

ISLAM
CHRISTIANITY
AND
HINDUISM

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

By
F. M. SANDEELA

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INTRODUCTORY

Ever since Marxism launched its frontal attack upon it, the days of religion seemed to have been numbered. It was the opium of the people, and means of exploitation, it was confidently urged. And the idea was catching on. In the academic centres, in factories, and on farms, it was the same story. The entire world seemed to be going irreligious, and even atheistic. There were nevertheless, from that very beginning, some very prominent exceptions. Islam, Christianity and Hinduism had been more or less successfully holding on.. And each has, more recently, been witnessing a revival.

Islamic resurgence has been reported, not only from the Muslim heartland, but also from the atheistic and agnostic strongholds. Christianity has succeeded in installing a Pope from a Communist country and has had its presence as well as power there recognised through the congratulatory messages and courtesy calls from Communist dignitaries. And from Africa and the Pacific substantial conversions to Christianity have been reported. Hinduism has, in its turn, been making inroad into what has for long been regarded as a Christian preserve-America and Europe. The so-called 'guru-religions' have been sweeping across much of the 'modern' world.

It is these three religions—Islam, Christianity and Hinduism— that we shall study in the sequel to see what promise they might hold in store for us and for our future generations. We shall make a comparative study; in turn, of the authority of Scriptures, and of the character of bearers, of each of those religions. We shall inquire next into the comparative values of faith, the efficacy of institutions, and the practical results achieved respectively by each of those religions. We shall go on thereafter to examine successively the nature and the results of their mutual encounter and, then, the nature of their respective mission. We shall devote the last two chapters to the study exclusively of the religion that seems to be faring the best, each to the negative and to the positive perspective of it, to the consideration of the critique and of the ideal to which it has been held.

There could be many other factors that go into forming **an** honest and intelligent judgment of value on those religions and on their comparative standing and achievement. But the factors that have been here set out for consideration form, upon any standard, and from any point of view, **the** central issues : the core of the problem. None of **them** can be either avoided or evaded, if the enquiry has **to** be an honest one. Each is eminently relevant to either **the** truth or the efficacy of religion which, in a truly divine dispensation, ought to converge and coalesce.

The two supplemental chapters, one a rather longish **one**, that have been devoted exclusively to one religion, **are** consequential to the conclusions **reached** in the earlier chapters. They have seemed necessary for the sake of the thoroughness of inquiry and absoluteness of judgment. Had that further step not been taken, the results of the

earlier inquiry would have had to be left open to ifs and buts and mybes, That would have left the present exercise uncertain and inconclusive and **made** it meaningless. The book is addressed to honest and intelligent believers of all denominations. It assumes that no genuine or honest believer rests his faith or commitment on any prejudices or pre-conceptions. He believes only because nothing, that is or can be, said against, is able to shake either his faith or his confidence. Nor does any such believer offer any faith or religion to another simply because it is his own. His effort, instead, is to make his own only that which is the best. His exercise in comparative religion is an exercise in self-education. The only way to ensure that unconscious assumptions and inherited prejudices and pre-conceptions are not traded to others is to rely on authoritative statement of facts and to use the opinions of outsiders. The effort throughout has been to live upto that ideal. There are likely, nevertheless, to have been lapses, such as inherent frailties of human nature make inevitable. Main thrust of the argument, and all major conclusions, have seemed to the writer to be inevitable and unanswerable, and to invite to a good deal of reason and reflection. Only openness of mind and of heart is expected from the reader, and of course, a desire for truth and justice, without which no comparative study of religion is possible.

CHAPTER – II

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURES

Validity of religion depends largely on the authority of its scriptures. And, although every religion regards its own particular scriptures as absolute as well as ultimate, this is not always objectively the case. An objective view of the authority of scriptures must rest, among other things, on their putative source, on the circumstances of their initial announcement and preservation and their subsequent transmission, and on its intelligibility to human understanding and its practical relevance to the affairs of man and society. In each of those respects, the scriptures of each of the three religions we have decided to **study**, fare fundamentally differently. And this, not **just by** the unobliging and acid test of the outsider, but upon the self-view of the votary himself.

Thus, the Hindu scriptures, the Vedas, are believed by the Hindus themselves to have **had a** mythological origin, which for all practical purposes means unknown and unknowable. And, when the origin of the Vedas is itself unknown as well as unknowable, no better certainty can be expected of, or imputed to, either their initial records or their subsequent recensions. The Vedas,

moreover, contain mostly hymns, addressed to the Hindu deities, texts to help with the sacrificial rites, and spells, incantation and charms. Of practical guidance in the matter of ordinary life and society, there is practically nothing. The following may be taken to the standard and the generally accepted view :

"Among the books of Ancient **India** the Vedas are the most important. The word Veda comes from the root vid, which means to know : the Vedas are, therefore, books of wisdom. The Rig-Veda is the most important of the four collections of books of wisdom of Ancient India. Its essential, and fundamental part is a Samhita, or collection of 1028 hymns addressed to various Indian deities. The hymns are of different authorship, and, according to the generally accepted view, the oldest of them date back to 1500 B.C. We may, therefore, say with Dutt that the Rig-Veda was composed during the Vedic period, which is generally believed to have extended from 2000 B.C. to 1400 B.C. But it is not likely **that** the collection of hymns was completed by that time.

Besides the Rig-Veda there are three other Vedas ; the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda, and the Atharva Veda.

The Sama Veda, was meant to serve as a text-book for the priests who attended the soma sacrifice, and contains a detailed account of the rites connected with this function.

The Yajur Veda was also written for practical purposes, but did not confine itself to the soma sacrifice ; it comprised the whole sacrificial rite in its entirety.

The Atharva Veda differs widely from the other Vedas, and is of much later date. It is made up of

verses, spells and incantations meant to bring down either a blessing or a curse. It contains charms against every kind of evil that may threaten man : against enemies, demons and wizards ; against harmful animals like snakes ; against sickness and diseases. Other charms contained in it are supposed to obtain benefits, to ensure love and a happy family life, health, longevity, and protection on journeys, and even luck in gambling "(J. E. Gense, S.J., A History of **India**, Macmillan and Co., Revised Edition, 1944, pp. 5—6).

Of the origin and authenticity of the Bible, much better account can be given. People and places mentioned in it are real and recognizable. Events and incidents related in it have a basis in fact. Circumstances and situations of its have a basis in fact. Circumstances and situations of its reception and record are, on at least their own showing, specific and that claim has remained essentially unaltered through thousands of years. And they are an integral part of a continuous and living tradition and are understood and accepted as such by countless conscientious men.

What adds even more to the authority, as the Vedas are, at least to laymen. It is read and recited for its sense, and not just for its sound. *It* purpoats to provide guidance for practical living rather than a formula for magical invocation and incantation. Millions of **men** through a succession of centuries have offered to it not merely their blind and unwitting acceptance, but a conscious, and **deliberate** and dutiful obedience.

While **thoae general** considerations must impel us to take the Bible **more** seriously, they cannot suffice for a positive valuation. For the latter purposes, a much closer

and critical look is requisite. And a closer look shows that different parts of the Bible differ widely in both their authority and their relevance to our purpose.

Although the New Testament, with which we are primarily concerned, is of comparatively later date, its origin as well as authenticity is much less certain. In the first place, the New Testament consists of four books which purport to be different accounts of essentially the same subject-matter. If they agree in part, they also disagree in part. Secondly, they are in essence biographies, the on-lookers accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus. Thirdly, the biographers, themselves are practically anonymous, and even fictitious, and seem to report more from hearsay than from any direct, personal or even verified information. Fourthly, none of the four books is in Jesus' own language or even purports to be a translation of anything earlier existing in Jesus' language, in spite of the fact that some of those who were most actively associated with Christianity from its inception, not only knew Jesus' language and met some of his closest companions, but also have had their own statements preserved with fullest textual accuracy. And, fifthly, all records of or about Jesus' life existing in Jesus' own language were officially suppressed and destroyed by the Christian Church itself.

Three circumstances combine to give this linguistic discrepancy a very special significance. In the first place, Jesus lived and taught exclusively to the Jews, and that on deliberate purpose. The New Testament, such as it is, reports : Jesus saying :

. 'These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles,

and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Mathew 10: 5—6).

'But he (Jesus) answered and **said**, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Mathew 15 : 24).

Since the house of Israel was, thus, the sole recipient of Jesus' dispensation, it was with that house and with its lost sheep that the true account and the right record must be expected to lie. It is a universally recognized rule of evidence that the record that comes from such natural custody is presumed to be true and correct unless otherwise established. And yet in this particular **case**, that was precisely the sort of record that was sought, **deliberated** to be suppressed and destroyed. In 325 **A.D.**, the Nicene Council, the first general council of the Christian Church, ordered that all original Gospels in Hebrew script **should** be destroyed. An edict was issued that anyone **in** possession of such Gospels shall be put to death.

This proceeding, by the universally accepted canons **of** common sense and justice, amounted to deliberate **des-**truction primary evidence, or at least the best evidence **that** was then available, and was a clear case of perverting justice, and preventing truth from reaching out to the world. Pauline version which came ultimately to be incorporated in the New Testament was being opposed from the very start. The entire east, which had had the occasion to hear or see Jesus himself or his immediate audiences and followers, and which understood the language of Jesus and of his disciples and was acquainted with the social, cultural and spiritual context in which Jesus and

his immediate disciples lived and preached, not only **refused** to accept the Pauline version, but actively opposed it. So much was this so, that Paul himself was led to complain : "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me". (II Timothy 1 : 15).

And the opposition was neither local nor limited, **and** was finally put down only by the ruthlessness of the Imperial Roman arms. Force might settle the fate of religions and of revelation for the purposes of their earthly success, but neither truth nor justice of their dispensation can be established by any such means. And those who were thus silenced without being convinced ultimately opted for **Islam**. A very detailed account of those events and adventures is given in one of the most monumental historical works of modern times, in Edward Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'. The Modern Library, chapters 15, 16, 20, 21, 37, 47, 66, ~9, 70.

The absence of authoritative material in Jesus' own language represents, therefore, much more as a linguistic transition. And, even **as** a linguistic transition, it involved more than a simple substitution of words. Language influences ideas in a subtle, but a very substantial, way. —Consider, for example, the fact that **Jesus** was addressed by his disciples as 'Rabbi', which is **the same** word that the Jews continue using without in **the** least involving any suggestion of divinity. But the same word, when rendered into English as 'Lord' with capital 'L', invites as well as evokes a very different response. Consider, again, the magic of the capital letters, which was unknown in Jesus' own language, in the New Testament expression 'Son of Man'. In the absence of

those **capitals** it could mean nothing other than what it **said**, son of man, a human being. But the very opposite **meaning** became automatically implicit, and the imputation of divinity inevitable, the moment the capitals were incorporated in it.

The New Testament, actually, involves much **more** than the transition of language. It offers at best **only** a partial teaching of Jesus, which by reason of its partiality alone, could be the cause of the greatest misrepresentation. Like every other half-truth, it could turn out to be a lie simpliciter. In the case of the New Testament, that theoretical possibility is promoted to a certainty by two peculiarly potent circumstances. In the first place, **Paul**, who admittedly never met or heard or even knew Jesus by any temporal or terrestrial reckoning, becomes the prime mover of the New Testament dispensation. And, secondly, meaningful asides are incorporated which give a visible twist to the primary teaching of Jesus.

Paul does not only claim to have had visions of Jesus after the latter's earthly ministry had been over, but also to base his teaching on them. Notice his insistence :

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after men. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

(Galatians I : 11-12).

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed".

(Galatians 1 : 8).

That the narrators of the New Testament books have made an effort to explain away some of the most decisive and deliberate utterances of Jesus, is clear from two outstanding examples of this. In one case, Jesus is reported to have told Peter : 'Get thee behind me, Satan'. This is a very strong rebuke, particularly from the religious point of view, and there is no other example of Jesus having used the same, similar, or even remotely resembling that language in its strength of annoyance with any of his apostle" or other disciples. Why was Jesus so annoyed with Peter ? According to Mathew and **Mark**, Peter himself had 'rebuked' Jesus to earn that retort. This **again** is not even remotely equalled either in Peter's and other disciples' relations with Jesus or in the relations of any follower with his master in any other religious denomination.

This account is too unusual and the authority of the narrators too anonymous to impel us to immediate acceptance. And anyone who might feel like raising his eyebrows will find a natural answer to his inquiry. Immediately preceding the 'rebuke' story Peter is reported to have **said** : 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God'. (Mathew 16 : 16) This it is, that could and would provoke such annoyance in Jesus who had shown a **like** annoyance with the 'evil spirits' who had been uttering the like of what Peter had uttered. Notice this :

"And Jesus answered and said unto him (the devil), Get thee behind me, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Luke 4 : 8, See also Mathew 4 : 10).

That there has been an effort to expunge or appropriate this incident is clear from the discrepancies appearing in the accounts of different books of the New Testament. If Mathew, and Mark interject Peter's rebuke to explain that of Jesus, Luke has a better idea. He replaces Jesus' rebuke by a more agreeable admonition, instead of interjecting Peter's rebuke, thus :

"And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing".

Apart from the possibility that in translations 'to tell no man that thing' could easily stand for something like 'don't say so', and become a counsel of secrecy instead of being a command against corruption ; Luke's version conflicts not only with the general attitude of God-sent men to announce, rather than hide, but also with a very specific command of Jesus himself:

"What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house tops." [Mathew 10: 27)

John attempts an even bolder feat. Jesus' rebuke, though following immediately upon Peter's imputation of implicit divinity to Jesus, is made more general, and an aside added that takes' annoyance to an entirely different world. Notice the flight :

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon •

*f*or he it was that should betray him' being one *of the twelve.*" (John 6 : 68-71)

The *underlined words*, though not of Jesus, control his meaning.

An equally suggestive comment of the narrator in another context, but upon the same ideological issue, has succeeded in giving the very opposite meaning to Jesus' rebuke. Notice :

"And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God, And he (Jesus) rebuking them suffered them not to speak : *f*or they knew that he was Christ."

Here, again, the controlling words are imported.

These examples merely illustrate an attitude that pervades the entire length of the narratives of each of the four books of the *New Testament*—the attitude to prevail upon even the express intent of Jesus. How much more has been done to over-reach the assumptions and implications, it is not necessary to tell. One aspect of this, however, needs to be illuminated for our immediate purpose. Paul, as we have already noted, relied on his visions instead of the teachings of Jesus in his normal earthly life. For this and allied reasons, Christian apologists have tried to belittle verbal revelation. To appreciate the overriding importance of verbal revelation, it is necessary to notice Jesus' own teaching in that behalf. He is reported, in the *New Testament* itself, to have taught :

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit

of truth, is come, he **will** guide you into all truth : for he shall not speak of himself ; *but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak*". (John 16 : 12-13)

In stressing the importance and ultimacy of verbal revelation thus, Jesus was merely reaffirming what Moses had taught centuries earlier when he said :

"A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your kinsmen ; to him you shall listen. This is exactly what you requested of the Lord, your God, at Hsreb on the day of assembly, when you said : 'Let us not again hear the voice of Great Eire anymore, lest we die'. And the Lord said to me: 'This was well said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kinsmen, and *will put my words into his mouth* ; he shall tell them all that I commanded him. If any man will not listen to *My words which he speaks in My names*, I myself will make him answer for it."
(Deuteronomy 18 : 15-19)

The new and the old testaments &M at one, thus, in stressing the importance of verbal revelation. They are at one also in looking forward to a future verbal revelation~ And that is precisely what the Quran professes and purports to be. It says :

"This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt!".
(2 : 2).

And it goes on severally to insist :

"With truth have we sent it down, and with truth hath it descended." (17: 105)

"It is an unavail-able Scripture. Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or behind it. A revelation from the **Wile**, the Owner of Praise." (41 : 41-42).

"And this **Qllran** is not such as could ever be invented in despite of Allah : but it is a confirmation of that which was before it and an exposition of that which is decreed for mankind—Therein is no doubt—-from the Lord of the Worlds. O! say they : He hath invented it I say: "Then bring a surah (chapter) like into it, and call (for help) on **all** ye can besides Allah, if ye are truthful." (10 : 38-39).

"Will they not then ponder on the Quran I If it had been from other than Allah they would have found therein much incongruity." (4 : 82).

"And when our clear revelations are recited unto them, they, who look not for the meeting with us say : Bring a Lecture other than this, or change it, say (O Muhammad) : It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I only follow that which is **inspired** in me. Lo ! if I disobey my Lord I fear the retri-bution of an awful Day." (10: 16).

To the objective validity of this self-view, some of the eminent non-muslims bear this witness :

"The Quran as we have it now is a record of what Muhammad said while in the state or states (of ecstasy) just mentioned. It is beyond doubt that his hearers recognized the symptoms of revelation, otherwise his obiter **diota** which the literature of **tra**-dition purports to record would be included in the Quran....•It must always be remembered that to Muslims the Quran is a faithful and unalterable

reproduction of the original scriptures-which are preserved in heaven:" (Alfred Gullaume, Islam, Pelican pp. 58; 59).

"Whatever the Psychological explanation may be, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the term 'revelation' was confined to those utterances which were not consciously produced and controlled by the Prophet and seemed to him to have been put into his mouth from without."(H.A.R. Gibb, Mohammadanism, Oxford, Home University Library, 2nd edition, p. 44).

"But it is known that, at times, Muhammad would call for a particu(ar ~Qr~ in order to add to it, **and** that it could be ~ϕUnd...When the Arab Tribes, in the year of Deputations, asked to be instructed in the new doctrine, there were plenty of men fully competent to go forth, with or without notes, **and** give them not merely the subsanee, but the precise words of the revelation." (E.E. Kellett, A Short History of Religions, Pelican/Penguin, p. 344).

What has made the preservation of the Quran in its absolute textual purity possible is the institutional arrangements existing in Islam for the purpose from its very inception. The Quran was not only written down as it was being revealed but also remembered verbatim full by innumerable men. So much was this so that a whole army of those who remembered the Quran by heart could be sent out within a short time after the Prophet's death. Another institutional arrangement that went to guaranteeing the textual accuracy was the regular recital of different portions of the Quran by every

believer every five times a **day**. The third such arrangement was the complete recital of the whole Quran loudly **and** to learned audience, once a **year** in the month of fasting in every mosque.

Three other circumstances go to reinforce the institutional arrangements for the retention of the full and authentic text. The Quran governs the entire life of believers, it charges every believer personally to understand **and** live by it and to inculcate its understanding and observance in others, and it has all subjects so interspersed that no compartmentalisation of knowledge is possible. It needs to be read and understood and applied as the one, integrated and all-inclusive whole. No part of it could ever become a matter of disinterest or disuse, as long as Islam continued to be a living religion, which it most certainly does.

To the unapproachable quality of the Quran, again, eminent outsiders have borne abundant witness. One speaks of its 'mysterious and compelling beauty' and 'the arresting, the hypnotic power'. (A..J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, Allen & Unwin. Vol. II, Preface) Another **calls** it 'a collection of wisdom which can be adopted by the most intelligent of men, the greatest of philosophers and the most skilful of politicians'. (Laura Veccia Vaglieri, *Apologia de l'Islamisme*, p. 57). Yet another notes that it 'has created an all but new phase **Of** human thought and a fresh type of character', and that its 'literary form is for the most part different from anything else we know'. (G. Margoliouth, *Introduction to Rodwell's Translation, The Koran*) And yet another finds that it contains 'just and elevated notions of the **Divine** nature and moral duties'. (Hallam, *Middle Ages*, Chap. VI,

quoted in E. W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, Edinburgh, p. 177).

As to the authority of scriptures, one of the foremost of modern minds formulates his enquiry and answers thus:

"In order to discover **what** social regulations are best suited to nations, there is needed a superior intelligence which can survey all the passions of mankind, though itself exposed to none : an intelligence having no contact with our nature, yet knowing it to the full] : an intelligence, the well being of which is independent of our own, yet willing to be concerned with it : which finally, viewing the long perspective of time, and preparing for itself a day of glory as yet far distant, will labour in one century to reap its reward in another. "The Jewish Law still lives, and the law of the child of Ishmael which, for ten (now **fourteen**) centuries, has regulated the conduct of half **of the world**. They bear witness, even today, to the **great men** who gave them form. To the eyes of pride **bred of** philosophy or the blind spirit of party, they **may seem** no more than fortunate imposters, but true **political** wisdom will ever admire in their institutions the great and powerful genius which watches over the birth of civilizations destined to endure."

(J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book II, Chapter 7., the beginning and the end)

The comparative study of the Bible and the Quran, which have been—placed at par, has led an eminent non-Muslim scientist to the following conclusions :

"The Old **Testament** represents a vast number of

literary works written over a period of roughly nine hundred years. It forms a highly disparate mosaic whose pieces have, in the course of centuries, been changed by man

"...the authors of the Gospels were not eyewitnesses of the data they recorded ..The inevitable result of the multiplicity of sources is the existence of contradictions and oppositions : many examples have been given of these

"The Quranic Revelation has a history which is fundamentally different from the other two. It spanned a period of **some** twenty years and, as soon as it was transmitted to Muhammad by Archangel Gabriel, Believers learned it by heart. It was also written down during Muhammad's life. The recensions of the Quran were effected under Caliph Uthman starting some twelve years after the Prophet's death and finishing twentyfour years after it. They had the advantage of being checked by people who already knew the text by heart, for they had learned it at the time of the **Revelation** itself and had subsequently recited it constantly. Since then, we know that the text has been scrupulously preserved. It does not give rise to any problems of authenticity.

The Quran follows on from the two Revelations that preceded it and is not only free from contradictions in its narrations, the sign of the various human manipulations to be found in the Gospels, but provides a quality all of its own for those who examine it objectively and in the light of science i.e. its complete agreement with modern scientific data. What is more, statements are to be found

in it (as has been shown) that are connected with science, and yet it is unthinkable that a man of Muhammad's time could have been the author of them. Modern scientific knowledge therefore allows us to understand certain verses of the Quran which, until now, it has been impossible to interpret.

The comparison of several Biblical and Quranic narrations of the same subject shows the existence of fundamental differences between statements in the former, which are scientifically unacceptable, and declarations in the latter which are in perfect agreement with modern data... Besides, there are major differences between the Quran and the Bible on the other subjects: they serve to disprove all that has been maintained—without a scrap of evidence—concerning the allegation that Muhammad is supposed to have copied the Bible to produce the text of the Quran.

In view of the level of knowledge in Muhammad's day, it is inconceivable that many of the statements in the Quran which are connected with the sciences could have been the work of a man. It is, moreover, perfectly legitimate, not only to regard the Quran as the expression of a Revelation, but also to award it a very special place, on account of the guarantee of authenticity it provides and the presence in it of scientific statements which, when studied today, appear as a challenge, to explanation in human terms." (Maurice Bucaille, *La Bible, Le Coran et la Science*, English translation, *The Bible, The Quran and Science*, by Alastair U. Pannell and the Author, General Conclusions).

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THE CHARACTER OF BEARERS

Although, in any retrospective evaluation of religions such as our own, attention is primarily focussed on scriptures, it is the bearer of those scriptures whose character and conduct qualifications ought to invite our attention in the first instance. It is the most immediate and tangible evidence of the authority of scriptures and the most indispensable one. Not all men who are the actual or potential votaries of any religion are endowed with the means of evaluating scriptures. But the ability to evaluate the character and conduct of men is inherent in human nature as well as an essential incident of earthly life. This primary, and potentially the most persuasive of all, evidence of the authority of scriptures needs to be evaluated insofar as it may be available to us in this late twentieth century.

As far as the Vedas are concerned; we know nothing about who their bearer was, who brought their initial intimation to humanity. There is nothing, therefore, to evaluate their character or conduct to consult, no conduct to counsel. Even if we come down to the Codes, there is nothing to guide us in this behalf. Manu, whose name and authority are invoked as the best of the Codes, is believed to have been a fictitious figure. Even if he was actual and real, nothing of his character or conduct

is known. Other Hindu authorities are as various in name as they are in character.

In the case of Christianity and of Islam, on the other hand, much more of the character and conduct of those who were the bearers of the religious message is known. There is in each case at least a certain self-view of specific historical personalities, a positive and definite statement of who they were, what they *did* and how they were received by their immediate circle and by the wider world that came in contact with them. This is material enough on which an objective judgment of sorts can be based. Whether that judgment will be conditional or categorical will still depend on whether the information supplied and the evidence given in the relevant reports is correct. But, unlike Hinduism, at least a tentative and hypothetical evaluation is possible. We are no longer dealing in either fancy or fiction, even if we *will* still be needing to know whether the actual intimation or understanding of the positive facts reaching us is true or not.

As we have already noted, the reports reaching us about Jesus are fragmentary and often unreliable. They, nevertheless, disclose a great and good personality. That, however, does not solve our problem or concern us primarily. For the religion with which we are concerned is the product of the visions of Paul, and not of the teaching of Jesus as reported in those accounts of his ordinary, tangible, temporal existence. Comparative value of Christianity depends on the credibility of Paul, not of Jesus. This is necessitated not only by Paul's being the founder of the Christian church and claiming to be; the direct, extra-temporal and supra-sensual recipient of

the message he made over to mankind at large, but also because of his message being at complete variance with that of Jesus. The message of Jesus is not just glossed over, it is absolutely negated. Notice this contradiction in the teaching of Jesus and of Paul. While Jesus teaches :

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

For verily I say unto you, Till heavens and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the **Jaw**, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be **called** great in the kingdom of heaven."

(Mathew 5 : 17-19).

"And he (Jesus) said unto him, Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but one, that is God : but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Mathew 19: 17)

"And it came to pass, as he (Jesus) spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." But he **said**, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." (Luke 11 : 27-28)

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Luke 4: 8)

Directly opposed to this is the teaching of Paul :

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe : for there is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ...Therefore we conclude that **a man** is justified by faith without the deeds of the **law.**" (Romans 3 : 21-24, 28)

"}for until the law sin was in the world : but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
(Romans 5 : 13).

