously, and morally.

1. *Philosophically*, in the first place, the Moslem concept of the personality of God is merely negative. To the question "What is God?" the Islamic answer is: "God is unknowable." Moslem theological treatises about God, therefore, mainly contain negative statements about God's person:—He is neither substance, nor body, nor accident, is non-spatial, not restricted to any given place, nor is He associated with aught else, etc.

The Risālat al-Birkawī gives these affirmations a popular expression by saying:

"God has neither associate nor similar. He is free from dressing and eating, from drinking and sleeping, begetting and being begotten, from wife, son or daughter. These things are not in Him, and cannot be. He is in neither Heaven nor Earth. He is free from place. He is on neither the right nor left, neither before nor behind, up nor down. He has no bodily members, is free from sickness or sorrow, fear or change, etc." "There is nothing like Him." Philosophically, therefore, Islam is decidedly agnostic with regard to the person of God. We cannot know what God is like.

2. *Religiously*, again, this doctrine of "difference" has separated God and man by placing them in two totally different categories: God is what man is not: God is not what man is. Thus God and man remain wholly unrelated, and between the two an infinite gulf is created. Man, from the religious viewpoint, becomes a mere worm at the feet of Allah; no room, therefore, is left for prayer in the sense of personal communion with God, and thus all efforts by the individual to establish personal relationship with God are futile. Prayer thereupon becomes, essentially, mute resignation to the immutable decree of Almighty God. In this crucial respect, then, the chief doctrine of Islam is simply resignation. According to Ash'arite teaching, in fact, a Moslem cannot even say, "I am a believer." He must say, rather, "I am a believer, in shā'a llah! (If God wills!)."

The psychological basis of this doctrine of God may, then, be stated as follows:

All creation is material,  
Spirit is a creation,  
Therefore Spirit also is material.  
But Allah is immaterial,  
Therefore Allah is unlike all creatures whatsoever.

Thus Moslem dialectic has placed Allah and World, God and man, in antithesis to each other, thereby denying kinship, and excluding personal relationship, between God and man.

Therefore, as I have previously observed, to say that "God is Spirit," which is a perfectly simple Christian

principle, is quite repulsive to the Moslem mind, while for the Wahhābites it is, indeed, the most abominable sin. Some years ago a missionary physician, travelling in Wahhābite Arabia, had quite innocently put on his cart Allah rūh—"God is Spirit"—but he was obliged to remove it because for the Wahhābites this meant that God was a created and corporeal being like jinns, or angels or men.

3. *Morally*, in conclusion, the effect of this teaching has been most disastrous, because obviously Islam can attribute no moral quality of any kind to God. For to say that God is just, and to expect that He will act with justice, would at once make God like man, which Islam explicitly denies. Similarly, to say that God is good, and to expect that He will deal rightly, is equally impossible because it too would make God resemble man, which would be grievous sin. That is why we find in the Moslem Creeds: "God does what He wills. God can never be questioned." Discussing God's justice, al-Ghazālī says: "God has the right to require of His creatures more than they are able to perform. He has a right to do with His creatures just as He wills. Injustice arises when a man deals thus with the property of another person; but so long as a man deals simply with his own property, no one can ever accuse him of acting unjustly." Al-Ash'arī again, the great theologian of Orthodox Islam, says in his Creed:

"Nothing exists upon earth, be it good or bad, but what God wills. . . . 'Whom God guideth aright, he allows himself to be guided aright, and whom He leads astray, they are the losers' (Sūra VII, 177). God is able to help the unbelieving aright, and to be gracious unto them,

so that they shall become believing, but He wills that they shall be unbelieving."

Thus no moral quality whatsoever can be attributed to God. In the Qur'ān, there are ninety-nine beautiful names given to God; but these are merely names, because nobody knows, nor can know, what they really mean with regard to the nature of God. For all our interpretations of His names would be merely human, and surely God has no human attributes at all. Most unhappily, this has been disastrous in its effects on Moslem character, since it has destroyed the very foundation of morality, and has consequently atrophied the Moslem conscience with respect to the fundamental difference between just and unjust, good and bad. If we can attribute neither justice nor injustice, goodness nor badness, to God, then surely we have no basis for claiming these qualities from men.

This non-spiritual character of Islamic Faith is, therefore, clearly discernible in its ethical teaching. Christians have often called Islam immoral, simply because they judge it from the typically Christian point of view. But this is wholly wrong and unjust. The ethics of the Mosaic Law may likewise be brought under the same judgment as compared with the teachings of Christ. In reality, however, Islamic ethics is neither moral nor immoral, but non-moral—that is morally neutral, non-spiritual. This is another essential characteristic of Islamic ethics, which must never be forgotten.

Consider next Sin and Salvation. What is Sin? For Islam, sin is primarily some transgression of a ceremonial prohibition, while in its grossest form it is intellectual error,

rather than moral pollution. The greatest of all sins in Islam, therefore, is Shirk, that is associating other gods with Allah.

This non-moral concept of sin is equally evident in Islam's attitude to religious piety; for its test of religion is never essentially moral. The criteria of religion are altogether different. There is a Law (*sharī'ah*), which is God-given and not man-made, and therefore absolute in its demands. Nothing whatever can be subtracted from its content. "Till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Torah." For the Moslem *Sharī'ah* this is literally true. This Law deals, moreover, not only with one particular aspect of life (such as we regard as spiritual or religious), but with all its aspects without any exception. It is quite concrete and definite, so that there is nothing at all in life, either great or small, that escapes the domination of the *Sharī'ah*. This contains the absolute will of God; piety, therefore, is the strict observance of the Law, and religion is rigid obedience to its regulations. It consists in conformity to a definite code of conduct, combined with belief regarding what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done. The pious man, therefore, is he who observes the Law, and there is in Islam no doctrine of salvation in any sense of a new heart or a new spiritual experience. Islam undeniably calls men to obey a new set of laws instead of the old, but to no change of heart nor character. It is essentially a legal system, even though its laws differ widely from others; but it is in no sense an end of Law. Islamic jurists still discuss the questions: "Which is the great command-

ment?" and "What is the great sin?" without any adequate conception of that love which penetrates far more deeply than external law and which, in truth, makes all law unnecessary.

Finally, "Who is my neighbour?" This ethical question, once asked by the Jewish lawyer, is a great problem in Islam also. What should the attitude of a Moslem be to his non-Moslem neighbour, to the Christian, the Sabeen, the Jew or the polytheist? What a vast mass of legal hair-splitting discussion there has been in Islamic jurisprudence on this sole point, whose result is to divide the world into two provinces, one of Islam and the other of war, but with no basic conception of the spiritual value of men, whatever their religious affiliations may be! It is perfectly true that Islam ignores the colour bar; but on the other hand, it strongly emphasizes the religious bar, thereby restricting the neighbourly attitude to a painfully narrow circle. Your good neighbour is then simply your co-religionist, the person who *believes* as you yourself do; with all others you may do as the law requires, either warring against them, or subjugating them to slavery, or forcing them to pay the poll-tax as humble subjects. Thus Islam is a mere legal system, rather than genuinely moral and spiritual. Religious and ethical duties are stated perfectly concretely and definitely, and all that is required is to observe them.

CHAPTER VIII  
DISCUSSIONS ILLUSTRATING THE ISLAMIC  
CONCEPTION OF RŪH

In the Autumn of 1938 I had the opportunity of travelling through Iran and India and visiting many centres of Moslem learning at Hamadan, Teheran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Lahore, Lucknow, Aligarh, Calcutta and Hyderabad (Deccan). In these places I met many Moslem religious leaders of thought, and discussed with them their doctrine of "spirit" and the problems arising out of this, in order to understand the Islamic point of view. Everywhere I enjoyed a cordial reception, and on both sides there was free expression of opinion. It would take too long, however, to describe all these interviews in detail, so that I propose to state briefly some of the main points which were dealt with in the course of these discussions. To my very great surprise I found that, whether they were Sunnis or Shī'ahs or Ahmadiyāhs, all Moslems gave the same answer, already dealt with, to the question "What is rūh?" They all said "rūh is jism latīf," "a fine or subtle matter." The Shī'ah in Isfahān, and the Sunnī in Lahore, though differing widely from each other in many other respects, both gave the same reply.

In this definition the adjective latīf is important; but it is very difficult to understand its exact meaning, or to express it in another language. Some Western scholars

translate it by "light" or "fine," while Dozy, in his *Arabic Dictionary*, interprets it as opposed to the word *kathif*, thick or hard. Lane, again, gives "fine or subtle"; and perhaps "subtle" is nearest to the actual meaning in this connection, since *latīfah*, from the same root, means "a subtle or witty saying," "a quaint conceit"; *rūh*, therefore, is a subtle or quaint entity. Nevertheless, it is a *jism*, "matter," only a very peculiar kind of matter, although it falls within the domain of the physical; it is essentially concrete. This interpretation was confirmed by all the Moslem religious leaders in our discussions, so that it was quite evident that the belief is common to all the branches of Islam and, in fact, fundamental.

This naturally led to the further issue of the personality of man and his relationship to God. "What is man? How shall we think of man's relationship to God?" In the *Qur'ān* we read that God says: "I formed him, and breathed into him from my spirit." What then does this mean in regard to man's spirit? Is there any spiritual kinship between God and man? What is the teaching of Islam in this respect?

In reply to these questions, my friends were unanimous in categorically refuting the idea of any kind of kinship between God and Man. For since God and Man are essentially different, there can be no kinship whatsoever between them. Spirits are all created by God, exactly like other things in the Universe, such as stones, plants and animals; whereas God Himself is the Creator. Therefore the words: "I breathed into him from my spirit," in no way implies God's giving of His own spirit to Man, but



simply means that the spirit in Man is likewise God's creation and, for that very reason, His possession. This is still further confirmed by the verse: "The spirit proceedeth out of the Command of my Lord"; all spirits, that is to say, have been created by the Lord. There is in fact no spirit in God which He could impart to Man; God neither has spirit, nor is He spirit. Islam, therefore, can never say "God is spirit," since to do so would make God Himself a created being. If then God is not spirit and has no spirit, while Man has spirit, it at once follows that God and Man have no mutual affinity in this respect. If, indeed, God and Man shared any such affinity, then God would become like man. But God, as I have repeatedly observed, is unlike any existent whatever. 'There is *noùght* like Him': this is the basic Qur'ānic teaching about God; in this connection, still further, the well-known Hadith was appealed to: "He who knows his soul or self, knows also his Lord." But if man can thus attain the knowledge of God through the knowledge of his own soul, does this not signify some kind of kinship between God and Man?

Many different interpretations of this Hadith were cited, however, most of which are to be found in Moslem theological treatises, and all of them denying the idea of *any* kind of affinity between God and the human soul. Some accepted this saying of the Prophet as applying only to the attributes of God (excluding His essence) such as His knowing, hearing, understanding, etc., and as involving some kind of similarity to Man's attributes in the same category. On the other hand, others went so far as to deny quite definitely the authenticity of this Hadith,

and consequently excluded it from discussion altogether. But both those who admitted its authenticity, and those who denied it, were unanimous in interpreting it as in no way implying any kinship between God and Man.

If, however, God and Man were thus totally different in essence, and there were no spiritual kinship whatsoever between them, what kind of relationship could be established between God and Man? Could we know God at all? Could religion of any sort ever arise? Again, would revelation be possible? It is obvious that one person can impart his thoughts, or his knowledge, to another normal person, because of the personal affinity that subsists between them; otherwise this would be quite impossible. I can, for example, impart my ideas, at least partially, to a child, or even to a cannibal, granting that they are normal human beings. But I cannot possibly imagine myself imparting these to a chair, even though I may have made it myself. Furthermore, how then can we be sure that the revelations, proclaimed by the Prophets and Apostles, are genuine revelations from God? For if Prophets and Apostles were men like ourselves, and were therefore beings totally different in essence from God, with no spiritual nor personal affinity with Him, how could they claim to have received true revelations from Him? And how could we, on our parts, test the authenticity of their revelations?

These questions naturally led to further discussions, but the final explanations always rested on the same basis:—that there subsisted no spiritual kinship of any sort between God and Man. They were quite apart and wholly unlike in essence, and therefore there could be no *personal* relation-

ship between them. None the less is God the Creator, and Man His creation, and the resultant relationship between them could arise only from that foundation. Religion consists, therefore, in acknowledging God as Creator and in obeying His commandments; this is the highest possible requirement from Man in his relation to God, and any idea of a personal or spiritual relationship with God is absolutely precluded. Man, in short, can aspire to no kind of *personal fellowship* with God, since God and Man are in two completely separate categories.

As regards the further possibility of any genuine revelation being proclaimed by the Prophets and Apostles, and its ultimate tests, the explanations consisted chiefly in appealing to the power of God, and particularly to the miracles performed by the Prophets. For since God is all-powerful, what seems difficult or even impossible to us is easily possible to Him. God, therefore, has power to reveal His will and commandments to the Prophets and Apostles in some unique way, and through them, again, to His human creatures; to deny this would simply be to deny God's omnipotence. In fact, one Ahmadiyah religious teacher, in discussing this question, said that he had actually seen a German engineer making his own will understood by an airplane; how much more, then, could God reveal His will to human beings! The Prophets and Apostles, moreover, were men specially endowed to receive revelations, this being clearly proved by the miracles which they had been authorized to perform; for every true prophet must be able to confirm his message by supernatural acts before men. Miraculous power, in

short, is the genuine and ultimate test of apostleship, and whether a man has received a revelation from God will be known by the supernatural power to perform miracles, which God has bestowed upon him.

