MODERN MUSLIM KORAN INTERPRETATION
(1880-1960)
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BY

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PREFACE

This study purposes to be a continuation of and a supplement to the last chapter (Der Islamische Modernismus und seine Koranauslegung) of I. Goldziher’s well-known work on Muslim Koran Interpretation (Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung, Leyden, Brill, 1920).

A continuation of Goldziher’s research seemed imperative, inasmuch as another 40 years of modern *Tafsīr* has elapsed since its publication. And the present work may be considered as a supplementary contribution in so far as it also, and even by preference, makes use of available Urdu material. I regret not to be able to cover the whole *Tafsīr* literature of the last decenniads; particularly the commentaries of Turkish authors might have been of great value for my inquiry.

The object pursued by the expositions given of Koranic exegesis is two-fold: on the one hand they are intended to provide Western readers with unpublished information about an essential branch of Muslim scholarship. It seems to me that as a result their judgment on modern *Tafsīr* may perhaps become more favourable than it was. At any rate such is my own experience. On the other hand, it is hoped that this survey of all sorts of explanations and inferences may to some extent further Muslim Koran exegesis itself. For it strikes the inquirer how defective and casual inter-change of thought proves to be between the commentators, both among compatriots and in the international sphere. Often views are brought to the fore, as if pronounced for the first time, whereas in fact the same had been said repeatedly before. Too little do Muslim
scholars endeavour to amend and continue arguments and findings of colleagues. When they refer to views of others, it is mostly when contending about principles and rarely because of a desire to reach a better apprehension of the Koran text. Yet, in spite of lack of co-operation, the jointly felt urge to open new ways is not only apparent, but is also on the point of producing results. Historical criticism, though still in its infancy, is going to determine where the authority of the Holy Book begins and ends. If the modernists succeed in this exacting enterprise, they surely will not have laboured in vain and will earn the gratitude of posterity.

Realizing in the end the dependence on so many persons and institutes in order to accomplish a self-appointed task, I have the pleasant duty of rendering thanks for all the indispensable assistance I received. Firstly, I gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the Netherlands Organization for Pure Research (Z.W.O.) in subsidizing a stay in London where Oriental libraries furnished important material. There I was really at home, since I prepared my thesis seven years before at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and I am still conscious of the great debt I owe my former teachers Prof. A. S. Tritton and the late Mr. A. H. Harley.

I thank Dr P. Voorhoeve, librarian of the Leyden University, and his assistant Mr. A. J. W. Huisman for their constant readiness to help. Also I should like to express my acknowledgments to my Pakistani friends Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf, Begum Naṣīr al-Dīn, Muḥammad Bakhsh Dījāwīd and the authors Ghulām Aḥmad Parwez and Muḥammad ʿInāyat Allāh Khān.
They kept me informed of recent commentaries and even most generously gave me a great many books and periodicals.

Finally, I owe many thanks to Mrs. G. E. van Baaren for so conscientiously correcting the English of the present study. Also very useful were the critical remarks concerning passages not clearly worded. Still it remains 'brushed up' English of a Dutchman who had to express himself in a foreign language. and for this I ask the indulgence of the Anglo-Saxon readers.

Loppersum, May 1960. 

J.M.S.B.
ABBREVIATIONS

‘Abd al-Ḥ. Tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi’l-Qurʾān (1901) by ʿAbd al-Ḥakim Khān.
Bayān Bayān bi’l-Nās (1936) by Khwādža Aḥmad al-Dīn.
al-Djawābīr al-Djawābīr fi Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Karīm by Ṭanṭāwī al-
Djawhārī.
EI Encyclopædia of Islam.
al-Fann al-Fann al-Qaṣaṣī fi’l-Qurʾān al-Karīm by Muḥ. Aḥmad
Khalaf Allāh.
al-Hidāya al-Hidāya wa’l-ʿIrfān fi Tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi’l-Qurʾān (1930)
by Muḥ. Aḥṣār Zāidī.
Maʿārif Maʿārif al-Qurʾān by Ghulām Aḥmad Parwez.
MIDEO Mélanges d’Institut Dominicain d’Etudes Orientales du Caire.
MW The Muslim World.
Q. Fi Zīlāl al-Qurʾān by Sayyid Qūṭb.
Reconstruction The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam by Sir
Mohammad Iqbal.
Richtungen Die Richtungen der islamischen Korananschlagung by I. Goldziher.
Salīm Salīm ke Nām by Ghulām Aḥmad Parwez.
Tardjumān Tardjumān al-Qurʾān by Abū ʿl-Kalām Āzād.
WI The World of Islam.
ZDMG Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

In the transliteration ẓ < is represented by a, and ẓ < by at. Thus Thaqāfat
Labore is an Urdu periodical and Thaqāfa al-Hind a quarterly written in
Arabic.
I. INTRODUCTION