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were **made** sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound." But **sin** abounded, grace did **much** more abound" .. (Romans 5: 18 - 20)

"For unto which of the angels said **Thou art MY son**, this day have I **begotten** thee ! And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son ! And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God **worship** him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and

his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a acceptare of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." (Hebrews, 1 : 5-8)

"That if thou shalt confess **with** thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans, 10 : 9)

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans, 10 : 13)

Quite apart from the trinitarian vocabulary, there are at least three points to notice in these statements of Paul. According to Paul, God said, 'Let all the angels of God worship him (Jesus)'. According to Paul, again, Jesus is addressed as 'God' by God Himself. And, finally, salvation is guaranteed to anyone who either believes in Jesus or calls upon him. Each of those affirmations are contrary to the express and insistent teachings of Jesus. The doctrine of trinity itself could not possibly have been taught by Jesus himself, since several books of the New Testament have him ask his disciples who they thought he was. There was no point in asking them, and in receiving conflicting and indeterminate answers, if he had taught a specific and unusual answer. Indeed, according to the New Testament, even after Jesus' earthly mission had ended and he had risen, he, or rather his spirit, asked some of his disciples as to what they had been talking about, and received the following answer :

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." (Luke, 24 : 19)

And the scrutiny in the case of any one claiming to speak for or from Jesus has been specifically demanded by Jesus himself. The New Testament itself reports Jesus to have cautioned :

"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ ; and shall deceive many." (Mark, 13 : 6)

"And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there ; believe him not ; for false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold I have foretold you **all** things." (Mark, 13 : 21-23. See also Luke 21: 8)

And the New Testament also reports Jesus to have handed down a test for determining the true from the **false** claimants. He is reported to have said :

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ! Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into fire. Wherefore *by their fruits ye shall know them.*" (Mathew, 7 : 15-20)

Fruits, then, is the touchstone on which to test the **validity** or otherwise of Paul's claim. And of what fruit did Paul bring forth, he himself is witness :

"For ye have **heard** of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that *beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and waited it.*" (Galatians, 1 : 13).

"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because *I persecuted the church of God.*" (I Oorinthians, 15 : 9. See also 1 Timothy 1 : 13).

And the official church records confirm the truth of this Pauline confession :

"As for Saul (Paul) *he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and halling men and women committed **them** to prison.*" (Acts, 8 : 3)

It seems impossible to characterise the persecution of the church of God beyond measure, the wasting of it, making havoc of it, and entering into every house and balling men and women to commit them to prison, otherwise than as evil fruit for the purposes of Jesus' warning. And once we know that the fruit *is* evil, we know it on Jesus' authority that it could not but come from a corrupt tree. For, Jesus insists, not only that 'a corrupt tree, bringeth forth evil fruit', but also that 'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit'.

In addition to Paul's answering fully and truly to Jesus' description of false prophets, and even admitting himself of falsehood and lies for Paul says "**In addition** is the fact that his teachings are deliberately and directly" opposed to that of Jesus in whose name and on whose authority he professed to speak, his character, as disclosed in his own epistles, betrays at least three traits that are utterly alien to the prophetic office. Unlike the true

men of God, Paul misses no opportunity of commending his own person, of humouring his audiences and of taking a collection. His epistles are a far cry from the authoritative announcements of those who speak by genuinely Divine

'as one having authority', as the New Testament puts it. (Matthew 7 : 29) commission, a sampling of extracts from Paul's Epistles will suffice to substantiate this.

In the whole range of prophetic literature, it is difficult to find the like of this Pauline entreaty :

"For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you : For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achala was **ready** as year ago ; and your zeal hath provoked very many. Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf ; that, as I said, ye **may** be ready : Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boating." (1 Corinthians 9 : 1-4)

"Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye went once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift : but I desire fruit that may abound to your account,"

(Philippians 4: 15-17).

"Even unto **this** present hour we both hunger,

and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands ; being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it : being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." (I Corinthians 5: 11-16)

Equally unparalleled is this apology :

"Am I not an apostle? am I not free ? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord ? are not ye my work in the Lord ? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you : for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have we not power to eat and to drink ? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas ? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working ? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges ? who planteth a vineyard; and eateth not of the fruit thereon or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock ? Say I these things as a man ? or saith not the law the same also ?"

(I Corinthians 9 : 1-8)

Equally unparalleled is the following self-praise :

"Are they Hebrews ? so am I. Are they Israelites

tea ? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham ?
 so am I. Are they ministers of Christ ? (I speak as
 a fool) I am more ; in labours more abundant, in
 stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent,
 in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I
 forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with
 rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck,
 a night and a day I have been in the deep ; in
 journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of
 robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in
 perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in
 perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in
perils among false brethren ; In weariness and
 painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and
 thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.
 Beside those things that are without, that which
 cometh upon me daily, the cares of all the
 churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak ? Who
 is offended, and I burn not ?"

(II Corinthians, 11 : 22 - 29)

Nothing is suffered, one might wonder, to be either
 imagined or ignored.

Prophets, again, did ever announce and admonish.
 But none of them sought ever to either appease or humour
 his audience thus :

"Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul,
 that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth..
 Not for that we have dominion over your faith,
 but are helpers of your joy : for by faith ye stand.
 But I determined this with myself, that I would
 not come **a~ain** to you i~ heaviness. For if I make

you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me ! And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I **came**, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice ; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears ; not that 'you should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." (II Corinthians, I : 23-2 : 4)

Jesus' insistence on absolute and exclusive sovereignty of God, on the importance of observing Divine commandments, and his warning against false prophets, **each** of which militates against the claims of Paul, was **ibself in** strict accord with the Biblical tradition. Moses had been no less specific or emphatic on each *of* those points. The Torah reports him to have taught :

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing **and** a curse, a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."

(Deuteronomy, 11 : 26-28)

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them ; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet,

or the dreamer of dreams : for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death". (Deuteronomy, 13 : 1-5)

Paul, in fact, confesses to his having lied in relation to the 'Truth of God' thus :

"For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto His glory ; why yet I am also judged a sinner". (Romans 3 : 7-8)

In the case of Islam, the position with regard to the identity and authority of the messenger is utterly different. Muhammad lived in the full light of history. **That** he it was, who brought the message contained in the Quran and established the community called Muslims and instituted the religion known as Islam, there can be no doubt. Nor, indeed, can there be any doubt that none **else** shared with him in those operations and exercises **except as** his obedient and unquestioning followers. We **know** for sure where to direct our attention and our **enquiry**. It is the character of Muhammad that alone is **relevant as** well as decisive for our immediate purpose.

Equally easy is our next step. There is altogether **an** abundance of material to inform and instruct us in the life and works of Muhammad. No other life either before or since has been the object of an equally detailed reporting and research. It is possible that more written

material exists about other men. But an honest inquirer will find in that material much that is not only irrelevant and evasive but also positively misleading. What makes reporting and research on the life of Muhammad inherently relevant and reliable is its religious basis and its practical purpose. The Quran holds out the life of Muhammad in its multifarious aspect and minutest detail as the ideal for all Muslims for all times and places. It is to serve the practical purpose of being emulated thus that every detail of and about Muhammad's life has been so meticulously noted by those who knew it the most for the benefit of themselves as **well** as of those about them and preserved in perpetuity for the benefit of coming generations.

For some twentytwo years of Muhammad's life following his call, his character and conduct was held out as an open book and friends and foes alike invited, nay urged, to observe and emulate it. Friends, neighbours and family members thought it their religious duty to avail of every possible opportunity to do **so and** to transmit whatever they knew to everyone else. The entire community was directly and deliberately involved in that penetrative and preservative process. And it was an active and observant community, and a very substantial one. So obvious and incontrovertible is the position in all these material respects that to cite an authority would be like lending a lamp to the midday sun.

Erudite students of Muhammad's life have actually gone much farther. They have inquired into, analysed and evaluated the life and conduct of every one who has **had** anything to say about Muhammad and to debate and to determine whether or not he or she **was a** reliable

witness. Such biographical studies form a regular and important branch of education in Islam. Muslims know more about many of the personages involved in that process than they know about some of their own immediate ancestors. While an outside observer could want an independent evaluation of his own, information on which to base such evaluation is abundant as well as unimpeachable.

Abundance and authenticity of information on the life of Muhammad which is available to the Muslims, together with some of the other special circumstances, makes the Muslim view of Muhammad itself basically sincere as well as sound. One important circumstance that lends it authority is that it is necessarily enlightened. Neither myth nor mystique misdirects it. No illusions or obscurities blur it. Another important circumstance that adds to its weight is that Islam allows and encourages personal inquiry and understanding. There is no official or organised interpretation or instruction. The collective Muslim judgment constitutes a completely free and voluntary concurrence. And by that cumulative concurrence of centuries, ever increasing and intensifying, Muhammad's life and conduct continues to be consistently regarded as worthy, not just of approval, but of emulation by the best of the rest of humanity.

The non-Muslim opinion of Muhammad has ranged from one extreme to the other. But adverse opinion has proceeded generally from ignorance and ill-will, often both. Enlightened and honest non-Muslim opinion of the Arabian Prophet has been largely appreciative, and has been increasingly so with the passage of time and advancing opportunity to understand and avail of the

original source material. Unlike the followers of false prophets, Muslims have had insistently to invite inquiry and to appeal to original material, rather than to evade or to explain away. Muhammad himself inaugurated his mission with the challenging question . "If I told you that an enemy force was across the hill, would you believe me !" And the unqualified answer was : 'Yes, we have never known you to tell a lie'. And the Quran itself is no less challenging. "I have lived among you a lifetime, won't you understand !"

An incorrigible doubter might allege those instructive statements to be based ultimately on Muslim authority and, therefore, interested. But the undisputed history of early Islam, to which friends and foes alike bear witness, includes several episodes that attest to the integrity and unimpeachability of Muhammad's character. He went by invitation and express compact, the one and only true 'Social Contract!', to become the head—social, political, military as well as spiritual and ideological—of a new religio-political society. He was followed thither, freely and voluntarily, by a substantial and ever increasing number of his followers from his home-place, who alone fought also the very first battle in defence of their new homeland. History records, what must astonish those who are used to abstract, speculative and unauthenticated annals, who exactly participated in that battle, complete with lineological connections. His authority, specially judicial, was accepted, again freely and voluntarily, by Jewish as well as Christian communities. And his erstwhile enemies and persecutors came ultimately to accept *en masse* not only his political authority but also his prophethood and became its active and enthusiastic

supporters. (See Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Medina, Muhammad at Mecca).

A sampling of modern non-Muslim opinion about the character and credibility of Muhammad will complete this part of our inquiry :

"It is strongly corroborative of Mohammad's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his household, who, all intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail to have detected those discrepancies which more or less invariably exist between the pretensions of the hypocritical deceiver and his actions at home." (John Davenport, An Apology for Muhammad and the Koran. London 1869, p. 17).

"Muhammad died as he had lived, surrounded by his early followers, friends and votaries : his death as devoid of mystery as his life of disguise" (H. M. Hyndman, The Awakening of Asia, London 1919, p, 9).

"His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked upto him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement— all argue his fundamental integrity." (W. Montgomery Watt, Mohammad at Mecca, Oxford, p. 52).

"His life, his meditations, his heroic revilings against the superstitions of his country, and his boldness in defying the furies of adolatry, his

firmness in enduring them for fifteen years at Mecca, his acceptance of the role of public scorn and almost of being a victim of his fellow countrymen: all these and, finally, his flight, his incessant preaching, his wars against odds, his faith in his success and his super-human security in misfortune, his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving of an empire ; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death : all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma." (Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turvuie*, Paris 1854, Vol. II, pp. 276-277).

"Muhammad's victory was in very truth one of religion and not of politics ; he rejected every token of personal homage, and declined all regal authority ; and when the haughty chiefs of the Koreishites appeared before him he asked ; 'What can you expect at my hands t' 'Mercy, O generous brother !' 'Be 'if so ; you are free I' he exclaimed." (Arthur Gilman, *The Saracens*, London 1887, pp. 184—85.)

CHAPTER IV

VALUES OF FAITH

The comparative value of religion depends **also** on the nature of the faith it inculcates. It depends not only on how true the faith is, but also on how clearly and categorically it is formulated, and how relevant and efficacious it is in the practical life of man and society,

In the matter of the truth, faith may not land itself to intellectual appreciation. But the formulation of faith as well as its bearing upon human life and society, are tangible and testable matters. And in these Islam, Christianity and Hinduism are fundamentally different.

Of the formulation of Hindu faith, the following may be taken to be the accepted view :

"Hinduism is not a religion established by a single person. It is a growth of ideas, rituals and beliefs so comprehensive as to include anything between atheism and pantheism. Having grown out of the practices and speculations of various communities that were admitted into the Hindu fold at different times, Hinduism, as it stands at present, has very few set dogmas. A formal recognition of the Vedas as revealed wisdom is **all**

that is required for a Hindu to be known as such. But the latitude permitted in interpreting the Vedas is so wide that the atheistic Sankhya philosophy of Kapila and the polytheism of the Puranas are both recognized as orthodox." (P. Thomas, Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners, D. B. Taraporevala Sons Co., Bombay, 4th revised edition, p. 21).

Of Christian formulation of faith, in turn, this may be taken to be an undeniable account :

"The Church, regarding itself as the sole depository of truth, denied the very name of Christian to any man who thought for himself. The thing **began** early... Heresy, then, ever reappearing, forced the Church constantly to redefine its views, and to lend precision to what had been left vague by its original teachers : **and** the history of Christianity in the third century is the history of successive endeavours to give exact expression to philosophic ideas the very germ of which had, in many cases, never occurred to the first generation of disciples... At the Council of Nicaea, which followed shortly after the conversion of Constantine, orthodoxy was decided by the Emperor, and heresy was confounded with *lese-majeste*—*Here* begins the shameful narrative of factions trying all means, open or secret, of influencing the Imperial court in favour of their peculiarisms ; of creeds changed as Emperors died or varied their ideas ; of favourites cajoled into support of this side or that ; of Bishops banished and restored by the caprice of

Governments ; or honest men pursued with rancour in this life and condemned to everlasting punishment in the next, for going wrong or right, as the case might be, on some obscure metaphysical distinction." (E.E.Kellet, *A Short History of Religions*, Pelican, pp. 205, 210, 291)-

Of the formulation of Islamic faith, some of the eminent non-Muslims have recorded this judgment :

"It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca **and** Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve (now fourteen) centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran...The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God', is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol ; the honours of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue ; and his living precepts have restrained the **gratitude** of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion." (Edward Gibbon and Simon,Ockley, *History of Saracen Empire*, London, 1870, p. 54 ; Edward Gibbon, *the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London, Vol. V p. 635).

"To believers, the Muhammadan creed is summed up on belief in the unity of God and in the

mission of His Prophet, and to ourselves who coldly analyse his doctrines, to believe in God and a future life ; these two dogmas, the minimum of religious belief, statements, that to the religious man rest on the firm basis of reason, sum up the whole doctrinal teaching of Quran. The simplicity and the clearness of this teaching are certainly among the most obvious forces at work in the religion and the missionary activity of Islam...he Quran has invariably kept its **place** as the fundamental starting point, and the dogma of unity of God has **always** been proclaimed therein with a grandeur, a majesty, **and** invariable purity and with a note of sure conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam. This fidelity to the fundamental dogma of the religion, the elemental simplicity of the formula in which it is enunciated, the proof that it **gains** from fervid conviction of the missionaries who propagate it, are so many causes to explain the success of Muhammadan missionary effort. A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvellous power of winning its way into the consciences of men." (Edward Montet, *La propagande Chretienne et ses adversaries Musulmans*, Paris, 1890, as quoted by T.W.Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, London **B13**, pp. 413—414)

"Islam had the power of peacefully conquering souls by the simplicity of its theology, the clearness of its dogma and principles, and the definite number

of the practices which it demands. In contrast to Christianity which has been undergoing continual transformation since its origin, Islam had remained identical with itself." (Jean L'heureux, Etude sur L'Islamisme, p. 35)

Not only has the statement of faith been vague and variable in Hinduism and Christianity, and clear, categorical, absolute and unchanging in Islam, but also has the practical relevance of faith been fundamentally different in Hinduism and Christianity on the one hand, and in **Islam** on the other. Polytheism which is central to all popular Hinduism, is essentially a religion of made-believe. **It is a faith that easily lends itself to social exploitation and abuse by those who minister to the objects of worship.** Polytheism also tends to be a religion of appeasement and propitiation, rather than of righteousness and justice. Assignment of specialist and mutually independent **and** even antagonistic roles to a multiplicity of objects makes **such a result inevitable.** It encourages an attitude of clientage, rather than of moral responsibility. **It is no accident that magic, witchcraft and spells generally are, in Hindus, religiously sanctified.** These are an outgrowth and a practical expression of the polytheist ethic. Upon such ideological basis and ethical orientation, nothing better than a corrupt, immoral and utterly perverted social life is possible.

Thus an eminent authority tells us :

"The most absurd stories of their gods are readily believed, so that the miracles of the New Testament are commonplace beside them...This hurrying from one means of salvation to another can be accounted

for partly by the fear that though an act of merit may have satisfied the claims of one deity, others who have not been pacified may wreck their vengeance upon them. Interested and unscrupulous priests make capital out of the gross ignorance and credulity of the people...Shrine after shrine is visited and word after word is done ; and yet the fear remains that some deity has been neglected who at any moment may demand his rights, or punish for neglect...There are so many deities, and are so different in character, that almost any habit can be indulged in, almost any vice committed, under the impression that it is pleasing to one or other." (W. J. Wilkins, Modern Hinduism pp. 38—89).

Pantheism, which represents the; higher, the mystic, element in Hinduism, has tried, on the one hand, to patronise polytheism as a useful indulgence in the working ethic of the vulgar masses, and on the other, to purify it of its perverting aspects. The patronage has earned a semblance of respectability to polytheism without being able to control or condition any of its errors and excesses. Some of the best meaning of reformers have had either to give up in desperation or to suffer a reversal (as in the case of Sikhism) or a rejection (as in the case of Buddhism) of their efforts and achievements. This betrays at once the incorrigibility of polytheism and the importance of pantheism.

In pantheism, nature is personified. It is held to prescribe as well as to take account. It is believed to be a moral force. Even if we were to grant this, it leaves the **practical** moral problem intact. It offers no enlightenment

on what the prescriptions of nature actually are, or indeed, on how to discover or determine them. Such prescriptions as have actually been offered are clearly the constructs of men, rather than of nature. Nature, as such does not either articulate its law or appoint any agency for doing so. Howsoever illuminating and instructive it may be to the spiritual elite, to the ordinary humans it can be no more than an enigma. By their own necessarily limited experience and spectacle, they can see how the big fish can swallow the small one with apparent impunity. That a greater purpose and an unrelenting justice operates above and beyond all that they can see, can only go to sanctify such swallowing amongst men also.

Pantheism, actually, offers an argument for absolute autonomy of the individual. And it renders morality as well as religion irrelevant to human life. It may help the reformation of those who are personally prone to it. But for those who are inclined to evil, it could earn an absolute moral holiday. Not only does it fail to provide any social discipline of its own, but it also undermines the authority of all social discipline. That is why, instead of being able to rid polytheism of its errors and excesses, it has succeeded in only confirming it in them.

Even in its most positive aspect, pantheism could only provoke a vague sentiment for propriety. But that itself is purely private virtue. While a personal character of the highest integrity might possibly be built upon it, no social life can be sustained without objective and explicit standards which may be not only inculcated but also enforced. Not only sermons, but also sanctions, are needed. The belief in the existence of an inscrutable

divine will **is** likely, even in personal life, to induce an attitude of fatalistic abandon, rather than of positive and profitable exertion. And, in and through that attitude, it frustrates, rather than fulfils, the plans and purposes of life and of nature.

In one particular respect, pantheism actually feeds polytheism instead of purifying it. It encourages uninitiated minds to propitiate, and even worship, the objects and events of nature. And, one of the worst forms such worship has, in practice, taken is the worship of the objectified male as well as the female principle. And it is **also** to propitiate nature that sacrifices, including human sacrifice, are made. By personifying and defying the inscrutable power and force of nature, man is invited and induced to indulge in imaginary expectations and irrelevant exercises which could turn out, in the event, to be more horrifying than the worst that may be done in the service of tangible self-interest.

Faith in Trinity may be taken to be the commonest factor in all organised Christianity. Although the Christian church counts this faith among the monotheistic religions, it is doubtful whether its claim is any more credible than the claim of Hindu, who postulates a Supreme Deity as presiding over a much more numerous pantheon. While it is possible to regard the 'Holy Ghost' as nothing other than the agent or instrument of executing the Divine will—just another name for Gabriel—, and, therefore, compatible with monotheism, in spite of its inclusion in the Trinity, same cannot at all be said about the son.

The resulting faith necessarily involves dualism, **with**

two equal and independent power-centres pulling in different, though not necessarily opposite, directions. Between the demands and dictates of the one and of the other, of love and of law, of grace and of works, there may not be exactly opposition, but there certainly is a wide discrepancy. If life were a matter merely of man-God relations, this discrepancy might not have raised equally grave problems. But human life involves also relations between man and man. And a religion that does not deal with those relations is necessarily an incomplete religion. And the one that does deal with those relations, but only in the private perspective, misguides and misdirects them. Mercy, thus, is the greatest virtue in the two-sided relations between **man and God**. But, for the purpose of relations between **man and man**, it is the justice of God that is requisite.

Importance of this distinction, and its ethical relevance, can be seen in the corresponding human situation. A judge that forgives freely any injury done to his person invites admiration. But a judge that takes upon himself to forgive anyone who might injure another, or who; in actual event, forgives, on his own, anyone who has in fact injured another, cannot but be accused of favouritism and partiality. Indeed, even the injury done to the judge is insistently avenged when it tends to impair either the image or the working of the judge. That, no one may insult or affiliate with the judge so that confidence in his independence and impartiality may be maintained, is a very material, and even decisive, consideration. It is inconceivable that either the independence and impartiality, or the image and eminence, of the Supreme Judge, should be any the less important or relevant to the

administration of transcendent justice. Nor is it conceivable that the obviously outstanding issues of human life and society should not call for Divine concern for such ultimate administration.

The idea of incarnation, of a man-god entity, is itself directly injurious to the ideal as well as the value of ultimate and transcendent dispensation. It tends, on the one hand, to lower the idea of the Divine task master, and on the other, to inculcate an attitude of human self-sufficiency. The combined result is to reduce the authority as well as the efficacy of the ultimate dispensation. The divinity that lies within the reach of man is not as over-awing or over-powering as the one that is so utter and absolute. The possibility of over-shadowing and over-reaching it seems only a little less lively than the one of outwitting and influencing the administrators of human justice. And the confidence in one's own judgment is as highly inflated as in an experienced and outstanding counsel appearing before his erstwhile colleague at the Bar.

It is this tendency in the Christian faith that has led to widespread permissiveness, materialism and 'irreligion' in the Christian world. It is also that tendency that has made the growth of agnosticism, humanism and even positive and militant atheism possible on so large a scale. If one man could become god, why not another? If god could be begotten, may he not die also? If god was in some sense human, may he not be in some sense fallible also? And, if god could be fallible, may not man with greater justice fail also without being accountable for his failing? And, if, on the other hand, the entire idea of incarnation was fiction, may not another fiction do

just as well and be equally permissible. Within the frame-work of Christian faith, these arguments were unassailable, and their implications irredeemable.

Islam is absolutely and uncompromisingly monotheist. Not only does it inculcate belief in one and only God and reject belief in every other, but it also declares any association whatever of anything with God as the only sin that God will never forgive. Not only is the absolute oneness of God stressed, but also His absolute sovereignty, and the unreserved subjection of all else to Him. His Power as well as His Providence, His Wisdom as well as His Justice, His Mercy as well as His Majesty, are simultaneously stressed.

The absolute and uncompromising monotheism of Islam has at least three very far-reaching and all-pervasive consequences. It inculcates the attitude of fullest moral responsibility in the believers. It liberates believers from the intrigues and exploitations of their fellow men. And it institutes the true relationship of equality and fraternity in the affairs of the human family.

Any one who is conscious of the absolute power of God, of His extensive reach, and of His all-embracing concern, such as Islam clearly and categorically spells out, and insists upon, cannot but feel fully responsible in his own conduct. He feels necessarily called upon to do right and to desist from wrong doing.

The consciousness of the all-pervasive power of God necessarily induces consciousness of the limits and restraints on the power of all others besides. And anyone who is conscious thus of those limits and restraints cannot easily be taken in or traded on make-believe or false pretence, such as so abundantly prevails in the polytheistic society.

EFFICACY OF INSTITUTIONS

A religion that spells out the most perfect faith as well as an ideal ethic may yet fail to fulfil its promise, and to carry out its high purpose, if it either omits to make any institutional arrangement for doing so, or makes an arrangement that is either inadequate, inefficient or open to exploitation or **abuse**. Every religion, moreover, invests its institutions with sanctity, but does not necessarily either substantiate or safeguard it. The sanctity that is either misplaced or misused, thus, becomes productive of greater mischief than the absence of it might have been. It adds to the religions potential, to be availed alike by the good and the bad, **and** for better, for worse. Islam, Christianity and Hinduism fare as differently in this, as in every other respect.

Every religion seeks to actualise itself in and through a variety of institutions. Not all of these can be studied within the scope available to us in the present context. Nor is it necessary to do so for the practical purposes of our inquiry. It suffices to select for consideration only those institutions that, on the one hand, lend themselves more appropriately to a comparative study, and on the other, bring out the distinctiveness of each religion.