Discussion then proceeded about death, man's destiny after death, the relationship of his body to the spirit, the conditions of existence in Hell and Paradise, etc. Death is a fact in human life. Man dies, is buried, and his body decays in the grave; what then becomes of his spirit? What, again, are Hell and Paradise? Are we to understand these literally and physically, or merely allegorically?

The elucidations given in answer to these questions were exceedingly illuminating with reference to the Islamic conception of Man. Death, it was held, is the separation of the spirit from the body; the former leaves the body and returns to the world of spirits, while the body decays in the grave. But there is a Day of Resurrection on which the spirit shall return to the body, and man shall rise up for judgment. Regarding the way in which the decayed body could thus arise, again the appeal was to God's power. God, it was urged, is Almighty, and can therefore bring back the decayed corporeal particles and join them to the spirit anew. One teacher contended that "If God created man out of dust, how much more was He able to re-assemble the decayed particles and reconstitute the body!" The resurrection of the body was necessary, moreover, so that Man might receive the rewards and punishments for deeds done in the body; and without a body, rewards and punishments would be quite meaningless. Hell and Paradise, therefore, are physically real and in no sense

allegorical, and man shall enjoy or suffer in them according to his deeds in this life.

It is unnecessary, I think, to outline our wider examination of other problems closely related to the Islamic conception of spirit, Man, and his relationship to God. It will be sufficient to add that, from these interviews and conversations, it was very clear that, according to Islamic teaching, Man is essentially a corporeal being, a body, animated by a peculiar quasi-material entity, or substance, called "spirit." Islam, as I have several times remarked, objected most emphatically to saying that "God is spirit," simply because spirit is of a semi-physical nature, whereas God is in no way nor degree physical. Spirit, again, is created, whereas God is Creator; and thus God and Man are totally different and wholly apart. There can be neither similarity nor any sort of affinity between them, so that it is impossible to say: "God and Man are akin spiritually." Man is but God's creature, and consequently His 'Abd (slave), while his relation to God is only one of 'Ibādah or 'Ubūdiyya, "slavery," the technical term used in Islam for worship. Man (to repeat) is God's slave, and Islam is essentially submission to God.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE AS BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

What then is the fundamental issue as between Islam and Christianity? In the past this question has been almost universally answered from the point of view of either doctrine or ethics, so as to emphasize the profound differences either in doctrine or in ethical and social principles. But while these approaches are both undeniably justified, they are seriously inadequate, simply because they do not penetrate far enough into the actual problem. It is quite true that Islam and Christianity differ greatly in their doctrine and ethical teaching; but there is a still deeper contrast which affects both their religious and moral principles. This is the difference, already dealt with, in their conception of the spiritual. For Christianity, as I have previously insisted, is essentially a spiritual religion, whereas Islam is essentially non-spiritual; and herein lies the basic issue in their relationship.

Both Islam and Christianity, again, show a monistic emphasis in their religious philosophy; nevertheless, there is a profound difference in the basis of the two monisms. For while Islamic monism is a monism of the physical, Christian monism is a monism of the spiritual; Islam, in other words, interprets the spiritual in terms of the physical,

whereas Christianity always interprets the physical in terms of the spiritual.

This, however, by no means implies that Islam is materialistic and does not believe in the spiritual at all; nor is it true to say that Islam accepts only the body as a reality while denying the spirit. For, as I have already shown, Islam believes that Man has a spirit as well as a body; but at the same moment Islam interprets Man's spirit in terms of his body.

If (to state this in the simplest possible terms) you wash your body, then you virtually wash your spirit also, or (rather) the spirit in you; in cleansing your body, your ears, your nostrils, your finger nails (and Islam demands the cleansing of all these, including even the dirt which may have attached itself to the ring on your finger), you are actually effecting the cleansing of the spirit that is active in all these organs.

It may, on the other hand, be argued that Christianity has no very clear conception of the spirit and the spiritual, and that we find no adequate psychology in either the Gospels, St. Paul's Epistles, or even in the writings of the Church Fathers. Nor, again, can we accept the distinction which Origen finds in the Scriptures between "bodily things" and "intellectual things," and then call the latter "spiritual."<sup>1</sup> None the less, it is incontestable that, whether

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Origen's *de Principiis*, p. 9: "It is the custom of the Sacred Scriptures, when it wishes to designate anything opposed to this gross and solid body, to call it spirit, as in the expression, 'the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,' where there can be no doubt that by 'letter' is meant bodily things, and by 'spirit' intellectual things, which we also term 'spiritual.'"

or not Christianity has a sound conception of the relationship between spiritual and physical, it makes the former central to all its teaching, while leaving the physical on the circumference; whereas in Islam, on the contrary, the physical is central and the spiritual is relegated to the circumference. Herein lies the outstanding difference between the two faiths in their concept of the spirit and the spiritual; and it is a fundamentally important difference.

People often think that the chief hindrance to Christianity, in the mind of the Moslem, is the Christian faith in the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ; and this is undeniably true. But, we are compelled to ask, what is the fundamental cause of this grave obstacle? It is, once again, the non-spiritual conception of the spiritual that makes this faith repellent to Moslem mentality, since it consistently regards spirit as belonging to the realm of the physical. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, therefore, which is essentially a spiritual doctrine, is physically interpreted by all Moslems, and consequently becomes blasphemous to them. Thus the *basic* conflict between Islam and Christianity arises not in the sphere of dogma alone; it lies far deeper than that, since it concerns the interpretation of the spiritual, as such. The ultimate issue, then, is whether Reality is to be interpreted in terms of the physical or of the spiritual; and this, as has already been urged, involves whether God and Man, the divine and the human, are akin in essence, or completely sundered from each other.

The Moslem's *primary* difficulty with regard to Christianity, therefore, consists neither in accepting a new body



of doctrine in place of his own, or (again) in new ethical standards, but rather in the new apprehension of the spiritual. His cardinal problem (in other terms) is to understand the true meaning of the spiritual:—to see that it is neither something quasi-physical, nor mysterious (*wahmī*) like those spirits (*jinnī*) who rule in the unseen worlds, but that actually it is Personality expressing itself in goodness, truth and beauty, but most supremely in love. This was what Christ understood by the spiritual with respect to both God and Man, what He taught and, still more wonderfully, what He exhibited in His own Person. For according to His teaching men are essentially spiritual beings, with the high destiny of becoming children of God; a man may certainly estrange himself from God, but originally, none the less, he is a child of God, akin to God, and called to fellowship with Him. In their essence, therefore, God and Man are not two opposites; and though God is not Man, nor Man God, nevertheless God and Man are one spiritually. In a very true sense, Man is divine and God is human; this is the essential meaning of the Christian faith in Incarnation. God and Man have thus become one; Heaven and earth have joined hands, and Man can become one with God. "He became human that we may become divine." It is to be feared that, in their Christologies, some early theologians committed themselves to mistaken assertions because of a faulty psychology. For Personality cannot be dualistic; it is impossible to conceive of two persons in Christ. Rather is Christ God Incarnate, being both perfectly divine and perfectly human, because divinity and humanity are not

antithetic essences, but one. Personality, therefore, means love, whether in the divine or the human, and in love God and Man may become one. God is our Father and we are His children, and our destiny is to become one with Him in fellowship through Christ. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," says St. Paul; this is the profound paradox of Christianity. And if this cannot be explained philosophically, so as to satisfy human reason, it is nevertheless true to experience; to be a Christian is to be Christ-like in spirit:—to have fellowship with God and to be united to Him, because God and Man are akin spiritually.

Many other religions, as we all know, have either separated God from Man as in Deism, or they have lost both Man's and God's personality in pantheistic absorption. Christianity alone has truly united God and Man in personal fellowship; and this is because it comprehends the correct interpretation of the spiritual. This, too, is the essential problem of Islam, and all other difficulties can be solved only on this basis.

In this respect there is a close similarity between Jewish thought in the time of Jesus and the Moslem mind. For Jewish law demanded that the Jew "should bind the Law upon his hand and frontlets, between his eyes, and write them upon the door-posts." The prophets, however, thought quite differently, and when Jeremiah, who understood the spiritual essence of religion better than any other prophet before his own day, raised his voice and said, "Thus saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it," the people were astonished. For how could the Law be put in their inward

parts? This the Jew never properly understood, although that was his primary need.

This is equally true of the controversy between Jesus and the Jews, of which the fullest account occurs in the Fourth Gospel. For if *St. Mark* is the Gospel of the wonderful deeds of Jesus, the Fourth is the Gospel of His spiritual teaching; and it is here that we see Jesus grappling with the Jews about this basic problem of religion, and trying to point out to them the true meaning of the spiritual.

Even St. Paul, again, with all his intellectual keenness, has been unable to attain the pure spirituality which the writer of the Fourth Gospel presents in his study of Jesus and His message. St. Paul is a Hebrew, as is very evident here and there in his writings. But in the Fourth Gospel there is no Hebraism whatever. It is the spiritual gem of the four Gospels. One is almost driven to the conclusion that the writer could not have been a Hebrew, simply because no Hebrew could have reached this pure light of spiritual vision; it would almost be beyond his power. The writer of the Fourth Gospel, however, knows Judaism well, and yet he is keenly alive to spiritual realities. From this viewpoint it would be most illuminating to make a thorough study of the Fourth Gospel, but a few examples must here suffice to indicate its value.

Consider, first of all, the greatest of all questions, *What is God?* Three-fourths of Islamic theological treatises deal with this subject:—with God the Creator, His essence and attributes, His activities and names, His commands, ordinances and decrees. Islam has always been intensely puzzled about God; but, unfortunately, Christian theo-

logical volumes have not been of much assistance in clarifying the situation to the Moslem mind. The answer given in the Fourth Gospel, "God is Spirit," which is repeated in the Epistles also—"The Lord is the Spirit" (II Cor. III, 17)—exactly meets the basic problem of Moslem mentality, because it means that God is a Being with neither any physical limitations, nor an essence composed of something quasi-material (like, *e.g.* vapour or air), but rather that God is spiritual in essence; He is personal. This solves Islam's dilemma in two ways:—first, it proclaims that God and Man are akin, since both are personal in their essence; whence it follows that they can share communion and fellowship. And secondly that, being personal, God is both transcendent and immanent: another vital principle which has baffled Moslem theologians owing to their completely mistaken conception of the spiritual essence of personality. For since personality is not physical, it is also non-spatial. In the physical realm existents can never be simultaneously transcendent and immanent, but in the spiritual realm conditions are totally different. It is, in fact, the crucial characteristic of personality to be both transcendent and immanent; this is therefore fundamental to the Moslem in understanding Christian doctrine about God and His relationship to the Universe.

In the next place, *What are God's Attributes?* This question has also proved extremely puzzling to Moslem theologians. In discussing such problems as: Has God any attributes? Are these related to His essence? What is their character, and what do they really mean? Can we know their true meaning in regard to God's person? they have lost their

way in the mazes of metaphysics. The consequence is that Allah has remained unknown, and in fact unknowable, in Islam, and has been described mainly in negative terms. To the question, Who is God? Islam's chief answer (as we have seen already) has been, "He is unlike any existent whatsoever."

The answer of the Fourth Gospel, on the contrary, is quite clear and positive. To the request of Philip: "Show us the Father," Jesus said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In other words, God's nature is like that of Jesus: God is like Christ; and this answers Islam's question in two ways: First, it teaches that God is knowable; we can actually know God's nature; secondly, that the personal qualities in Jesus Christ express the very character of God Himself. God, to repeat, is like Christ, and so we can assuredly say that God is good, and that He is our loving Father.

In this connection a short digression may not be out of place. It is often thought that the chief characteristic of the Islamic idea of God is power:—that God is Almighty. This, however, is not true, since God's omnipotence is included in the Christian conception of God also: "I believe in God, the Almighty." Much more accurately, the chief characteristic of the Islamic conception of God is His absolute Will: Allah does as He wills. Nor can Man ever question His actions, since Allah is far above any law or necessity: He is the Absolute Ruler. Therefore, as I have pointed out, God cannot be required to be good, nor just nor merciful, in His dealings with men. He does whatever He Himself chooses and decides, as is repeated over and

over again in the Qur'ān. Even al-Ghazālī, the best of Moslem theologians, says in his great book *Ihjā*: "God created Paradise, and also some to enter therein; and God created the Fire, and some to suffer in it; the pious for Paradise, and the wicked for Hell; and then God said, 'These are for Paradise, I care not! and these for the Fire, I care not!' Allah, the Most High, is the true Ruler; He is not to be questioned as to what He does."<sup>1</sup>

This clearly leaves Man to the sheer caprice of a Being whom Man does not, and cannot, know; and only the correct apprehension of the spiritual essence of personality will remove this false idea. For in the spiritual realm, freedom does not mean to act capriciously. Personality is genuinely free only when it acts in obedience to spiritual principles, to goodness and love; and Jesus exemplifies this in His own Person, by showing God to us as our Father. It is, in fact, in the Fourth Gospel that God has been called and addressed as Father oftener than anywhere else.

