

PHILOSOPHY  
OF THE  
QUR-AN

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by

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TO  
THE SOUL OF MUHAMMAD

By the high dawn,  
When the light of the sun is strong !

By the thick night,  
When the darkness is deep and long !

He hath not forsook thee, nor hated !

By His Mercies, I say,  
The life which will come shall be better  
Than the life of to-day.

HOLY QUR-AN (93—1 to 5), TRANSLATION  
BY SIR EDWIN ARNOLD



“Who Seeketh God shall find Him in the End.”

“He who is Power, is Grace and Beauty too.

And Clemency, and Pity, and Pure Rest,

The Highest and the Uttermost and Best.”



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## FOREWORD

The ideas on which this book is based are easy to understand. Whatever a man can think to be of the highest worth or value, be it Goodness, Beauty, Truth, Perfection, Harmony, Love, Energy, Holiness, Majesty, Power, one and all of these values, or any others that there may be, have their source in God (or The Real) who is Infinite and Eternal and who manifests them as, when, and how He pleases. He is the Vital Principle of the Universe. This book is nothing but a commentary on the first verse of the Qur-ân: "All praise belongs to God, Lord (or Vital Principle) of all the worlds." The word praise includes all the values.

The next idea is that God is not Static. He is ever Active. But none of his activities are in vain. He is not like a potter who makes his pots and breaks them as he pleases. He is not like a being who gives birth to others and these others become his equals, or relations or partners. He is free from imperfections. He is also not like a spadix from which life emerges and which itself ceases to exist. All such similitudes are bound to fail in His case, for we are finite and cannot comprehend the Infinite. We have to be content with the ideas of Eternity and Infinity in Him

and believe that the Universe is a manifestation or expansion of His Will.

But although we cannot define God ; if we put ourselves into the run of God's creation, we can understand or realize a great deal. This realization of the nature of reality is common to all mankind. But the quality and quantity vary.

As soon as a human being has Love and Goodness he, or she, has realized a part of reality. The same applies to all other values or virtues. We may never be able to explain what Love is but we know that it is a reality. We know that Beauty is a reality. We know or realize that Goodness is a reality. Great men have greater vision than their less fortunate brethren, but none is without his share. The highest forms of such realization are called inspiration and revelation and it is our business to learn from the examples and teachings of great men. The greatest of these are God's messengers, *i.e.*, men whom God has found fit to communicate His Laws of Life and His Values.

The third idea is that although the universe seems to run like a machine as far as matter is concerned, yet as soon as we begin to examine the processes of life, mechanism pure and simple fails to account for the reality of life. We see that life is also able to transform matter to follow its own impulse. Life seems to possess purposive activities. We see as a matter of fact that these purposive activities are sometimes

progressive and sometimes retrogressive. There is a general evolution towards some aim, and there is also a great deal of fight going on against the highest values. This latter tendency in life is called *evil*. The presence of evil cannot be denied. This evil cannot altogether be explained away, and every attempt to deny its reality only ends in failure.

Following the philosophy of the Qur-ān we believe it to be caused by the *choice* or *will* which God has given to all men.

Men exercised this *choice* and seem to do it in various ways, some of these ways seem to be preferable to others. But by the very nature of the gift, the *choice* has to be exercised and the various ways it is exercised seem to produce a certain amount of *confusion*, *dissonance*, *discord* or *evil*.

The fourth idea is that God, who is not sitting idle, is constantly correcting this *confusion* or *error* and in fact He is producing Harmony out of every *discord* and the *Final Concord* is yet to be, in a future state of the existense of the soul.

This naturally leads us to the one underlying idea of the whole book that man's soul is not a matter of a day, hour or moment. The evolution of this soul has been going on ever since God said "Be" and the Universe "Became". But we believe also that the "Be" is a continuing affair and man's soul will last as long as the heavens and the earth do. The soul is sometimes

*conscious* and sometimes *unconscious* of its own existence and in this respect differs from the Consciousness of God which is both Infinite and Ever-lasting, never-sleeping, never-tiring, never-dying.

The translations of the verses of the Qur-ân where not otherwise indicated have been made by the writer, from the original, without reference to any previous translations—his own included—and are, to a certain extent, put in philosophical language but generally they are as literal as possible. The numbers in brackets refer to chapters and verses of the Qur-ân. Thus (93 —1 to 5) means: Qur-ân, Chapter 93, verses 1 to 5.

The writer is a Muslim and makes no apology for being one; but prejudice is not a part of his faith. He loves truth in all books, all religions and all philosophies. If he has unwittingly said anything against any man's belief, the writer unhesitatingly withdraws all such remarks but is not conscious of having said anything against any religion or any philosophy excepting as it may naturally disagree with the philosophy of the Qur-ân.

An attempt has been made to treat philosophy from a rational point of view only. There is no other way of philosophizing. In this respect, again, if the writer has sometimes been carried away by his impulse, he must be excused because *style* and *philosophy* are two things in which no man can leave his impulse behind him.

One word more ; the writer's natural tendency is to write as clearly and as plainly as possible, and the reader who finds that this book on philosophy is devoid of philosophical terminologies must not be surprised at that fact. Ambiguities and flights of arguments by means of the conventional jargon of philosophy are foreign to the nature of the writer. The writer believes that philosophic thought need not be clothed in unintelligible language. Anyhow, it is foreign to the spirit of the Qur-ân. Parables and metaphors are unavoidable but the complexities of thought and argument generally indulged in by some of the older writers on philosophy have been purposely avoided. It is not intended to cast any slur on anybody. To each person his own philosophy. The writer does not claim any merit. He is merely interpreting the Qur-ân as best as he can.

The writer finally wishes each reader the same happiness in the reading of this book as it has been his in its writing.

It has been a labour of love and :—

“ Inside the Kaaba it matters naught

Whither men turn ; and in the secret place

Of perfect love for God, words are as breath

And Will is all.”

(From the *Masnawi* of Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi)

*Note.*—In the following pages by Series (A) we mean

$$1 = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{32} + \text{etc...}$$

to infinity.

By Series (B) is meant the general form of the above series, *viz.*,

$$\frac{1}{2^n} = \frac{1}{2^{n+1}} + \frac{1}{2^{n+2}} + \frac{1}{2^{n+3}} + \text{etc...}$$

to infinity which is true for all values of  $n$ .

In this Series (B), if  $n=0$  it coincides with (A).

$$\text{So that } \frac{1}{2^n} = \frac{1}{2^0} = \frac{1}{1} = 1 = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \text{etc...}$$

to infinity.

And the interpretation given to this series is that the Universe is a part of the manifestation or expansion of God's Will and that in so expanding Himself He still remains a Perfect Whole, because it is a division of Himself by Himself or of Unity by Unity; but the wonderful part of it is that while remaining Whole, He shows us an Infinite series of existents which are a part and parcel of His own Will and means of which we can realize Him.

LAHORE :

20th June, 1938.

H. G. SARWAR

“ WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL.”

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## CHAPTER I

Of all branches of knowledge, philosophy is the most difficult because it is the most nebulous. We must, therefore, be extremely patient in our search for what belongs to philosophy and when we have reached the end of our investigations we must still not presume to have exhausted our inquiry. Let us consider a few things that are not philosophy. Anything will do—carpentry, for example.

When a carpenter is asked to make a table, a chair, an almirah or any other article, he is provided with materials to be used in the making of the required article. Such materials consist of wood, nails, hinges, screws, gums and paints. All these things are definite.

The instruments which the carpenter uses, such

The instruments of a carpenter are ready-made. as axes for cutting wood, saws for dividing wood into parts, planes for smoothing surfaces, bores for making holes, chisels for carving and shaping wood, T-squares for testing rectilinear angles, pairs of compasses for describing circles and arcs of circles, sectors for measuring angles, rulers, pencils and numerous other articles are also ready-made.

The specifications of the article to be made are given. The article which is to be made by a carpenter is also given, either in the shape of a specimen which he is to copy, or a plan which he is to follow. The carpenter knows beforehand the length, breadth and height of the article he is going to make. He also knows its shape and any ornamentation which he has to carve thereon or attach thereto.

The carpenter is a skilled workman. The carpenter is also not a novice to his calling. He generally undergoes years of training in making himself competent in the use of the tools of his trade and in making the most economical and effective use of his material.

The result of carpentry can be judged or valued. And the product of the carpenter's labour can be judged or valued either by himself or by someone who is competent to do so. In fact, all that relates to the art of carpentry is definite. There is no vagueness about either the man, the materials, the object of workmanship or its value.



The same remarks apply to the art of a jeweller.

The art of  
jewellery-  
making.

Only the jeweller has to be more skilled than a carpenter, and the instruments he uses are much more delicate than those of a carpenter. Suppose a man is given the making of a royal crown. He will have to spend days and nights in making the designs of the various parts of the crown. He will require extremely accurate scales for weighing his metals. His chisels will be so fine and his skill must be so nearly perfect as to make configurations correct to a hundredth or a thousandth part of an inch. Like an expert billiard cueist he must not make a single false stroke or the whole of his work might be irretrievably spoilt. But in spite of all its difficulty, the work is predetermined and though there is some risk of its not coming up to the pattern absolutely correct in every detail, it can be accomplished to a very great degree of precision and refinement.

Let us now proceed to the making of something that is more difficult still, say, a bridge

The art of  
engineering.

over a deep and broad river. Here, again, the engineer or engineers will be occupied for weeks in making, correcting and revising the plans. The total weight of the bridge material must be calculated to a very approximate figure. The foundations to support this weight must be found or artificially constructed. Books of logarithms and mathematical formulæ must be gone through

to find out the relative weights, tensions or pulls which the various parts of the bridge have to bear. The bridge is like a chain as well as like a building. If the foundations are weak the whole structure will collapse under the weight that is put on the foundations. And even if the foundations are strong but the plan is defective or the construction and materials used are not of the required quality, the chain will break at its weakest point. The task is a hundred times more difficult than that of a jeweller but with the help of mathematicians, manufacturers, skilled artisans, and the wonderful machines of modern civilization the engineer is able to bridge some of the widest rivers of the world. Why, or rather how? Because the men, the materials, the object to be achieved and its value are all known and measurable.

What about painting? A painter like a carpenter, a jeweller, or an engineer has to go through a difficult course of training. The materials with which he works, such as paints, brushes and canvas are also given. He also has a model which he is going to paint, or some landscape or the glow of a sunset which he has experienced. But here the analogy with the previously described art comes to an end. There is no tape measure or mathematical formula to guide the painter in achieving the desired end. If he is merely copying another artist he may profit by rules of thumb but we suppose that he is making an original picture.

The indeterminacy of the art of painting.

Apparently, his task is quite different from that of a jeweller or an engineer. There is less definiteness or determinacy about his art. Not till he has actually completed the picture can he or anyone else say whether it is good or bad, and even then opinions will differ. Here is an element of vagueness or nebulosity introduced into the artist's achievement. Why? Because the value of the achievement is not known and cannot be foretold, in contrast with the work of a jeweller or an engineer. The painting of a picture does not depend on physical measurements only. True, the artist must know the quality of his paints and brushes and the effect they are going to produce on his canvas. But art does not consist merely of putting paints on canvas. Art consists in expressing the artist's own experience of the beautiful in nature or in man or both. There are no rules by which he can measure his experience or its value, nor are there any rules which inform him how to communicate that experience to a mind other than his own. The painting is, or ought to be, as near a creation of the artist's own mind as one can imagine. Hence the uncertainty about the result. It may exceed the painter's expectations or it may be disappointing. Its value also is not to be measured by the strength and usefulness of the article produced like the table of

The value of a painting is solely aesthetic.

the carpenter, the crown of the jeweller, or the bridge of an engineer. The value of a painting is entirely an

aesthetic one. And the value can hardly be appreciated by any two men in exactly the same way. It may be of no value at all to a carrier of water or a hewer of wood; whilst its value to a lover of beauty may be beyond all his worldly means. To the artist, it may amount to the crowning glory of his life and its value to him may be as much as his life or even more. People have been known to sacrifice their lives in the accomplishment or safeguarding of their artistic achievements. What does it matter if the man's body dies? His mind or soul lives in his art and not only lives but creates other artists. All true art is not only a creation but a creation that recreates.

The painter's creation is a kind of condensation of his experience of the beautiful in a single event, or a series of combined events which may be expressed as happening at a certain point in the space time continuum. It is like the climax of a tragedy. The poet goes a step further. He chooses words as the medium of the expression of his experience of the beautiful. Like the painter he also suggests a great deal more than he expresses. But he does it by means of melodious sounds in measured feet and recurring rhymes. Sounds are far more powerful in stirring human passions and human feelings than is the sensation of sight. The poet, moreover, is not confined to a single moment of time but is at liberty to communicate the evolution of his experi-

The art of poetry.

ence in his own mind. Whilst a picture is a single image, a poem is a series of images ; and being expressed in language, has the advantage over a painting of being more familiar and more expressive to mankind. Mankind, in general, are more accustomed to being communicated by the ear than by the eye, though there are some to whom the appeal through the eye is quite as effective as the appeal through the ear. In fact, the cultivation of one faculty more than the other is at the bottom of the difference. Language has the advantage over pictures ; though, perhaps, a combination of the two is the most reasonable way of developing human mind ; for the aesthetic appeal through the eye is one of man's most wonderful achievements.

But that is a digression. The point is that the achievement of the production of a poet and its value are even more indeterminate than those of a painter.

The value of a poem is also aesthetic.

Not till the whole poem is composed can the poet or his audience say whether it is good or bad or what its worth is. There are no rules which will enable a poet to measure his own experience of the beautiful which he is going to communicate to the world. And opinions will differ. No two men will appreciate a poem in the same way. Some will be carried away by its music ; to some the actual words used will be of value only in so far as they suggest something transcendental which no words can express. The poetical

appeal is an appeal from one beautiful soul to another beautiful soul. The aim of poetry is the creation of beautiful images. The poet lives in the minds of his audience much more so than does the painter. A poet is born not made. He is a revelation.

Carpentry, jewellery-making, engineering, painting and the art of poetry are not philosophy. Literally, however, philosophy means the love of wisdom. Can a carpenter, a jeweller, an engineer, a painter or a poet succeed without being a *lover of wisdom*? Wisdom means the possession of experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically. Without the *love of wisdom* and, in fact, the possession of wisdom no artist can succeed in his art. He must have the requisite experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically. The carpenter, the jeweller, the engineer must make their plans; they must have the knowledge and experience of using the plans in doing what is required of them; they must possess the critical power of adopting means to ends. They must be able to put a value on their work—a value not in money which is only a nominal value—but a value in the truthfulness of the article made, in its goodness and finally in its appearance or beauty. No art can dispense with these ultimate values and—goodness, truth and beauty—of philosophy.

Philosophy is indispensable to all arts.

When we come to the art of a painter or a poet we realize that the value of beauty dominates the other two values. Truth of form and goodness of material are present in painting as well as in poetry but it is beauty which the poet and the painter are in pursuit of rather than goodness and truth.

The ultimate values of philosophy underlie all knowledge and experience.

Now, Goodness, Truth and Beauty are the acknowledged ultimate values of philosophy. And, fortunately, there is little or no conflict on this point. Some philosophers add Adoration or Religiousness as a fourth value, but it is hardly necessary to do so. From this point of view, *philosophy instead of being an alien to other branches of knowledge underlies them all and is in a sense the necessary first element in the achievement of all practical and theoretical accomplishment.*

Science and philosophy used to be considered as one.

As a matter of fact, for centuries, science and philosophy were united together. In the course of time, knowledge became so vast that it became impossible to lump it together into one whole. Philosophy became differentiated from Science and Science became differentiated into many sciences. Even philosophy became divided into many philosophical studies. Differentiations, divisions and subdivisions and side-lines of knowledge have now become so numerous that we have such things as

Philosophy of Law, Philosophy of History and Philosophy of Religion. It, therefore, becomes very necessary to define even at the risk of being somewhat diffuse as to what we mean by philosophy in this book and philosophy generally at the present day.

The field of philosophical study is vast. Philosophy, we have already stated in the opening sentence of this book, is difficult because it is *nebulous*. Physics knows its function because it deals with matter in space or a space-time continuum; Mathematics understands its role because it deals with abstractions of space and numbers and so with the other sciences—Astronomy, etc. But philosophy with which we are dealing in this book does not yet realize its exact boundaries. It is chasing all the other branches of knowledge in the hope of getting at the bottom of them all, but it has not found, and perhaps never can find, its own bottom. Therein lies its difficulty and its nebulosity. But it is not a will-o'the-wisp. It is the most important of all branches of knowledge and the progress of mankind as well as of all sciences is bound up with the progress of philosophy. Just as a man's desires dominate all his actions so does the philosophy of a civilization dominate all its course. And a civilization without the guidance of a workable philosophy is like a ship without a compass. The compass has nothing to do with the machinery which causes the ship to move in water, or an aeroplane in air, but without the guidance of a compass, or its equivalent,



the ship or the aeroplane can never go right except by chance, but no chance can last for long. Similarly, the ship of science must be guided by workable philosophy or else all labour of navigating human knowledge must end in a shipwreck. What then is philosophy?

What is its object? What is its function? What is the material it deals with? What are its methods? These are all pertinent questions and though the answer be somewhat difficult we must give a cursory review of the subject before we begin to deal with it in detail, so that both ourselves and the reader may have an idea of the inquiry we are engaged upon to discuss. The definitions given below are not our own, but giving reference to each author and quoting chapter and verse is a tedious business and there is so much in common that it would be misleading to identify any particular author with any particular definition or description of philosophy. The primary purpose of philosophical inquiry is to ascertain the ultimate character of reality: And reality is existence which underlies all appearance, but Reality is really an undefinable quality. It is Being or Existence. If we could define Reality there would be no need of philosophy. Philosophy is the systematic study of the ultimate nature of reality. "I am unable to distinguish between philosophy and religion," says Dean Inge. "Philosophy is the attempt at a rational interpretation of Reality as a whole," is the opinion of L. T. Hobhouse.

“Philosophers,” says William Temple, “perpetually trace out a new route from the finite to the infinite, from the apparent to the real, from the world to God ; but then they stop ; they do not return to tell us how their vision of God leads them to regard this world.” The chief object of this book is to inform the reader how our vision of God leads us to regard this world and therein lies the novelty of this book, “Philosophy,” says another author, “at all times, like science, has had its roots in man’s practical needs.” “Behind all philosophy lies human nature, and in every philosophy there lurks a man,” says F. C. S. Schiller. Philosophy according to Aristotle is the thought of thoughts and Fichte says : ✓“The kind of philosophy a man chooses depends on the kind of man he is.”

The difficulty of discussing philosophical subjects now becomes apparent. We have to deal with the universe as a whole and try to investigate the nature of the Being underlying it everywhere and at all times and under all circumstances. The subject is too vast for any one man or for even a combination of men to explore adequately. And when we look into the history of the development of philosophy we find that each philosopher has treated the subject in his own peculiar way and one could hardly expect him to do otherwise.

Science confines itself to the study of some aspects of reality, whilst philosophy occupies itself with the *ultimate nature* of reality. A few illustrations will explain what is meant by this differentiation between science and philosophy.

Difference between science and philosophy.

Mathematics is one of the exact sciences and inquires into abstractions of space and number. Whether the Mathematics be Euclidean or otherwise all that is necessary is to postulate certain ideas or concepts and adopt a language of symbols and figures to represent our concepts. Having done this we follow the logical consequences or deductions of our concepts and establish a system of ready-made measurements concerning numbers and spatial figures which are extremely useful to us in the conduct of our life and the investigation of all departments of science. We become aware of the nature of the reality of space and numbers in a manner that we could not possibly have done otherwise. We establish such well-cut systems of calculation that the results obtained are little short of miracles. All this is possible because we have, in Mathematics, invoked symbols and signs to our aid and we condense logical reasoning to an extent which is impossible in other sciences.

Mathematics is a science of visible symbols and

Mathematics is a deductive science with given hypothesis.

as near a mysticism as any science could be. But the whole of Mathematics is contained in the axioms, postulates and other truths (or supposed truths) which we have posited beforehand. The study of Mathematics reveals to us the nature of the reality or the truth underlying space or numbers in accordance with the ideas or concepts of space and numbers *we have already taken for granted*. If these ideas or concepts happen not to be real but only apparently real, all our deductions are equally apparently real. *Mathematics is a sort of intellectual jugglery by means of which the Mathematician performs or seems to perform miracles of intellectual feats*. But he does not and cannot reveal the ultimate nature of the reality of his ideas or concepts. A Euclidean straight line is supposed to be capable of being produced to an infinite length and according to Euclid two straight lines cannot enclose a space. But in reality we know of no such straight lines. We are living on a spherical or nearly spherical body called the earth and any line drawn anywhere on the surface of this earth is bound to be the arc of a circle. The universe itself appears to be spherical and it becomes difficult to imagine straight lines in such a universe which are able to conform to Euclid's ideas of a straight line.

Euclid's geometry only approximately true.

Euclidean Geometry is not incorrect Subject

to its own hypothesis it is absolutely correct but when we come to apply it to phenomena where Euclidean definitions do not apply we find an element of error—an extremely minute element of error—creeping into our calculations. Fortunately, it is so small that for all practical purposes it may be neglected. In Mathematics we get such quantities as the square root of minus one, or  $\sqrt{-1}$ , a quantity which has no existence except as a most useful symbol. This and similar other numbers which cannot be conceived as

being real are called “imaginary”.  
 “Imaginarities”  
 in Mathematics. These “imaginarities” are so useful that without them the science of engineering and investigations into the working of electrical currents would be well-nigh impossible. But they do not correspond to any reality that we can posit, or any numbers that we can count. By well-agreed algebraical convention, the square of any number whether positive or negative is always positive. For example,

$$(+5) \times (+5) = +25.$$

$$(-5) \times (-5) = +25.$$

The square root of 25 (or  $\sqrt{25}$ ) may be +5 or -5, but we cannot imagine any number whether positive or negative which when multiplied by itself would give a negative result. Therefore,  $\sqrt{-1}$  or the square root of minus one is not and cannot be any real number. It must be a fiction. And yet this fiction

becomes extremely useful in factorisation and other calculations where the nature of forces is not amenable to the ordinary methods of calculation. We know by experience that

$a^2 - b^2$  can be resolved into factors, which are  
 $a + b$  and

$a - b$ . So that

$$a^2 - b^2 = (a + b) \times (a - b).$$

But what about  $a^2 + b^2$ ? Can we resolve this quantity into factors not involving the product of  $a$  and  $b$ ? By the use of real symbols we cannot. But by the use of "imaginaries" we can. Thus:—

$$a^2 + b^2 = a^2 - (-b^2) \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Put } x^2 = -b^2 \quad \therefore x = b \pm \sqrt{-1} =$$

$$\pm i b \text{ where } i = \sqrt{-1}$$

$$\therefore a^2 + b^2 = a^2 - x^2 = (a + x)(a - x) \quad (2)$$

substitute the value of  $x$  in (2) and we get

$$\therefore a^2 + b^2 = a^2 - x^2 = (a + b\sqrt{-1})(a - b\sqrt{-1})$$

or representing  $\sqrt{-1}$  by  $i$  we get

$a^2 + b^2 = (a + i b)(a - i b)$  which is quite simple to look at and absolutely easy to work. It is in fact another form of  $a^2 - b^2 = (a + b)(a - b)$ .

But the point is that neither Algebra nor Geometry do or can tell us anything about the *ultimate nature* of numbers or space. The investigation of the *ultimate nature* of reality belongs to philosophy.

Let us take another science and compare its investigations with those of Philosophy. Biology in the narrower and stricter sense means the generalized science of the nature, continuance and evolution of organisms. Like Mathematics, Biology is one of the most useful sciences. Biology has been directly helpful in increasing and improving the food supply of mankind. Within living memory it has improved the breeding of live-stock such as cows, sheep and horses. It has so marvellously changed the quality and quantity of such fruits as oranges and apples that it may be said to be the science that has been most useful to man and that has studied the nature of life in a way and to an extent which was undreamt of before. Its investigations are leading to practical ways of securing health and preventing disease by the help of Nature herself and not merely by the use of drugs. It is most certainly going to prolong human life, and, other things being equal, life in the future would be much happier than it has been in the past. In fact, life is already much happier on the whole in the twentieth century than it was ever before and the progress, in spite of all setbacks is bound to continue. Biology may, therefore, justly and with pride claim to have investigated the nature of life as no other science has done or can do.

Philosophy itself is indebted to Biology, as it is

The indebtedness of philosophy of sciences.

to most other sciences, for its recent progress. The mechanistic theory of the universe has received a check from biological discoveries of organisms transcending determinism and asserting their own autonomy in recreating parts of their organisms or organs which had been lost by accident. In each organism there is the presence of the child of the past and the parent of the future. This subject will be taken up again in later chapters but suffice it to say here that although the ultimate results of biological and philosophical investigations coalesce in parts, philosophy has a much wider field of inquiry than biology. Biology inquires into the nature of the reality of organisms only ; philosophy has to search for the ultimate nature of reality underlying everything whether organic or inorganic. Moreover, biology can hardly extend itself to heavenly bodies. It is confined to life on this earth. Philosophy tries to embrace the whole universe *telluric* and *supra-telluric*.

The immense sweep of Philosophy.

Philosophy being concerned with the nature or the ultimate nature of the universe as a whole must necessarily pay attention to all branches of sciences. Philosophical discussions include on the one hand questions of detail, specially details of sciences, such as logic and psychology—sciences which deal with mental phenomena—and on the other hand they include ultimate problems concerning all sciences. This immense



sweep of philosophical interests results in the production of philosophies of various types and shades. Not only are philosophers peculiarly liable to be affected by their views on their pet sciences : arts, religion, politics and social and other influences of their age but the temperament and experience of each philosopher are peculiar to himself. The result is an apparent conglomeration of diverse and contradictory philosophies.

But a moment's reflection will show us that this variety instead of being a loss is a direct gain to philosophy. By the very nature of philosophical inquiry this result might have been foretold. No one individual or set of individuals in any age can possibly lay claim to an all round familiarity with all sides of life and culture, especially culture of the advanced type required by a philosopher. The diversity and apparently contradictory nature of the views of different philosophers represent the nature of reality as they see from their respective positions and all are right as long as they express what they really experience. The only false philosophers, if any, are those who do not say what they mean or who do not mean what they say. The hypocrite and the liar have no place in philosophy. Sometimes, however, men, without being hypocrites, are so fond of high flown language that it is difficult to understand what they are driving at. On the other hand, there are those who get so immersed in details that their study instead of being philosophical degenerates into details of a

particular science. "We fail too often," says Viscount Haldane, "not only to see the wood for the trees, but the trees themselves, because of undue attention to the bark, and even the bark itself because of our concern over its specks." That is the danger of over-specialization.

"I have an extreme dislike for vague, confused, and oracular writing," says C. D. Broad, "and I have very little patience with authors who express themselves in this style. I believe that what can be said at all can be said simply and clearly in any civilized language or in a suitable system of symbols, and that verbal obscurity is almost a sign of mental confusion .....some writers.....are struggling to express profound ideas in imperfect language."

The REAL or GOD is concurrent with Nature  
and all Natural phenomena. In the  
analytical treatment of sciences, the  
whole reality from which we start has  
to be left behind. Reality as a whole cannot be cut  
up or analysed. But for scientific argument such  
cutting up or analysis is absolutely necessary. Science  
deals with the particulars of knowledge, not its  
universals. Hence the necessity of philosophy or  
rather of philosophical synthesis. *Philosophy thus inter-  
preted becomes the complement of all sciences.* It gathers  
up the scattered threads of all sciences and  
weaves them back again into the whole of which  
they are parts and where they always remain.

Analysis and  
Synthesis

The scientific analysis of these threads of Reality is merely a mental process just as philosophy is. In analytical knowledge Reality reveals its various aspects whereas in philosophical synthesis it again shows itself as a whole.

Philosophy  
must not imitate  
Science.

Whilst talking about the analysis of science and the synthesis of philosophy we must guard against an error into which a great many philosophers are involved and in which we ourselves may be involved if we do not clear it here once for ever. The approach of science to the investigation of the nature of reality is and can only be by regarding its subject as a kind of dead matter on which the intellect of man makes its operations and finds out the reality it is seeking. For example, when a biologist examines organisms, he studies them just as a physicist does matter. The biologist analyses life just as the physicist does matter and in order to get at his results he can only proceed in this way. There is no other way open to him. Vivisection and a thousand other operations of the doctor and the biologist are on the same footing as the weighing, cutting and measuring of dead or inorganic matter by the physicist. The doctor or the biologist cannot be thinking of the feeling of his patient or subject of operation. Unless the philosopher rises above the plane of the scientist he may go on in his investigations for a thousand years without finding anything about the ultimate nature of the reality which

governs the whole universe. That is where the difficulty and nebulosity of philosophy comes in. Philosophy in this respect is like poetry of the sublimest type, but again philosophy is not poetry. Poetry is a play of imagination. Philosophy is strictly rational though its premises are not ordinary matter or ordinary organisms but the mystery which is in both and yet beyond them both.

One cannot be writing or talking like this without becoming a mystic and unintelligible but it is well to point this out so that the reader may be prepared to follow the aim of this book which is to discuss the ultimate nature of the reality *from within*, making reality itself guide us and not our becoming its censors and critics which is exactly what a scientist has to do. The scientist has to consider himself as an individual superior to the subject he is investigating. But there is nothing superior to or beyond Reality. *The ultimate nature of Reality can only be studied by identifying ourselves with the course which Reality adopts in its various manifestations of organic and inorganic matter and the innumerable combinations of both these.* Only in this way can we make any progress in philosophy and only in this sense can philosophy be a guide to civilization as the compass is to a mariner. The strain of such philosophizing is tremendous and we must relax our sallies into the Real by occasional walks in the domain of science but always intending to come back and be carried away by the live-current

of the Real. And we must warn the reader that we are only able to get glimpses of the Real and are not able to stand in full view of the LIGHT that there is—here, there, everywhere.

No one can see The Real, but He sees us. He is always near, the Nearest One of all.

Like most other branches of knowledge which deal with reality, philosophy seldom inquires into its own reality or necessity and yet this inquiry is most pertinent. The neglect of this principle has led to results which are obviously barren. One defect has already been pointed out in the last two paragraphs. Most philosophers begin to analyse the whole of reality as the scientist does, in his own particular branch of study. In their study of reality, the individual becomes the centre and the reality is made to revolve round this centre. The whole of reality becomes an "objective" to this centre which then necessarily becomes its "subjective". But this is entirely wrong. The individual is nothing but a transitory point in the whole of reality and part of it. We cannot treat reality as the scientist does his particular branch of knowledge. We must try to get outside our own individual point in the universe and try to view it as a whole from within itself. This is certainly very difficult and very nebulous but is the only right way of philosophizing.

The necessity of Philosophy.

We can dispense with philosophy no more than we can do with our daily nourishment. We, as human beings, having been born with the gifts of imagination and reasoning or rationalizing, cannot help philosophizing. ✓ Every child, on becoming conscious of himself or herself, begins to ask questions which are truly philosophical. We are born philosophers though we are not born scholars. We are not born with knowledge ready poured into our minds but *we are born inquisitive. And philosophy is nothing but an inquiry.* ✓ Each human individual is single. But round him are other men—his parents, brothers, strangers. Then there are other animals, some of them useful and some of them harmful. He has also to take account of heat, cold, rain, air and water. These things are also very useful and sometimes very hurtful to him. There is the whole world round each single individual. Things do not exist independently of each other. There is inter-connection of a confusingly complex kind. The more does this human individual grow, the greater his experience of the world, the greater is this complexity of inter-connections—connections between men and men; between men and animals; between animals as a whole and inanimate matter. Then there are obvious connections between what individual men, societies of men, animals and groups of animals want for their living and above all what human beings think and desire. The problem increases in extent and complexity every

moment of the individual's existence. The human being born with the rationalizing spirit seeks to find some unity in this complexity—some single view which will harmonize his own being with the rest of the world. One does not need to be a scholar to do this. Every child attempts it, but is generally repressed by the single answer: "We don't know" or "Don't ask such silly questions." The man of the world becomes wise, looks after his own business and leaves all questioning to philosophers who generally get little thanks for their pains. *But whether a philosopher be right or wrong, as long as he is doing his work honestly he is satisfying an inborn hunger after knowledge—the most difficult knowledge of all—of the ultimate nature of reality.*

The divisions and departments of philosophy are extending every day but by general agreement, three divisions are said to be its main departments. These are :

(Departments of Philosophy.