This, the temple, the church and the mosque would

seem fairly well to do.

Of Hindu temple an eminent authority gives this account :

'The worship in the temple does not greatly differ from that of the home ..There are a few large temples, but as a rule they are small. No congregation gathers **in** them to witness an imposing ceremonial, or to listen to addresses on religion and morals. The Hindu's object in visiting a temple is not to enter, but simply to walk round the building, hand his offering to the officiating priest, if possible catch a glimpse of the idol it contains, and after prostrating himself before it, return home...But whether the temple be large or small, the part the worshippers take is identical—a mere promenade round the shrine, the bestowal of **an** offering, and a glimpse of the idol for whose worship the building has been raised. So far as I have seen, no instructive work is done in them ; nor is there the gathering of a congregation for the presenting of united prayer to the gods.

In Hindu temples the worship proper is all performed by the priests (who must be Brahmans), though they are **regarded** as a lower order than others who do not engage in this work. Occasionally some people may be curious enough to **watch** the ministrant at the altar, but, **as a rule**, he is not troubled in this way. There is nothing to attract the ordinary Hindu, for the texts are muttered, not distinctly spoken ; and if it were possible for them to be heard, being recited in the Sanskrit language, they

would be unintelligible. Moreover, the meaning of the ritualistic acts are known only to the priests. It is their duty to repeat the texts, and present the offerings to the gods; it is the people's duty to provide these gifts, and to pay those who condescend to be their mediators with the gods. The people have nothing more to do. (W.J. Wilkins, *Modern Hinduism*, pp. 57-60).

Another eminent authority explains the meaning and significance of this kind of worship :

"The idea that the word, written or spoken, is eternal and of magic potency is one of the primary Hindu beliefs connected with ritual and sorcery. A mystic formula repeated with the correct emphasis on the proper word and the correct accent on the required syllable is thought to be almost omnipotent. In all orthodox Hindu scriptures the power of spells is emphasised at every step. Not only spirits, demons and minor gods are controlled by Mantras, but even the great members of the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are said to be influenced by **spells**, and a Brahmin well versed in Mantra Shastra is considered capable of controlling even gods." (P. Thomas, *Incredible India*, D.B. Taraporevals Sons & Co., Bombay, p. 33).

It is obvious, in any case, that the worship of the Hindu sort is designed to appease and to influence gods and that it involves no commitment, counsel or concert which may be either intended or designed to encourage a life of moral responsibility or of social concern. This may be imagined to be done by the Guru, by and through

whom every Hindu is formally initiated into Hinduism in childhood and retained ever after in his orientation. But of initiation, and of Guru's role in and after it, we have this authoritative account :

"When a Hindu is about eight or nine years of age, the important ceremony of initiation takes place. At this ceremony, in the case of the Brahman, Kshatriya, and Vaisya castes, who are regarded as twice-born, the sacred *poitra*, or thread, is put on for the first time. This simple necklace of thread is the mark of the spiritual aristocracy of India: and an earl is not more proud of his coronet than is the Hindu of this thread which marks him as a special favourite of the gods."

On the appointed day for the guru's visit, the youth must fast, bathe, and appear in spotless garments. When guru and disciple are alone, the great man selects, out of the thousands that form the Pantheon, one god who must ever after be adorned by the disciple as the chief object of worship. The teacher then gives the child a text ; it may be simply a name of the selected deity, or a few words that have a similar sound. This must be kept as a profound secret, and repeated mentally or in whispers an hundred and eight times daily. Many people use a **rosary** to assist them in this repetition. This is sometimes carried in a bag ; but, Phraisee-like, they do not **object** to the bag being seen, nor do they hide the movement of their fingers in counting their beads as they stand in the markets and other conspicuous places muttering their charm. In some cases it is supposed to be sufficient if the text is repeated once on rising, and once on retiring to rest. So strong is the superstition regarding

secrecy in connection with the **mantra**, that I have known Christian converts shrink from making it known, lest the anger of gods should somehow vent itself upon them. As a rule they are meaningless words strung together with a rhyming sound.

The person receiving the **mantra** is regarded afterwards as the disciple of the man who gives it.. This relationship continues through life ; and frequently a son inherits his father's disciples as part of his estate. This is a lucrative post, as, influenced by superstitious fears, the people give liberally to men who are believed to wield divine powers. A guru visits his disciples about once a year, and, if he be a really earnest man, avails himself of this opportunity to teach them some portions of Hindu mythology, or other lessons in religion. I have often seen a man with two or three disciples sitting at his feet listening most attentively as he read a few lines from some of their sacred books, and then expound them for their benefit: As a rule, however, they are ignorant and selfish, their chief object in visiting their disciples being to obtain the customary fee." (W.J. Wilkins, Modern Hinduism, pp. 26-28).

The place and power of the guru may be judged from the following statement occurring in the Tantras, probably the latest of the religious writings of the Hindus :

"Of this word (guru), the g is the cause of friction, the r destroys sin, the u is Siva himself,, the whole word is the Eternal **Brahma** excellent and imexplicable. He whose lips pronounce the sound guru, with what sin is he chargeable. The articulation of g annihilates the sin even of killing a Brahmin ;

the sins of the present birth are removed by pronouncing u, of ten thousand births by the pronouncing ru. **Parasurama** murdered his mother, and Indra destroyed a Brahman, yet they both obtained absolution by pronouncing the word guru." (Quoted in W. J. Wilkins. *Modern Hinduism*, at p. 31).

Even if we dismissed these intimations as either unwarranted or extreme, and assumed that every guru was 'a really earnest man', the best he could offer would be instruction in myths and legends, or possibly in speculative philosophy or mystic lore. None of these are necessarily conducive to a life either of moral responsibility or of social relevance. And, the instruction being individualised **and**, therefore, differentiated, its ethic **and** inspiration is differentiated and individualistic also and tends, therefore, to dissolve the societal structure instead of cementing it or sustaining its health and vigour. If, on the one hand, recluses and hermits abound, on the other, perverts and parasites are found in abundance also.

Society, civilization and culture are products of positive and trans-personal association and involvement. An hundred of hermits, each enclosed within his own skin walls, will not make society. For social roles and relations to be properly and truly exercised, a more generalised and pervasive ethic and instruction are requisite. There is need, moreover, not only for the bonding power to help institute society and to initiate culture and civilization, but also for the preservation and protection of those institutions and to enable them to reach their ultimate flowering and fruition. There is need to institute and enforce sanctions that might keep the parasites and

perverts in check. For such purposes individualised instruction and individualistic ethic cannot suffice.

- The cumulative result of the absence of public instruction and of pervasive ethio has been ably portrayed in this learned comment :

'Tho Rajputs are the representatives of India. In them are seen **all** the qualities of the Hindu **race** unmitigated by foreign mixture, exerted with their original energy, and displayed in the strongest light. They exhibit the genuine form of a Hindu community formed of the most discordant materials, and combing the most extraordinary contrasts of moral nature ; unconquerable adherence to native opinions and usages with servile submission to a foreign yoke : an unbelieving priesthood, ready to suffer martyrdom for the most petty, observance of their professed faith ; a superstition which inspires the resolution to inflict or to suffer the most atrocious barbarities without cultivating any natural sentiment or enforcing any social duty... attachment to kindred and to home, with no friendship and no love of country; good temper and gentle disposition, little active cruelty except when stimulated by superstition ; but little sensibility little compassion, and scarcely any disposition to relieve suffering or retrieve wrong done to themselves or other ; timidity, with its natural attendents, falsehood and meanness, in the ordinary relations of human life, joined with a capability of becoming excited, to courage in the field, to military enthusiasm, to heroic self devotion ; abstemiousness in some respects more rigorous

than that of a Western hermit, in others a life of intoxication ; austerities and self-tortures almost incredible, practised by those who otherwise wallow in gloss consuality, no shame, no belief in the existence of Justice." (Makintosh, quoted in W.J. Wilkins, Modern Hinduism, p. 163).

The Church is a three-dimensional institution. Rather, it is three institutions in one. It is the place of worship, the general body of believers, as well as the clerical establishment. As the place of worship, it compares very favourably with the Hindu temple. It involves the individual believer in the direct and conscious communion with God. It also involves the individual believer in a community of commitment and concern with his fellow believers. And it involves the individual believer in a process of public education and understanding.

But it is not only in those positive points that Church has scored over the temple. It also imposes the authority of the clerical establishment, and appropriates to itself the indulgence of love and grace and even general infallibility. The Church claims to be the ultimate and absolute arbiter of right and wrong, to pardon sins and procure eternal bliss, and to curse and condemn at will and that as a matter of indulgence, rather than of duly earned desert. The net result is to induce in the laity an attitude of ethical indifference and in the clergy that of opportunism and exploitation. Of the former, the fate of the Negro, of the Aborigine, and of the Red Indian, is a sufficient witness. And of the latter, the following is an irrefutable account.

"Anathemas and counter-anathemas were brandied to and fro like the notes and protocols of diplomats. Bishops were condemned and deposed, absolved and restored, again condemned and again sent into banishment. The furious attack of Hippolytus upon Calistus, Bishop of Rome at the end of the second century, is typical of what went on almost everywhere. If we are to believe the Bishop of Portus, the Bishop of Rome was a thief, an embezzler, a cheat, and a convict. Worst of **all**, he was a Neotian heretic. Whether the charges were justified or not, is hardly important: they were made, and both accuser and accused have been canonized by the Church. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, makes hardly less violent assaults on the Pope of his own time, though he is quite willing to **avail** himself of Papal aid when he needs it against Bishops in his own country. When Rome agrees with you, '*Roma loeuia est*', the question is decided; when Rome differs, her Bishop is a heretic, or at least in gross error...A Church like this, living in apparent negation of every principle laid down by its Founder, might seem ripe for destruction. The better men within it sorrowed over its degradation; the heathen without mocked **at** the contrast between its professions and its practices...From a church like this, it is pleasant to learn, thousands turned away in disgust and shame...The heathen were to be dragged into the Church by the same compulsion which they had used to drive men out of it. The arguments which the Christians had employed when they were the

victims were forgotten ; and the crimes of Decius and Diocletian were avenged on men who had never heard of them. A few voices were raised saying that the weapons of the Church ought to be peaceful ; that persuasion, and not force, **was** alone consistent with Christianity ; but few listened, and the Church ran violently down a steep place into a 'sea of cruelty and self-deceit. The Inquisition and the Statute *De Haeretico Oumbr-endo*' might already have been seen on the horizon...Luther had seen Rome, and had been thunderstruck by its corruption...'No Archbishop can receive his pallium, no Bishop his see, without paying a fine to the Pope ; and anyone can purchase immunity for crime by bribing the **Papacy**." (E.E. Keller. *A Short History of Religions*, Pelican, pp. 210—211, 219, 303. For further details, see Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*).

In sharp contrast to this stands the Islamic institution of the mosque, and the Muslim way of worship generally, of which an eminent Christian priest informs us :

"The faithful are called to prayer by the muezzin, who mounts a minaret of the mosque and from a circular gallery cries with a powerful and penetrating voice : 'God is most great. I testify that there is no God but Allah. I testify that Muhainmad is God's Apostle. Come to **prayer**, come to security. God is most great.' Each clause is repeated at least once, and the morning call reminds Muslims that 'prayer is better than sleep'.

Any serious minded European who **understands** these words as **they are** thus proclaimed cannot but be impressed by the entreaty, so much more personal and evocative than the ringing of a bell...

"From my own observation I am able to verify Lane's words on Muslim worship today : 'The utmost solemnity and decorum are observed in the public worship of the Muslims. Their looks and behaviour in the mosque are not those of enthusiastic devotion but of calm and modest piety... they appear wholly absorbed in the adoration of their creator ; humble and downcast, yet without affected humility, or a forced expression of humility. 'The reader will have observed that apart from the testimony to Muhammad being the apostle of God there is nothing in the official worship of Islam in which a Christian could not join, and one who understands the words of praise and adoration is tempted to do so. A Christian who, like the writer, goes from a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with its warring, noisy, competitive sects to the peace and devotion of the Great Mosque of Jerusalem cannot but be saddened and chastened to find in the one what he was looking for in the other.'" (Alfred Guillaume, *Islam, Pelican*, pp, 66—67, 68).

Another eminent non-Muslim student of Islam and of the Muslims informs us :

"In the mosque when the call from the Minaret is sounded and the worshippers are **g~thered**

together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim, 'God alone is great'. I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man **distinctively** a brother. When you meet an Egyptian, an Algerian, an Indian and a Turk in London, what matters that Egypt was the Motherland of one and India the Motherland of another." (Sarojini Naidu, *The Ideals of Islam, Speeches and writings*, Madras, 1918, p. 169).

And another eminent outsider **adds** :

"The two score words of the mueasia are an im-peeative invitation in which Islam summons itself to its faith and practice. In them the Muslim is confronted with his own vocation, while the listening outsider learns what **shapes and makes** Islam. For those within and those without, here is the articulation of the meaning of **the mosque**. The call of the minaret is perhaps the best **single** epitome of Muslim belief and action...Both **imagi-**native and practical reasons thus combine to **make** the call of the minaret and the expression of Islam synonymous. He best serves the latter who best heeds the former...When the muezzin **refers** to his Adhan, or call to prayer, he often **speaks** of it as Hadhihi-l-Da'wat al - Tammah, 'this perfect summons,' 'this complete call'. Because Islam is ultimate and entire, the invitation to it is something that cannot be improved. But the adjective has slsc to do with achieving and aoomplishing.

The vocation is at once perfect and to be perfected. The Muslim is challenged, so to speak, to become what he is...in the inclusive word Falah to which, in and through the prayer, the Muslim is invited, lies an epitome of the essence of Islam as a communal allegiance, a social order, and a religious experience. Various translations as 'salvation', 'well-being', 'good', 'welfare', and 'cult', it stands, not for an experience of redemption from sin, but for a state of spiritual and social 'prosperity' brought about by pardon and obedience to God's revealed law in the state of Islam or submission. Islam and Muslim prayer are in truth inseparable. Falah is not, then, some pietistic abstraction, nor the indulgence of a private sanctity. It is the true state of welfare, the proper prosperity: of the people of God, fulfilled in communal existence and realised in social life. Islam was not an account of human relationship with God that could coexist with a variety of political expressions. Rather those political expressions gave way to the Islamic...It is in community, in political expression and political sovereignty, that Islam is realisable...we may perhaps go so far as to say that within the Muslim concept the religious ideology, not simply requires but is a communal order realisable by political sovereignty within the life of **this** world...Properly conceived, the historic religion **is a total way of life**, known and learned from Divine disclosure and attainable in political, social, and economic existence, by men on earth." (Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, Preface & pages 33-34, 105, 140, 142-43)

PRACTICAL RESULTS

Now that we have understood the nature and quality of religions, and explored their tendencies and directions, we can go on to consider their practical achievements. These fully correspond to, and confirm, the conclusions that the earlier investigation and analysis have thrown up. Thus, of Hinduism, some of the Indian publications state :

"The ignorant among the orthodox (these can be counted in millions), however, confuse inertia with spiritual perfection, and this has led to the breeding among the Hindus of an army of parasites who, under the pretext of piety and renunciation, idle their lives away and prey upon the community. The confusion of inaction and self-torture with spirituality has also produced a great many maniacs who assiduously court pain, privation or death as an end in itself." (P. Thomas, *Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners*, D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., fourth revised edition. p. 129).

"With all this, we find, that the Hindu state and religion have always tolerated and even encouraged prostitution and venal love. Kings were patrons of courtezans, and the temples were the sanctuary of

sacred prostitutea." (P. Thomas, Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners, p. 116).

"The static male principle is represented in sex cults as the Lingam or the phallus, the female principle as Yoni or the genitals of a woman, and the emotional principle as the sex love that unites the two... These highly idealistic conceptions supply the philosophic background for sex-worship in India which manifests itself in different forms among the various castes, sects and tribes. Among certain aborigines and lower castes, it assumes crude forms such as fertility rites with their attendant vulgar and obscene practices while, among others, it takes the form of sacramental Maithuna or sexual union... in the more solemn of its mysteries, the object of adoration is not an emblem, but the Yoni of a living woman, and the rituals are generally concluded by communal sex intercourse by the congregation who are all initiates... When they are all completely intoxicated, men and women no longer keep apart, but pass the rest of the night together, giving themselves up without restraint to the grossest immorality without any risk of disagreeable consequences... Hindu kings, chieftains and the sacerdotal hierarchy were welded together by magical rites that promised immortality or transformation into divinities through ritualistic indulgence in wine and women... And in certain cults the magical potency of sex was considered directly proportional to its frequency and perversity, and some of the temples that specialised in these cults became veritable monuments of what the Pasus

(Tantric term for the uninitiated) might well call obscenity...Not **only** normal sexual postures but even perverse practices are openly depicted at these shrines, emphasising the need for excessive sex activities for the elevation of the soul. '...But nowhere are its observances more blatantly exploited than on the walls of the temple of the Sun at Konarak, the figure sculptures of which are very largely representations of sexual perversion. In Orissa at this period the Maithuna movement appears to have obtained a firm hold on a considerable section of the community, while it is worthy of remark that the **carving** reproduced an ethnological type, very distinctive in appearance, which is now never seen. It is not improbable that this temple was erected on such a remote site in order that the practice so want only illustrated might be ceremoniously conducted by its addicts in an underworld of their own. The ultimate result was the same as that which has overtaken other races who have abandoned themselves to such unnatural pursuits. Konarak is deserted, the hierarchy and its following have died out, and even in the distant towns where this debased thought also appears to have prevailed, people **show** symptoms of its deplorable effects. Whether this form of worship was so deep and widespread that its consequences caused much of the original Orissan stock to disappear and its place to be taken by others, it is outside the present subject, but it is significant that the raising of such stupendous monuments as were then produced seems beyond the capacity

of the present populace... But its disfigured beauty cannot be concealed, nor its sinister character suppressed, tho drifting sands around ceaselessly whispering, although as ceaselessly they endeavour to hide it. Yet, once every year, the stillness is shattered, the temple again comes to life and recalls scenes of its ancient glory, when, stirred by some strange instinct like that of the migratory birds, pilgrims in their thousands converge from long distances to worship the Sun-god within its precincts. For one whole day its broken walls pulsate with religious emotion and its crumbling courts echo with fervent prayers from people of all classes. Then 'night over all spreads her garment,' and by the following dawn, the place is deserted, the devotees have filtered away in groups across the sand towards the horizon and the great ruin sinks again into solitary silence, steeped in its own dark thoughts.' (Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture* Vol. 1).

The temple of Khajuraho is another surviving shrine of a Tantric cult known as Kaula-Kapelika... The central doctrine of the Khajuraho cult was that kings, through communion with beautiful women converted into the goddess Sakti by appropriate magical ceremonies, could become gods." (P. Thomas, *Incredible India*, D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Bombay, pp. 75, 89, 91, 101-102, 122, 124, 127-129).

"Apart from regular sacrifice at the shrines of deities believed to be cannibalistic, it was a common practice in certain parts of medieval India to offer, at the commencement of the construction

of a building, fort or bridge, a human victim so that any cannibalistic spirit inhabiting the area might desist from evil activities. In the Maharashtra country, 'it is common to see a Maharin's shrine near the gate of every fort.' Usually the sacrificed Maharin (a woman of the low caste known as Mahar) was canonised and her shrine worshipped.

There is an authentic record of such a human sacrifice having taken place at the time of building the town of Anantasagar by a minister of a Vijayanagar king. For building the town, the Pandu river was dammed in the year 1364. The embankment was breached soon afterwards, and a daughter of the village headman was sacrificed to the river deity, being built up alive in the repairs of the breach. (Imperial Gazetteer of India)... While there are a number of deities in the Hindu pantheon who delight in blood and flesh, the goddess of insatiable thirst and hunger in this respect is Kali and her various forms. She is the favourite of the high and the low, and holds an honoured place in the pantheon; great philosophers like Sankara and Vivekananda were her devotees, and many primitive cults with their bloody rituals have been incorporated in her worship...they kill a hog in sacrifice and having allowed the blood to flow into a pit prepared for the purpose, the (human) victim who, if it has been found possible, has previously been made senseless by intoxication is seized and thrown in, and his face pressed down till he is suffocated in the bloody mire amid the noise of instruments. The Zanee (the priest) then cuts a piece of flesh from the body and buries it with ceremony near the effigy and the village idol as an offering to the earth. All the rest afterwards go through the same

form and carry the bloody prize to their village where the same rites are performed, part being interned near the village idol and little bits on the boundaries. The head and face remain untouched and the bones, when bare, are buried with these in the pit." (P. Thomas, *Incredible India*, pp. 55-61).

An authentic case of **human** sacrifice to the Hindu goddess Kali occurred much more recently in what was then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The Chief Justice of Pakistan reported to an eminent international audience thus:

"A remarkable case of this kind which came before the Supreme Court in **East** Pakistan deserves special mention. A Hindu devotee of the goddess Kali, who is thought to be appeased by human sacrifices, without provocation or preliminaries whatsoever, struck off the head of a young Muslim boy and carried the bleeding head triumphantly to the nearby temple of the goddess." (A.R; Cornelius, *Address to The Third Commonwealth and Empire Law Conference*, reprinted—*All Pakistan Legal Decisions*, 1965 Journal 149).

Frequent reports appearing in the Indian press, and carried to the world by the international news agencies, indicate that none of this is outdated. Some of the recent reports state :

"Well over 10,000 crimes were committed against untouchables, also known as Harijans (children of God), over the past year, according to incomplete official statistics. In 1976, the total was 5, 968..•

Reports of assaults, rapes and killings, hut and crops being burnt down appear regularly in the Indian Press." (Reuter, New Delhi. May 19 (1979).

"Four young men convicted for the ritual murders of 11 girls and a young woman have been banged at the central prison of the city of Poona in the state of Maharashtra, it was learnt here today. The murders—between 1972 and 1974—had caused a public storm when the killers admitted that the blood of the victims was for the Goddess Munjoba. The court proceedings never found out the killers' motives. The prosecution charged that the murderers were acting on behalf of a former Mayor and his mistress who, it said, wanted the young girl blood so as to fulfil her wish for a child and to uncover a buried treasure." (DPA New Delhi, September 13 (1979)).

"At least one newly-married woman is burned to death everyday in India by her in-laws for not bringing enough dowry with her. According to a report, published in the Guardian in its latest issue, demands by the grooms' families have soared in the past two decades and more and more young brides are either being murdered or driven to suicide if their parents do not pay up. In Delhi alone the police registered 200 such deaths last year. The most spectacular case in the recent past which provoked a public outcry in Delhi including two demonstrations by women's organizations is that of 25 years. Tarvinder Kaur who was admitted with

critical burn wounds to a Delhi hospital last month. Just before she died Tarvinder told police that she was burned by her mother-in-law and sister-in-law because they were not satisfied with the dowry she had brought." (PPI, Islamabad, July 3, 1979).

"Last Thursday, when Indians in New Delhi looked at the morning newspapers, they were **faced** with a front page picture of the charred remains of a group of Harijans—the Hindu untouchables, who were killed by Upper Caste Hindus in a night-long carnage on Monday last in a village, East of New Delhi.

Every year, at least 300 Harijans are killed in caste riots in India, Government statistics admit.

During the first two months of the current year, 36 deaths have been reported so far. The Harijans, a name given them by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and which means Children of God, live in fear, eternal poverty, and in dirty hovels.

From generation to generation they suffer at the hands of their caste superiors. In rural India for example, if a Harijan draws water from the well of an upper caste Brahmin, he is beaten and in most cases, it leads to death.

In summer last **year**, in a village in the state of Bihar, a Harijan girl who had fallen in love with an upper caste Hindu boy, was stripped naked and tied to a tree trunk and left unattended. On the third day she died of dehydration.

The orthodox Brahmins still believe in the shadow of

a Harijan **falls** on them, they are polluted and will have to purify themselves by sprinkling water from the holy river, the Ganges, over themselves.

In the Feb. 25 incident, 14 Harijans, including seven women and four children were killed by a 500-strong mob of upper caste Hindus at Pipra village, near Patna.

The mob raided the village at 10 p.m. dragged the Harijans out from their mud houses, shot them and later set the dead and dying bodies on fire.

In January, in Narainpnr, in Uttar Pradesh, a group of policemen beat up Harijan men, women and children, raped the women and robbed several Harijan families of their meagre belongings after a four-hour orgy.

Three weeks later, upper caste Hindus killed 12 Harijans, including seven women and two children in Parasbigha village in Bihar state. A 150-strong mob of hired hoodlums surrounded the village around mid-night, fired indiscriminately at the Harijans and set fire to their houses." (AFP, New Delhi, March 2 (1980)).

"At **least** nine ritual murders are known to have been committed in India during the last two months. A report today in the Indian Express newspaper said that in Bihar a man axed to death his four children— all less than seven years old.

In Bangalore, a Sadhu (holy man) cut a baby's throat because he wanted to acquire supernatural powers with its blood." (DPA, New Delhi, March 11, 1980).

In its home ground, Christian heritage has come to what Christianity itself has identified as 'irreligion ; materialism and Godlessness.' Permissiveness and perversion though

not exactly instituted in the religious life itself—in Prayer and in places of worship—as with Hinduism, have outdone Hinduism in some other respects. They have brought themselves in the streets, in market places, and even in the home. They have come to infest even the ordinary, everyday, life of the individual and society. They have become ends in themselves, and have been publicly **and** proudly parading as such. They have been able to **defy and** to overreach 'all possible sanctions, including those of parental authority. The laws have, not only ceased to suppress them, but also to procure their indulgence. Even the parental effort to stop or to interfere with them is dubbed, not just by the anarchists or extremists, but by positively and proudly enacted laws, as cruelty. Some of the results are astounding.

According to an AFP report datelined Auckland, May 14 (1979) :

"More than one baby in every five births in New-Zealand last year was born out of wedlock".