Equally vital is the question: *Who is Jesus Christ?* (*'Īsā l-Masīh*). So important is this issue to Islam that, in fact, it has been the main ground of controversy with Christianity, at the same time the basis of its main objection to the Christian Faith, since the Christian affirmation of belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as I have previously observed, must appear to Moslems as blasphemy.

In this connection, the Fourth Gospel is extremely significant. It begins by describing Jesus Christ as "The Word": Christ is the "Word" of God; and this at once raises one

<sup>1</sup> Part III, p. 42.

of the most fundamental antitheses between Christian belief and Islam. For while both Islam and Christianity affirm that God has spoken and revealed Himself to mankind, still there is this one great difference:—that whereas Islam teaches that the Qur'ān is God's "word" to humanity, Christian faith declares, on the other hand, that Jesus Himself is God's "word" to Man. For Islam, therefore, God has spoken through a Book: for Christianity, on the contrary, He has spoken through a Person. Islam, then, is a Book-religion, while Christianity is essentially a personal religion. For Islam, that is to say, the Qur'ān is greatest, greater even than the Prophet of God; but for Christianity Christ is greatest, greater than even the Law or the Temple. In Islam, again, the written Arabic Book is the marvel; in Christianity the Person of Christ is the true miracle! This is emphatically the teaching of the Fourth Gospel; and such a presentation of Christ may, indeed, be highly illuminating to the Moslem mind. For if Almighty God can reveal His will perfectly through a Book, surely He can do so through a Person also; while if, moreover, God is personal, then a personal life is clearly a far better means of revealing His will than any Book, however excellent it may be.

It is very significant, still further, that in the Fourth Gospel Christ is described in terms of Life: He is the Bread of Life, the Living Bread: the Light of the World, the Light of Life, the Water of Life. He came that men may have Life, and this more abundantly: He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The central theme of the Fourth Gospel, in fact, is Life, Eternal Life, and Christ is there presented

as the Giver of Eternal Life: He came that men may have Eternal Life.

This conception of Christ as the Life-giver is also one that may most powerfully appeal to Moslems, especially at the present time. For to-day, as of old, men are asking, "To whom shall we go?" and are seeking for an answer. They have experienced the shattering of their old convictions and are searching for some firmer foundation. It will, therefore, be of the greatest possible value to present Christ to them as the true Life-giver; and the vital question to be stressed, as regards the Person of Christ, should not be whether Christ is the second Person in the Holy Trinity, but rather what the author of the Fourth Gospel discovered in his own experience and expounded in his writings:—whether we can really know God and trust Him, whether in Christ we have the fullest revelation of God, and whether He has the words of Eternal Life. This must always be the main issue.

My next point is:—*What is Religion, and what is it to be Religious?* For Islam, as we have repeatedly seen, religion is conformity with the regulations of the Law; he who knows the Law, and observes it, is religious. But throughout the Fourth Gospel religion is placed on a quite different foundation: it is to know God and to be in right relationship with Him. "Life eternal is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ." It is not, therefore, to know any external code of laws, but rather a spiritual experience of the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. This, moreover, is no merely esoteric knowledge, but a life actually lived in personal and right relationship with God, so real, indeed,



that it is called "friendship." "I have called you friends" (XV, 15). It is called even "sonship" to God: "He gave them authority to become children of God," but with the clear warning that their birth is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."<sup>1</sup> Religion, therefore, is relationship with God, of a personal and most intimate character, issuing not from anything physical like blood, nor quasi-physical like "the will of the flesh," but solely from God, and based on a pure and unique spiritual relationship. The Jews believed that they were religious because they were of "the seed of Abraham": "Abraham is our Father," they said (VIII, 39), thus basing their religion on a physical pedigree from Abraham. But Jesus' words: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," placed it on a spiritual basis. Thus religion is a spiritual relationship to God, expressed in right conduct: it is to know Christ, and to be like Him in character. How vastly different is this from taking pride in a pedigree of saints, or in outer observances of the Law, like keeping the Sabbath or being circumcized!

Closely connected with all this is the problem: *What is Sin?* Sin, in Islam, is transgression of the commandments or prohibitions of the Law, and is distinguished as great or small, according to the importance attached to it by jurists; essentially, it is an act of either commission or omission. In the Fourth Gospel, however, sin is darkness of the soul, blindness to spiritual reality. "And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Sin is "to love darkness rather than the light"; it is

<sup>1</sup> John I, 13.

spiritual bondage: "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." Sin, again, is hypocrisy. Christ never condemned men for their ignorance, but only for deliberate resistance to truth. He spoke, therefore, of sin, rather than sins; of the inner condition of the soul, rather than outward acts; of pollution of the spirit, rather than ceremonial uncleanness. The antithesis between the two truths arises out of the deep contrast in their conception of the spiritual. The root of the trouble lay there.

In the next place, *What is Salvation?* The term "salvation" (najā) occurs only once in the Qur'ān (XL, 44), where it is used to imply deliverance from Hell. But in the Fourth Gospel salvation is a spiritual experience, a new birth, a birth from above. In this respect the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus is most illuminating. Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, comes to Jesus by night. He begins with a friendly gesture by saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest except God be with him," and thinks that he has made a very good start! Jesus is a Rabbi from God, because he has shown "signs," external wonders and miracles! A Moslem Mullah could not have thought of a better introduction! But Jesus says, "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God"; and thus He directs Nicodemus from an external miracle to an inner miracle in the soul of man. But since Nicodemus has the mind of a Hebrew, he continues to think in terms of the merely physical and asks: "How can a man be born when he is old?" "Except one be born of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of

God," replies Jesus, and adds, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." "We speak what we know"; to which Nicodemus answers: "How can these things be?":—precisely the baffling problem of the Moslem mind! Jesus, in reply, emphasizes the basic difference between things that are earthly and those that are heavenly or spiritual, and tries to lead him to a new insight into the reality of the spiritual as contrasted with that of the earthly. "We speak that which we do know, and testify what we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." The final criterion of the reality of the spiritual, therefore, is the reality of the experience; and salvation is itself that experience.

*What is the Law?* For devout Moslems this is an equally essential question; one must know the Law that he may observe it. The Jews were proud of not being "lawless," and the Scribes and Pharisees felt superior simply because they knew the Law, and were not like "the crowd who did not know the Law." But in this respect too the teaching of the Fourth Gospel is very startling. For it seems as though His disciples expected a new Law from Jesus; but He said: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Instead of an external law code, then, He gave them the inner law of love which makes all external codes quite superfluous. For Jesus, there is no law except that of love: He Himself, in truth, is the end of law, so that to be in Christ is to be free from all law. "A Christian is the freest of all men" externally, yet inwardly he is under the compelling rule of love. How much deeper are the demands of love than those of any

external code; and how profoundly different are the two conceptions!

To continue: *What is Worship?* This is another essential feature in Islam:—where, when, and how to worship God so that it may be duly performed and be acceptable to Him. There are so many minute details in regard to all these considerations which may make worship void or corrupt. In Islam, it is no simple matter to worship properly, as it was in Judaism. One has much to learn before he can worship rightly.

But in the Fourth Gospel, the answer is quite simple: “God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.” True worship, that is to say, is worship in spirit and in truth; place, direction, manner, hour, matter not at all. The sole condition for acceptable worship is sincerity and truthfulness of spirit. The Jew clamoured for holy places and holy seasons, holy garments and holy sacrifices; but Jesus swept these all away at one stroke, directing the eyes of men from outward words and acts of worship to the inner state of the spirit. For in all personal relationship, outer manners, courtesies and gestures do not matter much, while sincerity and truthfulness are absolutely essential. If, then, prayer is personal communion with God, the vital condition is the worshipper’s sincerity; purity of spirit, rather than of the body.

*What is Judgment?* Judgment is given heavy emphasis in Islam, and the Prophet began his apostolic career by preaching Judgment. In the early Sūras of the Qurān men are warned of the Judgment Day, and threatened by Hell

fire: "Woe to every Backbiter, Defamer! . . . For verily he shall be flung into the Crushing Fire! . . . It is God's kindled fire, which shall mount above the hearts. It shall verily rise over them like a vault, on outstretched columns" (LIV). "They who disbelieve our signs, shall be the people of the left. Around them the fire shall close" (XL, 18 ff.). In Islam, then, Judgment is a decree pronounced by Allah the Almighty on the Last Day. "Patiently await the Judgment of the Lord" (LXVIII, 48).

Now while this external conception of Judgment has undoubtedly had some effect in warning people, still it has also been a powerful factor in moral deterioration, simply because it has induced them to believe that Judgment is in the power of God and that God will judge according to His absolute Will; whereupon the problem straightway becomes that of escaping the severity of His Judgment; and this has naturally led to moral laxity and deterioration. For in place of making any earnest effort to change their own mode of life, people have tried to change God's Judgment by some device or other; plainly, therefore, the root trouble consists in their wholly external concept of Judgment.

In the Fourth Gospel, on the contrary, Judgment is essentially spiritual: it is always self-judgment, rather than any verdict pronounced from outside. It is a state of the soul rather than an external fire: present rather than future. It is loving darkness rather than light. "This is the Judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light" (III, 19). It is unbelief in the face of reality. "He that believeth not, is condemned already"

(III, 18). Christ directs men to the inner condition of the soul, and shows they are under Judgment already.

Finally: *What is Death?* What shall happen to man after death? Where will he go? What will he do? The Moslem mind has been deeply occupied with this question, and has devoted much speculation to it, the greatest puzzle being that relation of the body to the spirit. Shall man live after his body is decayed in the grave? This question the Semitic mind has never been able to solve. But Jesus' answer, in the Fourth Gospel, is marvellous in its simplicity and directness: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live." Death is overcome in Christ. But Jesus has something even more impressive to teach about death: "Whosoever believeth on me shall never die." "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death" (*John VIII, 51*). Thus not only is there resurrection after death, but in Christ there is no death; there is only Life Eternal, here and hereafter, now and evermore. To the materialistic mentality of the Jews, however, this was quite incomprehensible, so they said: "Now we know that thou art mad"; to which Jesus replies most emphatically: "If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste death."

The Jews were plainly thinking of physical life and death, while Jesus was teaching about spiritual life and death:—that the main problem for man is neither the length of his physical life, nor again physical death, but whether he is dead or alive to spiritual realities.

The discussion between Jesus and the Jews after the feeding of the five thousand, as depicted in the sixth

Chapter of the Fourth Gospel, is another valuable source for the psychological analysis of the Hebrew mind in this respect. They ask Him: "What doest thou for a sign that we may see and believe? Our fathers ate the Manna in the wilderness." The Jews, that is to say, want an external "sign" for faith.

"I am the bread of life," replies Jesus: "I am the living bread; yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they rejoin; and Jesus says, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him."

Even the disciples comment: "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" but, continues Jesus, "Doth this offend you? Doth it cause you to stumble? It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing;" whereupon many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Then Simon Peter said, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

It was not at all surprising that the multitudes could not understand Jesus' words, since He and the Jews were using the same terms, but with quite different implications. For while Jesus was teaching about the spirit, the Jews were speaking of the physical, and were therefore quite unable to understand Him.

Thus the Fourth Gospel provides highly illuminating answers to the puzzling questionings of the Moslem mind, by directing men from the physical to the realm of the spiritual in all aspects of religious life. "Except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe," said Jesus. The

Moslem also seeks external signs, and it is his problem too to turn his eye from these to the inner marvels of the spiritual life. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life. . . . Why do ye not understand what I say?"



## CHAPTER X

### WHAT IS EVANGELISM:

In their conception of evangelism for Moslems, Christians have usually been influenced by certain preconceived ideas which are, most unfortunately, quite contrary to both actual experience and right religious thinking. These ideas have been inherited mainly from the past; but in spite of this, they can neither be supported by facts nor submitted to the test of impartial investigation. Perhaps nowhere in Christian service is there so great a need for questioning the validity of the dominating ideas as in the task of evangelism among Moslems.

It is, for example, a common belief among Christians in Moslem lands that Islam has been so long sustained only by its political power, and therefore that Islam's loss of political power will involve the loss of religious power over its people. This view has been almost axiomatic for Christians for many generations, and it is still held by a very large majority. But any such conception of Islam's power over its followers is wholly inadequate, since it can be substantiated by no historical events, and is surely contrary to our present-day experience. For in Egypt Islam lost political power for a long period, and yet the number of converts from Christianity to Islam exceeded that of converts from Islam to Christianity.

Nor is the state of affairs very different in Africa, since

there, too, Islam has retained its hold on the people in spite of the loss of its political power in many parts of that great continent. This is equally true of India where, although its political influence disappeared long ago, still Islam has not forfeited its hold upon the natives. In fact, the impression that Islam's religious influence is due mainly to its political strength is a completely false interpretation of both Islamic history and religion, and must be abandoned altogether if any right relationship between Islam and Christianity is ever to be achieved.