(1) Ontology (fr. Gr. *eimi* be and *logos* word or knowledge)—knowledge concerned with the essence of things or being in the abstract, or the study of the ultimate nature of being or reality.

(2) Epistemology (Gk. *episteme*, knowledge and *logos*). Theory of the method or grounds of knowledge, or the study of the ultimate nature, validity and limitations of human knowledge.

(3) Axiology (Gk. *axioo* hold worthy of).

Or the study of the ultimate nature, reality and significance of values (goodness, beauty and truth).

Ontology and epistemology are grouped together and called Metaphysics.

Axiology is divided into (a) Ethics or Moral Philosophy, the study of the ultimate ideals and norms of conduct ;

(b) Aesthetics or the Philosophy of Beauty, the study of the ultimate ideals and norms of art.

Besides these departments, Logic or the study of the general conditions of valid reasoning is preliminary to all other studies. Logic (Gk. *Logos*) is the study of knowledge in the abstract just as Mathematics is the study of numbers and spatial figures in the abstract but Logic underlies all reasoning and may be said to be the mother of all sciences. The knowledge which distinguishes man from other animals is Logic. A man need not be a scholar to be a Logician.

Most books on philosophy are written either as aids to University students to pass examinations in Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy or as a refutation by one philosopher of the theories of another or others. In this way, books and systems multiply by the score. To quote Frederic Harrison : "Oxford calls out to Edinburgh, Birmingham challenges Harvard, and Glasgow replies to Cambridge. And

The aim of this Book.



one and all appeal to Jena, Berlin, Tribinger, or Bonn. Now the cry is—"Back to Kant!": anon it is—"Hegel to the rescue!": and then there comes to the front Neo-Schopenhauerianism, or the Panpassivism of Nietzsche, and the Pragmatism of Signor Papini. The cry is "still they come!" (*The Philosophy of Common Sense*, p. xviii).

This Babel of philosophies would not matter if they were intelligible, but most of them are Greek or Dutch to the reader of King's English. To quote the same book once again (p. xii): "The modern Metaphysical Tongue is far more bewildering to the unlearned than either Esperanto or Volapük."

The aim of this book is to state and interpret the philosophy of the Qur-ân in as simple a language as possible.

The philosophy of the Qur-ân is summed up in its first sentence which translated literally is as follows :

"The praise belongs to God Lord of worlds."

Paraphrased in proper English this means :

All goodness, truth and beauty are part of the Real (God) who is the source, nourisher, and guide of all that is known."

All the three departments of philosophy are contained in this one sentence.

Starting at the end we get first *Epistemology*: We must find out by perceptions and conceptions all that the human mind can find out by itself. That is the Universe and all that which is known.

When we have done that we must realize that with all that is known is its source, nourisher and guide called *Rab* in Arabic and *Vital Principle* in this book. God is the *Vital Principle* of all the worlds of minds and matter. The aim of all this knowledge and all this acknowledgment of the Real is realization of his values of Goodness, Beauty and Truth and the cultivation of these values in ourselves.

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## CHAPTER II

### The Nature of Unity or The Whole :

#### Infinity and Zero :

Every individual has a glimpse of God. It may be a momentary one ; it may be lasting ; it may be hazy ; or it may be clear ; it may be a recurring vision ; or it may seem to vanish after the first appearance. The mother with her first born on her knees has it ; the father kissing his heir or his angel of a daughter has it ; my cat rubbing his head against my cheeks has it ; my pigeon responding to my call has it. Nay, the very stones and atoms of matter proclaim the glory of God. There is nothing that exists or can exist except by its existence in God.

Let us illustrate this by an arithmetical summation.

Arithmetical  
series of  
equations.

The following arithmetical equations  
are self-evident :—

$$\frac{1}{2} = 1 - \frac{1}{2} \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{1}{4} = \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{4} \quad (2)$$

$$\frac{1}{8} = \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{8} \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{1}{16} = \frac{1}{8} - \frac{1}{16} \quad (4)$$

$$\frac{1}{32} = \frac{1}{16} - \frac{1}{32} \quad (5)$$

.....

$$\text{or} \quad \frac{1}{2^n} = \frac{1}{2^{n-1}} - \frac{1}{2^n} \quad (n)$$

Where  $2^n = 2 \times 2 \times 2$  multiplied  $n$  times.

Now, add the columns both on the left hand and right hand sides given above and we get :

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} \dots\dots\dots + \frac{1}{2^n} = 1 - \frac{1}{2^n}$$

Now, suppose that we make  $n$  an infinitely large number, so large that even our imagination cannot reach it, then  $\frac{1}{2^n}$  will become infinitely small or almost zero *compared with unity*. In fact, after the process of increasing  $n$  has gone sufficiently long the sum of all the end terms of the series will itself be little more than a zero *compared with unity*. [We must never forget the words *compared with unity*.]

We may, therefore, quite logically say that when  $n$  is infinitely large, the series—

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{32} \dots\dots\dots + \frac{1}{2^n} = 1. \quad (A)$$

Reasoning in the same way we can easily demonstrate that

$$\frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{32} + \dots\dots\dots \text{to infinity}$$

$$\frac{1}{4} = \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{32} + \dots\dots\dots \text{to infinity}$$

$$\frac{1}{8} = \frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{32} + \frac{1}{64} + \frac{1}{128} + \dots\dots\dots \text{to infinity}$$

$$\frac{1}{16} = \frac{1}{32} + \frac{1}{64} + \frac{1}{128} + \frac{1}{256} +$$

&c..... to infinity

$$\frac{1}{2^n} = \frac{1}{2^{n+1}} + \frac{1}{2^{n+2}} + \&c.$$

The result of the summing given above proves that unity is equal to the sum of the following terms *viz.*,

$$\frac{1}{2}, \quad \frac{1}{4}, \quad \frac{1}{8}, \quad \frac{1}{16} \dots \dots \dots \frac{1}{2^n} \quad \text{when } n$$

is infinite and that *each term in the series is equal to the sum of all those that follow it.*

This reasoning proves mathematically that a whole may be expanded into a series of terms and that this series may be made into an infinite or finite series as we please, because the *equation* :

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \dots \dots \dots + \frac{1}{2^n} = 1 - \frac{1}{2^n}$$

*remains true for all values of n.* But if *n* is made infinite then the sum of any number of finite terms at the end taken away from the whole makes no appreciable change in the value of the whole. In other words, an Infinite series which is equal to one is such that the taking away of any number of terms from the lower side of the series makes no difference to the whole.

This would mean that when *n* is infinitely large in the above series the following sum, *viz.*,

$$\frac{1}{2^n} = \frac{1}{2^{n+1}} + \frac{1}{2^{n+2}} + \&c. = \text{very nearly}$$

zero as compared with unity for each term is itself practically a zero and the adding of the above terms is little more than saying that

$$0 + 0 + 0 + 0 + 0 + \dots = 0.$$

But each of these zeros is a zero only when compared with unity. By itself it is double the value of each following zero, just as  $\frac{1}{2}$  is double of  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  is double of  $\frac{1}{8}$  and so forth. Comparatively speaking therefore, zeros also have values.

The series (A) given above is very simple but very instructive. It demonstrates that a whole may be expanded into any number of terms and each term may again be expanded into any other number and that each term is part of the whole but the whole is beyond all terms and yet comprehends them all. We do not say that God or the Real is like this series or that he is already expanded into any series. It is sufficient to understand that he can, if he so chooses, give out any infinitely small portion of his will and yet remain whole and undiminished. Let the reader ponder over this series and take his own time in comprehending all its implications. This is not the best illustration that we could produce. If we were to bring in the services of the Integral Calculus we could give some very striking examples of the method and value of calculating

infinitely small quantities. But the series (A) given above is intelligible to every one and sufficient to convey what we have in mind. According to this method of reasoning, God has to say to  $\frac{1}{2^n}$  of matter or mind or both or of Beauty, Goodness and Truth or all combined to "BE" and it BECOMES. Then this  $\frac{1}{2^n}$  goes on expanding itself to—

$$\frac{1}{2^{n+1}} + \frac{1}{2^{n+2}} + \frac{1}{2^{n+3}} + \&c. = \frac{1}{2^n} .$$

In this way, each higher fraction will have the qualities of each lower fraction, in itself without any inconsistency and each lower fraction combined with all others lower than itself will be the sum of the one higher than itself. So that we have a double evolution existing in the series from higher to lower if we run across the series from left to right; and from lower to higher if we run across the series from right to left. This is exactly what we find in the Universe whether we regard it a Universe of matter or mind or both combined into a body-soul or soul-body existence. But more of this hereafter.

The inspiration of this book comes from the Qur-ân. But let not the reader think that we are preaching any religion. We are not. We are only quoting the philosophical expositions of the Qur-ân which are the common property of all mankind. The Qur-ân is not a monopoly of the Arabs. It is a revela-

tion to all mankind, nay, to the whole Universe of rational beings. In giving our translations we have given the literal or the scientific meanings of the original terms as it seemed most convenient ; but we have kept the word God as it is.

The numbers in brackets refer to chapters and verses respectively. The translations are our own and from the original text.

(1) " God's affair is nothing but this :  
When He wills a thing,  
He says to it " Be "   
And it " Becomes." (36—82).

(2) " Our Word to a thing  
When We will it is nothing but this :  
We say to it " Be "   
And it " Becomes." (16—40).

(3) " The case of Jesus with God is like the  
Case of every human being (*lit.* Adam) :  
God makes him out of dry earth  
Then says to him " Be "   
And He " Becomes." (3—58).

(4) " He is the source of life.  
And He is the source of death.  
So that when He makes up His mind with



regard to any affair,  
 He says to it " Be " :  
 And it " Becomes." (40--68).

There are many other passages similar to these but let us be content with these four. Creation is God's Volition. All these four passages refer to what is commonly called " Creation." The first two refer to a " thing." The Arabic word for thing means " what is desired."

The act of creation with God is nothing but Volition. This solves one of the greatest puzzles of philosophy—the ultimate nature of reality. We have it here most plainly that *Volition* is, if not the whole of the ultimate nature of reality, certainly the most important part thereof as far as we are concerned ; because it is by Volition of The Real that all existence or universe comes into being.

The first two quotations given above refer to creation in general, the third refers to man (a being in possession of mind) and the verse is quite clear that man proceeds from the earth. We will, later on, have something more to say about man's evolution (chapters 5 and 6) but for the moment it is sufficient to point out that he is no exception. He, like all other creation, is a product of Volition on the part of the The Real.

The fourth verse quoted above refers to "affairs" themselves, not to "things." This is made clear by the use of the words "When He makes up His mind with regard to an affair." The "affair" is a question of mind in this case and the "creation" of mind is also governed by "Volition." "Volition," therefore, is unquestionably the ultimate nature of reality or part of that ultimate nature.

"The Truth proceeds from thy *Vital Principle* (O man !)

Therefore thou needst not quarrel." (3-59).

The word which we have rendered as "*Vital Principle*" is *Rab* in Arabic which means "one who brings forth, nourishes and carries a thing to its successful termination." That is to say, *it is another name for Reality governing all existence.*

When God says to a "thing" "Be" and it "Becomes," is the thing outside God? Is Creation a part of God? or is it part of Himself? If it was outside Himself, there would be duality or plurality. On this point, the Qur-ân is most explicit; everything whether mental or material is part of God, or as the Qur-ân says, "belongs to God." In the following translations the words "belongs to" or "belong to" are to be understood in the sense of "being part of." The Arabic word for "thing" is "what is desired" which again shows that the Universe is "what is desired by God." God is

infinite and all His creation is like the lower terms of the series (A) given above. Each term is a part of the Whole or Unity and when God creates anything finite He does not in any sense suffer any loss for the simple reason that, whether infinitely small or otherwise, all creation (*i. e.*, any number of terms in the series (A)), are still part of the Whole. **THE UNIVERSE IS PART OF THE WILL OF GOD.**

Each term  $\frac{1}{2^n}$  of the series can again be expanded into a series of its own without causing any loss to itself or to the Whole. The evolution of God's creation is certainly not so simple as the expansion of series (A). The creation of God is beyond all imagination most complex as far as our limited minds can conceive it, but the illustration given above—series (A)—makes us realize more or less how this creation of God may take place. But we must not digress. **THE POINT WE WISH TO MAKE OUT IS THAT ACCORDING TO THE QUR-AN ALL "CREATION" IS PART OF GOD AND NOT A DISPARATE EXISTENCE.**

“ God is the Maker of all things,

And He is the custodian over them all.

To Him belong the Keys of all the heavenly bodies and this earth.” (39—62 & 63).

“ And to God belong the East and the West,

Therefore, whichever way you turn

You will find God's Being there ;

Surely God is Vast (Infinite), Knowing.

“ And they say : “ God has taken a son.”

(Free from all defects is He).

Nay, to Him belongs whatever is in the heavenly bodies and this earth.

All are bound to His will.” (2—115 & 116).

“ To God belongs whatever there is in the heavenly bodies.

And whatever there is on this earth ;

And whether you disclose what is in your minds or conceal it.

He has a record of it all.” (2—284).

As a matter of fact, the whole Qur-ân is full of such verses. Nothing does exist or can exist except its being in God. Just as every term of the series,

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} \dots\dots\dots \frac{1}{2^n} = 1 \quad (\text{A})$$

is a part of the whole, so is every atom, or electron of matter, anything bigger or smaller than an electron, part of God. Similarly every soul and spirit, every mind or intellect, is part of God Himself.

“ Whichever way you turn you will find God's Being there.” These words are very significant. They imply an activity on the part of man, not merely a passive or static attitude. Whichever way man exercises his mind, whether on matter or mind,

whether on logic or spiritualism, whether on Mathematics or Biology, whether on chess or billiards, whether on painting or poetry, whether on music or sculpture, man shall find God's Being present governing all phenomena.

“ Say : Surely my spiritual devotions (*lit.* prayers) and my bodily performances and my principle of life and my principle of death all belong to God who is the *Vital Principle* of the Universe.” (6--163).

We see, therefore, that whether man is made after the image of God or not, man's life on this earth and his journey hereafter are a part and parcel of God Himself. He can no more divorce himself from Universe, reality which governs the whole than can the term  $\frac{1}{2^n}$  exist without its being a part of Unity or the Whole. The fraction means nothing but that it is that portion of unity which is conceived by dividing unity by a number equal to 2 multiplied by itself  $n$  times.

Why does God spread Himself out in such infinite series ? Why does He not contemplate His own being without bothering Himself with other beings so finite compared with Himself ? He may well do so. Plato, long ago, with the intuition of a genius said that it must be because God was Good. But when we speak of the Goodness of God we must not confound it with the *moral conduct* of man. Goodness in God

The Goodness  
of God appears  
in His Works.

implies beneficence, blessing and bestowing a gift. Volition belongs entirely to Him but out of His grace. He spreads it out and creates other beings endowed with a finite portion of His Infinite Will.

“To Him belong the keys of the treasures of the heavenly bodies and this earth ; He spreads His provisions for whomsoever He pleases and He has a proportion. Surely He knows everything,” (42—12).

The unphilosophical reader of the Qur-ân takes this and other similar verses to refer to material provisions and material treasures only, but that is not the whole truth. The reference is a general one and the spiritual significance of these verses is the more important of the two. The verse means that the source of all goodness, truth and beauty (and these values dominate the heavens and the earth) is with God and that He out of His bounty bestows these values on those who are able to make use of them and He knows in what proportion to make His gifts. To one He gives

$\frac{1}{2^n}$  of His Goodness or Love, to another He gives

$\frac{1}{2^m}$  and to a third  $\frac{1}{2^l}$  and so forth. To each being

He has given what is good for it. To give a being more than it can carry would be to destroy it, whilst to give it less would be niggardly. Thus He combines mercy (in the larger sense of benevolence) with justice (correct measurement).

“Say: if you had the controlling power over the treasures of the benevolence of my *Vital Principle* you would have withheld the dispensing thereof fearing to exhaust them.” (17—100).

This verse clearly shows that by “treasures” in other verses God means His Goodness or Benevolence and not merely food and clothes for the body. God’s treasures of Goodness are so vast that there is no fear of their being exhausted. But man being limited in his resources thinks that he will be a loser by being bountiful. God’s resources are unlimited but He provides each being according to its capacity to enjoy His favours.

“Or is it that they (mankind) are in possession of the treasures of the Goodness of the *Vital Principle* who is all-Mighty, all-Bountiful?” (39—9).

This is a question which suggests a negative answer. Mankind are not in possession of infinite Goodness, but God is, and He gives it to whom He pleases and as He pleases. “Or is it that they (mankind) have possession of the treasures of thy *Vital Principle* or is it that they are the controllers of the distribution thereof?”

Again the answer is in the negative. God alone is the Master and the Controller of the treasures of His Goodness.

“And there is not a thing in existence but We have (immense) treasures thereof, but We give to each only a certain proportion thereof.” (15—21).

This life is a schooling and a discipline. Each human being has a history and a heredity which he carries along with him adding to it his own share of increase or decrease of goodness. Some revert back to a condition of *spiritual beastliness*, some stagnate, whilst others make progress. Comparatively a few rise to great heights of spiritual glory and see visions of The Real which their less fortunate fellows never do. But God is Just, as well as Bountiful, and gives to each being his due. Men like Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad see visions of The Real and have peeps into His Firmament of Light and Loveliness such as are not possible for the rest of us in this life. The kingdom of the heavens and the earth and its secrets belong to God and are no secrets to Him at all and He shows as much of these as He pleases and to whom He pleases; but like the Mathematician of space and numbers each sees only as much as he is capable of and for what he has worked. Mathematicians perform wonders of skill with signs and symbols representing spatial quantities and the man of spiritual Mathematics similarly performs wonders in solving spiritual problems.

“And in this way, We showed Abraham the working of the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that he became sure of its existence.”

The working of God's kingdom known only to those who strive to know.

(6-76).



A poet is born, not made, *i.e.*, every person cannot become a poet; the poetical gift must come into existence with the poet's own existence in this world. The bent of a poet's mind is different from that of other people. But even with this gift, very few poets, if any, are known to have suddenly budded and blossomed into great poets. As a rule, the greater the poet the more painstaking he is. He studies the poetry of his predecessors and learns by the usual method of "trial and error" till by perseverance he is able to produce something of his own. Even then he has to wait, and to cultivate the ground of poetry till it brings forth its fruit unto him.

"And it is a fact that for man there is only that which he strives for.

And his striving for shall be scrutinized ;

Then he shall be rewarded his reward in full :

And towards thy *Vital Principle* is the end of all ambitions." (53—39 to 43).

This means that each being is given the opportunity to exercise and develop the gifts of God given to him and each being will reap the full benefit of his efforts in spiritual progress. This life is only the beginning of the exercise of such spiritual struggles amidst much that appears to be obstructive and opposite to the development of goodness in man, but that on the whole the balance is greatly in favour of such development. Those who are not fully

conscious of the absolute goodness of God waver and are lost. But the reason for their loss is that God has given His gift of goodness to be used. When that gift is not used, it is taken away and man is left wandering in darkness. God's gifts are truth and goodness ; light and love ; grace and beauty. These, and not food and clothing, are the ultimate realities.

Our dogs, cats, cows and camels see the same universe as we do. But the cat, cow and camel do not see the universe with the same eyes as does man and no two men have the same eyes either, whether they be poets, philosophers or prophets. No two elements of chemistry act alike. *In the infinite series into which God has spread Himself, each term has its own value.*

Before we proceed any further in our search of the ultimate nature of reality we must settle one question, *viz.*, "Is God Static?" Many philosophers and most religious people have conceived God to be so. It is not our business to find fault with their conceptions. Some of the greatest geniuses of the world have considered God to be Static and the Universe to be a "block universe," made once for ever as it is and as it shall remain for ever. To them the idea of a Progressive God amounts to blasphemy.

The idea of a Static God is so consoling to static minds that they cannot think otherwise, and it would

be worse than folly to quarrel with them. It is said that God has made man after His own image but it also appears that man is never tired of making God after his (man's) own image. And this image is very often *a reflection of man's own self in the mirror of his own mind*. And as Fichte has said: "The kind of philosophy that a man chooses depends upon the kind of man that he is." And as, moreover, extremes meet in infinity, there is after all not much to quarrel with those who believe God to be Static and the universe to be a "block universe." As a concept this "block universe" is much easier to consider than a progressive and expansive universe in which The Real is ever expanding Himself and never letting us rest—we who are so finite and so fond of residing within the prison of our own minds. But to one who thinks seriously over this matter, the idea of a Static God is the very negation of all knowledge that we possess about either ourselves or the material universe. Even those who believe in a Static God are constrained to believe in the "flux of events." But they say that whilst everything else changes God remains what He is.

Let us once again turn to the Qur-ân and see what it says. We first quote two verses on which the holders of the *Static* view of God rely:—

"And call not in your spiritual invocations on any deity with God:

He is the only Deity :

Everything is going to decay (or perish) except His Being.

To Him belongs the decision and towards Him do you return.” (28—88).

“ Everyone on this earth is passing away. And there abides (or endures for ever) the Being of your *Vital Principle* who is possessor of infinite Glory and infinite Honour.” (55—26 & 27).

From these verses it is inferred that all creation passes away or perishes and that God remains Static. But this logic is not quite correct. If we say that A dies but B lives for ever, it does not mean that B is static. On the contrary, B a living being must go on living. Life means continuity, activity, progress. The verses mean the very reverse of what the Static view of God takes for granted. We see that a flower blossoms to-day and withers to-morrow. All its beauty of form and smell that fascinates us so much is gone after a while. The handsomest man and the prettiest maid come to their age and death, or sometimes early decay and early death. It is the same with the rest of creation. The moon is already cold, the earth is semi-cold and the sun may some day be no hotter than our earth. All creation is subject to decay and death as we understand these terms. What the two (or rather three) verses quoted above mean is that

The flux of events does not mean God is Static.

we must not judge God as we judge ourselves. *God abides for ever.* The rest abide in time. If He was not continuously putting forth new life He would be a stagnant God. But He is not. *He is ever active and it is His activity which abides.* The activity in His creatures is subject to time but His activity is ever young. We have many other verses which directly ascribe continuous activity to God.

The very next verse after the one just quoted above says clearly that God is engaged in a new creation or new evolution every moment of His Eternity.

“All who are in the heavenly bodies and on this earth are in need of Him :

Every moment He is in an affair of some kind.”

(55—29).

Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon translates the last sentence as “Every day He is employing Himself in an affair of some kind.”

It is obvious that if God is employing Himself in an affair of some kind every moment (or day) of His Eternity He cannot be said to be a Static God. The word *Shaanin* which is translated as an affair of some kind means something that keeps one busy and the *in* at the end of *Shaan* is to denote that the noun is an indefinite noun, *i.e.*, any affair, an affair of any kind, an affair that is new.

We now proceed to quote verses that show that God goes on creating for ever new creations or new forms of old ones :—

“Have they not considered this fact that God Who makes the heavenly bodies and this earth and is not tired with their making is capable of causing the dead to live again? Yea, He is capable of doing all He pleases.” (46—33).

It is quite plain from this verse that the recreation of the dead is considered as a small matter compared with the making of the heavens and the earth which God goes on making and is not tired of doing so. Take three more verses :—

“And man sets forth parables for Us (God) and forgets his own making. He says: “Who will give life to these bones when they have become decomposed?”

“Answer thou—He will put life into them who evolved them the first time.” For He knows all makes. He who makes for you fire out of green tree which you burn. Is not He who makes the heavenly bodies and this earth capable of making their likes? Yea, for He is the most excellent Maker and full of Knowledge.” (36—77 to 80).

These verses not only state that God creates and recreates but gives an example which everyone can see for himself. The carbon contained in the wood of the green tree and all plants is burnt by mankind

either in their ovens or in their own bodies and escapes as carbon dioxide into the air. The ashes of the wood are thrown away into the earth. But the chlorophyll of plants acting under the power of the light of the sun and with the help of the water and salts or ashes sucked up by the roots of the plants catches carbon from the carbon dioxide of the air and converts it into wood and starches and sets oxygen free for men and animals to breathe. In this way *both plants and animals are being daily recreated.*

Animals and men seem to live one life from birth to death but it is only the *vital principle* which remains continuous in our bodies, otherwise *with every effort of mind and body millions upon millions of cells of the body* (which are all living organisms) *are being killed.* Their place is daily and hourly being taken by new cells made by our bodies without our being conscious of all the wonderful processes that go on inside our bodies. Bones, muscles, nerves, arteries, capillaries, veins, hair, skin, brain and all the other innumerable organisms of the body are composed of billions upon billions of cells. And the life of an animal is a continuous process of births and deaths and rebirths of these cells. This daily evolution is going on and that is why God says, "He will put life into them (bones) who evolved them the

There are many births and many deaths.

first time.” The *vital principle* is working with us all the time and evolving our bodies. And but for this *vital principle* neither food nor drink would be of the least use. It is the activity of God which causes us to live, which means not only assimilation of food and the expulsion of poisons but also the working of the mind—the will employed in doing any particular work ; the consciousness of an aim or object for which such work is done ; and above all the enjoyment which the exercise of the mental, moral, spiritual and bodily functions brings with it.

The Vital Principle is working with us always.

Poets, preachers and philosophers, like the mathematician, have to use a language of symbols because ordinary language is incapable of conveying the full meaning which is to be conveyed.

The soul or spirit of man is like the chlorophyll of the plant. With the help of earthly water, *i.e.*, life and earthly salts, *i.e.*, knowledge it sucks the Light of God and stores it in its spiritual body to be liberated at some future date and meanwhile it is liberating the oxygen of the Goodness of God for the creation and recreation of more goodness. Thus does the Goodness of God go on ever progressing and ever evolving itself without suffering any loss or damage.

Even those who take the static view of the Absolute agree with us that God's Goodness is Infinite and that there is no decrease or increase therein but that each manifestation of the whole in



what appear to be new phases of Reality to our eyes, is a manifestation of the Infinite Goodness that is latent in Reality. So that whichever view we hold we come back to the same conclusion with regard to the Goodness of God that is concurrent with all His creation including overselves. But He repeatedly warns us in the Qur-an that He can take away what He has made and replace it of something else.

“If He please, He may do away with you and bring a new creation.

And all this costs Him nothing.” (35—16, 17).

Every act of creation is a mere act of Volition on the part of God and He does not produce anything in vain or wills anything that is contrary to or irreconcilable with what He has already willed b ̣ His power of willing is in no way restricted by His own Activity or the activities of those He has created.

The Harmony  
of God's  
Creation.

In the spiritual realm this process of regeneration is always going on and although the individuals composing nations do not all die out, the political, moral and spiritual supremacy of mankind is always passing from those that are less fitted to those that are better fitted to carry on the Will of God. The nature of reality manifests itself in individuals as well as in nations and communities and *God is not partial to any individual or any nation.* The Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans

The regeneration  
of peoples is  
also going on.

and Arabs have had their periods of rise of power. *Each manifested some goodness of God and when the power of carrying on that goodness was exhausted the nation ceased to have its supremacy.* Generally speaking, the political, moral and spiritual progress all go hand in hand but it is possible that one nation may be in advance of the other in any particular respect. For the last three hundred years Europe (including European colonies in other continents) has been politically supreme and especially so within the last 50 years but unless this political power is accompanied by moral and spiritual awakening it will go the way of previous civilizations and anyone who doubts that has only to study the history of Spain since the Saracens were driven out of it. For nearly eight hundred years Spain under the Saracens was the guiding star of European civilization but though Spain became the most powerful monarchy in the world after the discovery of America by Columbus, her power soon decayed, for there was no moral or spiritual life behind Spanish conquests in Europe and America. There seems to be no moral or spiritual force behind European conquests in Asia and Africa either, but there are awakenings of such force and it is possible that Europe may still be saved the fate of the monarchies of Spain and Russia. All this may seem to be a digression but it is a point most pertinent to the investigation we are engaged upon. Says the Qur-ân :

“ And your *Vital Principle* is Self-Sufficient,

Possessor of great benevolence.

If He please, He may do away with you and cause to succeed after you whom He please, just as He evolved you from the seed of another people.”

(6—134).

The point to note is that this change of succession amongst nations is an act of God's Goodness as is explained in the opening words by reference to God being “Possessor of great benevolence.” If He did not do so the whole world would become corrupt and degenerate. The degeneration which set in before the Roman Empire fell, is well known to all—a degeneration so sordid that it boasted of feasts where whole dishes were prepared of peacocks' tongues and other luxuries were indulged in, which had no rhyme or reason. For God to have sat quiet and let the world rot under the decay of the Roman Empire would have meant that God was either incapable of fresh activity or that His activity had gone to sleep. But God is never asleep.

“God is,

There is no deity, but He is,

The Ever-Living, All-Sustaining,

Slumber overtakes Him not, nor does sleep.,

(2—255).

The fact, however, is that there are two great  
Two great fallacies which consciously or uncon-  
fallacies sciously most scientists, philosophers

and holders of different religious views fall into. The first of these is the conception of God or The Real as Transcendant-being above and beyond the Universe. alism and Pantheism. The second fallacy is the opposite of this and is known as Pantheism which regards God and Universe as synonymous terms.

We have heard some religious people affirm that God appears to do nothing. If it were really so, it would amount to saying that after having established His Kingdom, God had abdicated His Throne for a certain term.

So confusing and so contradictory are the views of philosophers and religious people about God that it is extremely difficult to find one's way through their labyrinths. Man is always fond of conceiving God after his (man's) own image and thus lands himself in trouble from which there is no escape. Is God personal? Is God impersonal? Is God Static and above the world? Is God the same as the Universe? Is the Universe a creation of God in the sense of a potter making his pots and breaking them and remaking them as he pleases? Is the universe an emanation of God as light emanates from a lamp? Or is creation, again, like a spadix of a fruitful tree bursting out into blossom and fruit as Bergson has it? Is God Immanent in Nature? Is God Immanent as well as Transcendant?

These and scores of such other questions have been asked and discussed by various authorities at

various times and anyone who likes to go through the puzzle again can look over the article "The Idea of God" by W. R. Mathews in "An Outline of Modern Knowledge."

If God is Personal, say the critics, there must be something that is "not self" to set off His Self. Professor A. N. Whitehead has been led to postulate a God as necessary for the being of the world, and at the same time a world as necessary for the being of God.

This would be making two Realities and not one. And how do they manage their relations?

"If there was any deity but God in the heavenly bodies and the earth (*lit.* in the two of them) both would have gone out of order.

But God the *Vital Principle* of the whole Universe is free from what they attribute to Him." (21—22).

"He has not taken any child nor is there any deity alongside Him. Had it been so, each would have carried away what it had created and some of them (the deities) would have dominated the others.

God is free from what they attribute to Him (of other deities)." (23—91).

The logic of this argument is unanswerable. There cannot be two supreme powers in the Universe. All wars are due to contest of power. If there had been more than one deity there must have been confusion

in the Universe. We all know that it is an orderly universe. If science has taught us anything it has taught us at least this. To go back on the orderliness of the universe is to deny human reason and deny everything.

Pantheism  
is only half  
the truth.

Pantheism gets over the difficulty by identifying God with the world. This is certainly an improvement on having many deities. The only difficulty is that science and reasoning both point to the world being finite and a God who is finite does not recommend itself to our ideas of the deity. If He be finite He cannot create any more. Creation is finished. In fact if the creation and the creator are one how did any creation ever take place? Pantheism is, therefore, bound to deny creation.

Reality is always  
working from  
within man  
and matter.

But our conception of God or The Real briefly is that the Universe, including mind therein, is an expansion or manifestation of God and has its being or existence in God. For the sake of clarity we say that both man and matter dwell in God and yet, as we have demonstrated by the series (A):

God remains Whole, He is the source of it and yet His Wholeness is not affected by the existence of man and matter. This conception of God is neither Pantheistic nor that of a Personal Being sitting apart from His creation.