To this must be added the number of babies lost through abortions which are naturally higher in the case of illegitimate than of legitimate conceptions. A further multiplication must be made on account of the extensive use of birth controls which, again, are necessarily higher in the case of illicit than of lawful relations. To give some idea of what those multiplications really mean, a Reuter report datelined Washington, April 30 (1979) helpfully states :

"Illegal abortions are leading cause of death among women of child-bearing age and about 20 million are performed in the world each year, a report issued **yesterday' said.**"

Those are illegal abortions. About the legal ones in addition, a Reuter report datelined London, April 29 1979) tells :

"About 30,000 people gathered in Hyde Park in Central London yesterday, to protest against British abortion laws which rally organisers said, denied life to one unborn child every four minutes".

Another dimension of the perverted sexual morality is highlighted in another Reuter report dotelined Bosten, March 17 (1979) :

"Nearly 10 per cent of doctors carrying out artificial insemination have used it to enable lesbian couples and single women to **have** babies according to an American survey.

The survey, conducted by the laboratory of genetics at the University of Wisconsin, indicated 6,000 to 10,000 babies are born each year in the United States as a result of artificial insemination".

And it is not only the lowly and the underworld that is involved. According to an AFP report datelined Washington August 10, 1979) :

"The best way for a girl working for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to get promotion is to have sex with her boss. A Ministry Internal Journal recently published the results of a survey carried out among employees. One hundred and sixty three women reported that their promotions and pay **raises** often depended on their 'favours' to the boss. Thirty per cent of the women said they were willing to respond to the 'boss'

advances, but 70 per cent said 'No'. Eighty per cent of those who responded favourably got the pay or promotion they expected, the survey **said**".

Family life has been disrupted too. According to a PPI report datelined London, December 22 (1979) :

"According to a study from the family action group of the order of Christian Unity, an inter-church body, of the effects of divorce on children, the number of children whose parents are divorced was already running at almost one million. The group's Chairman said that one in three marriages broke down in U.K. Second marriages were failing at an even higher rate. Urgent action was needed to buttress family life. Those who come from broken homes are likely to embark on marriages that **fail**. The fact, that now, second marriages fall at a higher rate—40 per cent—raises the need for action at all levels if marriage and the family are to provide the security essential for children's development, the report says. The evidence in the report comes from teachers, doctors, court officials and divorcees who have seen the traumatic effect divorce can have on children. A justice of the peace in a juvenile court said she had found that 82 per cent of children appearing before her in a year had come from broken homes".

The individual has not fared much better either. According to a GEMINI feature by Ross Brown :

" You must excuse me, but I can't tolerate this life any longer. Don't sorrow over me. Love, Mother'. This tragic farewell note from a 62-year-old

Swedish woman who had hanged herself lay near her body. She was one of 2,400 Swedes who commit suicide every year. At least 20,000 more attempt suicide. The number of people who take their own lives exceeds the number of murders in Sweden by thirteen times, and surpasses the total number of traffic deaths. It is the second most frequent cause of death for middle-aged males. Sweden lies 8th in the international suicide league-behind other industrially-developed countries. Finland, 9th a generation ago, is now number two. Suicide is the fourth most common cause of death in the land of lakes and forests. It has established a clinic to try to prevent self-destruction. A trustee, Mrs. **Irja Korbonen**... said each year about 24 of every 1,000,000 finns take their own lives, an annual total of around 1,100. The most common age group, was from 15 to 24".

More widespread and deep-rooted is what a UNESCO Feature calls 'Brain Strain' :

"According to the National institute of Mental Health in the United States, about 125,000 Americans suffering from depression have to be admitted to **hospital** annually; 200,000 undergo treatment in out-patient clinics, and four to eight million need psychiatric assistance. Of the 50,000 Americans who commit suicide every year, half are known to have suffered from depression. The situation is similar, although on a smaller scale, in other developed countries... there is evidence that the finest mental apparatus of earth, the human brain, has been brought to the brink 'of ruin'".

(Ivan Khorol, Problem of Brain Strain.)

The Economist, London, dated Nov. 25, 1978, asks, 'Is Satan Dead' ¹ and offers these reflections on the mass suicide of Guyana :

"The mass suicide of several hundred members of an obscure American religious-cum-political sect in a remote corner of Guyana is not just another example of the American tendency to violence, and not just another warning of the madness that lies at the fringes of the cult world. It is both those things...But it is also an extreme and therefore distorted manifestation of a much wider change that is happening to the world.

"The result, however, is not what the cheerful rationalists of the nineteenth century had expected. The disintegration of the old religious institutions has not produced a world in which everybody is contented to live in the confines of an existence without gods. One by one the secular heroes of the past century's one purely secular philosophy—Lenin, Stalin, Mao, even Marx himself—have begun to lose their appeal. Instead, a groping has begun for new forms of spiritual experience. The market place of religious innovation is one of the last and best examples of free enterprise in the world today. The cults and sects and communities which are looking for new ideas in this field are most numerous in the United States because America is, in this matter too, 20 years ahead of the rest of the world ; but they are also to be found in Europe, west and east, and in many other places. The grass has begun to force itself through the cracks in the agnostic concrete".

The different faring of Islam is immediately brought home by this report about Guyana itself:

"Nearly 4,000 people have embraced Islam in Guyana and the Caribbean island during the last five years due to missionary work," Saudi daily Okaz reported. The paper said, "Mohammad Abdul Hafeez, an engineer by profession, is the missionary who has been propagating Islam in Guyana. Mr. Hafeez is here these days to perform Umra". (IINA, Jeddah, Aug. 30, 1979).

And it is confirmed by this opinion of a new convert :
 "A leading British scholar. Mr. Brian Allen, has embraced Islam at the hands of the Imam of the Badshahi Masjid, Maulana Mohammad Abdul Qadir' Azad. While embracing Islam on Sunday, the British scholar said that he had been deeply impressed by the philosophy of Islamic brotherhood and Islamic concept of oneness. He admitted that the Western Civilization had decayed and the people had lost their mental equanimity and were groping in the dark. He said it was the 'duty' of Muslim scholars to rescue the people of the west from their present unhappy mental **state** by acquainting them fully with the sublime principles of Islam and the benediction it bestowed on humanity", (APP, Lahore, March 27, 1979).

The Guardian Weekly for the week ending January 6, 1980, in its leading article, entitled 'Learning to live with Islam, states :

"But it does not need a soothsayer to predict that the Middle East will dominate the decade about to begin.

British policy, to be both honest and effective, has to be based on three premises... Second, a full appreciation of the depth of feeling which now animates Islam: a culture of world significance which challenges, and many cases rightly, the assumptions of the West; a religious and a political movement which by-passes the hostility between NATO and the Warsaw Pact and brings no comfort to either, Islamic theologians are much concerned (like Christian ones) to fit the desert religion into a modern context. The very power and vigour of Islam helps them to do so".

An idea of what the 'power and vigour of Islam' might mean can be had from these reflections of an eminent non-Muslim :

"In Iran, 2,500 year old monarchy, backed by the most powerful military force in Central Asia and a surfeit of oil riches, is triggered by a loosely organised unarmed opposition led by conservative Islamic leaders. In neighbouring Afghanistan, the Leftist regime installed by a military coup earlier this year lashes out at its opponents as 'foreign agents covering their faces with an Islamic mask'—and hastens to strengthen its own legitimacy by publicly embracing the teachings of the Quran. In Egypt, Muslim fundamentalists are demanding Islamic laws replacing the present one. In Malaysia, university students are putting pressure on the government to adopt a sharia (sacred law) legal code aligning civil, criminal and commercial laws with Islamic doctrine. From North Africa and the Middle East to Central and South East Asia, the winds of a religious revival are sweeping with various degrees of force. The Russians... appear

uneasy over the Islamic revivalist movement's potential influence on the Soviet Union's own millions of Muslims. Recently, the Russians asked for an additional consulate in Libya, but quickly withdrew the request when the Libyan demanded in return a Libyan consulate in Tashkent, the major city in the heavily Muslim region of the Soviet Union". (Jonathan Kandell, Tremors from North Africa to Asia, Dawn-N.Y. Times Service).

"Perhaps the most important of all, Islam demands and receives an unquestionable faith from its believers. Western churchgoers will listen politely while the clergy thunder against immodest dress or sex in films, but they hardly ever do anything about it...the aspects of Islamic revival...reassertion of spiritual principles, renewed emphasis on ethical conduct and the concern for the poor—would clearly benefit any society...And though Islam began in Arabia, it has now spread throughout the globe to become the world's youngest universal faith. In Britain there are one and a half million Muslims, several hundred teaching houses and a dozen purpose-built mosques, the grandest of which looks across the Regent's Park in London...What should non-Muslim nations do in the face of the Islamic revival?...Adjust to it and hopefully, learn a lesson : that even in this scientific age, a religion born in the desert centuries ago can prove capable of overthrowing the mightiest of monarchs". (William Griffith, Islam on the March, Reader's Digest, July 1979) ..

The power and vigour of Islam are operative in private lives no less than in public affairs. Some of the

recent examples of these are instructive. According to a Reuter report datelined Ipoh (Malaysia), May 24, 1979:

"A Muslim High Court Judge on Tuesday stunned lawyers and court officials when he discarded his wig saying it was a sin for a follower of Islam to wear such a headgear. Judge Datuk Hashim Sani Yeop also asked prosecution and defence lawyers not to bow to him and address him as 'My Lord'. The Lord is in Heaven. Neither am I an English Lord, he said. The Judge told the lawyers to address him as 'Sir' in the Court and plain Hashim outside. Judge Datuk Hashim, who was reviewing a drug case, put on the songok (Malay Muslim cap) and announced: 'It has been my religious concern for quite a while; and I can no longer hear the sin, as it is Haram (ev.l) for a Muslim to wear a wig'".

Nor is this a solitary example, or confined either to **Malaysia** or to the mode of dress or address. In Pakistan for instance, some of the superior court judges are in the forefront of the fight towards fundamentalism. A retired judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the highest court in the country, was personally the petitioner in a petition challenging the validity of the Western political order. Judges, moreover, are not the only group pressing for a return to pristine Islam. In the very midst of permissiveness and sex perversion, Muslims have been trying to hold on to the Islamic alternative of purity and privacy of sexual life.

According to a PPI report datelined London, September 13, 197~ :

"The educational authorities have agreed to consider providing school buildings in various parts of the inner and Greater London area for the establishment of single sex muslim schools in this country. The education officials have asked the Islamic Cultural Centre to give them a satisfactory number of Muslim school-going children in various parts of London. It may be mentioned here that the Director Islamic Culture Centre Dr. Zaki Badawi had been striving for long to get such schools established for the Muslim children",

That people of all ages share equally in this enthusiasm for, and affirmation of, their distinctive ethic and identity is clear from another London report dated February 13, **1980:**

"So, while Mr. Said Rahman, 46, lost his case for praying on M 1 and was fined, Miss Farhath Malik, 18 won her case against a Manchester store for forcing her to wear skirts and showing her legs which is against her cultural and social traditions."

"**Mr.** Said Rehman of Rossendale, Lancashire, was fined five pounds by Sheffield magistrates for stopping his car on the hard shoulder of M1, other than in an emergency. Police had found Mr. Rahman praying besides his car on the hard shoulder...

"But when Farhath Malik, 18, of Blackburn Road, Dorween, Lancashire, complained to a Manchester industrial tribunal that she was refused Saturday job, **and** she told British Homes Stores that she could not wear Store's official uniform of a skirt and overall, then the tribunal entered judgment for Farhat~. The

industrial tribunal **ordered BHS** to change its Company rule for Muslims, requiring shop assistants to wear-skit-ts while on duty... The tribunal Chairman, Mr. Ian Webster, ruled that there had been discrimination and ordered that 'the BHS reverse its rules within 28 days so that ladies of the Muslim religion can comply with their requirements and will be able to wear trousers, which does not offend their religious dictates.: Miss Malik is now working part-thne.in a chemist's shop in trousers."

CHAPTER VII

INTER-RELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS

Now that we have seen how each religion fares by itself, within its own jurisdiction, we can go on to examine how each fare against the other in the event of a direct or indirect confrontation. We shall be concerned with situations where one religion has tried, by example or by argument, to supplant another. We shall be concerned also with situations of competition where, instead of directly confronting each other, different religions have confronted a common culture, and sought to outdo each other in finding acceptance. We shall be concerned also with the opposite situation where, instead of being on the offensive and trying to seek acceptance, they are up against a common cultural onslaught and have tried to defend themselves and to keep their place.

Of the Christian onslaught on Hinduism, this may be taken to be the net achievement :

"In my opinion the **Hindus** will remain after another thousand years as they were a thousand years ago. Their reserved and **distant** intercourse with Europeans will always continue the **same**, and their abhorrence of the religion, education and manners of the latter, as well as their other leading prejudices, will continue undiminished.; Let Bibles, as many as you please,

in every shape and in every style, be translated and circulated among the Hindus ; let them, if you wish, be spread in every village, in every cottage, and every family ; let the **Christian** religion be presented to these people under every possible light... I repeat **it**, with deep sorrow, in my humble opinion (an opinion grounded on twenty-five **years** of experience) the time of conversion has passed **away, and** under existing circumstances there remains no human possibility to bring it back..." (Abbe Dubois, quoted in W.J. Wilkins, Modern Hinduism, p. 146).

Of the reverse situation, of Hinduism projecting itself over against Christianity, we have this account :

"The 'guru' cults that beguiled young Americans in the early 1970s have spread to Western Europe, and several governments are alarmed. These fringe religions are flourishing in West Germany, France, Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark and Italy, a survey showed. The Bonn Government became so concerned about crime reports involving the cults that it launched a campaign last summer to **warn** young Germans against becoming involved. It estimated that 150,000 persons, most in the 14 to 28 age group, have joined about a dozen sects...German parents' group, working with Protestant and Roman Catholic churchmen, have cited the same cults in a collection of 34 case histories describing the psychological effects of membership. 'You get the impression the followers are bewitched, dazed and intoxicated', said the mother of a cult member. 'All these groups share fixation on an authoritarian, patriarchal leader, total obedience,

strictly regimented community life and uncompromising rejection of the old society', the ministry said .. Transcendental meditation followers of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi are said to number 80,000 in Britain and are growing at a rate of 10,000 a year.

Denmark is unofficially estimated to have at least 10,000 young cult members, ranging from Hare **Krishna** to Satanists. For the past few years, Lutheran church spokesmen and several newspapers have been campaigning against the activities of Scientology recruiters, but there has been no government action." (**Dawn**, Karachi, November 26, 1978).

As against this faring of Christianity, the faring of Islam against Hinduism has been assessed thus by an eminent Christian authority :

"We have seen that prior to the arrival of the **Muslims** all the people that invaded India and settled down in the country were absorbed into Hinduism. They received a definite status in Hindu society **and** their religious beliefs and traditions were incorporated in Hinduism.

Thus Islam is, in every respect, the antithesis of Hinduism with its social rigidity and leanings towards spiritual anarchy. It is obvious that these two religions could not absorb one another... The two religions influenced each other appreciably. The lower castes were attracted by the social status they stood to gain by conversion, and the proselytizing **zeal** of the Muslims made them embrace Islam in large numbers. The social democracy of the Muslim profoundly affected Hindu society and wherever Muslim influence

hat been predominant and prolonged, Hindu society does not show its most undesirable caste features. Idolatory among the Hindus is less prevalent in provinces which had Muslims for masters for a long time. The uncompromising monotheism and the simplicity of worship of Islam attracted many Hindu religious thinkers and these founded sects among the Hindus which were akin to Islam". (P. Thomas, Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners, pp. 8—9).

That Islam continues to attract Hindus in ever-increasing number even in secular India, in spite of its pronouncedly pro-Hindu bias, is borne out by this latest Indian Hindu report :

"When news of the mass conversions of Harijans to Islam in Tamil Nadu spread through the country last month, it was received with surprising alarm. Minister of State or Home Affairs, Yogendra Makwana, promptly rushed to Tirunelveli, Madurai, Ramnad, Thanjavur and Kanyakumari, the five districts from where they had been reported. Delegations from the Arya Sarna] and other Hindu Organisations followed in his wake. In one sense, the hectic toing and froing was needless. The country's secular Constitution, after all, guarantees the freedom of religion, and person's faith is not the concern of the state unless he is subjected to force or fraud...

In order to investigate the truth behind the reports, Picture Editor Raghu Rai and Correspondent Raj Chengappa last fortnight visited and spoke with a wide range of villagers, converts and those opposing them. Their report :

"I want equality. Muslims treat me equally. So I

became a Muslim', says Syed Mohammad, 40, formerly Sethu, a Harijan of Athiyuthu village, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu.

It is easy to explain why Harijans are converting to Islam. It is more difficult to say whether they will benefit from the move. But benefit or not, conversions are taking place with increasing momentum in Tamil Nadu. Last fortnight, another 100 families in Ramanathapuram district took shelter under the crescent of Islam, ostensibly to extract themselves from the crushing stigma imposed by Hinduism. And what was regarded as only a small insignificant trickle when 200 Harijan families embraced Islam last February in neighbouring Tirunelveli district broadened into a river of conversions in Ramanathapuram and is threatening to engulf the state with Harijans in Salem and Thanjavur giving the call to their brethren to follow suit .

'Nagu', as he was known before, said fervently, 'I hate Hindu religion. We are not allowed into temples. But in Islam there is only one God : Allah. Whether we are rich or poor we **are** treated equally in the mosque'.

Is that the only reason t 'No. Hindus don't let us eat with them. But with Musjims I not only can eat at the same table with them but I can walk into their house freely .

Why not become a Christian l 'Even among Christians there are caste problems. We have Nadar Christians, Harijan Christians and so on, Again we will be discriminated **against**'.

...A shy Nazirbee, formerly Poomaliamma, replied :
 "When I prayed in the temple I had no feelings because I could not even enter it. But praying to Allah gives me peace.

Does your family observe all Muslim customs now ?

'Yes, we pray five times a day. In the evening we sit around and read the Quran'. "(India Today, July 16-21, 1981. reproduced in Dawn, Karachi, Magazine, August 7, 1981).

Less direct but more consequential was the **confrontation** in South East Asia. That countries like Malaysia and Indonesia should have been overwhelmingly Muslim when their Christian conquerors granted them independence in the twentieth century, is a variable miracle. They were, if anything, Hindu, when the Christian powers conquered them. And the Christian Mission, unlike its Islamic counterpart, the Dawwah, is an organised activity and arrived everywhere with the arrival of the Christian power. Muslim presence in the area, upon the arrival of Christian missionary and military power was only nominal. Seldom, if **ever**, were those areas mentioned in Muslim counsels, in spite of the fact that Muslims, unlike the Hindus and the Christians, had a regular, world wide, contact in Arabia once each year. A Muslim historian, who might have had a reason to exaggerate, but certainly none to underrate, the Muslim presence on the eve of the Christian arrival, reports :

"Muslim traders from West India, mostly from Gujrat had started coming to these islands (East Indies) in the fifteenth century. At first, they started small trading concerns, but since they were honest in their

dealings and were a link with the Middle East and even Europe, they were welcomed by the local traders and the local Rajas ; some of whom accepted Islam. A Raja of Borneo is recorded to have been converted in 1510." (S. F. Mahmud, The Story of Islam, Oxford University Press, pp. 310—11).

The Christian position in the same area around the same time may be judged from the following entries taken from a British encyclopaedia :

"1494 Treaty of To!desillas: Spain and Portugal agree to divide unexplored part of world ; subsequently approved by Pope.

1507 Affonso de Albuquerque becomes Viceroy of Portuguese Empire in the East.

1542 First Portuguese reach Japan.

1557 Macao becomes permanent Portuguese port in China".

(Pears Cyclopaedia, 1964—1965, 73rd edition, Events A7—A8).

The miracle of this progress of Islam becomes all the more astounding when we remember that the occupying Christian powers could only have been hostile to the Muslims, since they were actively engaged in war with them elsewhere at the same time.

Behind the Christian-Muslim encounter here, the spirit of the Crusades was working, as this Christian authority tells :

"The Portuguese intended to destroy Islam, to secure the gold traffic of **Sofala**, to dominate the **Indian**

Ocean and to banish all Muslims from its waters, to break the monopoly which the Islamic peoples held of the wealthy trade with India, and to divert it by way of the new Cape route into the coffers of Portugal. This was a 'Christian' war, to be compared, as to its spirit, with the Crusades".

(Lyndon Harries, Islam in East Africa, quoted in International Review of Mission, October, 1976, at p. 440).

That colonialism and Christianity were jointly pressing upon the Muslims, is confirmed by a Christian authority thus :

"The Christian movement, in so far as it was controlled by outside bodies, found itself sharing aims with the colonial administration in certain places. One aim in which both co-operated was the attempt to check the spread of Islam as an anti-Christian and an anti-colonial force. The missionaries were also acting from fear, fear of losing African converts to Islam. It was a similar motive which led some later missionaries to acquiesce grudgingly in the apparent ease with which Islam was gaining adherents. Gradually Christian missionaries came to acquire a reserved tolerance for Islam on the grounds that it established a tender bridge to a higher, revelation which the African was incapable of reaching in one brief stride. A paradox developed here : the call to Christian service must be obeyed towards Africans for whom the claims of a rival religion were admitted to be more suitable ! The other side of the paradox cut against the Church which laboured under a self-inflicted pessimism in the face of alleged Islamic expansion in Africa ..The era of rivalry had its colonial

version too. The French, perhaps more than the British, Portuguese or Germans, were deeply involved with Islam in North and West Africa, At one stage so resolved were the French to scotch what they alarmingly called 'the Islamic peril' that they staged **what** a French scholar/administrator termed 'the St. Bartholomew's massacre of the marabouts'. (Lamin Sanneh, Christian Experience of Islamic **Da'wah**, International Review of Mission, Vol. LXV No. 260, October, 1976, pp. 417 et seq.).

In the more direct confrontation between Islam and Christianity, likewise, it has invariably been Islam that has on the ascendant.

According to an IINA report datelined London, Feb. 19, (1980) :

"Islam is 'beyond doubt' the fastest growing religion in Britain, according to Sunday Telegraph...in the past 20 years between 300 and 400 mosques have been founded, while in the same period 650 Anglican churches were declared redundant. Some of the mosques are as big as Cathedrals...'In recent years there has been a steady growth in young (indigenous) people embracing Islam', according to the report (a special report published in the Sunday Telegraph to mark the birthday of the Prophet of Islam). The association of British Muslims estimated there are about 1000 solid, practising English Muslims in the South-East of England, and perhaps 2,000 in the whole of the country. A community of between 100 and 200 English Muslims settled in Norwich, England, nearly three years **ago**. They have an English Imam and do not find it difficult

... read the Holy Quran in Arabic. They share houses with one another, support themselves largely by running their own press and publishing books on Islam in English. Most of them are professional people".

The situation in the rest of Europe is not very different. According to Western reports :

"The rise and rise of Islam will lead to unexpected effects everywhere...there is one rule from the Quran that will hold the future for all of us ; 'You have a pivotal role to play in the service of mankind...you must act as a model to others as the Prophet was a model to you' (Quran)...Our values are being flung back in our face by an older culture than our own that has tested our ways and found us wanting ..there are now two million Muslims in France, where Islam is the second most important religion...which today attracts 6,000 Muslims on Fridays to the Paris Mosque while there are empty pews on Sundays at the Catholic churches". (June Southworth, Daily Mail)

'Islam, barely visible in Europe since the medieval fall of Muslim Spain is making a resurgence across the continent. Minarets are rising against the skyline in many European cities. A mosque was opened in 1977 in London's Regent Park, and the Vatican is soon to have one as a neighbour...Although not directly related to the Islamic revival in the Muslim states, the rise of Islam in Europe results partly from the same cause ; the refusal of Muslims to accept Western standards and lifestyles imposed upon them. Among the demands are a recognition of Islamic law, Islamic holidays, for Muslim workers, time off work for

prayers, and the allocation of public funds and land to build mosques, Muslim cemeteries and abattoirs where animals can be slaughtered according to Islamic rights. Some nations have taken steps to accommodate their increasingly activists Muslim minorities. Belgium and Austria, for example, recognise Islam as **an** official religion". (John Lawton; Washington Post)

Some of the latest reports about Islam's faring in the heartland of Christianity state :

"About 700 conversions to Islam take place annually at the Paris Mosque involving mostly intellectuals **and** young students.

According to a report, among the converts, Catholics are in majority, followed by Protestants and Jewish faith." (PPI, London, May 4 (1980)

"There are at present around two million Muslims in the Federal Republic of Germany and is the third largest religious community. The majority of the Muslims **are** of foreign nationalities, particularly Turkish, but there are thousands of Ethnic German Muslims. Muslims, however, are facing serious challenges in the up-bringing of their children in accordance with Islam and one of the measures they have adopted is the establishment of Quranic schools.

The Muslim children attend the Quranic schools and the regular German schools. In north Rhine-Westphalia, the association of Turkish teachers reported in a survey that 80 per cent of the pupils were attending **Quranic** schools.

In Cologne, there are 8,300 pupils in the **Quranic** school. The Dawah work in Germany is clarifying all the misconceptions about Islam and many non-Muslims are embracing the Faith" (PPI, London, May 4 (1980) "Muslims now constitute the third largest religious grouping in the United States of America after the Jews and the Christians...what is significant is that Islam has spread in the USA only during the past 20 years while Judaism has been there in the USA since the time of the first immigrants from Europe to Americas 400 years ago. The startling revelation that the Muslims now comprise the third largest religious grouping came at the American Institute of Religion meeting in New Orleans recently where representatives of different religious communities spoke.

Two-thirds of the total Muslim population of the USA (three million) comprised of black and white converts to Islam in the USA as immigrants."