It has, still further, been a widespread opinion among Christians that the principal difficulty, as between Islam and Christianity, lies in the sphere of religious dogma, and that Islam must therefore be met on that basis. For centuries, consequently, Christian apologists have aimed at combating Islam on the plane of dogma, by endeavouring to prove the falsity of the Islamic articles of faith on the one hand, and on the other asserting the truth of Christian dogmas. But this has resulted in repeated failure because, first of all, it has been actuated by prejudice and a totally false conception of Islamic religion, and also because it has never properly understood the ideas which have been actually operative in the formation of religious dogma, as such. Others, again, have believed that the essential contrast between Islam and Christianity consists in their respective ethical and social principles, such as the attitude to racial and political problems, to women and family life, etc., and they have consequently emphasized these features in their discussions of religious questions; this tendency is especially prominent in modern times. But this

standpoint is equally inadequate, since religion is essentially neither an ethical nor a social system, although it involves such teachings; while ethical and social doctrines themselves spring from other, and still more fundamental, beliefs about Man and God, so that it is these beliefs that must be changed in order to effect any modification of individual and social conduct.

The *fundamental* difference between Islam and Christianity lies, therefore, in neither the sphere of politics, nor dogma, nor ethics, but rather in the realm of the spiritual. In all these relations there are extremely important contrasts which do not, however, constitute the real problem. This, once again, exists solely in the spiritual realm; it is in its conception of the spiritual that Islam differs radically from Christianity. In order to understand Christian teaching, therefore, Islam must first of all attain a new conception of the "spiritual." Just as the primitive Hebraic idea of the "spirit," as a mysterious and quasi-physical energy like the desert wind, was elevated by the great prophets of Israel to the moral and truly spiritual realm, and later still was used by Christian writers to indicate personality both in Man and God, so it must be in Islam. Its characteristic conception of the "spirit" as something quasi-material, as a non-moral energy, must be raised to the moral and personal sphere, so that since Man shares personality with God, the chasm between Man and God may be levelled and the way opened for fellowship in the spiritual realm.

The key to understanding Christ's teaching about Man and God, as contrasted with Judaism, is to be found in

His conception of the "spirit" and the "spiritual." "That which entereth into the mouth doth not defile the man," said Jesus, "but that which proceedeth out of the mouth defileth the man." Now in relation to Judaism, this was a most revolutionary utterance. It directed the whole problem from the external to the inward, from the seen to the unseen, and from the physical to the spiritual. This, then, forms the basic problem as between Islam and Christianity, so that evangelism among Moslems should aim, first of all, at awakening them to the reality of the truly spiritual.

It is therefore, in my opinion, most regrettable that Christian Apologists and Evangelists, without ever taking this basic difficulty of the Moslem mind into consideration, have tried to impart Christian doctrines to Moslems and, when they have met with opposition, have most unjustly accused the Moslems of obstinacy and blindness to truth. But in all education, assuredly, the teacher's task is not merely to impart subject-matter to his pupils, but also to understand their mentality and adjust his own presentation accordingly. But Christian Evangelists have neither understood the Moslem mind, nor taken its characteristic difficulty into sufficient account in expounding their ideas; in fact, some have almost taken a pride in presenting Christian doctrine so that it must offend the Moslem mind! One cannot but feel this tone of spiritual pride in most Christian apologetic treatises, both in the past and to-day. Instead of making an honest and sincere effort to understand the difficulties of Moslem sentiment and to be sympathetic to them, apologists have simply proclaimed

their own message, and then invited the Moslems to accept this. They have not even tolerated some modifications in terminology, but have insisted on Moslems receiving them without changing "one jot or one tittle!" Scientific method, I am convinced, has yet to be applied to Christian Evangelism. There is an obstinate clinging to old methods, and a deep distrust of new thought, which are professedly an intense faith in the Power of the Gospel, but in reality spring from mere self-confidence. The fault is always that of the other person: the evangelist himself is always right! I have no doubt whatever that, in this respect, much must be changed in Christian Evangelism. A little more humility in place of self-confidence! A little more sympathy instead of spiritual pride! A little more willingness to appreciate the genuine difficulties of others instead of finding fault with them! A little more patience instead of trying to produce quick results!

For the Moslem has a very real difficulty in understanding Christian teaching rightly, simply because, as we have abundantly seen, his conception of the spirit and the spiritual is so radically different, as has been contended throughout this volume. The main purpose of Evangelism, therefore, should be to awaken the Moslem to the reality of the spiritual; and without this there can be no true understanding, and consequently no true Evangelism.

But, in justice to Islam, we must add one word more. For is Christianity itself less in need to-day of being awakened to the reality of the spiritual? Does the Christian Church, in its doctrine, its worship and practice, witness truly to this great truth? Islam, at least, has been consistent

in its faith and practice, whereas Christian practice has too often contradicted its beliefs; it has taught one thing, but practised quite another. At the present time, there is a no less materialistic interpretation of religion and life in Christianity than in Islām, so that it is not just to divide men religiously, as Christians and as non-Christians, into two distinct groups, and then call one only to a change of heart! The division must rather be between those who believe in the reality of the spiritual and those who do not; those who interpret Man primarily as a mere biological organism, and then evaluate his life by his physical qualities and material acquisitions, and those who interpret Man primarily as a spiritual being, estimating his life by his spiritual qualities, by goodness and love. The crucial problem of the world to-day, Moslem and Christian alike and equally, is to attain the knowledge that Man, in his essence, is spiritual and that all personal and social life can be built up only on that basis.



## II

# MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN CONFLICT IN THE NEAR EAST (HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS)





## FOREWORD

The relationship between Islam and Christianity has, together with the psychological atmosphere already delineated, an historical background which must be studied if any comprehensive understanding of the problem is to be attained. It is extremely regrettable that their relations, throughout past centuries, have been dominated by an attitude of antagonism and controversy, in both the political and religious spheres; and this has resulted in great disaster for the peoples of the Near East. The entire subject should be studied with a quite unprejudiced mind, so that it may be correctly understood, and the way of reconciliation discovered. This is the purpose of the following pages.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ATTITUDE OF MOSLEMS TO CHRISTIANS

#### MUHAMMED'S ATTITUDE:

Muhammed himself was most firmly convinced of the existence of the all-powerful One Allah, and also of the Last Judgment. When he finally settled in Medina, he established there a community founded on faith in Allah, the One Supreme God, all the families and clans who accepted this faith being included in the community. As to his attitude to the non-Moslem elements in Medina, a decree issued during the early period, after the Hijrah and before the battle of Badr, is most illuminating, and is given fully by Ibn Ishāq, the earliest biographer of Muhammed.<sup>1</sup> According to this decree Medina has become a united umma, or community, ruled by Allah, and in His name by Muhammed. The faithful belong to this umma in the first place, but so do all who ally themselves and fight with them. Thus the Jews, and even the heathen Arabs, were expressly included, although they never shared exactly the same rights and obligations; any disputes that arose must be brought before Allah and Muhammed. Only the Quraish, or the Meccan Arabs, appeared as declared enemies of the umma, and it was this which made the

Ibn Ishāq's notes are given in Ibn Hishām's *Sirah*. Cf. Ibn Hishām, *Sirah al-Nabī*, Ed. Cairo, A.H. 1346, vol. i, pp. 299 ff.

battle of Badr so significant in the history of Islam.<sup>1</sup> Sir William Muir quotes this decree in an abridged translation as follows:

"On behalf of the Believers and whosoever else joineth himself unto them and striveth with them for the Faith. Whosoever is rebellious, or seeketh to spread enmity and sedition, the hand of every man shall be against him. No believer shall be put to death for the blood of an infidel; neither shall any infidel be supported against a Believer. Whosoever of the Jews followeth us shall have aid and succour; they shall not be injured, nor shall any enemy be aided against them. No unbeliever shall grant protection to the people of Mecca, either in person or in property. The Jews shall contribute with the Moslems, while at war with a common enemy. The Jewish clans in alliance with the several tribes of Medina are one people with the Believers. The Jews will profess their religion and the Moslems theirs. In going forth to war the Jews shall be responsible for their expenditure, and the Moslems for theirs; but, if attacked, each shall come to the assistance of the other. Medina shall be sacred and inviolable for all that join this treaty. Controversies and disputes shall be referred to the decision of Allah and Muhammed, and war and peace shall be made in common."<sup>2</sup>

The Arabic Text, however, is somewhat more definite: "The non-Moslems are a community (umma) with the Moslems. To the Jews their religion, and to the Moslems their religion"; and it is quite evident that this decree shows

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, pp. 11 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of Muhammed*, Ed. 1923, pp. 183 ff.

tolerance and justice in dealing with non-Moslems in the Moslem commonwealth.

In the next place, we find Muhammed himself making terms with others outside Medina, and among these with the Christians of Najrān, who sent a deputation consisting of forty ecclesiastics led by the Bishop, and twenty laymen. Muhammed granted them protection for their religion, churches and monastic institutions, as well as for their bishops and hermits, none of whom was to be removed from his abode: "No Bishop shall be removed from his Bishopric (office of a Bishop) and no Priest from his Priesthood," says the decree.<sup>1</sup>

In the ninth year after the Hijrah, however, another decree, called "Discharge" (*bara'a*) and committed to 'alī for publication in Mecca, shows a less tolerant attitude. On the great day of Sacrifice, 'alī read this aloud to the multitudes at the Pilgrimage, as follows:

"A discharge by Allah and His Apostle in respect of the heathen. Go to and fro securely during the next four months, but know ye that ye cannot hinder Allah. If ye repent, that will be better for you . . . and when the forbidden months are over, then fight against the heathen wheresoever ye find them. Take them captive, besiege them, and lay in wait for them in every ambush. But if they repent, and establish prayer and give the tithes, leave them alone, for Allah is gracious and merciful. . . . O ye that believe! Verily the Unbelievers are unclean. Wherefore let them not approach the Holy Temple after this year."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, Leyden, Ed. 1905, pp. 35 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Muir, *ibid.* p. 452.

The following year (10th of Hijrah) Muhammed went to Mecca on pilgrimage, and there he gave his farewell proclamation, in which he emphasized Moslem brotherhood but said nothing regarding non-Moslems. He said:

"Ye people! Harken to my speech and comprehend the same. Know that every Moslem is the brother of every other Moslem. All of you are on the same equality. Ye are one Brotherhood."<sup>1</sup> And he concluded with the verse, "This day have I perfected your religion unto you, fulfilled my mercy upon you, and appointed for you Islam to be your faith" (Sūra V, 5).

According to this, then, all Moslems are brothers of one another. But what about the remainder? Here we miss completely that attitude of tolerance which marked the earlier part of the Prophet's life.

This is equally noticeable in the teaching of the Qur'ān. Some verses show great tolerance: for example, "Never there shall be compulsion in religion" (Sūra II, 257). Again, "To you your religion, to me my religion" (CIX, 6), and: "O people of the Book, come to a word fair between us and you, that we worship God only and associate nothing with him" (III, 57). Or still better, "Those who have believed (namely, Moslems), Jews, Nasāra (the Christians of the North of Arabia), and Sabeans (perhaps the Christians of South Arabia), their reward is with their Lord. There is no fear upon them" (II, 59). These verses all teach that there is no distinction whatever before God, between Moslems and non-Moslems, Jews and Christians.

<sup>1</sup> Muir, *ibid.* pp. 472 ff.

Other verses, however, express a totally different attitude. For example, "Fight against those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor practise the true religion. The Jews say that Uzair is the Son of God, and the Nasāra say that the Messiah is the Son of God. God fight against them" (IX, 29 ff.). These indicate a definite antagonism toward non-Moslems.

Two characteristic factors explain this significant change in the Prophet's life: the first is the natural human impulse for domination, a temptation that has affected all great men, while the other is the inevitable reaction to an antagonistic environment. There can be no doubt that the unfriendly attitude of the Jews in Medina, expressing itself sometimes in bitter criticism and sarcasm, had very much to do in infuriating the new leader in dealing with them, just as with those Arab chiefs and poets who had shown the same hostility. Had they all exhibited a fair understanding, instead of sarcasm and antagonism, the results might have been very different; for we must remember that Muhammed began by preaching repentance, faith in One God, with the warning of the coming Judgment; he summoned *all* men, without any differentiation whatever, to submit themselves to God. This was the substance of his call.

#### THE FOUR ORTHODOX CALIPHS (A.D. 632-661):

After Muhammed's death his community in Medina was ruled by the Caliphs; and this was the era of the most spectacular conquests in Islamic history. Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Tripoli in

North Africa, and all Iran, were annexed to the Arab-Moslem Empire during the thirty years, 632-661. "The great innovation was that the Arabs were appointed governors of the provinces, the Arabs became the standing army and militia, and they were paid by the state to protect it, the provincials supplying the money."<sup>1</sup>

A document of this period, called the "Covenant of 'Umar I," is recorded in several forms. One is given in a letter from 'Umar, in which he quotes another received from some Christians. A second version appears in a letter to Abū 'Ubaida, the chief commander in Syria. Very probably this covenant is a document prepared in the law schools during the second and third centuries, but it clearly expresses the general attitude adopted by the Caliphs to non-Moslems. Although some irksome and humiliating conditions were imposed on them, still protection was accorded to their lives and property, and guarantees were given of liberty of worship in their own religion. It reads:

"I and all the Moslems promise you and your fellow Christians security as long as you and they keep the conditions we put upon you. . . .

"We will protect you and your lawful property against any one, Moslem or not, who tries to wrong you, as we protect ourselves and our property. Our decisions about it will be the same as those about our own property and ourselves. . . . You must not attack a Moslem, nor help their enemies by word or deed."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Moslem Subjects*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 15.