*Creation according to our conception is an Expansion of The Real Himself.* And this Expansion takes place through the Volition of The Real. In other words, it is nothing but Volition. Each act of Volition means that God releases so much of His Will to expand itself.

We must remember that each term of the series (A) is capable of expansion in the same way as A itself

$$\frac{1}{2^n} = \frac{1}{2^{n+1}} + \frac{1}{2^{n+2}} + \&c. \quad \text{to infinity (B)}$$

The reader can put  $n=1$ ,  $n=2$ ,  $n=3$  &c. and see that the series remains true for all values of  $n$ . In future we will call this general form of series (A) as series (B). When we put  $n=0$  in (B) the series (A) and (B) become identical, thus

$$\frac{1}{2^0} = 1 = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \text{to infinity.}$$

Any number raised to the power zero = 1  $\therefore 2^0 = 1$ .

*And unity divided by itself still remains unity.* This further illustrates our thesis of the expansion of God into His creation. When He does so *He is merely dividing Himself by Himself and still remain.* Whole but the division produces the millions of manifestations of His own Self. That which produces the manifestation is division. The opposite process of addition is the rolling back or gathering up of this manifestation into unity. Thus, manifestation of reality means Reality expanding itself.

The opposite process is integration. Both processes are continuously going on in the Universe without beginning and without end as far as we are concerned. Beyond that we cannot penetrate nor is it any use doing so, for that would be nothing but a phantasy, and philosophy is concerned with thoughts that are rational. It is this *strict adherence to rational methods that distinguishes philosophy from poetry.*

When we say that the *Vital Principle* expands itself into a series of *vital principle* which are attached to each being, however small or great, we do not mean that God creates so many minor deities ; just the opposite. According to our theory everything is God's manifestation and each manifestation is part of the series (A) of which God is the one Whole. Nothing is or could be separated from Him. We say everything is in Him. Similarly, the small fractions of the *Vital Principle* are part of the whole of the *Vital Principle* itself and not disparate from it. The language of philosophy is highly symbolical. The reader must not take our explanation of the expansion of the *Vital Principle* too literally or too arithmetically. The arithmetic is a mere symbol to express something far more complex than a mere addition of fractions. But it is a great help to thought.

The *Vital Principle* and its expansions are one whole.



الحمد لله رب العالمين

### CHAPTER III

#### THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD AND OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH

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If Metaphysicians could agree on some notion of time, other things would become easier of comprehension. The discussion has become still more difficult since the acceptance of Einstein's theory of Relativity in which the Universal continuum is not the three-dimensional space, but is a space-time continuum which curves upon itself and is finite. This theory has made matters easier for the scientists, but for the philosophers the difficulty has become greater than ever. The terms which require explanation are (1) Time, (2) Eternity, (3) Duration and (4) Interval.

Time, as mankind understands it, has its notion in the diurnal rotation of the earth round its own axis, and the annual motion of the earth in its orbit round the sun.

These two motions, together with other astronomical motions, are the foundations of all our calculations and notions of time. In measuring the distances of the stars from one another we use light years. But a light year means the distance which light travels in one year moving at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. Thus again, the *year* and the *second* come into our calculation and both these relate to the motions of the earth. Our clocks also record nothing but fractions of the time the earth takes to move round its own axis once in 24 hours. Thus a second =  $\frac{1}{24} \times \frac{1}{60} \times \frac{1}{60}$  of this unit. *Time is a measure of motion.*

We can never get rid of this reality of time. Other beings on other planets (whether belonging to the solar system or outside it) must have other notions of time.

If we suppose the electron of hydrogen going round its proton to be a conscious being (for the sake of argument) then its standard or unit of time may be  $\frac{1}{10000}$ th of a second. To it the motions of the earth round its own axis would appear to be miserable crawl. Similarly if we suppose other beings whose unit of time is the time it takes the solar system from its inception to the stage when it will all become as cold as the moon, the daily rotation of the earth must appear to be an insignificant moment of time hardly worth considering.

Even we human beings have different notions of time during our dreams as compared with our waking hours and even in our waking hours it depends on how our minds are occupied. When the mind is occupied with itself, time does not appear to affect it at all. Hours pass away as they do in dreamless sleep. This has led some people to believe that there is no such thing as time at all. That it is purely an invention. But it must be remembered that if it is an invention, it is a 'natural ineradicable' invention and one 'that will last as long as the human mind' (Bergson). *An invention like this is as much a reality as the human mind* and if we are not going to believe in the existence of the human mind we might as well shut our eyes and ears, and lie speechless and motionless till the bacilli make something else of our bodies. But we are not created to do so, nor are the earth, moon, sun or stars :

“It is He who has made the sun a light-producing body,

And the moon to shine ;

And He has measured out their journeys,

So that *you may be able to know the counting of the years and mathematics :*

God has made all this as a truth.

He explains these Communications for the benefit of those who wish to know.” (10—5).

It is quite clear that the motions of the earth, sun and moon are at the root of all ideas of time as far as

we human beings are concerned and time is a fact. What is then Eternity and what is its relation to time?

In the last chapter we quoted three passages from the Qur-ân (28—88) and (55—26, 27) saying that all things pass or perish except the Being of God (*Rab* or The *Vital Principle* as He calls Himself). The meaning of those passages is that God exists in Eternity which has no beginning or end but that all other things have a beginning and an end. That is why they are said to be passing or perishing. *Eternity* (Ar. *Dahr*, Time Everlasting) is therefore an attribute of God only. The Real has no beginning and no end. All other realities which are

What is  
Eternity.

Eternity is an  
Attribute of  
God.

parts of The Real exist in time which is finite. From this it follows that God does not calculate time as we do. "In a day (or moment) the measure of which is like a thousand years of your counting."

Even this is merely a way of making us understand that our calculation of time and of the motions of bodies are not the same as those of God. Our conceptions of time, matter, motion and mind are ours. They are real but *reality appears to different beings in different ways*. We now come to the definitions of interval and duration. Henry Bergson has written several books on philosophy of which the main burden is that Duration is the chief feature of Reality. His book "Creative Evolution" deals mainly with this theme and the following quotations

What is  
Duration.

are taken from the authorised English translation by Arthur Mitchell, Ph. D. (1911).

“Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past gnaws without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation” (p. 5).

“Real duration is that duration which gnaws on things, and leaves on them the mark of its tooth. If everything is in time, everything changes inwardly, and the same concrete reality never recurs” (p. 48).

According to Bergson duration is an active agent of evolution. “Even so with regard to the moments of our life of which we are the artisans. Each of them is a kind of creation.”

The strength of the conception of duration has carried Bergson so far that Life, Reality and Evolution are inextricably mixed up in his mind in the one idea of duration. Says he: “For, as soon as we are confronted with true duration, we see that it means creation, and that if that which is being unmade endures, it can only be because it is inseparably bound to what is making itself. Thus will appear the necessity of a continual growth of the universe, of a *life* of the real. And thus will be seen in a new light the life which we find on the surface of our planet, a life directed the same way as that of the universe, and inversely of materiality. To intellect, in short, there will be added intuition” (p. 362).

To use his own phrase which he says is denied by the scientist (p. 363)—“duration is a dilution of eternity.”

Duration according to Bergson has an absolute existence (p. 217). And it is duration “that puts spokes in its wheels.” By “its” he means the “deductive method” as applied to sciences.

“This long analysis,” says he, “has been necessary to show that a *self-sufficient reality is not necessarily a reality foreign to duration*” (p. 314). The italics are his.

“Then the Absolute is revealed very near us and, in a certain measure, in us. It is of psychological and not of mathematical essence. It lives with us. Like us, but in certain aspects infinitely more concentrated and more gathered up in itself, it *endures*” (p. 315).

That is the crux of Bergson’s philosophy of duration. It is a dilution of eternity abiding with us as well as with everything else. He might have called it the attribute of the *vital principle* in us just as Eternity is the attribute of the *Vital Principle* of the universe. The ‘interval’ is real time or that which flows on between any two given moments of time. (Bergson, p. 23).

This subject is capable of being enlarged to any extent. What has been said above is sufficient for the time being. According to the Qur-ân, God or The Real is Ever-Living, All-Sustaining not liable to sleep,

What is  
Interval.

fatigue or death, riding over the limitations of space, time and matter. All things exist in Him and everything created has a *term*, *i. e.*, has a beginning and an end. It does not follow that after the term is over the thing comes to nothing. All that is meant is that nothing except God is Eternal in its flow. When the *term* or *duration* of a thing is over God recreates it, perhaps, in another and subtler form. Here are a few passages throwing light on these matters. The attributes of God are generally given in pairs (except in a few passages of great importance). Each individual attribute is complementary to the other.

“He is the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden.

And He knows all things.” (57—3).

The first pair of attributes are easily explained by what has been said with regard to God is Eternal. Eternity. They (the two attributes *the First* and *the Last*) mean that God is Eternal. He is the First and the Last and all else abides in Him.

The second pair of attributes, *viz.*, “He is the Apparent and the Hidden” is more difficult to explain. Commentators explain it by saying that He knows what is apparent and what is hidden. But this is not the meaning of the term used in the original text. If we refer back to the series (A) of Chapter II as an illustration, we see that whatever God wills becomes His manifestation, and that each manifestation, as far

as we can realise it is part of Himself and in that sense He is **Apparent** to us. We say this of our own experience that when the light of the sun shines on a great diamond and is refracted thereby and meets our eye, and our mind catches a glimpse thereof, it is a case of the light of God being realised by the light of God. We cannot carry the metaphor any further. It is the same with an electric current running through wires, being obstructed by other wires and being transformed into light and heat and becoming visible to our eyes.

It is the same with a musician playing on a harp or violin or piano and the sounds being transformed into melodies in our minds. This is what is meant by God's **Goodness**. He gives us minds and gives us means to realize our minds. We are not gods or God, but we share His Goodness and become beautiful. We realize God.

As to God being **Hidden**, we know from series (A) that the parts He manifests in us are finite whilst He is Infinite. Therefore He remains **Hidden** from us. When the Qur-an says that God is all-Hearing all-Seeing etc., it does not mean that He is a person having big ears and big eyes. God is all-Hearing and all-Seeing without the aid of ears and eyes. He has full knowledge, a part of which only is acquired by mankind through the agency of the senses.

“His case is not like anything else,



For He is all-Hearing, all Seeing " (42—11).

" He is the One God,

God Unique (not in need of anyone) :

He gives not birth ;

And He is not born

And there is no one like Him whatsoever " (Chapter 112). ✓

In this passage, plurality of gods or of Realities is denied ; God is described to be above all want, whilst all His manifestations depend upon Him. His Uniqueness is against His having children or parents or other relations which are the attributes of His creatures. The most important point to notice in this passage is that the theory of Creation being an emergence of God is indirectly refused here.

Creation  
is not an  
emergence.

Bergson's theory of creation being an emergence from reality just as a spadix produces fruit is directly denied for that would be giving birth to creation. We can only suppose that with Bergson and other European writers the theory of emergence of creation from Godhead is an unconscious expression of the sonship of Jesus though they would hotly deny holding any such view. But the unconscious and sub-conscious parts of our minds are always playing tricks with us and exhibiting themselves in most unexpected situations. We are, however, only concerned with the

nature of reality and the Quranic view is that creation is not an emergence of God in the sense that fruit emerges from the tree or children from parents. *The Real is free from all such necessity. He expands Himself by a pure act of Volition.* "When He will a thing, all He has got to say to it is "Be" and it "Becomes".

Muslim writers have selected 99 Attributes of God which with the word *Allah* or God made up 100 Asma-ul-Husna or Beautiful Names of God or His Attributes. These have been translated by Sir Edwin Arnold, with commentaries into English verse.

The book is called: *Pearls of the Faith*, or the Islam's Rosary, first published in 1882. It is a translation in poetic form of the composition of an Indian Musalman. The author says in the preface that Muhammad established under the name of Allah Ta'alah, "God the most High" — "the oneness of the origin, government, and life of the universe." This agrees with our interpretation of the philosophy of the Qur-ān.

Both Sir Edwin Arnold and his Muslim coadjutor have done nothing but translated the verses of the Qur-ān with a few myths and stories thrown in to make the book poetical. Every lover of the philosophy of the Qur-ān should carefully study "Pearls of the Faith". We give a few typical verses below:—

“Inside the Kaabah it matters naught

Whither men turn ; and in the secret place  
Of perfect love for God, words are as breath  
And will is all.”

(Translation from the *Masnavi* of M. Jalaluddin).

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“ Al-Basir ! O Thou Seer ! great and small  
Live in Thy vision, which embraceth all.”

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“ Tender His answers are:—

(The “ Chapter of the Star.” (No. 52) *Ayat* the  
Thirty-third) : The heavens and earth

To Us pertains, and We

Will deal, assuredly

Well with the good, but with the ill in wrath.

Yet not for each offence.

Errors of flesh or sense,

Shall there be judgment, children of the loam !

Our mercy reacheth far,

We know ye what ye are,

And knew ye while ye lay clots in the womb ;

Sin, and be sorry, and amend :

Who seeketh God shall find Him in the end.”

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“ He who is Power, is Grace and Beauty too,  
 And Clemency, and Pity, and Pure Rest,  
 The Highest and the Uttermost and Best.”

Space does not permit us to go more fully into a discussion of these attributes but as they directly concern the nature of reality they cannot be passed over cursorily. The Qur-ân calls a world by the word *Aalam* which means “all that which is cognized.” Therefore there is not one *Aalam* or world or universe recognized by the Qur-ân but *Aalamin* or worlds in the plural. This not only refers to many stellar and nebular universes but the universe of mind is a universe by itself. In fact, each reality cognized by the mind of man is a world or universe. What relation does then The Real hold to each such world? The Qur-ân says, He is the *Rab* of all the worlds. As to the root meaning of the word *Rab* Lane’s Arabic-English Lexicon published in 1867 says (p. 1002): *Rab-bal-amara*, “He put the affair into a right, or proper, state; adjusted it, arranged it, ordered it, or rightly disposed it; and established it firmly, etc. God (or The Real, being *Rab* of all the worlds (which is usually translated as “Lord of all the worlds”), therefore, means in full “One who puts all the worlds into a right, or proper state; adjusts them, arranges them, orders them, or rightly disposes of them; and establishes them firmly, etc.” We have translated the word *Rab* when

God is the  
 Vital Principle  
 of the Universe.

applied to God as the *Vital Principle*. The reader can see how close the ideas of *Rab* and *Vital Principle* are. The usual English translation is "Lord of all the worlds." "Lord" conveys the ideas of ownership and nourishment but it does not go far enough; for to *Rab* a thing in Arabic means to so conduct it in every way that it shall be maintained, ordered, nourished and looked after till it reaches its destination as it should. This can be done by the *Vital Principle* only. So that the whole universe and each part thereof has its *vital principle* supplied therewith which accompanies it to its *term* or *duration* as explained above. But this is not all. The Qur-ân begins (after the usual formula, We commence with the Name of God the most Bencvolent and most Compassionate) with this verse, "All praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds."

This when translated into philosophical language means:—

"All Goodness, Truth and Beauty unlimited by any restriction whatsoever reside in and are part of the Being of The Real who is the *Vital Principle* of the Universe and who sees to it that the whole universe and every part of it as His manifestation is nourished, ordered, arranged, adjusted and carried to a successful issue, etc. etc."

Philosophically and practically speaking, the Values which belong to God are of even greater importance to us than are His abstract attributes, for to be philosophers we must study and cultivate these Values

Importance  
of Values.

rather than be concerned with an academic discussion of the attributes of Eternity and Infinity which are of mathematical importance only. Philosophy is directly concerned with these values. It is not a metaphor to say that God or The Real is Good, Beautiful and the Truth. God's Goodness consists in giving freely of what He is possessed of.

One may ask why should a philosopher not be content with the work being done by the scientist? The answer is that the work of the scientist is confined to *measurement* and all his laws are laws of *measurement* only. He makes a great many discoveries of practical use but when all is said and done, the scientist remains as indifferent to the *real life* of man of the universe as he was before he started on his investigation. Neither the laws of Motion as enunciated by Newton, nor the theory of Einstein has the least influence one way or the other with regard to the inner life of man. The scientist has no need of God. He takes the Universe as it is and as long as it goes on according to his way of thinking he is satisfied. His 'laws' pre-exist in the universe with which he deals. All he has to do is to discover those laws and when discovered to satisfy himself that he is not deceived by his own reasoning. He has nothing to do with the *source* of those laws. Like the *Pantheist* his universe is sufficient unto him. He has limited his inquiry to the sphere of that which

Values are not of much importance to the Scientist.

his senses can perceive and his mind can conceive without any outside aid. When a scientist is using a telescope or a microscope or a photographic film he is still using his eyes. It is good that the scientist does so confine his inquiry. It adds usefulness and definiteness to his reasoning and helps his investigation. *Without his aid the philosopher would be nowhere at all.* And it is not necessary that the philosopher and the scientist must always be separate individualities. The same individuality may contain the scientist and the philosopher in one being as happened to be the case with Newton, Leibnitz and many other eminent men but the scientist and the philosopher even when they exist in the same individual must not be mixed together unless knowledge advances so far that the scientist can be satisfied that his work as a scientist is finished and he must merge his knowledge as a scientist into that of the philosopher. Even then, it is a *merger* and not a *mixture* of science and philosophy. When Napoleon asked Laplace, the great scientist, as to how God worked in the Mechanism of the celestial bodies Laplace replied, "Sire, I have no need of that hypothesis." This is not a denial of the existence of God but merely an acknowledgment that scientific inquiry is confined to given *data* and works according to these. To introduce speculative principles into scientific inquiry would be to ruin the validity of scientific "laws" and scientific discoveries. Everyone was satisfied (and is

Science is  
not in need  
of God.

satisfied within limits) with the laws of gravitation as enunciated by Newton till Einstein enunciated a better theory but if Newton and Einstein were to mix up their laws with the theory of religion one would not know what to say about their laws.

Recent philosophical thinking has clearly proved that "determinism" cannot account for all the facts even within the sphere of the scientist's domain. In fact, the scientist cannot explain his own laws. Bergson in France, Croce in Italy, Sorley and Eddington in England have taken up the cudgels for "indeterminacy" or "contingency" and some biologists like J. Arthur Thomson in England and H. Driesch on the continent of Europe have turned into philosophers of the new type.

Biology is not satisfied with "determinism"

Driesch is the leader of Vitalism or New Vitalism as against the *Mechanistic* theory of the universe and of life.

*Mechanistic* theories work more or less satisfactorily when we are dealing with dead matter, though even there electrons are showing a tendency towards "indeterminacy", but when we come to deal with 'life', *mechanism* fails to explain the facts. If the dynamo of a motor car goes wrong, we do not expect the plugs to take upon themselves the function of the dynamo. If one wheel in a watch or clock is removed or becomes functionless we do not expect the rest of the mechanism to undertake its work. But in life it is different. Life has its mechanism but when one organ becomes



defective, life attempts to *substitute* some other organ to do its work or create new organs. In fact, *evolution of life itself is unintelligible on purely mechanistic theories.*

The *Vital Impulse* or *Vital Principle* (as we call it) is always trying new experiments in life and it is by means of these new experiments that man himself has

Life is its own  
manufacturer.

come into being. To produce evidences in support of this thesis would require a whole volume. But we give some examples of which we have personal knowledge. We find that under certain circumstances man's kidneys become incapable of functioning as they should, *viz.*, the excretion of waste products from the blood. These waste products consist of different substances, such as urea, creatin, uric acid and its salts in solution. When the kidneys become incapable of excreting the waste products, great pain and inconvenience are the result and if the *Vital Principle* were not to come to man's help death would follow. But in a thousand different ways 'life' begins to work and cure the trouble.

One of the ways is that 'life' calls upon the 'skin' to undertake part of the work done by kidneys and if the patient helps nature by keeping the skin and its pores open by frequent baths and massage, the recovery of the kidney trouble is expedited. When the kidneys are working normally again, the skin gives up the extra work imposed upon it. There are persons known to us (and one is a doctor) who

have only one lung working. Yet life is being carried on. If it was a motor car and one of the four wheels broke down the motor car could not move. Life does make such changes of its own accord. Therein lies the difference between "life" and a "machine". A machine, no matter how perfect, cannot produce its life as it goes on performing its assigned function. Life goes on performing its assigned functions and producing its "likes", and when it cannot do so or it is not necessary to do so, it produces substitutes.

The skin as we have already stated takes upon it part of the function of kidneys; it will similarly come to the help of lungs, stomach and brain. In fact the main value of most of the *Spas* is that they help the skin to do more work and better work than it does normally and thus relieve other congested organs.

To come back to examples of substitution, it is known that if part of the brain of a living animal is removed, then after some time its functions are carried on by another part of the brain.

Substitution  
of the  
function of  
one organism  
by another.

A person having eyes in good working condition would never think that it was possible to tell colours by touch and yet this miracle has been performed by some blind men. The sense of touch in the blind takes the place, to a certain extent, of the sense of sight.

A complete organism can be developed from an incomplete egg. Any one cell of a two-, four- or eight-celled segmented ovum can produce a complete

embryo. Hence some special vital factor must be operative to produce such effects. It is beyond *mechanism*. Similarly, in the case of the segmented ovum of the sea-urchin which is normally formed by the division of the egg, any one cell, or group of cells, can function instead of the whole egg. These examples are given by H. Driesch who is himself a great biologist and they are well known. There are numerous other examples. If the leg of a young crab is cut off it will develop a new one in its place. But the examples of such new productions and substitutions are numerous in our own bodies and those of other animals. Dogs and cats brought from Russia to hot countries, in time, begin to lose their thick hair. Children who have been carried away to the jungle by animals begin to produce thick hair and crawl on all fours to adapt themselves to their new lives. As said before, evolution becomes inexplicable unless the *Vital Principle* is given a free hand in not only adapting the body to new surroundings but in bending new surroundings to its own purposes.

In this and numerous other ways, science itself is pointing to the need of a new philosophy but this new philosophy is as old as the heavens and is contained in the verse of the Qur-ân already quoted, "Every moment He is engaged in a new affair of some kind." (55-29).

The new philosophy.

All that we have to remember is that the *Vital*

*Principle is not sitting apart from us somewhere on the seventh Heaven but is working with us every moment of our lives and that we are part and parcel of His will. Only He is Infinite and we are finite. He is Eternal, and we are time-bound. As soon as we try to separate ourselves from Him, our spiritual progress stops or decays, though our bodies go on to their span of existence. Man is born to rise to the highest of the high amongst God's Creation, but there is the liberty of disbelieving given to man.*

“Surely We make man in the most beautiful form.

Then (when he changes) We change him to be the lowest of the low :

But those who believe in Reality and do good, for them is a continuous reward.”

The beauty  
of man.

(97—4 to 6).

The whole universe is a manifestation of God's Will. Goodness is the motive of this Volition. This Goodness has its vision in man, but man being endowed with will has the power to say whether he will accept this gift of Goodness or refuse. Some people (in fact a large number) do refuse it. They think that by giving freely of what they have (knowledge, wealth, health, advice, life itself) they will be the losers. They do not believe that giving freely in this case means increase. Hence what is given to them is taken away and given to someone else. And those who refuse the gift of God become the lowest of the

low. Having risen to the top of Mount Everest of God's glory, they shut their eyes and are hurled back down to the depth of the Pacific of Darkness. This is the meaning of the verse of the Qur-ân quoted just above. *This is the near philosophy—a belief in the goodness of the Vital Principle working with and through the soul which believes itself to be above the mechanism of the world and above the determinism of the scientist and which is its own guide.* But as soon as we refuse its help, down we go, for the *Vital Principle* of Goodness is not going to waste itself on an undeserving object. From the Mount Everest of God's Goodness we have the choice of rising to heaven itself, if we will. Right philosophy is needed to guide us in our progress. Man has many falls and many rises and each fall and each rise is in proportion to his faith in the Goodness of God working through his own soul. When the eyes of the soul are opened man sees that—

“All the heavenly bodies and this earth and all rational beings who have their existence in the midst of these manifest His Beauty. And indeed there is nothing that does not manifest His Beauty and His Goodness.” (17—44).

But the eyes of the soul are required to see this Beauty, and right Consciousness is required to understand this Goodness ; otherwise the verse continues when we fail (in our choice). “But you understand not this manifestation of Beauty.”

In spite of our defects or finiteness, however, “He is Gentle, Forbearing.”

The above translation of verse 44 of Chapter 17 is a philosophical but at the same time a correct rendering of the original.

It is not one fall that will bring down man to the lowest of the low. There are many brakes on the downward path as there are obstacles on the upward and man has always a chance of redeeming himself.

“O ye ! my servants ! who have been extravagant against your own souls, despair not of the Goodness of God.” (39—53).

The *Vital Principle* will not brook any defiance but it is always ready to help when man thinks better of himself and each fresh recognition of the Beauty of God washes away the darkness of past mistakes.

“Surely Beautiful visions cause the disappearance of ugly apparitions.” (11—11).

“Surely God forgives all lapses.” (39—53).

And man's rise and fall is not so cumbersome as the bodily climbing of the Himalayas.

How to maintain the Ascent to Beauty.

In one moment, the vision may come and man may rise but the maintenance of the spiritual position is far more difficult than keeping the bodily balance on a peak. Daily and hourly communication with the Beauty and Goodness of the *Vital Principle* is necessary for the soul to maintain its consciousness of the Truth, Beauty and Goodness of God. How is this balance to be maintained ? The soul must know the spirit of

Reality of which it is a part. Forgetfulness is the enemy of the soul. The struggle of maintaining its position often brings fatigue and weariness to the soul and it thinks the downward path to be easy. But as long as it does not wish to go down, it keeps its position. The alchemy which will keep it up is contained in the following prescription of The Real. Says He :

“Remember Me, I will remember you ;

And have comfort in Me and do not wish to deny Me.” (2—152).

God is gracious, and short of God making man His equal, God is Bounteous in satisfying man's good wishes, for these good wishes have their source in God. There are some indeed who see a vision of their being finally merged in God Himself, so that they go over to the left side of series (A) and are no more. This is the Nirvana of Budha—an utter annihilation of the soul of man in the Soul of God, or, as the Muslim mystics have it, the unification of God and man. Philosophy, however, must be rational and avoid the mists of *mysticism* as well as the grinding edges of the wheel of *mechanism*.

“And do not tie your hands to your necks nor stretch them forth, such a stretching forth that you are caused to sit down blamed, insolvent.” (17—29).

“And do not be too loud in your spiritual

invocations nor too low and seek a *via media*.”

(17—110).

These passages must be construed philosophically.

*Via Media*  
is the best.

Too great an ambition in approaching the reality and exhausting of the funds of reason in search of even Beauty and Goodness will end by making us morally and spiritually bankrupt. Similarly, making high-sounding claims in spiritual progress is as bad as making no claims at all. The golden mean is the best, even in search of such Values as Beauty and Goodness, because being too boisterous we end in insolvency and being too niggardly we gain nothing at all. A steady recognition of our position in God's universe and a reasonable use of our resources is the best way of progress both materially and spiritually.

The views which we have been expounding are shared by a great many fellow-thinkers ; because Truth is not a monopoly of the East or the West. God, out of His Goodness, causes His Values to prevail everywhere and it is only the thoughtless who fail to recognize them. We make the following somewhat long quotation from Professor W. R. Sorley (*Contemporary British Philosophy*—second series, p. 265):  
“ All these difficulties arise from various forms of opposition between the one and the many ; and both Pluralism and Monism strive in vain to meet them. But they can be solved in principle if we regard the unity of the universe as consisting not of impersonal

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order or of 'bloodless categories,' but as a Supreme Mind to whom finite minds and their environment owe their reality. The Supreme Mind or God will be conceived not merely as a Creator but as the essence and source of all the free minds who owe their being to Him. The whole visible world may be regarded as an image of the Eternal ; but it is a temporal image, not a photograph. It is only in time and by the kind agency that time makes possible that finite minds can attain to the values of which they are capable; and, if freedom itself is a value or heightens other values, they must achieve these values by the slow process of trial and error in the midst of an environment which does not make the way too easy for them.

“ Clearly, a view of this sort assumes the validity of such conceptions as those of purpose and freedom, and a defence of these postulates cannot be entered upon here, though it has been attempted elsewhere. Even with these postulates it is not contended that the events of the world and the careers of particular minds can all be explained and 'justified'. We have far too little knowledge of existence and its final issue to make possible anything more than a general principle of interpretation ; and it would be presumptuous to imagine that the purpose of the existing universe is exhausted in the fortunes of the human race.”

This exposition of Professor Sorley's is very much on the same lines as we have been putting forward in

this book. But we have not quoted him to show that we agree with him or he agrees with us. We are merely acting as interpreters of the Quranic philosophy according to our own knowledge and experience, and agreement or disagreement with any particular school of philosophers is not our aim. We only quote Professor Sorley to show that Truth is common to all mankind ; but sometimes when two philosophers are apparently most opposite to each other they may really both be equally right for extremes meet in God ; and *he who thinks that his own view of God is the only correct one is probably the last man to be correct.* Even our interpretation of the Qur-ān may not agree with that of other students and we should be the last to quarrel with them. But harmony is most pleasing to human mind and we cannot resist the temptation of making one more quotation from the same book (*Contemporary British Philosophy*, pp. 268 and 269 : Article by J. Ellis McTaggart, first series).

“ What can we say of value in the universe if our theory of the nature of the universe is true ? People do not agree as to what qualities of the existent give it value. But I think there would be general agreement that they would not include anything not included in the following list : knowledge, virtue, the possession of certain emotions, happiness, extent and intensity of consciousness, and harmony.

“ There is, then, a state of very good and unmixed good, which *sub specie temporis* must be

regarded as lying in the future, and as being reached in a finite time while it is itself endless. But the time required to reach it may have any finite length, however great, and we do not know how much evil may await us during that period. What we do know, if our conclusions are correct, is that all the evils of the future and the past are surpassed in value by the good which lies at the end of time.”

We must repeat once again and with great emphasis that our interpretation of the Quranic principle of Creation is neither *emergence* nor the giving birth

Creation once again.

by God to something new, nor again is it God's activity on some previously existing substance. The Qur-ân distinctly and repeatedly says that all Creation is a manifestation of God's Will. Whatever He wills comes into being for a *duration* or *term*, and as we have tried to show, this process of manifestation and folding up and remanifestation goes on endlessly. Each new creation most probably being one of higher degree than the last. By higher degree we mean sharing more of the manifestation of Divine Will. With regard to Purpose or Finality of the whole of creation

Purpose in creation.

we know very little except that it is a Manifestation of Volition. But that can hardly be called an aim or purpose. It is the starting point or beginning of all creation. It may also be its end as God is the First and the Last. But to dogmatize on a point like this is to

claim more than human knowledge is able to fathom at present ; and mere fanciful speculation is no part of philosophy. One of God's attributes is that He is Self-sufficient, and if all mankind chose to exercise their wills in denying the Reality or Existence of God, it would make no difference to Him. Neither His Wholeness nor His Values would suffer in the least.

“And said Moses to his people : ‘If you and all rational beings on this earth joined together in denying God it would make no difference to God for He is surely Self-sufficient, full of Goodness.’ ”

“O ye men ! You are all in need of God, but as to God, He is Self-sufficient, full of Goodness.

✓  
God is Self-sufficient.

If He please He would do away with you and bring a new creation.

And this would not cost Him anything at all”.

(35—15 to 17).

If He can do so with man, He can do so with the rest of creation but He never creates in vain. His will being His, cannot be contradicted and He Himself is free from all defects. He is the most Beautiful, the Best, the Truth. Contradiction, defect, falsehood and forgetfulness are unimaginable in His case.

“ Said (Pharaoh) : Who then is your Lord (the *Vital Principle*), O Moses ? ”

Who is your Lord ?

“ (Moses) replied : Our Lord is He Who gives to everything its form (or creation) then guides it on its course.

“ (Pharaoh) said again : What then about the previous generation ?

“ Said (Moses) : The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record :

My Lord neither loses His way nor ever does He forget.” (20—49 to 52).

Therefore although God has the power to do away with any of His creation He does that which is in harmony with what He has done already, and He never forgets. The verses just quoted above are important as defining “Lord” or the *Vital Principle* as “one who gives everything its form and then guides it on its course.” So that the *vital principle* of man or matter is always working with him or it for the whole period of his or its existence, or term, or duration.