(UPP, May 27 1979)

CHAPTER VIII

NATURE OF MISSION

Now that we have spelt out the character and quality of each religion and the nature of the practical results issuing from them, and completed thus the substantive part of our inquiry, we go on to examine the adjective part of the problem. And the foremost issue that calls for consideration is the nature and quality of the mission, the mode and the manner in which the message is carried to the outsider and his conversion sought and sustained. A message that is simple and sound can be quite straightly and honestly delivered. But, when the message is quite otherwise, other means are needed, and come to be devised and used, to facilitate its reception. This may add a great deal to the quantity of conversions, but their quality suffers irreparably. We shall now see how the practical situation answers to this abstract and theoretical speculation.

As far as Hinduism is concerned, conversion as such has no place. Since status of every individual is irrevocably fixed by birth, nothing that he may do or declare can bring about any change of the sort we call conversion. Conversion, one might say, takes place in the other world and operates upon the soul in and through its transmigration. The temporal existence and the physical being, the

person, undergoing any change of status by a conscious, voluntary and visible exercise of option, is a matter unknown to and irreconcilable with, orthodox Hinduism. Notice how insistent Hinduism actually is :

"A man named Matanga...commenced a course of such severe penance that the gods in fright extracted from Indra the promise of a boon for the devotee. He asked to be made a Brahman, but this Indra refused. For a hundred years more Matanga continued his austerity, but Indra again refused him, and told him that a 'Chandala can only become a Sudra in a thousand births, a Sudra a Vaisya after a period thirty times as long, a Vaisya a Rajanya (Kshatriya) after a period sixty times the length, a **Rajanya** a Brahman after a further period of sixty thousand lives.' Concerning people not included in these **four** castes, such as the aborigines whom the Hindus found in India, and the inhabitants of countries bordering on their own, Manu has little to say. He affirms that 'the members of three castes, the Brahman, Kshatriya, and Vaisya, are twice-born ; the fourth, the **Sudra**, once-born ; there is no fifth.' All others are out-castes. He enumerates a number of such tribes, and gives their pedigree, showing that they are the descendents of some who were once within the bounds of the Hindu castes. They have sunk to their low condition from the fact that their parents did not marry members of their own caste. The common name Dasyas (slaves) is applied to them all, and it is taught that they ought to respect the Brahmanical institutions." (W.J. Wilkins, Modern Hinduism, pp. 262-63) See also (P. Thomas, Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners, pp. 19,21)

Such conversions, therefore, as have been taking place to the so-called 'guru cults', and thereby to Hinduism, may be taken to be to the lowest of the low of the human kind. They add only to the abundance of the **Dasyas**, the slaves. Whatever quantitative addition they might make to Hinduism, the qualitative gain accruing from even their abundance is nil. And the reports about the guru cults indicate that they live upto the indulgence that **Hinduism** grants them for their almost animal existence. Their conversion itself is procured largely, if not wholly, by the lure of that indulgence. Drugs and sex are their prime instrument. **Thue**, according to a Bonn report published in Dawn, Karachi, dated Nov. 26, 1978 :

"The Paris newspaper Le Monda published an interview last month with a 16-year-old girl who said she had prostituted herself in Corsica to lure men into the Children of God. 'Our father, Mose David, has **ordained** that sexual desire may also be served for the sake of spreading the word,' said Lilith, formerly Marie-Germain; who ran away from her parent's home in **Paris** to join the sect. Of the men she has slept with, she **said**, 'I don't feel anything special. I think of **other** things. And when it is finished I tell them about our faith.' The Interior Ministry said it has not taken any action against the sect for its alleged involvement in prostitution because 'we can't really distinguish whether it **is a** personal wish or an activity sanctioned by their church."

According to an American authority:

"We know, for instance, that the people most vulnerable to the culte are those at timee of deep emotional

change, like adolescence **and those** without roots." (Georgie Ann Geyer, *Mind Control : Key to Cults*, Dawn-N.Y. Times)

The Hindu mission, thus, operates at the lowest level of humanity, by the most inadmissible of means, and achieves results that can neither do credit to itself nor add much to the strength or efficacy of the society to which it caters. Acceptance of Hinduism, as every other act done in a moment of mental disturbance or **distress, is** devoid of any genuine conviction as well as consent. Inducement and undue influence, likewise, vitiates true conviction as well as consent in the matter of religious conversion no less than in all other matters of status and obligation. Tenderness of age is an equally frustrating factor wherever conviction or consent is requisite.

The nature and quality of the Christian Mission, and of its Islamic counterpart, the Islamic Dawah was the subject of comparative study and analysis in a joint Christian-Muslim conference sponsored and organised by the Christian side. The proceedings of that conference, as reported in the official Christian Quarterly, the 'International Review of Mission', published by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, are particularly illuminating for our purpose. The Muslim 'Guest Editor' sums up the Muslim view of Christian Mission, as expressed at the conference, thus :

"But the overall Muslim experience of the Christian mission was such that it failed to commend itself as something noble and holy. Any dispassionate evaluation of the experience would suggest that what has been achieved is a loss for Islam and religion as such, and not a \$&in for ChriBtianity—the real beneficiaries

being the forces of secularism, materialism and of moral insensitivity. The Muslim critique can be summed up in four points :

- (a) Gross and flagrant misrepresentation of the teachings of *Islam* and of the life and message of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Instead of examining Islam as it is, a totally unreal picture of Islam was concocted and used to denigrate Islam and Muslims. Although the high watermark of this type of approach to the study of Islam has passed, the effort still persists, even though in low profile and under many a disguise.
- (b) The methodology of Christian mission concentrated upon influencing the object in a state of weakness and helplessness. Instead of direct invitation, approaches were made to those who were disadvantaged, exploiting their weaknesses for the sake of proselytism. The poor, the sick and the immature were made special targets of economic assistance, medical aid and education. Many a Christian mission acted as an organic part of colonialism and cultural imperialism. All this was a very unfair way to bring people to any religion.
- (c) Whatever the ultimate aim, subversion of the faith and culture of Islam seems to have been the prime target of the Christian missionary enterprise. Nationalism, secularism, modernism, socialism, even communism were fostered, supported and encouraged. While the revival of Islam and the strengthening of Islamic moral life among the

Muslims were, and even now are, looked upon as anathema.

- (d) Muslims were treated as political rivals and as such subjected to **overt** and covert discrimination and repression. ••" (Vol : LXV, No. 260, October 1976, pp. **367–368**)

'Statement of **the Conference**', issued at the end of the proceedings, contained **the** following two paragraphs:

6. "The Christian participants extend to their Muslim brethren their full sympathy for the moral wrongs which the Muslim world has suffered at the hands of colonialists, neo-colonialists and their accomplices. The conference is aware that Muslim-Christian relations have been affected by mistrust, suspicion **and fear**. Instead of co-operating for their common good, Muslims and Christians have been estranged and alienated from one another. After more than a century of colonialism during which many missionaries served the interests of the colonial powers, whether deliberately or unconsciously, the Muslims have felt reluctant to co-operate with the Christians whom they have fought as agents of their oppressors. Although the time has certainly come to turn a new page in this relationship, the Muslims are still reluctant to take the step because their suspicion of Christian intentions continues. The reason is the undeniable fact that many of the Christian missionary services today continue to be undertaken for ulterior motives. Taking advantage of Muslim ignorance, of Muslim need **for**

educational, health, cultural and social services, of Muslim political stresses and crises, of their economic dependence, political division and general weakness and vulnerability, these missionary services have served purposes other than holy... proselytism, that is, adding numbers to the Christian community for reasons other than spiritual. Recently revealed linkages of some of these services with the intelligence offices of some big powers confirm and intensify an already aggravated situation. The conference strongly condemns all such abuse of diakonia (service). Its Christian members dissociate themselves in the name of Christianity from any service which has degraded itself by having any purpose whatever beside agape (love for God and neighbour). They declare that any diakonia undertaken for any ulterior motive is a propaganda instrument and not an expression of agape. They agree to exercise their full power and use whatever means at their disposal to bring Christian churches and religious organizations to a proper awareness of this situation.

7. "The conference, being painfully aware that Muslim attitudes to Christian mission have been so adversely affected by the abuse of diakonia, strongly urges Christian churches and religious organizations to suspend their misused diakonia activities in the world of Islam. Such a radical measure is necessary to cleanse the atmosphere of **Muslim-Christian** relations and orientate them towards mutual recognition and co-operation

worthy of the two great religions. The conference urges strongly that all material assistance donated by outside churches and religious organizations henceforth be distributed wherever possible through or in co-operation with the governments and local communities of people for whom they are intended, respecting the dignity and integrity of the people concerned".

(pp. 458—459)

While no statement of this kind could come forth without a great deal of goodwill and understanding, it is worthy of note that the Muslim participants had cited specific cases and supported their allegations with documentary evidence and, in answer to the suggestion that 'tremendous emphasis' was being placed on 'mission as it was practised in the nineteenth century, and perhaps amongst certain fringe groups today; Muslim participants had pointed out that 'the facts of exploitation and mission we are referring to relate, to 1960s and '70s and not to an earlier age'. It is important to note also that, before the 'Statement of the Conference' was forthcoming, a Muslim participant had observed : 'Dr. al-Faruqi had made an important point : before we can proceed effectively in the matter of practical co-operation between Muslims and Christians, some sort of statement is needed from Christians repudiating past activities. I was much impressed by the statement produced by the Vatican in the recent dialogue with Muslims in Tripoli, Libya. It was a very clear, forthright statement. But I don't know of anything similar from the side of the Protestant churches, which have been in advance of the Catholic Church in missionary

activity. All we have are the elusive references in the 'World Council of Churches' publications following earlier dialogues between Christians and Muslims'.

It is interesting **also** to notice that the following statements made about the Islamic mission were never challenged by any of the Christian participants, in spite of the fact that they displayed complete mastery over knowledge of and about Islam:

"Islamic law does not **recognize the** conversion to Islam of the minor child ; **for his** consciousness is presumed immature until he comes of **age**.

"The principle that da'wah (invitation, call to the acceptance of Islam) has nothing to do with psychotropic induction, preserves the freedom and consciousness of choice which cannot be affirmed in case of dilation of consciousness by chemical or mystifying means. It protects the da'wah from being conducted for pleasure, happiness, freedom from care, eudaeionia...indeed, for anything but the sake of Allah. Any ulterior motive would vitiate it in both the giver and the recipient. On the other hand, unconscious conversion of any person who has been tricked into entering Islam is evil ; more evil, of course, is the trickster". (p. 393)

Nor was any challenge offered to the authenticity or intentment of the following quotations from the Quran:

"Call men unto the path of your Lord by wisdom and goodly counsel. Present the cause to them through argument yet more sound". (Qur'an 16 : 125)

"No coercion in **religion**". (2 : 256)

"Truth is now manifest from error. Whoever believes (i.e. accepts the truth) does so for his own good. whoever does not believe (i.e. does not accept the truth) does so to his own peril" (39: 41).

Much more illuminating for our present purpose was the statement of the 'Christian Experience of Islamic Da'wah, whi -h, among other things, said :

"...the Christian recognizes immediately the religious stature and integrity of Islam and the way the African setting seems to have accentuated the theological and moral aspects of the faith. The devout and humble clerics held emperors, kings and princes to account through the clerics' frail grasp and partial glimpse of the Creator...The Christian is encouraged by the frank and direct way Islam appears to have understood and discharged its missionary obligation...Christian experience of Islamic da'wah in Africa can be both stimulating and challenging. It is stimulating because it has shown Christian how seriously the vocation to witness needs to be taken. The devotion and sense of self-sacrifice which Muslims have shown in obedience to the call to spread and establish the faith are a poignant reminder of what lies at the heart of Christian discipleship... The challenge consists in learning through commitment an identical lesson of humility... Accounts describing the growth of Islam in Africa show that Islam gained adherents in Africa largely through the appeal of its teaching, the Arabic as vehicle divine revelation of the Quran, the shahadah of Islam the salat of Islam... this being the particularly distinctive element of Muslim aobiviby by which Muslims came to be known, and by which they are still

known, in many **African** languages as 'the praying men'." (pp. 421 et seq)

Invitation to Islam, thus, is an open and intelligent one. No one is either tricked or traded into Islam. He is asked only to exercise his own enlightened judgment and provided the arguments and examples on which to base it. **This** manner of doing the missionary job is itself not a matter of either make believe or of false pretence. For, it is irrevocably enjoined on the Muslim missionary by God's law which he **il** ever so eager and insistent on observing. Nor is it necessary either to trick or trade people into accepting Islam. For, a sufficient number of people around the world are volunteering to understand and even to accept Islam for the Muslims to have to resort to any underhand and unbecoming means for the purpose-

CONTENDING WITH THE CRITIQUE

In every department of our enquiry; Islam seems clearly to win. But Islam's critics are not wanting. We shall now consider their case. Before we begin to contend with the positive points of the critique, let us remind ourselves of its essential subjectivity, to which some eminent authorities attest thus :

"History has been such that the West's relations with the Islamic world have, from the first, been **medically** different from those with any other civilization... Europe has known **Islam** thirteen ceatunes, mostly as an enemy and a threat. It is no wonder that Muhammad more than any other of the world's religious leaders has had a 'poor press' in the West, and that Islam is the least appreciated there of any of the world's other faiths." (Ellfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, The New American Library, New York, 1957, p. 109).

"During the first few centuries of Mohammanism, Christendom could not afford to criticise or explain, it could only tremble and obey. But when the **Saracens** had received their first check in the heart of France, the nations which have been flying before them faced round as a herd of cows will sometimes do when

the single dog that has put them to flight is called off; and though they did not yet venture to fight, they could at least calumniate their retreating foe. Drances-like, they could manufacture calumnies and victories at pleasure". (Bosworth Smith, *Mohammad and Mohammadanism*, London, 1889, 3rd edition, p. 63)

This motive has not ceased. Nor has the malice abated. Malice of those who control the Western media has been spreading misinformation about Islam and the Muslims all around the world. Although allegation of malice is stoutly denied in the West, the fact of misinformation being spread about Islam cannot possibly be denied. It is admitted, for instance, that all the major news agencies of the world are 'Western in spirit', as are also **all** the major broadcasting, publishing and teaching institutions. They necessarily, see and present Islam in their own peculiar perspective.

It is in this exercise that the Western critics whether Christians, agnostics or atheists ..have been calling much of what to the Muslims is God-giving in origin **and** perfect, just and efficacious in practical working as 'inhuman,' 'uncivilized' and even 'barbaric'. And it is this Western message that has been constantly poured into the **ears** of the world, with utmost confidence and unrelenting persistence. How misplaced that confidence can be, and how mechanically habitual the persistence, becomes clear when we recall the context of one of the most confident and categorical of anti-Islamic statements appearing recently in the Western press. The *Guardian* Weekly began its decade of the eighties with the leading article entitled 'Learning to live with Islam'. The article was headed by a cartoon showing a double-decker bus heading for 'Destination unknown' and listing intermediate stops as 'World Recession'

•Mass Unemployment', 'Civil Unrest' 'ideological War' and 'Energy Crunch'. The tyres were nearly bursting and the outgoing driver was waving out his farewell message :

"Good luck, kid—and by the way, there don't seem to be any brakes. If there ever was a place where one might have expected understanding for Islam and a lack of confidence in West's own valuation, it surely was here. But the paper proceeded, confidently and categorically, to 'inform' its readers that 'There is much in Islam, including its zeal, its apparent lack of flexibility, and its unfamiliar assumption of male supremacy, which militates' against understanding'.

That something militates against ones own understanding is a statement of an opinion, but that it militates against understanding generally is a statement of a fact. And the statement that a certain aspect of Islam militates against understanding, as a statement of a fact, is a patently false one for the simple reason that there are millions of men and women around the world to whose understanding it, not only does not militate, but actively and eminently appeals. The same article, in fact, had earlier spoken of the 'the depth of feeling which now animates Islam : a culture of world significance which challenges, and in many cases rightly, the assumptions of the west'. The reader, whose mind is cultivated and conditioned by such flasehoods, is of course, precluded from such understanding.

Only after one has rid oneself of the foregoing prejudices, and the pre-concepbious arising therefrom, is it possible to take an objective and intelligent view of what the outsider finds objectionable in Islam. And anyone taking an objective and intelligent view of the matter

will be slow in condemning and even criticising that which those who are fully informed about and intimately involved with it find absolutely satisfying. Such is the sentiment of Muslims, not only about Islam generally, but about everything that the non-Muslim critic has had to complain about. This is implicit in the fact that, far from seeking any escapes and evasions, Muslim masses have for ever been striving for a return to original and authentic Islam, as and how it was in the Prophet's time. And in that effort, those who are the object of the critics' concern are often found to be in the forefront. As the critics have been concerned chiefly about the status of women in Islam, an example of the female sentiments about Islam may be cited before we go on to consider the specific issues.

An eminent Muslim woman, who is currently a Head of Department in one of the leading universities of the Muslim world, comments on the constitution and working of the Pakistan Women's Committee, appointed by the government of the time in 1976, thus :

"Before we proceed further, we may be permitted to point out that of the thirteen members of the Committee, nine were women legislators and lawyers, while of the four men, three were the holders of the office of Advocate General of the Provinces. It would appear rather strange that neither among the majority group of the women members, nor of the minority group of men; there were any, who may, in the public eye, have had some long or deep association in acquisition **and** practice of Islamic learning and Shariat (Islamic Law) : according to orthodox standards ..none from among the Ulema (Islamic scholars) or Muftis (Islamic jurists)

whose views and decisions had governed the Muslim lives in these matters for the greater part of the last 1400 years...not that they can altogether be exonerated from the practical denial of the rightful status of women in many such matters. Most of the women members would appear to be imbued with the ideas of modern Feminist Movement as started in the Western countries, and one cannot therefore be blamed for entertaining a feeling that the more than **2/3rd** majority of the women advocating their ideas of emancipation were bound to have their views prevail on the small minority of men members, whether advocates or Advocates General |

I do not claim to be an authority on the matters in issue, but I feel as a Muslim woman with some knowledge of the Holy Quran and Sunnah (Tradition of the Prophet), and with a family tradition of service to Hadis extending for well over hundred years in the sub-continent, I have some right to express my submissions on this important subject for a cool and dispassionate consideration by them who may be charged with taking decisions thereon.

I would, therefore, begin with the humble but categorical statement that our Muslim Society functions under the pattern given to us by Allah and the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), our rights and privileges are clearly defined in the Quran and Sunnah. For us there is no question of demanding any woman's rights...that should be **the** concern of women of the Christian West or of the Hindus of the subcontinent where they enjoyed no rights for hundreds of years. For us, it is a case of enforcing the 'Privilege of the Muslimat (Muslim women)' as ordained by God and enjoined by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon

him) in a true spirit of Taqwa and without in any way transgressing or contravening the 'limits of God', a keynote phrase to which Committee themselves have made a pertinent reference. No Muslim can think of this, and we should be careful to avoid even any semblance of such transgression.

Therefore, we should first consider the Quranic provisions relating to the position, status and role of women, vis-a-vis men, as also independently in their own right. In this scheme of creation while God Almighty is the Creator—nay the best of creators—and man is His vice-gerent on earth, the woman is the procreator through whom God fulfils His purpose of continuing creation. With regard to this aspect of hers, man has been entrusted the duty of provider and progenitor... Their roles are mutually complementary... they supplement each other and neither can exist independently of the other. They may be equal in almost all respects but not independent as otherwise there can be no meaningful functioning".

(Atiya Khalik Arah, Women's Rights in Islamic Framework. Dawn, Karachi, Nov. 28, H76).

The point for the present purpose is, not who is right, but how meticulously careful Muslim women are about supporting and sustaining their role and relationship as enunciated in the original sources of Islam and how intolerant of efforts to deviate and to distract them from that situation. Any one who might think or suggest that those are individual opinions has to reckon with the fact that, not only do such opinions go largely, if not wholly, unchallenged, but also that in places like Iran they have had an overt and concerted expression involving almost the

entire female population. One has to reckon, further, with the fact that millions of Muslim women now living in the West, and exposed equally to the pulls and pressures of permissive living as their non-Muslim sisters, neither avail themselves of the opportunities of indulgence nor, what is a matter of verifiable record, resort to the courts to insist on, or to enforce, their equally permissive rights, as their non-Muslim sisters admittedly do.

A. Use of Force

We may now consider the specific issues raised against Islam by its critics. The first issue to be answered relates to the alleged use of force in the spread of Islam. And it **has** been conveniently answered by an eminent christian priest thus :

"Thus the Greeks paved the way for their own downfall. Within a century or so Muslim Arabs were at the gates of Constantinople, and its ultimate fall to the Turks in 1453 was the logical outcome of the shameful treatment of the Arab Christians by their orthodox rulers. Their policy was as foolish as it was wicked. Henceforth they stood for tyranny and injustice in the eyes of the Arabs, and through them Christianity was associated with perfidy we are not surprised to read that when the Muslim general told the people of Homs and Damascus that he had come to deliver them from the Greeks, he was welcomed as a liberator.

The amazing rapidity of the Arab advance east and west to which all writers refer was due to the cooperation of the local Christians disgusted with Byzantine cruelty and oppression. All the Arabs had to do was

to defeat a number of disaffected garrison troops ; and this was comparatively easy, because in Syria the population welcomed them and joined forces with them, while in Egypt they made a separate peace, stipulating that the power of Byzantium must be irrevocably destroyed. It was not until the Muslim Arabs came up against native opposition farther west that they met with a serious check. In Egypt and the Arab world they were accepted as deliverers."

(Alfred Guillaume, Islam, Pelican, pp. 16—19).

With this Christian **statement** of the cause of Islam's **spread**, we are ready to offer the Islamic answer to this part of the Critique. Islam, not only allows or approves, but positively insists, on the exercise of power and force. But, contrary to the cribio's assumption and imputation, it does so, not as means of acquisition or aggrandisement, but as **an** indispensable means of administering justice and of upholding essential human values. Thus, the Quran **demands:**

"How should ye not fight for the cause of Allah and of the feeble among men and of the women and the children who are crying: Our Lord ! Bring us forth from out this town of which the people are oppressors! Oh, give us from Thy presence some protecting friend ! Oh, give us from Thy presence some defender !"

(4: 75)

Fighting, thus, is prescribed in defence of the down-trodden and the weak, irrespective of what religious denomination they are and who their oppressors. Equally **unreserved**, absolute and all-embracing is **this** statement of the general principle that underlies Islam's over-seeing ethic :

"whoso interveneth in a good cause will have the reward thereof, and whoso interveneth in an evil cause will bear the consequence thereof."

(The Quran, 4 : 85)

"And cooperate in righteousness and piety. Do not cooperate in sin and transgression." (The Quran 5 : 2).

And, for the Muslims themselves, Islam places active and effective restraints in the matter of fighting' against non-Muslims :

"Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors. And slay them wherever ye find them, and drive them out of places whence they drove you out, for persecution is worse than slaughter. And fight not with them at the Inviolable Place of Worship until they first attack you there, but if they attack you (there) then slay them. Such is the reward of disbelievers. But if they desist, then lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against wrongdoers."

(The Quran 2 : 190—193)

"O ye who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity; and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to you than to Allah. Lo! Allah is Informed of what ye do." (The Quran 5: 8)

"And let not your hatred of a folk who stopped your going to the Inviolable Place of Worship seduce you to transgress." (The Quran 5 : 2)

Some Christians could, of course, make virtue of the want of justice itself, as we have seen elsewhere. To such, none of these aspects of Islamic fighting might seem sufficient either to satisfy or to convince. But their ethic is anchored, in this as in other respects, in the supervening gloss, and not in the teaching of Jesus himself. For, the New Testament reports Jesus to have unequivocally announced:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth,
I came not to send peace, but a sword."

(Mathew 11 : 34)

The absolute and unquestioning obedience to the 'powers that be' was preached by Paul, and needs to be viewed in the light of Paul's previous collaboration with such powers in the persecution of precisely those elements that Islam makes it a Muslim's duty to protect. Those who connive at, or condone, persecution, are understandably impatient with Islam's ameliorating ethic. And their impatience goes only to bear witness to Islam's efficacy as well as justice.

Islam, on its part, provides an explicit and an utterly unassailable rationale :

"Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged ; and Allah is indeed Able to give them victory ; those who have been driven from their homes unjustly only because they said : Our Lord is Allah-..For had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down. **Verily Allah** helpeth one who helpeth Him. Lo ! Allah is strong, Almighty...Those who, if ,ve give

them power in the land, establish worship and pay the poor due and enjoin **kindness** and forbid inequity. And Allah's is the sequel of events"
(The Quran. 22 : 39—41)

"And if Allah had not repelled some men by others the earth would have been corrupted. But Allah is a Lord of kindness to **creatures**"

(The Quran 2 : 251).

Islam, in fact, is the only religion which expressly and unequivocally provides **an** absolute and unqualified guarantee of safety and security to the honest and earnest followers of every genuine religion. The Quran states :

"Lo ! those who believe, **and** those who are Jews, and Christians and Sabaeans —whoever believeth in Allah and the last Day and doeth right—surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve".

(The Quran 2 : 62 See **also** 5 : 69).

The Quran provides equally clearly and categorically against the use of force in the matter of religion. It says:

+There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error."

(The Quran 2 : 256 'See also **Sura** Kaafiroon).

There is one aspect of the early history of Islam that has caused some misunderstanding to the non-Muslim student. Since Muslims themselves had implicit and absolute faith and confidence in the Prophet, early Muslim historians, who shared that faith and confidence fully and were, in any case, writing for the immediate Muslim readership which they knew **and** trusted to have that

faith and confidence, they have largely sufficed to **state** what the Prophet actually did, without concerning themselves with the why or the wherefore of it. This has caused the non-Muslim student to imagine the omission to have been due to the absence altogether of any appropriate occasion and to impute, in consequence, arbitrariness and aggression to the Prophet, and to Islam. The star example of this is the Prophet's visits or embassies to the tribes outside Medina, which have been styled as 'raids'. They were, in fact, diplomatic missions consequent directly to some very clear and categorical provisions of the Constitution of Medina. The Constitution had stipulated that no quarter shall be given to the Quraysh and it had conferred rights and obligations, not only on the primary parties, but also on their allies, in accordance with the prevailing Arab practice and the wishes of the allied **Medinans**.