The agreement which Caliph 'Umar made in A.D. 628 with the people of Palestine is equally pertinent: "The Commander of the Faithful grants them security for their lives and their property, their churches and their crosses, and everything else that concerns their religion. Their churches shall not be used as dwelling-houses nor be demolished; they shall not be coerced as regards their religion and no one of them shall be harmed."<sup>1</sup> The treaty which Khālid made in the year 14 of the Hijrah with the people of Damascus was to the same effect. He gave them security for their persons, property, churches, and the wall of their city. None of their houses should be destroyed nor dwelt in; for this they received the promise of God and the protection of His Prophet, the Caliphs and the believers. Nothing but good need befall them if they pay tribute.<sup>2</sup> Jerusalem, Ourfa and Raqqa all capitulated on similar terms, while Hīra, the stronghold of pre-Islamic Christianity, surrendered on agreeing with Khālid that they should pay 100,000 dirhams annually and be "eyes" to the Moslems against the people of Persia; but again neither church nor castle of theirs should be destroyed.

It is quite clear, therefore, that marked tolerance was shown by these Caliphs in their relationship with non-Moslems; a Nestorian Bishop, in fact, wrote in A.D. 649, "These Arabs fight not against the Christian religion; nay, rather they defend our faith, they revere our priests

<sup>1</sup> Tabari I, V, 2405, quoted by Margaret Smith in her *Early Mysticism*, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Tritton, *op. cit.* p. 39.

and saints, and they make gifts to our churches and monasteries.”<sup>1</sup>

#### THE UMAIYAD PERIOD (A.D. 661–750):

The Umayyad Caliphs, with Damascus as their capital, were chiefly interested in conquest rather than in religion. They represented the Meccan aristocracy, being themselves Arabians and supported by them. Their armies occupied all North Africa, crossed to Gibraltar and marched into France; and although their triumphs were sustained by religious zeal, still they were Arabs first and Moslems second. It is true that, for the faithful, confession of Islam resulted in great material prosperity, and at first all revenue came from non-Moslems; but later on, as the provincials themselves became Moslem and the revenue consequently diminished, they compelled non-Arab converts also to pay the tax. The Umayyads, in truth, were world conquerors; that was their chief ambition. Barthold says:

“There is no doubt that the Umayyad conquerors were guided only by the desire for booty and glory, and that religion was, in the main, of as little importance to them as to the defenders of the land. They did not possess any broad imperial ideals, but were first and foremost the leaders of the Arab nation in the course of the war for the Faith, concerned only to maintain their authority among the Arabs, to collect taxes from the subject peoples, and

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, p. 159. Cf. also Smith, *op. cit.* p. 120.

tribute from the vassal rulers. They were first and foremost the representatives of the Arab nation."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE 'ABBĀSID PERIOD (A.D. 750-1258):

The 'Abbāsid Caliphs were primarily Moslems, and since most of their supporters were Persians, and subsequently Turks, any Moslem, whatever his race might be, could hope for success. The antithesis between Arab and non-Arab steadily disappeared, while at the same time that between Moslem and non-Moslem was emphasized. "They sought to create a state in which both the Persian and the Arab should enjoy equal rights, the administration of the Sassanids serving as model."<sup>2</sup> Thus these Caliphs left the Christians, Jews, Magians, Samaritans and Sabceans, all perfectly free in their faith, although they were under certain restrictions. They were called "Dhimmīs," "the people of protection," "until they pay tribute out of hand and they be humbled" (Sūra IX, 27).

In his book on "Kharāj" (tax) Abū Yūsuf, who was the Qādī of Bagdad, A.H. 113-183, describes the condition of the Dhimmīs at this time of Moslem conquest as follows:

"As to the question, O Commander of the Faithful, concerning the Dhimmīs, how it is that their synagogues and churches in the important towns or other places of the Moslem conquest have been left to them without being destroyed, and how it is that they have been allowed to continue to display their crossēs at the time of their festivals, the reason thereof is that the arrangement made

<sup>1</sup> *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, pp. 182 f., 187.

<sup>2</sup> W. Barthold, *ibid.* p. 197.

between the Moslems and the Dhimmīs only took place on condition that neither their churches nor their synagogues, whether within or without the walls, should be destroyed, and their lives should be respected, and that they should be allowed liberty to fight against and repel their enemies. Such are the conditions following the payment of the "jizya," and under which the peace was concluded, and the written agreements demanded the non-erection of new churches or synagogues. It is thus that the whole of Syria and the greater part of Hira was conquered, which explains why the churches and synagogues have been respected."<sup>1</sup>

Another important document, discovered by Dr. A. Mingana, throws much light on this subject. It is a charter of protection granted in A.D. 1138 to the Nestorian Patriarch 'Abdishō III by Muktafī, Caliph of Baghdad, which proves that however imperfect Islam may have been in some of its social aspects, and however some Caliphs subjected the Christians to severe persecution, statutory intolerance, at least, was not among the defects of Islam. This charter emanates from the chancery of an 'Abbāsīd Caliph and shows great tolerance towards Christian subjects. It reads:

"According to the example of the imāms, he ordered you to be invested with the rights of those who preceded and came before you in the office of catholicus. He ordered to confirm your position, and that of those who follow and come after you, to protect you and the people of your

<sup>1</sup> Abū Yūsuf, Kitāb al-Kharāj, p. 164, Cairo, A.H. 1346; quoted by L. E. Browne in *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia*.

faith in their customs in the burying of your dead and the protection of your churches and monasteries; in all this to act on the model set and followed by later imāms, your treaty and covenant; to limit themselves to asking the poll-tax from women and immature boys; to demand it once a year, without turning aside from the approved decree of the law in levying it; that the various Christians may find justice in their litigation, that he will take justice from the strong for the weak and will lead to the right him who has turned to wickedness and injustice. He will so watch over them as to establish the rights and privileges whereby men live in safety, and he will go on the plain path and straight road.”<sup>1</sup>

It is thus quite evident that although Christians lived under certain humiliating restrictions as Dhimmīs, and sometimes suffered persecution as, e.g. under the Caliph al-Hākim (1009–20), still the Moslems, as a matter of principle, never persecuted Christians for their religion. Certainly politics, personal ambitions and the passion for wealth all played a prominent rôle; and Leone Caetani has shown most clearly that material necessities and greed were extremely important factors in the Arab conquests; and all this has been by no means a minor motive in the conversion of many peoples to Islam. Nevertheless, the Qur’ān teaches that “Those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah, to them give the message of grievous torment” (IX, 34). Yet Zubair and Talhah, two men whom the Prophet counted among the

<sup>1</sup> A. Mingana, “A Charter of Protection” in *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. 10, No. 1, January 1926.

most pious ten people to whom he could assure a free entrance to Paradise, each left land worth 30-50 million dirhems, and Talhah one hundred leather bags of gold in addition.<sup>1</sup> But this is simply human avarice, to be found in all societies alike, so that neither Islam nor Christianity can be held responsible for it.

In summarizing the whole situation Sir Thomas U. Arnold says:

"The very existence of so many Christian sects and communities in countries that have been for centuries under Muhammedan rule is an abiding testimony to the toleration they have enjoyed, and shows that the persecutions they have from time to time been called upon to endure at the hands of bigots and fanatics, have been excited by some special and local circumstances rather than inspired by a settled principle of intolerance."<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Prof. Margoliouth asserts that "It is a marvel to all who have considered Eastern Christianity and its circumstances since the Islamic conquests that it should have survived at all."<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps, however, that eminent authority, W. Barthold, describes the conditions more justly as follows: "Some of the larger churches were forcibly possessed by the Mussulmans, but generally speaking the Christians were left in possession of their churches. In fact for a long time, new churches and monasteries were built under Islamic rule without any opposition from the rulers. Over all the vast

<sup>1</sup> Goldziher, *Muhammed and Islam*, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> *The Preaching of Islam* (Second Edition), p. 420.

<sup>3</sup> *Early Development of Muhammedanism*, p. 134.

area of the Caliphate from St. Vincent in the South-western end of Portugal to Samarkand we see rich Christian foundations endowed with immovable property. The Christian subjects of the Caliphate were not hindered from keeping up relations with the rest of the Christian world nor from accepting contributions for their foundations.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mussulman Culture*: translated from the Russian by Suhrawardy, p. 13.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ATTITUDE OF CHRISTIANS TO MOSLEMS

It must be admitted that the Christian Emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire were far from being good examples to the Moslem rulers. When Christianity became a state religion, to be a Christian meant to be a citizen of the Roman Empire. This was an incentive to the Moslems to make Islam also a state religion. We know too how Justinian, the greatest of the Eastern Roman emperors, persecuted the pagans; in his great code, compiled less than a century before Muhammed, it was enacted that pagans must be baptized if they wished to enjoy the common rights of citizenship; and this resulted in 70,000 new converts being added to the Christian church in Asia Minor! What an example to the Moslems in dealing with non-Moslems!

In *The Renaissance of Islam*, referring to the conditions in the fourth century of Islam (tenth century A.D.) Adam Mez mentions: "As in the Byzantine Empire punishment for conversion to Islam was death, so also in the Empire of the Caliphs conversion of a Muslim to Christianity meant capital punishment for him."<sup>1</sup> Similarly:

"In the Byzantine Empire the State Church proceeded far more drastically against fellow-Christians of differing sects than did Islam against her political subjects. . . . The

<sup>1</sup> P. 32. Quoted from Kitāb al 'Uyūn, Fol. 209a.



Emperor Nicephorus in the 4/10th century compelled the Jacobites to leave Antioch. The Jacobite Chronicler calls the imperial Patriarch more perverse than the Pharaoh and more sacrilegious than Nabuchadnezzar; the Jacobite Patriarch of Melitene, with six other theologians, were taken and imprisoned at Constantinople, and their church was given to the Orthodox Community."<sup>1</sup>

"The State Church forbade the use of bells to the Armenians."<sup>2</sup>

"The later Roman Law forbade the erection of new Synagogues to the Jews."<sup>3</sup>

"The Arab writer Jāhiz (d. 255-869) states that all sharp practices come from the Greeks, notwithstanding compassion being the key-note of their religion,"<sup>4</sup> and "al-Bīrūnī says that it is a noble philosophy which gives the shirt to him who takes the coat, which blesses an enemy and prays for all. But . . . since the conversion of Constantine, the sword and the lash have been the instruments of the Christian governments."<sup>5</sup>

Then came the Crusades, which were nothing less than a great tragedy in the relations between Christians and Moslems in the Near East. It was, in fact, the worst step the Christians could have taken to antagonize the Moslems. The Crusaders attempted to rescue the Holy Land from the hands of the Moslems by the sword, and thus to win for Christ a kingdom of this world. But this involved a

<sup>1</sup> P. 41. Quoted from Michael Syrus, 556 ff.

<sup>2</sup> P. 41. Quoted from Schlumberger's *Epopée Byzantine*.

<sup>3</sup> P. 42. Quoted from Schlumberger's *Epopée Byzantine*.

<sup>4</sup> P. 50. Quoted from Kitāb al-Haiyawān, F. 55.

<sup>5</sup> P. 51. Quoted from India, Translation, II, 161.

complete misunderstanding of Jesus' own spirit and method; it was indeed a literal denial of Him, because it misrepresented Him altogether. Assuredly the courage and self-sacrifice of the crusaders call for nought but our admiration, but the result of their enterprise was that Moslems and Christians henceforth met, fought and, two centuries later, parted as enemies.

For long after the invaders had departed, the spirit of enmity remained in the land and became the permanent heritage of Christians and Moslems alike; dominated henceforward by a mutual hostility rendered keener than ever, each great religion sought every opportunity to crush the other and, whenever this presented itself, employed it relentlessly.

After the Crusades, for example, during the invasion of Syria by the hordes of the Mongol Hulāgu in A.D. 1260, the Christians rejoiced when his Christian wife persecuted the Moslems, permitted the destruction of their temples, prohibited the performance of solemnities in the name of Muhammed and enslaved them. "The Christians drank wine in public in Ramadan, poured it on the clothes of the Moslems, and on the doors of mosques. When they carried the cross in procession, they made the shopkeepers stand up, and ill-treated those who refused to do so. They preached sermons in praise of their faith, exclaiming, "The faith of the Messiah triumphs to-day". If the Moslems complained, they were beaten. The governor loaded the priests with honours . . ." <sup>1</sup> The Christian chronicler Haithon, in referring to these barbarous actions, calls

<sup>1</sup> A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their Non-Moslem Subjects*, p. 57.

Hulāgu's wife "This devoted Christian lady," while the Jacobite historian, Barhebraeus, styles the pair: "These two great luminaries and zealous combatants for the Christian religion."

But this inevitably had its repercussions; and in 1300, after the Mongols had been expelled, the Moslems took their revenge. They plundered the houses of the Christians, destroyed all they could, ruined churches, slaughtered many Christians and enslaved others. Thus they avenged themselves on those who had destroyed their mosques; and not content with this, they also pillaged the Jews' houses and reduced their shops to heaps of rubbish.<sup>1</sup> In 1301, again, all churches in Egypt were ordered to be closed, the Christians being regarded as allies of the Mongols; in 1321, too, the Christians were robbed and killed, until finally the Coptic Church was depleted to the meagre numbers of to-day.

The original cause of these catastrophes, unquestionably, was the hatred incited by the crusades; and such were the relations between Islam and Christianity at the close of the Middle Ages. They hated each other, and whenever any occasion arose they would tear each other to pieces.

