

THE
BASIC
DOCTRINES
OF ISLAM

AND OTHER IDEOLOGIES

Dr. K. M. Jamil



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FOREWORD

This monograph was first published in Dacca in 1970 primarily with a view to enlighten students of philosophy and Comparative Religion on Islam. It is unfortunate that soon after its publication certain anti-national forces succeeded in dividing our country into Pakistan and Bangla Desh. As a result of this all its copies were lost in Bangla Desh and very few persons in Pakistan came to know about it.

There is no denying of the fact that due to foreign domination for a long time, we have, to a great extent, forgotten our real way of life which had once made us a great, noble, and industrious people in the world. Since the establishment of Pakistan, sincere Muslim scholars are keen to produce works which could determine the salient features of our ideology. Despite the fact that there is no incentive for them, they keep themselves busy in this task. However, before they could do this spade-work for a country which is to become a Darul Islam in the real sense, the disruptionists got the up-perhand.

We must not forget that such philosophical studies are very important in our age. Had we developed a sound national outlook in the light of Divine thought during these years, there would have been no obstacles in our way. Luckily our people in general now realize the gravity of the situation and our Government are keen to develop our philosophy (or ideology) in order to make Pakistan a truly Islamic state. At this juncture we have to be very careful in making a choice of the doctrines which are the real source of our inspiration and progress. It is, therefore, incumbent on us to elaborate Islamic doctrines on different aspects of our individual and

social life along with comparative studies of other dogmas. We are sometimes very vocal in giving importance to freedom of thought and as such it is logical to expect that there would not be any hinderance in the path of those who are elaborating our teachings in this Islamic state. We have to bear in mind that these elaborations are very important for us; it is on the basis of these that our authorities will have to determine their policies.

I came to realize the importance of this short philosophical study on Islam when some scholarly preachers of Islam in U.S.A. informed me that they find it an invaluable work for attracting educated people in Western countries to Islam. I have no doubt that if such studies are provided to them, their task would be easy. The present work can serve as a guide-book for all those persons who are in search of Truth. Muslim educationists have divinely been ordained to invite others to the path of Islam. I earnestly request our scholars to study particular religions and philosophies and produce detailed research works on each of them from Muslim point of view. Mere casual remarks by them on contemporary thought are not enough to convince others about the truth in the doctrines of Islam.

Every philosophy requires a deep study. Along with this a writer on Islamic thought should also be fully aware of Islam's spiritual and rational ideology. If we adopt such an approach that would not only help others to know and come to the right path, but it will also help us to find out why our ideology excels other ideologies in all domains of life. This could also lead us to bring about a change in the structure of our society in order to mould it into an Islamic pattern. That is how it is expected that, after coming to know the subtleties in the Divine Message, human beings will be rightly guided.

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26.8.1984

MEET THE AUTHOR

Professor Al-Haj Dr. Khwaja Moinud-Din Jamil was born in Hyderabad (Deccan) in 1920. After passing his M.A. Examination in 1944 from the Osmania University, he was appointed as Lecturer in Moral Philosophy. Later on, he was selected for European Scholarship by the Government of Hyderabad. After completing his research work on the Spiritual Philosophy of Islam at the London University 1950, he was selected for his post-Doctoral research work by the Paris Sorbonne University for a comparative study of Muslim and Western Thought. In 1953, he was awarded the highest Doctorate of Docteur es lettres.

In 1954 he was invited by the Karachi University to work there as Professor of Muslim and Moral Philosophy. In 1955, the Government of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) selected him as Reader and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Rajshahi. In 1961, the Government of Iraq invited him to work as Chairman, Department of Philosophy and Professor of Muslim and Western Thought at the University of Baghdad. He served there for three years on contract basis.

In 1964, he resumed his duties at the Rajshahi University as Professor and Chairman, Department of Philosophy, and Dean of the Faculty of Arts. In 1972 he left Pakistan for U.S.A. and served there as Professor of Political Philosophy and Eastern Religion at the Colorado University. He came back to Pakistan in 1974, and was selected as Chairman, Department of Social Sciences at the Allama Iqbal Open University. Since September 1980, he is working at the Islamia University, Bahawalpur. He now holds the post of

Professor, Chairman, Department of Islamic Studies, and Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Learning.

His following books have been published.

1. A Critical Study of the Doctrine of Ego.
2. The Philosophy of the East.
3. Political Dialogues.
4. Nietzsche and Bergson.

Some of his research works are under publication. These are "A Golden Chapter in the History of Sufi thought", "Jalal-ud-Din Rumi's Evolutionary Philosophy" and "Morality and Religion". Besides these books, he has produced other works and written innumerable articles on different subjects which have been published in Pakistani and foreign journals.

He participated in many national and international conferences on Islam, Philosophy, and Education. In 1958 he was invited by the Turkish Government to deliver his extension lectures in Turkey. In 1959, he represented Pakistan as the Official Delegate to the 12th session of the International Congress of Philosophy held at Venice and Padova. In 1970, he was selected as the General President of All Pakistan Philosophical Congress for the session held at Peshawar.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When we talk about different ideologies in our time, we generally think of Western philosophy and its all-pervading influence on human thought. However, by implication only those ideologies can be regarded as great which deal with varied aspects of human life. Any ideology which has its own metaphysics, with its relevant epistemology, ethics, politics etc. is to be deemed as valuable. There is no doubt that Western philosophers have striven hard to enlighten mankind on many difficult problems by developing their systems of thought; but these systems cannot be regarded as ideologies in the real sense. This is because an ideology has always a reference to the people who believe in it.

It is not the privilege of philosophers only to hold metaphysical beliefs. There are many metaphysical notions that are prevalent in the West but these are not derived from the teachings of their philosophers. They are, to a great extent, based on Judo-Christian religious thought. As against such notions their social and political ideologies have no doubt their origin in Western philosophy. A collection of metaphysical views of Western philosophers can hardly be regarded as ideology, for these are neither very convincing nor have they any particular appeal in them.

It is also a fact that every philosopher in the West has his own metaphysics. Even the philosophers of the same school of thought are divided amongst themselves. It will not be incorrect to say that Western metaphysics is a sort of guess-work which offers no proof of its validity. A sound philosophy or a sound ideology is always based on a sound theory of knowledge. A person who does not like to be guided only by traditional beliefs or makes use of his own whims, has to be very careful in the choice of the ideology he would like to follow. If all is not vain and if there is such a Being who is our Creator, surely it cannot be believed that He has forgotten us after creating us and would like us to grope in darkness. This is the unanimous verdict of all those persons who have rightly been guided from the Unseen that our Creator has such a loving nature that He goes out of His traditional way to assist those who sincerely work for the realization of the ideals for which they have been created. With this provision there remains no doubt that His people alone are the most successful persons on earth. What is required is to seek divine guidance if we are interested in our well-being. With this object in view we have referred Him to be the source and object of our knowledge.

It cannot be denied that the metaphysical views of great religions provide us a clue to understand their ideologies. This is despite the fact that some religions are not very inspiring from the standpoint of metaphysics or social philosophy. However, the persons who believe in them are fully convinced that they hold the right views. This much is certain that unless the nature of ultimate reality is fully explained and a method is shown to prove its validity, no ideology can be relied upon.

While discussing religions we cannot neglect the theories of modern science which have directly influenced the believers in their ideologies. Of these, the theory of evolution is very prominent. The arguments of evolutionary thinkers have so

much force in them that it has made the believers to reconsider their religious dogmas which are against the spirit to this doctrine. Some of them have even tried to interpret them in an unorthodox way with a view to reconcile them with it; but such attempts have proved to be futile. Only a truly revealed religion can declare:

“Oh I swear by the afterglow of the sunset, And by the night and all that it enshroudeth, And by the moon when she is at the full, That ye shall be taken from one stage of existence to another; What aileth them, then, that they believe not.”

(Al-Quran, LXXXV; 16-20)

It is evident that Islam alone is the evolutionary religion. After critically examining the modern theories of evolution in the light of its teaching, we can solve the riddle of the universe. We shall then acquire an insight which enables us to know the limitations of scientific knowledge and the vast scope of Divine enlightenment. With the knowledge of the origin of man and the universe and the purpose for which man has been created on earth, the true significance of the Quranic doctrines of creation and resurrection is revealed.

Muslims are the only people in the world who are gradually becoming disillusioned by the so-called progressive western ideologies. Seeing the rivalries and hostilities between various people and the atrocities that are perpetrated on humanity, they are beginning to see the wisdom in reintroducing that system of social life which had enhanced the prestige of individual by eliminating all sorts of distinctions from human society. In this system only self-sacrificing and pious people are appreciated. Such an ideology alone is the source of inspiration for all time. It is both sublime and dynamic. Due to sheer force of circumstances even non-Muslims are now a days curious to know about it. I shall deem it an honour if this short comparative study on philosophy and religion could help those who are in search of the truth

The persons who have devoted their lives to the task assigned to them by the Divine Being in His Message, know very well that we have to write many books similar to this monograph on other aspects of eastern and western thought. I hope our scholars are conscious of their responsibilities. They will not disappoint those who would like to seek wisdom from divine teachings.

CHAPTER II

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE AND DIVINE REVELATION (An Epistemological Enquiry)

It is an article of faith with Muslims that "Muhammad (peace be on him) is the Messenger of God." It is obvious that this has a reference to revealed knowledge, the true significance of which can be understood by examining the nature of knowledge and its sources for acquiring an insight into the domain of ultimate reality. In Western philosophy there is much stress on reasoning and sense-perception, even so it sometimes refers to certain other sources of knowledge.

After a careful consideration of these aspects we can hope to reach any definite conclusion. The problem of knowledge is very much related to the often asked question, whether metaphysical knowledge is possible or not? If it is possible, then what procedure is to be adopted for acquiring it? The very fact that there are so many religions and philosophies point to the obstacles that are in the way of those who seek the Real.

Rationalism

Rationalism is a very old school of thought according to which reason is quite capable of knowing the ultimate reality.

Most of the Greek philosophers were rationalists and believed that they could probe into the mysteries of the universe and know the reality of God with the help of the faculty of reason. In modern Western philosophy the stress is on empiricism which believes in knowledge which is acquired by sense experience. There are, however, quite a few modern philosophers who are rationalists. They have tried to prove the existence of God with the help of reason; some of them have identified God with thought. Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, and Wolff are regarded as the best representatives of modern rationalists.

It maintains that the most perfect form of knowing is the kind of knowledge which is found in mathematical demonstration. Such demonstration consists in starting with premises which are self-evident, intuitively certain and are said to be clear and distinct. Their source is in the reason of man and these are not derived from empirical knowledge. A very good example of the rationalistic procedure is to be found in the famous ontological proof for the existence of God. The idea of God as an absolutely perfect Being is taken as self-evident truth. From this it is concluded that He must exist, because lack of existence would render God in a degree imperfect; which would mean that He is not a perfect Being. But God is truly known to be absolutely perfect and therefore must exist since His lack of existence would involve a contradiction.

It is commonly held that religions are creeds which advocate certain beliefs which are not very rational. Philosophy, on the other hand, is regarded as a discipline which leads to certain conclusions (or beliefs) based on rational thinking. Such a view is not quite correct. Religious beliefs could also be justified by rational thinking. Except probably in polytheistic religions and Christianity in which most of the beliefs are based on hearsay stories about their real or legendary heroes, there is a sort of reasoning in all other religions which leads to the beliefs which they advocate. Among all the religions of the world Islam is unique in its rational

approach. This is despite the fact that every word of the Holy Quran is believed to be Divinely revealed. The Book has arguments and proofs which appeal to both our rationality and sensibility. It is due to such discussions also that it has an appeal. Indeed it also contains significant events in the life of prophets in the past but their importance lies in the superb ideology to which they refer. If only certain beliefs were important without a reference to those who believed in these, then all this teaching was not required. It is true that there are many persons who have inherited Islam from their forefathers and have little knowledge about it. There are also those who embrace it after coming to know some of its main doctrines but these are not the persons whose religion is meaningful. Only educated people and especially those who are men of science and philosophy, studying it with an unbiased mind and comparing its teachings with other ideologies, when they become Muslims, acquire a real insight into this religion. Even if they do not embrace Islam there is a great likelihood they would come to appreciate its true value for human progress. Their's is a real conversion. At this stage Islam is both a sublime philosophy and a perfect religion. That is the reason why even those who were great rationalists in Islam identified it with the verdict of reason, and stressed that a truly rationalistic philosophy is in conformity with the teachings of Islam. The arguments of the Holy Quran are not such as can easily be refuted. The Divine teaching simply diverts the attention of intelligent people to certain facts and asks them to decide if there is God or no God.

Even in philosophy, the popular theories of transcendence and immanence, lead to the conclusion that the reality of God is not in the world of "appearance." That is what is meant by terminology of Huzur or presence in the Holy Quran. Those who would like to know the domain of Reality should seek It in the realm of Ghaib or Absence. Hence the insistence on belief in the Unseen, a fact which no one can deny. All creatures and objects in the world were non-existent and then they have come into existence, a state which is not

lasting. In a way, our whole life is wrapped up in Absence. Except the present all that is past and future is in the world of Absence. Not that God is identical with the Unseen or Absence but that it is the domain in which God manifests Himself in His full glory. He is the Unseen of the Unseen. That is to say, He is beyond the idea of things in themselves and the will that is supposed to be in the world and its objects.

The Philosophers who believe that they have a self-evident idea of the Perfect Being mean to say that their idea of God can encompass the Being of God, which is not possible. An artist can claim that he encompasses the work of art he has produced, but that which has been produced or created by him (even if it becomes conscious) cannot claim to know the mind of its creator.

Of course, we know what God has created in the world of Presence but we have no idea of that which is in the Absence. Besides, even in the Presence our knowledge does not go beyond a certain limit. Moreover, the becoming in the domain of Absence is something which we cannot even guess. All our ideas including the idea of the Perfect being are derived from imperfect objects that we witness in this world and this creates an illusion that we have an idea of God, that is why spiritual men ask us not to regard any idea of God as perfect. What gives a semblance of truth to this view is a somewhat similar view that has been expressed in the Holy Qur'an and other spiritual teachings. A prophet or a spiritual man does not say that he has an idea of God from which he can derive the knowledge of His existence. He says that he knows the Being in all His glory from eternity, and suggests that any man can realise the truth in this teaching provided he penetrates the Unseen to witness the Unseen of the Unseen. This is because at one stage of our existence we have all lived with the Reality and testified that it was that Reality which was our God. Hence the Quran says: "When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, saying,

“Am I not your lord?” they replied ‘Yea! we do testify.’ Thus (God made you testify) lest you should say on the day of judgment of this we were never mindful.”

(Al-Qur'an: VII-172)

The process of acquiring this a priori knowledge is difficult and cannot be explained by reason. Unseen is the mysterious world from which everything has come and to which it is returning. When the Qura'n says:

“There is not a thing, but its treasures inexhaustible are with Us (God). But We only send down thereof in due and ascertainable measure.”

(Al-Qura'n XV-21)

It refers to this world. Nevertheless, that which belongs to that world is so unique that nothing in this world can be compared to it. When this world, or the Reality that is manifested there, is known to a man after succeeding in his efforts to have a glimpse of it, he finds that the language that is used to convey the ordinary thought is not at all suitable to describe it. Hence in order to explain the extra-mundane he makes use of the words and terms in an analogical sense. That is why truly spiritual teachings are sometimes difficult to understand. These are mostly useful to those who sincerely work for the realization of the unseen for the reason that in proportion to their efforts and the Grace, the unknown gradually comes to be known. Hence those philosophers, who identify thought with the Reality or believe that in the world of ideas realities are known as they are, are not quite correct. The reason why truly spiritual teachings appear to be rational is this that there is something spiritual in all of us and this makes our rationality to appreciate these. A person in this condition begins to believe that it is his reason which has found out the truth. In fact the source of the truth is supra-rational.

The teachings of the Qura'n do not take man to that stage of rationality where philosophers are often left high and dry. It simply makes man aware of the existence of God by referring to our own existence or the existence of the

world. The idea is that all that we see in this world cannot be a mere chance product or a vain show. It enquires:

“Do ye then think that We (God) have created you in jest and ye would not be brought back to us (for account)?”

(*Al-Qura'n, XXIII-115*)

If there are persons who believe that they have uselessly been created or brought into this world then nothing can be said, but an intelligent man would not agree to this. Even if we try to hold such a view there is something in us which says that this might not be the case. In this connection the Book points out to a view of the unbelievers according to which man's emergence in this world depends on the blind force of Time or Duration:

“And they say ‘What is there for us but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but Time can destroy us’.”

(*Al-Qura'n, XLV-24*)

All such ideologies are product of human fantasy. Only those who have no knowledge and do not like to acquire it, can live on conjecture.

Empiricism

Empiricism affirms that the source and validity of knowledge are to be found in the empirical aspect of experience. The rationalists are wrong in trying to start with rational principles, because these rational principles are derived from experience. Reason is not provided with innate or *a priori* knowledge. In fact mind is a *tabula rasa* upon which experience writes. Sensation is the beginning of all knowledge and all our ideas are ultimately reducible to sensory experience. Thus the empiricists maintain that knowledge is not deductive but inductive in its procedure. Sound knowledge is to be obtained only by generalisations from experience.

Despite the fact that such a knowledge can not take us beyond the facts that we come to know by our immediate ordinary sense experience, it is on the basis of this kind of

knowledge that science has made a tremendous progress in our time. It must be admitted that by its very nature this knowledge cannot give us any clue to solving metaphysical problems. Only those who have had any supra-sensory experience can think of metaphysics. All others who depend only on this source of knowledge, tend to be agnostics. Indeed quite a few intelligent scientists who are keen in their observation of the natural phenomena and their laws, have come to believe in God but due to lack of proper guidance in metaphysical world, hold confused ideas about the Divine Being and the purpose for which man has come into existence.

This is in general the position of those empiricists who have a rational bent of mind. As against them, there are those philosophers who do not believe in any natural laws. In reply to those rationalists who try to prove the existence of God by the law of causality they state that this law is "an altar to an unknown God." They claim that experience gives us nothing but a lot of impressions and perceptions which are not causally related. On the basis of this doctrine we can neither believe in God nor in any human soul. We have no more than a collection of ideas and impressions and our knowledge is confined to these only. Hence scepticism. This kind of radical empiricism has led the logical positivists in our time to conclude that the very idea of metaphysics is ridiculous. According to them the very moment we talk about God or any other spiritual entities, our statements lose their literal significance and we talk nonsense. This is because we cannot verify the validity of these in the same way as we can verify the propositions about the objects which are known through sense perceptions.

Of all the empiricists Berkeley is the only philosopher who thought that empirical knowledge can lead to a belief in God. According to him, whatever we know by sense experience does not prove that there is such a thing as matter in the sense of an objective inert substance. Whatever we know about a thing, it is all mental. There is no reason to suppose that the objective cause of a thing perceived is matter. Since

perception is a mental state it proceeds only from a spiritual force which is Divine Will. The world of natural objects is the regular and systematic operation of God, the infinite spirit upon the finite spirit or human minds.

In the sacred philosophy of the Holy Qura'n all those who are "endowed with knowledge," and are "men of intellect," and "understanding," are those who learn something from every experience and whose observation is keen. Whatever they know about the universe or about their own selves acquires a metaphysical significance. Indeed in our day-to-day life there is much that makes man forget his vocation in life but we also undergo such experiences which can bring us to the threshold of Reality and a person can learn so much from these if he is sensitive. Whatever might be the nature of our experiences, all these can be valuable when these are looked at from the point of view of their origin and the object to which they ultimately refer. The Divine Message thus frequently reminds us of so many natural phenomena, like skies with their heavenly bodies and movements, the earth with its variety of objects like mountains, rivers, vegetations and creatures.

In all these there are such wonderful Divine portents or signs that they should direct our attention to their Creator. For the reason that we all the time live amidst these objects, that which is extraordinary in these, escapes our notice. The Divine Message refers to this heedlessness of man in the following words:

"How many signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn their faces away from them."

(Al-Qura'n, XII:105)

It advises them to ponder over these and asks:

"Do they see nothing in the government of the heavens and the earth all that God has created?"

(Al-Qura'n, VII:185)

There is no doubt, in all that we experience neither the objects nor our ideas and impressions can be regarded as self-existent independent realities. Their significance lies

in their indication to an ultimate reality which is magnificent in its creative attributes. It has been stated that the Sun of Reality is manifested in some other world which is mysteriously hidden but it cannot be said that Its Light is not penetrating the world of presence. The ideas of truth, beauty and goodness are generally derived from the glimpses of this Light in the phenomena but those who have witnessed these in their hidden Source know that none of these popular ideas have any similarity with the real objects which are embodied in a Being who is constantly manifesting from the Unseen of the Unseen. A reference to such a Reality cannot be called non-sensical because despite the impurities of the sensible objects, the Light of the Real is manifest. Only those who succeed in annihilating their carnal selves can witness the Real. That is why the Holy Qur'an at the outset declares that Reality cannot be perceived by sense experience. It is on this assumption that spiritual philosophy is based. He who denies this will have to prove that the world of presence is the only world and that there is nothing like Absence or Unseen. It is not befitting a philosopher to reject a philosophy on the basis that its propositions cannot be verified like ordinary propositions, when the very foundation of this philosophy is based on the doctrine that its propositions cannot be verified like ordinary propositions. It is a sheer tautology. He who says that Reality cannot be known by means of our ordinary sense perception, does not mean that he has no experience of the Reality. What he simply means is that there are certain experiences and super-sensory perceptions which are acquired after so much hardship in the path of truth. In a way Reality is neither in the sensible world nor in the Unseen which is not sensible. Just as in the sensible World there are philosophers who deny the Unseen, in the same way there had been mystic philosophers who were lost in the imagination of the Unseen. Neither sensible world nor Unseen can be regarded as God or ultimate reality. Their significance lies in the fact that the objects in these worlds divert our attention to their Creative Reality which is

beyond these two realms. None of the objects in these domains are creative or self created.

Irrespective of the fact whether what we call scientific knowledge deductive or inductive, in itself it cannot take us into the metaphysical realm to which it refers. The immediate cause of whatever has perished or is perishing may be their physical and vital nature itself but behind these there are unknown causes which ultimately depend on the unseen of the Unseen. It would be naive to believe that there are no laws that are operating in this world. It is due to the knowledge about these laws that science has made so much progress. In the Quranic terminology these are *Sunnatullah* (i.e. God's traditions) in which there is no change. It is also correct that the emergence of things in this world depends on so many phenomenal factors but this is correct in a general sense only. Since they all depend on the ultimate cause, similar things might emerge in situations which are different. Those who thought of proving the existence of God by the law of causality, had only the phenomenal causes in view and none of these can be elevated to the position of an uncaused cause. In a way the uncaused cause is present in every effect and at all stages of evolution but it refers to that which is not present. A person who would like to remain agnostic or sceptic deserves to remain in this condition if he does not take any clue from these to explore the unknown domains of knowledge.

Berkeley's denial of matter utmost takes us beyond the physical world but not beyond the mental world. The phenomena has two aspects, the physical and the mental. Neither physical nor mental can be regarded as real. Nevertheless, that which is real or spiritual works through the medium of physical and mental and comes into consciousness when it, with great efforts, succeeds in effacing itself in Divine consciousness. At this stage a new consciousness is acquired and that is spiritual in the real sense. From the spiritual point of view Berkeley's philosophy is rather misleading.

It creates an illusion that we are already in the spiritual world. In fact we are not. If physical things are ideas then the difference between physical laws and the mental laws has no meaning. If it is claimed that physical laws are the laws of those objects or ideas which are in the mind of God, and mental laws are the laws that govern human mind, then these latter are more important to human mind than the laws that are working in the objects like that of the external world, including the human body. If God has not this kind of mind with which we are acquainted in ourselves or if it is not even superior to it then by merely calling the physical as mental laws will not prove His existence.

It is evident that by interpreting the physical world in mental terms, Berkeley's philosophy utmost leads to a pantheistic concept of God but he forgets that the knowledge gained by sense experience can also be illusory. Had it not been the case, philosophers from ancient times would not have written so much against its validity. If physical objects are Divine ideas then we shall have to conclude that these can be a source of illusion. Such a view is absurd. Doubtless that whatever we know by means of sense perception is so helpful in the well-being of our physical existence; but neither we experiment on God's ideas in our laboratories nor do these particular ideas necessarily remind us about the Mind in which they are supposed to be. Indeed, as has been stated, there are certain experiences in which Reality comes very near us; but these are not very common.

Only at grave and extraordinary occasions our attention is diverted to it. For example when we see that the aircraft in which we are flying has developed some kind of trouble and it is difficult to save our lives, at that time it will be seen that all those who are in it are imploring God to save their lives. But soon after our safe landing we forget the Being to whom we were referring in our prayers. The Holy Qura'n points out to such experiences of ours in the following verse:

"When trouble toucheth a man, he crieth unto Us (God) in all postures: lying down on his side, or sitting, or

standing. But when We have solved his trouble he passeth on his way as if he had never cried to Us for trouble that toucheth him. Thus do the deeds of transgressors seem fair in their eyes."

(Al-Qura'n X:11)

Morality as the Source of Knowledge

The faculties which are so helpful to us in dealing with the matters that concern us in our present life, do not actually take us beyond the world of phenomena. The noumena or the Unseen is hidden and we do not know how to penetrate into it. Kant was conscious of this fact. He took much pains to prove that the metaphysical mysteries of the world cannot be revealed by any means of knowledge that are at our disposal. He was also conscious of the fact that we have a moral and aesthetic sense which refers to a world which is not this. He believed that in the practical reason we come to know a world of which the working is quite different from the world of phenomena.

The beauty of moral character is indeed sublime but first, we should know what is ideal in our character. If, as Socrates has said, "we all pursue good and no one willingly does any evil, then it means that he who has knowledge to decide what is really good, only his conduct could be right." And for acquiring correct knowledge there can be no better way than to get enlightenment, if possible, from the very Reality which is All-Knowing. It is, sometimes, claimed that the morality which results from the obedience to Divine commandments, is not upto the mark for the reason that there is in it an idea of reward and punishment or a notion to please the Deity. We are told that the moral life of a person who has these or similar considerations, is not as fascinating as the life lived according to the verdict of a command that emerges from within ourselves. It is believed to be preferable because, according to it, the moral life is its own reward. Those who express such views, it seems do not understand

the true significance of spiritual guidance. It is true that in religion they talk of reward and punishment and advise us to see that our behaviour is such as is pleasing to God but these suggestions have a reference to the outlook of those who always think in terms of profit and loss.

Any obedience to a spiritual or Divine command does not necessarily mean that it is obeyed because it is imposed from outside. Its obedience is, in fact, due to the reason that it is the verdict of our Real Self. He who obeys it, whether he hears it from outside or listens to it from within his self, realizes or is expected to realize sooner or later that it is the Command which is most natural to him. Only after this realization its obedience is natural and complete. There can be no categorical Imperative unless it is spiritual. All other commands are illusory and their obedience is doubtful. The very idea that a command is spiritual refers to the fact that it has emerged from the real human self. That is why it is said that the true religion is natural to man: it is for this reason that those who are truly spiritual bear all kinds of troubles in this world and would not hesitate to undergo a similar hardship in the other world also, if that is required. Hence, there is no better way than that which is suggested by the Divine guidance. The feeling of satisfaction that one experiences after being obedient to ones own reality and the power one acquires when Reality works through him is so unique that it cannot be expressed in words. The Reality which is sometimes called by the Sufis as the Beloved is not different from the Lover. It is said that the Beloved grants all that is best in both the worlds to the Lover. That, however, is the concern of the Beloved; the Lover is one who does not act for any consideration other than that of the Beloved.

Intuition in Philosophy

The idea of intuitive knowledge is so confused in Western thought that there is no unanimity among philosophers as to what is meant by it. Generally speaking any immediate

awareness without using our ordinary means of knowledge is regarded as intuition. Schopenhauer, for example, not agreeing with Kant's view that ultimate reality is unknown and unknowable, informs us that we need not seek it in some obscure domain where our mind cannot work but rather it is in us and we all know it what it is. It is our will whose knowledge we have by immediate intuition. Through this we come to know the universal Will pervades all existence. Nietzsche's "Will to Power," Bergson's "Élan Vital," or "Life Impulse," are also known by somewhat similar notions. Bergson even tries to define his own method of intuition. He tells us that the reality of change which is the very essence of life, cannot be known by intellect. Intuition is rather intellectual sympathy by which we become one or identify ourselves with the object of knowledge which is all the time in flux.

It is evident that whether it is Will or Life Impulse or any such psychological reality, these are such which work according to certain laws and are always accompanied with physical existence. Unless it is proved that the laws which they follow are not imposed on them by some greater Authority but that they are themselves such realities which frame their own laws and follow them, it cannot be considered that any of them is ultimate reality. Besides, if the ultimate reality is blind or is such a reality which acts instinctively then, however, great may be its creative powers, we human beings as self-conscious entities, stand at a higher level of existence than that of the original stuff from which we have emerged. That is the reason why the philosophers who have expressed such views are either really atheists or are regarded as atheists in a pantheistic garb. A mental reality, if it is not self-conscious, cannot be raised to the status of ultimate reality for we cannot derive all other laws in the universe from it. It is unbelievable that the reality which gives birth to consciousness and self-consciousness itself remains at the level of instinctive awareness. Only on the assumption that the ultimate reality is self-conscious can we believe that it not only creates

individuals with self-consciousness but sees that the laws that are established by It are obeyed by all the beings and objects so that a harmonious working of these leads to their destined goal.