Another point to note is that God is full of Goodness both in manifesting His Will and in folding it back unto Himself to make another manifestation thereof.

And this process goes on. The series He has summed up has not been in vain. In all these mathematical illustrations we must not suppose that the reality acts so simply as an arithmetical addition.

Man is composed of bones, muscles, blood, etc., but no artificial accumulation of these things can act like man.

Two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen may exist together in any quantity for any length of time but they will not act as water (H<sub>2</sub>O) does till there has been a chemical union. The composition of a living being is much more wonderful than a chemical union of elements. In this way, *the summing up of a series which we have put as a symbol for the evolution in creation is a process which has its own quality in each particular case*, and is not to be confounded with a mere putting of things in a heap as grains of wheat are gathered up in a barn. That is not our idea. Under each element and under each combination of elements and each special pattern of such combinations there are other qualities imposed on such combinations, forms and patterns which belong to the *vital principle* of each substance and each combination of substances till there is no end to this variety. Forms, colours, quantities, extents, etc., are mere outward appearances of the manifestations of reality. The reality in which all these things exist is Goodness or Beauty or both together. In the Qur-ān the same word *Husn* or *Hasn* means beauty and goodness. Beauty and Goodness themselves are manifestations of God's Will or rather Volition (the act of Willing). Will may exist without becoming active. *Volition is Will in action.*

The elements  
of Creation.

Action means motion, so that *all creation means God's Will being set in motion.* The first manifestation of the Real is Motion. But if motion remained pure

motion there would be only one creation, *viz.*, Pure *Motion*. And in fact science proves to us absolutely conclusively that all matter is waves or motion.

Matter is continuously being changed into motion and the reverse must also be true though we do not yet see it so clearly as we do the transformation of matter into motion. Heat, light, electricity, magnetism, etc., are nothing but waves and every atom of matter is capable of being transformed into waves and so disappearing as matter. Matter must have been waves to start with. Something has been withdrawn from *motion* to change it into *matter*. And what else can it be than *motion*? Steam, cooled down, becomes water; and water, cooled down, becomes ice; and so it is with all forms of matter. Matter is, therefore, quite apparently nothing but motion made less *mobile*. At 273°C all matter becomes solid and cold. This temperature is therefore called the Absolute zero. We human beings are cold creatures living just a little over 300° Absolute whilst the temperature inside the body of the sun may run up to a million degrees Absolute. The highest speed known to us is the velocity of light, 186,000 miles per second. Science can conceive of no greater velocity. But that does not mean that there is no greater speed. There may be, but if there is, we are incapable of rationally realizing it. There is no restriction to our imagining higher speeds. God who

What is  
Matter.

is 'Infinite' and whose Will is also Infinite has a Motion of His own of which we can have no conception. To those who are a little mathematically minded, the proposition that *Infinite speed and rest are alike* would not sound strange. We are able to calculate the speed of moving bodies *only* because some are moving faster than others and because they are moving in different directions. That is to say Motion is Relative. *If everything moved in the same direction at a uniform rate, no motion would be noticed at all.* Similarly, if motion is so infinitely fast that the thing which moves is capable of reaching all limits instantaneously it will not differ from the appearance of absolute rest. *Absolute rest and Infinite motion are therefore the same* and, as we said before, *Extremes meet in all-Infinity* or God.

To come back to the creation of *matter*, we have made it clear that *matter is nothing but motion made less mobile.* This may be mathematically represented. Suppose Unity (or 1) represents God's own Motion. Then His Manifestations mean some motion less than His own for no one but He Himself is capable of realising His own Motion. This may be represented by equations as follows :

$$\begin{aligned}
 1 - \frac{1}{2} &= \frac{1}{2} \\
 1 - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{4} &= \frac{1}{4} \\
 1 - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{8} &= \frac{1}{8} \\
 1 - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{8} - \frac{1}{16} &= \frac{1}{16} \\
 &\text{etc., etc.}
 \end{aligned}$$



So that

$$1 - \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{8} - \frac{1}{16} \dots \dots \dots - \frac{1}{2^n} - \frac{1}{2^n} \text{ is true for}$$

all values of  $n$ . When  $n$  is infinite, we may suppose this to be matter at absolute zero or some lower degree of temperature where even the electrons cease to move round their protons. Every higher degree of temperature or movement (the two are the same) means a higher manifestation till at 186,000 miles per second all matter changes into motion pure and simple as far as we can know.

From what we have said above it follows that

*All Creation is motion at different levels.*

We may conceive of motion at absolute zero as

Motion at  
different  
levels.

being rest. Everything above that is motion. The first stage is *matter*. And matter itself has different degrees of

motion and may therefore be said to have different stages of life. Matter at 273°C is comparatively dead. Matter at about 37°C is one of its manifestations in

Time and  
space are  
measures of  
motion.

the shape of human blood. Between the absolute zero and a speed of 186,000 miles per second, matter is alive in various forms and various

stages. Time is a measure of motion only. So is space. Whilst Time may be said to be the *qualitative* measure of motion, space is its *quantitative* measure. Therefore, space and time cannot be separated when measurements of matter are concerned, for in order to measure

matter at all, we must have its *quantity* or space and also its *quality* or time.

Mind also is motion. In measuring minds, however, we have this difficulty that we have no standard by which to measure them. Minds being motion must have both their *quality* and *quantity* but it is only a higher mind that can measure a lower mind. In order to weigh a pound's mass of matter we must possess weights amounting to at least one pound. If we do not possess weights totalling one pound in all, we will never be able to weigh a pound. In the case of minds, the *quality* of mind that is to say its measure in time seems so predominant over its *quantity* or measure in space that a proper balancing of minds is a very difficult thing. Even in the case of matter it is its measure in space that we are mostly conscious of, *i.e.*, we know matter mostly by its *quantity*.

We do not know God (or The Real) as He is. That is an impossibility. But we do know He manifests Himself as Motion at various levels. There is an infinity of levels. The lowest level may be called matter at rest. Between that and 186,000 miles per second is matter at various levels.

In the case of man and living beings, including plants, we have a manifestation of *mind* and *matter* in the same individual. That is to say man is neither matter

alone nor mind alone. Man is certainly mindmatter or mattermind (we intentionally make one word of these two). So are all living beings, for after the discoveries of Dr. Bose of Calcutta it is impossible to believe that plants do not possess minds. The body of man, like the body of any other living being, is composed of matter but governing this matter there is something else which we call *life* which dominates matter and is also to a certain extent limited by matter. In this book, we have called this mind in man and in all other things (even in matter) as a part of the Living Principle of God. We spell it *vital principle* in talking about the creation of God and *Vital Principle* when referring to Him.

Just as all matter is now demonstrated to be one, and composed of atoms, and different atoms themselves as being different patterns of electrons and protons, so may be all minds. But just as in the case of matter, different patterns form different elements, having separate specific gravities, so do different minds.

Minds are various.

Just also in the same way as H<sub>2</sub> O (two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen) form water which is quite different from either hydrogen or oxygen in its qualities, and as are all other chemical compounds (thousands in number), so are the various combinations of mattermind or mindmatter. This accounts for the variety in the realm of *minds* or *spirits*, as do the combinations of

atoms in the realm of matter. And the most wonderful and yet best established part of it is that all is one.

It is in some such combination of motions of various *levels*—motions of mind and motions of matter—that we human beings find ourselves to be what we are Human minds being of a higher level than inorganic matter or even organic matter such as plants and animals, which exist on this earth, find it comparatively easy to study such organic and inorganic matter but when it comes to studying our own minds we find great difficulty in doing so. We cannot weigh ourselves with our own weights. We go on affirming or denying realities without ever getting anywhere near the truth. Our case is like that of a man sitting closed in the cabin of his ship trying to measure the speed of his ship without any reference to the outside world. The thing is an impossibility. The speed of our ship can only be measured in two ways :

How can we measure our own minds.

(1) By an outsider who is relatively at rest.

(2) By us referring to the speed of something which is relatively at rest but which seems to us to be moving.

Hence it follows that all human reasoning about human mind is either a mere fancy and no reasoning at all, or it is at the best a reasoning about other minds and other matters which appear to move in a way

opposite to ours. A man sitting in a train may take a watch in his hand and see how many miles the train has passed in an hour. He calls this the speed of the train but it is from his point of view the number of miles of ground which have passed him in an hour. To a person standing outside a moving train, it is the train that is passing. To the observer inside, it is the land which is passing him. The same reasoning applies to our mental phenomena. *We judge ourselves by our opposites.* True philosophy can only come to us by The Real revealing to us what He thinks of us. Even then the difficulty is not got rid of, because He can speak to us only in our own language, otherwise He becomes incomprehensible ; and when He is speaking about Himself, He has to express Higher Values of His own in terms of the lower values of our knowing.

The only way of making any intelligible comprehension of the *ultimate nature* of reality is to choose a language of symbols and to give to these symbols imaginary values—values that are far higher than any of which we have an experience. Fortunately for us, we have some men of genius whose minds are of a very much higher level than are ordinary minds and judging by their analogy and bringing in the services of the God-given gift of imagination we are able to make some sort of Image of The Real and of the nature of our Minds, Spirits or Souls.

The value of genius in judging minds.

We have watched an expert billiard player making his brakes of hundreds and sometimes of thousands of points. If we were to sit down and solve all the problems mathematically, with pen and ink which an expert cueist solves successfully in a single brake of 1000 points, it would take us years to do so. At each stroke, the cueist has to decide the amount of side (if any) which he has to put on his hand-ball ; the exact spot on the surface of his ball that he is going to touch with his cue ; the exact spot his hand-ball is going to meet the object ball ; the kind of motion he is going to put on his cue, whether it is to be a flowing motion for a "follow on" or a jerky hit for a "screw" and so forth ; the exact amount of force he is going to put on his ball and so on and so on. And all these questions have to be decided with reference to motions and destinations of the hand-ball, the object ball and sometimes the third ball as well, in case of cannons. In "close cannons" the cueist must be accurate to the thousandth part of an inch and the delicacy of his touch has to be seen to be believed. There are, perhaps, a 100 expert cueists in the world, certainly not more at any one time ; and out of these also there are generally only half-a-dozen who deserve to be called geniuses. The same argument applies to poets, painters and sculptors ; also musicians and chess-players. A Morphy or an Alekhine are not born every day. These geniuses are able to tell you the shortcomings of their inferiors but it is difficult for

them even to explain their own methods to others as they can those of other men. It may be that the layman has not the ability to understand them, as he certainly has not the ability to compete with them. There are thousands of expert mathematicians in the world but there has been only one Newton and there is only one Einstein, though others have helped to make what Newton and Einstein have risen to be. For these reasons, the experiences of great artists, poets, philosophers and prophets should always be received with the appreciation that is their due,—especially, in matters which are within their special ken. The experience of a great poet with regard to financial matters may be worse than useless and a painter may or may not know anything of mathematics, just as a chess champion may or may not know anything of philosophy. And if a philosopher was put at the head of an opera company he may not be a successful manager. The chances are that, never having any previous experience of the vagaries of actors, he will not be a successful manager. That is

The Prophets  
as exemplars.

why we have chosen the Qur-ân to be our guide in philosophy. It gives us the experiences of all the great

Prophets as to God or The Real—Prophets such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. We make no apology for choosing a religious book as our guide in philosophy, firstly, because we know this book better than any other, and, secondly, because the

theoretical problems of philosophy and religion are the same. The approach to reality may be different in the two cases but the reality is the same in both cases.

Auguste Comte, and his two great disciples in England—George Henry Lewes and Frederic Harrison—who base their philosophy on experience, are as enthusiastic in their worship of the cult of Humanity as any Muslim was or is in the worship of God. Science may detach itself from religion, but philosophy never can, unless it ceases to be philosophy. The Positivists do not deny that there are problems beyond the reach of science but they either leave them alone as did Auguste Comte or they detach the scientific part of such problems and treat them scientifically as did G. H. Lewes. But recent advances in the scientific theory of matter and Einstein's conceptions of time and space have made Positivist Philosophy somewhat out of date.

The cult of Humanity founded on Positivism will, we hope, in the future be found to be no different from that of the great religious revealed books—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. And all those who wish to be true philosophers must find comfort not only in the theories of great men but in their actual lives.

Says Frederic Harrison (*The Philosophy of*



*Commonsense*, p. 197) :

What does  
Frederic  
Harrison say.

“All positive methods of treating man of a comprehensive kind adapt to the full all that has ever been said about the dignity of man’s moral and spiritual life, and treat these phenomena as distinct from the intellectual and physical life. These methods also recognize the unity of consciousness, the facts of conscience, the sense of identity, and the longing for the perpetuation of that identity. They decline to explain these phenomena by popular hypotheses ; but they neither deny their existence nor lessen their importance. Man, they argue, has a complex existence, made up of the phenomena of his physical organs, of his intellectual powers, of his moral faculties, crowned and harmonised ultimately by his religious sympathies—love, gratitude, veneration, submission towards the dominant force by which he finds himself surrounded.”

No one can say how this complex existence known to us as man is capable of deriving such wonderful moral and spiritual powers out of mere matter if he is no more than a physico-chemical combination of some of the 92 elements of chemistry. Nor can anyone else say, if man has something more than the mere combinations of elements, where this something more comes from, where it resides and what happens to it after death. We call this something as “Soul”

The Scientist cannot measure the soul.

and we say that it is "Immortal". But judging ourselves by ourselves we can come to no conclusion at all. If we do so, we are no better than the man confined in a ship's cabin trying to measure the speed of the ship without reference to any outside object.

The scientist pure and simple who measures things by his perceptions can honestly come to only one conclusion, *viz.*, that the soul is a function of the bodily organs just as the motion of a clock is the function of the mechanism of a clock.

But the *mechanistic* theory of life fails even to account for the facts of Biology as we showed by quoting Driesch. The real difficulty at the present moment is the *prejudice of linguistic usage*. Just as we speak of the sun rising and the sun setting every day although really the sun neither rises nor sets, so we have been speaking for 2000 years and more of *matter* as being a dead entity and of *soul* being something separate and having an existence of its own and being *immortal*. But *every particle of matter is imperishable*. Nothing, that we know of, can ever cease to be. The principle of the Conservation of Matter and Force which is now more correctly called the *principle of the Conservation of Energy* is the best established fact of human experience and we are to thank science for it. Energy is the last entity we come across everywhere. We cannot get beyond it. Heat, light, electricity, magnetism, atoms (in which this energy sleeps) are forms of energy.

Man is a combination of mobilities.

We have tried to show that Mind itself is Motion. Mind and Matter are not two separate realities but the same reality with more or less of mobility. The *Vital Principle* exists everywhere and everything exists in it and nothing can be without it. In man there is a combination of mobilities and hence we call him mindmatter or mattermind. Really we should coin a new word for the manifestation of reality in living bodies. But if we do so we will later find out—we are finding out even now—that there is no dividing line between living and non-living bodies and that on the border line they both meet and become indistinguishable. So to be correct we have to fall back on a common denominator for the whole of reality. Science calls it Energy and science is perfectly justified in doing so. *We know nothing*

God is Infinite Energy.

*beyond energy. We call Real as Infinite Energy. It is the same thing as Infinite Will manifesting itself in Motion. We*

prefer to call The Real by the descriptive title of the *Vital Principle* (or Lord) of *all the worlds*. This *Vital Principle* is the Truth, *i.e.*, it is The Real. It exists. It cannot be denied, or said not to exist. We have further tried to show from the passages of the Qur-ān that the whole of the Universe is a manifestation of the Beauty and Goodness inherent in this *Vital Principle* and this manifestation goes on without beginning and without end, that the *aim of philosophy is the exposition of this Beauty and this Goodness in all reality.*

What is the aim of Life? Nothing but the development of this Beauty and this Goodness without restriction and without any thought of falling back.

What is the aim of Life.

Philosophy that dicusses Greek Ideals and Idealism or that talks about the Absolute without coming down to the realities of life in general and human life in particular is nothing but ploughing the sands of human brain. "There is no more fruitless endeavour than this same, which the Metaphysician proper toils in ; to educe Conviction of Negation. How, by merely testing and rejecting what is *not*, shall we ever attain knowledge of what *is* ?.....Consider it well. Metaphysics is the attempt of the mind to rise above the mind ; to environ or shut in, or, as we may say, *comprehend* the mind. Hopeless struggle, for the wisest, as for the foolishest ! What strength of sinew, or athletic skill will enable the stoutest athlete to fold his own body in his arms and, by lifting, lift up *himself* ? " —(Carlyle).

Quite true, yet man has learnt to fly in spite of Carlyle's jibes and although a man cannot put his own arms round his own body, he can put a piece of tape and measure his roundness. In the same way with the help of the *vital principle* which is with us and which is the universe or rather in which we and the universe exist we can lift up ourselves both physically and spiritually. There is something greater than ourselves that is willing to be of use to us—to serve us

in fact. The photographic film sees a great deal more than does the eye and in the spectroscope of the astronomer is a picture of the inner life of stars and matter itself. It tells him what materials there are in the distant stars, whether they are in a solid, liquid or gaseous state. It tells him of the velocities they are travelling away from us or towards us. It tells us most of what we know about the atom and its constitution and structure.

What does the Spectroscope do.

“ That the spectroscope will detect the millionth of a milligram of matter, and on that account has discovered new elements, commands our admiration ; but when we find in addition that it will detect the nature of forms of matter billions of miles away, and moreover, that it will measure the velocities with which these forms of matter are moving with an absurdly small per cent of possible error, we can easily acquiesce in the statement that it is the greatest instrument ever devised by the brain and hand of man ” (*Outline of Science*, p. 7). And again (pp. 23 & 24) : “ The light of about a quarter of a million stars has been analysed in the spectroscope, and it is found that they fall into about a dozen classes which generally correspond to stages in their evolution.”

The records of Great Men are the Spiritual Spectroscopes.

Is there, then, no microscope, no telescope, no spectroscope for the spiritual reality of man to help it to educe itself as these instruments have helped to educe matter billions of miles away

from us in the millionth part of a milligram? There are such instruments and they are to be found in the records of the achievements of great minds and great spirits. It is with the help of these records that we can to some extent *comprehend* even our own minds just as we can measure the speed of a train from within, with the help of a clock and the milestones ready placed for us by our predecessors or fellow workers. One of such instruments for the illumination if not the measurement, of our minds is the Qur-ān and we proceed to look through it at the whole universe of Mind and Matter.

“ Know ye Allah’s law is love,

Viewed from Allah’s Throne above.”

(“ Islam’s Rosary,” p. 192).

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE UNIVERSE : LIFE ; MAN—HIS EVOLUTION.

“ In everything on this earth God has made  
The Universe a use for you.”  
is Ready to  
serve Man (2—29).

Oceans and rivers ; mountains and flatlands ; trees, plants and vegetables ; air, water, wood, coal, fruits, cereals, fish, birds, domesticated and wild animals; copper, silver, gold, iron, lead, phosphorus, oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, chlorine, potassium, magnesium, iodine, bromine, aluminium ; uranium, radium, helium and all the other elements with the thousands upon thousands of chemical compound ; the sea and air currents; ships, motor cars, aeroplanes, submarines, steam-engines and all other man-manufactured wonders ; cotton, wool, hides, furs and skins of sea and land animals, oils, meats, nuts, herbs, roots, barks, musks, spices, milks of animals and trees, ' juices of plants and of animal glands ; arsenic, strychnine, quinine and scores of other poisons and alkaloids ; fire, light, heat, electricity, sound, magnetism; colours and qualities of material objects ; languages, arts and millions of beautiful objects such as flowers, feathers and leaves ; railways, roads, streams and all the other

channels of transport ; books, pictures, potteries, carvings on wood and metals, buildings, monuments, bridges, wells and canals ; horses, camels, elephants, giraffes, ostriches and other animals kept for beauty or for carrying loads; whales, sea-lions, cods, salmon and a thousand other sea-creatures ; sand, earths, stones, grasses on land and sea ; limes, cements and resins ; paper, pens, pencils, and all the other material for making records ; knowledge, virtue, beauty, goodness, truth, personality, consciousness, pride, fear, submission, courage, the sense of curiosity, thought, fancy, imagination, sight, hearing, touch, taste, life, death, waking, sleeping, wishing, striving, resting, loving, and all other experience whatsoever—each and all have their uses for mankind.

“And if you were to count the *gifts* of God, you would not be able to number them. Surely God is Forgiving, Compassionate.” (16—18)

What about the earth itself? What about the sun, the moon and the stars?

“And He has made the night and day subject to an order for your use, so also the sun and the moon.

And the stars are subject to an order by His Command.

In this there are signs for those who are able to understand.” (16—12).

“Do you not consider that God has made all that is in the heavenly bodies and all that is in this earth



subject to an order (or law) for your use, and He has given you life full of the blessings that are apparent and those that are hidden?" (31—20).

There are scores of other passages in the same strain. Without the alternation of day and night, life would soon come to an end ; without the light, heat and other energy coming from the sun, we would not exist at all ; without the moon and the tides caused by its gravitation the seas would soon stagnate ; without the guidance of the stars the mariners of old could never have known their way on sea, or travellers on land ; the cosmic rays are coming to us from all directions of space and the study of the heavenly bodies under the guidance of the telescope, the photographic plate, the spectroscope is lifting up our minds in spite of Carlyle's taunts. There is a most rosy future for science and philosophy. This harmony of the universe with the mindmatter of man is the most direct evidence of the oneness of Nature—man and all included therein. No subtleties of thought, or rules of logic are necessary here. The proof goes direct to the heart or rather to the soul, just as good food assimilates itself to our bodies. It is not necessary to seek for the *Nirvana* of the Buddhist or the unification of the mystic with Godhead. The *Nirvana* and the unification can be realized without our giving up the ghost ; in fact, by keeping it alive in the company of the Great *Vital Principle* itself of which we are

a part. A whole book may be written on this subject of the Oneness of the Universe.

We have already stated that the Universe is a manifestation of God's Volition. This Volition manifests itself in Motion. By reducing the mobility of motion God transforms motion into matter. At first the motion is immaterial and invisible.

How is the  
Universe  
formed.

Then by subtraction of mobility from original motion, matter comes into existence but it is as yet in a nebulous form. The spectroscope of the astronomer proves this most conclusively for us. Of recent years hundreds of thousands of nebulae have been revealed by the telescope and the existence of millions of such nebulae is not only possible but most probable. Stars are of all ages, some are still nebular in constitution, others have become so old that they are altogether dark. Those are called "dead" stars to distinguish them from light giving stars. Our own sun was once a nebula. It is now somewhere middle-aged. The moon may be considered to be a dead star on a very small scale. But there is no doubt that the solar system was once a mere gaseous mass. The Qur-ân is quite definite about it :

" Then He directed His Will towards this and it was a gas.

Then He said to it and the earth " Come ye both, willingly or unwillingly ! "

They replied : “ We both come willingly ! ”

“ Then He settled it into seven (main) heavenly bodies each having two periods (day and night) and in each of these seven bodies He put a (special) duty of its own ; and We (God) embellished the space of this earth by means of lamps and as a safeguard.

“ This is the determination of the All-Mighty, All-Knowing.” (41—11, 12).

The passage just before these two states that the earth was similarly ordained into a day and night period. The seven main bodies are apparently the seven planets. This is further made clear by the following verse :

“ God is One who has made the seven heavenly bodies (seven main planets of the solar system) and this earth like them.” (65—12).

How could Muhammad who was not a man of letters find out all about the solar system being a gas unless we believe that the truth is somehow revealed to him by The Real?

But more wonderful still is the reference to the planets and the earth at one time being one body and that they divided afterwards and that life was produced by the agency of water.

“ Have not those who deny God considered this that the heavenly bodies and this earth were one mass, then we fissured them : and We made every-

thing living by the agency of (*lit.* from) water? . Will they not believe even now? ” (21—30).

There are numerous other passages dealing with the course of the sun, the moon, the rotation of the earth by which day and night are caused on this earth and so forth. But it is not our object to go into the details of these matters.

What is most important to note is the gradual cooling down of the earth and the other heavenly bodies and the production of life *only when motion has gone down to the level of water.*

Production of Life on this earth.

We all know that the motion of fire is on a very much higher level than that of water. We have a definite statement in the passage just quoted that *life*, as we understand it, is possible only when there is water and that life comes out of water.

This settles the question whether *life* comes from outside. The Qur-ân decisively says that it comes out of water not from outside. Water is the most essential component of life. This to a great extent helps the theories of physico-chemists but it must be remembered that the Qur-ân nowhere says that *life* is a *mechanism* pure and simple. That it is governed by law is not denied by the Qur-ân. In fact, the Qur-ân says that it is governed by law but it does not say that the law is altogether *mechanistic*,—*choice* and *will* are part of the law of *life*. But the nature of the reality

of life is very much like that of a chemical compound though the factors that guide and govern it are not chemical. This only means that there is a *vital principle* (part of the Great *Vital Principle* of the Universe) governing life just as there is a *vital principle* with everything else.

We have stated over and over again that each manifestation of God is a part of His own reality, however finite it may be. We have also quoted a verse of the Qur-ân.

That God is the Hidden and the Apparent. We may say in the same way that each manifestation of God partakes of this complementary nature of the two phenomena or one phenomenon in two parts—the hidden and the apparent.

*Part of each manifestation of God is hidden and part is apparent.*

The part which is *apparent* may be called for the sake of convenience the *substance* of manifestation and the part which is *hidden* and which is guiding, governing and completing the destiny of the *substance* is its *Rab* or *vital principle*.

There are two phases in everything.

It is the same with life. The *substance* of life or the apparent part of it is *chemical*, the *vital principle* which is governing and guiding it is *hidden*.

Thus from the very beginning of all creation these two complementary parts run together. Where

*substance* prevails we seem to realize existence as *matter*, where the *vital principle* is predominant we call it a *spirit*.

The fact that living and dead bodies are not essentially different from each other is emphasised in at least a dozen different passages of the Qur-ân and by implication in more than one hundred. Everywhere God speaks of bringing forth or producing (not creating or making) the dead out of living and the living out of the dead. Take the following :

Living and  
Dead matter  
are not  
essentially  
different.

Say : "Thou (O God !) causeth the night to merge into the day and Thou causeth the day to merge into the night ; and Thou causeth the production of the living from the dead and Thou causeth the production of the dead from the living." (3—26).

The analogy of day and night, and the living and the dead is itself significant. The running of life into death and death into life is like the merging of day into night and night into day. *Both are natural phenomena.* There is no mystery about them. When the sun dawns on this earth night disappears and when the sun sets the day merges into the night. The earth is the body on which Day and Night appear. The earth in the Qur-ân is compared to everything that is dead and is capable of becoming alive. When God's light shines on man he becomes alive. When

the light is withdrawn he dies. This light is the *vital principle*. There is a *spiritual* as well as a *material vital principle*. When both are present man is alive both spiritually and materially. If the spiritual part of the *vital principle* is taken away from him man may be alive but he is alive like a beast or worse than a beast. But the stuff which becomes alive or dead is originally from the same source. In this way all difficulties about the nature of the *soul* are solved immediately.

“God, surely, causes the grain and the seed stone to sprout. He causes the production of the living from the dead, and He is the Producer of the dead from the living. This is God (ye men!). Where do you wander !” (6—96).

Here, life's production is compared to the sprouting of the grain and the stone:

The plant or tree which produced the grain or the stone may be called dead but new life springs out of parts of this tree. Similarly man may be dead or he may be living. His good or evil deeds are reproducing him. A man may leave no children but no man (unless he die an infant who is not yet conscious of the nature of his deeds) is without an inheritance of deeds. These deeds go on springing and never die.

“ He causes the production of the living from the dead and the production of the dead from the living, and He causes the earth to revive after it has been dead.

“ And it is in this way that you (mankind) shall be revived also.” (33—19).

The reference to the earth is most probably to its state before there was any water on it. It was hot and dead. When it became cooled, life appeared on it out of its own matter, not from outside space. The same applies to all human beings. They will all die but their actions (good or bad) do not die and go on living. And according to the Qur-ân there is a balance to be struck hereafter. And we do hold most strongly on rational philosophical grounds that man's actions do not die. It is a natural consequence that God being just and benevolent must let those actions go on. He says in the Qur-ân dozens of times that good actions shall be multiplied and bad actions be dealt with as they deserve, and that God is never unjust to anyone. We will quote only one passage and then pass on to more pressing matter. The passage says :

“ Whoever does a good deed shall have ten like that, but whoever does wrong, he shall have no more than its like ; and no one shall be dealt with unjustly.” (6—161).

The number *ten*, like *seven*, in Arabic, often stands for a very large number. What the passage means is that he who does good shall have his good actions multiplied immensely but he who does wrong shall not suffer more than the single recompense which his action deserves.



Having dealt with life and death very briefly and having referred to good and bad actions let us examine as to what the Qur-ân means by *good*. The word which has been translated as *good deeds* is *al-hasanati* (good or beautiful in the abstract). What we have translated as "wrong" is the very opposite of *al-hasanati*. It might be translated *ugliness*—in word, deed and thought.

All evil is, therefore, nothing but an ugly word, an ugly deed or an ugly thought. And in the end all ugliness proceeds from ugly thoughts. Whence comes the power to man to conceive ugly thoughts? The answer to this is that God by His own free-will has given man a certain amount of *choice*. *Man has the choice of denying Beauty and Goodness* (Arabic *Husn*). He sometimes does so and the consequence is that he becomes spiritually weak. But as soon as he thinks better of himself the *spiritual vital principle* is ready to help him. It washes his slate clean and starts his equation of good and bad once more. But a man may abuse his choice so frequently that he may be left with very little strength of recovering his balance and sometimes the spiritual slate is broken and the man's good thought is sealed for ever. In that case his balance is already struck on the wrong side.

The point of the argument, however, is that

Beauty and Goodness are the ultimate nature of Spiritual Reality.

Goodness and Beauty are the ultimate nature of spiritual reality, and that man is intended to wind up as a spiritually beautiful and good being, and not as a beast or worse than beast—a materialistic being who has no share in the life which God has reserved for him. If man declares against Beauty and Goodness he must go back to the fiery condition of matter before there was any water on this earth. Those who lose their right to live must go back to this fiery condition of matter with the consciousness that they were once better off and could have lived with those who loved Beauty and Goodness. The law of God seems to be "Give that you may be given more; Love that you may be loved more". But we sometimes think that we shall become poor by following such a law and we do become poor by disobeying it.

Wisdom is immense goodness. "The Evil One holds out to you poverty (if you follow God's law) and he suggests to you what is heinous.

"And God holds out to you protection (or forgiveness) from Himself and riches :

"And God is Vast, Knowing. He gives wisdom to one who wishes it (or whom He wishes to give it).

"And he who is given wisdom has been given immense good ;

"And none realise this except the philosophers."

(2—268, 269)

We have thus come to an inference which we had intended to reserve for the end of the book but as it has come out naturally we are glad to expound it now.

*The justification for philosophy in religion is contained in the above verse. All the good that a man can do, the help he can render to his fellow beings; the love he can bestow on his fellow men and dumb animals is with the object that he may acquire wisdom. Thus wisdom is not only the starting point of religious life but also its main object. It is through wisdom and wisdom alone that a man by cultivating the sense of Beauty in all things and the charm of Goodness in all deeds and thoughts can become Happy. And beyond Happiness there is nothing but further Happiness and Harmony in the realization of self in the presence of The Real.*

Religion  
without  
philosophy  
an ampty  
shell.

In the midst of war and pestilences; in the midst of social and political upheavals; in the midst of personal bereavements and misfortunes for one to be able to keep one's balance of mind and to seek for nothing but Beauty and Goodness—this is the great achievement. *Religion without Philosophy is an empty shell.*

“And there is no equality between goodness (or beauty) and that which is bad (or ugly); return the latter by the former, so that he who is your enemy shall become your warmest friend.

Returning  
evil by good.

“But none attain to this except those who are persevering and none attain to this except those who possess great good fortune.”

The beginning of all wisdom is the education of self and its end is self-realization. We have our being in God and when we forget our own being we are separated from the *spiritual vital principle*.