In modern times the chief rôle has been played by the Ottomans. The Ottoman empire was the Moslem state *par excellence*, and Turkish Sultans bore the title: "The Caliph, the commander of the faithful." The Sultans assigned to various Christian groups the status of "Millet," a system originally adopted by the Iranians, which allowed

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire des Sultans Memlukes*, Trans. Quatremere, I. 98. 106. Cf. Tritton, *op. cit.* p. 57.

each community to manage its own affairs in the ecclesiastical sphere, while depriving them of any share in political administration. The Ottomans themselves were soldiers and officials, while non-Moslems were artisans and tax-payers.

In Europe it was almost universally believed that the motive which impelled the Ottomans to conquest was their fanatical desire to extend Islam. But this view is very far from being correct; for there was very little, if indeed any, genuine missionary enterprise on behalf of Islam. The chief motives, on the contrary, were ambition to extend the empire and the military desire for conquest; and although religious feeling certainly added zeal to these, it was never in itself the primary influence. This is equally true of the persecutions in Turkey during the last fifty years. These too have usually been explained as being due to religious fanaticism; but it cannot possibly be denied that the protection of Christians in Turkey by the European Powers, negotiated in many treaties, simply resulted in identifying the Christian populations of Turkey with those governments, and hence incited the Turks to persecution and massacre. Prof. Arnold Toynbee, in *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey*, has clearly delineated "the close connection between the Greek occupation of Smyrna, and the persecution and expulsion of the Greeks from Anatolia following the Greek War."<sup>1</sup> There

<sup>1</sup> P. 121: "The Greeks and Armenians in Anatolia, without facing the inherited geographical, economic, and administrative difficulties, have aspired to break their political connection with Turkey and to become citizens of a Greek and an Armenian national state,

was a similar connection between the Turkish massacres of Christians in Cilicia and the occupation of these districts by the Allied Powers, with the intention of making it a home for Christians; a policy which made them jubilant to begin with, but subsequently failed completely and involved its own repercussions. Surely Islam cannot justly be held responsible for these unhappy results of international politics.

and they have staked their lives and property on the slenderest expectations of realizing this ambition. A triumph of emotion over interest!"

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM

The outstanding controversy between Islam and Christianity, in the sphere of religious beliefs and doctrines, has mainly concerned two truths:—first and foremost, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, intimately connected as this is with that of the Trinity, and secondly, the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Islam, as we have seen repeatedly, always speaks with reverence about the Person of Jesus as the Messiah, a spirit sent from Allah, the servant of Allah, Nabī and Rasūl, but none the less categorically rejects His divinity, and also the Doctrine of the Trinity. “Infidels are they who say, ‘God is the third of the three’ for there is no God but one God; and if they refrain not from what they say, a grievous punishment shall light on such of them as are infidels” (Sūra V, 76). Still more emphatic is the Sūra Ikhhlās: “Say, He is God alone; God the Eternal! He begetteth not, and He is not begotten; and there is none like unto Him.” As against this, inevitably, the Christian insistence on the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, as the foundation of Christian faith, has caused much controversy and antagonism between the two religions.

Regarding the Holy Scriptures, in the next place, the Qur’ān accepts the Torah and the Gospels as Books sent down by God, but contends that they have been misin-

terpreted (Sūra V, 45), while later Moslem theologians developed the doctrine of "abrogation," asserting that the Holy Qur'ān has abrogated all previous scriptures. In reply, Christians insist that the whole Bible is the Revelation of God, written by holy persons inspired by Him, and is the sole final authority for faith and life. This also has resulted in hostility and conflict between the two faiths.

Almost any book, whether written by Moslem or Christian on religious problems, shows the controversy to be concerned mainly with these subjects, each contestant trying to refute the claims of his opponent and asserting his own to be true. This becomes obvious in the discussion between the Arab General 'Amr ibn al-'Ās and John I, the Monophysite (Jacobite) Patriarch of Antioch in the eighteenth year of Hijrah; in the apology of Timothy I, the Nestorian Patriarch called the Great (779-823), in the presence of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mahdī, father of the famous Harūn-al-Rashīd; in al-Kindī's apology, said to have been written at the court of al-Ma'mūn (circa A.H. 215; A.D. 830), and in that by the famous Nestorian metropolitan of Nisībīn, Elie Bar Schinaia (1008-1049), in response to the questions of a great personality, the Moslem governor of Diarbekir; similarly in the book by Krikor Dēwatzy, the famous Armenian Bishop in the early fifteenth century, against the Moslems; and finally, in many apologies written during the last century by either Western or indigenous authors.

But the result is invariably opposition and conflict:—tooth for tooth and eye for eye. The Moslem asserts his own belief and condemns the Christian faith, while the

Christian does precisely the same. Thus in all that concerns the relations between Islam and Christianity, the conflict about religious doctrine severely intensifies that in the political sphere; in this way the problem becomes worse and the antagonism more direct and embittered.

It would plainly take far too long, however, to discuss the entire range of the religious controversy between Islam and Christianity; nevertheless, there are certain features which can be fairly definitely indicated in the hope of clarifying the situation.

First of all, as regards the Scriptures. An impartial study of the passages in the Qur'ān asserting their corruption by Jews and Christians, clearly shows that Muhammed himself did not intend to accuse them of having altered and perverted the text of their Holy Books, but rather of having misunderstood and misinterpreted some passages, or of having concealed certain verses relating to his own apostleship. Neither the early Mecca Sūras nor the later Medina Sūras contain any censure upon either external or internal alterations of the Bible on the part of Jews or Christians. The Qur'ān, in fact, advocates faith in both Pentateuch and Gospel; and the same tolerant attitude characterizes the early Moslem polemicists also. The actual truth is that it is only after the clash in the Middle Ages that Moslem polemicists accuse Christians of having textually corrupted the Gospels, while this charge has been intensified in the nineteenth century by the attacks on Islam in Christian polemics. This is unquestionably most unfortunate.

Turning next to the doctrines of the Person of Christ



and of the Trinity, while it is true that the divinity of Jesus is the central dogma of Christianity, still it is one thing to affirm the content and meaning of this doctrine, and quite another to insist on the old credal formulas which define and explain it. Christ is divine, not because of any ancient traditions or metaphysics, but rather because He reveals God in the completest and clearest way, and also because He shows us the right attitude to God, to our fellows and to life. He is divine, that is to say, because He saves us from the bondage of sin and leads us into the liberty of the children of God. His Cross is the supreme manifestation of the love of God conquering hatred by goodness, and turning the enemy into a friend. With Christ, therefore, something unique and divine has entered into the world, and men are bound to follow Him, though always falling far short of His example. Herein lies the true meaning of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and His finality; Jesus is the meaning of life here and in eternity. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, now and for ever.

It is thus extremely unfortunate that Christian apologists, instead of presenting Christ as this power for life, have spent their energies in defining His Personality in metaphysical terms, in this way making Him an object of endless dispute with Moslems. What possible meaning can it convey to the Moslem to say that Jesus is "of the same substance with the Father"? Does this illuminate his mind? What profit, again, is to be expected from imposing the use of the term "Son of God" on the Moslem, since this term carries a definitely physical meaning for him and has been repeatedly condemned in his sacred Book? In place

of this, the Christian should have presented a living Christ, and then left the Moslem free to describe the Personality of Jesus in words best suited to his own mind and thought. For after all, what Jesus wants from men is that they should follow Him in sincerity, not that they should make correct metaphysical definitions of His Personality. He has come to be the Friend of men, whereas by these methods He has been alienated from them. He is God's answer to life's perplexing riddles, whereas He has Himself been made a riddle to others. Primarily, Christianity is not the affirmation of any creed; it is a new experience, a new life which has been manifested in Jesus Christ. We are called to be children of the Heavenly Father: that is the Christian Gospel; and Lecky was quite correct in saying that while the Platonist exhorted men to imitate God and the Stoic urged them to follow reason, the Christian taught men to love Christ. That was the reason why the Christians triumphed over Greece and Rome; and this should always have been done, but with regard to Islam Christians have completely failed to pursue this ideal.

This is equally true about the doctrine of the Trinity, which is no dry metaphysical statement arising out of philosophical reasoning. To present it in any such way, either purely intellectually, or concretely by employing geometrical figures with three angles, etc., is simply to miss its essential truth. In his *Kitāb Murūj-adh-dhahab*, al-Mas'ūdī quotes the defence of Christianity by an aged monk, who said: "I find the truth of Christianity in its contradictions and inconsistencies which are rejected by intelligence and repelled by thought," and, referring to

the Trinity, gave the example: "One is three and three are one." To such absurdities have Christians descended! But the doctrine of the Trinity is an expression of Christian experience of God in Jesus Christ:—of God as the Father, of Christ as the Revealer of God and of the Holy Spirit as the living presence of God in men's hearts. This experience itself is the all-important matter, and not the technical formulae, which are indeed foreign to present-day thought. It is therefore deplorable that Christian apologists have emphasized the mere formulae while almost completely neglecting the Christian experience which underlies and sustains them. For the basic principle in the Christian doctrine of God is God's Fatherhood, and the main contrast between the Islamic and Christian conception of God arises just there. "Our Father which art in Heaven." "God is Love." God has not only created man, but loves him and seeks him. This is the foundation of Christian Faith, which has nevertheless been forgotten while other features have been emphasized. Christians, in short, have fought for the symbol but ignored the substance!

The radical difficulty, then, consists in the difference between Islam and Christianity when considered as religions. For Islam, in the first place, is essentially a religion of dogmas about God and man, angels and the Last Day; whereas Christianity, on the contrary, is essentially a religion of spiritual experience of forgiveness, reconciliation and new life. And while it is easy to state dogmas in definite and concrete form, it is most difficult and, in fact, almost impossible to express experience at all ade-

quately. Whenever the main discussion has concerned doctrine, therefore, Islam has gained the advantage over Christianity. Herein lies the great weakness of Christian apologists in the past, and even to-day. For it is impossible to convince opponents by discussing Christian belief in the Fatherhood of God, the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, etc., primarily as intellectual problems. In attempting to do so, one feels hopelessly lost in a maze of subtle statements which simply confuse the mind, as can easily be observed in almost any controversy between Islam and Christianity, whether past or present. These basic Christian beliefs, then, are not primarily intellectual convictions at all, but arise out of personal experience. Christians believe in the divine Person of Christ because He can save men from sin; and they believe in the Fatherhood of God because they experience His love working in their own hearts. And since all these are personal experiences, it is quite futile to argue about them as if they were purely intellectual problems. Discussion must always be centred upon experience, not on metaphysics; instead of a frozen theology, men must be invited to a living experience. The cold logic of the deist must be encountered by the reality which is found in prayer to God, the Father. Curiously enough, one of the most frequently repeated injunctions in the Qur'ān is: "Dispute not." "Let them not dispute this matter with thee, then say: God best knoweth what ye do" (XXII, 67). "With the deceitful one dispute not, but implore pardon of God" (XL, 37). "Dispute not, unless in kindly sort" (XXIX, 45). Muhammed was commanded not to dispute with infidels, with Jews and Christians. This plainly shows

the contentious attitude of his opponents, and explains why the Qur'ān contains such condemnations as: "The Jews say Ezra is the Son of God, and the Christians say the Messiah is the Son of God. God do battle with them!" The result of controversy was invariably the hardening of hearts, and bitterness in mutual relationships.

This remains true to-day. Religious superstition is one of the most tenacious things to uproot, and it is futile to seek to overcome it by mere intellectual argument. Certainly discussion in the spirit of seeking truth is necessary and useful; but a duel of arguments, with the purpose of defeating opponents, is valueless and harmful; it engenders passions which cause fresh wounds rather than healing; and when a Christian apologist advances such absurdities as proving the falsity of the Islamic Book, because it forbids intoxicants made from grapes created by God, as stated in the Bible, he has lost all sense of truth in the heat of discussion. The Qurānic "Dispute not" must be the precept of every religious worker.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE WAY TO RECONCILIATION<sup>1</sup>

Such, in my opinion, are the grave difficulties of the situation to-day. What, then, is the way of escape? How shall we find the right path? What steps should be taken for reconciliation?

These important questions are well worthy of most careful consideration by all lovers of peace.

Widely different means are suggested to this end. First of all there is the method of the Ultra-Nationalists and Ultra-Religionists, who think that the only solution of the problem is that one group should crush and completely absorb the other, and thus effect unity. For there are both Moslems and Christians who favour this plan and propagate such a spirit among their fellows. But all these ideas are rash and extreme, and any intelligent person can discern their hopeless futility. In the first place, they are neither just nor wise, and any steps of that kind can provide no solution at all; in any case they are quite impracticable, since to-day neither Moslem nor Christian can crush and annihilate the other. Surely both Moslem and Christian Ultra-Nationalists must see the utter folly of such a policy,

<sup>1</sup> I should like to acknowledge the kindness of the Editors of *The International Review of Missions* in permitting me to incorporate in this Chapter most of the material which appeared in my Article in July 1935.

since it is clearly impossible to oppress millions of people and place them in a subordinate position, hoping thus to secure peace and reconciliation. These attempts will serve no other purpose than to fire the minds of youth and embitter them toward their neighbours, thus making the problem worse and the whole situation far more dangerous.