The Doctrine of Love

The main doctrine from which Western philosophers seem to have been benefited by the teaching of Christianity is that of Love. Bergson, for example, identified God with Love, and tries to convince us that spiritual men are the embodiment of love, amongst them he singles out Jesus Christ, and calls him the ideal man. But before we discuss who is an ideal man, we must find out whether the ultimate reality of Love has any individuality or not. It is evident that the love about which such references are made, is not the same of which we are aware. It is something unique, known to men of God alone. Only by way of analogy they make use of this term. Such an identification of Love with God does not mean that we worship a mere principle of Love which is not self-conscious and does not expect a particular behaviour from us. Even *Jesus* and other truly spiritual men did not ask their disciples to merely imitate them in love, but definitely told them to obey God's Commandments and live under His guidance.

It is not clear whether such persons are born as embodiment of Love or they acquire this quality. If they are born like that, then they cannot be our ideal men because in that case others might say that they are not born like that. If they have acquired this attribute then we must be told in what way this quality can be inculcated in us. Bergson does not tell us anything about it. He simply tells us that their lives have great attraction for us, and We are expected to imitate them. Supposing this to be true, if we tried to copy them, the natural result will be that in their character and in our character there will be the same difference as we find in things that are original and things that are mere imitation. Moreover,

all such persons differ in their mode of life and there are basic differences between revealed and non-revealed religions and there is no reason to suppose that only Jesus was the ideal man amongst all the prophets of God. Strangely enough even Christians cannot claim him to be an ideal man. For, according to them, he was God the Son. To say that he is both an ideal man and God is not correct. (I have refuted this view in my work: *The Divine Message for Christians*, under publication). How can we imitate a being who is at a different level of existence? No person can be considered as an ideal man unless it is established that he is primarily a man like us and not superhuman. Only on this understanding can we praise him for being successful in his attempt to be one with God. All these and similar views expressed by philosophers are such which make us doubtful if they have any clear idea of God and His guidance to mankind. If there is God, then he who succeeds in knowing the ideals which He has set for us will be the wisest among human beings.

Mysticism

Mysticism is a theory of knowledge which denies or relegates to a position of relative insignificance the ordinary source of knowledge, namely sense perception and discursive thought. According to this, true knowledge is to be found in the unique experience which is called mystical. To really understand this experience one must actually have it. It is an ineffable experience of unity with God or the universe. It differs from the ordinary communicable experience of life. Knowledge is not acquaintance with the world of space and time or with the world of concepts but rather it is insight into the self, mind, God, substance or entity which transcends the phenomenal world. This is gained through an identification of the knower with the transcendental being. Critics of mysticism point out that, whether this world is illusion or not, science seeks a knowledge of it and philosophy seeks an analysis and interpretation of such know-

ledge which shall be articulate. They claim that it is this problem that epistemology is concerned with.

In the light of what has been stated so far, it is clear that Islam neither denies nor relegates to a position of insignificance the ordinary sources of knowledge; but it does say that for entering into the metaphysical world a metaphysical source of knowledge is required. It is wrong to believe that only professional philosophers have expressed their views on metaphysics. In fact all religion is metaphysics. He who is interested to find out a right type of metaphysical ideology will have to make a comparative study of all great metaphysical teachings and then to decide which is to be preferred and why. Without going into a detailed discussion on the subject, it can rightly be pointed out that Western metaphysics has neither any particular appeal to masses nor is there any agreement among the philosophers on the solution of its main problems. They all appear to be writing from outsiders' points-of-view.

Only religious metaphysics is such which has been accepted by the majority of common people. Leaving aside those religions which are mythological, the only metaphysics that has any appeal for an intelligent man is that of the revealed religions. It has already been pointed out that according to Judaism only Jews are the chosen people of God, which means that whatever religious teachings they have, these are exclusively for them. Even if anyone accepts them, he cannot be regarded as a chosen one for racism plays an important part in this religion. Christians claim to have accepted some of their main teachings but they are all Gentiles. Hence they cannot be regarded as the chosen ones. Soon after Jesus' departure from this world, Christians made efforts to differentiate between themselves and the Jews by advocating dogmas which have nothing to do with the teachings of Jesus, the last prophet of the Jews. The New Testament is mostly based on hearsay reports on him, but it hardly contains any religious laws and metaphysical teachings.

They base their beliefs on the reported history of Jesus'

life. Since the Gospels in the New Testament were written long after his death with a view to purposely make their beliefs distinct from those of the Jews who had flatly refused to accept Jesus as their Messiah, much of what has been written in these is to make it appealing to the newly-converted Christians who were mostly Gentiles. Due to these and many other reasons Christian scholars now frankly admit that there is little in the New Testament which could be relied upon. Except a self-contradictory and exaggerated doctrine of Love and the idea that Jesus was an incarnation or Son of God who had come to this world for dying on the cross to redeem his disciples from their supposedly inherited sin of Adam and Eve, there is nothing worth mentioning in it. The persons who had written the Gospels did not bother to know that such views are not at all in conformity with the teachings of the Old Testament which is supposed to be a common religious book for both Jews and Christians. He who consistently believes in Jewish teachings cannot believe in such doctrines. Likewise a Gentile who relies on the New Testament cannot take the Old Testament seriously. Of all the revealed religions it is Islam alone which gives a correct information about the basic teachings of the prophets.

That is why it has been called a unique Divine portent, or sign, for those who would like to have a true metaphysical information for their guidance: "These are the Signs of the Book that have been revealed upto thee (Muhammad) from thy Lord based on the Truth."

(Al-Qura'n XIII-1)

Its purpose is the same which every Divine Messenger had in mind. That is to say, it invites human beings to the path of righteousness and asks them to mend their lives so that there shall be no fear or grief for them in both the worlds. It is not known whether Western philosophers now believe in any such attributes in man, like piety and righteousness. The Quran at the outset declares that only those who believe in the Unseen and have a desire to live a pious life can be

benefited by its teachings. With the exception of a few, Western thinkers and scholars in general have as yet failed to appreciate this teaching. Some of them regard the Prophet as a mystic similar to those Christians who mostly due to the unnatural monastic way of life and obscure views on religion, develop a morbid state of mind and preach a sort of mystic ideology with a fanatical zeal. Others consider the Prophet to be a very worldly-minded person whose object was to acquire power. They do not know that Islam through service to God and His creatures makes man a true vicegerent of God on earth. If there is any God who has created us in His image and with His spirit then this is the best philosophy provided it shows us a way to acquire this position. Had the Prophet been a mystic in the common-sense of the term, then he would not have been successful in establishing the kingdom of God on earth. Had he been an ambitious man then he would have gladly accepted the pagan Arabs' offer to become their king without caring to preach his Message. It is a well-known fact of history that he refused to become their king by telling them that he would not give up his task "even if they placed the Sun in his one hand and the Moon in the other."

If Jesus despite his failure to bring the Jews to the right path is called the Son by his followers then Muslims too, if they wanted to elevate the position of their Prophet, would have claimed a still higher position for him as he had actually established the Kingdom of God on earth. This was only an object of aspiration with Jesus. The only thing which has saved Muslims from exaggeration in matters of religion is the very Divine Message that was brought by him. It clearly states that neither he nor any other Messenger of God was more than a human being. The unbelievers of our time are in no better position than those who were at the time of the Prophet. They used to say that they would believe in the Prophet only if he produced miracles: "They swear their strongest oaths by God that if a (special) Sign came to them, by it they would believe in him." The Message

refers to this negative attitude of mind by informing the true believers that:

“Certainly all things are in the power of God, but you should know that even if a special Sign comes to them they will not believe”.

(Al-Qura'n VI-109)

It seems that unbelievers in our time also are waiting for certain extraordinary Divine portents to take place. The Holy Qura'n refers to such people in the following words:

“Are they waiting to see if the angels come to them or thy Lord (Himself) or certain of the Signs of thy Lord! The day that certain of the Signs of thy Lord do come, no goodwill do to a soul to believe in them at that time if it believed not before nor earned righteousness through its Faith”.

(Al-Qura'n VI-158)

Such persons do not realize that the doctrines of the true religion are to be understood, believed, and worked upon. Miracles are not helpful to those who have failed to grasp the significance of this teaching. That is why it had been said:

“Even if We (God) did send unto them angels, and the dead speak unto them, and We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in God's plan. But most of them ignore (the truth)”.

(Al-Qura'n VI-111)

Western thinkers and scholars are very well acquainted with the idea that only Jesus was a person who was the Word of God, and despite having a Divine existence had come here and “pitched his tent.” They hardly know that: we all, and especially prophets and saints, are such persons who are essentially the Word of God because Adam was created without father and mother. In fact the universe as a whole is a Word of God. Nevertheless, if the purpose of the whole creation is to be kept in view, then the only person who can be identified with the Word of God, it is,

the Prophet Muhammad because it is he who has uttered the everlasting Word of God (Divine Message). That is why it is said that he who comes at the end of all prophets was the first in the scale of existence. The idea of the Light of Muhammad which is a spiritual force in the path of righteousness refers to this doctrine. The external manifestation of this Light is the teaching of the Holy Qura'n which alone paves the way to human salvation. Those who understand it, believe in it, and follow it, their success is guaranteed by the Divine Being. Not that such a Word was not revealed to other prophets but it could not be kept in its pristine purity by their so-called followers. Hence any philosophy or mysticism which is not in conformity with it, is highly objectionable and confusing. No mystic or a philosopher has ever delivered such a Message. Hence any mysticism that makes a man cut off from the society is an escapism, and any philosophy that can make man active with no divine purpose advocates an obviously wrong activity. Indeed it is difficult to know the real significance of this revelation for those who are not spiritual, but on that account one has no right to reject it; otherwise, the position of such a person would be similar to those pagans who exclaimed to their prophets:

"We shall not believe until we receive one (revelation exactly) like those received by God's Apostles. God knoweth best where to carry out His Mission."

(Al-Qura'n VI-124)

The metaphysical teaching of this Book alone is such which has not been or cannot be contradicted by any truly metaphysical or spiritual thinker. It is through it that we come to know about our own origin and the origin of this world and the purpose of all creation. Philosophers who would like to do any philosophizing on metaphysical problems must take into account the Divine teachings and its source of knowledge even if there are difficulties in understanding the precise nature of this knowledge and the significance behind its clear and sometimes analogical expressions. It is not likely that God, if He exists has left mankind to

grope in darkness. Any denial of His guidance also implies that great prophets like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad were impostors. If there is any semblance of truth in what they have constantly preached then a philosopher will have to be very careful in his metaphysical investigations. It is their metaphysics and not the metaphysics of any philosopher that is reliable.

It may, however, be objected that if prophets in general and the last Prophet in particular has revealed the truth, then why his teachings or their teachings are to be regarded as embodying the truth especially when we ourselves do not receive any such Messages. This is wrong, for in that case all human beings would have become prophets. We are asked to believe in the revelations because our reason, our experience, our feelings all lead us to the conclusion that they were true. Leaving aside those who follow the religion of their forefathers, all those who make a comparative study of various ideologies with an unbiased mind, come to the path of Islam. It may be claimed that such a comparative study might lead one to become a sceptic. But this is not correct because the metaphysical propositions in the philosophy of this religion can be verified and a knowledge based on certainty can be acquired. What is known as a truly "sufi" philosophy in Islam deals with this method. If any rational or mystical philosophy with its metaphysical propositions, fails to make a provision for its verification, it is really non-sensical in every sense of the term. A true metaphysics is also non-sensical only with reference to our ordinary sense perception but not with reference to super-sensory perception or with reference to its own creative faculty. That is the reason why whatever metaphysical views Muslim philosophers and Sufis have expressed are only commentaries to what has been stated in the Holy Qura'n.

Divine Revelation in the Past

It will be seen that hardly any philosopher in the West,

at least in modern times, has expressed his views on this topic. The reason why this has not been possible appears to be mostly due to the fact that the Divine guidance in the form of revealed literature has not reached them in its proper form. Many of them do believe in God but they do not seriously think that there can be such experience in which Reality reveals Itself.

The Divine Message that is supposed to have come to the Jewish prophets including Jesus Christ, has been presented in the Bible in such a way that instead of declaring the truth, it informs them about so many other things which are doubtful and not very helpful for the spiritual well-being of man. Even the Divine spiritual agency of the Holy Spirit who conveys the Message has been portrayed in the New Testament as God and not as Archangel. His utterances and his very mode of manifestation are unbelievable.

It is now imperative on philosophers and other seekers of knowledge to make a thorough research and find out if Divine inspiration or revelation is possible. Leaving aside those to whom the very word metaphysics is disgusting, if, in general, they admit that there is God, then it is quite possible that He is beyond all their descriptions and proofs. Since it is pointed out that He is a Loving God, it is possible that He, in His infinite mercy, shows us the path which had led spiritual men in the past – and which will always lead humanity – in the right direction. No useful purpose can be served by merely stating that philosophers too have their inspiration which comes to them from their world of experience. If by merely concentrating on the world of appearance one could reveal the mysteries of the universe, then there would not have been so many religions, and philosophies with divergent points of view. It will have to be decided whether God has guided any human being into His path or not. In the latter case, it will have to be concluded that God after creating us has forgotten us. Such a view about Reality which has brought us into existence from nothing and is so kind that even those who do not believe in Him or do not

bother to find out what He expects from them, are enjoying from the unlimited treasures of His bounty.

If there are persons who claim to have been guided by the Divine Being, there is no reason to disbelieve them only for the reason that we ourselves do not have similar experiences. We need not doubt if Jesus or other Jewish prophets had succeeded in establishing personal relation with the Deity. Only because there are exaggerated reports in the Bible, we have no right to totally reject them on the supposition that these may be mere illusions of some abnormal or psychologically unbalanced persons. It is true that whatever is stated in the Bible about these prophets or their spiritual experiences, has hardly been written by the persons themselves. They are generally the reports written by their devoted followers years after their death. It is quite possible that the true spirit of Divine teaching is missing in these. They have only recorded those teachings and stories which they had heard from those who were supposed to be intimately acquainted with the lives of the prophets who had received Divine Messages.

No one can claim that the reports are beyond doubt or that no change has been made in the words of prophets or in the Message that was revealed to them through the Holy Spirit. That is the reason why those who would like to get any guidance from the Bible shall have to trace the elements of one Divine eternal religion and philosophy which leads us to the straight path shown to humanity by God. There is no reason to suppose that every prophet had a different religion. After studying the revealed literature we rather come to conclude that they all had come to preach the same religion. We are of the opinion that to a great extent it is the prejudice of so-called religious people that has so far been a great obstacle in knowing the truth.

What is most disheartening is the attitude of those persons in the West who believe that all kinds of Divine illumination is finished with the advent of Christ. They do not realize that Jesus himself had repeatedly informed his disciples that in his time he was not in a position to reveal

the whole* truth. He foresaw that after him a time would come when the truth would be told in plain words and there would not be any need of metaphorical language which was his usual mode of speech. In St. John, it is clearly indicated that he had predicted the advent of the Prophet (Advocate) or the "Praised One." The Holy Qura'n refers to this prophecy of *Jesus* in the following words:

"Verily I (Jesus) am Allah's Messenger unto you who confirmeth and bringeth (unto you) the good tidings of a Messenger who will come after me whose name is the Praised One. Yet when he hath come unto them with clear proofs, they say this is manifest sorcery."

(*Al-Qura'n, LXI:6*)

We do not know what was the actual word that was used by Jesus in his own language with reference to the person about whom this prophecy was made. Those who have used the later Greek manuscript of St. John, translated the word "Paraclete" as advocate or comforter, but the same word by a slight change of vowels is pronounced as "Paracutus," which means "the Praised One." (i.e. *Ahmad*) However, it does not matter whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) is pointed out as Advocate or the Praised One. What is most important is this that Jesus has referred to a holy person like him and not to the Holy Spirit which is generally believed to be the Advocate by Christians. In case, they thought him to be the Holy Spirit there was no need for him to change his name and call him an Advocate or the Praised One. In the same Gospel, it is stated that the person will be such who will baptise human beings with the Holy Spirit. Now it does not make any sense to believe that the Holy Spirit will baptise with the Holy Spirit. Any spiritual guide who has done away with this ritual of baptism and has purified human soul by illuminating it, it is the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him). He is the only Messenger of God who has come after Jesus and possesses all those attributes that are referred to in the prophecy.

The Christian view that the prophecy refers to the Holy Spirit who is said to have come upon the community on

certain occasions after Jesus, and they were all filled with him, is not in conformity with the notion of the Holy Spirit in the Bible itself. The Holy Spirit is the guiding light of individual spiritual men and especially those of the prophets.

The Last Word

It is through the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad that we come to know that prophets had indeed been sent to the Jewish people, and at one time they had been favoured by God for their piety and devotion but this does not mean that theirs were the only prophets. God has sent many much prophets among other people as well. We are told that the Messages that have come to mankind through these prophets from the One Real Being are identical in their essence. The minor differences in the teaching of prophets are due to the circumstances of their time and place. If Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and other were prophets of Jewish origin then there were prophets like Shu'ayb, Hud, Job, Saleh, and others who were not born among those who were Jews. In God's eye, all human beings are equal. Only that person is his real vicegerent of God on earth who is most obedient to Him and is always mindful of the duties towards Him and towards human beings through Him. The Last Testament of Allah (the Holy Qur'an) that was revealed to the Prophet (Peace be on him) points out that many of the prophets who are considered as Jews were not Jews. For example, about Abraham we know that in his time there was neither Judaism nor Christianity.

The reason why Abraham is respected by both Christians and Jews is that his spiritual attainments were extraordinary. At the time when he preached the true religion in a polytheistic society he was not asking them to become Christians or Jews. His Message was to submit to one Real God who is the supreme authority in both the worlds. The Qura'n tells us that in order to establish a religion in which one completely

surrenders himself to God, he too had prayed to God,

“To raise up in their midst a prophet from among them who shall recite unto them Thy revelation and teach them the Book (Divine Words) and the wisdom and purify.”

(Al-Qura'n, II:129)

This was his prayer while he was constructing the Holy Mosque (Ka'ba) at Makkah with Ismael. We are informed that the very person (i.e. Jacob) who was given the title of Israel was not preaching any creed like Judaism. He was preaching the same religion which was preached by Abraham.

Despite the fact that nominally even the Old Testament is regarded as a sacred book for Christians, they do not seem to get any particular inspiration from the life and teachings of the prophets that are mentioned there.

It is a common belief that these spiritual men had been sent to the Jews and not to Christians who are Gentiles. That is the reason why even Christians call them as “Jewish prophets. But the phrase is misleading. It does not go well with the idea that the Jews were or are chosen people of God. We shall have to conclude that they were rather very wicked, for, if that was not the case, there was no need for God to send so many prophets to them. Only when we consider these prophets to be the prophets of humanity then alone Jews as a nation can have some self-respect and we can appreciate them as a people who have produced quite a few spiritual leaders of mankind. However, it cannot be denied that the behaviour of the Jews vis-a-vis the teaching of these prophets was rather disappointing. We are told that distortion of the Divine Message for “a little gain,” was their favourite hobby. It is quite possible that the prophets had taken especial care to see that Jews also should mend their ways. But this does not mean that they were exclusively sent for this community only.

Christians, however, believe that Jesus, despite his Jewish origin, had a message for all human beings. The devotion they have for Jesus has led them to regard him as a person

who was superior to all the Messengers of God. Nay, they even go beyond this and claim that he was the "only begotten Son of God". Such a view along with other exaggerated reports about him make one believe that there was something lacking in other Messengers of God. Quite opposite to this view, Jews never considered Jesus to be more than a renegade. They were so opposed to him that they did not at all pay any heed to what he was preaching. The Gentiles who, years after him, tried to collect certain writings about him in a language different from that which was spoken by Jesus, could not differentiate between exaggerated and sober reports. This was because of their natural difficulty that they were unable to grasp the essence of Divine Message.

In the revealed teachings, the only Message that is clear and beyond any doubt, is that of the last Prophet Muhammad. (Peace be on him) From his revelations we come to know that God reveals Himself to the prophets. It is stated:

"And it is not (vouchsafed) to any mortal that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by revelation or from behind a veil or (that) He sendeth a Messenger and reveal what he will by His leave. Verily He is Knower and Wise".

(Al-Qura'n, XLII:5)

Scriptures tell us that this has been the usual mode of God's revelation throughout the ages. About the Message that had come to the Prophet (Peace be on him) it is stated:

"Surely We (God) have revealed to thee (Muhammad) (Peace be on him) as We revealed to Noah, and the prophets after him, Abraham, and Ismael, and Aaron and Solomon, and we gave to David a Zabur (a revealed book). And the Messengers (of Allah) about (whom) We mentioned to thee before and the Messengers not mentioned to thee and to Moses Allah addressed in speech".

(Al-Qura'n, IV:164)

The Divine Message reminds the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him) of the days when he was so keen to know the truth before he was selected as the Messenger of Allah and asks him to spread the Light with the same vigour:

“And thus we inspired in thee a spirit of Our Command. Thou knewest not what the Book was nor what the Faith. But We have made it a Light whereby we guide whom we will of Our bondsmen”.

(Al-Qura'n, XLII:52)

The Message also informs him that this teaching is not new but it is in conformity with all that has been correctly reported in the past Divine Scriptures:

“And we have revealed to thee the Book with the truth what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it”.

(Al-Qura'n, V:48)

We have been informed that the purpose of God in inspiring the prophets in the past was to guide human beings to the right path. The Message that has been revealed to the Prophet has this purpose in view. If real wisdom is to be acquired, it is through this Message only. It says that it is a “healing and mercy” for those who believe in it.

(Al-Qura'n, VII:12)

Referring to those who have tampered with the Divine revelations in the past and presented them in a distorted form or those who are in the habit of expressing views about God which are not correct, it is said that they are wicked:

“And who doth greater wrong than he who inventeth a lie concerning Allah? Such will be brought before their Lord, the witness will say: ‘These are those who lied concerning their Lord’. Now the curse of Allah is upon the wrong-doers”.

(Al-Qura'n, XI:18)

It may also be noted that this Message to the Prophet has been defined as the “Guardian” of truth. The meaning is that Divine providence has taken precaution to see that no mortal now will be able to make any changes in it. All misunderstanding about the true religion in the past had been due to the dishonesty of the people who had not preserved and presented the revelation correctly. About this Message which has been revealed to the Prophet through the Holy Spirit, the Divine Being Himself guarantees that

it will remain in its pristine purity till the end of time. It will be seen that until now when fourteen hundred years have passed after the death of the Prophet (Peace be on him), not a single change has been made in it and there is no reason to believe that this will be possible in the future.

The Message by its very nature is unique. Even its mode of speech is such that no one can imitate it. That is why it has been said:

“And if ye are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto Our servant (Muhammad) (peace be on him), then produce a chapter of the like thereof, and call your helpers beside Allah if ye are truthful: And if ye do it not – and ye can never do it – then guard against the fire prepared for disbelievers”.

(Al-Qura'n, II:2)

This too is a challenge for all time. Neither at the time of the Prophet nor during all this period after his death, any Arab has succeeded even in composing a single verse like Quranic verses. And there is no reason to believe that this will be possible in future.

Since the Message is preserved for all time and no other fundamentals are to be revealed, it is said that the Prophet is the last Prophet or the “Seal of the Prophets.” In fact, the Message which came at the end of all revealed messages, put a seal on them. It is true that all prophets were sent by God but the person who is the “Seal of the Prophets” is a person in whose teaching true religion is presented in a perfect form for all time. Hence the religion is completed: no other messengers are required. Anyone who would like to be guided properly will have to look to this Testament of God (Holy Qura'n) which has been issued with the Divine Seal.

It is now expected that every true believer, and especially those who are learned men in Islam, will mould their lives according to its injunctions and preach its doctrines among those who are unaware of God's guidance to humanity. In this sense that which was the privilege of the prophets in

the past has now become the legacy of all Muslims. That is why the learned people of Islam have been compared to the prophets of Israel.

This, however, does not mean that God does not reveal Himself now to those who are truly spiritual. The saintly persons who successfully tread the path that has been shown to them in the Holy Book (Qura'n) are also inspired. They realize the truth of the Message. The world of Unseen becomes manifest to them. They see the Reality with the eyes of certainty and know what kind of ideal life they are required to live in the circumstances they are placed in. The word "revelation" or *Wahi* is used for the Message which a prophet gets from the Divine Being. The illumination or inspiration which a saint gets, is known as *Ilham*. This, too, is a great boon for those who come into contact with him or read his teaching in order to understand the significance of the Prophetic Message at a particular time and place. This means that the Divinely "Sealed Message" of the last Prophet is the only standard by which all past revelations and future inspirations are to be judged. This also means that despite the guidance of the Lord through Divine inspiration, no person, however spiritually elevated he might be, can now be considered as a prophet.

General Comment

It is a strange phenomenon that most of the people who are regarded in the West as great philosophers and intellectual giants are those who have had no such experience of Divine illumination. Nay, even the very idea that there is such an experience in which Reality speaks through ones own self has not developed in them. This is due to the fact that unless one completely surrenders oneself to God and wholeheartedly devotes oneself to the service by annihilating ones own selfish desires, one fails to see the truth and his enlightenment is not possible. In Islam there is so much stress on the fact that on establishing intimate relationship with God.

even if a person believes that his great spiritual teacher Muhammad (peace be on him) is in any way associated with the Divinity of the Being, he is no more a Muslim and all his spiritual development is finished. We do not know how Christian saints and mystics manage to become Godly persons with their concept of Trinity, and how God elevates them to a spiritual position even when they worship or seek the pleasure of His counterparts, the Son and the Holy Ghost. According to Islam the concentration on the Divine Being is the basis of all spiritual progress. Along with this there are, of course, other beliefs that are also essential. For example, we must live a pious life which does not mean a life of monasticism. We are required to live in the society and serve human beings through Him. We must have goodwill towards all Messengers of Allah and should believe that they all had come with a Divine Message to guide human beings to the path of Allah. We must believe that God has not created us in vain but that there is a life after death where we shall have to give an account of what we had been doing in our worldly lives. That is why the Message declares:

“This is the Book where there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who are pious; who believe in the Unseen and establish worship and spend of that we have bestowed upon them. And who believe in that which is revealed into thee and that which was revealed before thee and are certain of the Hereafter.”

(Al-Qura'n, II:5)

Prophethood of Muhammad (Peace be on him)

We have already referred to a fundamental doctrine in Islam which says that “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah” and also pointed out that he is not the only person who was sent by God for imparting His Message to humanity in order to direct them to the right path but many such great persons had been selected by Him in the past for this purpose. None of them was a supernatural being whose character could not be regarded as an ideal for human beings.

Hence, it has clearly been pointed out in the Holy Qura'n that Muhammad (Peace be on him) was a man like us. The only difference between him and others was this that he received revelations from God of which the main doctrine is the Unity of God:

"Say, I (Muhammad) (Peace be on him) am only a mortal like you, it is revealed to me that your god is (only) One God".

(Al-Qura'n, XVIII:110)

The reason why he is sent is to inform others that there is a sure path which leads to the threshold of Reality:

"And most certainly thou summonest them unto the right path."

(Al-Qura'n, XXIII:73)

His task is not to compel others to follow this path, as such an attitude is the very negation of the free will that has been granted to man to find out his own way to salvation and work for the realization of the ideals he cherishes. Despite the fact that the religion of Allah is the natural religion of humanity, it is clearly stated that "there is no compulsion in matters of faith". From this we come to know this fundamental principle of decency that however good a doctrine or a creed might be, no one has any right to impose it on others.

The purpose for which the Prophet (Peace be on him) was sent was "to deliver the Message."

(Al-Qura'n V:99)

In clear terms he was asked to inform them that the reward of a good life according to the standard set by the Divine Being Himself and lived by all truly spiritual leaders of mankind, is with Allah. Nay, we are told that Truth itself is their reward. Those who do not sincerely try to know it or refuse to accept It, there is something wrong with them and the result is disastrous for them. That is why it is said:

"We (God) have not sent thee (Muhammad) (peace be on him) save as a Messenger of good tidings and a warner."

(Al-Qura'n, XXV:56)

Since the Message is complete and no other guidance from the Unseen is now required for man, it is indicated that with the advent of the Prophet (Peace be on him) the traditional practice of conveying Divine Message through prophets has also stopped:

"Muhammad (Peace be on him). . . . is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of prophets (which means that the Messenger's Message is complete) and Allah is cognizant of everything".

(Al-Qura'n XXXII:40)

Since the Divinely authorised version of revelation has come to be a guiding Light till the end of time, no more prophets will henceforward be needed to convey the same or similar Messages again and again. It is now expected that those who will take guidance from it, will take up the task of preaching it. (It is, however, unfortunate that Muslims of our time in general neither understand the Message nor make any effort to popularize its teaching).

The ideal that is before the rightly guided persons is unique. Many of the miseries of human beings are due to the deeds of those who are fanatically fighting for one object or the other but there are very few persons who have Divine Being as their ideal. It is this ideal which makes them embodiment of love. The followers of even those movements, which are generally known to be humanitarian, behave in a way which is not really the path of love. The love and sympathy which a God-fearing man has for his fellow beings, cannot be found in those who work for the well-being of a particular people or even those who claim to be lovers of humanity. It is only from such persons who work for human beings through God that we can expect any good for them in the real sense. The day when there will be God-loving persons in great number, that would be the time when this world would become a miniature paradise or Kingdom of God on earth.

