

142. The highest degree of contact, the surest and the most infallible means of communication between man and his Creator is called *wahy* by the Prophet Muhammad. It is not an ordinary inspiration, but a veritable revelation made to man on the part of the Lord, a celestial communication. Man is matter, God is on the contrary above even the spirit, and therefore beyond all possibility of direct physical contact with man (Quran 6 : 103). God is omnipresent, and, as says the Quran (50 : 16): "nearer to man than his jugular vein"; yet no physical contact is possible. Therefore it is a *malak*—literally a messenger, i.e., a celestial message-bearer, commonly translated as "angel"—who serves as intermediary, or the channel of the transmission of the message of God to His human agent or messenger, i.e., the prophet. None except a prophet receives such a revelation through the intermediary of a celestial messenger. It ought to be remembered that in Islam, prophet does not mean one who makes prophecies and predictions, but only an envoy of God, a bearer of Divine message intended for his people. As to the angel, it does not enter in the scope of our studies here to discuss whether it is a spiritual being, distinct from the material beings in the universe, or something else.

143. According to the Quran, the celestial messenger, who brought revelations to the Prophet, is called Jibril (Jibrail, Gabriel), which etymologically means "the power of God." The Quran cites also Mikal (Mikail Michael), without indicating his functions. The functionary in charge of hell is named Malik (literally "master" or "owner"). It speaks also of other angels without name and without attributes, all of whom execute the orders of the Lord. The Islamic belief is that Jibril, also termed by the Quran "trustworthy spirit (*al-ruh al-amin*), stands above all. In the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, as distinct from the Quran, we read that this celestial messenger, Jibril, did not appear to the Prophet always in the same form. The Prophet saw him sometimes like a being suspended in the air, sometimes in the shape of a man, sometimes like a being having wings, etc. In a narration (cf. § 129) preserved by Ibn Hanbal (I, 53 or No. 374), it is reported that one day in the presence of many people, an unknown person came and put some questions to the Prophet Muhammad, and thereafter went away. Several days afterwards, the Prophet told his companions: I am persuaded to believe that the person who put to me questions on that day was none other than Gabriel, who had come to teach you your religion; and never was I so tardy in recognizing him.

It was so, because he had come to examine the Prophet and not to communicate to him some message of God.

144. The way in which the revelation used to come could be deduced from the following reports in which the Prophet himself or his on-lookers have described it: "Sometimes it came to me like the beating sound of the bell—and this is the hardest experience for me—and when that ceases, I retain well engraved in my memory all that it has said; but sometimes the angel appears to me in the shape of a human being and speaks to me and I retain what he says" (Bukhari). In the transmission of Ibn Hanbal, this same report reads: "I hear the beating sounds and thereupon I keep silent; there is not an occasion of the revelation to me when I do not fear that my soul will depart." His Companions relate their observations as under: "Whenever a revelation came to him, a sort of rest (immobility) captured him" (Ibn Hanbal). Or "Whenever the revelation came to the messenger of God, he was overwhelmed and remained in this state a while as if he was intoxicated" (Ibn Sa'd). Or "The revelation came to him in the coldest day, and when it ceased, the front of the Prophet perspired with (sweat falling as) pearls" (Bukhari). Or "Once when the moment (of revelation) arrived, he let enter his head inside (a garment?), and lo, the face of the messenger of God had become red, and he snored; later the state vanished" (Bukhari). Or "Whenever the revelation came, he suffered therefrom and his face darkened" (Ibn Sa'd). Or "When the revelation came to him, we heard near him like the humming sound of bees" (Ibn Hanbal and Abu Nu'aim). Or "The Prophet suffered great pain when the revelation came to him, and used to move his lips" (Bukhari). Other series of reports say that he then felt the weight of a great load, and say: "I saw the Prophet when a revelation came to him while he was on his camel; the camel began to foam with rage and twist its legs to the point that I feared that they would break with a crack. In fact sometimes the camel sat down, but sometimes it obstinately tried to stand, with legs planted like pegs althrough the time of revelation, and this lasted until the state (of revelation) vanished, and sweat fell from him like pearls" (Ibn Sa'd). Or "The load almost broke the leg of the camel with a crack" (Ibn Hanbal). Zaid Ibn Thabit reports his personal experience of a certain day in the following words: "His leg lay on my thigh and weighed so heavy that I feared that my femur would break with a crack" (Bukhari). In another version, there is this addition: ". . . had it not been for the Prophet of God, I would have

pushed a cry and taken away my leg." Other reports say: "The revelation came to him once while he was standing on the pulpit of the Mosque and he remained immobile" (Ibn Hanbal). Or "He was holding a loaf of meat (during his meal) when a revelation came to him, and when the state ceased, the loaf was still in his hand" (Ibn Hanbal). At such an occasion, the Prophet sometimes lay on his back, sometimes the inmates even covered his face in respect with a piece of cloth, as the circumstance may be. Yet he never lost his consciousness nor control of his self. In the early times of the mission, he used to repeat aloud, during the course of the revelation, what was revealed to him, but soon, while still at Mecca, he abandoned this habit of simultaneous repeating, but began to remain silent till the end of the state of revelation, and then he communicated the message of God to his secretaries to note (as is mentioned in the Quran 75:16): "Stir not thy tongue herewith to hasten it; upon Us the putting together and the reading thereof." And again (20:114): "And hasten not with the Quran ere its revelation hath been perfected unto thee and say: my Lord, increase me in knowledge." And when the Prophet returned to his normal state, he used to dictate to his scribes the portion of the Quran which had just been received by him, in order to publish it amongst the Muslims and to multiply the copies (cf. § 50 and 53 *supra*). In his *al-Mab'ath wa'l-Maghazi* (MS of Fes), Ibn Ishaq reports: "Whenever part of the Quran was revealed to the Messenger of God, he first recited it among men, and then among women."

THE REVEALED BOOKS

145. God being the Lord of the earth as well as of heavens, it is the duty of man to obey Him, more so because in His mercy, He sends His messengers for the benefit of man, God is the sovereign and the source of all law, spiritual as well as temporal. We have just spoken of the revelations and communications of the will of God to man. It is the collection and compilation of these revelations which constitute the Revealed Books

146. The formula of the creed enunciated by the Prophet Muhammad speaks of the Books, and not merely of the Book which would refer to the Quran only. This tolerance is characteristic of his teaching. The Quran speaks of it in numerous passages. For instance (2:285): "Each one (of the Muslims) believeth in God and His angels

and His books and His messengers,—(and says): We make no distinction between any of His messengers." Again (35 : 24) it declares: "... and there is not a nation but a warner hath passed among them." And yet again (4 : 164, 40 : 78): "Verily We sent messengers before thee (O Muhammad), among them those of whom We have told thee, and some of them We have not told thee about." The Quran names and recognizes the scrolls of Abraham, the Torah of Moses, the Psalter of David and the Gospel of Jesus as the books revealed by God.

147. It is true that there is no trace today of the scrolls of Abraham. One knows the sad story of the Torah of Moses and how it was destroyed by Pagans several times. The same fate befell the Psalter. As for Jesus, he had not had the time to compile or dictate what he preached; it is his disciples and their successors who gleaned his utterances and transmitted them to posterity in a number of recensions, of which at least 70 recensions or Gospels are known, and excepting four all are declared by the Church to be apocryphal. Be it what it may, it is a dogma for every Muslim to believe not only in the Quran, but also in the collections of the Divine revelations of pre-Islamic epochs. The Prophet of Islam has not named Buddha, nor Zoroaster nor the founders of Indian Brahminism. So the Muslims are not authorised to affirm categorically the Divine character, for instance, of Avesta or of the Hindu Vedas; yet they cannot formally reject either the possibility of the Vedas and Avesta having been in their origin based on Divine revelations, or of having suffered a fate similar to that of the Pentateuch of Moses. The same is true in connection with what appertains to China, Greece and other lands.

MESSENGERS OF GOD (PROPHETS)

148. An angel brings the message of God to a chosen man, and it is this latter who is charged with its communication to the people. In Quranic terminology, this human agent of the message is differently called: *nabi* (prophet), *rasool* (messenger), *mursal* (envoy), *bashir* (announcer), *nadhir* (warner), etc.

149. Prophets are men of great piety, and models of good behaviour, spiritual as well as temporal and social. Miracles are not necessary for them (although history attributes miracles to all of them and they themselves have always affirmed that it is not they but God who

did that) ; it is their teaching alone which is the criterion of their veracity.

150. According to the Quran, there were certain prophets who had received the revelation of Divine Books, and there were others who did not receive new Books but had to follow the Books revealed to their predecessors. The Divine messages do not disagree on fundamental truths, such as the Oneness of God, the demand for doing good and abstaining from evil, etc., yet they may differ as to the rules of social conduct in accordance with the social evolution attained by a people. If God has sent successive prophets, it is a proof that previous directions had been abrogated and replaced by new ones, and, except for these latter, certain of the old rules tacitly or explicitly retained.

151. Certain prophets had had the Divine mission of educating members of a single house (tribe or clan), or of a single race, or of a single region ; others had vaster missions, embracing the entire humanity and extending over all times.

152. The Quran has made express mention of certain prophets, such as Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, David, Moses, Salih, Hud, Jesus, John the Baptist, and Muhammad, but the Quran is explicit that there have been others also before Muhammad, he being the seal and the last of the messengers of God.

THE ESCHATOLOGY

153. The Prophet Muhammad has also demanded belief in the doomsday. Man will be resuscitated after his death, and God will judge him on the basis of his deeds during the life of this world, in order to reward his good actions and punish him for the evil ones. One day our universe will be destroyed by the order of God, and then after a certain lapse of time, He Who had created us first, would bring us back to life. Paradise as a reward, and Hell as a punishment are but graphic terms to make us understand a state of things which is beyond all notions of our life in this world. Speaking of it, the Quran (32 : 17) says : "No soul knoweth what is kept hid from them—of joy as a reward for what they used to do. Again (9 : 72) : "God promiseth to the believers, men and women, Gardens underneath which rivulets flow, wherein they will abide—blessed dwellings

in Gardens of Eden—and the pleasure of God is grander still; that is the supreme triumph.” So this pleasure on His part is over and above even the Gardens of Eden. In yet another passage of Quran (10:26) we read: “For those who do good is what is the best, and more (thereto).” Al-Bukhari, Muslim etc. report, that the Prophet used to refer to this verse saying that, after Paradise there would be the vision of God, ultimate reward of the pious. As far as Paradise is concerned, an oft-quoted utterance of the Prophet Muhammad is: “God says: I have prepared for My pious slaves (-men) things in Paradise the like of which no eye has ever seen, nor ear ever heard, nor even human heart (mind) ever thought of.” As to what is beyond Paradise, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and other great sources record an important saying of the Prophet: “When the people meriting Paradise will have entered it, God will tell them: ‘Ask Me what else can I add to you?’ People will wonder, having been honoured, given Paradise and saved from Hell, and will not know what to ask. Thereupon God will remove the veil, and nothing would be lovelier than gazing the Lord.” (In another version, instead of ‘veil’; ‘hijab’, ‘the garb of grandeur’ *Rida-al-Kibriya* is used.) In other words, the opportunity of contemplating God would be the highest and the real reward of the Believer, this for those who are capable of understanding and appreciating the abstract notion of the other World. It is in the light of this authoritative interpretation that one should read what the Quran and the Hadith unceasingly describe for the common man with regard to the joys of Paradise and the horrors of Hell in terms which remind us of our surroundings in this world: there are gardens and rivulets or canals in Paradise, there are young and beautiful girls, there are carpets and luxurious garments, pearls, precious stones, fruits, wine, and all that man would desire. Similarly, in hell there is fire, there are serpents, boiling water and other tortures, there are parts extremely cold; and in spite of these sufferings, there will be no death to get rid of. All this is easily explained when one thinks of the vast majority of men, of the common masses, to whom the Divine message is addressed. It is necessary to speak to every one according to his capacity of understanding and of intelligence. One day, when the Prophet Muhammad was speaking to a company of the faithful about Paradise and its pleasures (including its flying horses), a Bedouin rose and put the question: “Will there be camels also?” The Prophet smiled and gently replied: “There will be everything that one would desire.” (Ibn Hanbal

and Tirmidhi). The Quran speaks of Paradise and Hell simply as a means of persuading the average man to lead a just life and to march in the path of truth; it attaches no importance to details whether they describe a place or a state of things? That should not interest us either; a Muslim believes in them, without asking: "how?"