In the opposite direction, again, there is the secularism and positivism recently adopted by Turkey, although it is practically certain that the movement has both Moslem and Christian promoters in the other countries of the Near East. Their aim is to separate religion entirely from the state, to set it on one side as a merely personal and other-worldly affair, and then to make social and scientific progress the chief national goal. "We all cling to positive science, not to religion; therefore let us side-track religion," is the motto of their policy. But this too is foolish because (first of all) no people can discard their religious convictions so easily. For all religious beliefs are primordial, and permeate equally our conscious and unconscious selves. Ancient religious feelings, therefore, express themselves even against our will, and profoundly affect our attitude toward others, as has been very evident in the experience of many peoples in recent years. It is quite useless, then, to try to eradicate religious prejudices merely by saying: "Let us put them aside."

Moreover, though scientific knowledge is undeniably necessary for social progress, it is futile to attempt to construct a harmonious social organization on science alone, since it is concerned essentially with means rather than ends, whereas for both personal and social reconstruction

we need wise ends and just standards of life. The greatest hindrance to reconciliation is man's selfishness. It is pride, avarice and sensuality that poison social life, and these can never be uprooted merely by scientific knowledge. We need a much more radical remedy.

Still another policy, advocated by some leading men, may be called the policy of the *via media*; it aims at ignoring all religious and racial differences, and emphasizing in their stead a common culture, e.g. Arab Culture. Even some Christian supporters of this suggestion go so far as to say: "We are Christians by religion, but Arab Moslems by national culture." This is certainly a new compromise, which claims to supersede the old conflicts and cement the two opposed groups together; it has, nevertheless, two serious weaknesses. Firstly, its motive is actually political rather than cultural, since it originated as a protest against the domination of foreign powers; and while this may surely be one motive for union, still it can at best have only a temporary effect, because as soon as its aim is achieved the old antagonisms may revive. Mere cultural development, still further, can provide no very high ideal to supersede the old feelings of religious and racial antagonism. For all sound social reconstruction some far higher ideal is demanded, one that will appeal to the highest in all, whether Moslem or Christian, and enlist their powers in its service—an ideal, therefore, widely inclusive in scope and unimpeachable in its ethical motive; some impulse much greater than any common cultural ground is, then, unquestionably necessary.

The problem, in fact, is primarily a problem of personal



relationships from which religion is inseparable, simply because it is one of the most powerful factors in moulding life and influencing our relations with one another; and all this is especially true of the peoples of the Near East. For religion affects their whole life and determines their social feelings, so that all solutions are bound ultimately to fail unless they exhibit prominent religious aspects. This fundamental fact must always be considered in this great Near Eastern problem. Peoples must learn neither to adhere obstinately and fanatically to their own particular religious beliefs, nor to discard religion altogether, but rather to reinterpret religion in a wholly new spirit and apply it to their social and political relationships. I feel convinced, therefore, that all attempts at social reconstruction based on science or culture, on language, blood or aught else, are bound to fail unless they are strengthened and sustained by a new religious outlook and spiritual insight. This is the paramount task of all who are concerned with the problem.

It is undeniable, moreover, that both Islam and Christianity have exhausted their vitality in past strife and have lost their hold upon their adherents. By keeping tenaciously to their formulas and creeds, they have almost fatally checked freedom of thought and progress. As the inevitable result, they have stagnated and lost their power of attraction, exactly as was the case with Christianity in the early centuries of Islam.

Prof. Richard Bell (of Edinburgh) begins his valuable book, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment*, with this significant statement about Christianity in that age:

"From one point of view the triumph of Islam in the East in the seventh century A.D. may be regarded as the judgment of history upon a degenerate Christianity";<sup>1</sup> while the Church historian Louis Duchesne, in his *Histoire de l'Eglise*, writes as follows about the same period: "Religious passions let loose, conflicts of metropolitans, rivalries of ecclesiastical potentates, noisy councils, imperial laws, deprivations, exiles, riots, schisms, these are the conditions under which the Greek theologians studied the dogma of incarnation. And if one turns to look at the result of their quarrels one sees, at the end of the perspective, the Oriental Church irreparably divided, the Christian empire dismembered, the lieutenants of Muhammed trampling Syria and Egypt underfoot."<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Sir Thomas Arnold, in *The Preaching of Islam*, referring to the condition of the Christian Church in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when Christianity and Islam contested the conversion of the Mongols who invaded Iran and the Near East, observes: "So long as Latins, Greeks, Nestorians, and Armenians carried their theological differences into the very midst of the Mongol camp, there was little hope of much progress being made, and it is probably this very want of union among the preachers of Christianity that caused their efforts to meet with so little success among the Mongols, so that while they were fighting one another, Buddhism and Islam were gaining a firm footing for themselves."<sup>3</sup>

Nor is the situation very much different in the twentieth century. For if one surveys the condition of the great

<sup>1</sup> P. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. III, pp. 323 ff.

<sup>3</sup> P. 222.

historic Christian Churches with the eye of a non-Christian, what does he find? Would he be attracted by any of them? Would he see Christianity as the Way, the Truth and the Life? Have the Christian Churches gained the vision of any victory greater than destroying the heathen temples? The two oldest Christian communities, claiming to have been established by the Apostles themselves, the holy Eastern Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church, have lived for six hundred years with Moslems, but have thus far completely failed to show the power of Christ for salvation. They have endeavoured to keep themselves Apostolic and orthodox in doctrine, but not truly Christ-like in life and character. They have courageously claimed that "Jesus is Christ, the son of the Living God"; but they have ignored His command, "Love your enemies." They have anathematized and cursed all who may have differed a hair's-breadth from their credal formulas, but have never censured those who denied Christ by their attitude to their neighbours; and thus in place of securing unity and harmony they have far too often intensified discord and strife.

Early Christianity, too, was confronted by precisely the same obstacles. When St. Paul was preaching, similar "group conflicts" characterized the Roman world; Greeks and Jews, slaves and free citizens, lived in antagonistic camps. St. Paul faces the question squarely, finding the solution in a new manhood in the image of Jesus Christ: "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation." A new creation! while the Jew remains a Jew, and the Greek a Greek, they could not possibly join hands. But if a Jew

becomes a new creation in the image of Christ, and also the Greek a new creation in the same image, then they can unite. St. Paul had experienced this in his own life; and as a Jew, indeed as a Pharisee, zealous for his nation and religion, he could yet say: "There can neither be Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male or female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." "For neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Exactly the same principle is true of the present situation. The Turk remaining a Turk, for example, and the Armenian remaining an Armenian, can never join hands. But if the Armenian is transformed into the image of Christ, and the Turk also is transformed into the same image, each thus becoming a new creation, then they can be one. This is very simple, and yet inexpressibly difficult! One almost asks: Is it ever possible? But here comes the challenge to the Christian community; and if Christianity cannot believe this to be possible, and does not render it actual, then it is merely superficial and quite useless to the present age.

The principle underlying St. Paul's words, however, is that the true solution of this acute and ancient racial fanaticism is possible only on the spiritual basis. For the real evil is spiritual. It lies in men's attitudes toward one another rather than in any racial considerations; to effect true reconciliation, therefore, their reciprocal outlook and approach must be changed. Many factors unquestionably tend to separate men widely from one another which can never be changed:—colour, language and race, etc.—nevertheless all men may become one in the spiritual

realm. For as soon as we penetrate beneath the surface, and reach men's hearts, we see that all men are alike, and all respond to truth, to beauty and to love. All men aspire to goodness and appreciate it. All are overcome by love. All may become lovely.

The root of the whole matter is that the "tooth for a tooth and eye for an eye" attitude in mutual relationships, in both the political and the religious spheres, must be abandoned once for all. On the other hand, so long as Moslems attempt to crush Christians and absorb Christianity, while Christians retaliate in the same way, no solution at all will ever be attained. Myself belonging to the Christian community, I feel certain that as long as we try to assimilate and absorb Moslems, either individually or collectively, into our own fold, our efforts will be futile. We shall simply intensify opposition, and ultimately fail. Only if we aim at creating a change, by which both Moslem and Christian may be transformed into something new, will there be any hope of a true solution.

Every civilization, if it is to survive, must be inspired by the consciousness of existing for some great ends, and can be justified solely by its capacity to draw men into fellowship in the service of those ends. Historians tell us that the old Roman civilization perished because it offered men no great cause for which to suffer and die. Mere enjoyment of life, the passion for wealth and power, can never satisfy the human soul. Man demands something far higher and sublimer than any of these things; that is why they turned away from the Roman mode of life. Christianity, on the other hand, captured the hearts of men because it brought

to that ancient world a cause for which men were prepared to die; and while the old order disintegrated, the Christian community survived. To-day, the situation is exactly the same; both Islam and Christianity have failed in the Near East, not because they lacked physical power or wealth, but simply because they present to men nothing worth living for, nothing for which to suffer and to die. Offering no great ends to draw men together, they must fail. Men are searching for something that will fulfil their aspirations, inspire them with new devotion and unite them in the bond of fellowship. This can be done only by a new interpretation of religion that will teach men, Moslem and Christian alike, the sacredness of human life, inspiring them with a deep reverence for human personality, and giving them the indestructible conviction that all men, whatever their race or language may be, are one spiritually. Only this can place social life on any sound foundation, guarantee human liberty and provide the true motive for permanent peace and reconciliation.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY

In connection with the problems discussed in this book, there can be no doubt that we are living in a most critical time; but this, after all, is because our era is one of incessant change, and due to the swift evolution of ideas. Waters stagnant for long ages have been violently stirred, and new streams have begun to flow in great torrents of aspiration; everywhere life and activity abound. Islam, too, is changing very rapidly, proving beyond dispute that the judgments pronounced in the past by many Christian writers, that Islam is quite incapable of renovation, are altogether mistaken and false. Even so authoritative a writer as Sir William Muir, for example, closed his *History of the Caliphate*<sup>1</sup> with a chapter in which he asserted that Islam cannot alter its system in many important respects.

"The Islam of to-day," he maintained, "is substantially the Islam we have seen throughout this history. Swathed in the bonds of the Qur'ān, the Moslem faith is powerless to adapt itself to varying time and place, keep pace with the march of humanity, direct and purify the social life, or elevate mankind. Freedom, in the proper sense of the word, is unknown; and this, apparently, because in the body politic, the spiritual and the secular are hopelessly confounded . . . nor has there been any change in the

<sup>1</sup> First Edition, 1883; Second, 1891.

conditions of social life. Polygamy and servile concubinage are still as ever the curse and blight of Islam."

He also discussed divorce and the veil in the following terms: "The institutions just noticed form an integral part of the teaching of Islam. They are bound up in the charter of its existence. A reformed faith that should attempt to effect a change, would be Islam no longer"; and, he concluded: "As regards the spiritual, social and dogmatic aspect of Islam, there has been neither progress nor material change. Such as we found it in the day of the Caliphate, such is it also at the present day. Christian nations may advance in civilization, freedom and morality, in philosophy, science and the arts, but Islam stands still. And thus stationary, so far as the lessons of history avail, it will remain."

There could be no clearer example of how dangerous it is for the historian to predict! For in all these aspects Islam has been changing. Sir William's statements, in fact, seemed so absurd in face of recent developments in the Moslem world that, in the 1915 Edition, the editor was obliged to add a page or two apologizing for the author's sweeping assertions.

The long-established impression that Islam can never modify its beliefs, then, is wholly out of date. Islam, on the contrary, has shown an undeniable ability to alter its viewpoint and adapt itself to modern conditions; of this truth Turkey is an outstanding example. A land that was a most zealous defender of Islam, and unspeakably proud of holding the seat of the Caliphate, has cancelled the Islamic Shari'ah and accepted the civil code of many European



countries. The Turkish Minister of Justice, in his address to the Grand National Assembly in 1926 when presenting the new law code abrogating all former laws based on the Moslem Shari'ah, concluded by saying: "On the day that this document shall be promulgated, the Turkish nation will be saved from the false beliefs and traditions, which have encumbered our nation during thirteen centuries past, and will have entered into the contemporary civilization of life and progress."

A well-known Turkish writer, Husein Cahid, the former editor of the Daily Tanin, who translated and published Leone Caetani's great work on *The Origins of Islamic History*, published in 1934 in his new magazine, Fikir Hareketleri (Movements of Thought), a series of articles on Muhammed and Islam, in which he condemned the old Moslem beliefs and attitude toward non-Moslems, asserting that the Ulema had radically misinterpreted the verses of the Qur'an and the teaching of Islam on this question, and that all, whether Jews or Christians, who believed in God and the Last Judgment were to be regarded as believers, so that it was quite wrong to call them infidels.

After quoting from the Qur'an, he continued: "If we interpret these verses correctly we perceive that while Muhammed was the first Moslem among the Arabs, there were other Moslems before him—the people of Abraham. The Qur'an also explicitly states that the followers of Jesus are Moslems (Sūra III, 45). We, however, have considered only Muhammedans to be Moslems, and all others non-Moslems; but this was due to a complete mis-

understanding of the Qur'ān on our part. It is our own fault. . . . The Qur'ān accepts and endorses Books divinely given before it, and is most tolerant toward Judaism and Christianity. But fanatical teachers subsequently distorted it and ascribed to it an altogether different spirit, by regarding only Muhammedans as Moslems and promising Paradise to these alone. But this is a wilful corruption of the teachings of the Qur'ān."

It is perfectly obvious that this goes a long way toward a better understanding between Christians and Moslems.