The ideal God-loving person is the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him), though he was not to be taken for granted like Jesus in the Gospels. To what extent the Prophet (Peace

be on him) loved the Divine Being can be understood from his whole mode of life. The following verse of the Quran refers to this:

“Say (O Muhammad) (Peace be on him), verily my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”

(Al-Qura'n, VI:162)

Unless a person is annihilated in God to such an extent, he is not expected to behave in an ideal manner. Such is the idea of moral life according to the verdict of all truly spiritual men. They serve humanity irrespective of what they would gain in this world or in the Hereafter. If a person acquires this mode of life, it is known as the “colour of Divinity” of which the beauty surpasses all that is beautiful in this colourful world. That is why it has been said:

“The Prophet (Peace be on him) and his followers take their colour from Allah and who is better than Allah at colouring (with Divinity). We are His worshippers alone”.

(Al-Qura'n II:138)

This transformation of self takes place only when a man completely surrenders to God and refuses to bow down before any other authority. Neither his objects of worship are the beings who are believed to be superior to him nor are his ideals wealth, position or any such objects. It is true that with the Divine Being there are treasures of all those things which we consider to be so precious but the experience to be one with Him is so extraordinary that all other objects and ideals lose their charm.

This highest spiritual attainment had led the Prophet (Peace be on him) to that experience which is known as Ascension. It is said that the Prophet (Peace be on him) in his spiritual flights had reached a stage in which the Reality comes face to face to be witnessed by a Prophet (Peace be on him) through the Divine eyes of certainty. This is the highest possible stage of proximity with God for a man. No spiritual development takes man to a higher stage than this. The miraculous flight of the Prophet (Peace be on him) has been mentioned in the following verse:

“Glory be to Him who carried His servant (Muhammad — peace be upon him) by night from the Sacred Mosque to the distant place of worship, the Precincts of which We have blessed, that We might show him some of our portents (in the extramundane). Verily He only is the Hearing and Seeing.”

(Al-Qura'n, XVII:1)

Some commentators point out that proximity of the Real with the Prophet has been described in terms of “two bows’ length,” in the following verse:

“Then He was (distant) at two bows’ length or even nearer.”

(Al-Qura'n, LIII:9)

We are of the opinion that the Ascension or the prophetic experience of the unity with the Divine Being is such a unique experience which is difficult to be easily understood. In a word, he acquires highest position in the world of God’s creatures. However, this is not such an experience which cannot be explained. The Tradition says that for all true believers there is an ascension at the time of their prayers when he discards all that is not God. He who becomes one with the Real knows how extraordinary is the soul’s flight in the domain of the Lord of the Unseen. A prophet when he experiences Ascension acquires the Divine Light permanently and witnesses that Light in all conditions of life.

It is said that the prophet Jonah had a similar experience when he was in the whale’s belly. Even Jesus could have acquired a similar experience if his so-called followers had not claimed for him the position of Divinity. Indeed, it was known to God that Jesus had always regarded himself as His humble servant but the charge is so severe that the matter is to be decided at the Doom’s Day. In order to save him from the clutches of his enemies, he had to be taken up to heaven, but this experience itself cannot be regarded as Ascension. In spiritual matters it is not Resurrection of a person from his grave but Ascension in his life that counts. He who is dead to his carnal self and unites with the Divine Being

his Resurrection is wonderful. After all we are all going to be brought to life at the time of general Resurrection. If Jesus was made alive three days after his so-called crucifixion there is nothing very extraordinary in it. Even the idea that he sat at the "right hand of the Power," is such a naive way of explaining the relations of spiritual men with God. The experience in which a spiritual man unites with the One from within the recesses of the soul is so unique that it cannot be explained in words.

The character of those who are "divinely coloured," is superb. No one can compete with them in moral perfection. Especially with reference to the Prophet we have to admit that he was ideal in this respect too. The Qura'n has praised him in these words:

"Verily in the Messenger of Allah ye have an excellent example (of moral perfection) for him who looketh unto Allah and Last Day and remembereth Allah much."

(Al-Qura'n, XXXIII:21)

For all moral perfection it is necessary to follow this example.

We have already stated that no spiritual man is ever sent to this world who is an incarnation of God. All prophets in revealed religion were Messengers of God and His true vicegerents. The Prophet claimed no higher position than this. He was only a human being who had attained all that a human being can aspire to attain in the life when he is at the height of his spiritual progress. Only from such a person can we expect that he would realise our difficulties and would guide us to the path of safety and salvation. This aspect of his life is depicted when it is stated:

"Grievous unto him is your distress."

(Al-Qura'n, IX:128)

He is so full of loving kindness for God's creatures that he has been defined as a boon to humanity:

"And We (God) have not sent thee (Muhammad - Peace be upon him) except as mercy for the world."

(Al-Qura'n, XXI:137)

The ordeal he had to undergo in order to be successful in conveying the Divine Message to human beings was unbearable. Yet neither in his life he expected a reward from those who had been benefited from him nor did he, after his death, allow followers to venerate as a divinity. He never asked his followers to consider him more than a human being who was enlightened in spiritual matters. It is strictly forbidden in Islam to worship him or to consider him as a supernatural being.

The true believers have only been asked to pray for him. This much consideration for him is as essential for he is the greatest benefactor of all human beings. We are told that even the Divine Being, in recognition of his services in His path, showers His blessings on him. Hence, they have been advised to seek blessings of Allah for him if they like to express their gratefulness to him:

“Verily Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe ask blessings on him with a worthy salutation.”

(Al-Qura'n, XXXIII:56)

Sufism

All that has been said with reference to the Prophet's source of knowledge and his teachings, is believed to be true by all Muslim Philosophers and Sufis. Nevertheless, a Sufi is one who particularly specializes in the science of practical wisdom and enlightenment through physical and metaphysical means. Sufis are spiritual Philosophers in Islam whose effort is to remain all the time at the threshold of the Reality. He who comes under their influence, liberates his soul from the evil that is accompanied with the phenomenal existence and transforms himself into a metaphysical entity which feels at home in the veritable domain of Reality. They make us aware of a path by following which it is possible to die before ones death. Such an idea is not new in philosophy. Even the philosophers of ancient times had some know-

ledge about it. And this is the reason why they had defined philosophy as the 'science of death.'

What is most important is to first become aware of the right path and then to follow it. A mere information about it or even a belief that it is the best path is not enough to make a person a true believer. Along with efforts the Grace of the Divine Being is required; it is always with those people who are men of goodwill and sincerity. That is why it has been said that:

"Those whom God willeth to guide – He openeth their breast to Islam; (and there are) those whom He willeth their breast close and constricted as if they had to climb up to the skies; thus doth God heap the penalty on those who refuse to believe."

(*Al-Qura'n, VI:125*)

Philosophers and thinkers mostly due to their pre-conceived notions and wrong views about free-thinking in philosophy, might feel as if they were climbing up to the skies when they come to know that they have to accept certain beliefs and work accordingly. Despite the plausibility of these beliefs and their conformity with the philosophical approach, it is sad that these have lost their extraordinary character by coming to be known as popular beliefs. Philosophers hardly know that these have been pragmatically tested for centuries. They all know that for becoming a true believer one is required to hold the view that there is no god but God and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last Prophet and that there is the Day of Judgement when the pious will be rewarded and the wicked will bear the consequences of their evil deeds, *et cetera*.

A philosopher may not approve of these when he sees that apparently there is no way to test their validity. It is not known to these people that there is a science in which all such beliefs acquire the status of knowledge when man sees the Truth with the eyes of certainty. Of course, the method is not the same which we make use of in verifying the statements about the objects in this world. This is the science of

spiritual men and the Sufis, who perpetually live in the realm of Grace. He who specializes in this science is a saintly person. It is wrong to suppose that he is a mystic who believes in all sorts of obscure ideologies about the things that are not known. For a Sufi, the world is not an illusion, though he knows that there is yet another world which is far better and everlasting. He prays for his success in both the worlds and tries to live like the Prophet in all aspects of life. Not that he neglects the knowledge of this world but believes that the knowledge of the other world which is more important, can also be of great help to him in living a successful life in this world. He is aware of the metaphysical forces that are working from behind the phenomenal world. Along with the material means he makes use of his spiritual force which never suffers a man to be disappointed. A Sufi too might analyze and interpret the worldly knowledge but he excels others in this for the only reason that he sees things in the Divine Light. Any epistemology which creates obstacles in the path of the spirit fails to explain the physical world in its true perspective. It is true that very few Sufis have been successful in the world in the same manner as the Prophet and his Companions were in the early days of Islam, but this is because in this task a collective effort of men of insight is required to bring about a drastic change in human society. The people with whom they live are mostly self-centred hypocrites. Such persons have grandiose ideas about themselves and their so-called intelligent people. They do not care to appreciate those who preach selflessness and devotion. They can hardly sacrifice their interest in worldly things in the way of truth. Without a band of God-fearing workers, individual Sufis prefer to live a calm and quiet life by helping that negligible minority which comes under their influence. They cannot help those who do not like to help themselves. However, it cannot be said that the object has been forgotten. The persons who have a formal religion may also ultimately realize their folly. That would be the moment when true Sufis will succeed in spiritualizing a considerable number of human beings and then it would not be difficult for them to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

CHAPTER III

A. REVEALED RELIGIONS (The Idea of God)

It cannot be said that any philosophy in the Western sense, could be a guide to human beings in the real sense. This is not the case with the philosophico-religious teachings of Islam. There are many religions which appeal to intelligent people also and to a certain extent, there is a lurking common factor in belief unanimity among the followers of all particular creeds. Philosophers, however, might claim that this common factor is not real and has no basis in fact. It may be true that an overwhelming majority follows the religion of their forefathers. But there is no reason to believe that among followers of religion there are not persons who have succeeded in finding out the truth in the real sense or that a man of sound nature, cannot accept it if the path is shown. We are rather of the opinion that, philosophically speaking, Islam is a religion which appeals to humanity in general, for it leads man from nature to supra natural. It is sad that philosophers have not as yet been able to find out a way to Perennial Philosophy. This does not mean that it is non-existent. It would be wrong to assume that this philosophy is the basic philosophy of all religions; this is because there are inherent, irreconcilable differences among them, and they do not all refer to the same Ultimate

Reality. The philosophy which brings out the deeper significance of things is the perennial philosophy, and this is the real philosophy of the East (i.e. Islam)

The basis of such a philosophy cannot be rational or empirical in the ordinary sense, for in general knowledge gained by reason and experience is such as to vary from person to person. We know that reason cannot take us beyond space and time. Had experience been convincing there would have been no obstacles in knowing the mysteries of the Universe. Indeed there are persons who believe that they can safely rely on the knowledge of sense experience. But the very reasons why scientists have made their discoveries and succeeded in finding out more than what an ordinary man can expect to know by his sense-perception is that there are grades of experience. Principles of an everlasting philosophy are likewise different from those of any vague mysticism or mythological religion. The last Messenger of God has preached a religion which is based on the principles of enlightened life in all ages and human consciousness which is serious in knowing the truth, approves it.

One may believe it or not, revelation or inspiration is a fact. There is no reason to doubt it if it claims to be the appropriate source of knowledge for knowing the ultimate reality, unless it is proved to be baseless on scientific grounds. If human beings have been receiving divine Messages, there is no doubt the Light is to be found in these alone. What is astonishing is the fact that Divine teaching in all ages is identical. Men of spiritual insight tell us that the faculty of inspiration does not hinder the functioning of any of our usual means of knowledge; rather, it enormously expands its scope and field of operation. Its beauty lies in its appeal to all those who are sincere in their search of truth. Besides, it is the source of the highest wisdom and enlightenment.

In the following pages some of its basic principles have been discussed. He who concentrates on these and follows them with a goodwill, is sure to be benefitted. A true belief is a hypothesis already proved to be true in religious experi-

ence. The most fundamental doctrine is that of the unity of God. The nucleus of revealed teachings is the declaration: "There is no god but God." All metaphysical, social, and political views of those who are true believers are derived from this teaching. Despite the fact that it is so important, there are not many people who know its true significance. There had been quite a few revealed religions in the past, but at present we have only three of them, viz. Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They all point out that the world has been created by One Divine Being who is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.

Judaism

Whatever might have been the distortions in the teaching of this religion there is no ambiguity in its doctrine about the Unity of God. Jews point out that the One God is a jealous God. He cannot tolerate the worship of any other Deity besides him. Nevsner Jacob in his book on "The Way to Torah" states that the "Biblical writers misrepresent paganism calling the worship of wood and stone, of dumb idols . . . that is fetishism. What was actually central to paganism was the deification of worldly phenomena . . . the view that all manifestations of nature are aspects of mysterious supernatural vitality." What N. Jacob has said about paganism is also in a way correct with reference to Christianity which is regarded as a revealed religion. If a man (Jesus) and an angel (i.e. Holy Spirit) are one with God, the father, then there is no reason to suppose that all other men and angels are at a different level of existence. The revealed religions of Judaism and Islam are opposed to such a view.

Prophets of Israel and Ismael were unanimous on the point that God is transcendental. The created world is wholly different from the Divine Being Jewish writers point out that God "has no myth, no birth. Israel should be his people, should do his will, and he should redeem them."

With reference to the transcendental nature of God, Islam, however, points out that this does not mean that God is far away from His creatures. The Holy Qura'n tells us that He is nearer to us than our life-vein. As a Creator His nature is quite different from that of His creatures and as the Lord of the universe, He encompasses the whole existence.

Jewish prophets were aware of the nature of Real Being. That is why they laid stress on the teaching, "You shall love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might." That is what the Holy Qura'n also says in the verse: "Those who are true believers, they are extreme in their love for God." As a people who are conscious of the Deity and their obligations towards Him, there should not have been any pride or arrogance in Jews but it is sad that they not only regard themselves as God's only people and even His children, but consider even the true believers (Muslims) as persons who are not rightly guided. Love of God is not the privilege of any particular community or persons. If Jews love God then it is not known why they are hostile to a people who believe in One God and love Him. From reading existing Jewish Scriptures it becomes evident they have developed a prejudiced mind against the prophets of Ishmael. While it is a historical fact that prophets themselves had no racial feeling; they all had great regard among themselves irrespective of whichever race they belonged.

It is true that some of the great prophets were Israelites but this does not mean that there were no other prophets or we can belittle their position. Even Jews admit this but persist in believing that their prophets alone were superb. They have conveniently forgotten the prediction of their own prophets that the World Prophet or the Messenger of God was to be born among the Ishmaelites. True revelation does not make any differentiation between such holy personages.

Jews trace their origin to Abraham who had migrated to the land of Canaan from Mesopotamia. He had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Jews, due to their prejudiced outlook,

do not admit that Ishmael had any extraordinary spiritual merits for he was not born from his first wife, the mother of Isaac whose son was Israel. This is despite the fact that Ishmael was the eldest son of Abraham and the object of his aspiration. This was the son who had willingly agreed to be sacrificed in the name of God by his father. That is the reason why he and his progeny were blessed by God and the task of guiding humanity was also entrusted to his most illustrious descendent, the Messenger of God. It is not known why they disregard Jesus son of Mary but still attach the Messianic hope to the Devidic line.

Jews believe that "in the beginning, two thousand years before heaven and the earth, seven things were created, the Torah, written with blackfire on white fire, and lying in the lap of God, the Divine throne . . . paradise on the right side of God, hell on the left side, the Celestial Sanctuary in front of God, having a jewel on its alter graven with the name of Messiah." (Chapt. 1). In this evidently distorted form of revealed teaching the word "Messiah" probably refers to the Messenger of God. In fact both the Messiah and the Messenger had come to guide this community but most of them did not believe in them. With reference to the Torah, Jews tell us "in heaven God and the angels study it just as rabbis do on earth." (Chapt. 2). It is stated that if an earthly court "overrules its testimony, God would rejoice crying out 'My sons have conquered me.' Jews have failed to appreciate that such witty remarks about Almighty are so harmful to the spiritual well-being of man.

Such utterances about Divine Word prove their lack of insight into revealed teachings. It cannot be believed that there is any fire in the lap of God for He Himself is Light. Besides, if Torah, despite losing its original teachings is so extraordinary then it is not known why Jews are waiting for any Messiah. Jewish prophets knew very well that only the Message of the Holy Prophet would remain with humanity till the day of Resurrection. That is why they had advised their community to follow him. Had this been the nature

of revelation in Torah they could rightly follow it for all time without waiting for any Redeemer. Jews themselves admit that they do not now possess the whole of Torah. It is said that it was preserved till the time of David. Later on it was legislated by Ezra and augmented by Ezekiel and others. If the revealed teaching of Torah had been reliable, then Jesus would not have taken so much trouble to enlighten the Jews on spiritual matters. If the Gospel of Jesus had been preserved the Messenger of God would not have particularly invited Christians and Jews to follow his path.

We are told that when a person claims to be a Jew, he regards himself to be a slave who has been liberated by God. Jews are very conscious of the fact that they had been enslaved by so many people like the Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Roman. It is not known exactly when they were liberated by God. Had this been a fact then they should have become very obedient to the Almighty. But this is not the case for we see that they do not hesitate to be ungrateful to Him and boldly confess that "they are not religious at all and that being a Jewish has nothing to do with religion." (Chapt. I). It has not yet dawned on them that he who truly believes in God not only takes pride in calling himself His servant but also offers the proof of his servitude. It is very unfortunate that Jewish Scriptures have depicted the character of their own prophets in a very degrading manner. Despite the fact that Christians and Jews regard their religious books sacred, they do not know that prophets in revealed religions were ideal human beings. If the Holy Quran had not refuted the wrong views about their character, human beings would have failed to grasp the true significance of revealed teachings.

Judaism and Islam

The Holy Qura'n has frequently referred to the objectionable behaviour of the Jews vis-a-vis the divine teachings. This is in no way to discredit the original religion that was

preached by the Jewish prophets but rather to make the Jews serious about God's message to humanity. It has been stated that they were in the habit of changing and distorting revealed teachings. The Holy Qura'n says:

"Woe then unto those who write the scripture with their hands and then say 'This is from God' so that they may therewith get a small price. Woe then unto that which they write and woe unto what they earn".

(Al-Qura'n, II: 79)

Jews have been advised to give up all such practices and follow the latest version of the Divine Message.

Leaving aside the harm they have done to themselves by not believing in the Messenger of God, it is unfortunate that they did not believe in their own last prophet whose name was Jesus Christ. What is even more degrading is the abusive language which they make use of against Jesus Christ and his mother, Mary. They have been asked to respect them both and not to hold views that are incorrect and beneath the dignity of these pious persons. The Holy Qura'n informs the Jews that they were right in not believing Jesus as the Son of God but were wrong in not believing him as their prophet and the Messiah who was miraculously born to Mary. It is also wrong to believe that they had killed or crucified him. The events in his last days were so complicated that his enemies and his so-called followers were left in a dubious perplexity when he was miraculously taken up in heavenly regions before they could get hold of him. While he was on earth unseen forces had so well-protected him that no one could torture or humiliate him. The Qura'n says that it is a highly grievous calumny to say anything against the piety of his mother.

These and many other misconceptions have been removed. The Jews were asked to sincerely seek right guidance, otherwise a distorted revealed religion is worse than infidelity. The persons who neither understand divine teachings nor live a life according to its injunctions are no more than the beasts of burden. That is why the Holy Qura'n says:

“The likeness of those who carry the Torah, but do not practise on it, is as the likeness of the folk who deny the revelation of Allah, and Allah guideth not the wrongdoing folk”.

(*Al-Qura'n, LXII:5*)

Notwithstanding the fact that the Jews were not receptive to the teachings of Islam, the Message was conveyed to them. It was for them to listen to it or not. If these clear revelations were not appealing to them, they had every right to reject them but there was no point in their hostility towards the true believers. The Prophet himself, if anybody denied him, would refer the matter to the “Lord of all-encompassing mercy”, even though the opposition of the Jews was so acute. The racial prejudice and the restrictions of the Divine Law were probably a great hindrance for them to accept Islam. If due to the sublime teachings of Islam many people have embraced this religion and Muslims are in majority in many Eastern countries, it is not their fault. Now that the Jews have established their own state of Israel with the help of certain Western powers, it is high time that they should learn how to live in peace. Their hostility against Muslims is absurd but probably this will remain their nature. They will not hesitate to harm them whenever an opportunity comes. Muslims have to be very vigilant. As long as they live a true believers' life in the real sense they are safe. That is why the Holy Qura'n says:

“Surely thou wilt find the most vehement of mankind in enmity to those who believe to be the Jews and the polytheists”.

(*Al-Qura'n, V:82*)

Christianity

Judaism had lost much of its original teachings at the time when Jesus was born. He was the last of the prophets of Israel who had been sent to revive the old religion of unitarianism among the people of Israel. That is why he is known as the Messiah. He laid stress on the doctrines that

had been preached by the prophets of Israel and Ishmael. Like all prophets he was wholly devoted to the service of God. He could not tolerate to see the exploitation of Jewish people by their priests and rabbis in the name of the religion. He asked them to have a direct contact with the Deity. Having no racial prejudice he boldly predicted the advent of the world-Prophet (Peace be on him) among the Ishmaelites and pointed out that he was to be born soon. Jewish priests had nothing but contempt for him when they saw him eulogizing an Arab Prophet. When the people were attracted towards him their prestige was at stake. Hence they conspired against him and tried to convince the Roman authorities that Jesus was planning to become the king of the Jews.

Due to his pious mode of life the authorities were helpless to take any action against him. The Roman soldiers were astonished to see that he was also performing miracles. They were pagans and could not understand the mysterious powers of this Messenger of God. They thought that he must be a person similar to their own incarnated pagan gods in their mythology. Hence they tried to convince the Jews that one of their gods had come down on earth. When the so-called followers of Jesus expressed such views, the Jews had no doubt that Jesus was an utterly misguided person who had nothing to do with the prophets of Israel. Since the hypocrites were also Jews they had not the courage to call him an incarnated god. In order to get over this difficulty they started calling him the incarnated Son of the Almighty God. Nevertheless in those days they were hesitant to openly give him even this name. He was generally addressed as the Son. Since it was a common practice to call a Jewish prophet "Son of Man", the word Son for Jesus could mean both the "Son of Man" and Son of God. For the true believers he was only the Son of Man but for the hypocrites, he was the Son of God.

From the revealed point of view, the creation of Jesus and Adam had great similarities. If Adam was created without father and mother, Jesus too had no father although he had his mother. When the hypocrites came to know that the Holy

Spirit was sent to Virgin Mary with a Message, without enquiring the reason for which he was sent, they at once came to the conclusion that both God and the Holy Spirit had something to do with the birth of Jesus. Thus he too was raised to the status of a god. In this way the incarnated Son, the Holy Spirit, and God came to be regarded as Three in One and One in Three. This is what is known as the doctrine of Trinity in Christianity. The hypocrites forgot that when Adam who had no father and mother, could not be regarded as the Son of God, how could Jesus be His Son when he had at least his mother. They had also failed to understand the reasons for which the Holy Spirit is sometimes sent on earth. His object is to convey the divine messages to pious persons. He was also sent to Mary in order to convey the good tidings of the Messiah's birth without any father. In the miraculous birth of Jesus he himself had no role to play.

It is however strange that those very persons who called him the Son of God, and the Redeemer, ultimately caused so much harassment for him. Due to the strange ideology preached in his name, the Jews wanted to take him to task. They thought that he was distorting their religion by introducing certain queer notions in it. Nevertheless, God was aware of the fact that Jesus had neither claimed to be His son nor had he any desire to become the King of the Jews. When they tried to humiliate and crucify him, God miraculously saved him and the mischief-mongers were flabbergasted. When at night a certain person was caught by the Roman soldiers under the impression that he was the Christ and was later on crucified, the Jews and the Christians had no doubt that the man who had died on the cross was Jesus himself. Since the Christians were a target of criticism in believing a crucified god, they could only save their face by removing the dead man's body from his grave and announcing the view that he had risen from his grave after coming to life in order to go to his Father in heaven. They forgot that he -- who dies goes to heaven without acquiring again this useless

bodily existence.

In order to religiously justify the story of the Son's death on the cross, it was claimed that Almighty God had to take this action in order to forgive the sinful human beings who had inherited their sin from Adam's act of disobedience. They forgot that when Adam and Eve were sent down from heaven on earth they were already punished and unlike the Devil's sin, their act of disobedience was forgiven due to their repentance. As such they were blessed by God to start a new career on earth with a guarantee of success for those of his progeny who remained obedient to Him. Besides, even if human beings are supposed to have inherited Adam's sin, Almighty God is not so helpless that He could not forgive it without sacrificing His own Son.

The doctrine of Trinity, Crucifixion, original sin and many other dogmas in Christianity are such as have emerged due to necessity and ignorance of facts about Jesus, and the influence of pagans among whom this religion was preached. Soon after the disappearance of Jesus when Christians found themselves in a tiny minority, they naively tried to persuade the Jews to believe their creed. They (the Jews) were a stern community; they not only flatly refused to accept such dogmas but went to the extent of expressing disgraceful remarks about the Messiah and his pious mother. After this the Christians had no other alternative except to take their religion to the Gentiles and preach in them. Since they were desperately trying to increase the number of their co-religionists, they appeased them by discarding many Jewish laws which were followed even by Jesus.

Their ignorance about their Master's life was so manifest that they did not even know the name of the religion that was preached by him. (This much is evident that he did not preach Christianity. He had come to revive the old unitarian religion of Jewish prophets and wanted the Jews to differentiate between true religion and the distorted form of religion which was preached by Jewish scribes and priests.) Nevertheless, some name had to be given to the religion of his suppor-

ters. The best way to overcome this difficulty was to call it Christianity or the religion of Christ. In their eagerness to preach certain whimsical dogmas, they forgot the basic fact of a revealed religion that no prophet had ever preached a religion in his own name. There had never been Noahism, Abrahamism, Mosesism etc. Even the name Judaism is not a correct name for the religion of the prophets of Israel. They were all following unitarianism or submission to the will of Almighty God. To evolve a religion on the basis of certain rumours and unconfirmed reports about Jesus was a difficult task for Christians but they were encouraged by the eagerness of the Gentiles to embrace this creed. It was interesting for them to be followers of a revealed religion without making any drastic changes in the pagan outlook. They were asked to take pride in the Christian doctrine of Love without realizing the fact that it is almost impossible to love the Three in One and One in Three. With this sort of Love no one can become a lover of humanity. Only a lover of One God who believes in all Messengers of God can be a real embodiment of Love.

Islam and Christianity

This critical study of Christianity has been made the light of the Last Testament of God (Al-Qura'n). It is therefore suggested that Christians should read the Holy Qura'n with an unbiased mind. Muslims have great regard for Jesus as he was the fore-runner the Last Messenger of God. It is wrongly believed that prophet of Israel were prophets of Judaism alone. They were all, including Jesus were the prophets of Unitarianism, (or one God) in the same way as the prophets from the children of Ishmael. True believers therefore rightly believe that they were all and many others about whom we have little knowledge were their prophets.

It is true that some of the fundamental dogmas of Christianity have been refuted by Islam but this is only because these have nothing to do with the basic revealed teachings in all ages. Neither can there be any change in the Being of

God, nor can the Principles of Religion change. That is why prophets have brought identical Messages from the Unseen. The Qur'anic criticism of Christianity is so appealing that only fanatics can disapprove of it. In their zeal to glorify the Messiah, the Gospel writers have often made exaggerated statements about him. Because of this, Christians are not clear about right and wrong beliefs. Hence the Holy Quran says:

“O followers of the Scripture do not exceed the limit in your religion, and do not say aught against God except the truth.”

(Al-Qura'n, VI:61)

He who has an insight into revealed literature will flatly refuse to believe that there can be a Son to God. Not only Christians but even some of the Jews in the past used to hold a similar view about the prophet Ezra. The Holy Qura'n refers to these views in the following verse and says:

“And the Jews say ‘Ezra is the Son of God’ and Christians say: ‘The Messiah is the Son of God’. These are mere words (without any significance) in imitation to the pagan views of the past. Allah has destroyed them. Look how they turn away.”

(Al-Qura'n, IX:30)

Jesus, the son of Mary, was a Messenger of Allah, and a servant to God. Even *Ruhul Qudus* (Holy Spirit) is respected only because he is the most obedient servant to God. Hence the refutation of the Christian doctrine of Trinity:

“And say not Three. Refrain (from uttering such a wrong view); it is better for you – Allah is the only One God. Far be it from His glory that He should have a Son.”

(Al-Qura'n, IV:171)

The Qura'n substitutes right beliefs while refuting wrong beliefs. Christians have been reminded of the “Chastisement of the painful day,” if despite these clear revelations, they persist in error. Life on earth is a serious affair. Wrong views lead to a wrong path. A right belief is conducive to a right path. No spiritual man can help those who would like to

persist in their ignorance. The Holy Prophet had been advised to leave such persons:

“Plunging into false discourses and sporting until they meet their day which they are threatened with.”

(Al-Qura'n, XLII:83)

The above criticism is mainly with reference to the views about the Divine Being and the status of the Messiah. As far as the behaviour of God-fearing Christians is concerned, they have been praised. It is pointed out that in this respect they are superior to Jews and polytheists. We are told that the decency in them is due to the influence of these monks and priests who are sincere in religious matters. The Qura'n records this aspect of their character in the following words:

“Thou wilt surely find that the nearest in friendship to the true believers are those who claim to be Christians; this is because there are priests and monks among them and because they have no pride in them.”