Three circumstances bore this out. Most of the parties sent out were small, they were sent each to the tribe through whose territory the Quraysh had only recently passed, and a treaty ratifying the constitutional provisions was usually the result; In the absence of this indisputable connection, they could not but bear an aggressive aspect. But to those who knew the connection, nothing could be farther from the truth.

The relevant provisions of the Constitution of Medina read:

This is a document from Muhammad the Prophet between the Believers and Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib (Medina) and those who follow them and are attached to them and who strive along with them. They are one community to the exclusion of all men."

"The Quraysh and their helpers shall not be given protection."

The Prophet's attitude towards the Meccans themselves was dictated as well as justified not only by his admitted persecution at their hands but also by their subsequent and continuing hostility. They were demanding his expulsion or assassination and in the alternative threatening to exterminate the Medinans, and to prostitute their women. Medina's therefore, had the right to check the Meccan presence and to watch the Meccan movement as well as to satisfy themselves' the intentions of those who either associated with themselves or committed to a neutral conduct.

The Prophet's conduct towards the Jews, likewise, was absolutely fair, just and lawful. By accepting the Constitution of Medina, and enjoying the rights accruing thereunder, the Jews had rendered themselves Hable to perform the duties stipulated therein. The Constitution had unequivocally stipulated :

"The wronged must be helped."

"This document will not protect the unjust and the wrongdoer."

"The God-fearing believers shall be against the rebellious and the one who seeks to spread injustice, or sin or enmity, or corruption among the believers ; the hand of every man shall be against him even if he be a son of one of them."

To these stipulations as well as the stipulation **against** the Quraysh, the Jews were fully committed. And they were committed to two even more important stipulations. The Preamble of the Constitution as well as the opening

sentence of the part dealing specifically with the Jews insisted on loyalty over against treachery. And the Constitution made Muhammad specifically in relations to the Jews, the ultimate judge in all disputes and controversies. It said :

"If any dispute-or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and to Muhammad the prophet of God."

The conduct of the Prophet towards the Jews was the direct result of the application of these stipulations to the circumstances and situations created by themselves. Of the three Jewish tribes of Medina, the one, B. Qaynuqa, were expelled after one of them had publicly misbehaved with a Muslim woman and the others, not only failed to help avenge the insult in terms of their constitutional obligations, but also helped and protected the wrongdoer and refused to accept the authority of Muhammad as stipulated in the Constitution. The Prophet's conduct was dictated, not by personal annoyance or disappointment, as the malicious minds have projected it to be, but by this uncompromising commitment to the wronged and his conscientious exercise of his office and his insistent execution of his judgement. Such were the impulsions of the Constitution, such the expectations of justice, and such the demands and dictates of Islam generally. Islam inculcates abundant mercy where personal injury is involved, but it insists on unwavering exaction where the rights of others are concerned. The concept of the blindfolded balancing of justice held out in the west seems to confirm the Islamic understanding.

The second Jewish tribe, B. an-Nadir, was also expelled from Medina. The Prophet went to them to ask

for their help in paying the bloodwit for two men who **had** been murdered after they had been given a promise of security. They agreed to help according to the wishes of the Prophet but kept him waiting on false pretexts until the Prophet came to know that they had been secretly planning to kill him. Thereupon the Prophet recired and ultimately expelled the tribe from Medina. This tribe also had violated the basic pre-requisites of social and political cooperation by not only failing to fulfil its obligations under the Constitution but also conspiring to undermine it. In the absence of mutual trust and good faith it was impossible to continue even as neighbours. And this became evident in the sequel.

Alfred Guillaume, who is generally sympathetic with the Jews and critical of Muhammad on their account, speaks of 'the existence of pockets of disaffected Jews in and around his (Muhammad's) base' (Islam p. 44) and of the Jews having been ridiculing Muhammad (Islam p. 43). And he does not deny the Muslim allegations against either of the aforesaid Jewish tribes. These circumstanes suffice to undermine the critique. For, neither Jewish disaffection nor ridicule was compatible with their confession of loyalty or good faith. Nor was their refusal to fulfil their Constitutional obligations. While the **extremist** of insistence on securing their own rights and utmost exaggeration of these, might be campatible with loyalty and with the desire to cooperate, refusal to meet obligation could not possibly be. Dissatisfaction with Muhammad and denial of his prophethood, likewise, might be compatible with continuing political and social relations with him, disaffection and ridicule surely were not. And, on the other hand, had Muhammad been wanting to get rid of the **Jews** otherwise than for their

failure to live upto their Constitutional obligations, exaggeration of rights and evasion of responsibilities should have started from his end, from the Muslims. Nothing of the kind is even alleged. That Muhammad should have been making excuses to expropriate men or to avenge a personal insult, as his critics allege, militates against the general character and conduct of the Prophet as portrayed by every non-Muslim but knowledgeable student of his life.

Of the fate of the third and the last Jewish tribe of Medina, of B. Qurayaza, Alfred Guillaume gives the following account :

"The Meccans for the last time prepared an expedition against Medina. An exiled Jewish chief took a prominent part in enlisting the aid of bedouin tribes and finally a force of some 10,000 men took the field. Great alarm was felt in Medina where the memory of Uhud was still fresh. Though Muhammad always reserved the right to make the final decision he showed his wisdom in consulting those about him. On this occasion he took the advice of a Persian convert and dug a deep ditch to cover the approach to the town where it lay open to attack so that the town could not be captured by a rapid assault unless the enemy were prepared to face heavy casualties. The Quraysh were disconcerted and withdrew to an encampment, shooting arrows at long range against the defenders. Meanwhile, both sides endeavoured to sow dissension in the ranks of their opponents. The Quraysh succeeded in detaching the Jewish tribe of Qurayaza, but Muhammed cleverly countered this move by sending an emissary who made the Jews

distrust the Meccans and induced the Meccans to distrust the Jews. Only one assault, and that a half-hearted one, was made, and the attackers were driven off. The killed on both sides amounted to eight only. Arabia is not a country in which long sieges can be undertaken without water and modern means of transport; and the besiegers began to "suffer from hunger and bad weather". The Jews would not make their promised diversionary attack for fear of being left in the lurch, so the Bedouin withdrew and the Quraysh returned to Mecca.

Muhammad immediately turned on the Jews, who after a short siege surrendered conditionally. Their old allies the Aus pleaded for them, and Muhammad asked them whether they would accept the judgement of one of their chiefs. They agreed, and thereupon he appointed a man who was suffering from a deadly wound, whose verdict was that the men should be put to death and the women and children sold as slaves. The sentence was carried out; the prisoners were led out in batches, beheaded on the edge of a trench which had been dug in the market-place, and thrown in. The execution of some 800 men occupied the whole day and went on far into the night. Only one Jew abjured his religion to save his life. The rest, after prayer and reading of the scriptures, went calmly to their death. This mass execution has excited bitter comment from most Orientalists. But it ought to be borne in mind that our generation has learned to its dismay that there are nations who believe that 'total war', involving even the death of women and children, is justifiable if it crushes the enemy's will to fight and saves further bloodshed;

and further, no man with a weapon in his hand need surrender. Nominal Christians and Jews have done similar and worse things in the cause of national, religious, or social security, and the fault lies not in religion but in sinful human nature. However, one does not expect such acts from one who comes with a message from the Compassionate and Merciful."

(Islam pp. 46—48)

We have taken this narrative through its dramatic detail and its patronising apologetic to demonstrate how prejudiced the Western reading of Islamic history easily becomes and to insist that Islam is too sound to need any **such** apology. What might earn admiration is passed over in silence. And what might occasion an accusation **is splashed** out aloud.

The conduct of the Qurayaza had been the most treacherous imaginable. Their intentions had been fully exposed even if nothing tangible had accrued to the Meccans out of it. That they were potential, if not actual **allies** of the deadliest enemies of Islam, of Muslims as well as of Muhammad had become abundantly clear. And all this from those who were committed by a solemn Constitutional engagement to support Muhammad and the Muslims. To agree to entrust judgment on such men to one of themselves was the most magnanimous act imaginable. And the choice of a 'deadly wounded' man for the purpose was the most judicious of choices. Its wisdom is recognized world-wide in the case, for instance, of what the jurists call 'Dying Declarations'. An eminent British authority propounds this principle thus :

"The general principle on which this species of evidence is admitted is that there are declarations made

in extremity, when the **party** is at the point of death and when every hope of this world is gone, when every motive to falsehood is silenced, and the mind is induced by the most powerful considerations to speak the truth. (Eyre, L.C.B., in R. v. Woodcock, (1789) 1 Leach 500)"

The comparison of the Prophet's conduct with 'nations who believe that 'total war', involving even the death of women and children, is [justifiable if it crushes the enemy's will to fight and saves further bloodshed' and with 'Nominal Christians and Jews' who 'have done similar and worse things in the cause of national, religious, or social security, is plainly false and frivolous. For, the same writer goes on in the immediately following pages to report that in the next war with the Jews not only did the prophet spare the lives of all-but-two of the Jews but even allowed them to keep their lands on condition of paying half of the produce. Had the Prophet been actuated by the motives of the sort made patronisingly available to him, he certainly would not have done so. There was nothing to stop him from liquidating the Khyber Jews or expropriating them altogether.

From the Islamic point of view, there were two material differences. The person and position of the judge was different. And the character and crime of the defendants was different. In the former case, it was Jew who delivered judgement. Mercy and indulgence were outlawed to him, not only because he was a Jew with a long association with the tradition of unrelenting legalism, but also because he himself was a party to the proceedings he was invited to judge. He could not, as a fair person, give himself the benefit of his own indulgence as an independent person might well be prepared to do to others

in otherwise the same situation. Muhammad, who delivered judgement in the latter case, was, on the other hand, a 'Mercy unto Mankind', as the Quran puts it. And he was, of course, the aggrieved party and could, as such, forgive and forego, if he so wished.

In the former case, again, the judgement had to reckon with treachery, in the latter, with plain enmity. While an enemy can be, and often is, forgiven with impunity, and befriended with advantage, the least indulgence to a traitor could be utterly misplaced and has often proved disastrous. While enmity can exist between the best of men, treachery necessarily pre-supposes the existence of an element of mean wickedness.' The best of men can be the worst of enemies in appropriate cases, but they can never be traitors. They can fight, and fight **hard** indeed, but they can never either betray faith or abuse confidence. Those who know and recognise the distinction are ever so ready to kill snake before it can strike. The ivory-tower idealist who is alarmed at the sight of blood, but remains unmoved by all accounts of betrayal, is seeking only to offer his insulation ethic to those who must adventure into the open country, to which life necessarily invites.

To the penal policy of Islam, we shall presently revert, It remains to examine Islam's expansion northwards, into the Christian country. This is the **Christian** recital of the relevant facts :

"A messenger from Muhammad to the **prince** of Bostra (Busra) had been intercepted and put to **death** by Shuruahbil b. 'Amr of Ghassan and Zayd **wa**" sent out with 3,000 men to exact a penalty .

"We do not know, for example, on what errand Muhammad had sent Ka'b al-Ghifari and his party of fourteen over the border into Syria.... The massacre of this party by men of Qudaah would be part of the reason for the two later expeditions since there were some Qudaah among the enemy at Mutah...

"... All expedition was sent under Amr b. al-As, another recent convert against the tribes of Bali and Qudaah which (or part of which) had been on the Byzantine side at Mutah, and were reported to be preparing a further concentration of men against Medina." (W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Medina, Oxford, pp. 53, 55)

On these admitted facts only prejudice and perversity of thought and ideal can attribute motives of territorial expansion or of economic exploitation to the conduct of the Prophet. The problem of the critics is that they try to interpret the conduct of the Prophet in the light of their own experience and in accordance with the ideals and expectations reared upon it. They find the reaction of the Prophet out of proportion to the excess committed on the other side only because they do not understand or appreciate the rights of those killed in the course of obeying the Prophet's orders. The Quran imposes a general duty to help avenge the death of an innocent person. It says :

"And kill not the soul which Allah has forbidden except for a just cause and whoever is slain unjustly, we have indeed given his heir authority but let him not exceed the limit in slaying.. Surely he will be helped." (17 : 33)

To that general obligation owed by every Muslim to every one killed unjustly irrespective of who he is, is

added, in the circumstances set out above, the personal obligation owed by the one whose ambassadors the innocent victims were. No honourable person could evade that obligation, and least of all the Prophet of God. The fourteen referred to above were actually missionaries **and**, therefore, invited to avenge the injustice done to them all the more.

That it was in fact, as it appears in theory, the consciousness of the obligation which impelled the Prophet **and** the Muslims to action, and not any designs or dreams of expansion or of economic advantage, as the critics have alleged, is clear from the fact that Muslims were hard-pressed at the time and had to stretch every resource to the utmost to meet the challenge from the north. This was all the more so when, upon the Prophet's death, there was widespread internal dissent which not only deprived the Muslims of much of their strength and opportunity but also added to their internal occupation and involvement. So much was this so that it was actually suggested to the first Caliph, who had succeeded to the political leadership of the Muslims, that the expedition for which the Prophet had ordered preparation might be called off in view of the more immediate and pressing problems at home. The Caliph who had been the closest and the life-long companion of the Prophet, did not agree. Had he known it to be an exercise in ambition, he had no choice but to agree. But, knowing it to be an exercise in obligation, he had no choice whatever to agree.

This is true of Muslim wars generally. Had there been wars of ambition and adventure, men would have fought, as they have been projected by the critics to have done, with zeal ; and adventures, such as the

Christian knights, should have been in the forefront. But it is a fact of history that in one of the most demanding of all wars Muslims put those in the forefront who knew the entire Quran by heart. And they won. And the Quran is a witness to the fact that those who rush in for loot and booty were keeping away from the Islamic wars and they were being constantly urged on to go and give up their lives and to gain a transcendent, not a terrestrial, return. Islamic wars were wars of surrender and self-denial, not of acquisition and aggrandisement. Says the Quran :

"Lo ! Allah hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs ; they shall fight in the way of Allah and shall slay and be slain. It is a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran. Who fulleth His covenant better than Allah ! Rejoice then in your bargain that ye have made, for that is the supreme triumph." (9: 111)

Some eminent non-Muslims confirm that the practical conduct of Muslims conformed to the high Islamic ideals :

" 'Take away that black man ! I can have no discussion with him' exclaimed the Christian Archbishop Cyrus when the Arab conquerors had sent a deputation of their ablest men to discuss terms of surrender of the capital of Egypt, headed by Negro Ubadah as the ablest of them all.

To the sacred archbishop's astonishment, he was told that this man was commissioned by General Amr ; that the Moslems held Negroes and white men in equal respect —judging a man by his character and not by his colour.

'Well if the Negro must lead, he MUST speak gently,'

ordered the prelate, so as not to frighten his white auditors.'

"There are a thousand blacks, as black as myself, amongst our companions. I and they would 'be ready to meet and fight a hundred enemies together. We live only to fight for God, and to follow His will. We care naught for wealth, so long as we have the wherewithal to stay our hunger and to clothe our bodies. This world is naught for us, the next world is all.'

"Such a spirit of class distinction is certainly the greatest hindrance to missionary work in the East, as every impartial observer has noted. How for instance can any other appeal stand against that of the Moslem who, in approaching the pagan, says to him, however obscure or degraded he may be, 'Embrace the faith, and you are at once an equal and a brother.' Islam knows no colour line".

(S.S. Leeder, *Veiled Mysteries of Egypt*, London 1912 pp. 232—235).

"The Caliph Abu Bakr had given to his followers three injunctions : Be just, die rather than yield : Be merciful, slay neither old men, children nor women; Destroy neither fruit trees, grain nor cattle. Keep your word even to your enemies."

(J. M. Robertson, *A Short History of Christianity*, page. 4).

"History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the **sword** upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that history has ever repeated."

(De Lacy O'Leary, *Islam at the Crossroads*, London 1923, p. 8).

"Incidentally these well-established facts dispose of the idea so widely fostered in Christian writings that the Muslims, wherever they went, forced people to accept Islam at the point of the sword."

(Lawrence E. Browne, *The Prospects of Islam*, London 1944, p. 14).

"No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam. The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts that idea, and the Koran is explicit in support of the freedom of conscience."

James A. Michener, *Islam...The Misunderstood Religion*, *Reader's Digest* (American Edition) May, 1955).

"Muhammad's **original view** that earlier religions had been founded by **God's will and** through divine revelation led both him **and his** successors to make an important concession; adherents of other faiths were not compelled to adopt **Islam**... It may seem paradoxical to assert that it was Christians influence which first stirred Islam to religious animosity and armed it with the sword against Christianity, but the hypothesis becomes highly probable when we have realized the indifferentism of the Muhammadan conquerors... Christians were able to rise to the highest offices of State, even to the post of **vizier**, without compulsion to renounce their faith. Even during the period of the Crusades, when the religious opposition was greatly intensified; again through Christian policy, Christian officials cannot have been uncommon. The theory,

however, that the Muhammadan conquerors and their successors were inspired by a fanatical hatred of Christianity is a fiction invented by Christians."

(C.H. Becker, *Christianity and Islam*, London 1909, pp. 28—33).

One other circumstance that has caused some misunderstanding is the fact that, before launching their attack, Muslims offered three alternatives to the enemy : either to accept Islam and become a brother, or to agree to pay the poll-tax and become a subject, or to face the sword. This has been imagined to have been Islam's offer to the world. The fact actually was that in each case the offer had been specifically earned by the particular individual or group by some antecedent act of hostility. The alternative of the sword was rightfully due and was not offered as a result of refusing the other two choices, as had been made to appear. The other two choices were offered, rather, as an act of the distinctively Islamic indulgence. It is not as if Muslims had been saying to every non-Muslim, unless you become a Muslim, we shall kill you or subjugate you. Muslims were saying, rather, to their avowed enemy, you have earned your death by your indulgence in active and overt enmity, but that shall be of no consequence or concern to us, and we are prepared, **nay we are bound, in spite of your past conduct to, not just forgive or forget, but accept you immediately as our brother, if you accept Islam.** We can see the true significance of this **if we compare** it with the corresponding Christian situation, **where**, even those who, like the American, Indian, the Negro and the Aborigine, have been at the receiving end of aggression, cannot be brothers even after centuries of active living in Christianity.

B. Slavery.

One further objection with regard to Islamic warfare may *now* be considered. It has been said that in Islam 'prisoners of war could be killed, sold or enslaved at the discretion of the Muslim authorities and the women of those who resisted the advance of Islam could be taken as slave-concubines, regardless of whether they were single or married'. (J.N.D. Anderson, Foreword to Muhammad Talaat al-Ghunaimi's 'The Muslim Conception of International Law and the Western Approach, Martinus, Nijhoff, the Hague, 1968),

Apart from the case of B. Qurayza, which is clearly distinguishable in many material respects, to which we have already adverted, there is no case where prisoners of war as such were killed. Only three persons were put to death at Khyber, and only four in Mecca. Each of those killed deserved their fate independently of the war (See Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Medina, p. 68), and—in accordance with Islamic law, as internally applied to the ordinary citizens—Whether that law, and its penal policy and ethic, is right, is an independent issue to be presently considered. But the charge of killing of the prisoners of war is false and malicious.

Being sold and enslaved are aspects of the same institution cumulatively dubbed in the West as slavery. This imputation has evoked assumptions about the Islamic situation which are not at all true. And this is beginning now to be recognized in the West **itself**. The variety of relations and situations indiscriminately styled as slavery are now distinctively placed in three separate categories identified as 'chattel slavery', 'plantation slavery' and 'patriarchal slavery'. (See Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Slavery). The West has known mainly the first two forms, the one dominating the classical and the other the modern period of its history. The application of the same verbal label to the Islamic institution has necessarily conjured up the same ideas and incidents about the Islamic situation as existed in Rome and in America. And this false impression, with all the implications for the image of Islam generally, have been broadcast to the world at large, **thanks** to the efficacy and indulgence of the Western information and education services.

We have it on the authority of Encyclopaedia Britannica that the so-called slavery of Islam...

"has always been very different from that which existed in Rome and in the Americas after their colonization by Europeans. Gang-slavery for work in the fields, or in industry and mining was almost unknown in the Islamic world. Most of the slaves were employed in wealthy households for domestic service and were well treated, in accordance with the prescriptions of the Koran.... Furthermore, Muslim society was not usually in the least race or colour-conscious, **liberated slaves** of whatever origin were readily absorbed as equal members of the community and examples of slaves or former slaves reaching the highest positions were numerous." (Slavery III (2))

According to another Western authority the so-called slavery of Islam was 'a sort of adoption'. (Norman Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, p. 303)

The reaction of the so-called slaves themselves has **been** reported by another non-Muslim authority thus:

tain those Africans there is no resentment that they have been made slaves... The patrons who paid their price have adopted them into their households, the males are circumcised and— — — that which enfranchises their souls, even in the long passion of homesickness— — — God **has** visited them in their mishap ; they can say 'it was His grace', since they be thereby entered into the saving religion. This, therefore, they think is the better country where there are the Lord's free men, a land of more civil life, the soil of the two sanctuaries, the land of Mohammad :— — — for such they do give God thanks that their bodies were sometime sold into slavery." (Charles M. Doughty Travels in Arabia Deserta, Jonathan Cape Paperback, Vol. I p. 605.. See **also** Vol. II, p. 188)

If the critic will now review his position, he will find compelling reasons to admire **what** he had found so utterly offensive in his false perspective. To adopt any outsider in ones own household in his early impressionable age for essentially self-regarding reasons, such as supplying the want of a child, is trying enough. How much more it must be so when the person to be adopted is already imbued with his own distinctive ideas, attitudes and ethic. And how much more yet again when he happens to be nothing less than the deadly enemy of only the other day whose nears and dears you probably happen to have slaughtered in front of his eyes. It takes a great deal of oourege as well as confidence in ones own character and cause to adventure into any such relationship. Petty men would faint at the merest prospect of having to live with fear and mistrust, that is inherent in the situation. To cultivate positive relations and to carry to the pinnacles of power, as the Muslims have all too often done with their so-called slaves,

is beyond the reach of the **imagination** of those who have not known Muslim society **at first** hand.

C. Concubinage

Now the concubine **part**. The moral and social propriety of concubinage, like that of slavery, must be judged independently of all modern prejudices and pre-conceptions, which the Western association with celebaoy, monogamy and the ascetic morality generally, have introduced. Ascetic morality is generally contrary to human nature' and, therefore, impractical and self-defeating. Celebacy, in particular, is the very repudiation and frustration of nature and has, for that reason, been flouted much more often than observed in every time and place and **at all** levels. (See Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Concubinage (Christian). See also Edward Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chap. 37) As we have seen, ascetic morality has succeeded in the West, in only inducing permissiveness and perversion. It remains, nevertheless, a proper paper rule, to misdirect human ideals and expectations, and to misrepresent the moral quality and ethical achievement of other societies.

We have it, once again, on the authority of Encyclopaedia Britannica that— — —

"It is important to remember that the word 'concubine' was initially applied to non-European institutions by **missionaries** who **had** a prejudice in favour of Biblical terminology and the virtues of monogamy. Anthropology has shown that, in the world at large, polygamy is no less admired than monogamy and in polygamynous households the atatusaea of the different women and *of* their respective offspring may be

differentiated in a variety of complicated ways. The ordinary English meanings of the words wife, concubine and slaves are often inappropriate to such situations. A phrase such as secondary or junior wife will usually be less misleading than the term concubine with its specific Biblical and Roman law associations." (See article on Concubinage)

It is important, therefore, to have an intelligent, and discriminate understanding of the institution itself, rather than allow ones judgement to be guided, and view to be coloured, by the label that the Christian missionary has chosen to use. And one of the foremost things to notice is that Islam contemplates a formal, regular and publicly proclaimed relationship called marriage (in Islam 'Nikah') and not an illicit or surreptitious one. Thus, the Quran provides:

"And whoso is not able to afford to marry free, believing women, let them marry from the believing maids whom your right hands possess. Allah knoweth best your faith. Ye (proceed) one from another ; so wed them by permission of their folks, and give unto them their portions in kindness, they being honest, not debauched nor of loose conduct. And if when they are honourably married they commit lewdness they shall incur the half of the punishment/ (prescribed) for free women. This is for him among you who feareth to commit sin. But to have patience would be better for you. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."
(4 : 25)

By another provision, the Quran, in fact, expressly forbids the taking of concubines. It says :

"This day are (all) good things made lawful for you. The food of those who have received the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And so are the virtuous women of the believers **and** the virtuous women of those who received the Scripture before you (lawful for you) when ye give them their marriage portions and live with them in honour, not in fornication, nor taking them as secret concubines." (5 : 5)

The only important difference in the marriage of the free and captive women is that, while only four free women can at any one time be taken in marriage by one man, the number of captive women for the purpose is not limited. This has been portrayed by the critic as an exercise in permissiveness in masculine indulgence. But the context of the rule is patently different. The **Quran** lays it down thus :

"And if ye fear that ye **will** not deal fairly by the orphans, marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four ; and if ye fear that ye cannot do justice (to so many) then one (only) or (the captives) that your right hands possess. Thus it is more likely that ye will not do injustice." (4:3)

It can be easily seen that these rules are intended to provide, not so much for indulgence as it might appear to those who view them against the background of their own experience with the permissive and sex-charged society, but for a happy and healthy society. They are intended to meet a genuine social need which the abstract theorist has ignored at a great social and cultural cost. While it is possible that individual Muslims might, or in fact do, abuse the option thus entrusted to them, the

society at large has been preserved from permissiveness and portected against perversion which has been the lot of other societies.