For believing Muslims the Koran represents unquestionably the very Word of God. It is taken for granted by the conservative 'ulamā (Muslim doctors of law and sacred literature) just as well as by the most radical modernists. For a puritanic orthodox Christian the Bible is equally the Word of God in the true sense of the word. In practice however, the latter proves not to understand it in that precise and literal meaning in which the Muslim applies it to his view of his Holy Book. A Christian fundamentalist may leave Old Testament food regulations for what they are, and he will not have scruples about choosing a candidate for a church college by vote in stead of by lot after the example of the apostles (Acts 1: 26). He may be a blue-ribbonist, despite an undeniable appreciation of wine by the Bible (cf. e.g. Judges 9: 13). But this way of ignoring explicit scriptural statements cannot possibly be followed by a modern Muslim. He has to consider all Koranic sayings seriously, and the only expedient left to him is to interpret the relative crucial texts in such a way that they may in a measure become palatable to contemporary feeling and thought. So he is, for instance, forced — in contradistinction of the Christian exegete — to discuss at length the scriptural prohibition of eating swine’s flesh (see Leviticus 11: 7 and Sūra 2: 168/173), and to discover its rational grounds.

So-called ‘modern Koran interpretation’, designating the attempts to adapt the text to the demands of the age, has really appeared a necessity since the death of Mohammed. Already under the reign of the four rightly directed caliphs situations arose with conditions differing from those in the time of the Prophet. Accordingly, Koranic injunctions were soon found
to require re-interpretation. And the more contact with foreign civilizations intensified through the quick expansion of Muslim dominion, the more the need of such re-interpretations was felt. Especially the resolution of the problems posed by the impact of Hellenism proved an arduous task, whose effects can be traced in commentaries of scholars like Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī (d. 1209).

But none of the earlier unpleasant confrontations with uncongenial cultures and philosophical systems Islam had been faced with, was to be compared to the crisis occasioned by the encounter with the enlightened and more or less secularized Europe of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. No longer could the matter be settled by a few legal adjustments or some reconciliatory theories in the speculative realm of thought. In politics the tables had been turned: Muslim rule was replaced by colonial dominion. In religiosis one had no more to deal with fairly similar creeds but with directly disruptive trends hitting the heart of religion itself. And in the sphere of social life the unfeasibility of Muslim society’s mediaeval structure contrasted to the active and dynamic way of life of the Westerners became painfully evident. In response to this situation, however, the ‘ulāmā confined themselves mainly to spasmodic efforts at maintaining the traditional way of living and thinking, and the Koran commentators serenely ignored the call of the new times.

Yet one exception has to be made. The Delhi reformer and Indian counterpart of al-Ghazālī: Shāh Wali Allāh (1703-63) appears in his writings to be reacting positively to the changed situation, and we may regard him as a precursor of Modern Muslim Koran interpretation in the qualificative sense it is taken in this study. His time was characterized by a rapid political decay. After the death of Awrangzīb in 1707 the Moghul Empire began to break up speedily. Simultaneously
the influx of Western thought soon increased. And it is in the expositions of the Delhi theologian’s views that here and there we recognize tentative endeavours to incorporate newly imported Western ideas. In the second volume of his principal work Ḥudjdja Allāb al-Bālıgha he underlines the expediency of the shari‘a (sacred law) institutions, demonstrating so to say the obviously rational basis of Islamic codification. In another work: Ta‘wil al-Aḥādīth fī Rnnīz Qīsas al-Anḥiyā it is asserted about the punitive wonders recorded in the Koran, affecting the people who denounced the prophets as liars, that they occurred in accordance with nature’s laws, inasmuch as there were concealed material (that is natural) causes underlying them. In a third writing he states that for the actual happening of karāmāt-miracles like e.g. visions, a craving for a revelation on the part of their blessed receivers was absolutely essential. In other words: ‘miracles’, granted to holy men, are said to be dependent not on causes against nature, but on the receipient’s fit psychological disposition ¹.

These scattered observations, not elaborate, still remarkable enough if considered within the epoch and environment of the author, do not seem to have brought immediate repercussions to any extent. Not until the end of the nineteenth century were they re-discovered. But from then onwards Shāh Wali Allāh is loudly acclaimed in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent as the man who discerned the signs of his times. And when at present an Urdu-writing modernist is looking for arguments from Muslim lore, he weighs in with opinions of the Shāh.