The Universe is, as we have said before, at first nothing but motion; then this motion is made less mobile or what we call *matter*. The matter goes on cooling and cooling till water appears and thence life. It has been so with our earth which is part of the matter that has been separated from the sun. The earth is between 1000 million to 2000 million years old. Man can hardly be more than a million years old on this earth,—probably much less than 500,000 years. Water may have been on this earth for 500 to 1000 million years. Before water there was no life, as we understand the term. And man is one of the latest manifestations of life.

*In the Qur-an man's birth is carried back to the birth of life on this earth and all living beings are considered as part of the life of man.* But civilized man is spoken of as Adam, and Adam's birth is comparatively recent. Civilized man may not have existed for more than 10,000 years on this earth. Civilized man means man when he is conscious of his own self and able to exercise his choice between good and bad. *Only man in such*

*a state of civilization is responsible for the use of his choice.* Man's life starts from the original fire of sun's matter and is a progress towards a spiritual illumination. Man has to pass from fire to solids, from solids to liquids, from liquids to vegetation, from vegetation to animal life of a million species towards his present civilization and hence to godliness in which he shall have left all his obstacles behind and be free to fly in the kingdom of heaven towards still greater progress undreamt of and unimaginable at the present moment. Students of the Qur-ân have recognized this evolution for over a thousand years, and Western science is now falling into line with this Eastern thought. And this advance of the East is due solely to the teaching of the Qur-ân.

A whole encyclopedia would be required to go into the works of Muslim writers. Many such encyclopedias on a small scale have existed as the works of individual writers or of a group of writers. We shall not attempt any summary of their views here. For an extremely brief summary the reader may refer to the late Syed Ameer Ali's book "The Spirit of Islam", chapters X and XI on "Rational and Philosophical Spirit" and "The Mystical and Idealistic Spirit" respectively.

We quote only one paragraph to show the trend of Muslim philosophy :

Evolution of  
Life:—from  
inorganic matter  
to spiritual  
reality.

“The doctrine of evolution and progressive development to which these philosophers adhered most strongly has been propounded most clearly in terms by one of their prominent representatives, the famous Al-Hazen. The philosophical notions on this subject may be summarised thus : ‘In the region of existing matter, the mineral kingdom comes the lowest, then comes the vegetable kingdom, then the animal, and finally the human being. By his body he belongs to the material world, but by his soul he appertains to the spiritual or immaterial. Above him are only the spiritual beings—the angels—above whom is God: thus the lowest is combined by a chain of progress to the highest. But the human soul perpetually strives to cast off the bonds of matter, and becoming free, it soars upwards to God from whom it emanated.’

“And these notions found expression in the *Masnavi* (name of a poem) of Maulana Jalal-ud-din, whose “orthodoxy” can hardly be questioned—[Here Syed Ameer Ali quotes 5 couplets from the *Masnavi* in Persian which he translates :]

“Dying from the inorganic we developed into the vegetable kingdom. Dying from the vegetable we rose to the animal. And leaving the animal we became men. Then what fear that death will lower us? The next transition will make us angels. From the angels we shall rise and become what no mind can conceive : we shall merge in Infinity as in the beginning

Have we not been told, 'All of us will return unto Him ? ' ' ' (pp. 424 & 425).

The passages relating to man's evolution in the Qur-ân are so numerous that it is a bit embarrassing which to quote and which to leave out. They all have a general resemblance to one another. But we must first note a small distinction. There are two words used for man in the Qur-ân. The first is *Insan* (Man) and the second is *Adam*, the same word as used in the Old Testament but with quite a new import. By *Insan* is meant Mankind generally, the *man* in evolution as just explained above—*man* as he is evolved from primordial substance to the perfect *man*. It includes all his stages, but especially so, his existence on this earth. By *Adam*, or children of Adam, is meant man who has become self-conscious, civilized and able to bear the burden of moral and spiritual responsibility which had been laid upon him from the very beginning of his existence as an animal on this earth but the ability to bear which became manifest only when *Insan* reached the stage of Adam.

Some thinkers, however, say that *Insan* means civilized man and *Jinn* means uncivilized man. But there are stages of *Insan*. *Insan* having reached the stage of Adam still continues to be *Insan* and will end by being greater and better than *Adam*.

But, before man appeared on the stage of life, there

The stages of  
Man's evolu-  
tion.

were and still are other existents in the strict philosophical sense. Two of these are important. One are the fiery spirits called *Jan* (plural of *Jinn*). The others are "angels" or messenger-spirits. *Jan* are made of fire, whilst the angels are wholly made of light. In fact, they are the spirits of light and darkness. *Both these act entirely on the mind of man.* The one automatically excludes the other.

As soon as man seeks the pursuit of selfishness, ugliness, niggardliness, the helping angels forsake him and the devils take hold of his existence and *vice versa*. *So this drama goes on from the age of self-consciousness till death.* The angels and devils standing by, both when man is awake and when man is asleep. There is one state in which the angels are altogether withdrawn. That state is the denial of the existence of God or The Real. When man affirms there is no Whole or God of which he is a part, man has become his own deity and is lost till he returns to the right path once more. If man lives and dies like that, man has forfeited his *soul*. He has relapsed into the stuff of which devils are made of—and its name is Fire or Hell. Man's evil desires are the devils that sometimes rule him.

"Have you considered the case of one who has taken his own evil desires as his deity and God then causes him to be lost on account of the knowledge which God possesses, etc.?" (45—28).



But that is a digression. We are now considering the stages of man's evolution. The first stage is said by the Qur-ân to be "death" itself. This may sound strange to some people but nevertheless it is true. *Man has been present in the universe from beginning and shall remain to the end.* His first stage is comparable to nothing better than "death".

State of death  
the First Stage  
of Man's  
existence.

"How can you deny God—you were in a state of death, then He gave you life; then He causes you to die, then He will cause you to live again and then will return to Him?" (2—28).

"They (the souls in hell) will say: "O our Lord! Twice hast Thou caused us to die and twice hast Thou caused us to live. We acknowledge our lapses. Is there then any way out of this fire?"

These two passages quite clearly affirm that the first stage of man before life on this earth was a state of death. The explanation of this is that man is not a new conception of God or The Real but when He said to the Universe "Be" and it "Became", man was part and parcel of that "Be" as we have already quoted in Chapter 3, verse 58.

The mystic's  
mistake.

We know that this view is a news to most people who have not carefully pondered over the inward import of the verses of the Qur-ân but it is nevertheless the correct view and puts the seal of Divine Will on

the oneness of man and the Universe. *By oneness we do not mean identity and no one should mean it.* That is the mistake into which mystics fall. They think that by being one with God they actually become God.

The Second Stage in Man's existence.      The second stage is clearly the watery stage. As soon as this earth after having separated from the nebulous mass of the sun cooled down sufficiently to the temperature of water, some form of life came into existence. The molecules of carbon dissolved seawater coming in contact with the various salts and elements necessary for life somehow imbibed the light of the sun just as the chlorophyll of the green leaf and sea moss does now and living cells were the result. Once a living cell was formed it had the innate power to reproduce itself.

“And We formed everything living through the agency of water.” (21—30).

The sea is the cradle of all life and still remains its greatest reservoir.

The Third Stage in Life.      The third stage in life is when sea creatures have taken to the muddy seashore, the swamps where sea and rain water form wet earth or mud.

“He is the One who has made you (men) from wet earth, then He settled a term and the term is known to Him but you go on being sceptics.” (6—2).

“And surely We have made mankind (*Insan*) from oozing, black, bad-smelling mud.

“ And the *Jan* (pl. of *Jinn*) We made, before We made man, from intensely fiery hot breezes.”  
(15 – 25, 27).

“ The oozing, black, bad-smelling mud” can be seen in any tropical or semi-tropical country where at every low ebb Malay, Chinese and other fishermen can be seen to wade knee deep and hunt for means of subsistence.

This is the “Origin of Species,” and “The Descent of Man” related in the Qur-ân long before Darwin had ever noticed it.

“ We have made them (mankind) of sticky mud.”  
(37—11).

“And surely We have made man from an extract of wet clay (or mud).”  
(23—12).

“He who has made everything in a most beautiful form and who began man’s making from wet clay (or mud).”  
(32—8).

“ When your Lord said to the messenger-spirits, ‘ Surely I am going to make a mortal from wet clay ’.”  
(38—71).

The point to note in all verses and in the quotation from Syed Ameer Ali is that *it is man or mankind which is being spoken of and not the ancestors of man.*

Western writers speak of man as he is now and of his ancestors who were not men ; but that is not so in the Qur-ân. *Man in the Qur-an is coeval with the universe*—or at least that is how we conceive the matter to be. And he will remain coeval with it.

(Chapter 11—106 to 108).

Life from ocean, mud and stream goes on to dry land. Not much spiritual progress can be made in oozing, black, bad-smelling mud. So out on dry earth we come as reptiles, birds, insects and mammals. The word for *wet clay* in all above passages is (Ar.) *Teen*. The word for dry earth is *Turab*.

The Fourth  
Stage of Life.

“ The case of Jesus with God is like the case of Adam. He made him from dry earth and said to him ‘ Be ’ and he ‘ Became ’. (3—58).

“ His companions said to him and they were conversing together : ‘ Do you deny Him who has made you from dry earth, then from a sperm-ovum and then formed you a perfect man ? ’ (18—37).

Here again two civilized men are speaking together and the reference of their birth is to dry land on which they live. It may be that the next stage of man is going to be a life in the air altogether.

“And one of His signs is that He makes you from dry earth, then lo ! you are human beings scattered all over the earth.”

“ And God makes you from dry earth, then from a sperm, etc.” (35—11).

We are in this fourth stage or if we exclude the state of death before life, we may call it the third stage or if we combine the two watery stages into one we may call our present stage as the second stage of life

Evolutionists have been very careful to point out the principle of Recapitulation in evolution and it is really the greatest discovery of evolutionary science. What does Recapitulation mean. What does Recapitulation mean? It is a long story but very briefly it means that the embryo of a human being in the course of its nine months' stay in the mother's womb repeats its past history of development which has taken it millions of years to reach its present stage. First it is the cooked food we take. It is organic matter but generally without life as we swallow it. The body assimilates this food and makes *cells* of thousands of kinds which are like primitive life-cells in the sea. One of these single cells the *ovum* coalesces with another single cell called the *sperm* which fertilizes the *ovum* in the womb. In this cell about  $\frac{1}{125}$  inch in diameter is condensed the inheritance of millions of years which it then begins to disclose by growth and nourishment. This is the embryo of a human being. And the embryo possess all the stages of all the embryos through which man passed in his course of life. At one time the human embryo of a little fish at a corresponding stage :

at another, it is like the embryo of a little reptile, then like that of a primitive mammal, then like that of a monkey.

Each stage of the human embryo, starting with a single cell like that of an amoeba, corresponds to a similar stage in the embryos of all the animals that man has been. In short, in the mother's womb, but the human embryo is what the Qur-ân calls it—man from a cell in water to man with the brain of a perfect man. Of course, there are degrees.

This Recapitulation is expressed in the Qur-ân in a language which is at once scientific, philosophical and poetical. It is a synopsis or synthesis of human evolution. The verses are again so numerous that it is embarrassing which to quote and which to leave out. The opening parts of some have already been given. Different passages relate to different stages according to the necessities of text. Here are a few :

“ O ye mankind ! If you are in doubt as to your resuscitation, then consider this—We have made you from dry earth, then from a sperm-ovum, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, symmetrical and un-symmetrical that We may make it clear to you what happens :

“ And We establish you in the wombs as We please for a known duration (or term), then We bring you forth in a state of childhood, then you reach your full manly strength, and some of you die (during this

progress) and some of you are carried back to your dotage when you forget what you had known, etc.

(22—5)

“ And surely We have made man from an extract of wet clay.

Then We put him as a sperm-ovum in a secure place.

Then We make (or develop) the sperm-ovum into a clot and the clot into a lump of flesh, and the lump of flesh into bones, then We cover the bones with muscles ; then We evolve him into a new make.

Therefore full of blessings is God the most Beautiful Maker.”

(23—12 to 14)

The philosophical importance of all these quotations is that life is innate in nature, that it is not a putting in of something from another star. With regard to the soul of man or his self-consciousness, that also is inherent in life. In fact, the whole development of life is with the object to develop this soul. That is the *raison d'être* of man's evolution.

Man and Con-  
sciousness.

“ And when your Lord (*Vital Principle*) said to the messenger-spirits—‘I am going to make a human being from oozing, black, bad-smelling mud :

So that when I have completed his formation and breathed My Spirit into him, then be ready to bow down to him, etc.’ ”

(15—27 to 29)

✓ This Spirit of God breathed into man, which becomes manifest at this late stage, is God's gift of Goodness. *Out of His own grace He takes a bit of His own Volition and makes a present of it to a being whom we call man.* This gift has not been given except to man (*Insan*). The material bodies, be they stars or planets, are without it. When we say they are without it we mean that it is not manifest in them. They are the conduit pipes, which carry on this gift till man is ready to take it up. Man is as we have described him—all life on this earth. But the full manifestation of this gift does not take place till man has become a highly developed mammal, the master key on the surface of this earth. In one word when man has become Adam. *And each individual human being becomes an Adam when he becomes self-conscious and able to use his choice between good and bad.*

“Read these what thine own deeds have written ;  
thyself by thyself shall be judged.” (Qur-ân, 17—14)

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## CHAPTER V

### MAN ; HIS WILL ; HIS KNOWLEDGE AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO

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The Heavenly  
Bodies and  
Man.

We made a present of Our Trust to the heavenly bodies and this earth and all solids (thereon) but they declined to carry its responsibility and they were afraid to carry it but man carried it, etc.” (33—72)

The Trust  
for which  
Man is  
responsible.

What is the Trust mentioned in this passage? It is the Divine Gift of Choice. The choice is not an unlimited one but, as we have already explained, God has put a use in everything on this earth for man and even the heavenly bodies are every moment of their existence of some use to him. The choice given to man is how he is going to dispose of these free services of all created things. Is he going to say (and he has a choice) that these things belong to him and have not been given to him? For example, God has given him the gift of knowledge. What is he going to do with it? God has given him health. What use is he going to make of it? God has given man the gifts of making beautiful things and doing beautiful deeds. What is he going to do with these gifts?

Above all, God has given man the gift of becoming Conscious of His Own Being. Is man going to become Conscious of God or is he going to deny Him? Man has the choice. The denial leads to the taking away of the gift but it is man's own business. God is Self-Sufficient. He has said "Be" and He is not going to say "Un-Be." So this drama goes on. It is a most wonderful, most mysterious drama. We know that it exists. We do not know why it does. That is known to God only. Perhaps He will let us have an inkling of it in the hereafter. But man is going to last as long as the heavens and the earth last, and we have not seen more than the First Act of this drama.

Angels and devils have not understood it. The devils are openly hostile and the angels have been obliged to God to serve man — "Be ready to bow down to him." They have bowed down but the disappointed devils have not, and so the struggle continues. Man is lord over both angels and devils. If he calls the angels to his help he rises above the angels. If he lets the devils rule him he soon loses his birth-right and is hurled back to the dark abysmal depths of perdition. This drama of Paradise Lost and Paradise Gained is going on. Man is the actor on the stage. The others are mere subsidiaries—servants to carry out his behests. Even the devils act the role of slaves. How does philosophy help us? The answer is contained in two words, "Know thyself."

The pessimists  
or devils  
are hostile  
to man.

Does matter know what it is? No. Do the  
 Knowledge is Man's chief aim in life. angels know themselves? We don't know.

The angels and the devils are automata. Do we men know of our own existence? Yes and No. And herein lies our whole history. Here is man's parable.

“And when your Lord (the *Vital Principle*) of the Universe said to the angels ‘I am going to place a successor (a sort of ruler over the rest of creation) in this earth,’ they replied, ‘Art Thou going to place one therein who commits disorder therein and sheds blood’ (the angels had seen man's doings whilst he was nothing but a beast or animal) ‘and we (the angels) sing Thy beautiful Praises and declare that Thou art Holy.’ God said : ‘I know what you do not know.’

“And God taught Adam all the names (qualities of things) and then presented them to the angels and said, ‘Let Me know the names (qualities) of these if you speak the truth.’

“They replied : ‘Beautiful art Thou ! We have no knowledge except what Thou hast taught us. Thou art surely all-Knowing, all-Wise.’”

“He (God) said : O Adam, let these (angels) know what are their qualities.’

“So that when he (Adam) had informed them about their names, (qualities or laws) :

“God said : ‘ Did I not say to you that I surely know the secrets of the heavens and the earth and I know what you (angels) are disclosing and what you are keeping back ? ’

“And remember, ye mankind ! When We said to the angels—‘ Bow down to Adam.’ Then they all bowed down but the disappointed ones—“ devils”—did not bow down. They refused and made much of themselves. And they became deniers of God.”

(2—30 to 34)

Books and volumes have been filled with interpretation of this parable. But for good or for bad man has become knowing. The tree of knowledge, according to the Qur-ân, was not the tree forbidden to Adam. It was the tree of disobedience whose fruit he was forbidden to taste but he has tasted that also.

We see very clearly that God has preferred Man or Adam above the rest of His creation in this respect. He has imparted knowledge to man which He did not do to angels or devils. What can this knowledge be ? Self-Consciousness, the place of man in the Universe, and Philosophy—the search for *ultimate* nature of reality itself. This is the ABC of the Philosophy of the Qur-ân. How is man equipped to acquire knowledge ? Is there a limit to such knowledge ? What are the uses to which man can put his knowledge ?

The question about the validity of knowledge has

Is knowledge possible ?

already been answered in the affirmative. Man does know something. We have the example of the prophets—Muhammad for example, telling us over 1300 years ago that man was born out of “oozing, black, bad-smelling mud.” He has also told us about the earth and the planets being a nebulous gas. People say there is nothing new in the Qur-ân. Granted. How did those who preceded Muhammad know all about these things? Who told them : “In the beginning there was Light ?” Scientists now tell us that that is the truth. Who revealed that truth to the Prophet if not The Real? Muhammad was illiterate and no prose book had ever before been composed in the Arabic language. Some of his contemporaries and predecessors were very great poets and orators. They boasted of their prowess in the concourses of Arabs at the annual Haj. Yet when Muhammad challenged them to produce the like of a single chapter of the Qur-ân (and some chapters consist of barely 20 words) none could do it and nobody is willing to take up the challenge even now or has ever taken it up. Neither the language nor the spirit of the Qur-ân can be imitated. They are a masterpiece defying all imitation and reproduction. We are only concerned with the fact that God has undertaken to teach man and He is doing so visibly and invisibly.

“God has given you your full of His blessings both open and hidden.” (31—20)

There is knowledge that comes to us by the use of pen and books ; there is knowledge that comes to us we know not wherefrom, we call it inspiration ; there is knowledge (and the greatest part of it) that comes to us by our direct experience of the universe by means of our senses. We call these perceptions. But even the photographic plate and the gramophone records can receive impressions which can be recorded and reproduced. What about our perceptions ? Are they recorded ? Yes. Can they be reproduced ? Yes. In what way are then our perceptions different from

How do we know things.

the impressions of the photographic plate and the gramophone records ?  
In this. We can, not only perceive

and reproduce, but we can conceive or make a picture of the thing in our minds, which gives us our perceptions. The photographic plate has no conception about the object which has provided the photographic plate with its impression. We have. In the same way we are superior to the gramophone record. We are more than machines.

We not only have perceptions and conceive things but we can use these perceptions and conceptions and produce new images which do not exist outside our own beings. We, from being mere copying records,

Our Perceptions and Conceptions and our creations.

become originators and creators of thoughts which have no existence outside ourselves. Surely there is something in us not possessed by the

angels or devils or mere matter. We have minds or spirits which can work their own machines. No other machine can do that.

*Scepticism* is the view which throws doubt on the possibility of real knowledge. The Qur-ān is most emphatically against this kind of scepticism and condemns it as a 'denial of reality.'

"Do not be one of the doubters" is a frequent warning to man. Doubt and scepticism as to the existence of reality or as to man's ability to make real progress or his powers to acquire real knowledge are spiritual suicides. A man may hesitate to accept what is offered to him as the truth. In fact, being over-credulous leads to superstition. But if a man believes that no real knowledge is possible then that negative belief is the end of man's spiritual existence.

A question is often asked whether man is born with the knowledge of good and evil. Whilst there is no doubt that a newly born human being, like other animals, has instincts of its own necessary to carry on its existence, it has no real knowledge either of the universe or of itself. All such knowledge is acquired by perceptions gained throughout life by means of the senses and by the experience gained and accumulated by the human mind. Of the senses, hearing and sight are the most important. Says the Qur-ān :

The Senses and the Mind are the means of all human knowledge.



“ Has not there passed upon man (*Insan*) a long period of time, part of eternity itself, when he had no self-realisation of any kind ?

We (then) made him from a ball of sperm-ovum which We went on evolving and unfolding till it became hearing and seeing.” (76—1,2)

The idea expressed in these two short passages is that there has been a long period of time before man's sperm-ovum was evolved and during that long term of preparation, man was not able to speak, argue, think and become conscious. Then the sperm-ovum became a jelly-like substance and went on rolling on itself, developing and dividing and growing till it acquired the senses of hearing and seeing.

“ Every human being (says the *Outline of Science*, p. 114) begins his or her life as a single cell—a fertilised egg-cell, a treasure-house of all the ages ” (as mentioned in the Qur-ân).

“ For in this living microcosm, only a small fraction ( $\frac{1}{125}$  of an inch in diameter) there is condensed—who can imagine how ?—all the natural inheritance of man, all the legacy of his parentage, of his ancestry, of his long pre-human pedigree.”

[This is the meaning of the words “ long period of time part of eternity ” in the Qur-ân].

Darwin called the pinhead brain of the ant the most marvellous atom of matter in the world, but the human ovum is more marvellous still. It has more



possibilities in it than any other thing, yet without fertilisation it will die. The fertilised ovum divides and redivides, there results a ball of cells and a sack of cells. (The word *amshajin* used in the Qur-ân exactly describes this jelly-like ball).

“There is a laying down of nervous system and food canal, muscular system and skeleton, etc.” This is the beginning of hearing, sight and mind as mentioned in the Qur-ân.

All these processes have already been briefly described in the passages quoted in this and the previous chapter of this book (Qur-ân, 22—5 and 23—12 to 14). Knowledge comes last.

The point, however, here is that man passes through vast periods of time before he becomes capable of acquiring real knowledge. *It is the last thing to come but it does come through the agency of the senses, especially those of sight and hearing—and, above all, of the mind of man.* Man even as a human being is not born with knowledge. He is born with the capacity to acquire knowledge but not with knowledge itself ready poured into him.

“And God brings you out of your mother’s womb whilst you know nothing; And He makes for you hearing and sight and mind that you may find comfort in Him.” (16—78)

“To find comfort in the Real” is the greatest

Only by means of knowledge man can make any progress.

happiness. Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad had enormous difficulties to contend with; the very people whom they tried to save from spiritual annihilation tortured them but they found "comfort in God." But even Muhammad is commanded to invoke the help of God in increasing his knowledge. "Say : O my *Vital Principle*, increase me in knowledge." (20—114)

✓ The word "knowledge" occurs at least eighty times in the Qur-ân and its derivatives about 800 times. Whilst the other attributes of mind such as "understanding," "remembering," "thinking," "judging," "collocating," "reasoning," etc., etc., and their derivatives are numerous. It is only the learned who can know the law of God and be prepared to meet them. (35—28)

"And these are parables which we coin for the use of mankind but none reason them out except the learned." (29—43)

The qualifications for a king are set out as strength in body and vastness of knowledge. The Israelites objected to Saul being made king over them because he was not rich but said their prophet :

"And surely God has chosen him (Saul) over you because He has given him an abundance of knowledge and good physique." (2—247)

The animal part of the body of man does live on bread and butter but the latest and highest development of him lives on knowledge alone—real knowledge about the reality in all things. Without this knowledge men are worse than beasts :

“ They have hearts but they understand not therewith,

They have eyes but they see not therewith,

And they have ears but they hear not therewith :

They are like beasts of burden or worse :

They are negligent.” (7—176)

But suppose a man uses his eyes and ears on all the things of the world and also his mind ; he will certainly know the value of the things of this world but if he neglect the Great Reality itself, he will still not profit his spirit. He would be gaining the kingdom of this world but he would be losing his own soul. He would be like one who dives to search pearls at the bottom of an estuary but who neglects to see that he can safely come up again. The Qur-ân inculcates the golden mean in all things and defines it as being the capacity of each particular individual in each particular case.

“ God does not burden any soul but to the extent of its ability to bear that burden.

For each soul is what it earns of good ;

And against each soul is what it earns of the contrary.” (2—286)

And again :

“ God desires for you freedom.

And He does not desire for you restraint.”

“ He has chosen you and He has not put any embarrassments in the law of your lives.” (22—78)

“ The law of your lives ” or Din in the original means decision, judgment, jurisdiction and everything relating to law temporal, moral and spiritual.

The philosophy of the Qur-an is comprehensive.

It is sometimes objected against the Qur-ân that it is not merely a religious book but one which interferes with man's social, political and moral relations as well. The objection as far as it says that the Qur-ân interferes with man's activities is quite false but nevertheless it is quite true that the *Qur-ân claims to lay down the principles governing all vital activities of man* in every sphere of life. In fact, everything that concerns the life of man whether as an individual, or as a member of society ; whether relating to temporal affairs only or whether concerning spiritual matters is within the purview of the Qur-ân.

*The springs of all activities lie in the souls of men.* Man has passed the stage of the mineral, the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. He still has his legacies of

these kingdoms which he carries with his body, but something else far superior to these is now awake in man and *his future depends on the care he devotes to the development of this new light now made manifest.* To neglect this is to retrogress and unfortunately some men do retrogress. That is also quite apparent. But the Qur-ân provides a sure guide to those who wish to advance and meet The Real. When we say meet The Real we mean realize Him with the spirit, otherwise The Real is everywhere and all things exist in Him.

“So let him who aspires to the realization of his *Vital Principle* do deeds that are good and let him not pay the reverence due to the *Vital Principle* to anything else.” (18—10)

And says The Real :

“I have not made the *Jinn* and men except that they should reverence Me.

I desire not any nourishment from them ;

Nor do I desire that they should feed Me.”

(51—56, 57)

The above is a literal translation but its meaning is quite clear. The laws which are prescribed for feeding the poor, for charity, for brotherly love, for self-sacrifice on the part of human beings are not prescribed because God is in need of any help but simply in order that man should cultivate the spirit of reverence and duty towards The Real who has made man what he is **Man**

has the choice of using God's gifts. If he uses them as God wishes he should do, man is reverent towards God. If he does otherwise, he loses those gifts for ever.

“Full of blessings is He in whose hand is the  
This life is a great Kingdom and who is Capable of  
schooling. doing all He wishes.

“He has made life and death that He may discipline you.

“Which of you does beautiful deeds?” (67—1,2)  
“And He is the One who has made the heavenly bodies and the earth into six periods (day and night and the four seasons).

“And His throne extends over all living creatures (*lit.* over all water).

“So that He may discipline you, which of you does beautiful deeds?” (11—7)

Angels have no responsibility. They are commanded to do certain things and they cannot do otherwise but with men it is different. Men are told to do that which is good and to think that which is beautiful but they have a choice and the proper exercise of this choice involves a certain amount of painstaking. This life is a great schooling. Who will learn his lesson and pass his trials with credit? Who will fail therein? The sun, the moon, the stars and the earth have their fixed courses and they have no choice therein. The earth

does not one day revolve round its axis from west to east and in the opposite way the next day. The moon does not reverse its motions nor does the sun. But we see every day from our experience and from the experience of other people that we do not keep to one course. We do things that we know or think to be wrong. All civilized men know that lying, cheating and dishonesty are bad. Yet knowing all this, they, or a good many of them, go on telling lies and are guilty of dishonesty. They make agreements and break them. They profess to be patriots and philanthropists yet the action of some of them belie their professions.

But the fact that vast majority of mankind have virtually agreed on truth, health, happiness, honesty, love, goodness, manliness, courage, reverence for God, kindness, charity as desirable things to achieve and to keep is itself a great achievement.

The *Vital Principle* knows our deficiencies and allows for them and we are not going to be punished for what we cannot help. The one thing which He makes a condition of His allowance for our weaknesses is that we do not deny Him. That is the *sine qua non* of His Blessing.

The denial of the Great Reality is a sin which God is not willing to overlook. If He did so He would be denying His own Reality. That is an impossibility. So that, as long as a man is strong enough to resist the temptation of asserting his own *divinity*,

God is not going to deny His own Reality.

man has hope of self-realization. But as soon as man says: "I do not believe in God, I believe in myself," that moment the man is lost. But God is Gracious and a thousand lapses are forgiven provided man does not live and die in that state. And life is very uncertain, so why should man ever risk losing his soul? True philosophy and real wisdom consist in a firm acknowledgment of the truth of The Real and an unwavering adherence to this acknowledgment.

God, again, out of His own Wisdom, has made the task of man to depend on man's own choice and *He has also put obstacles in this race which man has to run.* But He has pointed the way to get over those obstacles and He also promises help as long as man is willing to be helped. Why has God done, what He has done is beyond our knowledge. To ask that question is to assert our superiority over. The Real and a denial of Him. He may tell us all about it when we have run the race, have had our thousands of falls and yet not denied Him but before the race is finished the asking of this question in a defiant spirit is rebellion against God. Man has the choice, let each one do according to his light. The question is between God and each individual soul and it would be impudent for anyone to interfere, so we content ourselves with quoting God's Word.

✓ The prophets and the honest philosophers are the



Philosophy  
comes to  
the rescue  
of man.

true helpers of mankind. There are a few agnostics and atheists amongst philosophers but the large majority are firm believers in The Real and in the Oneness of The Real.

They differ as to details but Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Newton, Leibnitz, Wallace, Bacon, Coleridge, Viscount Haldane, Spinoza, Auguste Comte and scores of others have believed in The Real.

They have differed in the details of His attributes and as to what they mean by realizing Him.

Some people may say that Herbert Spencer, Haeckel and other evolutionists are atheists but from what we know of the philosophy of the Qur-ân they seem to us to be nearer the truth than many so-called Theists. Many are dubbed "atheists" because they deny the plurality, trinity or duality of Godhead. If that be so, then every believer in the truth of the Qur-ân would be in the company of such philosophers who deny plurality, trinity or duality of Godhead. *It is the fate of the philosophers to be misunderstood.* But for philosophy, the moral and spiritual currents of human thought would long ago have stagnated and become poisoned. Philosophers also do make their mistakes but the mistake of a philosopher who is true to himself is worth more than a thousand correct things done or said by lesser men. *The pursuit of philosophy, in spite of the philosopher's mistakes, is the only thing that can*

*save mankind and religion itself from ultimate error.* Moreover, if one philosopher goes wrong, there are generally ten others to correct him and in this mutual contest of finding out the truth lies the value of philosophy.

In religious controversies, tempers are heated much more quickly than in purely philosophical investigations. In religion, each person starts with axioms and postulates which he believes to be true and which he is not willing to relinquish. In philosophy, there is a real search for reality though here also the inquiry becomes tainted with the individual's inclinations and Fichte's saying (already twice quoted), about the kind of philosophy that a man chooses depending upon the kind of man he is, is true. But the very acknowledgment of this truth shows the broad-mindedness of philosophy. Recently, moreover, there has been a tendency to harmonize and synthesize various kinds of philosophies into a synoptic whole.

Many attempts have been made to make philosophy a harmonized whole science in itself and the mere enumeration of the different methods would make a book by itself. The easiest and crudest way is to synthesize all sciences into one; to take the broad principles of all sciences and find a unity in them somewhat in the way of Herbert Spencer's "First Principles."

Philosophy itself must be a whole.

Herbert Spencer's Philosophy is defective.

Bergson very rightly condemns Herbert Spencer's philosophy as no philosophy at all. Herbert Spencer takes the Universe as it is, cuts it up into what he calls *simple* and *homogeneous* bodies and then begins to reconstruct these into *complex* and *heterogeneous* bodies. Science has conclusively proved that his *simple* and *homogeneous* bodies are not at all so *simple* and *homogeneous* as he supposes them to be and whatever they are, his method *does not disclose anything that he does not presume beforehand*. He goes round in a circle of his own drawing. His philosophy is very defective but his researches and expositions are very useful.