(Al-Qura'n, V:82)

(Such people among Christians may come to the right path if they are properly guided.)

What is after all difficulty with the people of the Scripture in embracing Islam? That is a puzzling question. It is quite understandable that due to lack of authentic revelations both Christians and Jews might have sincerely been believing in what they traditionally are told, but it is doubtful that even their learned men who know the trend of thought in the history of Scriptures are unable to find out who the Prophet was or what the Message is which he had brought. The Qura'n says that they know him thoroughly well but it is their prejudices which prohibit them from accepting the clear doctrines of Islam:

“And those whom We have given the Scripture, they recognize him (i.e. the Messenger of God) as they recognize their sons; but those who have lost their selves, they will not believe.”

(Al-Qura'n, VI:20)

Along with this is asserted that:

"Those who have been given the Scripture know that it (i.e. the Holy Qura'n) is revealed by the Lord, thou then shouldst not be of the disputers."

(Al-Qura'n, VI:14)

There is no compulsion in the religion of Allah. If the followers of the Scripture are not interested in the well-being of their real and everlasting life, that is their will and pleasure. The door of success is open to all. The Message of Mercy and Love has brought good tidings to all those who would like to succeed in both the worlds in the real sense. It guarantees their salvation for it says:

"And if the followers of the Scripture had believed and been mindful, We would certainly have purged them of their evil deeds and made them enter the gardens of bliss."

(Al-Qura'n, V:65)

Indeed most of them appear to be materially prosperous but they would be wrong if because of this they regard their views to be correct. The Divine law takes its own course. Success in these few days of earthly life has little significance. Those alone are rightly guided persons who are successful in the life Hereafter.

"Had the decision not already been taken to grant respite for the heedless ones, the judgement would have been pronounced long before."

(Al-Qura'n, XLII:14)

This does not mean that by merely calling oneself a Muslim one deserves all those blessings that appertain extramundane existence. They have to prove their sincerity in love for the Divine Being by following His instructions. Non-revealed religions are far from the truth but Jews and Christians are in a better position. With a little effort they can find out the right path. If a person believes in Divine revelations and especially those that have been brought by the Praised One, then there would be no fear nor grief for him. This is because God has shown, through him, the purpose of human

life, and the way to achieve all that is good in both the worlds.

Christianity and Philosophy

In the Christian world there are not many thinkers who try to justify the dogmas of Christianity. Even theistic philosophers in the West rarely attempt to show that in their investigations of ultimate reality they come to know any principle which is not Unitarian but Trinitarian. The very terminology of Father and Son is avoided. Many of those who believe in Christianity frankly confess that they believe in it even though it is absurd. Philosophically speaking non-revealed religions like Hinduism and Buddhism are in a better position, for their philosophy is related to their religion.

Had Christianity been a truly paganistic creed and not a mere collection of borrowed pagan dogmas and certain revealed views, Jesus too, like Krishna in Hinduism, would have boldly claimed to be an incarnated God. According to the Gospels, even the phrase "Only Begotten Son," is said to have been used for him by others. Besides, pagan gods may incarnate any time they like. If Jesus had been an incarnated god, he too like Krishna would have said that "He had lived many lives like his followers but the difference between him and his followers lies in the fact that he remembered all those lives while they had no knowledge of it." We must not forget that paganism is closely related to the theory of transmigration of soul. Christians on the other hand adhere to the revealed doctrine of life after death. Those doctrines that are in conformity with the Message of the Prophet can be proved to the be by true believers rationally and by Sufi experiences but there is no way to ascertain the validity of this or other whimsical paganistic dogmas.

Rational philosophy in the West is also imaginary to a great extent. That is why materialists and empiricists regard it as baseless and even nonsensical. Since both these latter

schools of thought deal with the world of appearance, they do not know how to explain the emergence of this appearance or phenomena. The importance of the world of Unseen has hardly been realized by them. Even if anyone believed in it he does not know how to probe into it. Neither the metaphysics with which Western thinkers deal, has propositions which can be verified nor its critics have an insight into the nature of Reality. However, in the true believers' philosophy the propositions are verifiable though it requires hard labour. That is why it is claimed that the truth can be known by the eyes of certainty. Those who succeed in acquiring this experience know that the propositions of the religion of God, despite their evident non-verifiability are verifiable albeit in a way which is supra-sensible.

Islam

Islam originated and was successfully preached in a complex society at a place where the main doctrines of almost all great religions were known. It was the force of its inherent sublime teachings and philosophy which led to its ultimate victory over other creeds. Its doctrines are clear and in conformity with human nature and with all truly Divine revelations in the past. It has a message which can be rejected at a man's own peril. It does not say that every path is right or that a belief in certain mythological teachings is enough. Such a view leaves little scope for human enlightenment and progress. Unlike all religions Islam boldly asserts that its path alone is the right path.

There are certain obvious facts which must be known by all those who seek the knowledge of truth. Not that Islam tells us anything which has never been heard before but it is rather the confirmation and continuation of the same fundamental teachings which had been the guiding light for human beings in revealing the mysteries of the universe and the creation of man on earth. Its doctrines are even now vaguely known by the followers of the Scriptures but which

have been distorted due to tampering of their so-called religious men with the Divine revelations. The Message of the Last Prophet of God (peace be upon him) has come with a guarantee that no human being will be able to make any alterations in it. The teaching which was given fourteen hundred years ago is still in its original form and has been pragmatically tested by all those who were successful in the real sense.

It is in reality a doctrine of Love, Love towards One Object and One Object alone. It is this kind of love which makes man an embodiment of love for all creatures of God. The path that has been shown by the Messenger of God is a boon to humanity. No doubt there are in the Holy Qura'n warnings to those who are evil-doers but the idea is to make it clear that ultimately man deserves what he earns in this life. That is why the Holy Prophet and his followers have been asked to let others know the principles by following which human beings can flourish in both the worlds. Man's status has been raised to the highest level. He has been described as the vicegerent of God on earth. The true believers have been asked to organize their individual and social life in a way which is befitting those who represent the Divine Being on earth. However, it has been made clear that it is freedom, not compulsion, which makes a man meritorious. One must seek knowledge and live according to one's own conviction, but no one should be allowed to hinder the work of progress.

The doctrine of the Unity of God states: "There is no god except God." The idea is that neither in the world of appearance nor in the unseen there are such beings who have any power. Those who appear to be powerful are powerful only in appearance, the real power lies in Almighty God. He is a self-conscious, omniscient Being who despite His transcendental nature encompasses the whole universe. If anyone likes to be successful, he must seek His assistance. Since this worldly life has a very short span, man's effort should be to achieve success in the life after death which is

everlasting. The Divine Being, as the Creator, is beyond all those attributes that we find in created beings. He neither incarnates himself nor has any son or beings who work with Him, as His partners.

He is so loving that after creating human beings He does not like them to grope in darkness. That is why He had constantly been sending His Messengers to guide mankind. He is so considerate that He comes to help those who look towards Him in their distress. All creatures including the entities in the Unseen which are known as His angels are servant to Him. No one in both the worlds has any power to harm or to do good to others. He alone is active in the real sense. His knowledge is so extraordinary that nothing escapes His notice. All things and beings obey Him willingly or unwillingly. His commandments which are appealing to man's nature have voluntarily been accepted by the true believers. They deem these binding on them and turn their face towards Him without having any fear or hope from that which is not Real.

God is beyond all such relations as are existent between His creatures. He is so much conscious of His unique status that He does not even nominally call anyone as His Son, because the relation of Father and Son refers to the domain of creation. Whosoever has come to this world is His creature and servant. All polytheistic gods are either products of human fantasy or are devilish apparitions. He who bows down before any being other than God, commits a horrible sin. Such an act is degrading to man himself for if he is a truthful servant he can acquire the status of His vicegerency on earth. No one experiences any good or evil except in accordance with the Divine will. The nature of mundane life is such that it conceals the truth; it makes things appear real which are not in fact real. He who does not know the nature of mortal world perpetually lives in deception. This Philosophy uproots the very source of evil thoughts and actions. The real criterion of man's superiority over his fellow beings is knowledge and piety. The knowledge requires grace

and He alone determines piety.

The Conception of God in Islam

It is wrong to believe that God favours certain people or gives preference to one community over the others. He looks after all creatures and beings that have been created by him. His love for human beings is far greater than the love of those persons whose love and kindness is proverbial. His beneficence and mercy knows no bounds. He is so kind that even those who deny Him or hold wrong views about Him, or neglect Him are helped by Him to prosper in this life if that is their desire. However, He has issued particular instructions for those who would like to know their mission in life and flourish in both the worlds. If despite this, anyone is to suffer in the hereafter, it is due to what he earns by his action and beliefs in this world. This has divinely been decreed that those who are good can never be equal to those who are wicked.

Everyone achieves what he deserves. This is because despite all God's love for His creatures, He is also just and rewarding. He has promised to help those who are pious and mindful of their duty towards Allah and His creatures. If there are persons with these qualities, they will no doubt surpass others in their excellence in His eyes. Nevertheless, if due to the obstacles that are in the way of those who follow His will, suffer in their worldly lives, this does not mean that they are really losers, for the life that is pleasing for all time, is guaranteed to them by the Divine Being.

"There is nothing which is hidden from Him either in this world or in the heaven."

(Al-Qura'n, III:5)

"He is so powerful that when He decides to take action in any matter that is done immediately. The very moment the command comes, it is executed."

(Al-Qura'n, II:117)

"It is pointed out that the majority of human beings are so fascinated with the material world that they hardly think of their real Master. We are told that beyond the world of appearance there is the Lord's "treasure house," and He brings forth things from there according to His will."

(Al-Qura'n, XV:21)

"Nothing comes into existence or no changes are brought about abruptly. About this world of appearance it is stated that it took six Divine Days to bring it from non-existence into existence."

(Al-Qura'n, XXV:59)

"Even the guidance to the right path ultimately depends on the Grace of Allah, for He Himself is the Light. He illuminates from His Light to whomsoever He pleases. And to whom no insight and direction is given, there is no Light for him."

(Al-Qura'n, XXIV:40)

"He is the only authority to forgive a man's sin and may leave him in torture if He likes."

(Al-Qura'n, XLVIII:14)

"Human beings have been informed that all things and beings are bound to return to the Source from where they have come."

(Al-Qura'n, II:210)

"He alone knows at what time His creatures will have to give an account of their deeds in this life."

(Al-Qura'n, XLI:47)

It is pointed out that we should not be misled by seeing the behaviour of those who evidently deny Him or do not pay any heed to His Commandments. Like all other things in the world, they too indirectly submit to Him willingly or unwillingly. Their free-will works only in a limited sphere and that too is encompassed by Him. All beings including the Devil and his progeny submit to Him willingly or unwillingly. The devilish entities have been given permission to mislead mankind. These are not the creatures of the unseen world

but they lurk behind the phenomenal world. With their creation, it is expected that man will overcome their resistance. In the world of unseen there are no gods and goddesses; there are only angels and other spiritual beings who are most obedient servants to God. Even the devils submit to Him indirectly. That is why it is stated: "To Allah bows down all that is in the earth or in the heavens, whether those who are the creatures of this world or angels." None has the audacity to assert his ego before Him.

A beautiful analogy in which the Divine Being has been compared to the Light, states that He illuminates in a manner similar to the light which glitters like a star, and the light that emanates from it, embraces the whole universe of the seen and unseen world. Despite this, it has none of the attributes that we find in the light with which we are acquainted. This comparison has been made only to show the nature of its illumination which is beyond description. The actual words of the analogy in the Holy Qura'n are as follows:

"Allah is the Light of the heaven and the earth. The similitude of His Light is as it were a niche wherein is a lamp, the lamp within a glass, the glass as it were a pearly star. From a tree neither of the East nor of the West, the oil whereof were well nigh luminous though fire touched it not."

(Al-Qura'n, XXIV:35)

It should be noted that all those analogies in which there is a description of the Divine Being are very helpful to those who have made some spiritual progress and have developed a taste to grasp something of the spiritual world. In order that there should not be any misunderstanding, it is also clearly stated that there is nothing in the whole universe which is like Him. Our faculties of perception and understanding work only in a limited sphere. With the help of these, it is wrong to explore the mysteries of the universe. The Being who has granted such faculties of knowledge is the Creative Reality. Only a creative insight of a highly spiritual man can penetrate into the realm of Reality. Otherwise,

with all our abilities we can never hope to transcend the world of creation to enter into the domain of the unseen. That is why it is said that:

"The vision perceiveth Him not but He comprehendeth vision."

(Al-Qura'n, VI:103)

The difference between the things created and the Creator is obvious. One is by nature mortal and the other is eternal. This has been referred to in the following verse:

"All things are perishable except His Countenance."

(Al-Qura'n, XXVIII:88)

That is the reason why spiritual men try to seek a place in the Divine Countenance by annihilating their carnal self. Since the revelation deals with the world which is beyond our material world of contradictions, the ideas that are expressed may sometimes appear to be contradictory when we try to understand them in the same way as we do with the things that are in this world. For example, it is puzzling to an outsider how God can remain the same for all times as it is stated that He is ever fresh in His glory.

A similar difficulty arises when the question of God's proximity with the world is discussed. Theism is generally defined as a doctrine according to which God is such a Being who transcends all that is in the world. Pantheism believes in a Reality which manifests in all that is in the world. Now both these theological schools of philosophy propose intelligent ways of understanding a reality which cannot be known by sense perception. Once a thing is not known in the usual way and it is also believed to be existent, then it is natural to expect that it might either be in the domain that is known by sense perception or it might be far from it. Both these views are such which cannot be proved to be true by verification through sense perception.

Now, if it is claimed that God is immanently transcendent, and transcendently immanent, it might be objected that such a view is even more ambiguous than the other two. But if all these views are, to use the words of logical positivists,

nonsensical, then it does not matter which of these appear to them "more nonsensical." Our effort should be to make use of insight and determine which view is more true to the Reality which is beyond the world of sense experiences and human intelligence. Hence the value of truly spiritual knowledge. Philosophers with no spiritual insight generally do not understand the nature of this knowledge. They do not know that their main object of spiritual men is to encourage others to discover the illusions of the world of appearance and understand the significance of their description about the creative Reality in the Unseen. It is wrong on the part of philosophers to seek an explanation of this in the same way as they themselves do habitually. They even go to the extent of demanding a proof of their statements by verification through sense perception. They do not realize the fact that this kind of "rushing in," is not only futile but also harmful. This is a place where even "angels fear to tread."

Muslim thinkers do not claim to bring out what is hidden in the Unseen so that they might see and touch it and then become true believers. From the very beginning they invite others to concentrate on it. They offer us only certain hints as to what is hidden therein. It is only after listening and acting according to the path shown by them that one realizes the truth of their statements. Nevertheless, if rational statements are deemed essential then there can be no alternative except to say that God is immanently transcendent and transcendentally immanent. The meaning of this can only be clear to those who follow the path which has been shown by the Quran and Sunnah for the realization of that which is not known. This has been testified by innumerable spiritual men in Islam.

What is required is a sincere approach to the problem. There will not be any difficulty for men of understanding in knowing the significance of the teaching which says:

"And to whichever direction you turn there is the Countenance of God."

(Al-Qura'n, II:115)

Or that:

"Allah cometh in between the man and his own heart"

Or that

"He is with you wherever you are."

(Al-Qura'n, IV:57)

Or that:

"We have created man and We know what his soul whispereth to him, and We are nearer to him than his life-vein."

(Al-Qura'n, L:16)

To those who are in distress or ashamed to have lived a sinful life in ignorance, the Message of Love informs them that they should not give up their hope. If they have sincerely turned to Him and seek His assistance, He will not leave them in despair:

"And when My servants question thee (O Messenger of God) concerning Me then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he crieth unto Me. So let them hear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright."

(Al-Qura'n, II:186)

As for those who are true to God and are mindful of their duties, it is indicated that Allah is with them:

"Verily Allah is with the pious."

(Al-Qura'n, II:194)

With this description of God it is clear that He is True, Real, Just, Living, Loving, Wise, Holy, Beneficent, Merciful, Glorious, Creative etc. There are such beautiful ninety-nine names of God that have been mentioned in the Holy Qura'n. It should not be supposed that these names or whatever has been written in His praise encompasses His description. We are reminded that even:

"If it could be possible to use all the trees in the world to make pens and all the water in the oceans to be used as ink, to describe and glorify Him, they will not be enough to do full justice to Him. Nay, even if there were seventy times more such oceans and trees, the description of the Lord will not be complete."

(Al-Qura'n, XXXI:27)

Zoroastrianism

For a long time it was believed that Zoroaster was a mythological personage about whom nothing could be said with certainty; but modern researches have proved that he was a real historical prophet and "his religion is no concoction but founded by Zoroaster himself." Many Greek thinkers have written distinctly to show that Zoroaster was not only a sage and philosopher but also a prophet and the founder of the new religion called after him "Zoroastrianism,"¹ or the religion of the Magis. We are told that Pythagoras and Hermippus had studied the noble tenets contained therein. Muslim writers like Al-Biruni, Mas'udi and Shahrastani have also discussed his views in their works.

The Avesta, especially the Gathas point out that *Zarathushtra* preached and propagated his religion in Bactria and the surrounding provinces notwithstanding many reverses and fierce opposition from his enemies.

Nobody knows exactly about the age in which he lived. Some say that he was born between 4 to 6 thousand B.C.; others, that he lived between 13 to 14 hundred B.C. There is also a view that he existed between 5 to 6 hundred B.C. This much is clear that he was born at a time when the Iranian society was at the height of its degeneration. Magic, sorcery, and worship of many gods were in full practice.

According to Avesta, his name was *Zarathushtra* or *Zartusht*. It was the religion of Mazdiyasni that was prevalent in Iran before his birth. Instead of preaching a new religion he reformed it, retaining some of its tenets and ceremonies. It is claimed that at the age of 30 he became dissatisfied with the worldly knowledge that was imparted to him. He thought that it was

1. There are not many books that are available on this subject. My main source of information is the book entitled "Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism" by R. H. Mistri, Indian Publication Co. Dhobitalao, Bombay. Sany Vartaman Press. 1906. There is yet another book entitled "Homage unto Ahura Mazda" by M. N. Dhalla published by Dastur Dhalla Memorial Institute, 1970, Karachi. It provides information about the Parsis and Zoroastrianism.

not sufficient to enable him to know God and His works. He yearned to acquire knowledge about elements and their uses and tried to probe into the mystery of day and night, sleep and consciousness, with a view to remove evil and lies from the world. Finding no satisfactory replies to these questions, he decided to go into retirement and remained in a secluded place at a high mountain for more than ten years, to spend his time in prayers and contemplation. After the age of 40, he publicly announced his mission.

In revealed religions we are told that some great prophets had acquired the experience of Ascension. It is reported that he too had a similar experience and travelled in person through aerial passage for going to Heaven. There, with the help of the *Sarosh* (angel) he received answers from God to many of his queries. His revelations have been dictated by him in 21 volumes of the Scriptures for the information of his disciples. The replies contained therein are regarding Heaven, Earth, philosophy, medicine, mid-wifery etc.

It is generally believed that his followers are the worshippers of two gods. The god of good and the god of evil, but the Zoroastrians themselves do not agree with this view. They point out that according to the teachings of Zaratrushttra, One God alone is the supreme Being. He is the Creator of the universe. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent. He rules over the visible and invisible worlds and has no form. He existed long before anything else and will exist for ever. He is the Lord of the universe Who has no rival. He is Beneficent, Glorious, and Holy. He loves, defends and rewards only the good and punishes the wicked.

In the state of Ascension, *Ahura Mazda* informed Zaratrushttra that only good deeds proceed from him and that He does not wish to see sorrow, trouble, affliction and diseases of any kind in the world. These all are the works of the unholy, shameless *Ahriman*. He was told that God

had resolved to keep bad people, the followers of Ahriman in hell. The Ascension also took him to the abode of Ahriman in Hell where the unholy did his best to dissuade him from the path of righteousness. Zarathushtra could not be influenced by him and told him "O unholy Ahriman, hell is properly and justly assigned to thee. He who shall follow thee, shall also be punished as thou hast been, and his place will also be in hell. By the grace of Ahura Mazda, I shall resist all thy deeds." From these teachings, it is evident that Ahriman or Angremainyo cannot be regarded as god. "He can only resist piety and tempt, but has no power to harm others. He is weak and wily, with no knowledge of the future. He is not everlasting and will become impotent in distant future."

Critics point out that in this teaching Ahriman is not the antagonist of the Creator, but he is in reality antagonist of the *Spantomainyo*, the primeval good spirit. Ahura Mazda is the creator of both these spirits and has no rival. He has created both these sources of good and evil for the proper management of the world and works through them. The former represents the creative and the latter, the destructive powers of the universe. He has ordained the world in such a way that it is a playground of these two powers opposed to each other. Man has to select either the path of virtue or of vice. Ahura Mazda likes to see that only *Spantomainyo* and his followers should prosper. An assurance has been given that finally they will prevail over *Angromainyo* and his followers will be destroyed. According to these teachings, there are two aspects of existence. The worldly existence which is visible and tangible is produced and has arisen from spiritual existence which is invisible and intangible. In like manner the lapsing from visibility and tangibility into invisibility and intangibility which are themselves a spiritual state is unquestionable".

God has created human beings with freedom of will. Man is capable of securing for himself the salvation of his soul, but for this purpose, he has to depend on his own

actions and not on the promise or pardon of any priest or prophet. He is the architect of his own destiny and is at liberty to follow either the path of virtue or vice. Even wicked persons can work for their salvation provided they repent and thereafter live a pious life. It is stated that Ahri-man and his wicked helping spirits will be released from hell on the day of *Rastakhaiz* or Resurrection. They will repent and acknowledge the supremacy of Ahura Mazda and will no more torment His creatures. "Both the good and the wicked persons will be thrown into molten metal so that they could understand their respective faiths. The good will remain unharmed and the sinners will suffer pain".

By reading Jewish books that were written prior to their coming under the influence of Persians, it is sometime concluded that the idea of Resurrection in Judaism has come from Zoroastrianism but there is hardly justification for holding such a view. One of the main reasons why the Jews had adopted an impious mode of life was the very fact that due to the influence of pagan life they had neglected the idea of achieving success in their life after death. It seems that like revealed religions *Zoroastrianism* also had preached the doctrine of Resurrection. It is possible that the Jews after coming to know its importance in the life of the Magis, they again laid stress on this aspect of their own ideology. Had it been any new doctrine they would have flatly refused to accept it in the same way as they had done with the dogmas preached by Christians in the name of Jesus.

Zoroastrianism also refers to six Archangels and six Devils, along with a reference to the future prophets and the nature of life after Resurrection. It is also pointed out that "the last prophet"¹ will make the creatures again pure and later on

1. We are told that in 'Avesta,' Zoroaster informed his disciples that he had not completed his mission. One more 'prophet' would come after him who would perfectly reveal his religion. It is evident that it is this prophet who has been called as the last Prophet in the book on 'Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism,' is no other than the praised one Muhammad. His name has been mentioned as a Mercy in it as a "Mercy for the Universe." This is exactly the title of the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him) in Al-Qura'n.

the Resurrection will take place and perfect happiness will reign everywhere for ever. Due to the reasons quoted above Zoroastrianism has a great resemblance with revealed religion. Whatever might have been the original sense of the teachings of Zoroaster, his followers now believe that Ahura Mazda is all good and cannot be the author of evil. They insist that there must therefore be another source through which evil arises. They also refute those who believe that they worship fire as their god. They claim that they pay homage to fire only because it is the purest of the creations of God. They hold the view that God is present in all luminous creations, and that is why they face such objects while praying to God.

We are told that Zarathushtra had been advised by Ahura Mazda to ask king "Gustasp," the King of Persia to take care of and preserve all fires, to build fire-temples in every place and appoint learned and pious priests to preserve fire there with great respect and see that nobody puts it out by pouring cold water over it or throws dust or dirt on it.

These are in short some of the main points in the religion of Zoroaster. Quite a few of the beliefs in this religion are to be appreciated. Unlike polytheists Iranians, due to the sober influence of Zoroaster, had liberated themselves from the evil influence of a wrong ideology long ago. However, what is important with reference to Zoroastrianism, is to determine whether it is a unitarian religion or not. Unitarianism implies that there is no conflict in the very nature of the ultimate Reality. Had this not been the case, no order in the world could be maintained. This leads us to believe that good and evil all come from same source. In this sense, irrespective of individual experiences about the acts that are morally good or evil, all that happens in the world is good with reference to God Almighty. That is how it appears, the Divine authority has been established. In Rumi's words, the glory of a king lies in his acting according to his own will whether it is a matter of reward or punishment. Even Zoroastrians believe that Ahura Mazda punishes, and that punishment is painful.

If Ahriman is impotent then we shall have to admit that

God alone is the source of all activity. There is no sense calling Ahriman the source of suffering. The difficulty of Zoroastrians lies in the fact that they regard pain and suffering as evil but this may not be the case. True believers regard all trials and tribulation as a boon for their spiritual progress. Indeed the persons who do not believe in God or do not live according to His injunctions, may prosper in their worldly lives, but this prosperity is illusory and a prelude to all sorts of calamities.

Zoroastrianism rightly lays stress on the freedom of will which means that man can follow the path of good or evil as he pleases. He suffers because of his evil deeds, but his sufference comes from God. According to Islam, even Satan or the Devil who is a creation like many other creations of God, had freedom of will but he had taken advantage of this freedom and disobeyed God without seeking any repentance. That is why he had been cursed. It is possible that Zoroaster's views were also similar to those of the true believers, but due to wrong interpretations of his teachings and certain other reasons, his religion appears to be different from established form of revealed religion. If he was a true prophet of God, there is no reason to believe that he had not experienced Ascension. But it is unlikely that he had met Ahriman or Satan in hell. This is because he is not there but has been allowed by God to freely mislead human beings in this world. His punishment is still awaited.

The reference to prophets of God, Resurrection, and the mysteries of the invisible world was probably due to the fact that Zoroaster was aware of the Divine scheme of Creation. Even the idea that Ahriman is not an antagonist of the Creator, but that of spantomainyo, is not against the spirit of the revealed religion, for it reminds us about the spirit of the revealed religion, for it reminds us about the doctrine in Islam which refers to the Light of the Praised One (*Nure-Muhammadi*). *This reality is the very object and cause of creation.* However, the Devil is very inferior to him or even to those in whom this Light is manifest. That is why

he cannot be regarded as a rival to him. This Light of the Praised One has nothing to do with the fire of which the Devil is the embodiment.

In this connection it should be borne in mind, that neither the Praised One nor the Ahriman nor any other being has any creative or destructive powers. These are the attributes of God only. It is also unbelievable that at *Rustakhaiz* or Resurrection wicked spirits will be released from hell, for that is the time when they shall be taken to task and will have no more freedom to do any mischief. Rather they will be in the grip of Divine wrath. Repentance on this occasion is meaningless. Wicked spirits, whether they be of the Devils or human beings, are not sent to hell after their death in the proper sense, but they fearfully wait to face the calamity of the Doom's Day. At the time all spirits will have to give an account of what they had been doing in their worldly lives and will be punished or rewarded accordingly. God will not be unjust to any creatures.

It is quite possible that Zoroaster had preached the creed of pure unitarianism, but misunderstandings cropped up as Zoroastrians themselves gave too much importance to Ahriman so that he appears to be the author of all sufferings and calamities. Similar is their outlook towards the fire which is regarded as God's purest creation. This is not the case, as the Devil himself is the embodiment of fire. In a way, for men of insight, all created things in the world are God's portents, but these have no similarity with the Reality. Purity is not a thing to be found in this world. It is to be acquired at the cost of the carnal self. It is in this sense alone that pious souls can be regarded as God's purest creation. They neither follow the devil nor do they listen to the verdict of their carnal selves. That is how God's purest creation comes into being. By following their path one can acquire divine attributes.

If "this worldly existence which is visible and tangible is produced from a spiritual existence which is invisible and intangible," then it is only natural to look for the purest

creation in the domain of the unseen. That is why the spiritual realities are superior to any worldly reality. The objects in the material world, even if they are luminous are illusory and perishable. The stars are luminous but Abraham turned his faced away from them and tried to concentrate on the Object which is the sublime spiritual Reality.

This Object is so real and extraordinary that nothing can be compared to it. That is why the true believers turn their face towards God in the unseen. It is the characteristic of individuals in a polytheistic society that they bow down before all sorts of luminous objects. Hindus for example, regard *suraj* (the Sun) and Agni (fire) as sacred. They do not know that despite the analogy of Light for the Almighty, there is a qualitative difference between the mundane and the Divine Light.

Man can become God's purest creation for the reason that it is he in whom He has infused His spirit. Indeed, the realization of this entity is a very difficult task. One has to make a hundred thousand efforts to liberate oneself from all worldly attractions. It is not external fire but the Divine spark, which is within ones own self that has to be ignited in order to seek proximity with Allah or *Yazdan*. Those who pay homage to fire might consciously or unconsciously be led to the worship of Ahriman which is so dangerous and destructive.

We are constrained to point out that a prophet cannot ask the followers to construct fire-temples. It is possible that such teachings in Zoroastrianism have later on been added, or else we shall have to conclude that Zoroaster's understanding of the unique nature of the Divine Being was defective. However, there is also a likelihood that Zoroaster, could not reveal the whole truth and thought that the last prophet of God, the Praised One "will make the creatures again pure."