154. It goes without saying that Paradise will be eternal: once meriting it, there would be no question of being ejected from it. The Quran assures (15: 48): "Pain will not touch them, and there is no expulsion from it." Some would enter it forthwith, others would suffer longer or shorter periods of detention in Hell, before meriting Paradise. But the question is whether Hell is eternal for the unbelievers? The opinions of the Muslim Theologians have differed on the points although a great majority of them affirm, on the basis of the Quranic verses (4: 48, 4: 116) that God may pardon every sin and every crime except disbelief in God, and that the punishment that would be meted out for this last sin would be eternal. Others opine that even the punishment of disbelief may one day terminate by the grace of God. These theologians deduce their opinions, also from certain verses of the Quran (11: 107, etc.). We need not pursue further this discussion here, but hope God's unlimited mercy.

PREDESTINATION AND FREE-WILL

155. In his expose, the Prophet Muhammad has lastly demanded the belief that the determination (*qadr*) of all good and evil is from God. Does this phrase signify that everything is predestined for man, or does the statement merely imply that the qualification of good and evil in a given act depends on God? In other words, nothing is good or evil in itself, but it is so only because God has declared it to be such; and man has to do nothing but observe it.

156. Here is in fact a dilemma for the theologian. If we declare that man is responsible for his acts, it would be incompatible with the predestination of his acts. Similarly, if we declare that man is free in his acts, this would imply that God has neither power over nor the knowledge of what man is going to do in his worldly life. The two alternatives create an embarrassment. One would like to attribute to God not only justice, but also omnipotence and omniscience. The Prophet Muhammad ridicules this discussion, which will ever remain inconclusive: and he has formally ordered his adherents not to engage

in it, adding: "people before you have been led astray by this discussion." He recognizes for God, in all respect and reverence, the attribute of omnipotence-omniscience, and affirms also that man shall be held responsible for his acts. He does not want to tie up one of these things with the other. In a way, he relegates this discussion to the level of the futility of knowing whether the egg came first into existence or the hen?

157. Moreover good and evil are but relative terms. A tiger hunts a rabbit for food. What is good (sustenance) for one is evil (death) for the other. That is why the evil that seems to reach us is on account of our own nature, which merits or requires that "evil". That is also why it is for God to determine, for whom a given act is good and for whom evil. Furthermore it should be remembered that the conception of "responsibility" is a this-worldly thing, whereas the "Divine reward and punishment" belong to the other-worldly matters. We are shocked only when we relegate them both to the same level. To do so would be a fallacy.

158. Let us remember that it is this double belief in the omnipotence of God and the absolute individual responsibility of man, which rouses a Muslim to action, even as it enables him to support easily an unavoidable misfortune. Far from creating in him an immobility, it gives him a dynamism. We have to refer to the exploits of the early Muslims, who were the best practitioners of the teaching of the Prophet, in order to convince ourselves of the truth of this statement.

CONCLUSION

159. This is a resume practically of all that a Muslim has to believe. The whole formula of the creed is succinctly summed up in the two expressions: "There is no God if not God Himself, and Muhammad is the messenger and slave-servant of God." This would serve to remind us that Islam is not only a belief, but also a practice, spiritual as well as temporal. It is in fact a complete code of human life.

CHAPTER V

DEVOTIONAL LIFE AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF ISLAM

IT is the aim of Islam, to offer a complete code of life, without neglecting any one or the various domains of human activity. Its objective is a co-ordination of all these aspects. The concern for "centralization" is displayed in the fact that all Islamic practices touch simultaneously the body and soul. Not only do temporal practices acquire sacred moral character, when they conform to Divine prescriptions, but the spiritual practices also possess a material utility. The rules of conduct, whether spiritual or temporal, emanate from the one and the same source, the Quran, which is the Word of God. The ineluctable result is that according to the Islamic terminology the *imam* (supreme director or leader of the Muslim world) signifies not only the leader of the service of prayer in the mosque, but also the head of the Muslim State.

161. In a well-known saying, the Prophet Muhammad has defined the faith (*Iman*), the submission (*Islam*) and the best method (*Ihsan*), leading thereto. In the preceding chapter the Beliefs have been explained. For elucidating the subject under discussion, it would admirably suit our purpose to quote and comment on what he has said on the second point. He declared: Submission to God (*Islam*) is, that one should celebrate the services of worship, observe annual fasting, perform the *Hajj* (pilgrimage) and pay the zakat-taxes.

SERVICE OF WORSHIP

162. "Worship is the pillar of religion" is a saying of the Prophet Muhammad. The Quran speaks of it more than a hundred times, and calls it variously *salat* (inclination), *du'a* (prayer, appeal), *dhikr* (remembering), *tasbih* (glorification), *inabah* (returning, attachment), etc.

163. In its concern for creating an atmosphere of the sovereignty of God on earth, Islam has prescribed five services of worship daily:

one should pray when one rises—and one should rise early—again early in the afternoon, late in the afternoon, at sunset, and at night before one goes to bed. This requires abandoning, during the few minutes spent in each service of worship, all material interests, in order to provide proof of one's submission and gratitude to God our Creator. That applies to every adult, man or woman.

164. The service of early afternoon is transformed every Friday into a weekly congregational service, with greater solemnity, in which the *imam* of the locality delivers also a sermon before prayer. Islam has instituted two annual feasts: one at the end of the fasting month, and the other on the occasion of the pilgrimage to Mecca. These two feasts are celebrated by two special services of worship, in addition to the daily five. Thus, early in the morning people assemble for a collective service of prayer, after which the *imam* delivers a sermon. Another service of prayer, of restricted obligation, is held for the deceased before burial.

165. Speaking of the hidden meaning and mysterious effects of the service of worship, the great mystic Waliullah ad-Dihlawi says:

"Know that one is sometimes transported, quick as lightning, to the Holy Precincts (of the Divine Presence), and finds one's self attached, with the greatest possible adherence, to the threshold of God. There descend on this person the Divine transfigurations (*tajalli*) which dominate his soul. He sees and feels things which human tongue is incapable of describing. Once this state of light passes away, he returns to his previous condition, and finds himself tormented by the loss of such an ecstasy. Thereupon he tries to rejoin that which has escaped him, and adopts the condition of this lowly world which would be nearest to a state of absorption in the knowledge of the Creator. This is a posture of respect, of devotion, and of an almost direct conversation with God, which posture is accompanied by appropriate acts and words . . . Worship consists essentially of three elements: (1) humility of heart (spirit) consequent on a feeling of the presence of the majesty and grandeur of God, (2) recognition of this superiority (God) and humbleness (of man) by means of appropriate words, and (3) adoption by the organs of the body, of postures of necessary reverence. . . . To show our honour to somebody we stand up,

with a fulsome concentration of attention, turning our faces towards him. Even more respectful is the state when we bend and bow our heads in reverence . . . Still greater respect is displayed by laying down the face — which reflects in the highest degree, one's ego and self-consciousness — so low that it touches the ground in front of the object of reverence . . . As a man can reach the top of his spiritual evolution only gradually, it is evident that such an ascension must pass through all the three stages; and a perfect service of worship would have three postures, Standing up, Bowing down, and Prostrating by laying the head on the ground in the presence of the Almighty; and all this is performed for the necessary evolution of the spirit so that one might feel truly the sublimity of God and the humbleness of man." *Hujjatullah al-Balighah*, vol. I, Secrets of Worship).

166. In a passage (22 : 18), the Quran says: "Hast thou not seen that before God are prostrate whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is on the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the hills, and the trees, and the beasts, and many of mankind . . . ?" Again (17 : 44): "The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein praise Him, and there is not a thing but hymneth His praise; but ye understand not their praise." The Islamic service of worship combines in fact the forms of worship of all creatures. The heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars) repeat their act of rising and setting (like *rak'at* after *rak'at* of the service); the mountains remain standing (like the first act in the service); the beast remain bowed and bent (like the *ruk'u'* in the service); as for trees, we see that they get their food through their roots, which are their mouths and this in their words signifies that the trees are perpetually prostrate (like the *sajdah* or prostration in the Islamic service of worship). Further, according to the Quran (8 : 11) one of the principle functions of the water is to purify (and compare the need of ablutions for the service). Another passage (13:13) says: "The thunder hymneth His praise," and this makes us think of the loud pronounciation of *Allaahu akbar*, so often repeated during the service, even if we disregard the loud recitation of the Quran during the service which is done during certain services and not in others. The birds flying in flocks worship God (Quran 24 : 41), as also Muslims do when celebrating their congregational service. Just as the shadow stretches and shortens in the course of its daily life, (which is its particular way of submission to and worship of God, cf.

Quran 13:15, 16:48), so too the human worshipper stretches or shortens himself while standing, bowing, prostrating or sitting in the course of the service. (See pictures of the different postures of Muslim worship in the last chapter. The above-mentioned acts of different creatures have been adapted and assimilated therein, adding thereto what is particular to man and not found in other creatures). (cf. § 167, *infra*.)

166/a. It may be recalled that the Islamic word for the service of worship is *'ibādah*, which is from the same root as *'abd*, i.e., slave. In other words, worship is what the slave does, the service the master desires of him. God demands of the mountains to remain standing, of beasts and birds to remain bent, and of plants to remain prostrate before Him, that is their service, their worship. To everyone what suits him and what his Lord desires of him. Of course to man also what becomes of him as a rational being, as the foremost of the creatures, as the vicegerent of God.

166/b. Ablution or ritual washing and physically being clean is a pre-requisite of the validity of a Service of Worship, as will be detailed later (§ 549 ff.). A Muslim philosopher has nicely brought into relief its significance. For this ritual purification one has to wash the hands, the mouth, the nose, the face, the arms, the head, the ears and the feet. Washing them is not merely the outward cleanliness; it is a repentance for the past and a resolution for the future. Repentance washes away the past sins, and resolution through invoking the help of God concerns what is yet to come in life; and this relates to our principal organs of mischief. The hand attacks, the mouth talks, the nose smells, the face or presence abuses the prestige and exerts influence and pressure, the arms hold, the head thinks and plots, the ears hear, the feet march in the way of evil, forbidden by God. Not to speak of the sexual sin, from which one gets rid even before beginning the ablutions, and one has to get clean in W.C. This symbolical and mystical aspect of purification is evident in the formulas of invocations which accompany washing each organ. In the W.C. we say: "O God, purify my heart from hypocrisy, and my sex from shameful acts and fornication." One begins the formulation of the intention of the ablutions by saying: "Praise be to God Who has made water pure and purifying." When washing the face, one prays to God: "Brighten my face on the Dooms Day, and do not darken it," for washing the arms: "Employ me in good deeds and not in evil one, give me my

Rolls on Dooms Day in my right hand and not in left, and facilitate me my reckoning and do not make it difficult;" for head: "Teach me useful knowledge;" for ears: "Let me listen to Thy word and the word of Thy messenger;" and for feet: "Make my feet firm on the path when crossing over the Hell, and do not let them stumble on the day when the feet of Thy friends will remain firm and the feet of Thy enemies will stumble."