A better and more improved method is that of C. E. M. Joad, who tries to harmonize various kinds of Philosophical theories, such as Vitalism, Pluralism, Vital Impulse, Neo-Realism and Teleology into one consistent whole. Each theory has an element of truth in it and Joad tries to expound it and fit it into his scheme of philosophy. His philosophy is, in fact, Plato's *Symposium* reconstructed on modern lines. *The ultimate purpose of thought is the element of permanence and perfection in the Universe.* Says he :

“I further conceive that life in its earlier stages of development is unconscious of this ultimate purpose, but that at a certain evolutionary level there is emergent, to use Professor Lloyd Morgan's term, awareness of the goal which the process of evolution

is seeking to reach. Emerging at a comparatively late stage of evolutionary development, this awareness takes the form of an intimation of the permanent reality towards a complete consciousness of which the life force is struggling. Such intimations have been the special privilege and possession of mystics of all ages.”

*Contemporary British Philosophy*, p. 187

(2nd Series.)

Hoernle, on the other hand, is out for “speculative philosophy.” He conceives the universe as an “order of phenomena in which each kind of phenomenon has its distinctive and irreducible character and place.” “And all phenomena, focussed in one phenomenon, mind, which can approach itself as well as others, seem to me, for a synoptic view, to point to a universe permitting such a union of insight and feeling as Spinoza has embodied for us in his memorable phrase—*A nos intellectualis dei.*” (P. 156 above).

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE SOUL

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There is greater difference of opinion amongst philosophers about the existence and nature of the reality of the soul than there is about God. The existence of The Real, or God, can hardly be denied though His attributes may not be agreed upon. Even the so-called atheist believes in some principle underlying all Reality. Herbert Spencer and Haeckel, two of the greatest evolutionists, have both agreed to acknowledge the existence of the Great Unknown. It does not really matter very much whether we call Him the Unknown, the Absolute, The Real, the Vital Principle, the Soul of the Universe, or God. These and other words, used in naming the ultimate Reality, do not matter so much, for words are words. The great fact is the acknowledgment of His existence. And this is denied by few. The dispute about God generally is as to what each man thinks Him to be.

But as to the Soul, there are not a few who deny its existence altogether. And the difference of opinion as to its nature is quite as vast as about that of God. And, in this discussion, the common people take as great a share as do the philosophers. And the reason

is quite plain. It concerns everybody, the good as well as the bad.

When liars, hypocrites, thieves, robbers, murderers, kidnappers, marauders, gamblers, swindlers, *breakers of agreements*, cheats, perjurers, fornicators and deniers of the values of Goodness, Beauty and Truth are told that they are doing harm to themselves for which they are responsible, what is easier for them than to deny the existence of the Soul and finish the whole argument? If there is no one to punish them in this world, or, if they can escape such punishment, the denial of the "values", "hereafter", or "future" becomes a very handy tool in their mental armoury. The most cunning as well as the most dangerous method, however, is to make a verbal profession of the belief but to deny it in heart, and to act as if it did not exist. The philosopher of the Qur-ân must be prepared for it, and avoid the net spread for him by the Hypocrites. No lesson of the philosophy of the Qur-ân is more important than this :

" And there are some men who say, "We believe in God and the hereafter,"  
 Who are the Spiritual lepers. but they believe not." (2—8)

These are the hypocrites who would fain deceive God and the believers but they deceive none except themselves. Their hearts are diseased and the disease goes on increasing day by day. Open opposition can

be met and provided for, but such covert enmity is most dangerous to a lover of truth and wisdom. It is treason to the truth. Hypocrisy is the leprosy of the soul. Samiri, the misleader of the Israelites who made the Golden Calf for them to worship, knowing full well that he was wrong, and in order simply to satisfy the vanity of his own heart, was such a leper and he is told by Moses :

“Get thee gone, for surely for thee in this life shall be the motto “Touch-me-not” and in the hereafter a still worse fate which will not be put off.” (20—97)

The hypocrites are the white ants or termites of society. They eat away the heart of all that is good whilst nothing appears on the surface. They work underground and dig tunnels and work by night. The moral lepers do not wish to be seen and spiritual darkness is their greatest ally. Therefore everyone who wishes to safeguard his soul against hypocrisy and hypocrites must be always on the look-out not only for what is apparently false but for falsehood covered with the appearance of truth. We must also save ourselves from our own hypocrisy.

“And obey not the deniers of Reality and the  
 Opposition to hypocrisy is a duty. hypocrites and repel their mischief  
 and invoke the aid of God (in repelling  
 them)”. (33—48)

The Philosophers of the Qur-ân must not let their

There is a spiritual struggle for existence.

souls be attacked by the leprosy of hypocrisy in themselves of others. All the spiritual and physical manifestations of God in our bodies and souls must be invoked against the sly invasions of lies, hypocrisies and denials of Reality. There is no peace possible with moral lepers. Peace with such termites of the soul means death. There is a "spiritual struggle for existence" as well as a physical one. "Therefore, obey not the deniers of Reality and struggle against them a mighty struggle with the help of this Qur-ân." (25—52)

And a survival of the fittest.

We spoke of this life being a schooling in the last chapter. This is the meaning thereof. The aim of life is the evolution of soul by means of spiritual struggle here. Without a struggle against hypocrisy the souls that are to strive would not be so strong as they would be after such a struggle. There is then a principle of the survival of the fittest as well as a struggle for existence in the realm of spirits. By spirits we here mean human souls only and the struggle is between those who believe in the Reality and those who deny it. It is not a struggle by the sword and the dagger but by spiritual exertion. The greater part of the struggle is within our own souls. Hypocrisy lurks in our own souls and we must fight against it.

"When the hypocrites come to thee (O Muhammad!) they say: "We testify that thou art surely God's messenger:



“And God knows that thou surely art His Messenger :

“ And God testifies that the hypocrites are liars.”  
(63—1)

Such are the cunning pharisees of this world. They wish to confound the truth but they confound none except themselves. And we must look within our own souls and see that we are not being deceived by ourselves.

There are others who are less cunning but still equally obstinate. When their evil deeds such as robberies, rapes and murders are reproached and they are told not to ruin their future what is easier for them than to say :

The second class of disbelievers in the existence of the Soul.

“ Who will put life into (dead) bones when they are decomposed ? ” (36—78)

Or thus :

“ What ! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, are we really then going to be subjected to the Judgment (of God) ? ” (37—53)

Some are more explicit in their denial :

They say :

“ There is only this one death and we are not going to be raised up again.

And if you are right, then bring our forefathers back to life.” (44—35, 36)

They do not consider that even the recurrence of day and night have their term. On the 2nd of June in a tropical country if a denier of reality was asked to bring back the sun to the East after it had set in the West he could not do it. The same is the case with the souls. They have their recurrence of birth and death and an interval between the two events. The ignorant people are impatient. They wish to change the Will of The Real but no one can do it.

“ And were it not that a word (the word “ Be ”) had proceeded from thy *Vital Principle* fixing a known duration, the matter would have been settled amongst them.” (42—14)

The third class are more philosophical and they say: “ There is nothing but the life of this world: We live and we die, and nothing kills us but Time ! ”

The third class of deniers of the existence of the Soul.

“ But,” (says God), “ they have no real knowledge of this, they merely guess.” (45—24)

The earliest and commonest theory about the soul is that it consists of a very thin and subtle fluid-like substance which permeates the whole body. It is supposed to be, according to this theory, a real though extremely airy substance which is capable of extension and contraction. It is supposed to have existed before birth and is said to continue

Philosophical theories about the existence of the Soul.

to exist after the death of the body and might appear as a thin vapoury ghost. Even during the life of the body this ghost is supposed to be capable of leaving the body, as in sleep or trances, and is said to be capable of withdrawing itself from the body and wandering about. Theosophists and spiritualists of Europe and America are fond of depicting the soul as some such existence and a few great men of science like the late Sir Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge are supporters of this view of the soul. Sir Oliver Lodge is one of the greatest exponents of this theory of the soul and has written a book about the doings of the soul of his son (Raymond) who died in the Great War. Careful study of this book, in spite of our great sympathy with Sir Oliver Lodge and our profound admiration for his discoveries as a scientist, leaves us quite unconvinced about this fantastic activity of the soul after death. We think he has been imposed upon by the media he employed in interpreting the doings of the soul of his son.

Plato's theory of the Soul. Plato, as one of the greatest philosophers of Greece, did not agree with the view that the soul was like a thin vapoury body or ghost. He considered that it was impossible to perceive the soul by the senses—in fact that is not a material body in any sense. We could only grasp the existence of the soul by the intellect.

But, according to Plato, our sense perceptions of

all things whether mental or material are of a lower kind of cognition. Real knowledge, according to Plato, was concerned with the "Ideas" or with the world of eternal Being. Everything that existed here down below was a kind of "imitation" of the "idea" which existed in the eternal Being of the world of "Ideas." The soul, therefore, according to him could not possibly be a material substance. But he believed in its existence after the death of the body.

Aristotle, the greatest of Plato's successors, and a model to all scientists and philosophers of later ages, also rejected the common or vulgar theory of the soul. He has written a treatise on "The Soul." Aristotle to a certain extent reversed the theory of Plato. Plato regarded experience and concepts as the "imitation" or recalling of "Ideas." Aristotle held experience to be the true source of concepts and that "Ideas" did not precede concepts but followed them. Plato was an essentially deductive philosopher whilst Aristotle preferred induction to deduction. Life according to Aristotle is self-movement of which the soul is the principal. Strange to say, however, that the soul according to Aristotle is not merely synonymous with consciousness or mind but includes every kind of vital process—nutrition, movement, sensation and thought. The soul is to the body, what the form of a statue is to the substance of the statue. But although soul and body are conceived of as two things, they are really one, as

Aristotle's  
theory of  
the Soul.

model to all scientists and philosophers of later ages, also rejected the common or vulgar theory of the soul.

Important  
or  
necessary as  
life.

in the case of the statue whose form and substance are one body or thing, not two. Man is a single unit, not one being made of two separate existences—the soul and body. According to this theory the souls of plants, animals and men are essentially of the same kind in an ascending series, the higher developing from, and including, the lower. He approached Plato in assigning an “internal sense” corresponding to each “external sense.” Man alone has the power of recollection and construction. But the soul is both immaterial and immortal.

Above all other activities of the soul is the will.

We see in this extremely short summary of Aristotle's theory of the soul and his exposition of the science of psychology that what has been added to it since is hardly more than a commentary. Aristotle has dealt with the subject of psychology and his method is metaphysical. He has the great virtue of basing his ideas on facts and building his theories on principle. His *vital processes* are the nearest approach to the *vital principle* as expounded in this book. Aristotle starts with the objective point of view and having laid his foundations on observation and experience he proceeds to develop and evolve the subjective point of view at great length and in harmony with the facts of observation and with human experience.

Nothing was added in the Middle Ages to what

The Middle Ages & theories of the Soul. had been stated by Plato and Aristotle about the soul. But under the influence of the churches (the priests being the only learned men in the Middle Ages) Philosophy gradually degenerated into mysticism and tended to become more and more formal and subjective than real and objective—a discussion on the words rather than on the reality of philosophical ideas. Whatever real advance came to Europe in science, philosophy and arts came through Spain under the influence of the Saracens who then ruled that country. Their universities at Cordova and numerous other places kept the lamp of learning alight whilst Europe was sunk in darkness. The reader should refer to Syed Ameer Ali for a short account of Muslim Philosophy during the Middle Ages. Up to the fourteenth century Philosophy prospered but then it became merely dialectic argument and hair-splitting. The articles on “Mysticism” and “Philosophy” in the book called *The Legacy of Islam* are also useful.

Modern Philosophy in Europe. But after the Renaissance and Reformation, scientific and philosophic movement spread in Europe. Descartes (born 1596) was the founder of modern ideas of philosophic thought in Europe. He considered animals to be automata, without feelings or power of self-movement. Animals according to him were subject to physical and mechanical laws more or less in the way as inanimate objects are.

To man alone, according to Descartes, God had granted the gift of a soul. The automaton of the animal had been endowed with a further something which exercised only the higher mental functions of thought and volition. The rest was nothing but mechanism.

Descartes's  
theory of  
the Soul.

But the scientists soon began to doubt this special gift of soul to man and they saw nothing to differentiate the soul of man, if there was any, from the automatic machinery of the animals.

The Scientific  
Sceptics.

David Hume, the great Scotch sceptic, made an intellectual bonfire of all theories of the soul, especially those held by the clergy or Idealists of the type of Berkeley (born 1685). Berkeley had argued that matter did not exist and that spirits alone existed—the Spirit of God and the spirits of men. Hume argued, on the contrary, that all the mental processes were mere conglomerations of sensations regulated by the principle of association. The soul was a mere tradition which had been accepted without any true knowledge and no proof of its existence had ever been produced or could be produced. Like the agnostics and atheists of the present day Hume and the other sceptics of the 17th and 18th centuries believed soul to be a fiction generated by priests in order to maintain their own strength and influence over the minds of the people. Agnosticism and atheism in Europe are mainly directed

David Hume's  
theory of  
the Soul.

against the Christian Church and have a certain element of truth in them, for when the agnostics and atheists deny God and soul, their ideas of soul and God are based on the Christian notions of God and of the soul. Thus in the whole of the eighteenth century of the Christian era nothing but scepticism and materialism ruled the philosophic thought of Europe and it continued to do so into the nineteenth century. Meanwhile Leibnitz (born 1646) and Kant (born 1724) had given a new turn to philosophic thought.

Leibnitz's idea of the universe is a harmonious working of separate spirits or "monads." All mental substances are independent activities, essentially individual but working in harmony. The soul and body are like two separate clocks, originally wound up and started by God, but moving absolutely in harmony with each other. They keep the same time always without interfering with each other. This theory has the great merit of bringing clearness into the argument and is workable. We say, in this book, that the whole universe is an expansion of The Real without dividing it into "monads" or separate individuals but assigning to each manifestation of reality its guiding *vital principle*. Whatever appears to us, physically or mentally, is the *substance* or *apparent part* of the existence of a being and whatever is guiding,



adjusting and perfecting it is its *hidden* part with its *vital principle*. But we do not believe in the separate existence of "monads." If they did exist, as Leibnitz says they do, they should be either independent of each other in which case each would be a deity, or if they are all subject to the law of God as he holds they are, then it is God, not the "monads," who is the sole independent Being. There cannot be one Reality and then other realities made by the One and yet independent of Him. Leibnitz's theory would make God to have set the clock going and then withdrawn Himself from any further interference. Our theory is that the activity of God is always working in all His manifestations and is never absent, never sleepy, never dead.

Immanuel Kant offered a new solution of the dilemma. He said, somewhat like Berkeley but not denying the existence of matter, that the nature of the physical is but the appearance to us of some reality of whose real nature we know nothing. *The nature of appearance is determined by the constitution of our own minds.* Time and Space are the creations of our own minds which our own mental phenomena suggest to us as being necessary. So are all physical laws. These laws express the nature of our own minds rather than the reality of the physical world about whose reality we can form no idea nor can we form any idea about the reality of our own minds. All that we know is what our minds show us to be and we cannot get any further.

The philosophy  
of Kant.

According to this way of arguing, nothing could be said about the soul.

Immanuel Kant, therefore, fell back on some sort of moral intuition in acknowledging the existence of the soul and its immortality. The soul is not only immortal but a *supra*-sensible being. He practically falls back on the Idealism of Plato as regards the existence of the soul while absolutely denying it with regard to other phenomena. His argument is, therefore, not very consistent or convincing with regard to the existence of the soul and is not much supported by other philosophers though his belief in the existence of the soul is being taken up under new names and new ideas.

We now have such names as "Biotism," "Neo-Vitalism," and "Neo-Idealism" to distinguish them from the theories of Plato, Aristotle and Kant. We, in fact, have "Neo-Kantianism" and so forth.

The truth, however, lies between these various extremes. Man is not matter alone nor mind alone, nor spirit alone. Man is a curious mixture of many phases of universal phenomena. Will, reason, feelings, desire, the satisfaction of bodily requirements such as hunger, thirst and love of ornaments, dreams of the past and future, purposive activities, ambitions, rivalries, passions and a thousand other categories put together make man, not one thing alone or two things alone. Whichever of these things predominates in a

The truth lies between these various extremes.

man's mind that predominance determines his philosophy and his theory of the soul. *And probably the souls of no two men are exactly alike and hence all this differentiation arising from the very nature of the differences of our souls.* The belief in the existence of the soul is one thing. The argument as to its nature is another matter. The sceptics when they attack the idea of a soul having an existence are influenced by the theories as to its nature which they believe to be untenable. Confusion is also caused by thinking that *mind* has one existence and spirit or soul has another, as people always speak of "mental," "spiritual" and "physical" qualities being three separate entities.

Language a difficulty. Language, in fact, is, at the bottom, our greatest difficulty.

Where then lies the truth ?

We must always remember that in this book we have identified man with all life, though mankind is more advanced than it was, it is still progressing and though mankind is more advanced than it was, it is and is not yet perfect. Our theory of the soul must comprehend two things.

Self-consciousness.

- (1) Our own consciousness as men.
- (2) The behaviour of men and animals in general.

Consciousness and behaviour are the acknowledged

The nature of  
the Soul.

attributes of our souls. All philosophers are agreed on that. Some make these two attributes the result or function of the human machine, others derive them from a source which rules the human mechanism and is not its slave. But whether it be one or the other it is there and cannot be denied. Suppose, for the sake of argument, we agreed upon calling Time the soul of a clock. Then the first school would affirm that Time is a function of the wheels and clogs that are in the clock, whilst the second school would say that Time is the mind of the man who made the clock and governs the clock, and that it is not the clock that governs Time. It is a difference of viewing the soul rather than any denial as to the belief in the existence of the soul.

✓ Whatever view we adopt, the Qur-ân is explicit in defining soul as being mainly Consciousness. And the *object of philosophical thought*, according to the Qur-ân, is the *education of the soul*. Souls are not brought into existence as perfect beings or as independent 'monads' of Leibnitz but each comes into being with a history and heredity which is its own and each soul has the gift of God—the gift of *choice* or *freedom within* limits. Each soul as soon as it has developed sufficient strength, unavoidably begins to use this choice up to the hour of death. *The soul of a man continues to grow and gather strength. It is at first a seed, then a seedling, then a plant, then a great tree giving fruit in large*

The Quranic  
view of the Soul.

quantities and spreading its seeds and seedlings all round subject to the competition of other souls. *The body becomes part of the earth but the realization of Consciousness of each Ego lives.* The lamp may go out but the rays of light it has given still go on. They are constantly being changed from one form into another. *The Qur-ân says that they shall be focussed again into a new lamp.* Some of these rays have the explosive qualities of genius and their generation of new light may be incomprehensible to us now but will become comprehensible later on. Those that have spread the light of Beauty, Goodness and Truth shall shine as such. Those who have spent their lives in extinguishing Beauty, Goodness and Truth will have their own light taken away from them. Their resistance of the Light of God will change them into fire. The greater the resistance which they have offered to the light of Beauty, Goodness and Truth the greater will be their own burning heat. This language is undoubtedly metaphorical but that is unavoidable. We now proceed to enunciate the philosophy of the Qur-ân with regard to the soul by giving chapter and verse :

✓ "And He is the One Who takes away your soul or consciousness by night (during sleep) and He knows what your behaviour has been by day (during hours of consciousness); then He wakes you up in the condition you were before sleep that your known term, or

Consciousness is the essence of the soul.

duration. may be completed; then towards Him is your time and place of return, then He will inform you what your behaviour had been." (6—60)

A man is responsible for his behaviour during hours of conscious exertion, or conation as it is called by philosophers. When sleep comes upon man, this conation has a temporary rest and man's responsibility ceases during hours of sleep. God keeps every man's full account of his behaviour each day, that is why He says He knows what his behaviour has been during hours of waking. Then the ledger of man's behaviour starts again at the point it had been balanced the night previous and goes on till death when the final entries are made. The ledger will be balanced and God will inform each man how he stands just as naturally as He ripens the fruit of a tree or the seed of grain. *The whole process is a natural one just as day follows night and night follows day.* Just as friction of material bodies produces heat so does the friction of spirits against God's Laws. Let us take another verse :

✓ "God takes away the soul or consciousness of each individual at the time of his death, and those that do not die, at the time of their sleep; then He withholds those upon whom He has settled death and lets the consciousness of others run till a known duration, or term. Surely in this fact there are signs for those who think (the philosophers)." (39—42)

The above two passages read together are very

illuminating. Sleep and death are spoken of as analogous conditions. Just as consciousness begins to run once more after its term of quiescence during sleep so will it begin to run again after a new reawakening. The interval between death and the new reawakening is like the interval of nightly sleep.

✓  
 “When death overtakes one of them he says :  
 ‘My Vital Principle! send me back, send me back, that I may behave goodly in that which I have left undone!’ “But surely,” (says God) “this is a mere saying of the one who says it. Because there is a barrier behind them till the day of resuscitation.” (23—99, 100)

No coming back of the soul to this earth after death.

This “barrier” is the sleep of death. There is no coming back of Consciousness and reopening its account again. The Qur-ān makes it clear that although the soul is not annihilated, it has its durations of activity and its durations of quiescence.

As we have already pointed out there has been one long duration of “death” before man’s birth on this earth. Then there is a duration of man’s life on this earth during which each soul has its term of activity. Even during this short duration there are hours of waking and hours of sleep. Then after death, there is a further long duration of waiting or incubation. Then there is another reawakening and a further long duration of Consciousness after which we

cannot say what will happen. The soul is not like God who is always Living, always Active.

“Each soul has to taste death, and We discipline you with what is good for you and what is not good for you as an assay.

“And towards Us are you returning,” (21—35)

It is the soul that tastes death not the body.

The assaying  
of souls in  
this life.

*Death means stoppage of activity, of  
Consciousness, of self-movement, of will.*

During life, God makes man meet opportunities that are useful to him and others that are not, and God has given man the choice between the two by which He assays mankind. Goodness, Beauty and Truth settle down like the gold that they are, whilst what is false comes on top and is blown off as being rubbish.

“He makes the rain to fall from above, then streams flow therewith each according to its capacity, and the torrent in each stream bears along with it foam in bulging masses :

“And in the same way, there is foam (or scum) in what people melt in fire with a view to making ornaments or other articles of use—

“Thus does God mint parables of truth and falsehood—

“Then as to that which is foamy, it is blown off as rubbish ; but as that which is of use to men it remains



in the earth. Thus does God mint parables.”

(13—17)

Let us give the equivalents of the terms used in this parable.

Rain	=	God's spiritual blessings.
Above	=	Spiritual heaven.
Fall	=	Revelation of God's blessings through prophets and otherwise.
Torrent	=	Life.
Stream	=	The capacity of each soul.
Matter and Water	=	Truth.
Foam	=	Falsehood.
Melting	=	The process of separation of truth and falsehood or assaying as mentioned in (21—35) above.
Blowing off	=	Vanishing or being cast off as not wanted.
Earth	=	Man's soul.
Remaining	=	is permanent.

The meaning of the parable is as follows :—

God's blessings are common to all mankind and

The meaning of the parable of assaying mankind.

are evolved in the natural course of events just as rain. There is further reference in this rain coming from the Ocean of God's Mercy, rising above all things that are low and then falling on these very beings that are low, without favour or partiality. Each man catches of these blessings as much as he can carry. The water of life, or God's favour, flows continuously. The water as it comes down is pure but the impurities of each stream or soul become mixed therewith and the least useful are the most swollen up and uppermost. Thus, falsehood and evil though most apparent are not the real stuff of life. Falsehood cannot last, truth settles down in earth, *i.e.*, in acceptable souls. Life is thus a torrent or an assaying, a struggle, or a burning trial, in which the good and bad after being mixed up are finally separated and the bad and useless are thrown off. Muslim writers are very prolific about the attributes of the soul and the stages of its evolution. Volumes upon volumes may be filled up by quoting their opinions. Aristotle, Plato and numerous other writers are ground down to powder and analysed and reanalysed, sifted and resifted till the head begins to feel giddy. There are rationalists and fatalists, believers in the freedom of the will and strong supporters of predetermination. There are those who find an esoteric meaning in the plainest of Qur-ân's statements and there are others who take every word of a parable in its literal sense.

We are trying to seek the middle course in this book and as far as possible to leave all matters that are not relevant to the philosophy of the Qur-ân outside our consideration. But this question of the nature of the soul, the question of Consciousness and of Behaviour is so absorbingly vast and intriguing that some further light may be thrown on the subject by the following passages of the Qur-ân.

The evolution  
and education  
of the Soul:  
Chapter of  
"The Sun."

"By the sun and the radiation  
thereof :

By the full-moon when it follows  
the sun ;

By the day when the sun is  
bright :

By the night when the sun is covered up ;

By the space and the way it is built up ;

By the earth and the way it goes ;

By the soul and the way it is proportioned :

In this way has He taught the soul the things that  
corrupt it, and the things that perfect it ;

Surely successful is the man who purifies his soul,

And surely ruined is he who tramples upon his  
soul."

(91—1 to 10)

The theme of these passages is the soul. Just as in logic and mathematics we proceed from the known to the unknown so here in these passages of the Qur-ân, the soul is the unknown quantity and the sun, its

radiation, the moon and its reflection of the sun's light, the day and night, the heavenly space above the earth and the way it is constructed, the earth and its motions and extension are all the given premises from which, by analogy, to derive knowledge as to the soul.

The sun we all know is the immediate source of life and matter in the solar system. The soul itself was sleeping for aeons in the sun till the earth separated from it and cooled down sufficiently for water to form and life to appear on this earth. The sun is known by means of our senses and its knowledge has now been made fairly comprehensive by the labours of astronomers, mathematicians and physicists. What can the sun teach us about our souls? Almost everything. The age of the sun, the size of the sun, its revolution round its own axis, its journey in space, its material changes, its storms and struggles within its own body, and a thousand other facts are evidences that our souls partake of all these events. *Our souls are as fearfully made as the sun itself.* Just as a single atom of matter may be likened to a universe so may a single soul be likened to a sun. *The evolution and nature of the soul partakes of the evolution and nature of its source.*

The sun is divided by the astronomer into definite

Solar layers  
of flames.

concentric regions or layers, about which there is a good deal of information forthcoming. Within these layers is the heart of the sun about which we know very little though we may make guesses. It is so with the soul. The philosopher, like the astronomer, knows a good deal about the outer layers of the soul but as to the heart of it he can only guess.

The innermost layer of the sun is the luminous photosphere—a brilliant layer of vaporous matter. Above this is a cooler layer of smoke-like haze from 500 to 1000 miles in thickness.

The third layer called the “chromosphere” is from 5,000 to 10,000 miles in thickness. It is a sea of tumultuous surging fire.

Above the “chromosphere” is the “corona” of immense extent and fading away into the surrounding sky for millions of miles.

A description of these layers cannot be attempted here. The reader may refer to any book on astronomy. We make only one quotation :

“From the uppermost portion of the chromosphere great fiery tongues of glowing hydrogen and calcium vapour shoot out for many thousands of miles, driven outward by some prodigious expulsive force. It is these ‘red prominences’ which are such a notable feature in the picture of the eclipse of the sun already referred to.

During the solar eclipse of 1919 one of these red flames rose in less than seven hours from a height of 130,000 miles to more than 500,000 miles above the sun's surface. The immense column of red-hot gas, four or five times the thickness of the earth, was soaring upward at the rate of 60,000 miles an hour."

(*Outline of Science*, p. 9)

Freedom of will within limits. "And say: The truth is from your *Vital Principle*, then whoever likes to believe in it he may do so; and whoever likes to deny it he may do so:

"We have prepared for the unjust a fire whose curtains are surrounding them." (18—29)

This last passage establishes the theory of "choice" or "freedom" within limits in most unequivocal terms and the consequences of exercising the choice wrongly.

The radiations of the sun as evidences of the soul. The sun itself is an evidence of the nature of the soul, but its radiations by means of which alone we know the sun to be what it is are further proofs of the vitality of the soul or its self-movement.

The sun like all matter made apparent, is (according to the theory propounded in this book) motion made less mobile. But motion cannot become less mobile except by parting with some of that motion. This is what is happening to the sun, the stars, the earth and

all other bodies in space. They are becoming condensed by losing part of their motion and this loss is called RADIATION. The reader must clearly distinguish between *radiation* and *emergence*. Emergence is a sort of birth from a parent. Radiation is distribution of self rather than giving birth to something new. Our view of the Universe is that it is a finite radiation of the Infinite God or The Real. The distinction may seem to be very fine but we mean it.

The sun radiates heat, light, electricity, magnetism or, in one word, energy. So does the soul. People who are unacquainted with the Qur-ân also speak of *personal magnetism*. The truth is not confined to one book. It is to be found everywhere. There is such a thing as magnetism of the soul. The sun radiates heat. It ripens crops and fruits of all kinds. Its intensity also, sometimes, sets fire to dry grass or barns of corn and wheat. So does the soul's heat. We talk of "fiery speeches," "heated discussions," "surging and raging crowds" and a thousand other epithets similar to these in all languages. We speak of the sun's light being transformed by the chlorophyll of the leaf into life. So do we speak of the light of soul or "spiritual light." The "sweetness and light" of Mathew Arnold is nothing but this spiritual light of the soul and the spiritual sweetness which is the result thereof—just as the chlorophyll changes the carbon of the air into carbohydrates which make the sugar and honey of our

Spiritual  
radiation  
going on.

lives. If there is no sugar changed into honey in the body, no life can go on for long. Just in the same way, if there is no "sweetness of soul" the soul soon decays and dies. A great soul is a great light. "O thou Prophet (Muhammad)! We (God) have sent thee as a soul being a witness over mankind—giving them good news of what is to come and warning them of the consequences of the denial of reality—

The Soul of Muhammad is the Spiritual Sun.

"And (We have sent thee) as one who invites men to God with His permission.

"And (We have sent thee) as a shining Spiritual lamp." (30—45, 46)

The moon as evidence of the Soul.

From the sun we pass on to the moon which has lost most of its own heat and shines by the borrowed light of the sun. If a person is not born a great soul

like that of Jesus or Muhammad, "sweetness and light" are still possible to him by borrowing the light of the spiritual sun. As soon as the sun sets the full moon (or even the new moon, a day old) appears on the sky and it shines by the borrowed light of the sun. We humble mortals may not have such great communication with The Real as Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad had but His light is available to us. The Qur-ân is the Light of God given to Muhammad, the shining lamp of God. Can we not become the moons of God—the satellites of the sun of God?

Spirit as a moon.



The earth and the planets are the satellites of the sun. The moons are the satellites of the planets. We lesser souls can also borrow light from the spiritual sun—each according to his own capacity.

The Qur-an  
is the Spiritual  
Sun ever  
shining on us.

God's sun is ever shining in His revealed Word. Let us open our souls to it and they will shine, just as does the moon. The passages of the

Qur-ân which we are now discussing are such a revelation to each human being. They are not the monopoly of Arabs or Muslims. They are open to all mankind. We are not sentimentalist sermonisers. We appeal to reason and logic—not merely the reason and logic of numbers and figures but the reason and logic of the living soul within us all, the reality underlying all human phenomena.

Day and night, we have already pointed out in discussing Consciousness, are directly connected with the activities and quiescence of the soul. During day-time the material sun shines on the material sky. In the same way the soul or Consciousness of each man is engaged in sowing its seeds of future crops and also to a certain extent reaping the fruits of its past labours. The connection of the souls with the sun now becomes quite apparent. The sun, of course, does not sleep. Our souls can only prosper on the alternation of day and night as it happens to be the case on this earth. During day-time, or waking

Day and Night  
as evidences  
of the soul.

hours, the soul is engaged in its struggles, or the sun of human life is out for show and work. During the night this soul or the sun of human life is covered up by sleep just as the material sun is covered up during the night by the earth. Day and night are, therefore, the evidences of the activities and rest of souls.

The soul, if it has a being, must have a structure.

The space and its structure as evidence of soul. What is its structure like? The answer is that the expanse of souls is like the expanse of the whole heavenly space and souls are points in that heavenly space just as stars, planets and moons are in the material space.

“And We (God) have constructed (or laid the foundations of) the heavens with Our own hands, and We have laid these foundations very vast and deep.