B. Non-Revealed Religions

Polytheism and Atheism

The declaration of Muslim faith that "There is no god but God," despite its subtle implications particularly refers to the metaphysical concepts of polytheists who claim that there are many gods and goddesses. If we ask them the reasons for which they believe in these supernatural entities and bow down before them, a general reply will be that they have been informed about them either by their forefathers or by their religious authorities that there are actually such beings in the universe though they may not perceive them by their own naked eyes. If it is asked, what is that particular attribute in them which makes them gods and goddesses, they would reply that they hold certain powers by which they may favour those with whom they are pleased or may harm those who are not submissive to them.

The individuals in a society where for centuries such ideologies are prevalent really take them to be actually existent. This indoctrination continues for centuries. If, by chance, they succeed in achieving their objectives after praying to them or if they experience any calamity or misfortune after neglecting them, they begin to feel that it is because of their attitude towards their gods that they are prosperous or miserable. The pendulum of a man's life swings between profit and loss or good and evil. Since he likes to avoid all that is unpleasant and hankers after the good, his effort is to make use of all the means at his disposal to see that he succeeds in life. It is no wonder that in a polytheistic society an individual submits to such powerful, imaginary or real beings and seeks their favours. As they are supposed to be holding certain supernatural powers, the followers of polytheistic creeds, represent them in images and idols. In this way they are very well reminded of their particular attributes which are so helpful to them in their concentration and contemplation on them. Worshipping so

many gods with a mere idea about them in the mind, is so confusing. Leaving aside the professional priests in these religions who may be having a notion of them, it is very difficult for a common man in a polytheistic society to be fully aware of all their particular attributes. It is quite possible that a person may have a distorted view of the whole hierarchy of such supernatural beings. When a god is represented in the form of an idol, the domain of his influence becomes clear to a believer. That is the reason why idol-worshipping is a part of almost all such creeds.

It is not necessary for a polytheist to believe that there is no Supreme Deity. As a matter of fact most of the Polytheists have some idea about God but they also believe that there are other deities besides Him, who can help them in their hour of need. It appears as if their well-being is directly concerned with these deities. Probably they think it easier to please some particular gods for particular purposes than to trouble the Chief God for all that they require. As a result of this attitude the Real Deity is almost neglected. However, from their point of view, it need not be considered as something objectionable. Rather, philosophically speaking, they believe that all-pervading ultimate reality should be of this nature. He must transcend all those attributes which are generally believed to be in minor gods and goddesses. If no prayer or sincere supplication can affect Him, it is most befitting for His status and dignity. Those who hold these or similar views have been termed in the Holy Qura'n as *Mushrikin* (i.e. believers in God and other deities, who participate in His Powers).

Now the point is whether such beings exist or not? In case they do, then what kind of power or authority they have?

This problem leads to the discussion on appearance and reality. We are all acquainted with the world of appearance, and generally speaking, we consider it to be real. But when we realize that all that is in this world has come to perish and even our well-being in this short span of life depends on

so many other factors and since every now and then events take place over which we have no control, a sense of helplessness and insecurity develops in man. He may try to strengthen his position by acquiring all that leads him to be successful in this life but this greed for worldly things is rarely satisfied. Whatever we acquire by fair or foul means with efforts that are often heart-breaking, we realize that it is not permanently ours; any calamity may deprive us of it. Besides, we also know that it is in no way helpful to us in prolonging our life in this world.

Those who are atheists do not look beyond the worldly good and consider that there is nothing more that we can attain in this life. They console themselves in living a life of which the motto is "Eat, drink and be merry." Since they do not believe that there is any God or gods, they claim that if one cannot get any sense impression of a thing then that thing is not existent in the real sense. They do not bother if anyone calls this attitude self-deceptive. They are at home only in the domain of appearance. The position of man according to this view, is no better than other things or beings which they believe to have emerged as a result of blind interaction of physical or material forces in the world. Despite all their efforts to disprove the existence of the Unseen, there is something in man which tells him that this might not be the case. All that appears to be so charming in this world, could be a mere vain show. There might be some powers that are working from behind the phenomenal world and they could not be regarded as blind since they have granted sight and insight to us. This means that they would like us to live a life which is pleasing to them. It is natural, therefore, to believe that all has come into existence from a source which is not known to us. We know that we are mortals and what is for us in future that is also not known. This also leads us to think seriously if there could be a life after death. Our intelligence, however, fails to enlighten us on this or many such problems. Not to speak of origin and end of the universe, we do not

know what we were before our birth and what will become of us when we die.

These considerations take a man beyond the phenomenal world and if he does not like to die in ignorance, he will try to know if there is any Being or Beings that are hidden from us. This means that there are loopholes in positivistic and materialistic philosophies and because of these one may not remain all the time a materialist or a worshipper of phenomena. It is not what is, but what has happened, and what will happen, that takes us back to the world of Unseen of which no sense experience is possible. It is unbelievable that all that is, merely is, and has not come from any Source, or that we have just emerged by chance. We would like to take precautionary measures so that if there is in fact any life after death and we are expected to follow a certain path. Thus we hope that we shall be losers. This reference to our future career, would like us to examine the ideology according to which there is power or powers behind the world of appearance. Unless it is decisively proved that there is nothing like a hidden world or the Unseen, one cannot remain confined to the world of sense perception and cannot stop exploring the Unseen. Any doubt in the reality of appearance may lead one to the path of mysticism. This means materialism is self-destructive. The same reasons which make us self-centered and world-conscious, make us mindful of some other world which might not be transitory like this. If this life were a mere passing phase then he who prospers in the hereafter will be considered as really successful.

In this sense theism and polytheism are creeds which are more appealing to a man who would like to live a life which could help him to prosper in both the worlds. Despite the fact that the world of unseen is mysteriously hidden, we do realize that whatever happens to us mostly depends on what is waiting for us in the unseen. The natural tendency due to a man's existence in his peculiar situation might lead him to believe that there are many gods and goddesses in the universe and man is a helpless tool in their hands. In this

predicament there is no alternative for him except to please as many gods as he could.

Hinduism

The faculty of imagination led the polytheists of India and many other countries to believe in innumerable types of forces which emerge from their respective gods or goddesses. Since there is no reliable source of information about them, polytheists have no unanimity or agreement on their nature. That is why Greek gods and goddesses are quite different from those of Indians and those of Indians are quite different from those of the Egyptians and others.

Historically speaking, it will be noticed that paganistic creeds have done a great harm to the revealed teachings in turning the attention of true believers from the Real Being to the unreal entities. This is despite the fact that in influencing Divine teachings, most of the polytheistic creeds have themselves perished. However, the traces of their wrong ideologies are even now persistent in certain revealed teachings. These have also done so much harm to the community of true believers for creating a fascination for worldly life.

In our age the only well-known philosophy of paganism is that of Hinduism. According to its ideology, Brahman is the Divine Ground of all things and the world is his manifestation. He is supposed to be an impersonal god, but it is claimed that he sometimes becomes Ishwara, a personal god with regard to universe. (God knows how an impersonal being becomes personal)

It is wrong to suppose that even this reality can be identified with the Almighty God in the revealed religions, for God in it remains the same eternally. Even when our material world was not there, He was the Lord of the Unseen world. The revelation makes it abundantly clear that the universe is a plurality and a created object and God is Transcendental One. Neither things have *Atman* (Spirit) God is *Permatman* (Super-spirit). There is nothing similar

to the Divine Being. The revealed religion says, that only in man there is that element of Grace which is known as *Ruh* but it works freely only when the carnal self in man is annihilated in God.

Hindu religion tells us that the Brahman or the Divine Ground has his many incarnations. Of these the following three are very important.

1. Brahma
2. Vishnu
3. Shiva

With reference to the Divine Ground it is pointed out that he has no attributes. He is a god to whom no prayer or supplication reach. His main characteristic is that he incarnates in the forms of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. It is not known where these entities remain after their emergence. They come to our notice when they also incarnate in human form in this material world. Hindus believe that these gods are very active. They dominate the scene to such an extent that the Divine Ground is left in background. Hence Hindus try to please them and many other gods for seeking their favour.

It is believed that Brahman creates, Vishnu preserves and dissolution is the task of Shiva. Prophets in revealed religions try their level best to lead mankind to the Threshold of the Divine Being but in the presence of these incarnated gods in Hinduism, no Hindu bothers to please Brahman for he is neither self-conscious nor conscious of other beings. Besides, the believers have been informed that Ishwara, the Chief God and his associate deities are all *Maya* (illusion). One does not know how the *Maya* can help those who grope in *Maya*.

If any Hindu would like to have an intuitive knowledge of God-head, he is advised to seek the meditation and grace of his incarnations by worshipping them. Those who are more inquisitive about God-head, they are asked to develop a super-conscious stage of *smadhi* (union with God-head)

within themselves for realizing the presence of *Atman*.

Despite the possibility of various incarnations in human form, we do not know if Brahma or Shiva had ever come to this world. It is not known how Hindus have come to know about their existence. Only about Vishnu we are informed that he had incarnated himself on one or two occasions. About one of his incarnation we come to know from *Bhagavat Gita*, which is regarded as a sacred book of Hindus. This book records the teaching of this incarnated god, whose name in human form was Sri Krishna.

It is stated that in the battlefield of Kurukshetra Krishna had tried to help both the contending parties who were desirous to rule our the country. The leader of the one party whose name was Daryodhana was allowed to select either Krishna or a warrior kinsman of Krishna whose name was Vrishnis. Daryodhana preferred to take the help of the kinsman of the god rather than the god himself. The other party's leader Arjuna selected the god himself. As the god was not a warrior, he was asked to work as his charioteer.

Notwithstanding the fact that Krishna had expressed his sympathies for both the parties, he did not hesitate in advising Arjuna to look down upon those who had come to fight against his party. He asked him to regard himself as superior to them for he was a brave man whose object was to achieve fame. (God knows what he would have advised to the rival group if they had selected him as a charioteer. It seems that Krishna was very much impressed by Arjuna, for he had found time at the battlefield to seek enlightenment on philosophical problems.

Taking refuge in the theory of transmigration of souls, he advised him to mercilessly slaughter those who would like to acquire power. Here he assumes the role of *Shiva*, the destroyer. The fact that the Daryodhana's men were also Arjuna's kith and kin, is of little importance to him. Since in his that by killing his enemies Arjuna would not really kill them. He thought that in this struggle for power Arjuna should be ruthless against his rival party. He informed him that if he

acted on this precept, he would liberate himself from the bondage of birth and rebirth, for according to him, this was the best way to seek union with Brahman. If we compare this attitude with that of the prophets of God in revealed religion, we shall find a marked difference. Prophets of God, who are not God, tell us what type of persons are suitable to hold power. Lord Krishna is silent on such problems. In the revealed religion Islam, no man is asked to fight for power or fame. A true believer's main concern is to please God and help the suffering humanity according to Divine injunctions. This is the only mode of life to liberate mankind from all kinds of bondage. In Hinduism this god alone is not keen to see his devotees should at least be faithful to him. Had he been conscious of his position, he would not have said:

Please the *devas*: (other gods)
Your prayer will be granted." (73)

Doubtless, at one place, he also says:
"In reality I alone am the Giver." (73)

But if this had been the case, then it is not known why the worshipper is advised to implore those who are not real benefactors.

Due to the influence of Muslims, educated Hindus since the time of the *Bhagti* movement in India, interpret their religion in a way which is traditionally different. In their heart of hearts, they feel that it is not good philosophy or good religion to believe in multiplicity of gods. Their endeavour is now to prove that there is not much difference between the revealed concept of God and the idea of god in Hinduism.

They claim that if God is mentioned with so many names and unlimited attributes in Islam, then in a similar fashion God is referred to in Hinduism by various names of Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu, Saraswati, Kali, etc. Hindus do not now approve the common idea that they are to be regarded as independent divine beings. There is also an attempt to justify idol worshipping in a way which does not appear to be in

conformity with the practice of polytheism. We are now told that it is advisable for only those who cannot concentrate on the Divine Ground. The deities are required to be worshipped for they are his different phases. It is highly doubtful that such views can transform a polytheistic religion into a truly unitarian religion. It should be known that the attributes of God cannot be separated from God, nor the idols which represent these so-called attributes either individually or collectively are helpful in knowing Him or seeking His grace. Those Hindus who believe in the Unity of God should carefully study the teachings of Islam. That is the only true unitarianism. The main difficulty with Hinduism lies in its vague mythological ideology. All those who hold different mystical and metaphysical views, nay, even those who do not believe in any god or gods, are regarded as Hindus. Despite so many divergent views they call themselves as the followers of the same religion only on the basis that they have a common cultural background. Despite the fact that they are divided in manifold ways, they would like to see that their identity is maintained. It is not appreciated that Islam or Christianity should be preached in India. This means that they do not allow the members of their community to individually seek their own salvation. Along with the efforts to modify the "good old religion" (*Sanatan Dharma*) according to the modern requirements, there are attempts to make it a missionary religion. Since it is impossible to preach all sorts of views that are in this paganistic creed, those who are converted to this religion are asked to have faith in more or less the same doctrines to which we have referred. (Indeed in the Middle Ages some Hindu mystics had started a movement according to which *Rama* (a Hindu name for god) and *Rahim* (an Arabic name for god which means the Merciful) refer to the same Reality. But Muslims know very well that the attributes of *Rama* and *Rahim* are not the same. The word *Rahim* or Merciful at once reminds the true believer of One Almighty God while the word *Rama* may lead a Hindu to think of a person in the remote past whose wife was

abducted by *Rawana* or an incarnation of a whimsical deity whose name was Vishnu. The great Hindu leader late Mr. Gandhi was also a champion of this Ram-Rahim movement, but the moment he preached Ram-Rajya instead of Ram-Rahim-Raj, his inherent polytheistic creed was exposed. That is the reason why in India those who believe in *Rahim* are not treated at par with those who believe in Rama.

Some Hindus appear to be nearer to Muslims when they shun idol-worshipping. It was expected that such persons would be nearer to Muslims, but it is strange that even they are mostly those who preach violence and hatred against the believers in One God. If they, like the true believers, considered God to be the only Master, then we do not understand how they could have any sympathy with those who commit unjust acts, and worship various gods and goddesses. The reason why they join hands with such people is that despite their professed love for God they have not completely discarded their polytheistic views which they have inherited from ancient times. Besides, neither the "Divine Ground," nor its deities have any similarity with the attributes of God. No sooner God's names are mentioned, a true believer's mind is at once diverted to the One Almighty Lord. Such is not the case with the names of Hindu gods and goddesses. No Hindu will admit that whenever their names are mentioned, his mind does not stop at them but he thinks of the "Divine Ground," or the One Almighty Lord. The reason is obvious. In Hindu mythology these deities play such an important role. That is why it is impossible to consider them as mere attributes of God.

The idols and images which Hindus place before them for worship refer to their deities, but for a true believer no image or idol can represent God or His attributes; for He is beyond all such determinations. It is sometimes argued by polytheists that even true believers worship their own image of God which they have in their mind at the time of their prayers. This is wrong. It is true that every Muslim has certain views about God but at the same time he realizes that these

are very inadequate. That is why true believers are advised not to make any particular idea of God as the object of their worship. A Muslim knows that all his ideas about God are most imperfect and the object of his worship is beyond the image he has formed in his mind about Him. Therein lies the essence of true unitarianism.

If any people were really serious in adoring the Real Being then we cannot understand why they should not accept a religion in which there is no place for the diversion of the mind and the concentration is on the only One object. As a matter of fact even a clear conception of God is not possible without believing in Islamic ideology. If a spiritual man's idea of God were no more than of a philosopher's without any Divine guidance, then his view may utmost be considered as one more school in theistic philosophy. The God of true religion comes to guide the human beings by revealing Himself to them. We come to know from His Message what He expects from humans and what would be the consequence of a heedless life. God is not a mere abstract idea for the realisation of which it is man only who proceeds, but the Divine Being Himself proceeds to us more swiftly than we can if we knew how to proceed. After embracing Islam a person seeks an enlightenment which is as certain as that which was given to Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. These were all Messengers of Allah and none of them belonged to any vague theological school of philosophy or had advised his followers to worship God in the way He is worshipped in polytheistic religions.

Philosophy and Polytheism

It will be seen that in countries where polytheistic religions flourish, the persons who do not find any rational justification to such beliefs take refuge in philosophy. They begin to realise that instead of having faith in a religion or religions which are based on mythologies and doctrines which appear to be unreasonable, it is better for them if they

followed the verdict of their own reason. It is more interesting for them if they could concentrate on metaphysical and ethical problems and develop their own philosophy than to be guided by the teaching which is not at all inspiring. Hence we see that in countries where polytheism or polytheistic views are prevalent, intelligent people prefer philosophy to religion. The reason why Greek philosophy is appreciated is that Greek thinkers unlike those of India and other polytheistic countries, have tried to liberate themselves from unbelievable mystical and mythological dogmas derived from their religion.

In their effort to solve metaphysical problems they made use of the faculties which are so helpful in understanding the physical phenomena of this world. Their success and failure in this attempt was due to this fact alone. They did not realize that there could be a religion other than that of their own which is natural to man and in which all that is good in religion and philosophy identifies itself.

It is true that the conclusions to which they have reached are not in general quite against the spirit of true religion, but it cannot be said that from them we get a knowledge based on certainty. Nevertheless, every philosopher who expounds his views believes that these are more reasonable than those of the others. Without a conclusive epistemological enquiry, which is acceptable to many, if not to everybody, it is impossible that a philosopher will ever express views which will be as popular as those of spiritual men. The reason why it is so, is inherent in the very sources of knowledge which are employed by philosophers to reveal the mysteries of the universe. These are by nature not very helpful in solving metaphysical problems. If that be the case, it might be asked, why is it that many of them believed in God, a conclusion which is generally accepted in religion as well?

We must not forget that philosophers, despite their professed efforts to be rational or empirical, acquire ideas from various other sources of knowledge. Since the idea of

God which is originally derived from true religion, appeals to our sensibility and rationality, they consciously or unconsciously approved of it and tried to prove by reasoning that God exists. It will, however, be seen that a person with a philosophical bent of mind tends to be materialistic and pluralistic when he fails to find out that there is something beyond the world of appearance. Those who concentrate on the world of Reality in the Unseen, which has wrongly been termed by the Western philosophers as the world of thought, tend to be spiritual and unitarian. Greek philosophers could not transcend the world of thought, but to a certain extent, they were conscious of the mysteries of the unseen.

It is due to this that their doctrines were not in conformity with the prevalent creeds of their time. Despite this, their views are not subject to any verification by test, and their ideas about God generally appear to be as those of the outsiders. None of them claims to have seen God with the eyes of certainty or could think of having a contact with the Divine Being or could receive His Message of guidance. Very few of them thought of seeking proximity with the Reality, but due to improper guidance, were lost in ecstasy and came to certain erroneous conclusions.

Islamic View

It is unbelievable that the creation of the phenomenal world has no meaning. There is no reason to suppose that man has come to this world with no definite purpose. It is also unbelievable that the Reality which has created us, has left us to grope in the darkness or to act on our own whims. If there is any divine guidance then how can the persons who live an ignorant life or act according to the verdict of their ego, be equal to those who make effort to find out the truth and follow the path shown by the Creator Himself? Indeed the divine law is inherent in mankind but only sincerity, effort and guidance can bring it out to consciousness. Only such persons realize that beyond this world, a great future awaits for them.

Success in eternal life is the real success. A Muslim lays stress on the success in that life, but it is not at the cost of worldly success. Nevertheless, the meaning of success in this life is drastically different from that of the people who are not rightly guided. There is no escape from belief. Throughout our lives we cherish beliefs without knowing which of these is in conformity with the truth. An incorrect belief about the nature of Reality leads us away from the path of safety.

The ultimate reality is not a thing to be witnessed by ordinary means of sense perceptions. The certainty in knowledge comes from a different source. Unbelievers expect to observe the Reality in the same way as we see ordinary material objects. They do not realize that they are those who cannot perceive many such objects which are physical. If that be the case with the material world then how is it possible to perceive their creative Reality, which is far sublime than anything in this world. In the Qurānic words, they probably expect from the Divine Being to appear one fine morning on the horizon:

"In the shadows of clouds surrounded by angels."

(*Al-Qura'n*, II:270)

The Reality is one. There is no plurality or division in its nature. In case there had been pluralism, the world would have been disintegrated long ago by conflicting principles. It is wrong to suppose that the Divine Being is the Divine Ground who sometimes remains impersonal and sometimes assumes the role of personal god. If the Ocean of Reality is impersonal then it would always remain impersonal. It is also incorrect to assume that the Real Being divides Himself into various self-conscious deities or causes to bring them into existence in order to assert themselves and be adored by those who are not their creatures. Indeed there are innumerable principles and objects in the universe, but He cannot be identified by any of them. They are all His creatures that are obedient to Him. Hence the denial of all forms of polytheism.

The concentration of mind on objects other than the Real Being is bound to produce all sorts of fantasies. Polytheism is a creed which belittles man's position and also the position of the Almighty God. That is why it is said:

"Verily God forgiveth not that anything should be associated with Him but forgiveth what is besides that to whomsoever he pleaseth. Whoso ascribeth partners to Allah, he hath indeed invented a great lie."

(Al-Qura'n, IV:48)

Polytheists do not know that man is the highest creation of God. He can even become God's true representative provided he works according to His will. It is degrading for such a being to bow down before His creatures. What is most disappointing is the fact that most of these creatures who are supposed to be deities are not even His creatures but are products of human imagination. The actions resulting from this state of mind seldom lead to happy consequences. The Holy Qura'n says that if spiritual men and prophets in the past had committed this blunder they could never have attained felicity. A polytheist in his behaviour is compared to that of a spider "who takes to herself a house which is frailest of all houses."

It is sometimes pointed out that paganism is a natural primitive religion and there is no doubt that due to no guidance the animal spirit in man dominates him, and he degenerates. However, even animals do not bow down before other animals or inanimate objects. That is why it is said:

"In the eyes of Allah these incorrigible and headless polytheists are like the vilest of animals."

(Al-Qura'n, VIII:55)

From these statements it would be wrong to conclude that Muslims are in any way advised to look down upon unbelievers. All this is with reference to the True Being in relation to those who outrightly reject the divine guidance, otherwise the majority of the polytheists ignorantly follows this creed. Man is born with sound nature. There is no reason to believe that he will not come to the right path if he

is properly guided. That is why true believers have been asked to keep in mind human dignity and not to look down on those who ignorantly persist in wrong beliefs.

Referring to the objectionable behaviour of the polytheists who are averse to healthy influences and who, in their enmity against the truth go to the extent of harming the true believers, the Qura'n points out that the light of Islam is inextinguishable. It is said:

"They desire to put out the light of Allah but Allah will see His light (illuminating and) perfect, though the unbelievers may not like it."

(Al-Qura'n, LXI:8)

Muslims are advised to bear with patience all that is wrought by them. The best way to avoid conflict is to be away from them. It is quite possible that the oppressors with all their unworthy thoughts about God may not come to a disgraceful end in this life but they cannot evade the Divine retribution. That is why it is stated:

"On them is the evil turn."

(Al-Qura'n, XLVIII:6)

Muslims have been asked not to be overawed by them if they flourish in their worldly lives. The matter would already have been decided had they not been granted respite for an appointed term.

(Al-Qura'n, XX:129)

Buddhism

Gautama Siddhartha Sakya (560 B.C) was a renowned religious leader of mankind in the east. He was a man of sensitive nature. He could not bear the sight of the miseries of the world. The Sakyas were a Katriya tribe of India. His father Saddodena was the prince of Kapila Vasta. At the age of 30 he claimed to have attained perfect enlightenment by becoming Buddha.

Due to his Hindu origin he too had inherited certain beliefs which are generally associated with paganistic creeds.

What was praiseworthy in him was an effort to go beyond these. Like all Hindus he believed in the theory of the transmigration of soul and thought that death is merely a prelude to rebirth in this world. Hence he tried to go beyond it and seek liberation from it.

He believed that if a man cuts off the very roots of suffering that would lead him to the path of salvation. Sufferings are due to libidinous drives, craving for sensual gratification, hankering for survival, and even the wish for extinction.

We are told that when he became "enlightened" a certain wanderer approached him for seeking his guidance on certain philosophical problems. He enquired:

"Are the world and souls eternal, non-eternal, both or neither? Are the world and souls infinite in space, finite, both or neither? Are the world and souls infinite in space, finite, both or neither? Are the souls and body the same or different? Does the Tathagata (Buddha) exist after death, does not exist, both or neither?"

These are indeed difficult questions. Philosophers and spiritual men for centuries have tried to express their views on them. Buddha's views on these problems are, however, not clear. According to certain reports, he did not reply to these questions. Other reports say that in his view such queries were irrelevant. "The categories of existence and non-existence are applicable only in the realm of the conditioned. *Nirvana*, the unconditioned, transcends them. The fire which 'goes out' does not go north, south, east or west. But to its unmanifested source."

Such a reply can be regarded as mystical but not convincing. The unconditioned alone is the domain of real existence and not 'conditioned.' If *Nirvana* appertains to the realm of 'unconditioned' and enlightenment comes from there, then that is the domain of the Real Being and not that of merely unconditioned existence. There is no reason to suppose that the Being is like an ocean in which all drops are merged. It would be more reasonable to suppose that whatever remains at the level of conditioned existence perishes. How-

ever, the drop of conditioned existence becomes a pearl by acquiring the Light from the Divine Being and remains eternally shining in the bosom of the Being.

It is said that with reference to Almighty God, Buddha's views are ambiguous. We are told that when Buddha was asked by a disciple at his death-bed, whether he should believe in God, he replied: "Did I tell you to believe in Him?" The poor fellow, under the impression that he probably did not approve of the idea, again enquired: "Lord! should I not believe in Him?" The Master retorted by saying: "Did I tell you not to believe in Him?"

There is no doubt that Bodhistava had certain wonderful qualities and fulfilled six perfections: donation, morality, patience, vigour, meditation and wisdom. Even the Middy Way that had been proposed by him for Nirvana is philosophically sound. It is based on eight principles: (1) Right views (2) Right intention (3) Right speech (4) Right action (5) Right livelihood (6) Right effort (7) Right mindfulness (8) Right concentration.

However, the question of right and wrong requires much elaboration. In determining right or wrong with reference to an ideal, there can be different views. If, as Buddhism says, all mental and physical actions lead to the accumulation of *Karma* which leads to birth, death and rebirth, then no action can be regarded as right for all actions lead to birth and rebirth; on the other hand, if it is Real Being who enlightens man, then alone His path of righteousness can lead him to salvation.

Hinyana Buddhism which flourished in India denies the so-called self or ego in man. They say that it shackles us to the ever-revolving wheel of birth — life — death, through the motive force of *Karma*. As against this, the Mahayana Buddhism in China denies even the components of the self, which come together to form a temporary individual.

There is no sense in denying the existence of self or ego. Even Buddhism, in denying its existence is asserting it. However temporary it might be, but it exists. Nevertheless, from both the Islamic and Buddhistic points of view, it is

wicked. In Islam it is gradually annihilated in order to seek union with the Deity. All those who are engaged in this task are saved by some divine mechanism. What is strange is the fact that such persons remain successful in both the worlds.

Buddhism offers no incentive for living a good life for even if a person devotes his life to do good that is not enough to achieve Nirvana. According to Buddhism this is not the way to liberate oneself from the chain of birth and rebirth. Only if a person succeeds in transcending his desires, he can hope to be merged with the ultimate reality. This cannot be a good motive for bearing any hardships in the path. Man inherently desires to survive. Such an ambition might be illusory or real but spiritual men in the revealed religion point out the desire for survival is genuine and survival is also possible. If we tell a man that by seeking his salvation his personality is lost, he is not at all pleased. It does not matter whether he is merged in any superior Universal Reality or is completely lost. If there is no hope of survival then there is no alternative to birth, death and rebirth.

Confucianism

Confucianism was the main religion of Chinese. Along with this Taoism was also an important creed. Later on Buddhism was introduced. According to Confucianism every thing had its opposite, but the opposites were complementary and necessary. These were expressed through the concepts of *yang* and *yin*. This bi-polarity constituted the specific characteristic of Chinese metaphysics. That which goes wanes and that which comes waxes. The waning and waxing affect each other and benefits are produced. Yang and yin have nothing to do with a struggle between good and evil, the principles of Persian religion.

It cannot be said that in this religion there is no idea of God; but it is rather vague, for it is believed that the universe functions through the working of law without a law-giver.

The followers of Confucius also believe in a personalized power in heaven which is named as *shang-ti* (*ti*, on high, as God). But, he is concerned with ruling authorities or dynasties and is the source of the mandates which they receive to give them legitimacy.

Confucius remarked that the actual moral law (or *tao*) is not something away from the actuality of human life. Behind or beyond heaven there are the working of Yang and Yin which have their source in *tao*. It is implied that misbehaviour as an action is inimical to the harmonious working of the universe.

It is evident from the above statement that yang and yin cannot be the source of moral law. If their origin is to be found in Tao, then the working of moral-law in the Universe is to be attributed to him alone. In this sense Tao is both God and the moral law. Such a God alone can be regarded as the real God since both the ruling authorities and common people receive mandates from him. However, in general both the ruler and the ruled grope in the darkness, it is appropriate to believe that they are not clear about right and wrong. The path of righteousness can be shown by God alone. In such a case we have to believe that the revealed religion is justified in believing that the mandate of God comes through His Prophets.