It was the Mutiny, the Sepoy-revolt in 1857, which became the decisive event for the initiation of a real re-orientation of the Indian Muslims. On account of its most unfortunate direct

¹ Cf. Taṣawwuf ki Ḥaqīqat awr us kā Falsafa Ta‘rikh (ed. Sindh Sāgar Academy), 254.
effects on the Muslims—it completed their fear of and aversion from modern progress through the now extremely strained relations with the British—it became clear to their future leader Aḥmad Khān (1817-98) that his community must rapidly give up its passive and indolent attitude, if it would not court total disaster. To this end he started a vast program of social and educational reform after European patterns. Soon, however, he also perceived that the introduction of Western manners and norms as well as the diffusion of Western knowledge necessitated a new version of Islam in the light of contemporary thought. For the Western-educated youth religion had to be expressed in terms adapted to their newly acquired way of reasoning. Otherwise Islamic faith might be rejected as being obsolete and meaningless. For the prevention of this acute danger, Aḥmad Khān set himself to the study of the Koran in the firm conviction that the truth it contained would be demonstrable in the spirit of any age. A six volume Koran commentary on the first 17 Sūra’s was the result. Thus the year of appearance of the first part: 1880 can be rightly styled the initial date of deliberate modern Muslim Koran interpretation.

The well-known Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905) might be called the Egyptian counterpart of Aḥmad Khān. He too did not see the good of political agitation in the circumstances, and he similarly sought the uplift of his nation through social reform and better education. Further he also made sincere attempts to arrive at a new evaluation of Islamic principles. But unlike his Indian colleague, for that purpose he did not start with writing a tafsīr (Koran commentary) but a Muslim theology, called Risāla al-Tawḥīd (1897). This is significative and betrays a different background. The Egyptian lived in religious circles where a thorough acquaintance with classic dogmatics was held a selfevident requirement for a man of knowledge. Aḥmad Khān was a descendent of an aristocratic
family closely connected with the Mughal court. There Persian culture and refinement was sought after. Consequently, the Indian educationist did not dispose of the proper theological equipment when he was faced with the need of a re-valuation of Islam’s faith and institutions. In such a situation it is indeed easier to compose an exegetical work than a dogmatic disquisition. Conversely, an all-round theologian seeking to display familiarity with doctrinal subtleties, more readily fancies the composition of a book on religious tenets. And when in the beginning of 1898 ‘Abduh’s disciple Muḥammad Rashid Riḍā urged his master to write a tafsīr besides, the latter made all sorts of objections. Apparently the proposal did not appeal to him. Finally he agreed to it, so that we also possess specimens of Koran commentary by the Egyptian reformer.

The Koranic explanations of Muḥ. ‘Abduh, continued by his pupil Muḥ. Rashid Riḍā have had the deserved attention of Orientalists, and particularly by J. Jomier ¹ they have been exhaustively and capably analysed. It turns out that their way of exposition does not deviate considerably from the traditional one. In my opinion the most distinguishing feature of ‘Abduh’s Koran comments is his apparent desire to give moral lessons whenever the text affords an opportunity.

A similar moderate, if not conservative, stamp marks the commentaries of many other Egyptian ‘modernists’. A departure from the usual course of commenting, however, is the method followed by Ṭanṭāwī Djawhari (d. 1940). Without much exaggeration his commentary might be qualified as a manual for the general public on biology and other sciences, accompanied with practical advice and paternal admonitions addressed to the reader, and ornamented with Koranic sayings applied as a kind of headings. So, for instance, the Koranic subject “hell” affords ready occasion to describe the earth as consisting

¹ See his Le Commentaire Coranique du Manār (1954).
of a fiery globe and to mention particulars about the Etna volcano ¹. The prohibition, hinted at in S. 4: 119, to alter God’s creation gives the author cause to assert that one ought to take account of man’s innate capacities, so that a teacher e.g. should not require of his pupils more than they are equal to ². It is obvious that such a treatment of the Holy text has nothing to do with true interpretation. But, when we are blaming the commentator for it, we must, to be fair, not lose sight of the fact that in his days the Egyptians were getting information about Western knowledge for the first time on a wider scale. In that situation the best chances of its introduction were to be expected, if a connection could be made with the sacred Scriptures, so that people might become less suspicious of it.

In recent times Egypt has brought to the fore two intelligent and independent authors who also won their spurs in the field of Koranic research. They are Muḥ. Aḥmad Khalaf Allāh and Muḥ. Kāmil Ḥusain.

Khalaf Allāh found all too soon that originality is badly appreciated in a conservative milieu. A thesis of his on the literary composition of the Koranic tales was not accepted. Twice he had to recast it ³. Happily the work, at last released for publication under the title al-Fann al-Qaṣasī fiʾl-Qurʾān al-Karīm (1950-51), has retained its most striking features and its basic ideas. It abounds in penetrating observations, and in this study numerous quotations from it will be met with.