“And as to this earth We have spread it out and what a beautiful cradle have We made of it!”

(51—47, 48)

Whenever the Qur-an speaks of the construction of the heavens it uses the same word *Bana* which does not mean “make,” “create,” or “originate” (though these words are used when heavenly bodies are spoken of) but when the construction of space itself is spoken of, the word used is *Bana*. Nothing can better express this word *Bana* in English than the steel foundations and superstructure of a *ferro-concrete* building of a skyscraper of modern days. If the reader were to imagine the universe to be constructed of immensely

large unnumber of extremely thin wires running in all directions he would get the Quranic idea of the building of space. It would naturally be a huge (almost infinitely large) spherical network. This is exactly what the Qur-ān says in the verse quoted next below :—

“ By the heavenly space which is of the nature of a network.

“ You (men) are involved in various sayings.”

(51—8, 9)

But what is this net made of?

What are its wires made of?

The reader will remember that according to our theory all “ creation ” is in the first instance motion.

<p>Motion, Matter, Space and Soul,</p>	<p>There is this motion before there is matter in the universe. Motion pure and simple is the first manifestation of God's Will.</p>
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Space is the quantitative measure of this motion; whilst time is its qualitative measure.

The wires of the net of space are waves of motion. Wherever this motion is of a level higher than 186,000 miles per second, it is still motion. Wherever this motion is of a lower level than that, it is matter. Wherever this motion is not yet condensed to the velocity of light (186,000 miles per second) it may still continue to be space without matter, or rather space

containing motion of a subtler kind than that of light. We can have no experience of it for our experience is limited to that of 186,000 miles per second or less. Neither our minds nor our instruments can record anything higher than that. We have no measure either real or imaginary to do that. We know its existence by its negative quality only. It passes our limit of vision.

“ By the heavenly space the nature of which is a movement upon itself ;

“ And by the earth the nature of which is to split up and become alive ;

“ Surely this Qur-ān is a Decisive Word.”

(86—11 to 13)

The word for describing the nature of heavenly space (*Sama*) is *Rajaa*. *Rajaa* means wave returning upon itself, or undulatory motion. If a wave of light, as the scientist knows it, be conceived to move backwards and forwards upon its own course with a velocity greater than that of light it would be one of the infinite number of waves of which space is made. These waves would, in fact, take the place of the ‘ether’ of science of which no physical proof can be given because the motion of this ether passes all our instruments without their showing any effect of its presence. *We are blind and deaf and dumb to ether and hence our inability to perceive or to conceive it in the usual way* but there is no such limit to our imagination. We can imagine speeds of over 186,000 miles per second just as we have been

imagining Euclidean straight lines for over two thousand years though no such lines exist within our experience.

The inner nature of our souls is somewhat like this imaginary space. But there are levels or layers in our souls just as there are levels of motions; and of the outer layers of our souls we are well aware or conscious. In fact, we are conscious of all else through this consciousness.

In the passage from the Qur-ân just quoted above, it is said that the nature of the earth is to split up and become alive. In that it is exactly like our souls. The souls have their manifestations on earth. Before that they were hidden in matter and motion. It is only on this earth that this distillation or extraction of the essence of matter and motion becomes possible. If the Will of God is called the Ocean of the Universe, our little souls might be compared to drops of water in the Great Ocean of the Will of God.

He who keeps this drop of water of his soul pure is successful and happy. He who corrupts it, dirties it, has to suffer for his neglect or carelessness or wilful default. God must purify even His little drop of a soul entrusted to man's care and it may take aeons in doing so. *During these aeons the consciousness of this corrupted drop of water has to go through the fire of regrets. This fire is Hell. It is not punishment. It is not chastisement. It is the natural course of events.*

“ All souls must come back to Us (God).”

(21—93)

“ He (God) cannot be questioned as to what He does but they (mankind or their souls) shall be questioned.”

(21—23)

His Majesty, His Power, His Glory, His Greatness, His Beauty, His Goodness, His Truth are above all questions. He is His own Judge, Master, Cause and Will. He is His own Beginning and End. He is the Alpha and Omega of all existence.

He is the first and last term of the infinite series of manifestations that we call motion, matter, time, space and mind. But *we get nearest to His reality in our own minds or souls.* Happy then is the man who having partaken of the will and consciousness of God keeps his little drop of consciousness and will pure, undefiled and uncorrupted.

One of the greatest defects of modern civilization is the disturbance of balance of material and spiritual progress. When mankind had no better weapons than spears and arrows and no better means of transport than camels, horses and mules it did not matter so much if their spiritual progress was not very high. Even then we had prophets. There were also philosophers like Plato, Aristotle and Confucius. But, now, man is able to fly above the top of mount Everest and

Comparison  
between  
Material and  
Spiritual  
progress.

above both poles of the earth and his soul is lagging far behind. Wars still continue and, not only continue, but are pursued with such deadly instruments of destruction that one war now is more destructive than a hundred wars a thousand years ago. Hatreds continue. Greed continues. Selfishness continues.

No doubt, men have combined into large groups called nations and within these groups there is bodily peace. But there is no check to greed, avarice and selfishness even amongst the individuals composing the same nation. There is the iron rule of law amongst certain nations and the wilful submission to law amongst others and semi-chaotic conditions amongst the rest; but *philosophy and religion have been practically deserted by nations*. Certain forms of religion still have some sort of control over certain nations but this control is bound to break down. Everything is against its continuation, firstly, because *religions themselves are corrupted* and, secondly, because *humanity has outgrown forms of old-fashioned religious clothes*. A new philosophy is urgently needed to unify or at least harmonise old ideas. We believe the principles laid down in the Qur-ân are capable of such enunciation. They are not new but they are stated in the Qur-ân in such general and universal forms that all those who are fair-minded might adhere to them without losing any faith in themselves or in their own particular lines of scientific and social activities based on the ultimate values of Beauty, Goodness and Truth.

The Philosophy of the Qur-ân is based on the purity and purification of the soul of man which is a part of the Great Soul of the Universe. Let the reader ponder over the first ten verses of the "Chapter of the Sun."

Just as the earth is a part and parcel of the sun so are our souls a part and parcel of God or The Real.

Each individual soul is under the power of the Soul of God, and must go back to it. In fact it is doing so.

The sun is on its journey so is each soul.

The sun is full of heat, light, magnetism and numerous other forms of energy. So are our souls.

Even souls that are not so energetic as to be compared to the sun can shine by light borrowed from great souls or stars of the spiritual firmament of God. These latter are God's prophets or messengers. Their light is still shining in their deeds and their records. These records, like the records of music, are capable of producing the same music in our souls. *We must learn how to play the divine harp of our souls with its chords of Goodness, Beauty and Truth.*

We can be as brilliant as the sun, as shining as the moon, but we must partake of the wealth producing properties of this earth. Our souls can become beautiful gardens of the fruits of God's Knowledge, God's Grace, God's Beauty.



All good men, whether prophets or laymen, have left their records of good deeds and the Qur-ân is a record of Muhammad's Spiritual Life. Happy is the man who is willing to be guided by this Light of the Real. It is an inclusive Light.

## CHAPTER VII

### ETHICS OR MORAL PHILOSOPHY

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Philosophy, as we mentioned in Chapter I of this book, is divided into three departments :

(1) Ontology, or the study of the ultimate nature of reality or being ;

(2) Epistemology, or the study of the theory of knowledge ;

(3) Axiology, or the study of the ultimate values of philosophy, *viz.*, goodness, truth and beauty.

We have so far been dealing with Ontology mainly but the other two departments have not been overlooked.

The fact is that making classifications, divisions, departments, sub-divisions and sub-departments is a matter of convenience only. Knowledge, and especially philosophical knowledge, is a whole and must always be regarded as such,

Knowledge is a whole and all divisions are for the sake of convenience only.

and the Qur-ân which we have been following throughout in our search for reality forces us to do so. The proof of the correctness of this method of treating philosophy is borne out by the *attempts of modern philosophers all over the world in making philosophy a constructive study of the whole of reality.*

As has been frequently pointed out before, science as such is concerned, and very properly so, with the logical treatment of facts and phenomena. Science does not require to postulate any *finality*. It takes the universe as it is and tries to find out how it works, in one word, science is Logical, and must be so. Science is concerned with the Law and Order which prevails in the Universe, and is not concerned with the origin of this Law and Order or its end: its wherefrom or whereto; in one word, its *why*. Science is not concerned with Morality.

Philosophy and Religion, on the other hand, are concerned with this origin and end, this where from and where to this *why* of all things. But man is a finite being, and the consciousness of man has had only a comparatively infinitesimal duration to disclose itself and consequently no satisfactory solution of this *why* is possible or can be possible.

The only justification for this labour of man is that the reality inside us compels us to do so, and that the exercise of this *impulse* has already resulted in wonderful realizations of The Real by the human souls that have devoted themselves to its contemplation and study. We see that there is an interpenetration of our souls and the Great Soul of the Universe.

The achievements of great poets, painters, musicians and prophets encourage us to study this Alogical part of the Law and Order prevailing in the Universe just

Philosophy  
and Religion  
inquire into  
the *why* of  
things.

as the scientist does the Logical part thereof. Again, we must warn the reader that this division of the study of the Universe into Logical and Alogical processes is only for the sake of convenience. But being ourselves limited on all sides, we cannot help ourselves. We have to impose our own limitations on the Universe in order to understand it. In the end the greater our understanding of the Universe, the fewer our limits will be ; but meanwhile we have no other method. We can only study one thing at a time. We are only a  $\frac{1}{2^n}$ , an infinitely small fraction of the whole series (A).

Having made this observation let us inquire into the evolution of Moral Law.

Human beings, like all other animals, are societies of individuals, not individuals living by themselves and for themselves.

Evolution of the Moral Law.

Ants, wasps and bees are societies whose workings are known to most people. We need not go into the details of the division of labour and division of functions which these societies have imposed upon their individuals.

Parrots, pigeons, penguins, fish, reptiles, insects and mammals—all are societies or rather communities. The existence of social or communal life presupposes a social or communal law. Without this law no community can exist. It is the recognition of this law, by

instinct, amongst animals ; and by instinct and volition in man, that the existence of a community becomes possible and its life can continue to progress. In bees, ants, wasps and other animals the whole law of the community is based on the instinct of making the community a *permanent* one. These communities have become almost perfect in their adaptations to their surroundings and the sole aim and object, or *the end in view*, seems to be *permanence*. The reader can refer to the *Outline of Science* (p. 377) for an account of the communal life of bees and (p. 376) for workings of armies of ants.

But what the reader, perhaps, is unaware is that of all kinds of parasites that infest the human and animal blood are also communities and have their own communal law and order which is marvellously perfect. Even the scientist, in his zeal for knowing the cause and effect of things, forgets the study of the life of parasites which are such a nuisance to mankind. But the fact is that all microbes, bacilli and other creatures have a communal life. This does not amount to the consciousness of man but is still a most uncanny thing to explain. Take the case of the parasite of malaria which infests the human body. A man may have an attack of malaria, get well, go about his business for days, weeks and months without another attack. He may forget all about his malaria.

But not so the malarial community which has

Community  
of malarial  
Parasites.

found its home inside his system. This community goes on breeding slowly without showing any signs of its existence—on the principle of live and let live. The man has forgotten his malarial guests, but they have not forgotten their friend, the man—their host. The man goes out to work; is tired; gets caught in rain; has no protection against rain (he sometimes despises such protection); comes home wet, is careless in effecting an immediate change; his vitality is lowered. The instinct of the community of the malarial parasites gives an immediate order of “attack.” Billions upon billions of parasites are born and gather together in armies as numerous as the stars on heaven and at a given moment their poison is poured on into the living stream of blood and their good host is down with a terrible ague and its natural reaction fever—an attempt on the part of human nature to fight the parasites.

No Napoleon could time his “attack” in such a concerted and mass formation as does the community of malarial parasites and were it not a fact that within the human system itself, unknown to our consciousness, there are stronger communities of blood corpuscles and other active allies of human life, we would not survive the attacks of malarial or other parasites.

Therefore, man is not one being, but the possessor

Communities  
within man's  
blood.

and master of billions and trillions of other beings existing within himself as communities. In the same way, all living beings are communities like ourselves and the Qur-ân laid down this principle over thirteen hundred years ago.

“There is no *kind* of beast on earth, nor fowl which flieth with its wings, but *the same* is a people like unto you; We have not omitted anything in the *Book of Our decrees*.”

(Sale's *Translation of the Qur-ân*, ch. 6—v. 36)

This translation was made 200 years ago when nothing was known in Europe about the evolution of man. We purposely quote Sale on this occasion. The only mistake he has made is in the word *beast*. The original is *dabat* (*lit. a thing that goes, moves or walks, meaning an animal*).

Palmer translates “nation” for “people” but the word is better translated as a *community*.

So that, it is quite clear that all living things on this earth are communities and have their communal existence which necessarily implies *Communal law*.

This is the beginning of the Moral law. *Everything that is injurious to communal life is a sin against the community*.

“It is not suggested that animals are ethical agents, for there is no warrant for crediting them with general ideas, but the

Morality begins  
with animals.

point is that there has been a long evolution of the incipient virtues, the raw materials of good conduct, such as courage, affection, control, and sympathy; and many animals are morally admirable, along certain lines at least. But besides the occurrence of the primary virtues amongst animals, we must recognise that they have been rewarded in the course of organic evolution with survival and with success. There is not only an evolution of ethics but there is also an ethics of evolution." (*An Outline of Modern Knowledge*, p. 224.)

The basis of animal morality is *survival* and *success* or *permanence*. And when we look into the records of primitive human societies we find the desire for *permanence* predominating over all other desires and the *behaviour* of all primitive societies is governed by the search for means of *permanence*. The roaming about of tribes in congregations in search of food; the tribal customs of blood revenge; of marriage; of settlement of disputes, etc., are all aimed at the preservation and permanence of the tribe, just as is the case in a community of bees.

In a tribe, as even now amongst nations, a man's conduct or *behaviour* is governed by—

- (1) self-preservation or self-maintenance;
- (2) group-preservation or group-maintenance.

Self-preservation is not only the preservation of



one's own body but that of one's family. Those who feed together breed together. Hence arise the customs of caste systems.

As amongst lower animals, for a long time, the human children were under the care of the mother only. But life in all primitive societies is a continual warfare and when men brought in women of other tribes, kinship came to be reckoned on the father's side. And in China—a country of tribal system *par excellence*—this idea of bringing wives from other tribes has prevailed to such an extent that marriage within the same tribe (same surname) has been forbidden for a long time.

It would take us a whole volume to go through the evolution of *tribal virtues* but they were and are founded on mere convenience and self-preservation and not on any moral principles as we understand them now. For example, the killing of a member of the tribe was punished by blood revenge or by payment of so many camels or other wealth to the relatives of the deceased; killing of a foreigner was not only condoned but sometimes actually encouraged.

“ Thus tribalism thrives on war. In North America we find the very word for tribe meaning those who fight together.

(*An Outline of Modern Knowledge*, p. 422 )

Side by side with the growth of the tribe, man

Evolution of  
false religion  
and false  
morality.

dreams of there being something beyond and beside himself, and the tribal chiefs were not lacking in the cunning to pretend to be allied to this something so that they could take advantage of their followers' faiths. The chief in each tribe either pretended to be a deity or a priest of the deity. Those early tribes who were willing to submit to their chiefs were naturally stronger than those who did not, and thus this double authority of the chief tended greatly to increase his own power as well as that of his tribe. The Emperors of China were always addressed as *Thean Chu* or "Sons of Heaven" and the Emperors of Japan are, in popular fancy, the descendants of the gods. The same thing has happened in many other countries. We know now that men are not the descendants of gods, or God. God or the Real is free from such alliance. How have we come to this knowledge? The primitive tribal morality or tribal religion was based on transient phases of tribal life. How have we advanced to what we are? Or is it true that we are still on the wrong track? If humanity has been wrong in the past, what guarantee is there that they are right now, or ever can be? Wars still exist, and in spite of enormous international developments, patriotism is still stronger and seems to be stronger than the love of mankind in general. Is there then any true morality possible? And if so, where can we find it?

It is a great pity that the leaders of thought and action amongst mankind have not even yet started to search for right answers to the questions put above.

Wrong methods of inquiry.

The learned in all countries are trying to answer these questions unaided by the real truth of the matter—or so it seems to us. The truth is quite apparent in the records of human history and especially as it is recorded in the Qur-ân but scholars are fond of excavating the moral debris of ages past and trying to discover the truth under ancient ruins. The truth is everywhere, obvious and shining, but mankind are reluctant to receive it because it means a certain amount of humility on the part of its recipients. What then is the truth?

The truth is that in all ages, at all times, and in all countries, in spite of the pressure of tribal, communal, social, political or national handicaps, there are souls that are not blinded by appearances. *The man of the world—whether civilized or a barbarian—is always blinded by appearances.* The man of reality is not.

The true evolution of Morality.

The man of reality sees that it is not right for his tribesmen to loot and kill foreigners. He sees the oneness of mankind; he sees the oneness of all animal life; he sees the oneness of the Universe; and at the risk of his life he preaches of the truth. He is laughed at; he is fought against and

The true preachers, reformers and prophets are men of reality.

is sometimes killed, but reality conquers. Mankind, in the end, see that he is right and his opponents are wrong. Only in this way has mankind made the progress it has made and in no other way. Some are reluctant to acknowledge this and try to discover other sources of man's moral progress but this is the reality. There have been innumerable such reformers, and, if it was not so, the pessimists would be justified in saying that evil predominates good in this life. It seems to do so, but it never does. ✓ The Real sees to it that His creation is not made to rot by the wrong choice of certain of His creatures. ✓

The Qur-ân is full of hope for mankind :—

“ Every time they light the fires of war, God puts them out.

“ And they strive to create disorder on this earth,

“ But God loves not the creators of disorder.”

(5—64)

The Qur-ân does not deny the existence of evil. It, however, asserts the triumph of good over evil in the end. Even writers on the morals of savages admit this. R. R. Marett, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, ends his article on “ The Beginnings of Morals and Culture” in *An Outline of Modern Knowledge* with these words :

“As far back as we can trace him, Man appears as a visionary who has lived on an overdraft and traded

on credit. Since, therefore, something infinite attaching to his notion of good has hitherto helped him on his way, it might well seem sound policy on his part to continue steadfastly to imagine the divine, and to treat it as the only true measure of the human."

This confession is a very welcome one. Had it not been for the *Vital Principle* itself looking after His creation, mankind would surely have corrupted it long ago. But *the Absolute or The Real of Western philosophers is a mummy*. He is a dead or a sleeping partner in a world of His own creation. According to them, He has made the Universe, made its laws and then gone to sleep, leaving us human beings to find out the evil and good in His Universe and to strike a balance. But the proof of His Existence is His ever-lasting, ever-conquering Presence. He is not absent, or idle but ever with us and correcting us.

God is our  
Guide always.

"And those who deny the Reality say: 'Why has not His *Vital Principle* sent a proof with him?'

(Says God): "Thou (O Muhammad!) art but a warner and every people have their guide (from God)."

(13-7)

But people are not willing to acknowledge these guides because people are proud, and think that they would be humbling themselves in giving preference to their guides.

“And surely We have raised up in each community a messenger saying “Believe the Real (God) and shun falsehoods.” Then some of them were guided and some were surely misled. Therefore, study the earth and its history and see what has happened to the liars.” (16—36)

Truth has conquered in the sense that it has been made apparent, so much so that most of the people who deny Reality in heart, acknowledge it with their lips, or acknowledge it in their hearts but are too weak to act rightly.

“And for every community there is a messenger, so that when the messenger comes the matter is settled between them with justice and they are not wronged.” (10—47)

“And We do not send a messenger except speaking the language of the people to whom he is sent in order that he may explain his message to them.” (14—4)

“And there has not been a community but has had its warner.” (35—24)

And the Prophet Muhammad is only a warner. “Thou (O Muhammad!) art but a warner.” (35—23)

The message of Muhammad has now been translated in all civilized languages and so Muhammad's warning has been conveyed to all civilized men.

“Say : O ye mankind, surely I am the messenger of the Real (God) to you all.” (7—158)

We are carrying out not only his philosophical message but that of all the prophets or reformers.

But someone may say that the Qur-ân is a rigid system and not suitable for all nations. That is not so. The Qur-ân is suitable to all times and all peoples ; to all stages of civilization and to all individuals highly civilized and less highly civilized. This is especially so with regard to Morality. Nowhere has the Qur-ân laid down that the moral laws which are applicable to highly civilized societies, or highly cultured people, are to be applied to savages without any alteration, change or special adaptation. Those who assert the contrary have not given due attention to the philosophy of the Qur-ân. We proceed at some length to prove that the only one thing which the Qur-ân does not allow anyone to deny is The Real Himself. All else is a matter of time and circumstance. “It shall not be equal,” He sayeth, “for them that accept and deny.”

We have already quoted (51—56) which says that the object of man’s creation is the reverence of The Real and the whole world knows that the philosophy of the Qur-ân is contained in the four words :

The philosophy of the Qur-an adaptable to all nations.

The irreducible minimum of Quranic philosophy.

## LA-ILAHA-ILL-ALLAH

or

## LA-ILAHA-ILLA-HU

which is usually translated as "There is no god but God (or He)" and as I have done it in my translation of the Qur-ân, "There is no deity but God (or He)." In philosophical language it means that

"The Real is One"

with all the deductions that follow from the UNITY and which we have been at some pains in explaining in this book.

"He sends down the angels (spiritual messengers or spiritual light-waves) with the Spirit (the Holy Spirit which communicates Divine messages to God's messenger) by His own Will on whomsoever of His servants He pleases, with the message: "Warn ye all mankind that there is no reality but Me and that they should pay reverence to Me." (16-2)

And then follow numerous verses as indications of the Oneness of the Universe and its Creator. There is no mention here of prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, marriage and divorce laws, of contracts and commercial bargains, of rules of evidence and giving full measure. All these things follow in the ordinary course of life and civilization but the philosophical principle is one and simple. No true man can help being a philosopher of the Qur-ân and no one has



any right to deny the philosophy of the Qur-an to anyone who believes in this Unity.

“O ye mankind ! pay reverence to your *Vital Principle* who has made you and those before you that you may be saved.” (2-21)

We have also already mentioned that the only sin or lapse which the Real cannot overlook, if it is adhered to until death, is man's denial of the Real or joining others in His worship (4-48 and 116). In fact, the Qur-an says that this faith in the Oneness of the Real is bequeathed to all mankind in the Reason God has gifted mankind with, so that even if no prophets or messengers came to mankind, mankind should by their own reasoning faculties come to the same conclusion.

“And remember the fact that your *Vital Principle* when He produces the children of Adam makes them bear witness about themselves as follows :

Says He—“Am I not your *Vital Principle* ? ”

They reply—“Yes, we bear witness (that Thou art).” (7-172)

“*Revelation*” is a guide to Reason, not its substitute.

*The whole Universe is a fluent testimony to the existence of the Reality and the Reality of existence. And in the Qur-an the whole universe speaks to man.*

*The prophets have come and delivered their messages.*

*It is for each man to become his own messenger of God and his own holy Spirit.* In the working of the heavenly bodies and the motions of this earth; in the alternation of day and night and the changes of seasons; in the ships that pass over the seas and the machines that fly in the air; in the wonders of our bodies and the factories established therein; in the myriads of flowers that bloom all over the surface of this garden of a globe; in the billions of insects who seem to enjoy life as if the whole universe was made for them; in our activities, occupations, thoughts, ideals, dreams, affections, desires, aims and ends, God is communicating with us. We sit in a vast hall of a beautiful hotel decorated with palms and flowers; the diners are having their dinner a little further away; the orchestra starts playing something. It is a band of stringed instruments. We close our eyes, for the ears require the concentration of our soul.

The air is filled with sound vibrations which falling on our ears awaken the soul within us to melodious harmonies. The rest of the universe, for us, goes out of existence. Nothing exists but music. We do not know where we are or who we are. We know only we are music. The music in our soul is catching the music in the air started by the music in strings worked by the music in the souls of the players created there by the music in souls of the players created there by the music in the

soul of the composer put there by the music in the soul of God.

And how many transmutations has this music passed through?

The last moment it was our consciousness, just before that it was nervous motion from the ear to the brain, which caught it as sound waves which were started by the motion of the strings of the instruments and, immediately before, this music was the movement of the fingers of the players and these movements themselves were a transformation of the consciousness of the players coming in the shape of nerve waves from their brains to their hands. For the players, the music existed on pieces of paper with funny-looking, crooked signs in black and white which came there through various other channels from the consciousness of the composer. And between the composer and God, the Creator of Music, or the Great Musician, we cannot tell how many transmutations there might not be. All these transmutations are some form of motion.

May not our souls also be sometimes moving music  
 Music is like                      and sometimes a sleeping record ready  
 our souls.                              to be the cause of fresh motion?

Can we doubt the reality of music? If not, can we not similarly believe in the existence of the Great Soul and His ability to start music in the souls of other beings whom we call prophets and messengers of God?

Should not the philosopher search for the manifestation and ultimate nature of reality in the music poured out by the souls of these prophets? That is our belief and that is what we are trying to explain. The prophets of God came to teach morality suited to their times. Let us take a single chapter of the Qur-ân and run through it—chapter 26.

Verses 10 to 68 give a brief summary of the mission of Moses to Pharaoh. And what is this mission? It is described in a few sentences:

The message of Moses to Pharaoh.

“Go ye both (Moses and his brother) to Pharaoh and say to him—‘We are the messengers of the Lord (the *Vital Principle*) of the worlds (and our message is) that you send back with us the children of Israel.’”

This, of course, implies that Pharaoh has to believe in God but the message to him is to cease torturing and killing the Israelites. This may almost sound to be a political message and so it is. The philosophy of the Qur-ân demands that *this political question is the question* and all other questions are subordinated to it. Let any one search the whole Qur-ân (and about a quarter of its historical part concerns the Israelites) and find out a single passage in which Moses asked Pharaoh to say his prayers according to Israelite manners, or to fast or to go to Pilgrimage to the Holy Land or to observe a thousand and one other things which were regarded as moral or

religious by the Israelites—the laws of marriage, circumcision and so forth. The reader will not find one word about these things in the message of Moses to Pharaoh. “Do not do unto Israelites what you would not like others to do unto you.” This is the whole message to Pharaoh who is not asked to fast or give alms. He is, undoubtedly, asked to believe in the “Lord of the Worlds.”

The next prophet mentioned in this chapter (verses 69 to 104) is Abraham. And all that Abraham asks his father and his people is that they should acknowledge the One and give up the idols. The Qur-ân is with us all. Let any one search for passages where Abraham asked his father to fast and pray, or to give alms to the poor or preach any one of the thousand minor moral acts so necessary for the proper life of a modern civilised society. It is not that Abraham did not know these *moralities* or was lacking in their practice. The thing is that the preaching of such minor moralities is useless as the basis of all morality is corrupt. The fountain-head of morality must be purified first before there can be any hope of further reformation.

The next prophet mentioned (verses 105 to 123) is Noah. And his message is simply this :

“Surely I am a trustworthy messenger sent to you, Therefore pay reverence to God and obey me.”

(Verses 107 and 108)

The next prophet is Hud and he adds to the message of Noah thus :

The message  
of Hud.

“And do you build a monument on every prominence ?

“ And you build forts thinking that you are going to last for ever,

“ And when you lay hands (on foreigners) you lay hands like great tyrants.”

(Verses 128, 129 and 130)

The people of Hud called ‘Ad had apparently become more civilized (politically) than the people of Noah. They had become a small empire, built forts and monuments as do modern nations and when they invaded a neighbour or a passing caravan they acted most cruelly. A prophet is sent to them to ask them to believe in One God and to give up tyranny. He is of their own blood. But *he is a man of reality whilst they are men of the world.* How suited is the message to the necessities of the times! Again the Qur-ân is before our eyes, let anyone find Hud preaching fasting and Muslim prayers of modern times. He will search in vain. Not because these things are not part of morality or life but because the preaching of these things was not suited to the time and circumstances of ‘Ad’s.’

The next prophet mentioned is Saleh (verses 141 to 159) of the people of *Thamud*. They were the

successors to 'Ad and had gathered great riches and built themselves luxurious palaces on hills, and gardens on plains, somewhat like Roman rulers of later times.

And this is what Saleh says to them in addition to what Noah had said before :

“ Do you think that you will remain (for ever) in the condition you are, always secure ? ”  
 The message of Saleh.

“ In gardens and fountains ? ”

“ And green fields and gardens of palm trees with soft spadices ? ”

“ And you take immense pleasure in carving residences out of mountains and rocks. ”

(Verses 146, 147, 148, and 149)

The story is told in many other places in the Qur-ân. *Thamud* were absorbed in the pleasures of the body and were killing their souls. A prophet is sent to them to correct their evil habits of harmful luxury. How adaptable is the philosophy of the Qur-ân ?

Lot (verses 160 to 175) was sent to Sodom. He has the same message as Noah but adds :  
 The message of Lot.

“ Do you come to males amongst mankind ? ”

“ And do you leave that which God has made for you in your mates ? ”

“ Nay, you are a people that do transgress.”

(Verses 165, 166)

He does not preach about going to pilgrimage or other commandments, nor about minor matters of morality. What is the use of such talk when a people's mind is corrupted?

The next prophet is Shuaib (verses 176 to 191).

The message  
of Shuaib.

His people had become traders and merchants but practised fraud. Shuaib brings them the message of Noah and

adds :

“ Give full measure and decrease not,

“ Give weight with an upright justice,

“And decrease not the commodities of men (apparently foreigners) and act not corruptly on this earth.”

(Verses 180, 181 and 182)

In all the messages there is absolute unity with regard to the belief in God or The Real.

Each prophet uses the same words in exactly the same formula : “ Pay reverence to God and obey me.”

But as to other matters the message is concerned with the evils of the time and so it should be always. *The philosophy of the Qur-an is entirely rational. Its ethics is based on the sound principle that everything that is injurious to human welfare is Immoral.*

Not till civilization has advanced as it has done



The duties of a perfect man.

now, that man is burdened with the duty of practising fasts, prayers and pilgrimage. These are observances which require great spiritual and social advancement in life and are the attributes of a man who wishes to be perfect. It is only then that his marriage and divorce laws, his duties of human behaviour towards all mankind and animal are laid upon him, and he is required not only to be just and fair to all creation but to look into his own soul and bring it in direct daily communion with the Soul of God. Some early Muslims understood this spiritual philosophy of the Qur-ân and a few do even now.

The Vital Principle is always active.

However, the love of the One is still alive in the hearts of all philosophers of the Qur-ân, and God the *Vital Principle* is not asleep. When people are in uttermost darkness, He sends His chosen ones to awaken His creation. *The days of prophets are over. Reason, the ever-living prophet, is still alive in the breasts of men* and Reason is as wide-awake as ever and the philosophy of the Qur-ân is ever-lasting. In the past, when one people have failed to bear its torch, God has appointed another. His Will is ever working and if so-called Muslims are failing in learning and preaching the philosophy of the Qur-ân, God (The Real) will appoint others to do so.

It is always through the men of reality that Truth

What are the values ?

has been kept alive and mankind saved from spiritual death. They are the moral philosophers. And what are the virtues which they preach—the ultimate values of all philosophy? These have repeatedly been mentioned as being Goodness, Beauty and Truth. But are these values distinct from each other? Are not they also part of a unity? The answer is that they are undoubtedly part of a whole, but like all other things *it is convenient to divide this unity into units*. This is for the sake of convenience only. When we study arts—poetry, painting, sculpture, music, handwriting—we speak of their ultimate value as being Beauty. When we consider a man's behaviour, we talk about it as being good or bad. It is goodness or a man's kindness, benevolence, generosity, etc., that we inquire about when we analyse his conduct, behaviour or doings.

On the other hand, in scientific inquiries, goodness and beauty are considered to be as a backward affair and the scientist searches solely for truth or facts and phenomena as they are or ought to be according to his given *data*.

Values are not exclusive of each other.

But science must not, and, in fact, cannot, be reduced to the position of a calculating machine. We are fond of playing chess, billiards and of solving mathematical problems and we speak of a 'beautiful move' in chess, a 'lovely stroke' in billiards and a 'fine solution' of a mathematical problem. All things that give

us joy or satisfaction become beautiful to our minds. The study of biology and geology is no less beautiful to us than the fascination of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* or Shelley's "Promethens Unbound."