We are told that in this philosophy man is not the special creation of God, much less he is god, himself. Such a belief is due to the idea that life is produced through the union of male and female. But then both yang and yin can be regarded as manifestations of Tao. Chinese philosophers do not point out how human beings have emerged and what is the purpose of their lives. If we neglect the guidance of spiritual men in revealed religion, then no guidance is received by the Universe itself.

Taoism

In this form of Chinese religion there are certain sub-



lime ideas. It is said that Taoists are in quest of liberation of the spiritual element of the ego or self from physical limitations so that man may enjoy immortality.

The stress in this philosophy is on the idea of one God. Taoists were aware of the fact that the spiritual self in man emerges only when the physical nature is curtailed. That is why we are told that a man is one who does not eat five grains but sucks the wind, drinks the dew, climbs upon the clouds and mist, rides a flying dragon, wanders beyond the four seas. All this success is due to the fact that he guards the pure breath.

The Taoist adepts attempted to reduce their intake of food as far as possible; for they believed that the consumption of food merely contributes to the maintenance of physical body and produces excreta that clogs the various internal passages of the body which were to be kept open wide for circulation of the forces. Even cereals were to be avoided because the body was inhabited by maleficent spirits who were nourished by cereals.

Those who followed the path of Taoism disregarded all worldly matters for three days. After seven days, they disregarded all external things. For nine days they disregarded their own existence. After this hard labour, they became enlightened and were able to gain the vision of the one and transcended the distinction of past and present and entered the realm where life and death are no more.

Theory of Transmigration of Soul

The problem of creation is one of the most important problems of science and philosophy. The theory of evolution has caused a revolution in the history of thought, though it is true that its propounders have generally dealt with the "how" of evolution and not with the "why". And even when the evolutionists deal with how, they are not unanimous in their views.

The literature that has come down to us from the past

generations contains more or less different cosmogenies, coloured by religious or theological presuppositions. It is generally thought that the old traditional notions of Jews, Christians, and Muslims, point to an immediate *exnihilo* creation of the world. During the latter half of the 19th century many attempts were made to reconcile the facts and theories of science with the narrative of the Book of Genesis, but such adjustments were recognized as impossible and unnecessary.

Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that before the exposition of evolutionary theories these same traditional notions appealed to many people in the world. The theory that could rightly be said to rival it was that of the transmigration of soul which is linked with the Greek philosopher Pythagoras. But it is actually much older than his time. Hindus in India and Chams of Indo-China have long believed in some such doctrines. Similar views are also to be found among some tribes of North America, the Philippines, Sumatra, and among the Negroes of West Africa.

A consistent doctrine of metempsychosis is to be found in Hindu philosophy. Souls they hold to have existed from eternity, each diffused throughout all space. If we do not accept this doctrine, say the advocates of these systems, it follows that the soul must be perishable. It is argued that whatever had a beginning will have an end. If a soul once began to be, it will at some time cease to be.

It is also pointed out that, in case we do not accept this doctrine, the imputation of partiality and cruelty must be attached to God. Almost all men suffer misery and misfortune. There must be some reason for it. It is not enough to say that it is because of sins that have been committed in the current state of existence; for it is a matter of experience that many a man whose conduct is meritorious, is oppressed with proverty and pain. And how can we explain, they add, the great sufferings of innocent infants and harmless animals? Hence they maintain the doctrine of transmigration of soul, and say that the bad man who lives in comfort must have

been eminently virtuous in a former state of existence and now is reaping the reward of his past virtue. When a good man suffers afflictions, they conclude that in a former state of existence he was sinful. Infants and beasts according to this doctrine, undergo punishment for the offences of which, in a prior birth, they were guilty.

Long before the theory of evolution came to be accepted, this doctrine was subject to a severe criticism on the ground that proving the eternity of soul in the world is as impossible as proving the eternity of matter. Seeing that everything is perishable, the only alternative is to believe that both the soul and the matter have come from some other source. It is a legitimate question to ask how the first creature that appeared in the world is to be explained. It cannot be supposed that it assumed primitive form as a result of its good or bad deeds in a previous life. Its sufferings are not in any way related to its previous life or past generation.

It cannot be believed that animal life which is all inter-related exists from eternity. Instead, it is easier for human mind to think of yet another life beyond material existence. Those who believe in such a life hold that the happiness or the misery in this life is not the sole criterion for judging a man to be good or bad. The well-being or perdition in the other life beyond the physical realm might be more important. If a good man suffers or a bad man enjoys life, it matters little. The total happiness is to be kept always in view. The theory of transmigration not only asserts that a good man who suffers in this life was inherently sinful, but it also claims that a man, as a consequence of his deeds, may be born next time as a quadruped or a worm. If this be the case, then cruelty may be attributed to God. However, good or bad a man may be, his very nature abhors to be in a lower form of animal state.

Despite these difficulties in accepting this theory, we see in it human mind coming very near to the idea of evolution. This theory suggests in a way the idea of transmutation of

species. But there is little room for the creation of new forms of life; all the succeeding life experience is the result of the deeds or misdeeds in a previous life. Moreover, the idea of spiritual progress is there, and apparently the goal does not seem to be far from that of a consistent philosophy of evolution.

Plotinus in Greek Thinkers

The idea of evolution is thought to be purely a product of modern science. But there is no doubt that even in ancient time we do see some of the Greek philosophers teaching the development of the species. However, it did not occur to them that the universal phenomenon of development has a deeper significance. With all their intellectual subtleties they were far from these evolutionary notions. The thinkers of antiquity whose world picture can be developed into a theory of evolution were Aristotle and Plotinus. The evolutionary views of Plotinus were even clearer than those of Aristotle. He believed in a continuous chain of life, in a hierarchy of Being emanating out of the One. Nous is the first manifestation of the image of the One; it is engendered because God in His self-quest has this in Vision. Soul is the lowest member of the hierarchy and the author of all things. There is a continuous movement and a circle of beings, each one rising from the lower to the higher and reverting from the higher to the lower. (*History of Western Philosophy*, p. 313).

The teaching becomes monotonous when Plotinus puts forth the idea of eternal repetition of an infinite series in similar world periods. It did not also occur to him that there is such a thing as the transformation of species. This shows how Philosophy unaided by scientific data and real spiritual insight into the nature of worldly life can be a misleading guide. Whatever seems to be true in his scheme of Emanation and Return from and into the Primeval and Eternal One, is mostly due to his mystical insight but not revealed enlightenment.

The Biblical story of creation

The Biblical story of creation, despite its apparently inadequate explanation, has its own merits and deserves a careful consideration. (Some of the views that have been elaborated here are those that I have expressed in my paper which was read in the XII International Congress of Philosophy held in Venice (Sept. 1958).

In the beginning, we are told, God created the heaven and the earth. It took him six days to finish His work, and he rested on the seventh day. The earth was without form and void and there was darkness upon the face of the deep. God said: "Let there be light" and there was light. He then made the firmament, and gathered the waters together. The dry land and grass, the herb yielding seed and fruit trees, were brought forth. After which moving creatures and fowls appeared, and then there were cattle, creeping things, and beasts of earth.

Man was created in the end. He was "formed" of the "dust of the ground in His own image." God then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and put him into the garden of Eden. He then took one of his ribs out of which the woman was made. Of every tree in the Garden they could eat, but of knowledge of good and evil they were not allowed to eat. There they lived naked, and were not ashamed. The serpent then beguiled the woman and advised her to eat of the forbidden fruit so that they might for ever remain there like gods, knowing everything. She yielded to the persuasion and temptation. When they both (Adam and Eve) ate of the fruit thereof, their eyes were opened and they knew they were naked. Because of this disobedience, they were banished from the Garden and sent down into this world where woman shall bring forth children "in sorrow" and man shall eat bread "in the sweat" of his face.

According to the modern findings this statement has

its origin in the cosmogenies of other early races, especially that of the Babylonians. Despite their fantastic mythology that contrasts with the sober Biblical narrative, it has instructive comparisons with the Hebrew story of Creation.

Both accounts begin with the chaos of darkness and water; each records the division of the chaos of waters into two parts by a firmament; each speaks of light as existing before the sun, moon, and stars. Eden, the sacred tree, and the cherubim, all have their analogies in Babylonian mythology.

Modern View

We shall be wrong to conclude from this that it makes the Biblical statement doubtful. A person who is interested in truth, will be glad to acknowledge it in whatever source it is found provided it is based on the truth. But, unfortunately, the theory, as it is given, appears to be not in conformity with facts. The main objection to this theory is that, in the light of modern scientific researches, it is unbelievable to think that the world has come into existence in a short duration of six days. Besides, it is not clear what is meant by "the Garden." Where was it? Was it in this world or in some other sphere? What form of body was given to Adam and Eve? What was actually the nature of that fruit which was forbidden to them? Did they live in ignorance of good and evil before they ate that fruit? Who was the serpent and what did he gain by deceiving them? We do not find any satisfactory answers to these questions in the Biblical statement. In contrast to this the modern theories of evolution are based on historico-empirical grounds. No sooner the scientists started formulating their theories than the Biblical version appeared to be more and more absurd. For a true understanding of the problem, it is essential to examine their views and see if they satisfy us.

Despite so many discoveries in modern times, scientists themselves admit that they find themselves unable to solve

the riddle of the universe. No one is yet in a position to show definitely how the universe came into existence or in what way the life started in this planet of ours. But there is a unanimity on the point that the life of our planetary system, judged in relation to an astronomical time-scale, is very short. The period of life upon earth as compared to a scale of geological time, is very short. The period of human life, in relation to a biological scale of time, is very short. It is estimated that the period of life upon the earth from its earliest appearance in the shape of specks or protoplasm floating in the tidal scum of the shores of the earth's first seas, is roughly about twelve hundred million years.

It is suggested that in warm waters of the Proterozoic seas anything from six hundred to sixty million years ago, there were amoebas and there were jellyfish. The earth grew cooler, and life left the waters and proliferated into enormous reptile-like creatures, the dinosaurs and gigantes of the Mesozoic age. Among them there could have been the human germ as well, in the form similar to those of sandworms which continued to evolve because "it was less adapted" than the others and probably possessed an aptitude to evolve. (Lecomte du Nouy tells us that the such a worm may have been our ancestor. "*Human Destiny*," p. 70).

When the earth was still cooler, there appeared birds and mammals. Among them was a small lemur-like creature whose descendants split into two branches, the one developed into anthropoid apes, the other culminated in man. The past of human life from the Neanderthal man upto the present day is about one million years; of civilized human life, about four thousand years. (*Guide to Modern Thought*, p. 55).

All Mechanistic biologists agree that life started from matter, though until the earth cooled and consolidated, it was quite unfit to be a home of life. At some uncertain but inconceivably distant date living creatures appeared on the scene. Some of the evolutionists believe that the germ of life came to the earth embosomed in meteorites. The major

rity of them are unanimous on this point that life is as old as matter and that living beings evolved from the inanimate.

Life in its simplest form appears in the single cells that are physiologically complete in themselves. Then the nucleus divides over and over again and forms loose colonies. Then, as evolution goes on, an internal unity develops. The centralization of the nervous system develops for a unified control of the whole organism. Plants and animals are alike in fundamental structure being built up of cells and various modifications of cells. Minerals evolve; plants grow and live; animals grow, live and feel. The real distinction of man from his nearest allies, depends on his power of building up general ideas and of controlling his conduct to these ideas. For man's origin, we should look into an ancestral type common to him and to the higher apes: There is an all-pervading similitude of structure between man and the anthropoid apes; their physique is closely similar. This evidence is the same as that used to substantiate the general doctrine of evolution.

What are the causes of the origin of species? There are different theories for explaining these:

It is said that changed conditions might directly influence the organization of the creatures in whole or in part. Its direct result is variation. Functional peculiarities of an organism, use and disuse of organs also cause these variations. Darwin talks of the importance of individual variations which we see between parents and children, brothers and brothers; when these slight variations are accumulated and successively repeated, they give birth to new species. De Vries believes that these have nothing to do with the origin of species which appeared all at once by mutation, without any visible preparation, and without any obvious series of transitional forms.

Heredity also plays an important role. It is no longer thought that it is a mere power or principle, fate or force but a genetic relation which is sustained by a visible material basis namely the germ-cell. In it lies the tendency to persist,

i.e. like begets like. Similarly in it lies the tendency to diverge. Changes in degree of use and disuse of a part, produce an inherited effect. This is hereditary relation; it includes both continuance and change.

A continual process of adaptation of their surroundings is also a fact. They adapt themselves to their food and habits, sexes to one another and so on.

Natural selection preserves the favourable variations and destroys injurious ones. There is a continual struggle for existence between individuals and species. Individuals having any advantage over their fellows would have the best chance of surviving and of procreating their kind. This is called "the survival of the fittest."

There is no satisfactory answer to the question: "Who is the fittest?" Darwin admitted that it is extraordinarily difficult to say precisely why one species has been victorious over another in the great battle of life. It is possible, he says, that man arose as a mutation, as anthropoid genus, but admits the factors that led to his emergence, are all unknown. The internal unity of an organism, the manifold chemical processes that are correlated and controlled in a unified behaviour, are still far from our knowledge.

The present scientific trend is not very favourable to the hypothesis of materialism. If matter is "something infinitely attenuated and elusive" and a wave of electricity undulating into nothingness, and "merely a convenient way of collecting events into bundles", then materialism is as mystical a doctrine as any other mystical dogma.

Vitalism and Materialism

The vitalists come to fill up some of the gaps in the doctrine of materialism. They show that the physico-chemical theory of life is unsatisfactory and point to the two different realms in nature: (1) of psysical activity and (2) of vital activity. Organism to them is not mere aggregate of matter, nor is it a machine. It differs from any machine

in its greater efficiency. It is a self-repairing, self-preserving, self-adjusting, and self-producing engine which is perfected by experience and trades with them. Hence it is not an engine.

Dr. Hans Driesch says that interpretation of a living creature as a machine is invalid both in regard to its functioning and its development. He seeks to show that it is necessary to postulate an immaterial, autonomous factor or "Entelechy" which stresses the transformation of energy that goes on within the body. This entelechy is the innermost secret of living organism, and its directive soul.

Bergson thinks that there is an impetus of life which rushes through matter and disperses itself on the way. He reminds us that the physico-chemical explanation of life is unsatisfactory. "Some may maintain", says he, "that the passage from one species to another was accomplished by a series of variations, all of them accidental being preserved by selection and fixed by heredity. But if we reflect on the enormous number of variations, co-ordinated with, and complementary to one another, which must take place in order that the organism shall benefit by them or merely not be injured, we wonder how each of them, taken separately, can be preserved by selection and wait for others which are to complete it." It is not the mechanical action of the external causes, "but an inward impulse that passes from germ through individuals, that carries life in a given direction towards an ever higher complexity." He compares matter with a heap of iron filings in which the hand of life moves. In his own words, "an invisible hand, thrust through a heap of iron filings, would merely brush aside the resistance encountered but the very simplicity of this act, seen from the point of view of the resistance, would appear as an alignment made in a deliberate order of the filings themselves. Now, is there nothing to be said concerning this act and the resistances it encounters? If life cannot be resolved into physical and chemical facts, it operates in the manner of a special cause, added on to what we ordinarily call matter, matter

in this case being both an instrument and an obstacle. It divides what it defines. We may conjecture that a division of this kind is responsible for the multiplicity of the great lines of vital evolution."

(*Morality and Religion*: pp. 29-23)

In his "Creative Evolution," Bergson attributes the quality "*La Duree*" (duration) to organism. There is in them a continuous change and a progress of the past which grows into the future and which swells as it advances. Each moment something new is added to it. Bergson refutes both mechanism and the doctrine of pure finality, because in both cases the creation of life is supposed to be predetermined, whereas there is a creative spontaneity in the indivisible act of life.

Emergent Evolution and Neutral Stuff Theory

Lloyd Morgan tries to take a middle course between mechanism and vitalism. According to his doctrine of Emergent Evolution, physical forerunners of matter become arranged in various systems and from elements such as oxygen, hydrogen, sulphur etc. That is one great step. The qualities and properties of these elements are emergents. They are new in the world on their first appearance.

These elements combine with one another in various ways. Oxygen combines with hydrogen and the properties of a molecule of water emerge; water with all its peculiar qualities and properties is an emergent. In the combination, potentialities previously latent in the hydrogen and oxygen have become actualized, with the consequence that the molecule of water exhibits qualities not exhibited by, nor discernable in, hydrogen or oxygen in their pure state.

In a similar way, every element combines with different elements and forms a multitude of chemical compounds. After a period of such chemical emergence there came a great step forward. Some systems of atoms attained a new degree of complexity and life emerged. "Life" is the work

with which we sum up the peculiar qualities that emerged on that occasion. There was nothing added from outside the system; no new element entered it. As the new intrinsic relations were established, the system began to exhibit the complex properties that we call 'Life'.

New complications rendered possible further new kinds of correlation and there emerged sentience, the forerunner of that which is called mind. After further complications, mind appeared. Thus, this process continued upto the emergence of the higher forms of intellect and moral personality.

Professor William McDougal has tried to repudiate this doctrine. Criticising Mr A.D. Broad who, praising the doctrine of Emergent Evolution, had said: "The link connecting the properties of silver chloride with those of silver and chlorine is, so far as we know, a unique and ultimate law, which could not have been discovered only by studying samples of silver chloride itself. McDougal writes: "It is clear that, in the instance cited by Broad and many other similar ones, many of the properties of the compound could have been predicted from the knowledge of silver and chlorine and such compounds as silver bromide etc. If no samples of silver chloride had been available for study, its weight, its crystalline form, its solubility, its general properties as a metallic salt could have been predicted.

"It is for the emergentists to point to specific instances of what they regard as emergent qualities in the physical realm, and this they neglect to do. It is implied in their doctrine that in such elements as chlorine and silver there are properties that remain latent and undiscoverable until the two elements enter into combination; and then those latent properties are manifested in the emergent. In view of the fact that chemists have been able to predict their existence and many of the qualities of elements never actually observed, this claim of the emergents seems ill-founded."

(Modern Materialism: p. 126)

It is said that hydrogen, after combining with oxygen in a peculiar reciprocal active or causal relations produced a

liquid compound, water, then it would be said that liquidity is not the attribute of water only, under certain physical conditions hydrogen and oxygen are themselves liquid and H₂O a gas. This solidity or liquidity of compounds, even though it were unpredictable before the event becomes intelligible and explicable thereafter. All physical combinations are interchangeable. Water can be resolved into hydrogen and oxygen, and again, from oxygen and hydrogen water can be formed. This cannot be said of organisms.

There is no reason to believe that at any remote time changes of the kinds now going on in the physical world did not occur. Nor can it be said that the physical world in general or any part of it has gone through any process of change in the same direction that could properly be called evolution. Explaining this view Mr. McDougall writes:

"Our island of matter, the stellar universe is approaching a condition in which all the matter will be collected in one solid mass at zero temperature. This history when completed would be one of a process of change in a certain direction. But would it be the history of evolution? In what sense would it be the history of evolution? I see 'no analogy.'"

(*Modern Materialism*: p. 129)

Besides, it is difficult to reconcile the repudiation of every form of vitalism by the emergentists with their idea that directive activity of God makes the emergent emerge.

For the exponents of the doctrine of emergent evolution, there are two ways open, either they would have to agree in repudiating even the immanent teleology of Bergson's *elan vital*, or else it would follow that teleological causation is but a disguised form of mechanistic causation. But purposive intelligent action implies always a considerable degree of organization. It would be absurd to attribute teleological action to electrons or any other premordial unevolved stuff. There has been, no evolution of mind from the physical realm, but evolution of mental capacities according to the fundamental laws of mind. Cognition cannot be legitimately regarded as evolved or as emergent out of the same events or

the same functions that have nothing of the cognition. Where there is life, there is mind, though it may be a very simple form of mind. Pure evolution is only in the organic world, which exhibits a progress of organization in respect of complexity and efficiency.

According to new-Darwinism organic evolution has been purely mechanistic, however, emergent. According to Lamarkism, mind or teleological activity has been a guiding influence without which there could have been no evolution. If the Biological Materialism were true, namely the assumption that all vital organization is material, Lamarkian transmission could not occur. How can mechanism through which any modification of form or function acquired by the adult organism, impress itself upon the germ-plasm? In matter there is no memory and therefore no evolution.

In the end, McDougall concludes that the whole doctrine of emergent evolution has been devised just in order to bridge or to diminish the gap between the physical and the mental, by importing some of mind into physical world. "We must be content with a provisional dualism, however, repugnant it may be to our aesthetic preference." (*Ibid* p. 156).

What kind of "Provisional Dualism," does McDougall suggest? For the working of the mind, he postulates a kind of organization that is physical yet not material. To this he gives the name of psycho-plasm; it consists not of material protons and electrons but of some other modification of ether. It is, therefore, physical though immaterial. (*Ibid*, p. 103). It works teleologically and is non-spatial, as opposed to spatial organizations, which works mechanistically. He tries to prove the existence of a non-spatial organization by referring to such organizations as that of a sonata which is physical though not material.

Scientifically speaking, we are not in a position to say definitely if there can be life without matter. But if it is to be considered as something infused into matter from the very beginning, then it means that there is higher reality which

makes use of both matter and life. Such a hypothesis appears difficult to be reconciled with facts of science and is evidently in need of clear guidance. If there is a God then how and why God created this world. Science itself will not be able to decide the issues unless there is a clear metaphysical insight.

On the other hand, if it is said that life has been introduced on this planet at a certain stage of material change, then we are led to believe in two different independent entities of life and matter: Since matter nowadays is considered a dynamic reality, the belief in yet another dynamic force of life, does not seem to be very helpful. It is believed that this mystical vital entity does not explain anything. Vitalists first suppose an entity and then all that we see in life and consciousness is attributed to it.

A contemporary view on this problem is that physical energy is composed of neither mind nor matter but of a sort of neutral stuff more fundamental than either. Others are of the opinion that it contains both mind and matter perhaps other things as well. But such stuffs either tend to the one or the other of the above-mentioned hypothesis, or remains as an unknown third entity more mysterious than the other two.

Recent Suggestions

From these discussions it is apparent that the question concerning the origin and nature of life, is still very puzzling. The general trend is now to admit that both mechanism and vitalism have some truth in what they say. We are asked to treat organic and inorganic as one. It is believed that "there are no new materials and perhaps no new forces at work in the living cell. But it seems as though there are present in nature's depths 'formative influences struggling up to freedom,' impulses and urges towards organization and towards relations which for want of a better word we may call social." (*Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 118).

Evolution is described as a process of organization, tending to increase complexity and integration and to in-

creased definiteness and stability, issuing in new structures, thus giving to the world new qualities, new powers and new modes of action, all leading to increased control and enlarged freedom. The human body is such a new structure; and human mind is such a new power and mode of action. (*Ibid*, p. 147). We are told that it took about thirty thousand years for human species to evolve. Before its emergence there was in Central Europe a race of men called the Cro-Magnons; but long before them there were other species which resembled mankind. (The Java man, Heidelberg man, Neanderthal man, Piltdown man, Rhodesian man, and Peking man have all been defined as "tentative," and are not counted among nature's successful experiments.) None of these are now taken as the ancestors of *Homo sapiens*, the man of today. Nature succeeded in its efforts when at last mankind appeared on earth.

The scientists have different views on "humanization," of an anthropoids:

(1) According to some reliable authors, the Simiidae of the Tertiary period show a distinct tendency in this direction and the morphology of the body of species (*Drypithecus*, *Sivapithecus*) is considerably nearer to that of the human beings than the morphology of the anthropoid apes living today.

(2) According to others the *Eoanthopus* of Piltdown (Dawn man) derives directly from the *Propliopithecus* of the Oligocenes or Eocene (Egypt). This primate would, therefore, be common stock from which the branches leading to the actual primates and man emerged about forty or fifty million years ago.

(3) Some other authors believe that the common ancestor is even more ancient. The truth is that nothing positive is known. (*Human Destiny*, p. 76).

Vis-a-vis these considerations those who believe in the Biblical version have also modified their views. They now admit that the value and purpose of scriptures is not scientific instruction, but moral and spiritual. We have no right to

accept that they should anticipate a scientifically accurate discovery of the method of creation than we have to demand that it should contain statement of the Copernican system or Newtonian Laws of gravitation.

The problem, as it appears, is not so simple (Dr. Iqbal has rightly pointed out that "the theory of evolution has brought despair and anxiety instead of hope and enthusiasm for life to the modern world." (*Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, p. 115). The reason is that in the light of modern theories of evolution the old optimistic views of religion have been undermined. The substitute is poor Science which does not lead us to any definite conclusions on the main points. The trend is rather materialistic.

The differences are so obvious that one can not accept both the views at the same time, or else we need a clear guidance. The plausibility of the scientific view is undeniable. If religion insists that its view is correct then it will have to justify its position.

Islam on Creation and Evolution

Little attempt has yet been made to see the problem in its true perspective. We are of the opinion that for a true understanding of creation both the help of science and spiritual insight is necessary. A careful examination of both the views is therefore essential. Especially with reference to the Biblical theme, we are in need of further enlightenment. Doubtless, there are in it references to many things that cannot be testified on scientific grounds; but still, so many other things are clarified if one scientifically studies the divine literature. A fundamental point is that the revelation should be taken as a whole. We have no reason to suppose that the chapter on Creation in the Old Testament is the last word. We get much more information from the latest revealed documents. We shall have to make use of all available information and see if the spiritual view can combine with that of science and enlighten us in any way. From this point

of view the description of creation given in the Holy Qura'n, the latest of the revealed books, may prove to be of great value. It will be seen that the doctrine here is presented in an altogether new form and is evolutionary in its spirit. That is the reason why the idea of evolution is not at all new to Muslim mind. Muslim thinkers did not stop at showing only the marked similarities between higher and lower species. They observed that there are species in plant life which are very near to animal world and the animals that are in proximity to man. They even suggested the names for such species which can be identified with the missing link in Darwinism — e.g. *Nizami Arudhi*, who calls them "Nasnas."

Amongst Muslim Philosophers, Ibn Muskawaih (d. 421 A.H.) was much nearer to modern evolutionism than others. Shibli Nu'mani sees in him the germs of Darwinism (*Ilm Kalam*: p. 141). He explained that the combination of primary substances first produced the minerals, which passed into the lowest form of plant life. In its highest stages it produced organisms that belong to both the the animal and vegetative life. The animal kingdom in the beginning exhibited only involuntary motions, then the sense of touch was developed which in the course of evolution differentiated into various senses. In the last states of the animal kingdom, such animals appeared which were erect and very near to mankind.

Discussing the philosophy of the "Brethren of Purity," (*Ikhwan us-Safa*) De Boer writes, "They have been presented as the Darwinists of the tenth century, but nothing could be more inappropriate. The various realms of Nature, it is true, yield, according to their encyclopaedia, an ascending and connected series; but the relation is determined not by bodily structure but the inner Form or Soul substance." The Form, according to them, wanders in mystic fashion, not in accordance with inner laws of formation or modified to the external conditions, but in accordance with the influence of the stars. In fact, in their system the body is matter of quite secondary consideration. The soul alone is

an efficient existence, which procures the body for itself. (*History of Philosophy in Islam*: p. 91-92).

Even if the above statement is to be regarded as correct they were not very far from the modern notions of evolution. Their views have much resemblance with those of the vitalists. There is definitely much improvement on the Neo-Platonic ideas and the crude theory of transmigration. Besides the above-mentioned philosophers some other great Muslim thinkers have also written on this subject, but in their teaching we find no such vulgarity of the half-truth that "men sprang from monkeys." Science now a days is more cautious, nevertheless, it is in extreme doubt if there has been any special creation of man. But it is quite possible that the cause of his supremacy over other animals is not to be seen in some external source but rather in the very nature which has produced varieties of species and has bestowed so much on man besides granting him the faculty of reason to rule over matter. In a sense there is a special creation for every organism. We might as well say that all that is, is nature's masterpiece. In the creation of man nature seems to have made use of animality in order to take it beyond itself.

The Qura'n, like all revealed books, confirms the simple and generally accepted truth that the world has not come of its own, but that it has a Source which is conscious and creative principle. If the physical energy had started pouring into this world from this source at a certain time, then it is not unlikely that it might also disappear or dissolve after some time. If such a source exists, then what we see by our naked eyes is not all. There is much more in the Universe. That which is fundamental defies all sense-perception.

The Qura'n, like the Bible asserts that the world was created in six days. (*Al-Qura'n, XXXII:4*)

"Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and that which is between in six days. He then mounted the Arsh (Throne)."

The "throne," is with reference to the things and beings

that have been created. But "the day," in the terminology of the Qura'n have never been taken in the literal sense. It refers to a very long duration of time:

"Verily a day with thy Lord is as (long as) a thousand years of what ye number."

(Al-Qura'n XXXII:47)

In this verse the word "thousand" has been used, but even thousand is not to be taken literally. In another place the same word implies a duration of fifty thousand years. Referring to the flight of angels to the Divine Being the Qura'n said:

"To Him ascend the angels and the Spirit in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years."

(Al-Qura'n LXX:5)

What is meant is this that the world has been created in a relatively indefinite period of time. This is what the science tells us.

It is pointed out in science that life is started in water then it spread on earth. The same idea is expressed in these words:

"And We created every living thing out of water."

(Al-Qura'n XXIV:47)

We are told that as a result of further development there appeared reptile-like creatures. These have been referred to in the Qura'n by the following words:

"Of these is (a kind) that goeth upon its belly."