Muḥ. Kāmil Ḥusain’s chief contributions lie in the realm of Biblical topics. Thus we possess a dramatized account of Good Friday ⁴, in which the reactions on the events with the Jews,

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¹ al-Djawāhir ii, 163 ff.
² id. iii, 81 ff.
⁴ It is called Qarya Zālima (1954), and was rendered into English by K. Cragg (City of Wrong) (1958) and into Dutch by the present writer (Stad des Verderfs) (1961).
Romans and disciples are presented in three separate parts in the form of long dialogues with a minimum of action. Equally thought-provoking is a paper of his on the deep-rooted after-effects he supposes the Exodus to have had upon the Jewish mind. For our object is of value the treatise this distinguished physician and educationalist wrote on the Arabic eloquence of the Koran, inserted in a collection of essays, entitled *Mutanawwi’sat* (*Miscellanea*). With the above-mentioned writing *al-Fann* of Khalaf Allah, it indicates how rapidly at the moment Egyptian scholarship is advancing in the field of Koranic study. The West must come to reckon with it, and one may even presume that within not too long a time its findings will be noticed and discussed in the works of Western Orientalists.

The bulk of the material employed for our research is derived from the exegetical works of three authors on the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, viz. Abu’l-Kalām Āzād, al-Mashriqi and G. A. Parweez. It might, therefore, be appropriate to enter into some details concerning their life and work.

Abu’l-Kalām Āzād (1888–1958) was born in Mecca as a son of Indian parents who emigrated to the Holy City after the tumultuous days of the Mutiny. In 1898 the family returned and settled down in Calcutta. There Āzād’s father found the standard of the local madrasa’s too low for the proper education of his son, and the young boy got his lessens at home from his father, a pīr (spiritual guide) by profession, and some qualified teachers. At an early age he already appeared to possess unusual literary gifts. Only fourteen years old he contributed to the magazine *Makbzan*. In 1912 he began publishing his own newspaper, *al-Hila’il* (the crescent-moon). It caught on with the public immediately. The editor’s style “appeared like the

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language of a high-souled prophet” 1. In it fierce attacks were directed against British rule, and that perplexed the readers, in particular the Muslims who continuing to act on the advice of Aḥmad Khān had got used to keep aloof from politics. It also tried to bring Muslims and Hindus closer together, and the conclusion in 1916 of the famed Lucknow Pact between Congress and Muslim League was a result to which al-Hilāl must have given a considerable contribution. In 1923 Āzād was elected president of the Congress, and in 1940 for the second time. From 1937 onwards he was Gāndhi’s adviser in Muslim affairs. In the Independent India State he was minister for Education from 1947 till his death.

10½ Years he spent in jail! When in August 1942 he was imprisoned for the sixth time in fort Aḥmadnagar, he was 53. The total amount of the five previous times was 7⅔ years. On this he notes laconically: “A seventh part of my life, i.e. one day in a week, I have been detained. Thus the English gave me a fine sabbath-rest”. And it was certainly not in bitter irony that he said so. From the same prison he also wrote to a friend: “Whenever I hear during my captivity that by confinement one receives the punishment of seclusion, I wonder why it should be a punishment”. Actually it was not in Āzād’s nature to be a man of politics and public affairs. And he confesses furtheron: “If people open a stall in the market-place, one looks for a spot where a good many possible buyers are expected to pass. If I should open a stall, I should look for a spot where merely a few customers were to pass” 2.

In another letter written in fort Aḥmadnager Āzād describes the process of his spiritual growth. Since it gives a good idea of the mental habitus of the average young Asiatic intellectual,

1 See A. H. Alбируні, Makers of Pakistan and Modern Muslim India (1950), 134.
2 Ghubār Khūṭir 115 and 125.
confronted with Western thought and thinking, we append it at some length. He says: "As a rule man receives his belief by tradition, and with me it was the same. Yet I could not be content with the traditional doctrines. The drink they gave could not quench my thirst. Abandoning the old paths I had to search on my own for new ways. Before my fifteenth year I already began to doubt... Firstly, I found diverse trends within Islam, and the mutually contradicting convictions and discrepant dogmas both alarmed and confounded me. Then, when I penetrated still further into the matter, I noticed that in the heart of religion itself there were points in dispute, and this brought me from uneasiness to doubt, from doubt to unbelief... Vital questions which I had seldom posed myself, arose one by one... questions, like: What is truth? Where is it? Does it actually exist? If it should exist, it ought to be one, for there cannot be more than one truth. Why, then, does one see such various ways to attain it?... Over against all those conflicting ways Science stands with the light of its unshakable and well-founded truths in hand, and in that pitiless light all those old obscure mysteries of former times and tradition, at which mankind had got accustomed to look with awe, are dimmed one by one. This path begins with doubt and mostly ends with atheism. And if one runs down it to the end, one has finally nothing left but despair... I too had to pass those stages, but I did not walk down the road to the end. My thirst refused to be satisfied with despair... It became clear to me that amidst the conflicting ways and the dense darkness of fallacies and delusive ideas a bright and safe course is still open, leading to security and a firm ground for faith... The belief I lost by searching for truth, I got back with the aid of this very searching. What had been the cause of my illness turned out to be eventually the means for recovery." 