167. The five daily services were made obligatory for Muslims on the occasion of the ascension of the Prophet (*mi'rāj*). The Prophet Muhammad has moreover declared that the service of worship of a believer is his own ascension, in which he is raised into the presence of God. These are no empty words; let us look at what a Muslim does in his worship. First of all, he stands up, holds up his hands, and proclaims: "God alone is great"; thus he renounces all except God, and submits himself to the will of his Lord alone. After having hymned and recalled the merits of God, he feels so humble before the Divine majesty, that he bows low and puts down his head as a sign of reverence, proclaiming "Glory to my Lord Who alone is Majestic." Then he stands erect to thank God for having guided him, and in his mind of minds he is struck so much by the greatness of God that he feels impressed to prostrate himself and to place his forehead on the ground in all humility, and declare "Glory to my Lord Who alone is High." He repeats these acts so that the body gets accustomed to the spiritual exercise and gradually becomes worthier and worthier so as to be lifted from the world of matter and pass through the heavenly atmosphere, and enter the presence of God. There he salutes God, and receives the answer to his greetings. In fact, he employs for the purpose the very formulae that were used during the Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad, when he exchanged greetings with God: "The blessed and purest of greetings to God—Peace with thee, O Prophet, and the mercy and blessings of God—Peace with us and with all the pious servants of God." Without material, idol-like symbols, the believer travels, so to say, towards the transcendent God, on a spiritual journey, which, in certain communities, is termed "communion."

168 Such is the spiritual significance of the service of worship. As for its material utilities, these again are numerous. It assembles five times daily the inhabitants of a locality, provides the opportunity of relaxation for some minutes in the course of the monotonous duties

of individual avocations, and gathers the highest as well as the lowest personalities of the place in perfect equality (for it is the chief of the locality, who is to conduct the prayer; and in the metropolis, at the central mosque, it is the head of the State himself who performs this duty). Thus one meets not only other members of the community, but also the responsible functionaries of the place and approaches them directly without formality or hindrance. The social aspect of the service of prayer is that the believer feels around him the sovereignty of God, and lives in a state of military discipline. At the call of the *muezzin*, all rush to the place of assembly, stand in serried ranks behind the leader, doing acts and carrying on movements in common with others, in perfect uniformity and co-ordination. Further, the faithful, in all parts of the globe, turn their faces, during the service of worship, towards the same focal point, the Ka'bah or the House of God in Mecca. This reminds them of the unity of the world community of Muslims, without distinction of class, race, or region.

169. The preferable and more formal way of worship is the congregational service. In the absence of such a possibility, or lacking adequate facility, one prays alone and individually, man or woman. The five prayers of the day mean rather a minimum duty of passing about 24 minutes, during 24 hours, in the presence and remembrance of God; but the believer must actually remember God, every instant, in weal and in woe, at work or in bed or while engaged in any occupation. The Quran (3:190-91) says: "... men of understanding, who remember God standing, sitting, and reclining, and consider the creation of the heavens and the earth, (and say) Our Lord! Thou didst not create this in vain..." God has made the universe subservient to the use and benefit of man; but the enjoyment must be accompanied by recognition (gratitude) and obedience, and not by rebellion against God and injustice against other fellow-beings.

170. It may here be mentioned, that at the very moment when the service of prayer was instituted, the Quranic verse (2:286) was revealed: "God tasketh not a soul beyond its scope." It is the intention and will that counts in the eyes of God, and not the quantity or the exterior method of accomplishing a thing. If a devout man honestly believes that he is unable to perform five times daily the service of prayer, let him observe it four times, thrice, twice or even a single time

every day, according to his opportunities and circumstances, and the duration of the hindrance. The essential point is that one should not forget one's spiritual duty in the midst of material and mundane preoccupations. Such a reduction is permitted in abnormal conditions, such as when one is ill and has fits of unconsciousness, or unavoidable duties in the service of God as we infer from the practice of the Prophet himself. In fact it is reported that in the course of the battle of Khandaq, it happened that the Prophet himself performed the *zuhr*, '*aṣr*, *maghrib* and '*ishā* services, all these four late in the night, for the enemy had not allowed a single moment's respite during the day to attend to prayer. (Maqrīzī, *Imtā'*, I, 233). This means twice the prayer during the day. Again on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, it is reported (see Bukhārī, Muslim Tirmidhī, Ibn Ḥanbal, Mālik, and particularly *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, kitāb as-ṣalāt, bāb al-jam' bain as-ṣalātain fi'l-hadr, No. 49, 50, 54) that "sometimes the Prophet combined *zuhr*-'*aṣr* and *maghrib*-'*ishā* having neither fear (of enemy) nor (inconvenience of) travel; adding: and the Prophet wanted thereby that there should be no inconvenience for his community." This narration implies thrice the prayer during the day. Evidently all depends on the conscience of the individual faithful who is personally responsible to God Whom one cannot dupe and from Whom one can conceal nothing. There is again the question of the timings. We know that there is a great difference in the risings and settings of the sun between normal (equatorial-tropical) countries and the regions situated beyond and extending to the two poles. Al-Bīrunī (cf. *al-Jamahir*) has observed that at the poles the sun remains set for six months continually, and then rises to shine continuously for six months (excepting the two days of the equinox). The jurist-theologians of Islam affirm in general that the hours at 45° parallel remain valid upto 90° parallel, i.e., upto the poles; and in the regions, comprised between 45° and 90°, one is to follow the movement of the clock and not that of the sun. This applies to worship as well as fasts and other like duties.

171. Women are exempted from prayer-services during their monthly indisposition and accouchement.

THE FAST

172. The second religious duty of a believer is the fasting for one month every year. One must abstain during every day of the month of Ramaḍān from eating, drinking and smoking (including in-

oculations and injections) from dawn to sunset in the equatorial and tropical countries (and for an equivalent period in regions situated far away from the centre of the globe, calculated on the basis of the hours at 45° parallel, as we have just mentioned). Of the sick we shall speak later on, § 174. It goes without saying that one must likewise abstain from thinking of carnal and other pleasures, incompatible with the spiritual regimen. It is quite a rigorous discipline, which may appear very difficult to the adherents of other religions; yet even the new converts get accustomed to it very soon if they show good will, and inclination as is evidenced by the experience of centuries.

173. The fast extends over a whole month; and as is well known it is the purely lunar month which counts in Islam. The result is that the month of fasting, *Ramādān*, rotates turn by turn through all the seasons of the year, autumn, winter, spring and summer; and one gets accustomed to these privations in the burning heat of summer as well as the chilling cold of winter, and one undergoes all this as a spiritual discipline, in obedience to God. At the same time one derives from fasting temporal advantages connected with hygienic, military training, development of will power, among others, even as those resulting from the services of worship. More than anybody else, it is the soldiers who have, during sieges and other occasions of a war to support the privations of food and drink and still continue their duty to defence. So the most stupid ruler or commander-in-chief would be the one who hinders his militia from fasting in the month of *Ramādān*. But it must be repeated that the aim is, essentially and chiefly a religious practice and a spiritual exercise enabling proximity to God. If one fasts for temporal motives only—under the prescription of a doctor for instance—he will be far from accomplishing his religious duty, and will not benefit spiritually at all.

174. As in the case of prayer, women do not require to fast during their feminine indispositions, yet with this difference that the defaulting days are to be made up later by an equal number of days of fasting. The same applies to the sick. As to the very old, he need not fast, yet if he has means he must feed a poor for each day of the fasts of *Ramādān*.

175. It may be recalled that the Prophet forbade fasts extending over several days continuously (for 48 hours or 72 hours for instance),

over the whole year, or during the whole life, even to those who longed to do so in their zeal for spiritual practices to obtain increased benefit. He remarked: "Thou hast obligations even with regard to thine own self." In addition to the obligatory fast of Ramaḍān, one may fast, as a work of supererogation, if one likes, from time to time; and for this voluntary fast, the Prophet has recommended fasting for two days at a time. From the medical point of view, one notes that fasting eternally becomes a habitude, which does not produce the same effect as fasting at intervals. To fast for less than a month does not produce great effect, and a fast for more than 40 days becomes a habitude.

175/a. It is a myth to say that fasting, in the sense of the privation of food and drink, in cold climate is contrary to the requirements of human health. Biological observations show that wild beasts get practically nothing to eat especially when it snows. They sleep or otherwise pass their time "fasting", and get rejuvenated on the approach of spring. The same is true of trees also, in winter they lose completely their leaves, and sleep, and are not even irrigated; and after a few months of "fasting", they are rejuvenated in spring and get more vigorous than ever, as everybody can see in their luxuriant new foliage and blossoming. In fact like all animal organs, the digestive apparatus also require rest. Fast is the only conceivable method for it. Now-a-days a new school of medicine has come into existence in all the western countries, which treats, particularly chronic diseases, by short or long periods of fasting.

175/b. It is an antique notion in human society to offer the tithe of one's gains to God; the tithe of the harvest is an example. Fasting is offering the tithe of our meals to God. A parallel notion (endorsed by the Quran 6:160: "Whoso bringeth a good deed will receive tenfold the like thereof") is that a good deed is rewarded ten times as much by God. That explains the saying of the Prophet: "Whoever fasts the month of Ramaḍān and six more days in the following month, *Shauwāl* is as if he has fasted the whole year." In fact the lunar year employed in Islam, has 355 days, and the lunar month sometimes 29 and sometimes 30 days. So a Muslim fasts every year for 35 or 36 days, which is worth tenfold, i.e., 350 or 360 days, the average being 355, which is the number of the days in the lunar year.

176. The mystics observe, that an ebullition of animal nature

hinders the perfection of the human spirit. In order to subjugate the body to the spirit, it is necessary to break the force of the body and increase that of the spirit. It has been found that nothing is as efficacious for this purpose as hunger, thirst, renunciation of carnal desires and the control of the tongue, the heart (mind) with its thought and other organs. One of the aspects of individual perfection is the subordination of animal nature to reason and the spirit. Nature sometimes rebels, and its behaviour at other times is one of submissiveness. One therefore needs the practice of hard exercises, such as fasting, in order to keep in check animality. If one commits sins, penitence and mortification through fasting may bring solace and purify the soul, even as they fortify the will so as not to indulge again in vices. It has also been remarked that neither eating nor drinking is a trait of the angels; and in imposing this regimen, man makes himself resemble more and more the angels; and since his actions are intended to conform to the behests of God, in the result, he approaches nearer to Him and obtains His pleasure; and that is the ultimate aim of man.

THE HAJJ

177. *Hajj* literally means a travel (i.e., towards God) as also an effort to dominate something (the self, in this connection). Conventionally this term is translated as pilgrimage, although it is far from giving the exact significance of the word *hajj*. This is the third of the religious duties of a Muslim. It is obligatory on every adult, man or woman, to go once in his or her life-time to Mecca in order to perform there the great *Effort* for annihilating the ego (*fanā'*), i.e., assimilating one's self with the will of God. Those who do not possess the material means of travel, are exempted from it. But which Muslim would not collect, little by little, the necessary amount for being one day able to visit the centre of his religion, the Ka'bah or the House of God? The Quran (3 : 96) does not exaggerate when it says that this is the oldest House in the world dedicated by mankind to God and to the cult of monotheism. If one were to think only of Abraham—who according to the Islamic tradition, was but the restorer of the edifice erected originally by Adam—it would still be older than the temple of Jerusalem, constructed by Solomon. No other place of worship older than the Ka'bah of Mecca, is known to be still functioning.