Slaves and slaves-girls, whether as wives or in any other capacity or condition whatever, became extinct in Muslim society long before they were struggling to obtain a semblance of human rights elsewhere. And, for this, Islam had a built-in provision. Far from insisting on, or encouraging, the keeping of slaves, **Islam** provides for their expeditious emancipation. There are many **sins** which can be expiated by the freeing of slaves. And, what is more, freeing of slaves has even otherwise been placed very high in the scale of virtues. Thus the Quran provides :

"But he (man) hath not attempted the Ascent— — —
Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Ascent **is!**— —
(It is) to free a slave, and to feed in the day of hunger an orphan near of kin, or some poor wretch in misery, and to be of those who believe and exhort one another to perseverance and exhort one another to pity. Their place will be on the right hand. But those who **dis-**believe Our revelations, their place will be on the left hand. Fire will be an awning over them." (90:11-20)

To the ethic and efficacy of Islam and of Muslim society, in dealing with the slave situation, an unwitting compliment has been paid in this apparently adverse statement:

"The standing army of the Janissaries, an elite force of professional soldiers, began with a thousand men under Orkhsn, but rose to 12000 men at the time when Istanbul was taken, and to 26000 under the

great sultans that followed. In the classical era the Janissaries were recruited from the tribute of children that Christian subjects were forced to pay. The state reared, trained and used them as elite soldiers or as confidential servants. Many of the great military leaders and servants of the state rose from their ranks." (Arnold Hottinger, Turkey ; A Land Rich in history. Swissair Gazette, 11/1978, p. 4)

The 'tribute of children' is, of course, a plain lie like so many others that Christian prejudice has fabricated against Islam and the Muslims. But the consequences of **Islamic** upbringing and training are only too true.

D. The position of Women

Muslim family law, and the position of women in Islam, have been the subject of ridicule in the modern West. Male supremacy, seclusion of women, polygamy, man's power of divorce, have excited the greatest opposition. Before we embark upon an examination of each of those matters, we must record the critic's own acknowledgement of the staying and satisfying power of this part of Islam. Professor J. N. D. Anderson, whose adverse comments have been quoted already, informs us :

"I have chosen the law of marriage and divorce for our consideration, for four very good reasons ;
First, because, as we have seen, it is the family law that has always represented the very heart of the Sharia (Islamic Law), for it is this part of the law that is regarded by Muslims as entering into the warp and woof of their religion.

Second, because, by the same token, it is the family law that has been basic to Islamic society down the centuries.

Third, because it is, generally speaking, in the law of the family alone that Sharia is still applied..., for it is virtually only in the Arabian Peninsula, Afghanistan, and Northern Nigeria that the Sharia is applied today, as such, outside the sphere of the family relations and personal status.

Fourth, because it is precisely in regard to the law of marriage and divorce that the battle is joined today between the forces of conservatism and progress in the Muslim world, and the vicissitudes of that battle provide, as we have seen, a gauge of social progress, a mirror of the advance of modernism in Islam, and an illustration of how a nominally immutable law can be changed in practice." (Islamic Law in the Modern World, New York University Press, 1959, pp. 39—40)

In the more than twenty years that have elapsed since the publication of this statement, it has become outdated in only one respect, the only respect in which it sought to dispute or doubt the staying and holding power of the family law of Islam. And so surely outdated, indeed, it has become that any re-reading of it could not but be causing embarrassment to the author himself. The Iranian woman's 'Chador' has become symbolic of the world-wide Muslim resurgence. 'Progress', 'modernism' and 'change', of the Western conception which was promising to the Professor 'an illustration of how a nominally immutable law can be changed in practice', have actually turned out to have been only Western and Christian machinations. If the Shah of Iran, has been shown to have been an American implant, and his policies and programmes of 'moderan iaatfon' discredited thereby, some of the secularist

policies and programmes pursued in Indonesia have been shown to have been actively instigated by the Christian Church. Some such elements have existed in, and been known to have been associated with the 'modernisation' efforts of, most of the Muslim world. And it is not only the ignorant and the unthinking among the Muslims who have complained of this. About Indonesia, for instance, it was no less a person than Professor of Islamic Studies, University of Indonesia and a former Minister of Religious Affairs of the Government of Indonesia, and the one whom the Christian Mission had judged qualified to represent Islam and the Muslims in an inter-denominational conference with themselves, who reported :

"In August 1973, the Indonesian Government wanted to impose a secular marriage law, disregarding religious considerations. That law was prepared by Christian experts working in a special department of the Government. When the Muslims rejected the proposed law, both Protestant and Catholic councils of churches supported the law... This brings me once again to one of the central issues in Indonesia. Christian missions are prepared to be in alliance with anyone, but are not prepared to see Muslims develop their individual as well as corporate life in accordance with Islam. Any effort to strengthen Islam amongst the Muslims, any effort to see that Islamic law and traditions are established in an overwhelmingly Muslim country are regarded as a threat by the Christians... Our independence movement was inspired by our religion. When we attained independence in August 1945, it was agreed that the declaration would contain a statement to the effect that the Muslims would be enabled to follow the Shari'ah. But when the declaration was read by Dr. Hatta, the Vice President-elect,

this phrase was omitted. In 1975, Dr. **Hatta** has made it known to the world that he had to omit it **at** the insistence of the Dutch Government who declared **that** it would not be acceptable to the Christians... The Christians have opposed every effort by the Muslims to make the shariah the basis of Muslim corporate life in Indonesia. They have fought tooth and nail to perpetrate a secular order in the country. They have gone to the extent of opposing the Islamic Personal Statutes which are meant to enable the family law of Islam to be enforced for Muslims. Let me quote the official position of the Christians as stated in the letter of the Catholic Fraction of the House of Representatives (No. 15/FK/69, dated 1st February, 1969, with Annex I).

•Since the Personal Statutes say that the national law follows the religious law, as explained in Article 37, we, the Catholics, feel that the Personal Statutes have left the principal norms in our law, i.e. Pancasila. With the inclusion of the personal statutes in the Parliament, we now have two highest sources of law i.e. preamble of the Constitution of 1945 and **God's** revelation."

Annex I to the letter elaborates on the theme and it deserves to be read carefully.

2.1c With the possibility of regulating marriage according to the religious law in the form of the Personal Statutes, we shall have more than one highest source of law— — —national law having its source in the preamble of the Constitution of 1945 and religious **law having** revelation as its highest source.

2.3a Religion has, as its source, personal conviction. Therefore, realization of shari'ah must not be forced through law.

2.3b To put shari'ah in a **law** with certain **sanctions** against those who violate it, is in reality coercion **and**, therefore, a contradiction of human rights and of Article 29 of the Constitution (which says : Every citizen has the right to embrace a religion and to observe its rituals).'

...In 1973, we witnessed a similar crusade. Introduction of Muslim family law for the Muslims was unanimously opposed by the Council of Churches in Indonesia (**Protestant**) and the High Council of Catholic Churches. In a joint statement issued on 12th December, 1973, they said :

- '1. According to the Constitution of 1955, Article 29 the State guaranteed to the citizen the freedom to embrace his religion and to perform rituals according to that religion or belief. This means that the most essential thing in religion is the freedom of choice.
2. During the discussion on Personal Statutes in the Parliament, we felt an anxiety that the State would not guarantee the freedom of religion; moreover we get the impression that the State will impose religious law, at least concerning marriages.
3. We hope that every citizen will go through a marriage ceremony according to his religion, but voluntarily. But if we consider the religious marriage the only legal one, then many problems concerning religious freedom will arise.'

An acrimonious debate followed in the Christian press and every pressure was used to stop the introduction of Muslim family law for the Muslims... Christians use every artifice to see that secular law prevails, which for the Muslims virtually means de-Islamisation of their collective life. If this is modernization,

then we as Muslims look upon it as form of neo-colonialism." (Muhammad Rasjidi, **Christian Mission in the Muslim world**, *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXV No. 200, October 1976, pp 432, 435—38).

Family law, thus, continues to be, as it has **always** been, central to Islam and to Muslim society, and the most ingenious **and** insistent of christian efforts have not been able to shake Muslim faith and confidence in it. It is one branch of law that continues to be observed throughout the Muslim world. This continuing **and** world-wide observance of it, moreover, is the ultimate stage in the process of non-observance which has invariably proceeded from the public to the private sphere. This goes to confirm undeniable historical fact that non-observance of Islam, unlike that of other religions, has been artificially induced, instead of being invited. The authority, and not the individual, has been the active agent of non-observance. The general body of believers have, if anything, fought to hold on to as much of Islam as they can. And this, not as, a matter merely of habit. For, this fight has been carried right into the opposite camp. Muslims throughout the west, have been demanding their right to live by their own personal laws. And Muslim women have been equally associated with that demand and involved in it.

This could not be so unless Islamic law had been found to have been fully satisfying in personal life and practical observance. That what the critic finds unpalatable to his speculative ethic articulates, in fact, the demands and dictates of human nature is clear from the fact **that** the non-Muslims themselves cannot help affirming it, though often in eccentric and perverted forms, Nottoo the

affirmation of male supermacy in the very heartland of feminism. According to a London report datelined March, 20, 1980) :

"Wife-beating in Britain is far more prevalent and severe than commonly supposed, according to a study published this week."

'Despite more publicity in recent years, we found it to be one of the most covered up and ignored of social ills,' says Dr. Russell Dobash. He and his wife Rebecca—both sociology lecturers at Stirling University—spent two years researching material for their book : 'Violence Against Wives'.

•We hope we have helped to explode some social myths' he says, 'particularly this quite unreal popular concept that wife-beating amounts to a black eye or mild chastisement handed out by the labouring classes when drunk on Saturday night.'

This is erroneous in all respects. A frequent and brutal use of force against wives by husbands can be found among all classes. The middle class has the facilities to disguise it better and beating may be less audible to the neighbours. Drink may be associated with it, but we are convinced it is not the fundamental cause'.

And if you ask what surprised us most in the research — **perhaps** shocked would be a better word——it was how severe the violence was. It is quite remote from mere horse-play and the sceptics who think that battered wives must perversely enjoy being victims would find it hard to explain some of the brutalities in our evidence.

Dobash said one woman told them how she broke her back after leaping out *of* a first-floor window to escape a beating from her husband. Another was dragged up and down stone stairs by **her hair** and then whipped with a wire spring belt. Countless others suffered split lips, broken teeth, black eyes and bruised throats, shins and spines from punches, kicks and half-attempts to **strangle**.

The US born authors, graduates of Washington State University, have been at Stirling University for eight years. They undertook the investigations of *wife* beating for the Scottish Home and Health Departments. It is claimed to be the most thorough examination of the subject so **far**.

The evidence comes largely from detailed interviews with 109 battered wives, from which the Dobashes constructed a picture of the couples' relationship from first meeting, to courtship, and the experience of violence sometimes lasting through a good many years of married life.

From the wives' estimates of the frequency of beatings, the authors say they conservatively calculate that the 109 wives suffered a total of no fewer than 32,000 assaults during their **marriages**. One revealing thing about this statistic is that the sample group— which other evidence confirms to be very typical— reported less than two per cent (517 incidents) to the police.

Yet even this fractional recourse to police help by the victims— — — suggesting that very large numbers of marital assaults are suffered in silence— — — has a substantial effect on official **figures**. The authors

examined all assault cases in one full year in Edinburgh and a large area of Glasgow and found wife-assaults amounted to 25 per cent of all assault cases, **second** only to **brawls** and other violent incidents between unrelated men.

Authors believe **wife-beating** derives from the assumption of male dominance and control in the home. This has roots in history **and**, as authors see it, **this** view of the rightness of the patriarchal family where the woman is supposed to be subordinate and obedient to the husband's behests supported by the underlying structure of Christian marriage and all the social institutions associated with its working.

...One reason she endures it is that the wife herself is to a high degree conditioned from girlhood to accept the subordinate place as normal.

The book suggests that, if there is one reason for the continuance of wife-beating, then it is the acceptance of all concerned, including the police and social agencies, that the man has virtually all the rights and the wife has to conform— — — though this assumption is never spelt out."

The reference to 'Christian marriage' in this report invites us to inquire into the Christian view of the matter. And we have it on the authority of Paul :

"For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much as he is the image and glory of God : but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman ; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman ; but the woman for the man." (1. Corinthians, 11 : 7—9)

"Let your women keep **silence** in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak ; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home : for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. (1 Corinthians, 14: 34—35).

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church : and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in every thing." (Ephesians, 5: 22—24)
 "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." (1 Timothy, 2 : 11—15)

We may compare with this the position of a Muslim woman as portrayed by an otherwise uncharitable European critic :

"Law and custom give **the husband** absolute authority over his wife and children. But Quranic law, very favourable to the wife, **has** given her a status which is in some ways, more advantageous than that bestowed by modern European law. Financially, she retains her own separate estate ; she remains mistress of her dowry and of any goods she may acquire by inheritance,

by gift, or as the fruit of her own labour. In practice it is difficult for her to exercise those rights : but she is certain of maintenance, lodging, and service, according to her **rank.**" (Maurice Gaudetroy Demombynes, Muslim Institutions, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., p. 132)

Islam does, indeed, allow for male supremacy and authorise men even to chastise women, but it does so within very specific and appropriate limits. Chastisement is permitted only in the case of conjugal infidelity and woman remains, whether as wife or as mother or daughter, a complete person, endowed with rights and responsibilities directly issuing from and owed to God. Thus, in his sermon delivered at the Farewell Pilgrimage, which he specifically asked his audience to remember and hand down, and in which he recounted the **salient features** of Islam, Prophet Mohammad **said** :

"O people, verily you have got **certain rights over** your women and your women **have certain right, over** you. It is your right upon them that **they honour** their conjugal obligations, and not commit a act of impropriety, which if they do, you are authorised by Allah to separate them from your beds and **chastise** them, but not severely, and if they refrain, then clothe and feed them properly.

Treat the women kindly, since they are your helpers and are not in a position to manage their affairs themselves. Fear Allah-concerning women, for verily you have taken them on the security of Allah and have made their persons lawful unto you by words of **Allah.**"

+be corresponding Quranic ~visions read :

As for those of your women who are guilty of lewdness, call to witness four of you against them. And if they testify then confine them to the houses until death take them or Allah appoint for them a way. And as for the two of you who are guilty thereof, punish them both. And if they repent and improve then let them be. Lo ! Allah is Relenting, Merciful." (4: 15–16).

"O ye who believe ! It is not lawful for you forcibly to inherit the women, nor ye should put constraint upon them that ye may take away a part of that which ye have given them, unless they be guilty of flagrant lewdness. But consort with them in kindness, for if ye hate them it may happen that ye hate thing wherein Allah hath placed much good." (4 : 19).

"Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property. So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded. As for those from whom ye fear rebellion admonish them and banish them to beds apart; and chastise them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Lo ! Allah is ever High, Exalted, Great. And if ye fear a breach between them twain (the man and wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire amendment Allah will make them of one mind. Lo, ! Allah is ever knower, Aware." (4: : 34–35)

The authority of man over **woman**, thus, though undoubtedly existing, is highly circumscribed. And it is an exercise in the enforcement of law, not of self-assertion. It is no stronger than it exists in the Christian world

whether in theory or in **actual** practice, notwithstanding the opposite impression being projected by all the means of propaganda. About the position of women in Hinduism, **Dharma Sastra**, the most authoritative text on Hindu law, states :

"By a girl, or by a young woman or by a woman advanced in **years**, nothing must be done, even in her own dwelling-place, according to her mere pleasure. In childhood must a female be dependent on her father, in youth on her husband, her lord being dead, on her sons. A woman must never seek independence... Though unobservant of approved usages, or enamoured of another woman, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must constantly be revered as a god by a **virtuous wife**... No sacrifice is allowed to woman **apart** from their husbands, no religious rite, no fasting. As far only as a wife honours her husband, so far she is **exalted** in heaven. A faithful wife who **wishes to attain in heaven** the mansion of her husband must do nothing **unkind** to him, be he living or dead." (Quoted in W. J. Wilkins, *Modern Hinduism*, pp. 180, 181).

This position stated in about 900 B. C. had become only too worse for the wife by the eighteenth century of the Christian era. For, a code of laws drawn up by order of the Government of **India** for the guidance of judicial officers, *Code of Hindu laws*, 1776, states !

"A man both day and night must keep his wife so much in subjection that she by no means be mistress of her own actions. If the wife have her own free will, notwithstanding she be sprung from a superior

caste, she will behave amiss. A woman is not to be relied on...A woman who dissipated or spoils her own property,... is **always** quarrelling, or who eats before her husband eats, such woman shall be turned out of the house... A woman shall never go to a stranger's house, shall not stand at the door, and must never look out of the window. It is proper for a woman, after her husband's death, to burn herself in the fire with his corpse ; every woman who thus burns herself shall remain in Paradise with her husband 35,000,000 years by destiny. If she cannot burn, she must in that case preserve an inviolable chastity : If she remains chaste, she goes to Paradise ; and if she does not, she goes to hell." (Quoted in W. J. Wilkins, *Modern Hinduism*, pp. 185—186)

The current position has been painted by an eminent authority **thus** :

"The lot of the Hindu widow is even now a miserable one among orthodox Hindus. Although Sati has been abolished by law and no Hindu lady is now permitted to be burnt alive with her husband, the widow is the object of much persecution and humiliation. It is generally believed among the Hindus that widowhood is the result of sins committed in a previous life ; as such a widow is looked upon as the cause of the death of her husband, and his mother and sisters among whom she lives treat her with cruelty and contempt. It is customary among villagers, even in these days to have the widow, on the death of her husband, to be dragged by barbar women to some waterside and after the bath, to be dragged back to her home where **she is** starved, abused and even

beaten, at least for a week after her husband's death. The head of a *widow* is shaved and she is not allowed to wear bright garments, or ornaments. She is not permitted to eat wholesome food. Her clothes should be white or black. She cannot attend social functions. In a marriage feast she is dreaded as an ill-omen portending evil to the bride and death to the bridegroom. Widow remarriage not being permitted among the orthodox classes, a widow's troubles end only with her death." (P. Thomas, Hindu Religion, Custom, and Manners, p. 60)

Nor is even the abomination of Sati a matter of the past. The following report is as recent as April 13, 1980:

Two women, one in her teens and the other more than 60 years old are reported to have committed 'Sati' by burning themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands in the last nine months.

The first incident took place in July last year in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh and the recent one is Naguar district of Rajasthan in February.

Both the sites attracted thousands of people who chanted Sati Mata Ki Jai— — —long live the mother offering her life on the pyre of her husband— — —and made offerings.

According to English periodical Blitz there are indications that the promise of posthumous honour and veneration as 'Devi Mata' (goddess mother) might spur on more widows to immolate themselves."

Much more widespread is female infanticide. According to an authority :

"In 1856 an officer was appointed to investigate the

facts of this custom in Northern India. He states that of the villages visited by him, in 26 out of 308 not a single girl under six years of age existed. In another batch of 38 villages he did not find a single girl; marriages were very rare there, and in some places were not known to have taken place within the recollection of the present generation. In another instance there was not a girl over six, and no marriage had taken place there for over eighty years. In many parts of the Benares division he also found that marriages had not taken place within the memory of the present generation. Other officers in other districts had a similar experience.

'Among the Rajputs it appears to be customary to destroy the infant immediately upon its birth; they simply starved them to death.' In other cases they were poisoned with the juice of the mudar plant, tobacco, or dhatura; or the child was strangled immediately it was born. In Benares it was a common practice to drown them in milk after a prayer had been offered **that** they might come again in the form of sons; whilst in other places, again, the newly born infant was buried alive, or left exposed in the jungle.

Strong measures **have** been resorted to by Government with some measure of success; but there is every **reason** to believe that in many places the practice still prevails. The plan relied on to check the evil **was** to reduce the expenditure at weddings, and thus save the unfortunate father of a girl from being compelled to **spend** immense **sums** of money in feasting **and** making presents. That these people do not

differ much from those of other lands in the proportion of sexes, **may** be shown from the following fact: "The village of **Raipur**, in the Umritsur district, had become so notorious for the commission of this crime, that in September, 1867, there were only eight girls to one hundred boys. A police force was quartered upon them for two years, and in the next year thirteen girls, of whom ten are alive, were born to nine boys'. (Dr. Chevers, Medical jurisprudence, p. 769)". W. J. Wilkins, Modern Hinduism, pp. 170;-171)

Subordination of women, thus, is no peculiarly Islamic institution. It is the common denominator of all religions as well as secular wisdom. Islam has, if anything, seasoned that situation with justice, fairness and moral, spiritual, legal as well as social responsibility.. Nothing even remotely resembling anything like female infanticide can exist in Islam. Such subordination **as is** involved in **Islam** is more than made up in the added security and self-respect that necessarily accrues to the Muslim woman. Subordination itself is intended as well as designed, not so much to satisfy the male ego, as to establish a healthy and harmonious home life for the common benefit of the spouses as well as their off-spring.

The International media have frequently reported cases of sex being used to allure men into offering secret information or exercising authority in a manner they otherwise would not. Some such disclosures have rocked governments and others occasioned international scandals. Prostitution of sex is an even more widespread evil. Here is one revealing report :

(In the US, singer Rod Stewart and film actor Lee Marvin are being sued by their ex-mistresses for a

total of fifteen million dollars. Both women are claiming that they are entitled to the same kind of pay-off as a wife. Pay-off could begin to equal rip-off with such sums involved... The last word, perhaps, rests with Helen Buckingham, a London prostitute who is campaigning for rights for prostitutes. She argues that men are better off with prostitutes **than** mistresses. 'Most men find prostitutes cheaper than mistresses because they don't have to find them accommodation, fur **coats**, expensive gifts and things. At only £ 30 for an hour in bed, prostitutes appeal to a man's sense of fun and are far less trouble than mistresses.'" (Mistress Power in Action, Eastern Times, March 30, 1978, p. 4)

, This one-way traffic in sex, with women on the selling side and men on the buying, in the very heartland of feminism as well as of freedom of sex, confirms that woman, though not entirely a sex-object, remains ever so conscious of that role and is ready and willing to cash in upon it. Neither the talk nor the exercise of either freedom or equality or both have succeeded in either changing either that fact of human nature or the attitudes and impulses arising from it. They have succeeded in only perpetuating a **farce** and in inculcating false expectations. Much of the mischief caused to human life, and misdirection of human society and civilization, could have been avoided if the problem had been viewed and judged **in** its true perspective and attended accordingly.

Islamic law bearing on this subject is intended and designed to cater to the demands and dictates human nature and life as well as of society and civilization. Howsoever offensive it might appear to the abstract theore-

tionian, it cannot but appeal to those engaged in active living and involved in the affairs of man and of society. Its practical wisdom **and** efficacy are verified in the actual field situation. The only alternative to male supremacy and the segregation of sexes is prostitution, perversion **and** permissiveness generally in sexual life and their cumulative consequences of broken homes, bettered **wives**, disobedient and delinquent children, drug-addiction, **and** ultimately and inevitably, the destruction of society, culture and civilization itself.

An eminent non-Muslim woman has expressed herself on this subject thus :

"You can find others stating that the religion (Islam) is evil because it sanctions a limited polygamy. But ... monogamy with a blended mass of prostitution was a hypocrisy and more degrading than a limited polygamy... it must be remembered that the law of Islam in relation to women was until lately, when parts of it have been imitated in England, the most just law, as far as women are concerned, to be found in the world. Dealing with property, dealing with rights of succession and so on, dealing with **cases** of divorce, it was far beyond the law of the west, in the respect which was paid to the rights of women. Those things are forgotten while people are hypnotised by the words monogamy and polygamy and do not look at what lies behind it in the West— — —the frightful degradation of women who are thrown into the streets when their first protectors, weary of them, no longer give them any assistance... I often think that woman is more free in Islam than in Christianity. Woman is more protected by Islam than by the faith which

preaches monogamy. In Al-Quran the law about woman is more just and liberal." (Annie Besant, The Life and Teachings of Muhammad, Madras, June 1932, pp. 3,25,26)

Another authority opines :

"Whether the question is considered socially, ethically or religiously, it can be demonstrated that polygamy is not contrary to the highest standards of civilization. The suggestion offers a practical remedy for the problem of the destitute and unwanted female ; the alternative is continual and increased prostitution, concubinage and distressing spinsterhood." (J. E. Clare McFarlane, The case for Polygamy, London, 1934, p. 30)

Admission of male supermaey, and the adjustment of family and social relations accordingly, has the effect of satisfying the natural impulses and inclinations of spouses and the cementing of social relations generally. Once the underlying cause of contention and conflict is removed, there is seldom any need to resort to violence. Women accept their secondary and supporting role quite naturally and spontaneously, and a whole range of harmonious relations ensues automatically and effortlessly. Children are born and brought up in a happy and healthy atmosphere and are saved of all the divisive and desruptive tendencies that go to corrupt and pervert life and society. In the absence of such corrupting and perverting influences, in turn, culture and civilization -flourish : culture and civilization that constitute the true flowering of human life and society, and not of the sort that add arbiflcislity and embarssment to both.

Man's power of divorce is an integral part of this over-all scheme of things, It is wrong, however, to

imagine that power is either wrongly exercised or abused. It is equally wrong to imagine that the general authority of man is wrongly exercised or abused either. Such apprehensions arise only from the importation of non-Muslim ethic and experience into the assessment of the Muslim situation. Not only does Islam restrain and regulate the exercise of male authority but it also provides other checks and balances that are directly operative and efficacious. The individual Muslim himself is more conscious of, and responsive to, his spiritual **and** moral obligations than is the case in other religions. Social roles and relations are more closely integrated and have, therefore, an important and ameliorating influence on the exercise of individual options and observances. And above all, Islam makes the enjoining of righteousness and forbidding of wrongdoing the concern of each and all. This absolute, eternal and universal censor can and does reach out to the most private of concerns and intimate of relations. Nothing escape its attention, and nothing its **reach**.