And then there were birds and mammals:

"Of these (creatures) is (a kind) that goeth upon two legs and (a kind) that goeth upon four."

Such description of creatures goes well with that of the already quoted verse.

This is how creation took place. The Qura'n does not stop here; it tells us more than science can empirically testify. There are two aspects of Quranic view of creation. We are not only informed about the life in the phenomenal world but also about its existence in the domain of the Unseen. We are indeed amidst the brute facts of matter; science itself is

not in a position to testify whether there was any life prior to this existence? If so, then what was its nature? It is religion only that can reply to this question.

Like Bible, the Holy Qura'n says that Adam existed long before human species appeared on earth. We are told that he had a life though not beyond all physical implication: "And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Verily I am about to create a mortal from mire (dust)."

We do not know in what way the dust (*teen*) had been used in the creation of Adam but there is no doubt he did not have the same body as we have in this world. It could have been some other modification of physical energy of which we have no idea. But this was not all what Adam had in pre-existent life. What was most fundamental to his nature was the Spirit that was infused into him. It was not a mere life as it has been said in the Bible. It was the Divine element and a source of knowledge in him for which the angels had to bow before him. This means that Adam alone had a privileged position among other creatures. Hence about him it is said:

"So when I have made him and have breathed into him My spirit, do ye (i.e. angels) fall down prostrating before him."

(*Al-Qura'n XV: 29; XXX:7*)

Even the rebel spirit (Iblis or Devil) who refused to submit to him was not altogether free from physical nature, but in his own estimation he thought himself to be superior in his nature to man. And when he was asked to explain why he did not obey the Divine command, he replied:

"I am better than him. Thou (God) created me from fire while him thou didst create of dust."

(*Al-Qura'n, XXXIIIU:7*)

He forgot that both matter and fire are modifications of the same stuff. Besides, Adam was not mere clay, there was Divine spirit in him.

Contrary to what has been said in the Bible, Adam,

according to the Qura'n, had been given a unique knowledge which the angels did not possess. The verse says:

"And He taught (him) all the names."

(*Al-Qura'n, II:31*)

This kind of knowledge implies a differentiation between various names which leads to an awareness of good and evil. It is illogical to identify this awareness with the forbidden fruit. The very moment Adam and Eve had temptation for it, they knew it was bad. Thus the superiority of Adam lies in the fact that he had the Divine element in him and had been granted a knowledge *par excellence*. All this seems to have happened in a sphere about which we know nothing. The nature of the Garden (Eden) they were kept in, is also not known. This much we know that they were asked to live there and not to eat the fruit.

"O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden and eat from whence ye will, but come ye not nigh this tree lest ye be wrong-doer."

(*Al-Qura'n, VII:19*)

It is apparent from this that the Garden has a resemblance with our physical world. We can very well imagine that Adam who was himself made from out of dust could not have been kept in a purely spiritual domain. (Of course there appears to be a life of human souls even prior to the creation of Adam. That was probably the domain of pure spirits. It is also clear that the Garden does not refer to the world we live in. This is because it is a world of change. Nothing remains here eternally fresh and beautiful. The place referred to in the Scripture is perhaps an intermediary stage between the sphere of the Pure Spirit and the material existence in which we live.

If the forbidden fruit is not to be identified with knowledge of good and evil, then what could be its nature? There is no agreement on this point. George Bernard Shaw holds that the "apple," refers to a sense of shame in man. He says that Adam and Eve were not only naked in the garden of Eden but that their "sexual relations were also normal."

The eating of the apple only made them conscious of what they were habitually doing. "The moment Adam and Eve tasted the fruit they found themselves ashamed of their sexual relations which until then had seemed quite innocent to them." (Preface to *Androcles and the Lions*).

Dr. Iqbal believes that the eating of forbidden fruit means the sexual intercourse as Adam and Eve before this had probably been living an innocent life. In his own words: "The fall of man from a supposed state of bliss was due to the original sexual act of the human pair." (*Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 75).

Both these views are subject to criticism. From the Qura'nic point of view there was no nudity in the heaven, nor could there be any sexual act in the sense we understand it. The human progeny was only in the potential form. But it is apparent that Adam and Eve had somehow developed a temptation to seek pleasure from their carnal nature. Their disobedience lies in turning their attention from sublime spiritual pleasures to those of the lower forms of their physical existence. In this sense the mortal fruit seems to be no more than a conscious acquisition of carnal pleasures. The Devil, who had been cursed for not bowing before Adam, was there to take revenge from him. He seems to have taken an active part in intensifying their unlawful desire until that time Adam and Eve were not conscious of the new mode of life which was mysteriously hidden from their spiritual nature.

It seems that they were not quite content with the blissful life in heaven. Satan took advantage of this situation and encouraged them in their quest for the realization of their perverse nature. Hence he "whispered to them that he might manifest unto them that which was hidden from them of their shame." (VII:20). About the forbidden fruit he deceived them by expressing views quite contrary to its real nature. He told them:

"Your Lord forbade you from this tree lest ye should become angels and remain (in heaven) as immortals."

He swore unto them (saying):

"Verily I am a sincere adviser onto you."

(Al-Qura'n, VII:20/21)

No sooner they became self-indulgent than they saw their material forms with all their changing modes. This was not at all a happy experience. The heavenly bliss had gone away from them for ever. They were overtaken by a sense of guilt and shame. Their celestial raiments were removed from them and the "leaves of the Garden" by which they wanted to hide their shame were only a poor substitute.

"Then he (Devil) caused them to be deceived. And when they tasted of the tree their shame was manifest to them and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden."

(Al-Qura'n, VII:22)

But there was nothing that could be done; the cause had produced the effect. They were rebuked by their Lord Who had asked them to be away from the mortal fruit and had warned them not to be misled by Satan who was an open enemy to them. When they realised the gravity of their sin they readily admitted their fault in the following words and prayed for mercy.

"They (Adam and Eve) said: Our Lord, we had been unjust to ourselves. If thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, surely we are of the losers."

(Al-Qura'n, VII:23)

The wrong had already been done. They had to reap what they had sowed. They were asked to leave the Garden and undergo an ordeal for acquiring that material existence which we now possess and to be in a perpetual conflict with the rebel spirit. *(Al-Qura'n VII: 24/25)*

He (God) said:

"Go ye down (becoming) some of you the enemies of others, and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time."

He (God) said:

“There shall ye live, there shall ye die, and thence shall ye be brought forth.”

(Al-Qura'n, VII:24/25)

God does not disappoint those who sincerely turn towards Him in their distress. Hence as a result of humble supplications of Adam and Eve their sin was forgiven and they were blessed by God in their new career. The highest position on earth was bestowed on them provided they henceforward remain obedient to the Divine call which they were expected to receive from time to time. This position of Adam and Eve was quite contrary to that of the Devil who was not at all repentant for his wicked deeds. However, because of his grudge against them he had requested God to grant him respite to mislead the human beings who were obedient to Him. God granted him this permission with an indication that he would have no power on those who were true to Him.

This is what has happened before the emergence of man on earth. From the Qura'nic point of view it would be a wrong notion to believe that Adam was dropped from heaven on this world without suffering the pangs of creation and evolution. We are not informed through what stages man had to pass in order to reach the form of existence he has now acquired. The “teen” (clay) with which he was created has been described in the Holy Qura'n (II:37) as firm clay, the dry clay like the potter's (XV:26): the clay that gives forth sound, of black mud given shape:

“Such a metal with the melange of water turned into the human seed. It was allowed to develop in humidity and made to grow in a safe lodging.”

(Al-Qura'n, XXIII:13)

There is no reason to suppose that the metal used in the creation of man is different from that of other species. It is neither the container nor its attributes which are unique but rather the content or essence which is extraordinary in the being of man. It is this essence which makes him a true image of God. Nowhere has it been said that the process by which man has been created is different from what we

see in the emergence of vegetative and animal kingdoms. We have been clearly informed that God has caused us "to grow as a growth from the earth."

(Al-Qura'n, LXXI:17)

Passing through various stages of life during a long period of evolution, man has emerged on earth as God's vicegerent. This description of his past career makes it abundantly clear that evolution is the principle of progress for all time. The creative impulse does not come from any source other than

"the Divine Being Himself who has brought us into being from earth and made us dwell in it."

(Al-Qura'n, XI:61)

Whatever has been said about the events in the Unseen, We are not in a position to test its validity except by creating a spiritual insight in us. All that we talk about evolution in the physical world may help us to understand our carnal self, but the causes due to which the physical has come into existence remain hidden. This picture of creation and evolution in the revealed teachings is so remarkable that by mere science and rational philosophy we can neither hope to reach it nor can understand its true significance. This can work as an hypothesis for those who are keen to work for their future evolution.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESURRECTION

There are people who bear so much trouble to see that they live a life free from all kinds of blemishes and there are others who pay no heed to moral and spiritual call that emerges from within ones own higher self and feel all the time in fulfilling the desires of their carnal selves. Now which of these two ways of life is to be praised? Either we shall have to prove that there is not much difference in them, or we shall have to admit that those are intelligent and superior types who suffer in this life to make it ideal or work for their spiritual well being with a conviction that it pays in the long run to do so. In the latter case, we shall have to conclude that good is always preferable. It may be claimed that since a bad man even in this life bears the consequences of his deeds, sooner or later, there is no reason to believe that there is life after death. This is to a certain extent correct but it cannot be said that all evil-doers are taken to task in this world. We shall have to suppose that if not here, there is some other world in which they shall have to give an account of what they have been doing in this world.

There are philosophers who believe that no man is wicked. All human beings act according to what they consider to be good. However, we all admit that there is a lot of difference between the acts of those persons whose character is like that of Socrates and those that are criminals. We praise Socrates because of his knowledge and character; this implies that knowledge is also important for knowing good and evil. We also know persons who always justify their

behaviour by referring to the circumstances in which they perform a certain act. If there is any picking of conscience for any act, even then this causistry can console him.

Except those criminals who are caught by the police and punished, anyone who can dodge the authorities, may enjoy in this life more than those who persist in their efforts to live a good moral life. That is why in certain philosophies, life after death is a moral postulate to reward those who bear hardship for achieving moral perfection. Even those who live an immoral life in ignorance will be held responsible for at least not trying to know how they should have lived. Due to all these considerations, it cannot be believed that a person living happily in this life is really fortunate unless it is proved decidedly that there is no life after death. Besides, it is wrong to suppose that human beings do not realize that sometimes they act unjustly or immorally. It is a common experience that at times criminals themselves approach the authority to admit their guilt. Such persons may not be punished in the Hereafter if they bear the consequences of their deeds in this life. But if a person has a mere sense of remorse after he has successfully dodged the authority, he too is expected to reap what he has sowed in this life.

In this discussion the reference is to only those persons who live an immoral life or are unjust to their fellow beings. It cannot however be believed that these are the only persons who are blameworthy. If there is a God who expects from us to live a life under His guidance then all those persons who do not pay heed to the divine call are blameworthy. If, as we are told, God in His infinite mercy has sent His Messengers to lead human beings to the right path then except those who follow this path all others to whom the Message reaches, will be held responsible for ignoring it or not trying to seek their well being by following it. Such is the case with all those who persist in their wrong beliefs or follow a religion of their forefathers or who deny the very existence of God without caring to know their creator.

It is clearly stated that the main purpose of the Divine guidance through the prophets is to remind that there is God who has not created us in vain but that He would like to see us organize our lives according to His Commandments.

"He casteth the Holy Spirit from His Command upon whom He will of His servants that He may warn of the Day of Meeting."

(*Al-Qura'n, XL:15*)

This warning refers to an objection raised by polytheists and atheists against the doctrine of Resurrection. It states that according to them such a phenomenon can never occur for the reason that they believe themselves to have emerged from the dust and when they die they will return to the same condition in which they were prior to their emergence.

And they say:

"When we are bones and fragments shall we, forsooth, be raised up as a new creation?"

(*Al-Qura'n, XVII:49*)

Such an argument is not tenable. The dust in itself has no capacity to produce a being who is far superior to it. We shall have to suppose that there is a Being who has created us from this stuff. The Divine will, or command, is fundamental for all creation. With reference to the creation of man there is an additional factor which raises his status. We are told that the creative essence has mingled with the dust. Had man been a mere product of dust, it could be believed that there was no life for him after death, but the creative element in him would not allow him to perish. That is why it is said that the Divine Being who has created individuals when they were not at all existent can very easily again bring those beings into existence who have already been born at one time:

"O mankind! If ye are in doubt concerning the Resurrection then verily We (God) have created you from dust."

(*Al-Qura'n, XII:5*)

In this connection there is also a reference to the views of those who believe that there is no God. According to them

there is a universal creative time (*Dahr* or *la duree*) which goes on creating things and being without enlightening us how we should live or what should be the ideal of our life or what is the reward of good life when we perish:

“And they say:

There is naught but our life of the world and we die and we live, and naught destroyeth us save time, and when they have no knowledge whatsoever; (all) that they do but guess.”

(*Al-Qura'n, XLV:24*)

This means that they are not very keen to find out a correct solution of this metaphysical problem. They console themselves with certain ideology which is based on a mere conjecture. Students of philosophy are well acquainted with this type of imaginary metaphysics. What is needed is a sure guidance by following which we can acquire a knowledge which is beyond all doubt. The stress in Divine literature is on the point that we should not be deceived by the charm of this worldly life. God has created us only to see whether we are fascinated by the Real or the ephemeral. We are told that if we believe in Him and try to live a life under His guidance, the success in our future life is guaranteed:

“Verily the worldly life is but a sport and a pastime. And if ye believe and ward off (evil) He will give you your wages, and will not ask you of your worldly wealth.”

(*Al-Qura'n, XLVII:36*)

We are told that we should not remain under the impression that this is the best possible world. In comparison to this, the life we shall have in the other world is much better and everlasting. Those who are to be successful in the Hereafter, quite opposite is their impression of this life. We are told that at the time they will realize that the worldly life was only a moment in eternity without end:

“And ye will think that ye have tarried but a little while.”

(*Al-Qura'n, XVII:52*)

About the life after death the revelation states:

"Therein they shall not taste of death except that which they had experienced previously (in their worldly life)."

(Al-Qura'n, XLIV:56)

We are informed that all human beings will assemble in the next world and then it will be decided who was really meritorious:

"Verily those who believe (Muslims) and those who are Jews and the Sabaeans and the Christians and Magians, and the polytheists (idol worshippers) . . . truly Allah will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection. Verily Allah is witness over all things."

(Al-Qura'n, XXII:17)

The Divine Commandment repeatedly tells us:

"Know that ye shall be gathered to Him at Resurrection."

(Al-Qura'n, II:203)

This has been stated that we be very careful in our present lives. We have obligations towards Allah and to the human beings in general. Nay, there is even an indication that we have to be sympathetic and considerate towards the animal life as well. We have no right to make use of God's creatures as mere tools. They too have their independent existence and are created with some purpose. Since human beings have not been granted a knowledge of all things, it is difficult for them to understand that they are also responsible to God as we are:

"There is not an animal on the earth, nor a flying creature on two wings, but they are people like unto you. We have nothing left in the Book. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered."

(Al-Qura'n, VI:38)

A reference may here be made to the doctrine of redemption in Christianity according to which, the Son has sacrificed himself to atone for the inherited sin of Adam and the sins of those who believed in him. Hence Christians do not now bother about their acts of omission or commission. A belief in such a doctrine is so detrimental to the spiritual well-being of man. The Holy Qura'n clearly points out that there is no original sin, but human beings are responsible only for the

sins which they commit in this life and that at the time of Resurrection no one except God has any authority to forgive these sins:

“Be mindful of the Day when no one will be able to do anything for the other and no intercession on their behalf will be accepted.”

(Al-Qura'n, II:48)

Prophets and spiritual men are indeed the chosen people of God but even they are helpless in this matter. In case they would like to plead on behalf of any person, they will first have to seek God's permission for making such a request.

So much stress is on this doctrine that it seems that a belief in God and a belief in the life after death are complementary. A true concept of God necessarily leads one to believe in the Hereafter. That is why we are told that mere good acts without right beliefs are not of much help. The persons who do not believe in God and refuse to listen to the Divine Message, willingly choose a path which leads them to their doom:

“And those who disbelieve will be gathered unto hell.”

(Al-Qura'n, XIII:33)

We are told that at the time of Resurrection whatever a person has done in this life will become manifest to him:

“And whoso doeth evil as atom's weight, will see it also.”

(Al-Qura'n, XCIX: 7/8)

We shall be asked as to how we have served God and His creatures in the circumstances we were placed in and as to how we have made use of the faculties that were granted to us:

“(O Man) follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Verily the hearing, the sight, and the heart — each of these, it will be asked.”

(Al-Qura'n, XVII:38)

This means that life is a serious affair. Whatever we do we are responsible for it. A person who is righteous and good, he proves by his actions as to what he is, and there is every possibility for him to emerge successfully through the ordeal

of Resurrection. He who concentrates on the good of this world only and goes not prepare himself for the future well-being, it means he blindly sacrifices the eternal for the temporal:

“Whoso doeth right, it is for his soul, and whoso doeth wrong it is against it. And afterward unto your Lord ye will be brought back.”

(Al-Qura'n, XLV:15)

“Whosoever doeth right it is only for his own soul that he doeth right, and whosoever erreth, erreth only to his hurt. No laden soul can bear another's load.”

(Al-Qura'n, XVII:15)

It seems that the Prophet in his time was very grieved to see that despite all his efforts and manifest proofs of his divine mission the unbelievers would not come to the right path. He was advised by the Holy Spirit not to bother about those who do not care to listen to him and persist in their wrong doings. He was told that such persons will always be in the world and they too in a way serve Divine purpose:

“And We (God) suffer those who look not for Meeting with Us to wander blindly on in their contumacy.”

(Al-Qura'n, X:12)

As against these the believers know that there is Some One in the world of Unseen and they try to see that they follow His path. It is they who can be forgiven even if on certain occasions they behave ignorantly. They have been assured by the Deity that it is they who will be granted that which is good in the Hereafter:

“Those who are mindful of their Lord in the Unseen, to them belongeth forgiveness and great reward.”

(Al-Qura'n, LXVII:13)

There are people in the West who believe that the idea of Hell does not go well with the concept of an all-loving God. Such views are mostly due to an exaggerated statements on the doctrine of Love in the Gospels. If the Son is so loving that he turns his other cheek when he receives a slap on the one, then it is logical to expect that the Father will even be

more considerate to those who are disobedient to Him. This is a mere wishful thinking. From the standpoint of the true religion there is no justification for such views. To deny the reality of hell is to believe that God in the Hereafter will not make any differentiation between the good and evil. If the very purpose of creation is to see who is who, then whatever is written about reward and punishment, is the very basis on which the foundation of human creation and right path has been laid.

If God can remain a Loving God despite His creation of this world which is full of miseries, then He can very well be regarded as loving when the disbelieving and the wicked will suffer. God's love is not dependent on rewarding persons who do not deserve His favour:

"The companions of the Fire are not equal to those of the heaven. The companions of heaven are those who are successful."

(Al-Qura'n, LIX:20)

That is the reason why men of understanding will not mind if they have to forego some of the good of this life in order that they are saved from the torture of hell which may or may not be for all eternity but this much is clear that it will decidedly be a very sad affair for long period in the world of eternity. Hence those who are true to their Lord, pray to Allah, that they are saved from that ordeal:

"The servants of the Beneficent . . . are those who (pray): 'Our Lord! Avert from us the painful chastisement of hell.' Lo! the doom thereof is anguish."

(Al-Qura'n, XXV:65)

If such the important event of Resurrection is inevitable, then it is natural to ask when it will take place. To this the Prophet (Peace be on him) has been advised to reply that nothing definitely can be said about it. Had they been intelligent enough his very existence could have made them realize their position in the domain of eternity. No one except God is aware of its appointed time. It seems that human beings are not at all serious to know the effects of their heedless life in the Hereafter:

"They ask thee (Muhammad — peace be upon him) of the (destined) Hour, when will it come to pass, say, 'Knowledge thereof is with my Lord only. He alone will manifest it at its proper time. It is heavy in the heaven and the earth. "

(Al-Qura'n, VIII:187)

About the Doom's day, this much has been made clear that it will come at a time when it is least expected.

Its nature is mostly like any other calamity but it is distinct from all calamities in the sense that it would be universal. And the worst sufferers will be those who have died or will die while persisting in their wrong beliefs and acts. They live in this world in the same way as a person spends his time in his pleasure trips:

"Deem they themselves secure from the coming on them of a pall of Allah's punishment, or the coming of the Hour suddenly while they are unaware?"

(Al-Qura'n, XII:107)

Its exact timing is known to God alone and the people have been informed:

"It cometh not to you save unawares. They used to question the Prophet as if he were well informed, about it. He was asked to declare: "Knowledge thereof is with Allah only but most of the mankind know not."

(Al-Qura'n, VII:187)

The enjoyments of paradise and the tortures of hell have been described only to indicate that there would be a gulf of difference between the lives lived in these two regions. The "eternal abode," or paradise with all its beauty is for those who do not seek self-aggrandisement or exploit others or behave mischievously. It is reserved for those who are pious and devoted servants of God. It is stated that there they will have all that they desire. Christian writers sometimes are critical about the Qura'nic description of pleasures of heaven and torments of hell. They believe that all beings and their actions are spiritual in the life after death. They conveniently forget that according to the Gospels,

even Jesus who was far superior to his followers in his spirit had to come out of his grave in his bodily existence hale and hearty on the third day of his crucifixion. If spirit were the only real entity in him, it could have gone to heaven directly "to take its seat at the right hand of the Power." If he had gone to heaven with his bodily existence, then he could have been lifted up before bearing all sorts of humiliation, torture and crucifixion. The ordeal through which he had undergone was meaningless. In fact actually this is what had happened from Muslim point of view. It is true that at the time of his departure from the world a certain culprit was crucified under the impression that he was Jesus. They even buried him in a grave, but he was not Jesus. His supporters had no idea of his miraculous escape. They were very grieved to his sad end and in order to save their face and avoid disgraceful remarks about their Master, they removed the corpse of the crucified person from his grave and declared the doctrine of the Resurrection of Jesus and his departure from this world.

This means that even from Christian point of view a spiritual man's body offers no hindrance in his flight in heavenly spheres. The story of Resurrection is a fabricated tale but it proves beyond doubt that Christians at the time of Jesus, had a better idea about the relation of a spiritual man's body to his soul. Muslim writers have a clear notion of it. They point out that it is far from the Justice of God to believe that the body of a spiritual man which suffers a lot in the path of righteousness can perish in the life after death. Likewise those who are slaves to their carnal desires in this world must also bear its brunt in the Hereafter. With this assumption we proceed towards the Deity, otherwise there are no hard and fast rules to limit the bounties of Lord. Nevertheless a true believer has no doubt that there will be no deviation from what has been expressed in the Scripture with reference to the pleasures of heavenly life we must not also forget the experience of beatific vision to those who are true servants of God. Since He is the source of all that is good and beautiful in both the worlds, we can

understand how superb would be this experience. We have been informed that no such vision will be granted to those who live blindly in this world.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF GOOD AND EVIL

When we talk about moral character we mean that kind of habitual behaviour in which all our acts help us to seek the Highest Good. The ideals for the realization of which human beings work are supposed to be good. One might ask, can all the objects that are pleasing to us, be regarded as good? We have to admit that this is not the case. According to the Scripture a thing which we do not like can be good, and vice versa a thing which we like may not be good. Despite this, human beings persistently seek objects which they believe to be good without caring to know if it is actually the case. Persons who do not have an insight into the nature of things tend to be greedy and selfish. They hardly care to know that all that glitters is not gold. Such persons live blindly. A majority of human beings live in this condition till the end of their lives. All this is due to the fact that their carnal self dominates in them. Such persons are neither keen to know the truth nor are they serious to acquire a knowledge without which one is not safe from the mischief of ones own carnal self. All conflicts and wars between individuals and nations are due to carnal desires.

Since man is a social animal, there are not many persons who do not look beyond their own self-interest. People in general identify their self either with their family or with their nation. This is the limit of ego's expansion in nature. There are hardly any persons in the world who identify their self-interest with humanity. The movements which had well-being of mankind as their objects, were missionary

religions in the past. Most of them are now divided into groups and sub-groups and practise a closed morality. This is because they have lost their original impetus. In our time atheistic socialism and secular democracy are preached by some western powers with a missionary zeal, but since they are not humanitarian movements in the real sense, they cannot be compared to the religious movements with no distinction between the privileged and the disadvantaged classes of human beings.

The factors which establish bonds of brotherhood between individuals of all races and nationalities are not generally known. In fact very few persons are serious about them. However, we cannot say that ego in man or bonds of unity between the members of closed societies, are unnatural. It seems that these are nature's devices to save individuals and societies from certain hostile forces to lead them to preliminary stages in the development of mankind. But nature does not stop at that. It is only at higher stages of mankind that man emerges as the most sublime creation of God. In order to know his real nature we have to concentrate on the structure of our self in itself. There is yet another entity in human self besides its misleading carnal ego. This is the spirit or *Ruh* in man which is a manifestation of Grace in the material existence. It is because of this that we sometimes receive commands that are the very source of enlightenment.

Kant was so impressed by it that he gave the name of Categorical Imperative and developed his philosophy of moral will. We are of the opinion that we cannot develop a consistent moral philosophy by merely referring to this phenomena. We have to take into account all that is good and evil in the nature of our self and have to uproot all that is evil in us in order to develop a real Categorical Imperative. The Divine teachings refer to all these commands by stating that human self receives these from two distinct sources of good and evil, but in order to differentiate between them we need further guidance. Unless it is satisfactory we cannot become

moral.

Neither all our acts which are in our self-interest or in the interest of our fellow beings are absolutely good and absolutely evil nor the principles of any vague humanitarianism or positivism can lead us to become an embodiment of human love. It is a philosopher's job to find out the source which directs us to the right path for in all likelihood this path alone can be the path of love. Without probing into the origin of the impulse of love in the beings of Nature we are not in a position to deal with the problems of moral philosophy. We know that human beings in general follow a traditional or prevalent code of morality. But the impulse which has produced lovers of humanity cannot be explained by any reference to these. This requires effort and enlightenment. The persons who live in ignorance are bound to be materialistic for the world is a play ground of the forces that appeal to our carnal self. There is no wonder if such persons regard good as evil and evil as good.

There are two conflicting forces of matter and spirit. Both these are active in man. The spirit or Ruh is an entity which is the product of Grace. It remains dormant in man until he pays a particular attention to it and starts discarding all selfish desires in him. Doubtless, it is a difficult task which cannot be undertaken without making use of the impulse of love under proper guidance. Only then the spirit works as a free agent in man. It is the working of this spirit which is sometimes described as the opening of the heart or breast that leads man to accept the Divine Law (*Shariah*) and tread the path of progress. In this way man can liberate himself from the clutches of his carnal self.

Hinduism and morality

Those who explore the metaphysical world of the unseen, point out to the two types of mystical domains which have a great appeal. One of them is real and the other is the product of human ego. Very few mystics have an access to

the real. Most of them derive pleasure from their ego's conjecture in the form of imagination and fantasy. It appears to be light while it is neither a light nor a reality but a sheer product of the principle of darkness created by God for man in order to be removed by man.

There are philosophies which are a mixture of mystical and rational thinking. These advocate all sorts of doctrines which are regarded as spiritual. When Radha Krishna writes about Hinduism, he refers to one of these philosophies. With a sense of approval he states that all the communities who have accepted this creed have taken part in the formation of its beliefs. It is evident that it is not logically thought out consistent philosophy. Such are the views of Mahatma Gandhi also about this religion, for he points out that fortunately or unfortunately there are no universally accepted doctrines in it. This is not the case with the teachings of a religion which is based on truth.

It has already been pointed out that in Hinduism the ultimate reality of Brahman is god only in name, for it has none of the characteristics of a god. Since it is impersonal, it has no message to convey for human guidance. He who guides a person, it is understood that he would lead him to the right path. A god who is deaf and dumb is good for nothing. He is often described as a Divine Ground. We are told that he has incarnated many other gods but strangely enough he forgot to prepare any ground for his own devotees to set their foot upon. As for the important Trinity of incarnated gods in Hinduism, it is not explained what the creator Brahma, the preserver Vishnu, and the destroyer Shiva expect from their devotees and how they can be helpful to them. Besides these, there are supposed to their wives whose names are Saraswati, Lukshmi, Kali etc. It is believed that these are the goddesses of artistic attainments, wealth, and position etc. We know that these objects are also not very helpful in the domain of morality. In fact it cannot be said these gods and goddesses are moral beings. In such a case, we wonder how they can lead their devotees to become

moral. Even the behaviour of Lord Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu was not very moral.

It has been pointed out that the theory of transmigration of soul in Hinduism is also deceptive. It is advocated in order to preserve the racial superiority of high caste Hindus. The low castes are befooled when they are asked to serve the high castes most obediently in order to seek their rebirth in a family of high caste Hindus.

Buddhism and Morality

Buddhism has no doubt a humanitarian outlook, but since it has emerged from Hindu society, it has inherited some of its doctrines of which the theory of transmigration of soul is one. Like Hindus, Buddhists believe that death is a prelude to rebirth. They try to explain this phenomena by referring to their causes which are supposed to be libidinous drives and craving for gratification of human desires. There is no end to human sufferings as long as man does not liberate himself from his chain of birth and rebirth. Buddhism, however, does not believe in the division of humanity into low caste and high caste groups. According to Buddha whosoever is born is bound to suffer. Since this is due to human desires and cravings, these are to be gradually discarded from human self. With this process there remains in man no will or craving to bring him into existence again. This is the highest stage of spiritual development which is known as *Nirvana*. After this man becomes one with the ocean of reality which remains aloof from the world of *Maya* (illusion) that has emerged from it.