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1 Ghubār Khāṭir 65 f.
The insights, acquired by the conquest of doubt, concerned a) the true relation between science and religion, i.e. that it is not one of controversy but of harmonious coexistence; and b) the discovery of the actual existence of a Universal Religion, despite all the extant divergent rites and creeds. And it was for the purpose of exhibiting the brilliancy of the One Universal Truth mankind is so badly in need of, that Āzād wrote his commentary Tardjumān al-Qurʾān (1930), inasmuch as the Koran is its document 1.

Universalism presumes unity of religion as well as of men themselves. A concrete realization of his belief in the essential unity of mankind Āzād pursued in the field of politics and education. Thus he declared in a presidential address to the Congress in 1923: “If there comes a delay in the attainment of sva-rādj (self-rule), it will be detrimental to India, but if our unity (of Muslims and Hindus) ends to exist, it will be detrimental to mankind as a whole”. And till the last he resisted the establishment of Pakistan as a separate Muslim State. The next criticism he levelled against the current geographical instruction, speaks for itself: “When we teach a child geography, we do not start by saying that he is an inhabitant of the earth, but on the contrary we start by instilling in his mind that he is from Delhi, and Delhi is in India, and India is in Asia, and Asia is in the Eastern Hemisphere... the idea of his membership of the human species remains a mere abstraction” 2.

Muh. ‘Ināyat Allāh Khān, better known under his honorary name al-Mashriqi (“The Orientalist”), born in the same year as Āzād, is a totally different personality. He likes to step upon the public platform and to send out open letters, addressed to

1 For more particulars about this commentary, so highly esteemed by the Urdu-reading public for the superior Koran translation it contains, see the present writer’s paper A Modern Urdu Tafṣir (WI, ii, 2, 1952, 95 ff.).
2 Speeches of Maulana Azad (1956), 150.
the scientists all over the world — Āzād shunned publicity: “I did not seek the hurry-scurry life of the politician”, so he once declared, “but the politicians sought for me!” —. al-Mashriqi’s impulsive mind produced flashing and far-fetched ideas, often viewing Islamic faith and institutions from a very revolutionary angle — Āzād proves to be open to all sorts of trends of thought and belief but everything in moderation. Thus, e.g., for him the shari‘a is authoritative but legalism he fiercely condemns. Actually, he aims at a kind of reconciliation between the ‘ulamā who should be better acquainted with modern views and standpoints, and the Westernized youth who ought not neglect what is valuable in the age-old articles of faith —. The trenchant al-Mashriqi scoffs mercilessly at his adversaries, the ‘ulamā — Āzād, from head to foot an aristocrat, is known for having never applied even one bad qualification to an opponent —.

As a young man, this turbulent and dynamic personality successfully studied Mathematics and Oriental Languages at the universities of the Pandjāb and Cambridge (England). His energies were still mainly absorbed by academic preoccupations, when in 1916 he was made Principal of the Islamic College at Peshawar. Full opportunity to unfold, however, he got when he was able to start his Khāksār movement in 1931. To a great extent it can be fitly compared with the Nazi S.A.-organization in its first stage, viz. at the moment that Germany was still held by the Allies to be demilitarized. Its members wore a brown uniform and carried a spade, symbolizing both labour and readiness to fight. The leader himself wished to be looked upon as the benevolent dictator who, if required, could use force for the people’s own good 1).

The chiming in of the Khāksār with Hitler’s semi-military

1 For more details on al-Mashriqi and his movement see W. C. Smith, Modern Islam in India (1946), 235-245.
organization, pointed out in a paper of mine, has led to a dispute by correspondence, as al-Mashriqi categorically denies to have been dependent on German Nazism. On the contrary, he claims to have been a source of inspiration for Hitler whom he met incidentally in the National Library of Berlin in 1926. About the conversation he had with him, al-Mashriqi states in a letter to me, dated the 12th July 1955: "I was astounded when he (Hitler) told me that he knew about my Tazkirah. The news flabbergasted me... I found him very congenial and piercing. He discussed Islamic Jihad with me in details. In 1930 I sent him my Isharat concerning the Khaksar Movement with a picture of a spade-bearer Khaksar at the end of that book. In 1933 he started his Spade Movement".