For the permission of polygamy also there are reasons in human nature and situation. The fact that women can trade on sex clearly implies that they are endowed by nature not so much with the demand impulse ~s with the supply impulse. And the complementary fact that men **can** be traded in on sex implies that they are, in their turn, endowed more with the demand impulse than with the supply impulse. What is the need for one sex, is the opportunity for the other. That is why polygamy is right, polyandry wrong. Polygamy caters at once to both those impulses. And polyandry frustrates both. Instead of appeasing, it can only aggravate the human situation. By providing a le~itim~te way of satisfying

demand, polygamy discourages illegitimate supply also. Polyandry, on the other hand, leaves the demand even less satisfied than does monogamy and provides, consequently, greater opening for the illegitimate supply.

Those who cannot countenance the use of adjectives 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate', and imagine them to represent inherited prejudice rather than absolute moral values might like to reflect on this revealing report :

"Being married and residing with one's spouse (without regard to the quality of the relationship) is the healthiest of marital states, statistics show.

The author of the report, Dr. Anne Somers, a specialist in **family and** community medicine at Rutgers Medical School in Piscataway, N. J. says the statistics from 1940 through 1961 show that among men and women at every age married people on the average live longer than the single, widowed or divorced.

The data on admission to mental hospitals is far more striking. In 1975, according to the National Institute for Mental Health, among **married** persons 89.9 per 100,000 Americans **14 and older** were admitted to a state or community psychiatric hospital. For those who had never married, the rate was seven and half times higher—685.2 per 100,000 ; for the widowed it was 701.1 per 100,000, and for those separated or divorced it was the highest—865.6 per 100,000. In each marital category the rates for men were much higher than those for women.

In his book, 'The Broken Heart : The Medical Consequences of Loneliness', Dr. James Lynch, a psychologist at the University of Maryland School of

Medicine in Baltimore, note, that unmarried persons not only visit physicians more often but also stay in hospitals longer than do married people with similar illnesses." (Jane E. Brody, Married People Live Longer, Dawn-N. Y. Times Service).

We shall conclude this part of the inquiry with the remarks of an eminent Christian. Mr. Justice A. R. Oorneliua, who had a truly brilliant academic record and nearly forty years of varied administrative and judicial experience at the time behind him, and who had already been the Chief Justice of Pakistan for more than five years, told the Third Commonwealth and Empire Law Conference at Sydney on 27th August, 1965 :

"The strength of the family bond remains unimpaired in Pakistan and by reason of the discipline of their elders, the young have so far been prevented from indulging to any appreciable extent in the excesses which have gained some notoriety in Western countries. Concern is however being felt among the general public as to the possible effect upon young persons, particularly of the educated classes, of the increasing prevalence of imported cinema films, depicting carefully planned acts of violence, as well as of the spread among such children of unhealthy comics also imported from abroad...

In the matter of sexual morals as well, the country is largely free of those developments, which have received notice in Western countries through commissions of enquiry and with increasing frequency, through the courts. According to the oriental ethic, there are restraints imposed upon the freedom of behaviour of women which are effective to lessen

the need for law to intervene for the purpose of checking excesses of both **sexes.**" (Reprinted in The All-Pakistan Legal Decisions, 1965 Journal, p. 155)

What the learned Chief **Justice** has projected here as the oriental ethic is, in fact, Islamic ethic exclusively. That it should have appeared to him to be more general, and shared alike by other oriental societies, is due to the sympathetic extension of the Islamic ethic to the societies that have benefited by their contact with the Islamic society and ethic. We have already noticed, on non-Muslim authority, how, for instance, some of the extremes of Hindu ethic have been mitigated in and through this process, in the very heartland of Hinduism. How much more this should be the case in the predominantly Muslim society of which the Chief Justice was speaking, can be easily imagined. But we are not left to imagine merely.

A very interesting contrast has surfaced in India recently which seems to establish our point directly. India and **Pakistan** share a common historical and sociological background, including their legal codes and administrative establishments. And yet, the results have been so fundamentally and demonstrably different. This was highlighted recently in and through the **Indian Women's Protest** week of which an eminent **Indian** journalist gives this account :

"One of the most respected judges of India's Supreme Court last week demanded that rapists should be flogged in public. Justice V. D. Tulzaturkar... was addressing a **New Delhi** seminar on protecting women from sexual assault.

Hundreds of women, including MPs, teachers, journalists, social workers, students and **housewives**, have

paraded in Bombay and New Delhi to launch a campaign for revision of the law on rape.

These demonstration began on **March 8**. They are continuing with public meeting, letters and articles in newspapers, appeals to jurists and petitions to the Prime Minister.

'Our police rape women' and 'blind laws, blind justice' **read** some of the playcards carried by the marchers. 'Rape is a crime against civilization' and 'women are not utility and pleasure objects' are other popular slogans. Even a few men have joined the crusade.

Women's organisations complain that India's century-old laws are riddled with loopholes and encourage **abuse**. Rapists usually get off scot free because the onus of proof is on the victim. Few women in the countryside agree to submit to medical examination, **and** even fewer will give testimony in court on a matter that inevitably leads to social ostracism.

...illiterate women are often cowed into submission by threats to husbands or brothers, a form of pressure not covered by the existing law." (Sunanda Datta-Ray, Indian Campaign to change Rape Law, P. T. Observer Service)

The reason why the same laws have not had the same effect in Pakistan is that the positive morality, which supplements those laws, and guides the character and conduct of men has different source in each case, Islam in the one case, and Hinduism in the other, and has, therefore, a different content also. One aspect of the difference is that Muslim husbands and brothers are sure to accord a very different reception to the rapists as well as to any woman who might for any reason suffer them to

be. The other aspect of the difference also is exposed in the same report which goes on :

"But the otherwise liberal judge gave grave offence to militant campaigners when he also suggested that women should not wear 'provocative' plunging neck lines and brief skirts or expose a vast stretch of midriff."

The opposite Muslim attitude has already been cited in the case of the Muslim girl fighting in the midst of the permissive society to keep her legs covered. That this is not an isolated individual eccentricity is clear from the fact that seldom do any Muslim girls participate in such events as beauty contests, which involve self-exhibition, or swimming, which necessitates economy dressing.

Insofar as provocative or inviting dress or conduct is necessarily conducive to sexual indulgence and immorality it is wrong to impute guilt **in** such circumstances solely to men, and to call them **criminals** while defending and even idolising women for **their** attractiveness and exhibitionism. Surely, those who incite and provoke to crime deliberately and designedly thus, are greater criminals than those who are impelled by their inherent nature to respond to what might become an irresistible situation.

E. Islamic Punishments :

With the views, once again, of the former Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice A. R. Cornelius, expressed in the address, from which we have already quoted, we take up the next and the last part of the critique. After citing facts and figures of crime and criminal justice as administered under the British-instituted system and establishing its failure, he went on :

"I may appropriately end this paper by stating my doubts regarding the utility of imprisonment in all cases as a mode of punishment **for a crime**. At a time when the common person all over the world is finding it increasingly difficult to provide subsistence for himself, there is something of absurdity involved in the consideration that he can procure such subsistence and a good many **amenities** besides (such as medical care) by simply **committing a crime**. The possibility is known to **be exploited by** individuals, in every country. Although it would be too much to say that conviction and imprisonment have totally lost their deterrent effect, except perhaps in relation to political offences, yet the ever-increasing harden of maintaining prisons and highly **paid** staff to provide accommodation, care, **proper** food and other amenities for persons of proved anti-social quality is one from which an intelligent citizenry may [un]willingly seek to be relieved if alternative methods, cheaper and not less effective, can be found to create the desired effects of punishment, retribution and reformation. I **may** mention here— — — and I hope it will create no great shock among my readers— — — that no one from Pakistan who visits Saudi Arabia for the Pilgrimage ever returns without a strong impression of the very high degree of security of property which prevails in that country. One and all put it down to the fact that the punishment for theft is the cutting off of hands, which punishment is very promptly and publicly administered, and has proved to be an extremely effective deterrent against that form of crime, although it is applied only in a very small number of cases. The thought is excited

that perhaps there is something in the ancient doctrine that 'whatever moved to do the deed is dead and forfeited'. There are many crimes of a violently anti-social nature which could be thought of in similar terms. Dacoity, meaning robbery with violence, committed by a gang of five or more persons, mostly at night, from peacefully sleeping citizens in isolated localities, is made possible by the abuse of the faculty of mobility. It is very often accompanied by murder. A habitual burglar or house-breaker uses his limbs and power of movement for a purpose most gravely disturbing to peaceful society. A cattle lifter falls in the same category, finding it easy to make away with property which is itself mobile, with the aid of his own mobility. Is there anything gravely shocking to the public conscience in the thought that such persons should be deprived of their mobility, either permanently or temporarily, as the true and just punishment for their criminal acts and tendencies? ... The public conscience has been long accustomed to the imposition of death as a punishment in appropriate cases. It could scarcely suffer a shock if, for its protection, so just and appropriate punishment as disablement were applied, with proper qualifications, for the control of crime of certain kinds.

...I am aware that the subject of punishment for crime is receiving intensive examination in many quarters and in the light of results achieved, the suggestions I have made might be merely superficial. But I do believe that the universal practice of imprisonment for crime is by no means the most intelligent or effective means for its prevention, or

for the protection of the interests of society generally. ... Plainly the controls applied through the prevailing modes of investigation, trial and punishment are not effective to check the growth of this disease (crime), whose manifestations are constantly on the increase." (pp• 157 et seq.)

Imprisonment, actually, does not find much favour in the West itself and even stronger opinions have been expressed against it there by **some** eminent authorities. One of these informs us :

"After **more** than 150 years of prison reform, the outstanding feature of the present movement is its scepticism concerning imprisonment altogether and its search for **new and** more adequate methods of treatment outside prison." (Dr. Max Grunhut, quoted in Sir Walter Moberly's 'The Ethics of Punishment', Faber, 1968, p. 265)

And another opines :

"Theoretically, a prison is intended to promote the reformation of the criminal, but in the light of its practical methods and **actual** operation probably nothing more ineffective or vicious could be devised as a method of protecting society from the depredations of the anti-social classes. Almost everything that could possibly contribute to the debasement and demoralization of the **human** personality characterises present day prisons and contemporary methods of penal administration. The mammoth prison breeds the professional criminal. It is the introduction to the organised under-world which receives here **its material** substructure and its ideological

foundation... Even the best administered prison is the counterpart of a deeply disorganized society...

In confinement there is no relationship of equal men; all human relations are unreal, fictitious, counterfeit... On the driest sands of a social Sahara we want non-swimmers to learn to swim... We speak of delinquency areas, of degraded and degrading neighbourhoods and of the ascendancy of bad companionship. Like a burning-lens, prison concentrates all these malignant forces and turns them on the convict." (Barnes and Teeters, *New Horizons in Criminology*, 3rd edition, pp. 370—371)

The West, which has been pioneering and pressing the hardest with this part of the critique, has itself been never too sure of its own penal policy and has only been tentatively probing in the dark. The history of the Western penal policy has been authoritatively stated thus :

"The above cursory review of modern correctional history suggests that belief concerning the causes of crime and the best methods of crime control are being revolutionized for the third time within the past few centuries. In the late 18th and 19th centuries the philosophy of the rational man resulted in the substitution of imprisonment for the earlier methods of corporal punishment. Then the late 19th and early 20th centuries saw a decline in rationalism and the development of individualized treatment programmes based on the assumption that criminals suffered from major mental, emotional or social deficiencies and emphasising education, case work and psychiatry. Again, an accumulation of evidence contradicted the dominant philosophy of the time: the number of

crimes increased at an alarming rate. Studies of the efforts of individualized treatment were frequently discouraging ; law violatfons came to be recognized as group or gang activities rather than solitary deeds; many law violators revealed few signs of the expected personal inadequacy. It was perhaps inevitable that another new conception of crime and its treatment should come into prominence.

There is some rather convincing evidence that society is in the early stages of a third major revolution in its belief concerning crime and correction. The chief feature of the rising philosophy is the idea that society is the patient in need of corrective action if crime control is to become a reality." (**Encyclopedia Britannica, Prison, Major Historical Developments, An Emerging Philosophy**).

That the Western society has itself been feeling its way towards the Islamic alternative is clearly implicit in this grudging confession :

" a surprising amount of the old philosophy remains to plauge criminologists who are trying to apply our present fund of knowledge to the treatment of criminals. No part of the old seems completely and universally eliminated. Traces remain of the belief in retaliation ; the victim of a criminal wishes the criminal to suffer as he has suffered, and sometimes he bypasses the courts and, as in the past, seeks his own revenge. Often the courts exonerate the criminal act of the avenger or administer only nominal punishment. For example, it is often difficult to induce a jury to convict a man who has murdered

the rapist of his wife or daughter, even though the rape occurred some time in the past and the case is on its way through the courts. Retribution, or the idea that a criminal must pay for his crime in suffering, is active in the minds of newspaper editors and the public when they demand severe punishment for criminals, although they themselves are not the victims." (Ruth Shonle Cavan, *Criminology*, 3rd edition, p. 273)

If that is indeed how the victims and the judges, the jurors, the newspaper editors and the public at large feel, who is sustaining the opposite attitude, and with what justification, on what authority? The ivory-tower experts, who are not themselves involved in the business of living? The advocates and attorneys who benefit by benefitting the accused? The criminals who never wear the shoes of the victims to know where they might pinch? To these, the instinctiveness, the persistence and pervasiveness of the alternative choice suffices to give a lie. And it suffices to vindicate the Islamic penal policy as well. In this, as in every other sphere, Islam articulates the demands and dictates of human nature and society.

We have it on the authority of one of the most outstanding jurists of the West that :

"The emotion of-retributive indignation, both in its self-regarding and its sympathetic forms, is even yet the mainspring of the criminal law. It is to the fact that the punishment of the wrongdoer is at the same time the vengeance of the wronged, that the administration of justice owes a great part of its strength and effectiveness. Did we punish criminals merely from an intellectual appreciation of the expediency

of so doing, and not because their crimes arouse in us the emotion of anger and the instinct of retribution, the criminal law would be but a feeble instrument. Indignation against injustice is, moreover, one of the chief constituents of the moral sense of the community, and positive morality is no less dependent on it than is the law itself. It is good, therefore, that such instincts and emotions should be encouraged and strengthened by their satisfaction; and in civilised societies this satisfaction is possible in any adequate degree only through the criminal justice of the state. There can be little question that at the present day the sentiment of retributive indignation is deficient rather than excessive, and requires stimulation rather than restraint. Unquestionable as have been the benefits of that growth of altruistic sentiment which characterises modern society, it cannot be denied that in some respects it has taken a perverted course and has interfered unduly with the sterner virtues. We have too much forgotten that the mental attitude which best becomes us, when fitting justice is done upon the evildoer, is not pity, but solemn exultation." (Salmond on Jurisprudence, Sweet & Maxwell, 11th edition, p. 121)

Practical problems issuing from the indulgent penal policy of the West, and the public-opinion polls, which directly reflect them, are combining to compel the Western leadership to return to a more retributive ethic, as this Reuter's report bears out :

"Britain abandoned the death penalty 14 years ago, but an increase in violent crime and terrorism has forced a re-examination of the decision and a vote in Parliament this week.

Since Parliament suspended the death penalty in 1965 for all crimes save treason, it has resisted strong pressure from opinion polls calling for a return of the hangman.

But the sharp increase in violent crime and criminals carrying guns has provoked a new round of soul-searching on the need for executions." (London, July 14, 1979)

Italy, Spain and the Americas, have been calling even , louder for the same sort of soul searching.

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CHAPTER X

THE PROMISE

The theoretical claims as well as the practical performance of Islam, which we have found to be so outstanding, invite us, finally, to inquire into what promise Islam might hold for the future. Before we inquire into the positive part of the promise, the negative aspect of it needs to be considered. The recent upsurge of Islam **has** seemed to cause of great deal of concern in certain quarters. The West, in particular, has been feeling very apprehensive of the rising tide of Islam and has wondered what might happen to its institutions and achievements in the event of its being overwhelmed by Islam.

Three things need to be said in this behalf. Firstly Islam is no preserve of any particular race or region. The Arabs, who bore the earliest witness, and broadcast Islam to the rest of the world, constitute only a small minority of the Muslim Brotherhood. They kept **the** leadership role only so long as they led Muslim world in the practical observance of Islam also. The Mughals and the Turks, who occupy a pride of place in the **Muslim** annals, were initially outsiders to it. And, once they **had** entered the fold of Islam, they never had any regrets about it. With the same openness and opportunity, Islam invites now, among others, the West and the Whites.

That this shall be as it **has** been before, is guaranteed

by the fact that the openness of Islam was no accident of history. It issued automatically from absolute, and unambiguous imperatives of Islam. In his most memorable address, delivered on the occasion of his Farewell Pilgrimage, Prophet Muhammad said unequivocally :

"O People, listen to my words, for I do not know whether we shall ever meet again and perform Hajj after this year. O Ye people, Allah says : O people We created you from one male **and** one female **and** made you into tribes and nations, so'as to be known to one another. Verily in the sight of Allah, the most honoured amongst you is the one who is most upright. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for the white over the black nor for the black over the white except in Godconsciousness."

The Quran puts it thus :

"O mankind ! Lo ! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo ! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the **most** upright one." (49.: 13)

The second thing to be said in response to the fear psychosis is that the attitude of make believe or of false pretence, whether about one's own religion or about any other, is in any case, unavailing. While the most intelligent of men do not liberate misrepresentation of another religion, or false glorification of men's own, can be the work only of unethical and unscrupulous men. Matters of policy or of prestige may possibly be urged against a religion **that** is either regional or racialist. It otherwise seeks to subserve some special or vested interests. But to do so

against a religion, like Islam, that is open and availing alike to all and everywhere, is to deny oneself the opportunity of stealing a march on others.

And, finally, Islam gives no cause for any genuine concern in behalf of any valuable or worthwhile institution or acquisition of the West or of any other society. An enlightened Western opinions will bring home this truth :

"It is to Mussulman **science**, to Mussulman art, and to Mussulman literature that Europe has been in a great measure indebted for its extrication from the darkness of the Middle Ages." (Marquels of Dufferien and Ava, Speeches Delivered in India, London 1890, p. 24)

"One of the most deplorable things in history, said Dr. J. W. Draper, is the systematic way in which European writers have contrived to put out of sight the scientific obligations of the Arabs." (H. G. Farmer. Historical **Facts** in the Arabian Musical influence).

"If the Greek was the father, then the Arab was the foster-father of the, scientific method of dealing with reality, that is to say, by absolute frankness, the utmost simpilicity of sta-ement and explanation, exact record and exhaustive criticism. Through the Arabs it was and not by the **Latin** route that the modern world received that gift of **light and** power." (H. G. Wells, The Outlines of History, London 1920).

That; of course, is past. From the performance of the past, only a dim view of the promise of the future may be gained. But the enlighteuod men of t— West have helped us further in filling out the details **and** flooding the promise with their own light thus :

"But Islam has yet a further service to render to the cause of humanity... No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India, and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Muslim community of Japan, show that Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition." (H. A. R. Gibb, *whither Islam* 1 London 1932, p. 379)

"The extinction of **race** consciousness **as between** Muslim is one of the outstanding achievement of Islam and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue...

In these, recently **and rapidly** 'opened up' tropical territories ; the **Weatern** ofvilization has produced as economic and political **plenum** and, in th~ same breath, a social and **lpiritual** void.

If ever the 'natives' of these regions (Central Africa and Indonesia) succeed in recapturing a spiritual state in which they are able to call their souls their own, it may prove to have been the Islamic spirit that **has** given fresh form to the void...

Here then in the foreground of the future, we can remark to valuable influences which Islam may exert upon the cosmopolitan proletariat of a Western society that **hal out** its net around the world and embraced **the whol~** mankind." (A. J. Toynbee,

Civilization on Trial, New York, 1948, pp. 205, 207—208)

An eminent oriental Christian, with intimate knowledge and prolonged practical experience of Muslim life and thought, whom we have had occasion to quote earlier in another context, illuminates another aspect of the Islam promise thus :

"An it is only in Pakistan among all the nations of the world that you find the introduction of the religious conscience into the control of secular affairs **being a major requirement** of the Constitution. In every country where the Christian ethic is in force, I find a different situation. I speak here of course, **with great** respect, as probably a lone voice in a field **suffused** with learning and philosophy and the magnetic power of words. It seems to me that in **these** other countries, the influence of the religious conscience is denied and depressed in the conduct of secular affairs. The temporal power is held paramount in that sphere and is thereby relieved of the pressure of conscience in a general sense... I conceive **that** when the meaning of the Constitution as to the implementation of the Fundamental Rights is more fully understood, the 'moral responsibility' will have a **place** in the **secular** affairs of Pakistan such as **appears** to have been denied to it in many parts of the civilized world for many centuries." (Mr. Justice A. R. Cornelius, Chief Justice of Pakistan, inaugural address at the Second Law Conference, S. M. Law College, Karachi, reprinted in All Pakistan Legal Decisions, 1965 **Journal p.** 49).

What might have seemed here to have been a

peculiarly Pakistani virtue confined to the constitutional field is, in fact, more generally distinctive of Islam and of the Muslims, and more widely pervasive in Muslim life and society, as another eminent non-Muslim tells us :

"It may be boldly asserted that no people in this world give the impression of being so religious-minded as do Moslems. All of life is saturated with the consciousness of God." (Charles R. Watson, *What is this Moslem World?* London, 1937, pp. 38-39).

How Muslims themselves conceive their future role in relation to the rest of the world, is where we must conclude our inquiry, And an indication of this is available in the Lahore Declaration adopted at the Second Islamic Summit held on 22-24 February, 1974, which, in part, reads:

"The Kings, Heads of States and Government and the representatives of the Islamic countries and organisations proclaimed :

1. The conviction that their common faith is an indissoluble bond between their peoples : that the solidarity of the Islamic peoples is based, not on hostility towards any other human communities nor on distinctions of race and culture, but on the positive and eternal precepts of equality, fraternity and dignity of man, freedom from discrimination and exploitation and struggle against oppression and injustice.

3. Their desire that their endeavours in promoting world peace based on freedom and social justice will be imbued with the spirit of amioability and co-operation with other faiths, in accordance with the tenets of Islam."

The more recent as well as the more solemn, **Mecca Declaration**, adopted by the Third Islamic Summit, expounds these intimations further thus :

"Strict adherence to Islam and Islamic principles and values, as a way of life, constitutes the highest protection for Muslims against the dangers which confront them. Islam is the only path which can lead them to strength, dignity and prosperity **and** a better **future:..**

"The belief of all Muslims in the eternal principles of liberty, justice, human dignity, fraternity, tolerance and compassion and their constant struggle against injustice and aggression reinforces their determination to establish a just peace and harmony **among** peoples, to ensure respect for human rights, **and** to work for the strengthening of international organisations based on humanitarian principles and peaceful co-existence among nations. Thus a new age would dawn wherein relations between **nations** would be governed by principles and not by force, and wherein all forms of oppression, exploitation, domination, injustice, colonialism and neo colonialism as well as all kinds of discrimination on **grounds** of race, colour, creed or sex would be **banished for ever** from this earth.

"We are saddened to note that despite all its material **and** scientific and technological achievements mankind today suffers from poverty of the spirit, from moral and ethical decay and societies are marred by inequities, economies are crippled by severe crises and international political **order** is in constant danger of destabilisation. The forces of evil are now on the

march, multiplying the hot-beds of war, sowing the seeds of dissensions, threatening the security of the world, man's peace of mind, and jeopardising human civilisation.

"It is our conviction that the Ummah (community) of 1000 million people, composed of various races, spread over vast areas of the globe and possessing enormous resources, fortified by its spiritual power and utilising to the full its human and material potential, can achieve an outstanding position in the world and ensure for itself the means of prosperity in order to bring about a better equilibrium for the benefit of all mankind.

"All Muslims, differing though they may be, in their language, colour, domicile or other conditions, form but one nation, bound together by the common faith, moving in a single direction, drawing on one common cultural heritage, assuming one mission throughout the world. Thus, they stand as a nation of moderation, rejecting alignment to any and all blocs and ideologies, steadfastly refusing to surrender to divisive influences or to conflicts of interest.

"Taking note of the present state of international relations, which are characterised by the evils of bigotry and racism, dominated by the rule of force and the arms race, by greed and injustice, colonialism and exploitation of weak nations, factors which threaten our civilization and disturb social and material equilibrium of the world, desiring to see that the forces of good throughout the world establish the human values of fraternity, humanity and justice, we call upon all States and peoples of the world to

rebuild it a new, through sincere and concerted efforts so that peace may prevail and conflicts and wars may be avoided.

"We call for the disputes to be settled peacefully, and for relations to be conducted constructively, for man's capacities to be harnessed in the service of humanity, instead of being wasted in a race for the acquisition of armaments and of weapons of death and destruction...

"We appeal to all other states and peoples to reciprocate the sentiments of the State members of the OIC and their peoples in a sincere spirit of human brotherhood, let us banish all hatred injustice and oppression so that we may together build a world fit for mankind and so that we may enhance the level of our spiritual and material life."

It is important to notice that these are the affirmations, not of idle dreamers, or of abstract theoreticians, or of professional priests, but of the practical men of affairs: of all the Muslim Heads of State and Government. The promise contained in them needs, therefore, to be seriously taken and soberly analysed and understood. And it needs to be so taken also because of the generally high level of the Muslim commitment and earnestness in matters religious. And, when so taken, it holds out the highest hope for the future alike of man and of nations.