We admire a picture as being *true* to Nature, as a *good* representation of artistic *beauty*. When we praise a man's conduct we often use such terms as his "lovely ways," his "fine manners" and so forth. An artist would see *beauty* in a man's work whilst the clergyman speaks of its *goodness* and the scientist affirms the *truthfulness* of all his performances. Hence we see that *Goodness, Beauty and Truth are not exclusive of each other but different moods of one and the same Value or the different moods in which our minds contemplate the same ultimate Value.*

Attempts have been made to name this ultimate Value. Some have called it Happiness. Happiness as ultimate Value. Then Happiness has been divided into

Personal Happiness

Altruistic Happiness

Ideal Happiness.

But there can be no real division of Happiness. One cannot be happy without somehow knowing what happiness is in the abstract, and one cannot be looking after the happiness of others without oneself being happy. The desire for Happiness is undoubtedly a component of all our activities. But it is rather a by-product of our activities than their aim and end.

We become happy not because we find happiness but because it comes to us in our progress towards something which we are still unable to define. Happiness is the *sine qua non* of our activities and it is a state of our minds necessary to nourish our souls ; but it can be hardly said to be the goal of our activities. The proof of this statement lies in the fact that no man has ever been known to have said that he had found Happiness and did not want anything else. No philosopher or prophet or scientist has ever been known to have said that he had found Happiness and reached the goal of his activities. We hear a cricketer say "I am extremely happy in having made a century in this match." This clearly shows that it was the making of a "century" that was the batsman's object and not happiness in the abstract. This subject is capable of being extended to any length, but it is sufficient to show that even Happiness is not, or does not seem to be, altogether an all-inclusive Value.

Some philosophers have, therefore, following the batsman's logic, considered Perfection to be the ultimate Value. They say, and with reason, that in our search for Goodness, Beauty and Truth we are searching for Perfection. Perfection has again been divided into

Personal Perfection

Altruistic Perfection

Ideal Perfection.

The champions of Perfection affirm that the scientist, the artist, and the good man are impelled towards something that is Perfect. A poet writes a good poem, a painter paints a beautiful picture, a philanthropist gives millions for hospitals but not one of them is satisfied with what is done. They want to do more. The reward of doing good is to do better. There is truth in this and as a code for moral conduct it can hardly be improved upon. It must, however, be pointed out that the search for Perfection and the enjoyment of Happiness are, in their final analysis or synthesis, the same. They are not exclusive but in the end an expression of the same inward feeling and that the real aim still is beyond our grasp—something for which no single word is satisfactory.

Some philosophers have, therefore, fallen upon

Duty as the final arbiter of all values.  
 Duty as an ultimate Value. Duty has also been divided into three, like Perfection and Happiness. Examples are given by religious teachers, philosophers, rulers and leaders of thought as to the hold which Duty has on the minds of men and the excellent results achieved by those who have held on to this tangible value instead of the abstract ideas of Happiness and Perfection. There is truth in this also but the setting up of Duty, as an ultimate value although an extremely useful matter, is from a philosophical point of view not sufficient. Duty implies the existence of some superior (be it a person or an idea) to which we

are conforming ourselves. It is, therefore, not duty but obedience, respect or awe of the superior which is our guide or Value. Duty as an abstract idea is much more complex than either Happiness or Perfection. "Duty to the Real" may perhaps be a convenient phrase to adopt.

Realising all these difficulties some philosophers have suggested Harmony as the final or ultimate value. Harmony as a Value has this advantage over the other values that it can hardly be divided into—Personal Harmony and Altruistic Harmony.

Therefore, it seems that the concept of Harmony has in it something more than Happiness, Perfection or Duty. It is a much better concept than the Nirvana or utter annihilation of the Budhists and the Unification of the Mystics. "Harmony" preserves the existence of each separate soul. It does not either annihilate it or make it a deity. Mysticism, not infrequently, leads to creatures being made the creator and thus puts its followers in a very awkward position.

We know something of Harmony in the theory of music and can form some idea of its existence and evolution in the universe by comparing it with the harmony of musical notes and in music as a whole. The study is worth while. In fact, *no philosopher can realize the ultimate nature of reality without realizing the harmony of musical notes.* He need not be a musician

but he should be able to appreciate music and its harmony. "Harmony" in music is a technical matter and so we will try to explain "Harmony" in as general terms as possible.

"Harmony" in common parlance is synonymous with "agreement" but that is not harmony in music or philosophy.

Harmony explained.

Suppose we start playing the first note (do) of an octave on a piano or pianos and we do so a thousand times or any other number of times, there would be complete agreement between all the notes played, but there would be no harmony. On the contrary, there would be extreme monotony, disagreeable to the ear and the soul.

Suppose now we play all the notes of the octave (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, se, do) in succession and repeat the same as we did *do*. In the present case there is some music and some harmony as the ear will soon detect. Each note is repeated after seven other notes. There will be some pleasure at first but after the 2nd or 3rd repetition, the ear will be fed up with this repetition and the music will again become monotonous. One wonders why? There has been in this second case a good deal of variation of notes and a good deal of agreement and yet there has only been the appearance of temporary harmony or rather an expectation of harmony and disappointment.

*Nor will any other kind of agreement of notes alone produce harmony in music.*

What is the secret of harmony then, which our ears so readily detect and which we find so difficult to define? Even the musician himself is not able to give a completely satisfactory answer to this query. He can only interpret it bit by bit and let the listener catch it as best as he can.

The modern musicians are at loggerheads with the classics in music in their ideas of harmony. There are conservatives, liberals, and revolutionaries in music at the present day. The last are sometimes called the wild men of music and a battle royal is raging in the camp of musicians.

It is, therefore, not an easy matter to explain musical harmony when the musicians themselves are not in agreement about harmony.

However, we must attempt some explanation. To the lay reader, it might come as a surprise to be told that *dissonance* or *discord* is an essential component of harmony in music and, as we will point out later, in the universe generally. It sounds extraordinary that something so enjoyable, pleasurable and desirable as harmony should have the thorn of discord attached to it. But the fact is that, without this thorn of discord there can be no harmony at all.

Discord is a component of Harmony.

In music, an *interval* means the sounding of two notes at the same time.



When the two sounds blend or fuse together completely the *interval* is called a *Perfect Consonance*.

When the blending or fusing is incomplete the *interval* is called an *Imperfect Consonance*.

When the blending or fusing is conspicuous by its absence the *interval* is called a *Dissonance*.

There are various ways of producing *Consonance* and *Dissonance* into which we need not go here.

Many Eastern ears are jarred by modern Western music and the cause of it is that in a good many modern pieces of Western music there is too much of a continuous running of *dissonances*.

Now a *dissonance* creates tension and if the music is an *all-dissonant* music, the listener is made to endure a state of continuous *tension*. The arrangement of these *dissonances* in a piece of music may be called *discord*. Every *dissonance* played creates a state of tension, and if the *tension* is continued too long it becomes unbearable. So, what the musician does is to arrange his *dissonances* and *consonances* in such a way that this tension is relieved. The relief becomes an agreeable feeling and is what we instinctively call harmony. So that *harmony in music is not agreement of sounds but the agreeableness of the agreement of dissonances and consonances*.

The *dissonances* and *consonances* are made to succeed each other in such a way that *by contrast the result becomes pleasurable* and we say music is *harmonious*. Modern music differs from classical music in the fact that in classical music the *dissonance* or *discord* was arranged more or less mathematically—so many *dissonances* for so many *consonances*. But modern music refuses to be bound by mathematics. The patterns of weaving *dissonances* and *consonances* are becoming unorthodox and everything is judged by the results. The modern composer is allowing himself a liberty which classical music does not allow him to undertake. Music, therefore, at the present time is in a state of transition. The rebellion of the wild men of music sometimes produces extraordinary euphonious originalities, and sometimes nothing better than a confusion to unaccustomed ears. Habit is a great fact in music. When a listener is accustomed to a certain kind of music, it always sounds good in his ears and that is why very often Eastern ears find Western music somewhat wild and Western ears regard Eastern music as childish. There are countless degrees in music and each potter praises his own pot.

But the point is that this *contrast* of opposites runs through all art. Take any masterpiece of drama, or work of fiction, for example. If it is analysed it will be found to consist of a series of *contrasts* from beginning

Harmony runs through all art.

to end. The *contrasts* in some pieces are *simpler* and more *obvious* than in others. The greater the complexity of the weaving of these patterns of *contrast*, the greater is our enjoyment of fiction or drama. We, as students of Shakespeare's dramas, have noted this *contrast* for the last 40 years. In his earlier plays the *contrast* is obvious but as his mind develops, the *contrast* becomes more complex and hence the climax of the play becomes more *harmonious* and more artistic in his later works than in his earlier plays.

Let us take two of his comedies, "The Comedy of Errors" and "The Tempest."

In the "Comedy of Errors," the action of the play centres round two twin brothers each named Antipholus, one of Ephesus and the other of Syracuse, two countries which are at war with each other. Each of these brothers has a servant named Dromio. The two Dromios are also twins.

Some twenty-three years before the events in the play the family of the two Antipholuses became shipwrecked and husband and wife, brothers and their servants became divided into halves. The mother of the twins is taken to Ephesus so also is the eldest son whilst the father is taken to Corinth with one of the servants and now comes to Ephesus in search of his eldest son. Everything in the play is divided into two. Aegeon the father is asked to find a ransom or else he

is condemned to death before the evening and during the day there is an endless confusion caused to the *dramatis personae* by the confusion of the identities of the double pair of twins.

This might be compared to the *dissonances* of music and the *tension* of the listeners is increased to the utmost by confusions worst confounded by the mixing up of the identities—wife does not know husband; master does not know servant; servant does not know master and so forth. At the end the parties all come together and the “Comedy of Errors” comes to a happy conclusion of blessed unions. There is peace and harmony after all.

The *discords* of the day have been harmonised by the *consonances* of the evening.

This play is an exact parallel of the classics in music. But the *contrasts* are, after all, simple and quite *artificial*. There is a good deal of art in the play but it is all *primitive*. The whole *conception* of the play is based on ready-made clothes of dramatic fashion. There is no development of character, and no real complexity at all. The whole affair is based on chance and in that sense not quite *classical* as a drama. But Shakespeare takes good care to make it most amusing and the chance happenings are utilised to the best advantage. *Harmony* is produced out of apparent *chaos* and *discord* of events.

“The Tempest” is also full of *contrasts* and *dissonances* but these are of a very different class to those mentioned in the “Comedy of Errors.”

In the *Tempest* there is contrast between :

Prospero the rightful Duke of Milan and Antonio his usurping brother ; between Ferdinand the virtuous and Caliban the wicked ; between Gonzolo the honest counsellor and the dishonest Lords.

There is also contrast between the marriages of Alonso’s daughter and of Prospero’s daughter.

There is also a most subtle contrast between the freedom-seeking spirit Ariel and his master Prospero, seeking freedom from his self-imposed labours. Everything, at first, seems to be *chaos* and *discord* in the play but the events naturally shape themselves towards an end. The evolution of character and incidents or events is maintained at a very high level of probability. The *natural* and the *supernatural* are contrasted throughout the play and neither *dissonances* nor *consonances* are over-played ; and the *harmony* at the conclusion of the play, as well as in the parts as they develop, is complete.

Ferdinand and Miranda are happily married, Ariel is free, Prospero also is free, Caliban becomes wiser

than before and all are happy in Gonzolo's words :—

“ Was Milan thrust from Milan, that his issue  
Should become King of Naples ? O, rejoice !  
Beyond a common joy ; and set it down  
With gold on lasting pillars ; in one voyage  
Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis ;  
And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife  
Where he himself was lost ; Prospero his dukedom  
In a poor isle ; and all of us, ourselves  
When no man was his own.”

This *contrast*, this combination of *dissonances* and *consonances* is the end of all works of art and fiction. Whether we study “ David Copperfield ” or “ The Three Musketeers ” this *contrast* is ever present and the artist's whole business is to produce harmony out of apparent *chaos* and *discord*.

Why do artists seek for the *contrasts* and combinations of *dissonances* and *consonances* in art? Why is, in fact, *harmony* itself a combination of such contrasts ?

Discord present in all life.

The answers to these questions are contained in the fact that such combinations are the very nature of our minds and of all life. *The stuff of which our lives and our consciousness is made of is itself a combination of*

*contrasts*, a putting together of a state of strain and tension followed by a state of ease and relief.

There is no beauty without ugliness, no pleasure without pain, no good without evil, no truth without falsehood. There is a white and black in each picture of life, and judgment can only be pronounced when the result is known. If the black in a picture predominates then the picture is not worth looking at, but if the black is there only to produce harmony it is not only excusable but absolutely necessary. The angels have no black in their existence but then they are mere automata.

“ They do not disobey God in all that He wills them to do and they carry out His will.” (66—6)

“ They fear their *Vital Principle* and carry out His will.” (16—50)

It is not so with men. Man has the choice to *disobey*. This is the fruit that was forbidden to Adam but he has eaten it.

*Discord has come to live*. Out of this *discord* the Real now creates the harmony of all our consciousness. The *dissonances* of our behaviour are followed by the *consonances* of God's making, and thus are disclosed Goodness, Beauty and Truth to our existence. But for the tasting of the fruit of the tree of disobedience

we would have remained *automata* like angels, or a very much inferior *automata* like bees. We are neither. We are undoubtedly imperfect both physically and spiritually but why fear this imperfection? It is the very urge to perfection. Man's glory and greatness do not lie in the fact that he is more beautiful than a flower, more complete than an ant, more truthful than an angel. He is less in every respect. But he is progressing. Out of every *discord* he manages to produce a *concord*, out of every ugliness he paints a beauty, out of every falsehood of appearance he manufactures the truth of reality. Man is in search of the Ultimate Value and he will find it—Harmony between his soul and The Real.

The pessimists cannot say that life or man have been degrading. All the evidence of geology, physiology and philosophy is on the side of progress. There is some backsliding; there is evil present in all life on this earth; there is discord. Those who deny that shut their eyes to facts. But what is the tendency of life? Is man (and we are concerned with man chiefly) degrading? Is the Universe itself degrading? Is the state of the fiery motions of stars and nebulae preferable to the gardens of flowers and fields that exist on this earth? Is the mind of man now, as we know it, worse than the minds of those beings through whom it has come through? If it is not, then surely the pessimists should not be over-pessimistic. *Is not*

Man's past is  
an assurance  
of his future.



*evil itself, like discord in music, a necessary component of the harmony of our souls?* There is no need to despair, no need to bewail our fate and sit down helpless. The *Vital Principle* is ever acting with us.

He knows our deficiencies.

“As to those who keep themselves clean from great lapses and indecencies of behaviour except perhaps in what they may be unavoidably involved in, surely your *Vital Principle* is Infinite in His forgiveness. He knows you best when you were embryos in your mothers’ wombs. Therefore do not be declaring your exemption from evil. He knows best who pays reverence.” (53—32)

Was there ever any philosophy more tolerant than this? And why?

Because the philosophy of the Qur-ân knows all about a man’s origin and his having passed in the mother’s womb from an ovum to the embryonic forms of fish, reptile, bird, lower mammals and monkey. It is no use man exulting over the declaration that he is made after the image of God or being an incarnation of God. God knows whence man comes, what he is and whereto. Is it not really strange that unless Muhammad had communication with The Real he could be so accurate in his statement about man’s origin and evolution?

And the philosophy of the Qur-ân is so plain and so far reaching that the man-in-the-street as well as the

philosopher in his study may both equally profit by it. It never overlooks realities. It recognizes the existence of evil, it recognizes man's various ambitions, it recognizes the inequalities of men; it recognizes the shortcomings and failures of men. It does not expect them to be immediately transformed into super-humans but it encourages virtue, it urges man to a better state than he is; it promises the realization of The Real in the end.

“ And had God so willed, He might have made you all a community uniform in faith but He wishes to discipline you in what He has given you of His goodness, therefore try to excel in all good things.”

(5—48)

“ Surely, your strivings are of different kinds. Then as to him who is generous and reverent And who accepts Goodness, Beauty and Truth (*lit* the virtues).

We will make his path easy for him.”

(92—4 to 7)

Man's life, it is stated over and over again in the Qūr-ān, is a striving for. It is not an end in itself. It is an activity and its tendency is towards the attainment of Goodness, Beauty and Truth in thought, word and deed. There are many obstacles in the way, corresponding to *dissonances* in music, causing a great deal of strain, tension and exertion to get over them.

But then at the same time there are consonances and these relieve the strain, tension and exertion of life and create harmony in our thoughts, words and deeds. There is no need to despair over our defective origin, or over our incomplete understanding of our surroundings. Man's weakness and his strength. The *Vital Principle* knows all this and has provided us with means of clearing these spiritual hurdles. We must have some falls, but these do not matter. He has imposed Goodness upon Himself and as long as we are willing to have comfort in Him, He is ever active in our aid. The only person who is lost is the one who despairs—the unredeemable pessimist. As to him, he loses his God-given gift; but as to the philosophers they contemplate the wonders of the heavens and the earth and they realize God in all their activities, in all their studies and in all their contemplations. They say, “Our *Vital Principle*! Thou hast not made all this to no purpose.” (3—190)

The philosopher of the Qur-ân does not say that his philosophy applies only to his faith and not to his occupations. His principle of life and his principle of death; his eating and his drinking, his working and his playing, his domestic life and his public service; his private conversations and his public utterances, his borrowings and his lendings; his helping others and being helped by them are all a part of reality. He has no two existences—one for show and the other for personal review! His existence is an attempt to be

sincere, to be charitable, to be beautiful in everything. He does not boast of his possessions for they are part of The Real; he does not despair on account of his losses for he has nothing to lose except the choice given to him by God. This is man's trust for which he has to give an account.

It is not our intention to buttress our arguments by outside support, but holding as we do that the truth is not confined to one book only, or one man only, every book and every philosopher who supports our views is a part of our own philosophy. He is not a foreigner to the philosophy of the Qur-ân though he may never have studied it. We might have quoted the *Old Testament* or the religious books of the Hindus, or even the sayings of the Confucious. We have confined ourselves to the Qur-ân because we know it better than any other book.

In this book we have entered upon the interpretation of the *Vital Principle* being present in all existents and it would be presumptuous on our part to say that we have done more than merely indicate the direction of such interpretation. Our knowledge is as yet incomplete and the *Vital Principle* is not tired and cannot be tired of new creation or new expansion as we call it. Man may not be the highest term in the expansion of Godhead. There are other stellar systems than ours. And even in our own solar system Uranus and Neptune have yet to cool down to the level of

water temperature to produce life, and they may produce life at a higher or lower temperature than ours. The sun itself may some day cool down to produce life on its own surface and maintain it by its own internal energy, or the future inhabitants of the sun may be skilful enough to employ the radium of the sun to preserve their energies. We cannot put the finale of this chapter of our book in better words than those of Professor Sorley :

“The result of the argument is that a view of reality which gives impartial recognition to the realm of values as well as to that of existents cannot dispense with the idea of God.”—*Contemporary British Philosophy*, second series, p. 266.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE IDEA OF GOD

---

“ Say the unbelievers :

“ Has he (Muhammad) made all the gods into one God ? Surely this is a most *astonishing* thing.”

(Qur-ân 33—5).

In the year 611, after the birth of Jesus, the Prophet Muhammad announced to the astonished Meccans that The Reality was One—Reality not only on this earth but on the heavens above and everywhere else—there was none but One. What is the Name of this Reality ? The Qur-ân calls it by the pronoun “ *Hua* ” or “ *He* ”. All the other names are names. The Real is “ *He* ”. It does not mean a He-man or anything of that kind ; it means an *Existence* or Being. “ *He* ” is not a pronoun that stands for any noun but is a Substantive Noun by itself. No doubt, in ordinary conversation *Hua* is a pronoun but *Hua* when it refers to The Real is a noun standing by itself. All the verses in the Qur-ân referring to this Existence begin with this *Hua* or *He*. The English *it* comes very near this idea of *He*. But unfortunately the connection of *it* with lifeless objects makes its use ambiguous. We will in this chapter keep the word *He* but spell it HE. The reader will kindly remember that when this word

HE is used as it is now spelt it refers to The Real and nothing else. And everywhere it is the translation of the *Hua* of the Qur-ân. The mystics amongst Muslims remember The Real by the repetition of this *Hua* by the formula :

*La-ilaha-illa-Hu : La-ilaha-illa-Hu*

“There is none but He.” *ad infinitum*

(no deity).

We give some passages which describe this HE. Every reader is entitled to make his own commentaries on the passages which follow, each according to his own knowledge. The Qur-ân has been sent for all mankind. It is the rain of God’s blessings. Let each one drink of its pure water of spiritual blessings and be satisfied.

1. HE is the One who makes for your use everything that is on this earth ;

And HE knows all things. (2—29)

2. HE is the One who makes your various shapes (or figures) in the wombs as He pleases ; There is no reality (*lit.* deity) but HE, all-Mighty, all-Wise. (3—5)

3. HE is the One who has given (*lit.* sent down) thee this book, etc. (3—6)

[It should be noted that the phrase “ HE is the One ” shows that HE is not a pronoun standing for another noun but is a substantive which requires to be further expanded. HE is exactly in the same grammatical form as God in “God is the One.”]

4. HE is the One who makes you from wet clay, then settles a term (or duration). And the term is known to Him but you are still sceptic about it.

(6—2)

5. And HE is God (The Real) in the heavens and on this earth; HE knows your secrets and your appearances, and HE knows what you do.

(6—3)

6. And HE is the Supreme (Mind) above all His servants ; And HE is all-Wise, all-Aware. (6—18)

7. And HE is the One who takes away your consciousness at night (when you are asleep) and HE knows what your behaviour has been during day-time (hours of consciousness or waking), then HE causes you to wake up in the state you were before your sleep that you may complete the known term ; then towards Him will you return, then HE will inform you as to what your behaviours had been.

(6—60)

8. And HE is the One who makes the heavens and this earth with the Truth :

And when (*lit.*, the *day*) HE says “ Be ” it “ Becomes.”

His Word is the Truth ;

And to Him belongs the Sovereignty (of souls) when HE breathes them into various forms.

HE knows what is hidden from these souls and what is apparent to them.

And HE is all-Wise, all-Aware. . . . . (6—73, 74)



[These two verses make it quite clear that Truth is identical with God's Word or the expression of His Will and that the material Universe and the souls are a Reality of which God Himself is the source. The verses refute the supposition of the Idealists when they say that nothing exists but mind, and also the other supposition that there is nothing but the material Universe. Both are Real and are manifestations of God's Will.]

9. Such is The Real (*lit.*, God) your *Vital Principle*.  
 There is no deity but HE—the Maker of all things,  
 Therefore pay reverence to Him,  
 For HE is in charge of all things.  
 No vision (physical or spiritual can) *contain* Him.  
 And HE *contains* all vision,  
 For HE is all-Subtle, all-Aware.

Surely, to you has now come vision from your  
*Vital Principle* :

Therefore, whoever has a vision has it for his own  
 good,

And whoever is blind to it, is blind to his own  
 harm.

And (say, O Muhammad!) 'I am not a guardian  
 over you.' (6—103 to 105)

[These three verses are the end of a long reference to heavens and earth, sun, moon, stars, day, night, land, sea, life, death, the creation and evolution of

man and all living things in the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. There is in all these things proof of God's Reality and a vision for man to realize that Reality, provided he would open his eyes and not be blind. It is a lesson in having eyes and no eyes. It also lays down that God is Infinite. He is not confined in anything but all things are contained in Him.]

10. And HE is the One who has made you (mankind) successors of this earth and has raised some of you above the others in ranks that He may discipline you in what He has given you. (6-166)

[This chapter 6 is one of the longest chapters of the Qur-ân and the repeated reference to the Real is a proof of the importance which the philosophy of the Qur-ân attaches to the idea of God. We have omitted several verses, fearing to overtax the mind of our readers. The critics of the Qur-ân should study this chapter carefully especially verses 96 to 105, and they will find in it a storehouse of philosophy the wealth of which can never be exhausted.]

11. And HE is the One who sends winds carrying the good news of His mercy with (*lit.* before) them.

Till they are laden with heavy clouds with which We water a dead territory.

So that We pour down water and bring forth therewith all kinds of fruits.

*In this way is the raising of the dead—perhaps you will realize it.* (7-57)

[The truth of this statement is apparent as far as material rain is concerned but it is really a parable of the spiritual rain and the growth of spiritual life out of an apparently dead territory of souls. We do hope that some such revival of spiritualism in its real meaning and not merely a story of a dead Raymond is imminent. If this book helps, in howsoever small a degree, we shall be more than satisfied.]

12. HE is the One who has sent His messenger with this guidance and the Law of Truth that it may override all other laws—even though the pluralists may be averse thereto. (9—33)

13. And HE is the One who has extended the earth, and put mountains therein and streams. And of all fruits which He has made therein, there are pairs—male and female. He makes the night cover the day, etc. (13—3)

14. HE is the One who gives you rain from the clouds (*lit.*, from above) in which there is drink for you and watering for all plants on which you pasture.

He causes with water the growth of all green fields, palm-trees, grapes and all kinds of fruits. Surely in all this there is a proof (of the existence of Reality) for people who think (the philosophers and scientists).

And He has subjected the night and day to law for your benefit, and also the sun and the moon.

And the stars also are subject to law under His will.

Surely in all this there are proofs for people who understand.

And, similarly, (there are proofs) in all that He has spread for you on this earth of various species.

Surely in all this there is a proof for people who realize the Truth.

And HE is the One who has subjected the sea to law that you may eat therefrom fresh meat and that you may take out ornaments that you wear ; and you see the ships ploughing the seas in order that you may search what God gives you of His grace and that you may find comfort in Him.

And He has put on this earth mountains that keep its balance and He has put therein streams and made paths that you may find your way.

And He has made landmarks .

And the stars are there to guide you.

Is He then who makes all this like one who makes nothing ?

Do you not realize this ?

And if you try to count the blessings of God you will not be able to count them.

Surely God is Forgiving, Good. (16—10 to 18)

[These few verses are a specimen of hundreds of others where the Qur-ân teaches Philosophy by the testimony of God's manifestations in the creation of

the heavens and the earth. Every material blessing mentioned has a corresponding spiritual value.

Rain	=	God's revelation and inspiration.
Fruits, etc.	=	Knowledge of all kinds.
Day	=	Beauty, Goodness, Truth or Activity.
Night	=	Ugliness or Rest.
Sun	=	Prophet Muhammad.
Moon	=	Prophet's companions.
Stars	=	Other Prophets.
Sea and Land	=	Spiritual Realms.
Mountains	=	Great men.
Streams and Paths	=	Means of Spiritual growth.
Life	=	Spiritual awakening.
Death	=	Spiritual lethargy.]

The man of reality partakes of the blessings of God and a heavenly life begins to dawn on him even in this world. His soul remains undisturbed in the midst of all troubles, worries and even death. He never doubts that the end will be happy and we wish by writing this book to make our readers realize that whether they be of one religion or another, they can always find happiness and harmony by contemplating and realizing the Goodness, Beauty and Truth of God who is always with each one of us—be our origin whatever it may. The Law is God-made not man-made.

It is always with us. Let us be our own prophets, seers and great men. Let us communicate with God, open our hearts to Him and realize Him within ourselves as well as everywhere. He is Beauty, Goodness and Truth. *These concepts are not mere words but the WORD.*

15. “ And HE is the One who makes the night and day and the sun and the moon. All float in their own respective orbits.” (22—33)

And HE is the One who gives you life, then causes you to die, then He will cause you to live again. Surely man is very ungrateful. (22—66)

16. And HE is the One who evolves for your benefit, hearing and sight and mind. Little thanks you pay for all this !

And HE is the One who spreads you on the surface of the earth and towards Him are you being gathered together.

And HE is the One who causes life and who causes death and to Him belong the alternation of day and night.

Why do you not understand then ?

(23—78, 79, 80)

17. And HE is the One who makes the night a clothing for your souls and sleep a recuperation and He makes the day a time of struggle.

And HE is the One who sends the winds bringing glad news of His Goodness : And We (God) pour down pure water from above.

With which We revive a dead territory and give drink therewith to many a man and many an animal.

(25—47, 48, 49)

18. And HE is the One who makes the two seas to flow—one of fresh water, sweet to taste and the other full of salt and causing burning thirst.

And between the two HE has put a barrier which prevents the mixing up of the two.

And HE is the One who makes man from water and appoints for him relationship by blood and relationship by marriage.

And your *Vital Principle* is capable of doing all this.

(25—53, 54)

19. And HE is the One who makes the day and night to succeed each other for the benefit of those who wish to realize God or who wish to find comfort in Him.

(25—62)

20. And HE is GOD, there is no deity but HE. To Him belong all Goodness, Beauty and Truth (*lit. praises*) from beginning to end. And the Order is His and towards Him you (mankind) are returning.

(28—70)

21. And HE is the One who creates and recreates

and it is easy for Him to do so. And to Him belong all that is noblest in the heavens and the earth.

And HE is all-Mighty, all-Wise. (30—27)

22. HE is the One who shows you His signs and who gives you food from the air (*lit. sky or above*); and none realize this except those who turn their minds to the truth (or Reality). (40—13)

23. And HE is the One who accepts the turning towards Him of all His servants and who passes over their lapses and He knows what you do.

And He responds to those who have faith in Him and who do beautiful deeds and He adds to their beauty out of His own grace. And as to those who deny Him there is the tasting of their denials—a severe tasting. (42—25, 26)

24. And HE is the One who sends the rain after people have despaired of it; and He spreads His Goodness.

And HE is the Custodian-in-Chief, full of Goodness, Beauty and Truth (*lit. praises*). (42—28)

25. And HE is the One who is God in the heavens and God on this earth.

And HE is all-Wise, all-Knowing. (43—84)

26. HE is the One who produces tranquillity in the hearts of His believers, so that their faith in Him goes on increasing from more to more.

And to God belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth. And God is Knowing, Wise. (48—4)



✓ 27. HE is the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden.

And HE knows all things.

HE is the One who makes the heavenly bodies and this earth into six periods (day, night and the four seasons) and always remains firm in His power. He knows what permeates in the earth and what comes out therefrom, and what comes down from the space above and what rises thereto (*lit. therein*).

✓ And HE is with you wherever you be.

✓ And, God sees well what you do. (57—2, 3)

28. HE is the One who gives to His servant (Muhammad) clear proofs that he may bring you out of your spiritual darkness into the light (of God).

And, surely, God is Loving and Good to you.

(57—9)

29. HE is God, One besides whom there is no deity but He is—the Knower of all things hidden (from mankind) and all things known (to mankind).

HE is the most Benevolent, the Good.

HE is God, One besides whom there is no deity, but HE is, the King, the Holiest, the Whole, the author of Peace, the Guardian over all, the Mighty, the master of His Will, the Greatest of the great, free from all defects is God, defects which the Pluralists attribute to Him.

HE is God, the great Maker, the Creator, the great Fashioner. To Him belong all the Beautiful Attributes.

All that is in the heavens and the earth declares His Goodness, Beauty and Truth.

And HE is all-Mighty all-Wise. (59—22, 23 & 24)

30. HE is the One who has raised up amongst an illiterate people a messenger of their own who recites to them His proofs ; who teaches them His book and His philosophy; and before this they were in apparent loss.

And he is a messenger amongst those who have not yet met him and who are to come after him.

And HE is all-Mighty, all-Wise (in making this provision).

This (sending of Muhammad) is God's grace. He bestows it on whom He likes (or who likes this bestowal) and God is full of Great Grace. (62—2, 3)

31. HE is the One who makes you (mankind), then some of you deny Him, and some of you have faith in Him. And God knows well that you do.

(64—2)

32. And HE is all-Forgiving, all-Love.

Master of the throne of virtues—Goodness, Beauty and Truth carrying out whatever He intends to carry out. (83—13, 14 & 15)

33. Say : HE is GOD, the ONE : GOD, UNIQUE ; on whom all things depend, and who depends upon Himself :

He gives not birth ; He is not born :

And there is no one like Him at all.

(Chapter 112)

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