178. The rites of the *Hajj* may briefly be noted: At the borders

of the sacred territory, around Mecca, one puts off the ordinary dress, and puts on by way of a religious uniform two sheets of cloth—a loin cloth and a shoulder cover, a dress required only of men, not of women. He is bare-headed, and one tries to forget one's self during the several days of the *Hajj*. He goes to 'Arafāt, in the suburbs of Mecca, to pass there the day in meditation. Towards evening, he returns, passes the night at Muzdalifah, and early next morning arrives at Mina which is on the outskirts of Mecca. There he passes three days, during which he lapidates Satan every morning, sacrifices a goat, pays a short visit to Ka'bah for performing the ritual sevenfold circumambulation and running through the hills of Šafa and Marwah in front of the Ka'bah. The symbolic background may also be described here:

179. After their fall from Paradise, Adam and Eve were separated and lost. They searched for each other, and by the grace of God met together at 'Arafāt. In gratitude to God, the descendants of Adam and Eve turn to Him, make an effort to forget themselves and be assimilated with the Divine Presence, with a view to entreat His pardon for their shortcomings in the past and His help for the future.

180. As to the lapidation of Satan, it may be recalled that when Abraham claimed to love God above everything else, God demanded of him as a proof the immolation of his beloved son. To add to this trial, Satan went first to Abraham to dissuade him from his resolution—and they say that this happened at Mina—but Abraham chased Satan away every time by pelting stones at him. Then he went to Hagar, and lastly to Ishmael himself; each one of them did the same. So one repeats the acts symbolically, and resolves to fight diabolic temptations.

181. The visit to the "House of God" is self-explanatory. To give evidence of obedience, one goes there with respect and in humility. It is a very old custom to circumambulate a thing for showing one's readiness to sacrifice one's self for the object of devotion and care and love.

181/a. The Black Stone requires a particular mention on account of the many misunderstandings on its score. It is not a meteorite, but a black stone. Its practical importance is to show the starting point of the circumambulation, and by its colour it is conspicuous in the

building. Secondly, this stone is not worshipped, nor even Muslims prostrate in the direction of this stone, prostration being done towards any and every part of the building of the Ka'bah, and more often than not one turns to directions other than the Black Stone (al-Hajar al-Aswad). It may be recalled that when the Qaramitah ravaged Mecca in 318 H./930, they carried the Black Stone to their country as booty and it remained there for 21 long years. In the course of this absence of the Black Stone, no Muslim turned to the place where it was kept (in 'Umān), but continued to turn towards the Ka'bah in Mecca. Even the building of the Ka'bah is not essential; if it is demolished, for instance for repairs and new construction, Muslims turn to the same spot, whether the Ka'bah with its Black Stone is there or not. As said, the practical importance of the Black Stone is that it indicates the point from which the circumambulation begins and at which it ends; but it has a symbolical significance too. In the Ḥadīth, the Prophet has named it the "right hand of God" (yamin-Allāh), and for purpose. In fact one poses there one's hand to conclude the pact, and God obtains there our pact of allegiance and submission. In the Quranic terminology, God is the king, and He has not only His treasures and His armies, but also His realm; in the realm there is a metropolis (*Umm al qurra*) and in the metropolis naturally a palace (Bait-Allāh, home of God). If a subject wants to testify to his loyalty, he has to go to the royal palace and conclude personally the pact of allegiance. The right hand of the invisible God must be visible symbolically. And that is the al-Hajar al-Aswad, the Black Stone in the Ka'bah.

182. As to the act of covering seven times the ground between Ṣafa and Marwah, it is related that when Abraham left his wife Hagar and the suckling Ishmael in the desolate and un-inhabited site of Mecca, the provision of water was soon exhausted. So Hagar ran hither and thither, driven by maternal affection, to search for some water for the thirst-stricken baby; and then the spring Zamzam gushed forth. So one repeats this act in the same place where Hagar did it, to pay homage to maternal love and in thanksgiving for the mercy of God.

183. The social aspect is not less striking. The world brotherhood of Muslims manifests itself there in the most vivid manner. The believers, without distinction of race, language, birthplace or even class feel the obligation to go there, and to mix with one another in a spirit

of fraternal equality. They camp together in the desert, and perform their religious duties in common. For several days, at fixed hours, they march, make a halt, pass the night under tents or in bivouac,—all this, to an extent greater even than the five daily prayer-services, trains the soldier of God for a life of discipline.

183/a. When the Prophet Muhammad performed his own hajj, a few months before his demise, he uttered then from above the *Hill of Mercy* (Jabal ar-Rahmān) a sermon which constitutes the charter of Humanity in Islam. Some 1,40,000 Muslims had come that year from all parts of Arabia, to listen to this testament of their Prophet, which may be analysed as follows: He reminded the basic elements of Islam, viz., belief in the One God with no icons or other material representation; Equality of all Muslims without discrimination on account of race or class, and there being no superiority to one over any other except by the individual excellence in the matter of piety and fear of God; Sacrosanct character of the three fundamental rights of each and every human being concerning his person, his property and his honour; Prohibition of transaction on interest, be the interest big or small; Prohibition of vendetta and private justice, obligation of treating well the womenfolk; Constant re-distribution and circulation of the private wealth to avoid its accumulation in the hands of a few (by means of the law of obligatory inheritance, restrictions on wills and prohibition of interest, etc.); and Emphatic restatement that the Divine Revelation alone should be the source of law for our conduct in all walks of life:—The pilgrims are made to hear this same sermon every year, recited from above the same sacred Hill of Mercy, at 'Arafāt.

184. There is a reason to believe that a pre-Islamic practice was continued, at least in the early generations of Muslims, during the Hajj festivities: Profiting by the occasion provided by such a vast assembly, an annual literary congress was organized, where poets "published" their new compositions, orators made harangues before the spell-stricken masses to demonstrate their talents, professional wrestlers fascinated the spectators, and traders brought merchandises of all sorts. Caliph 'Umar gave it a most salutary administrative character. For this was an occasion for him to hold the sessions of an appeal court against his governors and commanders as also of public consultation on important projects in view. Let us recall once again, that in Islam the sacred and the profane, the spiritual and the temporal live in co-existence and even in a harmonious collaboration.

THE ZAKAT-TAX

185. In modern times, the man in the street understands by *zakāt* certain percentage of his hoarded cash which is to be given to the poor every year. But in the Qur'ān, in the Ḥadīth and in the practice of the early centuries of Islam the *zakāt* (also called *ṣadaqāt* and *ḥaqq*)* meant all sorts of tax perceived by the Muslim State on its Muslim subjects: tax on agricultural product, on sub-soil exploitation, on commercial capital, on herds of domesticated animals living on public pastures, on hoarded cash, etc. In the beginning all these taxes were paid directly to the government, but later, during his caliphate, 'Uthmān decided that Muslims could spend directly the tax on the hoarded cash to its beneficiaries prescribed by the Qur'ān (9 : 60) without the intermediary of the government.

185/a. The Qur'ān (4 : 5) recognizes that wealth is the basis and the essential means of the subsistence of humanity. Therefore it should not be surprising that payment of tax to the government has been raised by the Prophet to the dignity of an article of faith and one of the four fundamental rites of religion, along with prayer, fasting and pilgrimage. In Islam one does not pay a "tribute" to the chief of the city for his personal luxury and vanity, but one pays his dues, as a right connected with the collectivity, and more particularly in favour of the needy; and this for the purpose of "growing" and "purifying" one's self, as is the etymological sense of the term *zakāt*. The Prophet Muḥammad said, "The chief of a people is in fact their servant." In order to demonstrate the truth of this saying, and the absolute disinterestedness with which he had assumed the direction of his people—both as a spiritual guide and the head of the State—the Prophet formally declared that the revenues of the Muslim State, coming from Muslim tax payers, were religiously forbidden to him and to all members of his tribe. If the head of the State does not abuse public confidence it follows that his subordinates cannot but be scrupulous in the performance of their duties.

*Chronologically speaking, the Qur'ān has used the terms *naṣīb* (6 : 136, 16 : 56) and *ḥaqq* (6 : 141, 70 : 24) in the Meccan surats, and *ṣakāt* (2 : 43 passim), *infāq* (2 : 267), *ṣadaqāt* (9 : 60) and *ṣadaqah* (9 : 103) in the Madinan period. Later the word *ṣakāt*, to the exclusion of all else became the technical term used by the jurists.

186. In the time of the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs, there was in the Muslim State no tax on Muslims other than the *zakāt*. Far from being an almsgiving, it constituted a State-tax, an obligatory contribution fixed in quantity and in epoch, levied by sanctions and coercion from the recalcitrants. In order better to inculcate the importance of these payments in the spirit of the faithful, the Prophet declared that the *zakāt* was a religious duty and a Divine prescription, on par with belief in One God, the service of prayer, the fasting and the *Hajj*. If belief is a spiritual duty, and prayer, fasting and *Hajj* are bodily duties, the payment of the *zakāt* is a fiscal duty. The jurists call it *'ibādat maliyah* (worship of God by means of property). This is another proof—if there is need of one—of the fact that Islam co-ordinates the entire human life into a single whole, for the purpose of creating a harmonious equilibrium between the body and soul, without either favouring or treating with disdain of these two elements of the human constitution.

187. The Qur'ān indifferently employs several terms to designate the tax: *zakāt*, used in numerous verses which means both growth and purification. It connotes that one must pay part of one's growing wealth in order to purify it; *ṣadaqāt* (Qur'ān 9 : 60) which signifies both truth in charity, implying that to be true to humanity, one must be charitable towards the less fortunate; and *ḥaqq* (cf. 6 : 141) or right. If it is the right of others, it also entails duty on the one who possesses,—rights and duties being correlative terms, and collaboration being the basis of all functioning of society.

188. There are taxes on savings, on harvests, on merchandises, on herds of beasts pasturing in public meadows, on mines, on maritime products, etc. The tariffs differ, yet all are called *zakāt ṣadaqāt* and other synonymous names indifferently.

189. The tariffs of the time of the Prophet seem not to have been considered rigid and incapable of modification. We have seen above (§ 88) that the Prophet himself exempted the inhabitants of Ṭā'if from the *zakāt*, (with some other examples for other regions also). The great caliph 'Umar reduced, as Abu 'Ubaid records, the duties on the importation of victuals in Madinah. In the life-time of the Prophet, there were occasions when he was obliged to appeal for extraordinary contributions, for instance, the defence of the country against foreign

menace. This has enabled the jurists to conclude that the government may impose new provisional taxes, called *nawā'ib* (cf. *Mabsūṭ* of Sarakhsi, x, 21) or augment the rates, for the duration of the crisis. The silence of the Qur'ān on the items and rates of taxation confirms the deduction of the jurists.

190. But the Qur'ān speaks in detail of the expenditure of the State, and the principal heads of the government budget:

“The *ṣadaqāt* (taxes levied on Muslims) are only for the needy and the poor, and those who work (for these State revenues), and those whose hearts are to be won, and for (freeing) the necks, and the heavily indebted, and in the path of God, and for the wayfarers;—a duty imposed by God, and God is the Knower, the Wise.” (Q. 9 : 60).

As stated above, *ṣadaqāt* and *zakāt* are synonymous, meaning: What is perceived on a Muslim subject. What is perceived on a non-Muslim, such as *kharāj*, *jizyah*, *ghanimah*, etc., it is not included in *zakāt*; the beneficiaries of the two also differ considerably.