Notwithstanding his undisplayed fascist sympathies (Hitler's Mein Kampf was a masterpiece in his eyes), one would do our activist an injustice by bracketing him with people like Hitler, Mussolini and Franco. Being deeply concerned with the backward state of his nation, its apathy and idle idealization of the past, he is dazzled by the energy and quick results of the fascist regimes. Such a startling awakening would save India! And it seems that recent history puts him more or less in the right. Asiatic governments at present display an unmistakable preference for the euphemistically styled system of "conducted democracy" in their fight against disruptive forces like corruption, provincialism and so on. So strong personalities are called for to settle matters under circumstances of emergency.

Before launching his Khāksār campaign, al-Mashriqi laid down its principles in a work whose title Tadbkira ("Warning"),

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1 Cf. WTI iii, 3-4 (1954), 187.

2 al-Mashriqi's principal work, published two years before. In my analysis of it I characterized it as 'A Modern Muslim Decalogue', since in it the author draws up ten leading principles, taken from Koranic teaching, as substitutes of the well-known Islamic 'five pillars' (see WTI iii, 3-4, 1954, 189 ff.).
derived from S. 74: 54, foreshadows a heavy programme of action and nation-building. With reference to S. 53: 40/39, the acknowledgment “Man shall have only that for which he exerts himself” is pronounced the most fundamental principle of tawhid (monotheism)\(^1\). The worst of Muslim evils: shirk (polytheism) is described *per definitionem* as “all that which keeps you from exertion and prevents you from maintaining unity”\(^2\).

A second book of his which is of importance for our study is called *Hadith al-Qur’an*, and it was committed to paper during a short detention (30 May - 20 June 1951). It attempts to demonstrate the high value the Koran sets on science for mankind’s evolution and unification. The theme itself is far from original in the context of Muslim modernity but the way the author develops it is often interesting, and must be fascinating for the followers who — though decreasing in number — still adore their master as in the high-days of the Khāksār successes.

Ghulām Aḥmad Parwez, born in 1903, was a graduate of the Pandjāb university and studied Oriental Languages. He was employed as an Assistant Secretary to the Government of Pakistan, but retired to devote himself entirely to the research centre *Tulūṣ Islām*, working under his direction. This institute in Karachi strives for a better understanding of the Koran in the light of modern thought. It got a certain notoriety on account of its denying any value to hadith (traditional sayings ascribed to Mohammed and his companions) for Koran interpretation.

In our opinion Parwez’ scholarly work has not arrested the attention it deserves. This applies in particular to his four volume study *Maʿārif al-Qurʾān* (1941-49). The work is not a Koran commentary in the traditional form, closely following the given arrangement of the verses and sūra’s, but it

\(^1\) *Tadhkira* ii, 111.

\(^2\) *Tadhkira* i, 72.
may best be compared with what is named in Christian terminology a ‘Biblical Theology’, giving an evaluation of basic notions in the Scriptures. The author purposely chose this systematic grouping of Koranic material, as he had the Western-educated youth in view for whom neither the Koran as such nor a verse by verse interpretation of it offered any affinity to their mind and interest. By means of this comparatively new framework he hoped to reveal to them surprising coherencies of thought as well as illuminating and imaginative ideas from the storehouse of Koranic meditation. 

This ‘Koranic Theology’ begins with the doctrine of God. After some preliminary remarks on the universal apprehension (iḥsās) of the existence of a Divine Being: Ilāh, culminating in the only true worship of Allah, follows a detailed and careful treatment of the divine attributes. Successively one is instructed about the Koranic view of God’s creative power, providence, grace, wrath, knowledge, wisdom, dominion, will and remaining attributes, mentioned in Holy Writ. Part ii starts with the doctrine of man, his relation to Iblīs and the angels (= the chapter De Libero Arbitrio of classic Muslim theology). After the elucidation of the ethical sides of human existence Parwez deals with man’s connections with the other world. Thus we are told of Revelation and Prophecy. Discussion of the latter article of faith results in an appreciation of the Koranic prophets. Part iii continues and concludes the review of divine messengers. Part iv gives a survey of the main non-Muslim religions (Judaism, Christianity, Zarthustraism, Hinduism, Chinese and Japanese religions) which is followed by a kind of biography of Mohammed, based on Koranic texts. Then the author finds opportunity to pass under review dominant features and salient questions, arising in the Prophet’s life, like ḏiḥād (holy war), slavery, organization of his community, miracles, the miʿrād (ascension
of Mohammed), his domestic life and the ḥadjidj (pilgrimage). What constitutes an essential part of every Muslim theology: the Eschatology (doctrine of the final issue of things), is lacking in these dogmatics. This is a highly typical trait of Muslim modernity. Instead of it comes as closing chapter — and that is equally significant — an excursus on the New World, to be brought about by the revolutionary views of the Koran. So the ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ is not to be regarded as a divine surprise at the end of time, but it is a mission to men, capable of realization if only the Koranic principles are carried out in full.