We are told that Buddha had also preached the doctrine of moderation which is known as the Middle Way: Its principles appear to be sound though not quite consistent with the philosophy of *Nirvana*. We have already referred to his doctrine about Right views, Right intention, Right speech, Right action, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness and Right concentration. These are praise worthy in

all spiritual teachings when a guide explains the significance of every word that is preached, but unfortunately there is no elaboration of the terms that are used here. Neither we know the meaning of right nor have we any idea about wrong views, intention action etc. This is not the case with the revealed teachings of Islam which distinctly refer to the outward and hidden purification and impurities.

If all desires including hankering for survival and even the wish for extinction are evil, then it is not known how the realization of the ideal of *Nirvana* can be regarded as good. A philosophy which ultimately leads to the extinction of all desires, can neither be good for the individual nor for the society. Spiritual philosophers in Islam know very well that all that is in nature is not good for man. Such is the case with human self. There are evil and good tendencies and desires in all of us. To find out what is good in the external world and within us, we require guidance. We have been created in this material world to make use of nature for our spiritual development. This task is to be undertaken in an artistic manner so that we live as attached or detached to this world as the lotus in the water. We are told that from Buddhist point of view man liberates himself from the chain of birth and rebirth after achieving *Nirvana* by merging himself in the ocean of the universal reality from which he has emerged. This Reality is not God for God has no place in Buddhist philosophy. It is highly doubtful that a man, even after coming to know the dreadful picture of transmigration, would like to be merged as a drop in the ocean. This is complete self-annihilation which is quite different from that of the doctrine of *Fana* (annihilation) in Islam which leads to survival of the self in the Divine Being. This means that Buddhism places man in a predicament where he has to make a choice between the devil of birth and rebirth and the deep (i.e. impersonal ocean of Reality). All this ideology which has no proof of its validity has developed due to the fact that Buddha was not enlightened about God and the mode of His revelation. If the world is *Maya*, then the source

from which it has emerged should either be real existence or non-existence. Since nothing can come forth from non-existence, we shall have to conclude that it is existence which has produced *Maya*. This cannot be without any purpose. If existence produces illusions, then it is expected from it to make them known to those for whom these have been produced. Granted that human beings live and have their beings in *Maya* but they would like to liberate themselves from it. If the purpose is not made known to them, then the existence is as illusory as *Maya*. Revealed religions call this existence, the reality of God who has revealed His purpose to humanity. The world has a charm which is misleading but not altogether *Maya*. It has a reality of its own but it is temporary. It has been created with a set purpose to mislead those who are fascinated by its charm. It can also be helpful to those who would like to go beyond it and sincerely seek the Real. At that time the Real reveals Itself through the very existence which is supposed to be *Maya*.

Judaism and Morality

Judaism is a revealed religion with a Law which is Divine but it is not preserved in its original form due to centuries of distortion by its so-called religious men. The conception of God in this religion is rather clear, but due to the habit of the Jews to look down other people, they feel that even God has a prejudiced outlook for other nations. They have rightly stressed on the point that man should love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his might. Those who have extreme love for God, their love for God's creatures is also extraordinary. That is why great Jewish prophets were embodiment of love, but it is strange that long before the birth of Jesus, the followers of these prophets had acquired a narrow outlook and practised a closed morality. This clearly proves that their sincerity with God is doubtful.

Indeed they are also conscious of it and their writers boldly claim that their community is not at all religious.

but this statement is not quite correct, for racism is the creed of this religion and no one can doubt about it. They have a particular behaviour and mode of life which makes them different from that of other communities. Human beings in general are not religious in our time. The creed of racism leads a community to an approach to life which is different from that of others. It is this aspect of life which makes the Jewish community fanatically religious, despite the fact that they in general do not act according to the spiritual teachings of their religion. One remarkable characteristic of their being a narrow-minded religious community is the fact that they have failed to develop a humanitarian outlook which is against the spirit of a true religion. This is one of the reasons why they cannot identify themselves with the country in which they live. However, he who calls himself a Jew means to say that he believes in One God and the Prophet Moses. This is very good. It is just as the word Muslim or Mumin which means a person who believes in One God and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). If Islam is the true religion of God, it is not known why Arabs and other Muslim nations do not take pride in calling themselves Muslims. Another proof of Jewish adherence to their faith is the fact that they call their state Israel which is the name of their prophet. Muslims have not shown any such regard to their spiritual men who were real well-wishers of humanity.

It is sometimes pointed out that Jews are not serious about their life after death and some other doctrines in their religion, but this only proves that they have a distorted form of religion. This seems to be the reason due to which, like pagans they are greedy for their worldly life and like other racial groups they follow a closed morality. This leads to discrimination against other people which is a manifest ill-will towards the humanity. The great prophets of Israel who had preached the religion of unitarianism were ideal men. Their character was superb. They were not at all prejudiced against humanity.

This type of Jewish behaviour is the result of their distortion of revealed teachings. Because of this they have suffered a lot in the past, but despite this there is no improvement in them. In our time they have succeeded in establishing their state in the Middle East by the help of some western powers that represent the same people who were their staunch enemies in the past; but now due to certain reasons, they whole-heartedly help them against the Arabs who, it seems that, will not be able to face the challenge of Israel. From what has been stated above, it is evident that the Jews are very loyal to their people and the creed, whereas Muslims are divided into various groups. In order to see that they do not suffer any more humiliation by the Jews, they must sincerely follow the principles of their own religion which had once led them to the path of progress which makes man acquire all that is sublime in both the worlds. As long as they call themselves Arabs, Persian, Turks etc., they shall hardly be able to defend their countries and protect their rights.

Christianity and Morality

Like all Jews Jesus Christ, who was the last of the prophets of Israel, was also aware of the fact that the basis of all true religion in the world is the doctrine of the unity of God and the Divine guidance for human well-being. He could never think of any Trinitarian creed. Christians point out that his most fundamental teaching was his Gospel of love towards humanity. It has already been explained that the love of humanity and in fact love of God's creatures is the natural outcome of extreme love for the One Almighty God. It is also a well-known fact that Christian preachers, in order to make their religion acceptable to pagans, discarded Jewish laws which even Jesus could never think of abolishing. As a result of this, they did embrace a sort of revealed religion but it had no revealed laws.

The Christian doctrine of Redemption states that Jesus had died on cross to redeem mankind from the inherited

original sin of Adam and Eve. Its implication leads to the conclusion that sinful acts of Christians have been forgiven, for a God who forgave the sins of those who did not believe in His Son, cannot be so inconsiderate as to punish those who have faith in His incarnated Son. Christians hardly realize that such a belief is so injurious and harmful to moral well-being of man. The idea that the loving God had witnessed the crucifixion of His own Son as a silent spectator, leads to imputation of cruelty in Him. It cannot be believed that Almighty God was helpless in forgiving an inherited sin of human beings which has been attributed to them on spurious grounds. A people who believe in a God who did not hesitate to crucify his own Son, are not supposed to be more considerate towards others than Him. This leads to the conclusion that Christians neither regard God as Almighty Being, nor can they themselves be considered as more loving to others than the Father was do His Son.

It is a fact that in the whole history of revealed religion there is not a single instance which supports the idea of sacrificing a man's life for seeking the redemption of another man's sin from Almighty God. The best way for a sinner to seek forgiveness from God is to turn towards Him with humble supplications after repentance. It cannot be believed that the loving God would disappoint him. The last of God's Testaments, Al Qura'n, makes it abundantly clear that by following this method, even the sin of Adam and Eve was forgiven. This is the only way to seek forgiveness from God for all time. It is because of this that there is so much stress on repentance in revealed teachings. What is strange in the doctrine of Redemption is the fact that the human beings who are supposed to be sinners, cannot even repent despite the fact they are blamed for a sin which they have not committed at all. A God who regards all human beings as sinners for an act of sin committed by their parents in the garden of Eden, has a highly distorted notion of justice. It is evident that they all would have been doomed if the Jews had not taken His son to the task.

Even the idea that Jesus was the Son of God and not simply a human being, can make other human beings regard themselves inferior to him. No sane person would regard anyone as God who had been born and brought up like all other human beings. If, on one hand, such a complex in Christians is so harmful to their moral progress, on the other hand, the exaggerated statements about his doctrine of Love, can make them bold. They may commit all sorts of sins without any fear of their repercussions. If the Son was so loving that he would turn his other cheek also to the man who slapped him on the one, then the Father is expected to be more loving to the believers whose behaviour is disgraceful.

Morality and Western Philosophy

From Christian point of view monastic life is meritorious, but it is not possible for all Christians to adopt this mode of life. In general, very few persons are attracted towards it, and in Christianity there is no code of behaviour for all those who live in society. That is why they have borrowed a lot from the pagan thinkers of Greece and Rome in order to organize their social life. A truly revealed religion enlightens on all aspects of human life. That is why it absolutely forbids any such tampering Divine teachings. All that is important in the ideology which is now prevalent in the Christian West has nothing to do with the revealed teachings. For them the religion is a private affair. One may believe in it or not. It would not be incorrect to say that Western people are more faithful to the pagan way of life than to Christianity. As a result of this, the secularism of democracy, though not atheistic socialism, has been reconciled with their religion. In order to justify it, Christian writers refer to a statement in the Gospel which asks the believers to pay their dues to both the authorities of God and the Caesar. This is again a deviation from truly revealed teachings, for according to the Scripture God is the only authority in both the worlds.

We know that Caesar was a pagan Roman emperor who could never think of becoming a Christian. Jesus had asked his disciples to pay their taxes to the Government for the reason that in his time Christians at Jerusalem were a tiny minority under the Roman domination. If Jesus had asked them to pay their dues to the Government, that is only because he could not afford to antagonize it before bringing the Jews to the right path. He might not have expressed such a view if Christians were in majority and in a position to form their own Government. Now when almost all persons are Christians in Western countries, those who compare their authorities to pagan kings, consciously or unconsciously feel that paganism rules over Christendom.

In Greek philosophy a reference is made to many ideals of which each of them can be regarded as the highest good. Actions that help a man to realize these are considered as good. Those that offer an hindrance are evil. The highest good or the *summon bonum* are ideals that are supposed to be good for both the individuals and the society. Wisdom, bravery, temperance, and justice are regarded as virtues. Greek thinkers in general believed that for living a moral life or for acquiring these virtues, metaphysical insight is not needed. They were not conscious of the fact that wisdom is an attribute of God. According to the Divine philosophy that man alone is wise who derives wisdom from the Divine Being. Hence it cannot be said that polytheists, disbelievers, and hypocrites have any wisdom. Likewise, all those who fight courageously for any casue are not brave in the real sense. He who fights for the cause of truth can alone be regarded as brave. Temperance is not a mere middle path that can be determined by imaginative thinking. If there is insight into the nature of things, even extremes can be justified. Those who follow the commandments of God, tread the safest path of temperance or moderation. Justice is not merely to reward and punish according to a certain law. Those who understand the implications of the Divine Law, they only can be shrewd enough to find out who is deserving

and what he deserves.

Kant has rightly suggested that intention is good in itself, but to know what is good in itself, a certainty in knowledge is most essential. By merely believing in the validity of certain laws and commands, we are not in a position to act with confidence. The behaviour of such persons cannot be regarded praise-worthy. What is required is to definitely know what actions are good and why they are good. He who has this kind of certainty in his knowledge, nothing comes out of him except good. Not to speak of the disbelievers, even most of the true believers in our time are ignorant of the life after death; they merely believe in it without acquiring a proper conviction. It is rarely known that even the experience of life after death is possible in this present life. But there is a method for this. All those persons who are in doubt about it, know very well that no wise man has definitely disproved it. In such a case, an intelligent man is one who takes precaution about it in his present life in order to see that his life in the world of eternity is successful. In polytheistic creeds and in the secular philosophies of the West, there is no enlightenment on this fundamental issue.

In order to find out the right intention, Kant proposes certain principles. In the light of these an action can be judged. One of these principle states that the action of man should be such as it could become a universal law which is applicable to all persons. It is doubtful that in actual life this principle can work satisfactorily. A person may like to act with the intention to see that all human beings should be equal to each other in all respects. Despite the obvious difficulties in realizing such an ideal, we cannot blame him from Kantian point of view. We know that with reference to power in the state neither all persons can hold it nor can the state survive with this arrangement. Even society would not tolerate a man who holds such a view. If he is punished as a rebel for preaching such a doctrine, Kant can only console him by referring to a reward in the life Hereafter. What is required is to determine the position of a man

in the society and then to make use of his services. A formal type of morality is incapable to lead anyone to the path of progress.

It is divine guidance that makes man conscious of his mission in life. If he fails in it, then only there can be a reward for him in the Hereafter. Besides, virtue is not merely to refrain from committing certain evil acts, but to declare the truth after acquiring its knowledge is even more meritorious. In Western philosophy truth remains an ambiguous entity.

Philosophies that have developed in our time in the West lay great stress on pleasure. This is regarded as the highest good. Hedonists are divided into two groups. One of them claims that man by nature seeks pleasure: Consciously or unconsciously he works for acquiring it. The other group of thinkers are not interested to know what man seeks but ask us to consciously work for acquisition of pleasure. These have led to the development of utilitarian philosophy which is the basis of democracies in the West. Due to their influence even in most of the Muslim countries there is now an effort to reconcile this view with the principles of Islam. It is forgotten that in Muslim thought the idea of life in the Hereafter is more important than the well-being in the worldly life which has been described as a "play" and a "jest": It leads to pride and breeds rivalry in the acquisition of worldly goods. A Hedonist may claim that even those who work for a pleasant life in the Hereafter, are Hedonist for they also seek pleasure albeit in the other world. This is not correct. There is nothing common between heavenly and worldly pleasures. What is most extraordinary in this philosophy is the fact that most of the pleasures of carnal self, which are the bone of contention, are ruthlessly discarded under the guidance of Divine Law. Hence Islam cuts off the very roots of conflicts between man and man. Besides, the sense of unity with the Deity and the experience of beatific vision in the Hereafter, are such unique objects which cannot be described in words.

CHAPTER VI

THE IDEAL MAN

It has already been pointed out that doctrine of the Unity of God (i.e. There is no god but God) in Islam is the source of all moral, social, and political teachings of Muslims. It is unfortunate that due to the influence of paganistic cultures and due to a persistent un-Islamic way of life for centuries, Muslims, to a great extent, now fail to grasp the deeper significance and essence of Islam's teachings. If God is the real authority and the cause of our being, then whatever He commands us to do that is binding on us for it is really the verdict of our nature. In a way even a common man knows what to do and what not to do but that is not enough for leading an ideal life. The teaching; "And (We) inspired it (human soul) what is wrong to it and (what is) right for it," (Al-Qura'n, XVIII-70) clearly indicates that there is something in man by which he can differentiate between good and evil. However, due to various reasons, man's judgement on this problem is not very reliable; but when he comes to know the truth from its very source, he may come to the right path in the real sense. This means that without divine guidance man's behaviour is misleading. That is why he must pay heed to what has been communicated to him in the Divine Book. The declaration that "the truth hath come and the falsehood hath vanished and verily the falsehood is bound to perish," refers to this. He who acquires knowledge through the Divine source, liberates himself from ignorance. That is why it has rightly been asked:

“Is the blind man equal to the seer, or is darkness equal to light?”

(*Al-Qura'n, XIII:16*)

Without acquiring this Light, it is not possible for man to become a human being in the real sense. Due to egotism which is the product of ignorance, he tends to be brutal and inhuman. The unbelievers and hypocrites have been condemned only because they grope in the darkness. A Muslim knows that there is one all-powerful Being from whom he must always seek the light which alone safely leads him to his cherished goal. The object of Din (inspired way of life) is to make man mindful of his spiritual needs and to transform his self in such a way that there remains nothing in him except that which is pure and sacred. In the history of human beings there have been many efforts to spiritualize them, but only the revealed religion has successfully fulfilled this purpose. That is why its Book of Guidance (i.e. the Holy Qura'n) has been defined as: “a declaration for mankind, a guidance, and an admonition unto them who are pious.” (*Al-Qura'n, II: 138*)

The ideal character amongst human beings is that of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him) whose sole object was to live and have his being in the Deity. Indeed in the religion of Allah there are also references to the pleasures of heaven and other divine blessings for those whose thoughts and actions are good but those who succeed in acquiring wisdom from Him through revealed knowledge and service, realize that Allah himself is the reward of those who work for Him. There is nothing in both the worlds which is better and higher than this object. Since this is the object of the objects, piety is the creed of the true believers, for those who become sacred, they alone ultimately come into contact with the Pure Being and eternally live in Him. This is the highest good or *summum bonum*. After the realization of this ideal, a true believer acquires divine attributes. There is nothing more sublime and dignified than this position. All those commandments that have been communicated to us through the Holy

Spirit in the form of Wahi (revelation) in the Last Testament of God (Al-Qura'n) and also those commands that emerge in saintly persons and are in conformity with those of the former, are good; all those that are the products of the human fantasy and mental corruption are devilish. The devil is an entity in the world due to which evil forces are at work in man and ignorance prevails. The suffering of humanity since its emergence owes so much to this factor. That is why mankind have been asked to submit to Allah alone. This is the only way to be free from mischief of the Devil and to remain safe and secure in both the worlds. Hence the command: "O ye who believe! come all of you into perfect submission (unto Him) and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Verily he is an open enemy for you." (Al-Qura'n, II:208).

All ethical, political, and social ideals to which thinkers and philosophers refer after consciously or unconsciously overlooking the idea of divine guidance, are harmful to human beings. A real Categorical Imperative can develop in man when after a hard labour he can spiritually transform his self. At that time its certainty is established and it conforms with the Message that was revealed to the Prophet. He who acts according to the teachings of the Prophet or listens to his own self, when this condition is fulfilled, only his conduct can be regarded as good. The ideal character is that character in which there is no conflict between the verdict of the self in man and the Commandments of God in the Last Testament (Qura'n). Indeed there are persons who try to improve their character by selfless acts and self-imposed restrictions but that is always susceptible to doubt due to ignorance of such beliefs which prompt a man to make use of a self-annihilating method in the realization of the truth. That is to say, morality attains its perfection in proportion to the acquisition of true metaphysical knowledge. This also means that the character of a *Mumin* (or true Muslim) alone is perfect. Without completely rooting out the traces of carnal self in man, no one can become an ideal man. Mankind in general are slaves to their passions and greed: "Rivalry in

worldly increase distracteth you, until ye come to the grave." (CII-1/2). Even those who claim to have attained perfection can at times behave ignorantly if they do not permanently live in the domain of Grace.

There are two main reasons for which human beings are generally misled. (1) Firstly, the worldly pleasures which make man oblivious of his duties which are indispensable for his well-being in both the worlds. (2) Secondly, the influence of the society and the group of the people with whom he lives. If they are ignorant about the purpose of human life or their character is not up to the mark, or their training and bringing up is defective, then also an individual can hardly evolve.

1. About the first it has been made clear that the worldly life itself is not harmful if its main purpose is known and there is a constant effort to achieve it. This guarantees the well-being of man in both the worlds. Nevertheless, it is possible that due to sheer force of circumstances one might not succeed in this life but even then one is not a loser, for there cannot be any hindrance in his success in the Hereafter. Since the life after death is everlasting, the success in that life alone is the real success. On the other hand, if one flourishes only in this life, it is no achievement: "The similitude of the life of the world is only as water which We (God) send down from the sky, then the earth's growth of that which men and cattle eat mingleth with it till, when the earth hath taken on her ornaments and is embellished, then people deem that they are masters of her. Our (God's) commandment cometh by night or by day and we make it as reaped corn as if it had not flourished yesterday. Thus do We explain the revelations for people who reflect." (X:25). At another place in the Holy Qura'n the same idea has been expressed in the following words: "And coin for them the similitude of the world as water which We send down from sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingleth with it and then becometh dry twigs that the wind scatter. Allah is Able to do all things." (Al-Qura'n, XVIII:64). More

clearly than this, the nature of worldly life has been expressed in the following words:

“This life of the world is but a pastime and a game. And verily the Home in the Hereafter, – that is Life indeed, if they but knew.”

(Al-Qura'n, XXX:64)

Selfishness is the creed of the ignorant. Since it is the source of mischief and is self destructive, human beings agree to live in a sort of organized society for the sake of living in peace. Hence secular laws to desist people from committing atrocities in self-interest. This is also a divine device to grant a people what they desire. Allah is kind and merciful. Even those who desire to succeed in this life alone He helps them to achieve this objective. There are persons, the Qura'n says, who pray to Allah:

“Our Lord! Give unto us in this world. For them there is no portion in the Hereafter.”

(Al-Qura'n, II:145)

No one is deprived of God's bounty. It is stated that “whoso desireth the reward of the world, We bestow on him thereof.”

(Al-Qura'n, III:145)

True believers are those who would like to succeed in both the worlds, and there is nothing which is beyond God's power to grant. They too have been promised in the following words:

“And of them (also) is he who saith: Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good and guard us from the doom of the Fire. For them there is in store a goodly portion out of that which they have earned.”

(Al-Qura'n, II:201)

In order to liberate mankind from the evil influence of a bad society and wrong up bringing, it is pointed out that they are to make an effort. This is because people under these circumstances are not interested in finding out the truth. Either they follow the traditions of their forefathers or

they are led by popular trends. In both the cases they act upon their whims. In this way they prepare their own doom. The Divine word explains their behaviour in the following passage:

"Most of them follow naught but conjecture. Assuredly conjecture can by no means take the place of truth. Verily Allah is aware of what they do."

(Al-Qura'n, X:36)

The influence of paganistic and atheistic creeds is as strong in our time as it was at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). We have to be very careful in seeing that we do not fall a prey to such corrupt influences. The Prophet is the spiritual magnet for all times but even he was warned about these. The Message says:

"If thou O Muhammad (peace be upon him) obeyest most of these on earth, they would mislead thee far from Allah's way. They follow naught but an opinion and do nothing but guess."

(Al-Qura'n, VI:117)

A firm belief in the Almighty Lord and in His Messengers with a consciousness that man has to give an account of what he has done in his worldly life, makes him mindful of his duties towards Allah and His creatures. This is the primary condition for acquiring moral and spiritual qualities. The following commandment refers to this age-long old teachings of the true believers:

"Worship no one save Allah, and be good to parents and kindred orphans and the needy and speak kindly to mankind and establish worship and pay poor-dues."

(Al-Qura'n, II:83)

The Qura'n, however, points out to yet other higher aspects of the Mumin's morality and reveals the spiritual significance of this teaching. It says that obedience to Allah and His Messenger is essential for seeking divine mercy. It takes note of the fact that our shortcomings vis-a-vis the ideal character are so many. That is why man must seek

Allah's forgiveness all the time. Whosoever is conscious about his own weaknesses and implores Him to keep him on the right path, it is expected that Allah will have mercy on him and he will improve in his moral character. Thus the commandments says:

"And vie one another for forgiveness from your Lord and for a Paradise as wide as are heavens and the earth prepared for those who are morally and spiritually elevated (*Muttaqui*). It is they who spend in Allah's name, in ease and adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving towards mankind; Allah loveth the good."

(*Al-Qura'n, III:132/4*)

Such persons not only vie with one another for forgiveness from the Lord but they also:

"Vie one with another in good works."

(*Al-Qura'n, V:48*)

The more a man is true to Allah, the more he will be enthusiastic in serving humanity without expecting any reward or compensation for his services. At this stage man acquires an ideal character. For such a person even the pleasures of heaven have no charm; his object of aspiration remains God and God alone. And this results in the transformation of his self and he becomes a vicegerent of God on earth whose attributes are divine. There is no morality which is superior to this.

The behaviour of those who talk about moral life but whose acts are not moral, cannot at all be appreciated for they try to be moral without knowing how to become moral. Such persons are often seen behaving in a way which is quite contrary to what they profess. They have been asked "enjoyin ye righteousness while ye yourselves forget to practise it."

(*Al-Qura'n, II:44*)

As against the character of such persons there are those spiritual men for whom even evil thoughts and wrong intentions are sinful. They detest to desire things which are for-

bidden. Good and evil are not to be judged by certain standards of morality set by the moralists who have no knowledge about the sources from where good and evil come. Goodness, Truth and Beauty identify themselves in God who is our creative Reality and nothing escapes His notice. All that we do has its repercussions on us. There is a sort of mechanism in the universe according to which whosoever is good or bad in his thoughts and deeds will have to bear the consequences of his behaviour. In order to live an ideal life in the society, one cannot afford to neglect the divine guidance. Since man is a social creature there is so much stress on the rights of the fellow beings (*Huqul Ibad*) in the teachings of the true religion. The sins which we commit against Allah by not being mindful of our duties to Him, may be forgiven as He is most Gracious and most Merciful but the sins which we commit against human beings are not forgiven. At the time of Resurrection we shall have to face those persons whom we have misled or harmed. In such a predicament there is nothing that could be done and this would ultimately lead us to our utter perdition. In this sense, both from worldly and spiritual points of view, we have no other alternative except to obey the Divine Commandments. That is why, it has been said:

“O mankind! Your rebellion (against the teachings of the true religion) is against yourselves.”

(*Al-Qura'n, X:24*)

Human beings have been asked to be mindful of their behaviour and not to take any of their acts lightly. It is stated that:

“Every man's augury have We fastened to his neck and We (God) shall bring forth for him on the Day of Resurrection a record of his deeds which he will find quite evident.”

(*Al-Qura'n, XVII:13*)

It is the mode of life and the behaviour of an individual that determines his destiny. The more a person is good, the more he will survive in the real sense. Indeed there are



certain obstacles for a good man to flourish in his worldly life but it is wrong to suppose that they cannot succeed. In fact even in this life their success can be extraordinary and lasting similar to that of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) himself provided they make ceaseless efforts to seek union with the Deity and bear all sorts of hardship in upholding the cause of truth. As against such persons those who live a carefree life, their lives in the Hereafter can be defined as perpetual death. The message states that:

“Wealth and children are an ornament of the world. But the good deeds which endure are better in thy Lord’s sight for reward in respect of hope.”

(Al-Qura’n; XVIII:47)

The Qura’nic Law, as the teaching of the natural religion in man, purifies all that is worldly and then justifies its utilization in the well-being of man. The Command says:

“Eat and drink of that which Allah hath provided (and made lawful), and do not act corruptly making mischief in the earth.”

(Al-Qura’n, II:60)

As for those, who plot iniquities, it says that:

“Theirs will be an awful doom and the plotting of such (folk) will come to naught.”

(Al-Qura’n, V XXV:10)

Among the true believers there are two types of people. Firstly there are those who are sincere in their search for the realization of the truth in the light of the Qura’n and Sunnah. Secondly there are persons who become one with the truth. In these latter ones there is a natural flow of moral acts due to the working of Divine Impulse in them. There is no compulsion for them in good deeds. All their actions are spontaneous and wonderful and at the same time in conformity with the standard set by the Last Prophet (peace be upon him) about whom it has been said that:

“Thou art verily most sublime in thy morality.”

(Al-Qura’n, LXVII:4)

Such a morality alone is a boon for humanity. That is why the Prophet has been praised by the Divine Being as a "Mercy for the whole universe."

(*Al-Qura'n, XXI:107*)

The ideal man in Islam will not mind doing any humble work for himself and for others. He would not seek superiority over any person. He knows that God is very near to those who are in distress. It is because of them that all persons are able to earn their livelihood. That is why the Commandment says, "Seek me in suffering humanity." A true believer knows the reasons why a man is not entitled to live a gay life. In all his acts he behaves as a true servant to Allah. Beyond his spiritual merits, there is no pomp and glory for him. When he is victorious over the enemies of the truth, his submission to Allah is worth seeing. He takes no revenge and is liberal enough to forgive even his worst enemies. He even serves them when they are in difficulty. He would willingly feed them with the food that is kept for himself and his family and would not mind starving to please them. Despite the fact that he always remains in proximity with God, the sense of individual responsibility in him is so much developed that he asks even his kith and kin to work for their own salvation. The distorted teaching of Jesus has created an impression in Christians that his death on the cross has guaranteed their salvation. That is very harmful to the individual and the society. Islam tries to create a consciousness in man that he is responsible to himself, to his Creator, and to the society in which he lives.

When men of insight in Islam live in Muslim society, they ask the people in it to sincerely follow the path which they have chosen for themselves so that they must individually and collectively try to realize the ideal which is before them. If they live in a non-Muslim society, then their object is to bring them to the right path. Such a person knows his limitations. It is the duty of the true believers to spread the creed of Allah (*Din Allah*) in all circumstances. If a man of insight holds power, then he organizes the society accord-

ing to the Divine injunctions and establishes a Shariah government in the state which is known as Darul Islam. The people who work for it know that the life in this state should be attractive to all human beings. At the same time they make it so strong that no aggressor should have a courage to disturb order of this divine society. Since the sense of unity among Muslims is exemplary, its citizens, arming themselves with the latest weapons, would defend it like one person. The ideal man in Islam would like to create this sense of unity in all mankind and the Message is an open invitation to the path of progress for all the nationalities of the world. If Muslims do not follow this teaching or human beings are not mindful of their well-being, then it is their concern.

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