191. While other legislators would rather prescribe rules for income, Qur'ān, on the contrary, formulates the principles of State expenditure only. In the eight categories of beneficiaries of *zakāt*, of whom the verse speaks, it will be noted that there is no mention of the Prophet. Some remarks may be useful for the better understanding of the range and extent of this verse, which speaks of certain exclusive recipients:

192. According to so great an authority as the Caliph 'Umar, (cf. Abu Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, ch. *Fi man tajib alaihi al-jizyah*), the needy (*fuqarā*) are those of the Muslim community, and the poor (*masākīn*)—almost an equivalent—are the poor among the non-Muslim inhabitants (the protected persons), (cf. § 353 *infra*). It is to be noted that the *ṣadaqāt* do not include the revenues coming from non-Muslims, yet Islam includes them among the beneficiaries of the taxes paid by the Muslims.

193. Those who work for the revenues are the collectors, accountants, those in charge of the expenditure, controllers and auditors, which list practically embrace the entire administration, both civil and

military, of the State, in view of the fact that the beneficiaries of these revenues include practically all departments of administration.

194. Those whose hearts are to be won are of many kinds. The great jurist, Abu Ya'la al-Farra' (*al-Ahkām as-Sultāniyah*, p. 116), points out: "As for those whose hearts are to be won, they are of four kinds: (1) those whose hearts are to be reconciled for coming to the aid of the Muslims; (2) those whose hearts are to be won in order that they might abstain from doing harm to Muslims; (3) those who are attracted towards Islam; and (4) those by whose means conversion to Islam becomes possible for the members of their tribes. It is lawful to benefit each and every one of these categories of 'those whose hearts are to be won,' be they Muslims or polytheists."

195. By the term "freeing the necks," one has always understood the emancipation of the slaves and the ransoming of the prisoners of war made by an enemy. A word about the slaves may not be out of place. No religion before Islam seems to have paid attention to the amelioration of the condition of the slaves. The Prophet of Islam forbade altogether the enslavement of the Arabs as Sarakhsi records; as to other peoples, the Qur'ān (24 : 33) orders that if a well-behaving slave is prepared to pay off his value to his master, this latter cannot refuse the offer; in fact, he will be constrained by the court to grant his slave opportunities to earn and save the necessary amount for obtaining manumission, (and be exempted from serving his master in the meanwhile). Further, as we have just seen, the Muslim government allots a sum in the annual budget for the aid of the slaves desiring emancipation. The object of permitting slavery in Islam is not the exploitation of an unfortunate fellow-being. Far from that, its aim is first to provide shelter to the prisoners of war who have lost everything, and for some reason or other are not repatriated; and secondly to educate them and give them the opportunity of acquiring culture in Islamic surroundings, under the government of God. Slaves are obtained only in legitimate war, waged by a government. Private razzias, kidnapping or even sale of infants by their parents have no legal sanction whatsoever.

196. Aid to those who are heavily indebted or have too great a charge may take different shapes. We see Caliph 'Umar organizing a service of interest-free loans also.

197. "In the path of God" includes every charitable cause; and the jurists have not hesitated to start with military equipment for the defence of Islam, since Islam struggles only and solely for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

198. As for the "wayfarers," one can help them not only by giving them hospitality, but also by ensuring them health and comfort, security of routes and adoption of measures for the well-being of such who have to pass through a place other than their own, whether they be natives or aliens, Muslims or non-Muslims.

CONCLUSION

198/a. After having detailed the facts concerning the religious practices, it may not be out of place to repeat, that the development of the whole and the co-ordination of all parts—is the basic principle governing the Islamic way of life. The Qur'ān has repeated scores of times: "establish worship and pay zakāt-tax." What can be a better manifestation of this unity of the body and soul than the fact that the worship of the One God and payment of the duty towards society are commanded in one and the same breath! The spiritual duties are not devoid of material advantages, and temporal duties have also their spiritual values; all are dependent again on the intentions and motives that govern one's performance of those duties.

CHAPTER VI

THE CULTIVATION OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

ISLAM envisages for man a discipline for his life as a whole, material as well as spiritual. But there is no denying the fact that, owing to differences of individual temperaments, certain people would specialize in certain domains and not in others. Even if one were to concentrate on the spiritual side of one's existence, he still remains more or less attached to the other occupations of life, for his nourishment, for the sake of the society of which he is a member, and so on.

200. In his celebrated expose of his teaching on faith, submission and the best method of this submission, the Prophet Muḥammad defined this last point in the following terms: "As to the embellishment (*iḥsān*) of conduct, so render thy service unto God as if thou seest Him: even though thou dost not see Him, yet He seeth thee." This beatification, this best and most beautiful method of devotion or service unto God, is the spiritual culture of Islam. "Service unto God" is a most comprehensive term, and includes not merely the cult, but also relates to human conduct throughout life. The most cultured from the spiritual point of view, are those who abide most closely by the will of God, in all their acts.

201. Questions concerning this discipline from the subject matter of mysticism. The term mysticism has in Islam several synonyms: *Iḥsān* (which we find also used in the above-mentioned expose of the Prophet), *Qurb* (or approaching God), *Ṭarīqat* (road, i.e., of the journey unto God), *Sulak* (journey, i.e., unto God), *Taṣawwuf* (which etymologically means: to put on a woollen cloth). This last term is, curiously enough, the most currently used.

202. It is true that Muslim mystics—even as their counterparts in other civilizations—are not very eager to divulge their practices and their peculiarities to those outside the restricted circle of their disciples or conferrers. This is not because there are scandalous secrets, but probably because of the fear that the men in the street may not

understand why they undergo so much "useless" pain by renouncing the amenities of life; and also because the commoners do not believe in the personal experiences of the mystics. So the mystics think, it is better to conceal them from those who are unable to appreciate them. Incidentally it also happens that if a thing is enshrouded in secrecy, it becomes so much the more cherished by those who ignore it, yet are in search of it.

203. Differences of individual temperaments have existed in the human race at all times. It goes to the credit of Islam, that it has discovered certain things which it could impose on each and everybody, irrespective of temperament, a minimum necessary to be shared and practised in common; and this minimum necessity touches not only the spiritual but simultaneously also the material needs. In order to understand it well, it may be noted that all are agreed that the best Muslims were the immediate disciples of the Prophet, namely his companions. A study of their lives shows that from the very outset they were possessed of a variety of temperaments. There was Khālid, a warrior, an intrepid soldier, on whom the Prophet was pleased, in admiration, to confer the title of "the Sword of God"; there were 'Uthmān and Ibn 'Awf, who were rich merchants, and the Prophet had announced the good tidings that they belonged to the people of the Paradise; there was also Abu Dharr, who detested all property, and preferred an ascetic life of mortification. We may recall the Bedouin nomad, who had visited the Prophet one day, in order to learn what were the minimum duties to merit Paradise. The Prophet had replied: Faith in the One God, prayers five times a day, fast during the whole month of Ramaḍān, and the pilgrimage and payment of zakāt-tax if one had means thereto. The Bedouin embraced Islam, and burst forth: By God! I shall do nothing more and nothing less. When he departed, the Prophet remarked: Whoever wishes to see a man of Paradise, let him look at him! (cf. Bukhārī and Muslim). Be it the warrior Khālid, or the wealthy 'Uthmān, they never neglected the essential duties of Islam and its spirituality; similarly Abu Dharr, Salmān, Abu'd-Dardā' and others who liked asceticism, did not obtain permission from the Prophet to lead, for instance, lives of recluses, to fast perpetually, to get castrated in horror of carnal pleasures, etc. On the contrary, the Prophet enjoined on them to marry, and added: "Thou hast obligations even with regard to thy own body." (cf. Ibn Hanbal). According to Islam, one does not belong to one's self, but to God; and it is not per-

mitted to misuse the trust which God has reposed in us in the shape of our persons.

THE SUFFAH

204. In the grand mosque of Madinah, there was in the time of the Prophet a special portion, called *Suffah* somewhat away from the prayer hall. This was a centre of training and education, functioning under the personal supervision of the Prophet himself. A considerable number of Muslims occupied it. They devoted part of their time, during the day, to learn the Islamic way of life, not only in matters of man's relations with God, but also with other members of society. They also worked to earn their bare necessities of life, so that they might not become parasites and a burden on others. During the night, they passed their time, like the best mystics, in the observance of supererogatory (*naḥal*) prayers and in meditation on God. Call this institute a convent (a *Tekkeh*, a *Khānqāh*) or by any other name, there is no doubt that the inmates of the *Suffah* were more attached to spiritual practices than to material avocations. Perhaps one will not be able to know the details of the practices which the Prophet had enjoined on these early Muslim mystics, which practices must have varied according to the temperament and capacities of each individual. Yet the object being determined, there was enough liberty to select lawful means leading thereto. It may be recalled, by the way, that the Prophet once said: "Wisdom is the lost-property of the believer; wherever he should find it, he should recover it" (cf. Tirmidhi, Ibn Majab).

THE ESSENCE OF MYSTICISM

205. Through mysticism, Islam envisages a rectitude of beliefs, embellishment or beatification of the acts of devotion, taking the life of the Prophet as a model to be followed in all activities of life, the amelioration of personal conduct, and the accomplishment of duties imposed by Islam.

206. It has nothing to do with the power to know in, visible things, with performing miracles, or imposing one's will on others by mysterious psychic means; not even with asceticism, mortification, seclusion, meditation and the consequent sensations (which may sometimes be means, yet not ends); or even with certain beliefs regarding the person of God (pantheism, etc); much less with

what the charlatans assert, that a mystic is above the Islamic law and the necessary minimum duties imposed by it.

207. For want of a better term, one might use the word "mysticism" which in Islam means the method of the best individual behaviour, i.e., the means by which one acquires control over one's own self, the sincerity, the realization of the constant presence of God in all one's acts and thoughts, seeking to love God more and more.

208. In the Islamic teachings, there are certain "external" duties, such as prayer-service, fast, charity, abstaining from evil and wickedness, etc. There are also "internal" duties, such as faith, gratitude to God, sincerity and freedom from egoism. Mysticism is a training for this latter aspect of life. However, even the external duties are motivated for purifying the spirit, which is the only means of eternal salvation. In general, the mystic develops by his spiritual practices certain of his faculties and talents, which appear to the commoners as miraculous; but the mystic does not seek them; he even despises them. To know invisible things, even if that becomes possible for certain persons by certain practices, is not desirable for the mystic; for these constitute the secrets of God and their premature divulcation is harmful to man in the long run. That is why the mystic does not utilize such powers even if he comes to acquire them; his aim remains always the purification of the spirit, in order to become more agreeable to the Lord. The perfect man is he who beautifies not only his outer but also his inner self, or — as mystics say — his body and his heart. For the external aspect, there is the *Fiqh* or body of Muslim law which consists of rules for the entire outer life, such as cult, contractual relations, penalties, etc. It is however the internal aspect which is the true subject matter of mysticism. The acts of prayer-service belong to the domain of the *Fiqh*, but sincerity and devotion are inner things, and belong to mysticism. Let us recall in this connection two verses of the Quran: "Successful indeed are the believers who are devout in their prayer-service" (23 : 1-2), and "Lo, the hypocrites . . . when they stand up to worship they perform it languidly and in ostentation so as to be observed by men" (4 : 142). The good and bad services of worship, indicated therein, give us a clue to the understanding of what Islam requires of its adherents in all activities of life.