The objection has been advanced, nevertheless, that these changes affect Turkey only, and that the Turks are, after all, a negligible minority in Islam. Both assumptions, however, are completely mistaken. For the Turks are by no means a negligible minority in Islam, nor are these changes confined to Turkey alone. If we will only open our eyes, we shall find the germ of similar transformations in all the countries of the Near East; the advance from tradition to reason, and from slavery to freedom of thought. Under the leadership of her new King Iran is following the same course. To-day, too, in Cairo, beside the old al-Azhar which has been the stronghold of traditional Islam for centuries, and has sent its emissaries to the four corners of the world, there is the Egyptian National University which is becoming a centre for progressive thought.

Dr. Taha Hussein, again, in his Cairo address on the Freedom of Thought, in describing the intolerance of Christianity in the Middle Ages and the persecution of Christians by Christians, spoke about the tolerance of

Islam, and after quoting: "no religious hatred can enable us to distinguish between guidance and foolishness," he concluded: "every one who opposes Freedom of Thought is the enemy of Islam."

It must not be forgotten, too, that until the thirteenth century the Islamic world was civilized while Christian countries were retarded. Shortly afterwards, however, Islam halted while Europe advanced. But now Islam with its millions has once more awakened from its slumber, to break out in new vitality. This is the vitally important feature of the situation to-day.

But what will be the outcome of all these revolutionary changes? That depends to a very great extent on the attitude of the Christian communities in Moslem lands. Will they be indifferent or sympathetic, cynical or friendly, about it? Will they be antagonistic, or will they offer a hand to the forward movement of the Islamic peoples? Will Christians wish Moslems to remain just as they have ever been, or will they show genuine interest in their effort for progress and development? It is our answer to these challenges that will decide the future relationship between Moslems and Christians in their own lands.

It must be admitted, however, that in this respect Christianity has already lost great opportunities, especially in the seventh and eighth centuries, owing to its concentrating on the religious controversies previously referred to. Similarly from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, during which Christianity was in close contact with the great Turcoman masses who were converted to Islam and became its strenuous defenders. From the fifteenth to

the twentieth century, again, Christianity lived within the Turkish Empire, yet it never became like salt that purifies, or light that shines and dispels darkness. These conditions might have been of the highest promise, but they were all sadly misused, and the result is that all have suffered.

To-day we are once again passing through a transition period. Once more Islam has begun to move and to shake off its ancient fetters. Confessedly dissatisfied with both its present and its past, it looks forward eagerly to some new inspiration that will vitalize its progress. The nationalistic movements and uprisings, and the excitement and agitation which inevitably accompany them in Moslem countries, are no more than the outward expression of a deep inner yearning for what will give them new life, and give it more abundantly.

A critical hour, therefore, has struck. Have Christians a message, a word that will show the way? Are they willing to empty themselves, to abandon their prejudices and stretch forth the hand of fellowship? This is the vital question for the Christian Church to-day.

So far as the evangelical communities are concerned, I believe I am right in saying that there is no substantial reason for the maintenance of evangelical institutions unless they prove themselves capable of coping with this situation; they must face the problem squarely. For the future of the evangelical movement in these countries will be determined, not at all by the orthodoxy of its religious dogmas, but simply by its power of bringing new light into the life of the people. Can it proclaim a new direction and a higher goal, and at the same time

generate new power for its realization? This, I must repeat, is the crucial challenge to the Christian leaders in these lands.

Dr. Browne closes his valuable book on *The Eclipse of Christianity in the East* with the following hopeful and inspiring statement:

"At the moment it seems that the return of Christianity to Asia is a task depending entirely on the missionary activities of the Churches of the West. But it may be that the faithful remnants of the Churches of the East, who, through centuries of oppression such as we have not known, have refused to deny Christ, strengthened now with fresh outpourings of the Holy Spirit, will play their part in the new evangelization of Asia." "

It is most tragic that the Christian peoples of the Near East, the remnants of the old historic Churches, have been called time and again to set aside their own temporary interests and dedicate themselves to the great purpose of the Kingdom of God, but have shrunk from the prospect. Had they but listened to the challenge to serve this noble end, they might have saved both themselves and others great disasters. Yet even now I feel confident that, despite their extreme poverty and humiliation, they possess spiritual resources more than sufficient to enable them to give a wholly new turn to affairs in the Near East. It is true that they have neither gold nor silver, no physical nor political power; nevertheless, they have what is far more valuable and influential:—they can love their neighbours and teach them to love one another; they can forgive their enemies and exhort them also to forgive.

They can live in the spirit of peace and reconciliation, and show their fellows that goodwill is stronger than force and love more effective than vengeance. They can subordinate their own interests and serve the good of mankind, proving that it is better to give than to receive, that enmity can be overcome by friendship and the spirit of suspicion transformed into that of fellowship, that even irreconcilables can be reconciled and conflict turned into harmony. This is the most essential need of the peoples of the Near East, both Moslem and Christian alike and it can be realized by a venture of true faith.



## A GLOSSARY OF ARABIC TERMS

To facilitate printing, no diacritical points appear under h, s, z, t, to represent Arabic values; th, kh, dh, gh, are to be understood to represent certain characteristic Arabic consonants, although the customary underlining has been omitted.

|            |                                                                                             |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 'Abd       | A slave.                                                                                    |
| Ahmadiyya  | A modern Moslem sect in Lahore, India.                                                      |
| Āyat       | A sign: a verse of the Qur'ān.                                                              |
| Dhimmi     | A non-Moslem subject in a Moslem country.                                                   |
| Hadith     | The authoritative collections of traditions. I.e. the records of what Muhammed did or said. |
| Hajj       | The pilgrimage to Mecca.                                                                    |
| Hijrah     | Muhammed's departure from Mecca to Medina, which is the beginning of the Moslem era.        |
| Imām       | The prayer leader in a Mosque.                                                              |
| 'Isā       | Jesus.                                                                                      |
| Jizya      | The "poll-tax" paid by a non-Moslem subject.                                                |
| Ka'ba      | The Holy Shrine in Mecca.                                                                   |
| Kufr       | Infidelity.                                                                                 |
| Masīh      | The Messiah, Christ.                                                                        |
| Mulla      | A doctor of Moslem law.                                                                     |
| Mushrik    | A polytheist.                                                                               |
| Mu'tazilah | A rationalistic sect in the early centuries of Islam.                                       |
| Nabī       | A prophet.                                                                                  |
| Qalb       | Heart.                                                                                      |
| Qibla      | The direction toward Mecca in prayer.                                                       |
| Ramadān    | The month of fasting.                                                                       |



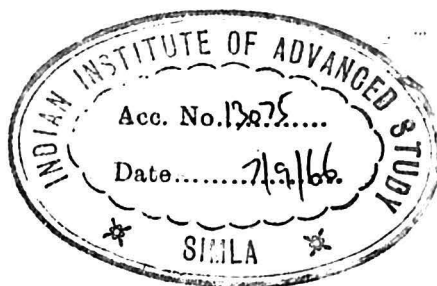
|          |                                                |
|----------|------------------------------------------------|
| Rūh      | Spirit.                                        |
| Saḥīḥ.   | An authoritative collection of the traditions. |
| Salāt    | Ceremonial prayer.                             |
| Shari'ah | The Moslem Law.                                |
| Shirk    | Associating others with God: polytheism.       |
| Sūra     | Chapter of the Qur'ān.                         |
| Taqdīr   | Predestination.                                |
| Tasawwuf | Islamic mysticism.                             |
| Wahī     | Revelation.                                    |

# INDEX

- 'Abbāsīd period, 118 *f.*  
 Al-Ghazālī, 42 *f.*, 50 *f.*, 55, 60 *f.*,  
     65, 70, 89  
 Angels, 61 *f.*  
 Apostles, 62, 77 *f.*  
*Arabia Deserta*, 18  
 Arnold, Sir T., 121, 141  
 Attributes, 87 *f.*  
  
 Barthold, W., 121 *f.*  
 Bell, Prof. R., 140 *f.*  
 Blood, 21  
 Body, 35 *f.*, 43, 48, 82  
 Breath, 24  
  
 Creation, Creator, 25, 32, 35,  
     38, 44 *f.*, 69, 78  
 Crusades, 124 *f.*  
  
 Death, 26, 37, 48, 51, 79, 97  
 Doughty, C. M., 18  
 Duchesne, L., 141  
  
 Egypt, 149  
 Essence, 46 *f.*  
  
 Faith, 60 *f.*, 71  
 Frazer, Sir J. G., 19  
  
 Gabriel, 28 *f.*, 62 *f.*  
 God, 68 *f.*, 86 *f.*, 134 *f.*  
  
 Heart, 43, 48  
 Hell, 79, 89  
  
 Immortality, 26, 51  
 Incarnation, 83 *f.*  
 Inspiration, 30  
 Iran, 149  
  
 Jesus, 30, 39, 83 *f.*, 88 *f.*, 132,  
     135  
 Judgment, 95 *f.*  
 Justinian, 123  
  
 Law, 72, 85, 91 *f.*, 94  
 Life, 22, 90 *f.*, 97  
 Light, 56, 61 *f.*, 90  
 Love, 85  
  
 Man, 25 *f.*, 32, 37, 75 *f.*, 80 *f.*, 87,  
     105  
 Margoliouth, Prof., 121  
 Mingana, Dr. A., 119 *f.*  
 Miracle, 62 *f.*  
 Mongols, 125 *f.*, 141  
 Muhammed, 35 *f.*, 54 *f.*, 59, 62 *f.*,  
     110 *f.*, 131  
 Muir, Sir W., 111, 146  
 Mysticism, 41, 57  
  
 Names, 23  
 Neighbour, 73  
 Nicodemus, 93 *f.*  
  
 Ottomans, 126 *f.*

# 158 STUDIES IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

- |                                                    |                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Paradise, 79, 89                                   | Smith, Robertson, 18                                                |
| Paul, St., 26, 86, 142                             | Soul, 25 f., 37, 51                                                 |
| Person, Personality, 68, 75, 84 f.,<br>131 f., 135 | Spirit, 17 f., 24 f., 34 f., 39, 43 f.,<br>49 f., 57, 80 f., 102 f. |
| Prayer, 64, 69                                     | Sūfism, 41, 54 f.                                                   |
| Prophets, 77 f.                                    |                                                                     |
| Purification, 64                                   | Tolerance, 113, 116, 149                                            |
|                                                    | Toynbee, Prof. A., 127                                              |
| Religion, 91 f.                                    | Trinity, 129, 132, 135                                              |
| Resurrection, 26, 51 f., 79, 97                    | Turkey, 138, 149                                                    |
| Revelation, 62 f.                                  |                                                                     |
|                                                    | Umayyad period, 117                                                 |
| Sacrifice, 22                                      |                                                                     |
| Salvation, 71 f., 93                               | Will, 88, 96                                                        |
| Scriptures, 129 f.                                 | Wind, 24                                                            |
| Sin, 71 f., 92 f.                                  | Word, 23, 89                                                        |
| Smith, Sir G. A., 21                               | Worship, 64 f., 95                                                  |



OVERLEAF  
*particulars of publications  
of similar interest  
issued by*



GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD  
LONDON: 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C.1  
CAPE TOWN: 73 ST. GEORGE'S STREET  
TORONTO: 91 WELLINGTON STREET WEST  
BOMBAY: 15 GRAHAM ROAD, BALLARD ESTATE  
WELLINGTON, N.Z.: 8 KINGS CRESCENT, LOWER HUTT  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.: AUSTRALIA HOUSE, WYNARD SQUARE

## The Nature of Thought

by Brand Blanshard, M.A., B.SC., PH.D.

*Demy 8vo. Two volumes. 32s. the set*

Library of Philosophy

"Professor Blanshard is not only a philosopher of critical insight and constructive power; he also possesses a clear and pointed style and a happy knack of illustration. One cannot but remark on the useful detailed analysis, in the table of contents, of the argument of the book. Indeed, the author has spared no pains in the effort to aid the reader."—*Expository Times*

## The Real and the Negative

by B. K. Mallik

*Demy 8vo. 21s.*

Author of *The Individual and the Group*

"This is a remarkable book; it has taken the author nearly twenty years to write it, and the mark of the concentration and effort is on every page. To read this book is an experience. To make acquaintance with it, is to make acquaintance with a mind that has lived for a long time in the high altitudes of Truth. What better recommendation could there be?"—*The Inquirer*

## The Idea of the Soul in Western Philosophy and Science

by William Ellis, PH.D.

*Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d.*

The history of an idea—the idea of the soul. Beginning with its first confused glimmerings in the mind of primitive man, the author traces this idea through the ancient Greek cults of the soul, through Greek philosophy and early Christian thought, and so through Renaissance to modern times.

Implicit throughout this history is the idea that the concept of life is more fundamental for philosophy even than for biological science. In the sense that all the great metaphysical systems since Socrates have been primarily concerned with the psycho-physical problem, it may be said that the whole of philosophy is an attempt to formulate a satisfactory concept of life. As soon as philosophy loses contact with this concept, as contemporary positivistic thought has done, it loses itself in a pedantic and sterile solipsism. The psycho-physical problem, the author contends, is no mere pseudo problem; there is yet much to be said about it. The concluding chapters deal with the possible developments of this problem in the philosophical thought of the future.

*All prices are net*

---

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.