Parwez’ qualities are not to be sought in the production of brilliant exposé’s nor in the exhibition of a great literary proficiency. He is, however, a gifted teacher and a paternal friend for the drifting young people who are in need of a religious anchorage. In general he shows himself the happy possessor of a sound and independent judgment on the subjects he is treating and of a clear insight into the situation of the moment. Thus it is to be expected that his influence will become increasingly stronger.

In the next chapters II - V the only criterion applied to the available Muslim elucidations of and reflections about the Koran is, whether in them the impact with Western Weltanschauung and way of living is somehow recognizable. So there is no doctrinal point of issue from which we set out, and authors of the Ahmadiyya Movement, e.g., are not excluded from our research, if they prove to be desirous of giving explanations attuned to the spirit of the age. Also no formal limits are kept to, i.e. we did not stop at the Koran commentaries proper or works on Koranic items, but wherever in a periodical, essay, or book a usable example or good illustration occurred of the manner in which the Koran is treated in view of contemporary thought and life, it is reproduced in this study.
II. WAYS OF INTERPRETATION

In the writings of the modern Koran expositors one meets sundry objections against the classic interpreters, serving as favoured grounds of justification for adding one more commentary to the hundreds existing. First and foremost we find the postulate of the Reformation that everybody is allowed to reflect on the purports of the Holy Book. Koran interpretation is not the monopoly of imāms and mudjtabids (religious leaders and highest authorities in jurisprudence) ¹.

H.A.R. Gibb ² and others have already noticed the modernists’ repugnance against the traditional use of Ḥisābīyyāt (Jewish legends) when expounding Koranic tales. In the same way, cultural influence of Byzantium and Iran in the interpretations applied is identified and rejected ³. And Muḥ. Aslam Djairādjpurī is surely speaking in the name of nearly all of them, when he states: “The very first principle for explaining the Koran intelligibly is that the elucidation is done with the Koran itself; for God accepts full responsibility for the interpretation: “Further, it is for Us to make it clear” ⁴.

Whether, however, beside other Koran passages which may shed more light upon an obscure text, one is also entitled to utilize explanatory traditions, is a moot question. Āzād, who declares that in writing his commentary the old as well as the modern modes of research and thought have been employed, does not set aside hadīth for Koran interpretation. Still he con-

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¹ Comment made by Āzād on the rhetorical question of S. 4: 84/82, “Do they not consider the Koran?” (Tardjumān i, 381).
² Modern Trends in Islam (1947), 73.
³ See WJ ii, 2, (1952), 96.
⁴ S. 75: 19. See Preface to Maʿārif i.
fines himself chiefly to traditions ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās and some other tābi‘ūn (the Muslim doctors who followed the immediate companions of Mohammed), and he is well aware of the fact that even a ‘sound’ tradition remains a testimony of fallible men. But in the opinion of quite a lot of modernists of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent elucidations and historic details stemming from tradition, are to be regarded purely as human fancies. And according to Aḥmad Khān the Koran itself hints at the disparity of man-made stories and divinely communicated intelligence. In sūra 18 at first the account of the aṣḥāb al-kahf (Fellows of the Cave) is given in a concise form. Then in verse 12/13 there is announced: “We will narrate to you their account in truth (bi’l-haqqi)”. “The word bi’l-haqqi”, so it is concluded, “is a clear indication that the preceding report was not the story God wanted to tell, but the one publicly known, beautified with miracles, and that after it the true course of events, without miracles, would be communicated”.

The best documented combating of tafsir-traditions has been supplied by Parwez. In the two volume work Maqām Ḥadīth (1953) which treats this matter at great length, we find among other things a confutation of the demonstrative force of Koran-texts, adduced by the traditionists as commending faith in Ḥadīth:

a) it is not right to deem ḥikma in S. 2: 123/129 an equivalent of the Prophetic traditions. Ḥikma is a common term denoting ‘wisdom’: and cannot have that special sense. One reads in S. 31: 11/12, “We granted ḥikma to Luqmān”. Does that mean