208/a. Islamic tradition reserves to the caliph or the head of the

Muslim State not only politics (including administration of justice), but also cult, i.e., the outward practice of the religion, such as service of worship, fasting, pilgrimage. All this falls under the purview of the *Fiqh* (Muslim law) developed by the different schools (see *Infra* § 563/a). In this realm, monopoly of power has been jealously imposed, although this concerns rather the less important part of our life. Sectarian differences exist among Muslims, since the death of the Prophet, as to who had the right to succeed to the Prophet in the exercise of the power regarding politics and cult. Let us leave the decision to God on Dooms Day, and let us occupy with our future and the defence against the enemies of God. As to the inner life, which alone determines the salvation in the everlasting Hereafter, in this sphere there are no jealousies: several persons could and did succeed the Prophet simultaneously. If the Naqshbandiyah Order of mystics seeks its authority from the Prophet through Abu Bakr, the Qadiyah and Suhrawardiyah orders for instance, do the same through 'Ali, and all this among the Sunnis to whom Abu Bakr alone was the immediate successor of the Prophet in the political field. This spiritual Realm, which unites Sunnis and Shi'as, is no vapid abstraction: it has its own full-fledged administrative organisation. The existence of *abdāl* and *autād* or spiritual governors and administrators is known on the authority of the Prophet himself, as we read by as early an author as Ibn Sa'd. A monograph of Suyuti has collected all the traditions of the Prophet on the subject of *quṭb*, *abdāl* and *autād*. One need not enter into details here.

PLEASURE OF GOD

209. The common folk desire that God should love them, in a sort of one way traffic, without their loving Him: that He should give them well-being without their obeying Him. The Qur'ān (2: 165) teaches: "... those who believe are stauncher in their love for God. Again, it indicates the traits of the best men and says (5: 54): "... a people whom He loveth and who love Him."

210. Obtaining Divine pleasure is not analogous to the enjoyment of material comforts, which God may give a man in order to test his gratefulness. Sometimes a man remains deprived of these comforts so that his endurance and constancy may be tested. In both cases man must show his devotion and attachment to God. This necessi-

tates, on the one hand, abnegation of the ego by getting absorbed in the will of God, and on the other, a constant feeling of the effective presence of God.

211. The philosophic conception of pantheism emanates from the necessity of "self-abnegation in God." For a mystic, the mere affirmation of this belief has no value; he aspires to assimilate it and feel it as a reality. Thus it is that the learned distinctions between pantheism in the sense of the unity of existence, and that of the unity of vision, or any other, are for a true mystic mere logomachy, which makes the eager traveller lose his track, and retards his arrival at his destination.

212. It may be recalled here that the Islamic notion of pantheism does not lead to the reunification of man with God. However close a man may approach God, there is still a distinction, a separation, and a distance between the Creator and the created. One abnegates one's ego, but not one's person. The higher the level we attain, the more does God speak with our tongue, act with our hand, and desire with our heart* (cf. Bukhārī). There is an ascension and a journey of man towards God, but there is never a confusion of the two. Thus it is that a Muslim does not use the term "communion", which may imply a union and a confusion. The Muslims designate the spiritual journey by the term *mi'rāj*, which means a ladder, an ascension, which varies according to individuals and their capacities. The highest imaginable level a human being can attain is the one that has been reached by the holy Prophet Muḥammad; and this experience of his is also called *mi'rāj*. So, in a state of consciousness and wakefulness, the Prophet had the vision (*ru'ya*) of being transported to heaven and graced with the honour of the Divine Presence. Even there, in this state beyond time and space, the Quran (53 : 9) indicates formally that the distance between God and the Prophet, "was of two bows' length or even nearer," and this graphic description lays emphasis simultaneously on the closeness of proximity as well as the distinction between the two. The Prophet himself employed the term *mi'rāj* in connection with the common faithful, when he indicated that "The service of worship is the *mi'rāj* of the believer." Evidently to each according to his capacity and his merit.

*Literally : "I become his ear with which he hears, his eye with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, his feet with which he walks."

213. The spiritual journey has a whole series of stages, and it is only gradually that one traverses them. In the life of the Prophet Muhammad, we see that he began with retreats in the cave of Hirā': then came the Meccan period, in which there was in store for him suffering and self-abnegation for the sake of the Divine cause. It is only after the Hijrah that he permits himself,—under Divine instructions always—to oppose injustice with force. It is quite possible that someone, who pretends to be a derwish, should only be so in appearance, being in reality a wolf disguised, as a sheep, similarly it is quite possible that a king, with all the powers and treasures accumulated in his hands, should still be in practice a saint, who does not at all profit by these things, but makes a great self-sacrifice, in the course of accomplishing his duties, by renouncing his personal comforts.

214. To break the ego, the first requirement is a feeling of humility, which should be developed. Pride is considered as the greatest sin against God. In the words of al-Ghazali, ostentation is the worship of self, therefore really a kind of polytheism.

215. Temperaments differ, that is why the roads also are various. One insists on the need of a guide and master. One who has studied medicine privately, without passing through a period of apprenticeship or even attending the courses of study with proficient doctors, is not allowed to practise medicine. The cases are rare where one sees all one's defects; rarer still are instances of people who correct themselves immediately. A master is necessary in the first instance to indicate to us our defects and also the way in which these are to be removed. There is a constant development and a perpetual evolution in the individual, and the master spares us many an unnecessary effort. If one were not to profit by the experience of the past, and if each newborn were to recommence all of the task and to fall back on his own individual self, there would be no growth of culture and civilization which may be defined as the accumulated knowledge and practice of generations of our ancestors. The pupil has a regard for the judgement and counsel of his master, which he never has for his comrades and equals. After theoretical studies, one passes through a probationary period, for learning their practical application. This is as true of the material sciences as of the spiritual ones. There are many things which one can never learn by mere reading or listening; their practical application under the supervision of an experienced master is always useful, if not indispensable. Further, mere knowledge does not suffice

it should be assimilated and become a second nature.

216. Mystics recommend four practices : eat less, sleep less, speak less and frequent people less. "Less" does not mean complete abnegation, which is sometimes impossible (such as in eating and sleeping), and always undesirable ; there must always be a moderation. One should eat to live, and not live to eat. To eat for the purpose of obtaining the energy to accomplish the will and the commandments of God, is an act of devotion ; and to diminish the nourishment and get weakened to the extent to diminishing the spiritual productivity is a sin. Sleep is necessary for health, and is a duty imposed on man ; but laziness, which makes us remain in bed for long, affects our spiritual progress. Sleeping less does not mean passing time in material needs, but finding more time for the practices of devotion and piety. Speaking less means diminution of frivolous talks, and avoidance, if possible, of all evil talk. It is often our habit to give good counsel to others, but forget to practise it ourselves. To frequent people less, means refraining from unnecessary talk and wasting time in needless contacts. To do a good turn to others, and to be occupied with the realization of things which could procure the pleasure of the Lord are rather desirable frequentations. However, it should not be forgotten that the needs of the individuals differ according to their stage of evolution ; one does not give the same advice to an expert master as to a young novice. Mundane frequentations often occasion temptations, waste of useful time, and the forgetting of our more important obligations. It may be permitted to add a fifth counsel : spend less. meaning on luxury, on flirtation, on personal pleasure ; the amount thus saved could be used for purposes dear to us but for which we have no money—in our spend-thrift habits—to contribute our mite. The five counsels may constitute five principles of economy in Islam, both spiritual and material.

SPECIAL PRACTICES

217. One has to remember God all time. The essential feature is the remembering by the heart. But concentration not being constant one employs physical methods for strengthening the presence of the spirit, and focusing of thought on the Divine person. The Quran (33 : 41-2) says : "O ye who believe ! Remember God with much remembrance. And glorify Him early and late." Again (3 : 191) : "such

as remember God, standing, sitting and reclining and meditate on the creation of the heavens and the earth (and say:) our Lord, Thou createdst not this in vain; glory be to Thee; Preserve us from the doom of Fire." There are litanies, in which some formulas are repeated a number of times; there are prayers which one pronounces every day as a habit. This is done aloud or in a low voice, but all should be related invariably and always to God, to His person or to His attributes, and never to created beings. Even if the subject be the Prophet Muhammad, for gratitude and admiration, the approach should be always through God, and not praying Muhammad himself independently to do something for us. For instance "O God, incline to Muhammad and take him into Thy protection," or "O God resuscitate Muhammad in the glorious place which Thou hast promised him, and accept his intercession in our favour," etc. For developing concentration of thought, the mystics sometimes live in seclusion, or retreat, stop respiration for moments, close the eyes, and concentrate on the throbbing of the heart while thinking of God, etc. They also say that there are three grades of remembrances of God: to remember only His name, to remember His person by means of and through His name, and to remember His person without having the need of His name or any other means. That these practices were recommended by the Prophet himself and that they are not of a foreign origin, it may be recalled that Abu Hurairah had a rosary, made of a thread, with 2,000 knots to serve as many beads, and he repeated a certain prayer on it every night. (Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umari, *Masālik al-Absār*, vol. 5, MŠ. of Istanbul).

218. Among other practices, one may mention a life of asceticism, self-mortification, and meditation particularly on death and the final judgement. For Islam these are not ends, but only the means, rather temporary and provisional, for the purpose of mastering and breaking the ego. Everything that one permits to one's self in this world is divided into two categories: necessities and luxuries. One can never renounce the necessities, for it would be suicide. To commit suicide is religiously forbidden in Islam, for we do not belong to ourselves, but to God; and to destroy something before its full-fledged realization is to go against the will of God. As for luxuries, if they are not made the aim of our existence in this world, they are lawful. One can renounce them in order to dominate over one's animality; one can also do so in order to help those who do not possess

even the necessities of life, or perhaps as a penitence. But it is not permitted to act in an exaggerated manner or out of all proportion. A verile man who makes an effort to lead a chaste life has greater merit than the one who destroys his desires by means, for instance, of a surgical operation. One who has no capacity for evil has no merit in comparison with the one who has the most perfect capacity for it and yet abstains voluntarily from it, for fear of God.

219. Self-mortifications, abstinences and other spiritual practices enhance certain faculties, yet the acquisition of such faculties, however miraculous they might be, is not the aim of one who travels towards God. One seeks to realize acts, but not the sensations which are produced thereby automatically. Even an infidel may acquire certain of the faculties of saints, yet without the ultimate salvation. The mystic is continually directed towards his destination, and does not think of, much less profit by, these incidents of the saintly journey.

220. The life of a Sufi, derwish or mystic begins with repentance for the past sins and the reparation, as far as possible, of the harms done to other people. God pardons harms done to His own rights, but not those to the rights of other creatures; it is these latter who alone can pardon. It is only then that one can march on the path leading to the Lord. It is not the monopoly of any person or class or caste; it is within the reach of everybody, and it is the duty of each and everyone to take this road. The provisions for this journey are two-fold: obedience to God and constant remembering of Him. Obedience is easier in the sense that one knows what one has to do and what the will of the Lord is. He has revealed His will and His prescriptions through His chosen prophets, in order that they communicate them to the common folk.

221. God has sent innumerable prophets. If their teachings have differed in details, it is not because God has changed His opinion, but only because, in His mercy and wisdom, the evolution or deterioration of the human capacities necessitated a change in the rules of conduct and in the details. Although in the essentials of their teachings, particularly in those which concern the relation of man with God, prophets do not differ,—and the Qur'ân lays a strong emphasis on it,—it is part of the obedience of man to God's orders to abide by the latest disposition of His will. If God taught men something

through the prophet Abraham, for instance, it will not be disobedience to abandon it for abiding by the teachings of the prophet Moses, because he brought in his time the latest disposition of the orders of the same Law-giver; what is more, to neglect the directions of Moses and continue to practise the teachings of Abraham would be a flagrant disobedience to God. It is thus that man should practise, turn by turn, the messages of God brought by successive prophets, the latest of whom being Muḥammad of holy memory. It is thus that, with all his respect for the previous prophets, a Muslim cannot abide except by the latest disposition of the will of God communicated to man. A Muslim venerates the Torah, the Psalter and the Gospel as the word of God, yet he abides by the latest and the most recent of the words of God, namely the Qur'ān. Whoever remains attached to the preceding laws, cannot be considered, by the Legislator, as law-abiding and obedient.

CONCLUSION

222. Man being composed simultaneously of body and soul, of an outer and an inner existence, the harmonious progress and blanced evolution towards perfection require that attention should be paid to both these aspects of man. Mysticism or spiritual culture in Islam envisages the diminution of the Ego and the ever-increasing realization of the presence of God. To be absorbed in the will of God does not at all mean an immobility; far from that. In innumerable verses, the Qur'ān urges man to action and even to compete in the search for the Divine pleasure by means of good actions. Not to follow one's own evil desires, but to abide by the will of God alone, does not lead to inaction. Only that happens which God wills; yet not knowing the will of God, which remains concealed from men, man must always continue his effort, even though failure follows failure, when trying to attain the good which he conscientiously believes to be good and in conformity with the revealed commandments of God. This notion of a dynamic predestination, which urges one to action and resignation to the will of God, is well explained in the following verses of the Qur'ān (57 : 22-23): "Naught of disaster befalleth on the earth or in your souls but it is in a Book (Prescription) before We bring in into being—lo! that is easy for God—that ye grieve not for the sake of that which hath escaped you, nor ye exult because of that which ye had been given; God loveth no prideful boasters." Man should

always think of the grandeur of God, and vis-a-vis this, of his own humility, as well as of the day of the Resurrection when the Lord will demand individual accounts. The Qur'ān says (29: 69): "As for those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our paths, and lo! God is with the good."

CHAPTER VII

THE SYSTEM OF MORALITY

MEN may be divided into three principal categories: (1) Those who are good by nature, and incorruptible in the face of temptations, whose very instinct suggests to them whatever is good and charitable; (2) Those who are just the contrary and are incorrigible; and (3) Those who belong to the intermediary group, and behave suitably if they are constrained thereto by supervision or sanction, but who otherwise lapse into a state of carelessness or do injustice to others.

224. This last category comprises the immense majority of the human race, the members of the other two extreme categories comprising but a few individuals. The first kind (of the human-angels) does not require any direction or control; but it is the second kind (of the human-devils) which must be controlled, and prevented from doing evil. Great attention has to be devoted to the third kind (of the human-men).

225. The members of this third category resemble in certain respects the beasts: they are calm and content with what they possess, so long as they perceive nothing better in the possession of others, or do not suspect some mischief on the part of others. This evil propensity in the face of temptations has been, at all times, the object of intense preoccupation on the part of human society. Thus the father controls his children; the head of the family, of the tribe, of the city-state, or of any other group of men, tries to force those who are placed under his authority to be content with what they possess, and not to usurp that which others have obtained in an honest and legitimate way. Perhaps the very aim of human society is no other than controlling temptations and remedying the damage already done. All men, even members of the same nation, are never developed alike. A noble spirit is willing to sacrifice and do works of charity. An intelligent spirit sees very far; and the consequences which would compromise the immediate gain prevent it from doing evil, even if it should not be persuaded to sacrifice on its own initiative. As to the ordinary spirit,

not only does it not willingly consent to sacrifice, but even permits itself to thrive at the expense of others, unless there be a fear of violent and immediate reaction on the part of its victim, or society, or any other superior power. And the obtuse spirit is not deterred even by this fear, and persists till the last in its criminal intent, struggling against all opposition, until it is placed by society in a state where it can no more have a nuisance value, such as a punishment by death or imprisonment.

226. All laws, all religions and all philosophies try to persuade the masses, or the intermediary category, to behave in a suitable manner and even to offer voluntary sacrifices in order to help the poor, the destitute and those who have needs and yet cannot satisfy them, for no fault of theirs.

CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS OF ISLAM

227. Islam is an all-embracing mode of life. Not only does it prescribe beliefs but also the rules of social behaviour; moreover, it occupies itself with the nicer application and functioning of its laws. We know that Islam does not believe in the life of this world as an end in itself, or in body without any relation to soul. On the contrary, it teaches belief in the Hereafter. Its motto, as enunciated by the Qur'ān, is "The best in this world as well as the best in the Hereafter." It is thus that not only does it praise the good and condemn the evil, but also provides rewards and sanctions, both spiritual and material. As far as its injunctions and prohibitions are concerned, Islam inculcates in the spirit, the fear of God, the last judgement after the Resurrection, and the punishment of the Hell fire. Not content with this, it takes all possible precautions in the realm of material sanctions, in order to deter man from permitting himself acts of injustice and violation of the rights of others. It is thus that the believer prays and fasts even when he is not coerced to do that; he pays the tax even when government ignores fixation of the amount or finds itself unable to obtain payment by force.

THE BASIS OF MORALITY

228. Often, it so happens that motives or circumstances bring about a profound change in the import of acts which outwardly seem to resemble one another. For instance, the death occasioned at the

hands of a brigand, of a hunter mistaking his victim for a game, of a fool, or a minor, in self-defence, by a headsman executing the capital punishment ordered by a tribunal, a soldier defending his country against an aggressive invasion, etc.—in all these cases the killing is sometimes pushed more or less severely, sometimes pardoned, sometimes considered a normal duty entailing neither praise nor condemnation, and sometimes obtains high praise and honour. Almost all human life is composed of acts whose good and evil are relative. This is why the Prophet Muḥammad has often declared: “Acts will be (judged) only according to motives.”

229. Islam is based on the belief of a Divine revelation sent to men through prophets as intermediary. Its law and morality, even as its faith, are therefore based on Divine commandments. It is possible that in the majority of cases human reason also should arrive at the same conclusion, but essentially it is the Divine aspect which has the decisive significance in Islam, and not the reasoning of a philosopher, a jurist or a moralist, the more so because the reasonings of different individuals may differ and lead to completely opposite conclusions. Sometimes the motive of discipline is found underlying an obligation and practice which is apparently superfluous.

230. One may divide human actions, first of all, into good and evil, represented by orders and prohibitions. The acts from which one must abstain are also divided into two big categories: Those against which there is temporal sanction or material punishment in addition to condemnation on the day of the Final Judgement, those which are condemned by Islam without providing a sanction other than that of the Hereafter.

231. In a saying attributed to the Prophet (and reported by Qadī ‘Iyad, in his *Shifa*, ch. 2) we see the conception of life envisaged by Islam: “‘Ali asked the Prophet one day about the principles governing his general behaviour, and he replied: knowledge is my capital, reason is the basis of my religion, love is my foundation, desire is my mount for riding, remembrance of God is my comrade, confidence is my treasure, anxiety is my companion, science is my arm, patience is my mantle, contentment is my booty, modesty is my pride, renunciation of pleasure is my profession, certitude is my food, truth is my intercessor, obedience is my sufficiency, struggle is my habitude and

the delight of my heart is in the service of worship."

232. On another occasion, the Prophet Muhammad said: The sum-total of wisdom is the fear of God. Islamic morality begins with the renunciation of all adoration outside God, be it adoration of the self (egoism), or adoration of our own handicrafts (idols, superstitions), etc.; and the renunciation of all that degrades humanity (atheism, in justice, etc.).

233. Abolishing the ineluctable inequalities—based on race, colour of skin, language, place of birth—Islam has proclaimed (and realized more than any other system) the superiority of the individual based solely on morality, which is a thing accessible and open to everybody without exception. This it is that Qur'ān (49:13) has said: "O mankind, lo! We have created you of a male and a female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another; verily the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is the most pious; lo! God is Knower, Aware."

234. In a beautiful passage (17:23-9), the Qur'ān gives twelve commandments to the Muslim community, and says:

- (i) Thy Lord hath decreed, that ye worship none save Him.
- (ii) And that (ye show) kindness to parents. If one of them or both of them were to attain old age with thee, say not 'Fie' unto them nor repulse them, but speak unto them a gracious word. And lower unto them the wing of tenderness through mercy, and say: My Lord! Have mercy on them both, as they did care for me when I was little. Your Lord is best aware of what is in your minds. If ye are righteous, then lo! He is ever Forgiving unto those who turn (unto Him).
- (iii) Give the kinsman his due, and the poor, and the wayfarer, and squander not (thy wealth) in wantonness. Lo! the squanderers are ever brothers of the devils, and the Devil was an ingrate to his Lord. But if thou turn away from them, waiting mercy from thy Lord, for which thou hopest, then speak unto them a convenient word.
- (iv) And let not thy hand be chained to thy neck nor open it with a complete opening, lest thou sit down rebuked, denuded. Lo! thy Lord enlargeth the provision for whom He will, and

straineth (if from whom He will). Lo! He is ever Knower, Seer of His slaves.

- (v) Slay not your children, fearing a fall to penury; we shall provide for them and for you. Lo! the slaying of them is great sin.
- (vi) And come not near unto fornication. Lo! it is an abomination and an evil way.
- (vii) And slay not the life which God hath forbidden save with right. Whoso is slain wrongfully, we have given power unto his rightful representative, but let him not commit excess in slaying. Lo! he will be helped.
- (viii) Come not near the property of the orphan save with that which is better till he comes to strength;
- (x) And keep the covenant. Lo! of the covenant it will be asked.
- (x) Fill the measure when ye measure, and weigh with a right balance; this is meet, and best refuge.
- (xi) Follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Lo! the hearing and the sight and the heart—of each of these it will be asked.
- (xii) And walk not in the earth exultant. Lo! thou canst not rend the earth, nor canst thou stretch to the height of the hills. The evil of all that is hateful in the sight of thy Lord. This is part of the wisdom wherewith thy Lord hath inspired thee (O Muḥammad). And set not up with God any other god, lest thou be cast into hell, reprovèd, abandoned.

These commandments, comparable to and more comprehensive than those given to Moses, were revealed to the Prophet during the *mi'raj*.

235. It would be too lengthy to cite here all the Quranic exhortations. However, we may quote a passage (4: 36-8), in which it speaks of the social behaviour of the average man: "And serve God; ascribe nothing as partner unto Him: (show) kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and unto the neighbour who is of kin (unto you) and the neighbour who is not of kin, and the fellow-traveller and the wayfarer, and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess; lo! God loveth not such as are proud and boastful, who hoard their wealth and enjoin avarice on others, and hide that which

God hath bestowed upon them of His bounty; for disbelievers, We prepare a shameful doom. And (also) for those who spend their wealth in order to be seen of men, and believe not in God nor the Last Day; whoso taketh Satan for a comrade, a bad comrade hath he."

236. In another passage (49: 10-12), the Qur'ān describes the characteristics of Muslim society: "The believers are naught else than brethren; therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to God, that haply ye may obtain mercy. O ye who believe! Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they are, nor let women (deride) women who may be better than they are; neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames; bad is the name of lewdness after embracing the faith: and whoso turneth not in repentance, such are evil-doers. O ye who believe! Shun much suspicion: for lo! some suspicion is a crime: and spy not, neither backbite one another; would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother (by backbiting)?; ye abhor that (so abhor the other); and keep your duty to God: lo! God is Relenting, Merciful."

THE FAULT AND ITS EXPIATION

237. Nobody could object to the good counsel, offered in the above-mentioned verses; but man has his weaknesses. He is constituted simultaneously of the elements of good and evil. By his innate defects, he gets angry; he is subject to temptations, and is driven to do harm to those who are weaker and have no means of defending or avenging themselves. Similarly, his noble sentiments make him repent afterwards; and in proportion to the force of his repentance, he tries more or less to rectify the harm he had done.

238. Islam divides faults into two big categories; those which are committed against the rights of God (unbelief, neglect of worship, etc.), and those against the rights of men. Moreover, God does not pardon the harm done by a man to his fellow-being: it is the victim who alone can pardon. If one does harm to another creature, be it man, animal or any other one commits in fact a double crime: a crime against one's immediate victim, and also a crime against God, since the criminal conduct in question constitutes a violation of the Divine prescriptions. It is thus that, when there is an injustice or crime against another

creature, one has not only to try to repair the damage, by restituting to the victim of one's violation the right which had been taken away from him, but he has also to beg pardon of God. In a famous saying of his, the Prophet Muhammad gave a warning, that on Doomsday, a certain person would be thrown in Hell because he had tied up a cat with a rope giving it neither to eat nor to drink, nor letting it go and seek itself the food, thus causing the death of the poor animal in inanition. In another Hadith, the Prophet spoke of Divine punishment to those men who did not fulfil their duty against even the animals, by not giving them sufficient food, or loading them beyond their strength, etc. The Prophet prohibited even the hewing down of trees without necessity. Men should profit by what God has created, yet in an equitable and reasonable measure, avoiding all dissipation and waste.

239. When one causes damage to another and wishes to repair it, there are several ways he could adopt. Sometimes by merely asking pardon everything is set right; at other times it may be necessary to reëstitute the rights which were taken away, or replace them if the original rights could not be restituted, and so on.

240. To show clemency to others and pardon them is a noble quality, and upon this Islam has often insisted. In culogizing it, the Qur'ān (3: 133-34) says: "And vie one with another for forgiveness from your Lord and for a Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious, who spend (as charity) in ease and in adversity, who control their wrath and are forgiving towards mankind: and God loveth the doers of good."

241. Pardon is recommended, yet vengeance is also permitted (for the average man). In this respect, the Qur'ān (42: 40) says: "The guerdon of an ill-deed is an ill the like thereof. But whoever pardoneth and amendeth, his wage is the affair of God. Lo! He loveth not the oppressors". This is one of many similar versés.

242. God is incomparably more forgiving and merciful than the most merciful of men. Among the names with which Islam calls God, there is *Raḥmān* (Most Merciful), *Tauwāb* (Most Pardoning) 'Afu (one who effaces faults), *Ghaḥḥār* (Most Forgiving), etc. Those who commit a sin against God, and then repent find God full of indulgence. Two versés of the Qur'ān may show the Islamic notion of the bounty of

God :

- (a) "Verily God pardoneth not that partners should be ascribed unto Him, while He pardoneth all else to whom He will (4 : 116).
- (b) "... O My slaves who have been prodigal to your own hurt! despair not of the mercy of God; Verily God forgiveth all sins: verily He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. (39 : 53).

243. If one gives up disbelief and turns to God to beg pardon of Him, one can always hope for His clemency. Man is weak, and often breaks his resolutions; but true repentance can always restore the grace of God. There is no formality, no buying of Divine pardon by the mediation of other men; but one must turn directly to God, present Him one's sincere regrets in a *tete-a-tete* conversation (*munājāt*); for He is the knower of all and nothing could be concealed from Him. "The Love of God for His creatures is hundred and more times greater than that of a mother for her child," as has once been remarked by the Prophet. For the Prophet Muḥammad has said: "Mercy has been divided by God into one hundred portions, of which He has retained Himself 99 and distributed the one portion among all the beings living on the earth; the mutual mercy found among the creatures comes from the same". In a saintly saying (*ḥadīth qudsī*) the Prophet reports God as saying: "Whoever tries to approach Me by a span, I approach him by a cubit, whoever approaches Me by a cubit, I approach him by a fathom, whoever comes towards Me walking, I run to meet him." The Qur'ān (11 : 114) announces no doubt: "Verily the good deeds carry away evil deeds." Alms and charities are no doubt recommended, yet they do not buy automatically the Divine pardon for a given sin; each has an independent existence, and God's freedom is absolute.

THE INJUNCTIONS

244. The Qur'ān often employs two characteristic terms to designate the good and the evil. Thus it refers to *ma'rūf* (the good known to everybody and recognized as such), and *munkar* (the evil denounced by everybody and recognized as such). In other words, the Qur'ān has confidence in human nature, in the common sense of man; "There will

VARIOUS

POSTURES

OF

PRA YERS

SERVICE



Takbīr-i-Tehrīma (تکبیر تحریمہ)
(Legs must be kept apart)



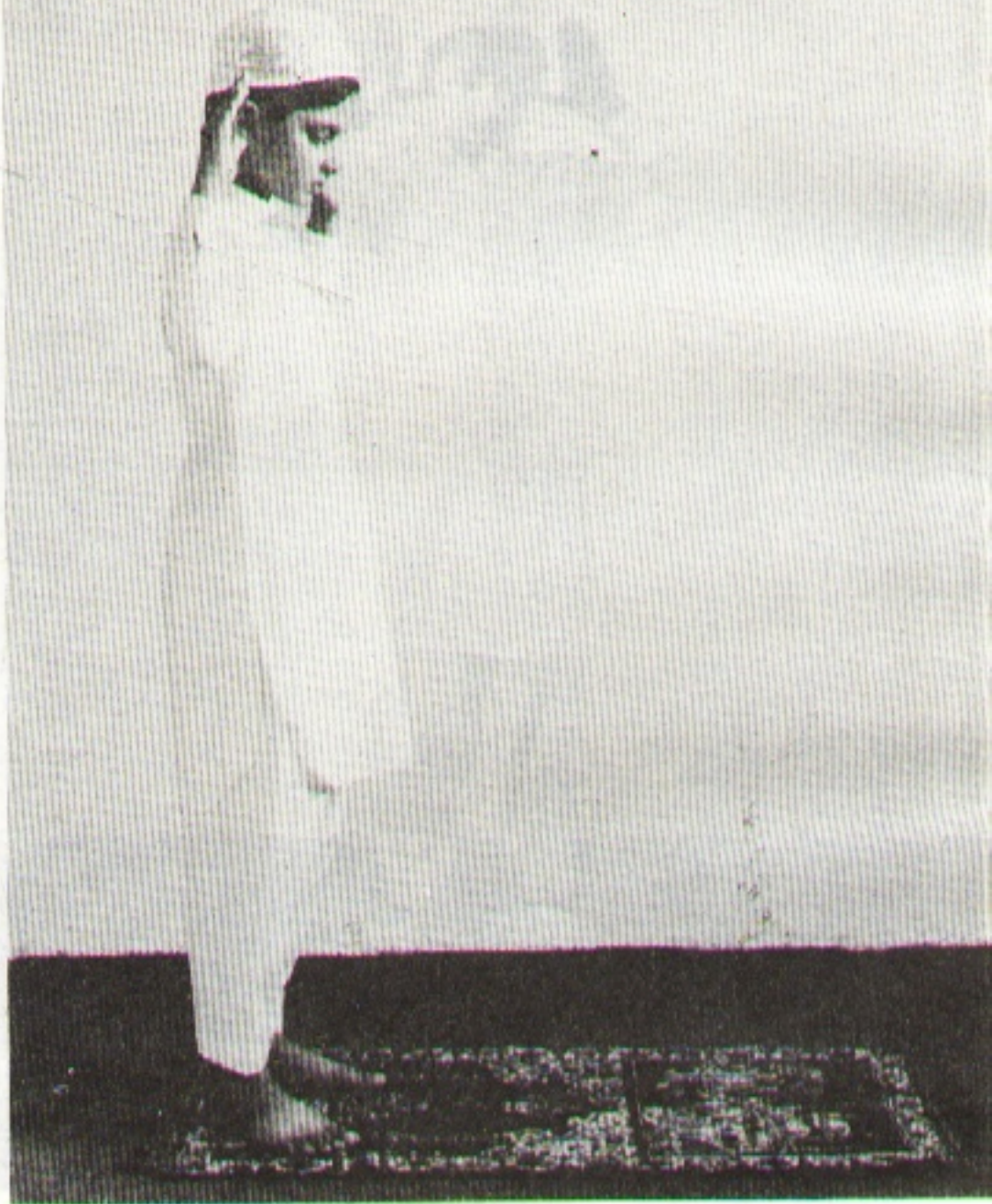
Salām (سَلَام)
(With eyes looking over the right shoulder)



Salām (سلام)
(Looking over the left shoulder)



Du'ā (دعا)
(Supplication)



Takbir-i-Tehrîma, side pose (تکبیر تحریمہ)
(With eyes on the spot of Sajdah)



Qiyām (قيام)
(Prayer begins)



Rukū' (ركوع)



Position for Qawmah (قومه)

(Front pose)

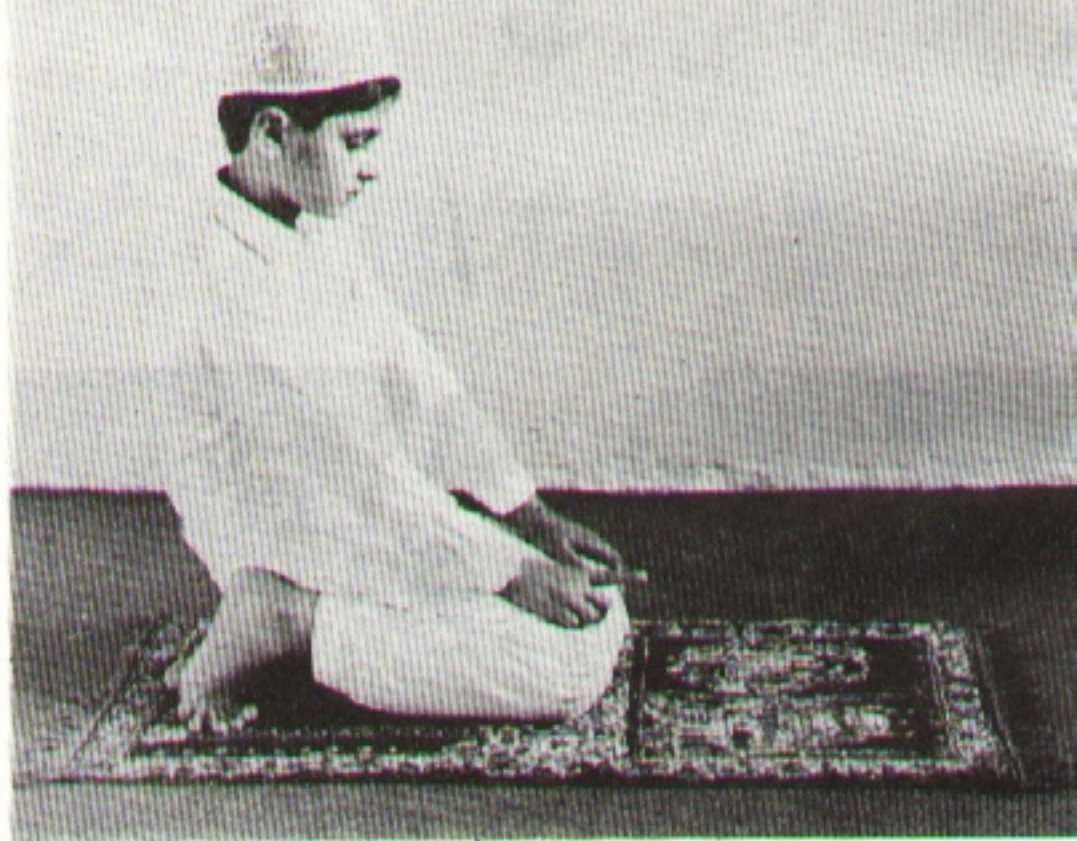


(۷۷) Sajdah (سجده)



Jalsah (جلسہ)

(Front pose)



Jalsah (سجده)
(Showing the correct position of right foot)



Jalsah (جلسه)

(Back pose—position of right foot)