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1 Tardjumān ii, 103, 434, 500.
2 Targīm fi Qīṣa Aṣḥāb al-Kahf wa’l-Raqīm (1889), 32.
3 See the present writer’s art. Pakistanin Views of Hadith in WI v, 3-4 (1958), 219.
4 “O our Lord! send from among themselves a messenger who... may teach them the Book and the Ḥikma”.
5 Cf. also I. Goldziher in ZDMG lxi (1907), 869 f.
that Luqmān received traditions delivered by Mohammed, the Seal of prophets?! b) authority of prophetic sayings is also derived from S. 59: 7b, “What the messenger has given you, take; what he has refused you, refuse”. This passage, however, the author rightly remarks, does not relate to general pronouncements of Mohammed. It bears merely upon a distribution of spoils on a specific occasion. Moreover, ātā (to give) cannot mean ‘to command’ or ‘to say’; c) from S. 53: 3 the traditionists draw the inference that whatever came from the blessed tongue, was revelation. This is nonsense, for it cannot be claimed that e.g. all that the Prophet talked over in the domestic circle would be revelation; d) the passages, in which God orders obedience to the Prophet, refer to the imāma, i.e. the rule of the umma which after the Prophet’s death fell to the khilafes and which is at present the duty of a central government. In other words, so Parwez summarizes, nowhere in the Koran are we told to put an equally firm belief in Koran and Ḥadīth.

Further, one of his objections against those traditions is that texts of the Koran are restricted to particular meanings, whereas our insight into the Holy Book grows with the centuries. Take, for instance, the case of God’s rescue of the Pharao’s corpse at the time of Moses, recorded in S. 10: 92. Nowadays, this has been found to refer to the discovery of the mummy of Ramses II.

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2 Nor speaks he from mere impulse. It is but an inspiration inspired!”

3 E.g. S. 24: 53/54.

4 Maqām Ḥadīth i, 150 ff.

5 Maqām Ḥadīth i, 272.
In his book on Koranic ideas Parwez also devotes attention to this matter. There he sets forth: "... from the Koran it follows obviously that not every word of the Prophet was revelation. If all that he spoke were revelation, what could it mean when in the Koran decisions of his are criticized and it is said to him: "Why did you act like that?" ¹. If every word of his were revelation, why did he look for revelations regarding items for which no rule had yet been given in the Koran...? In the beginning, at the salāt (prayer) he turned his face to Jerusalem, but in his heart there lived a strong desire that God would indicate the Kaaba as qibla (point of direction for prayer). To this he himself did not resolve, but the Koran tells us that he turned his face heavenward for it, craving for a divine sanction (S. 2: 139/144)². Some pages furtheron Parwez argues that, if one values every word and deed of the Prophet as to-be-obeyed-till-Resurrection, the tradition-collections are brought to the level of revelation!³.

By Aḥmad Khān the ancient commentators are also reproached with too great a dependence on the existing lexical works. In his view it always remains possible "that a certain

¹ See S. 9: 43 and S. 17: 76/74.
² Ma‘ārif iv, 688 f.
³ id. iv, 693. Our extended reproduction of Parwez’exposé on hadith, however, is not meant to convey that at the moment such represents the general feeling in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Muḥ. Ḥanīf Nadawi who is definitely not a man of obsolete ideas, considers that by merely crediting a prophet with the task of delivering divine messages one takes too narrow and mechanical a view of revelation. The prophet has to be an educator as well an ameliorator of human conditions. One ought to note how the Koran when speaking of previous prophets makes mention not only of their tenets but also of the situation of the peoples to whom they were sent. And from S. 4: 67/64 which says that every messenger must be obeyed 'with God’s permission' (bi‘dhnī ‘llāhi) it is deduced that the prophets are consequently divine deputies (ma‘dhnīn) whose lead is to be followed (Thaqāfat Lahore, June 1959, 44 ff.).
word in the Qur’ān is used in a way or in a sense not registered in lexical works or literature”.

A grievance, ventilated by Khalaf Allāh, is that sometimes the literal sense of the words has been too persistently adhered to, without regard to the peculiar composition of the texts and the psychological background of the terminology. Thus al-Kashshāf, the famous commentary of Zamakhshari (1075-1144) analyses the three terms for serpent al-djān, al-thū‘bān and al-hayya which occur in the Moses narratives, and harmonizes the available material in this way that at first there would have been a little snake (al-hayya) which gradually developed into a bigger one (al-thū‘bān). And al-djān is the biggest of the three! But the point is this, that in these tales the term al-djān is used only when it is intended to convey the terror inspired by it. Hence we read after al-djān (in the story of the moving staff): “he turned back fleeing” (S. 27: 10). The terms hayya and thū‘bān, however, are used when there is no need to depict an effect of fright.

A second objection Khalaf Allāh brings to the fore pertains to the historicity so dear to former commentators. A criterion for authenticity of the prophets and reliability of the Koran was sought in the correctness of that which was recorded. So events reported twice or more times were chiefly studied with a view

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1 Tr. by Muḥ. Dā’ūd Rahbar in MW. Oct. 1956, 327. It is complained by Muḥ. Abū Zaid that many lexica attribute to Koran words the same sense as the writings of figh-scholars do, so that they receive a meaning different from that meant by the Koran (see Introduction al-Hidāya). In this connection it might be of interest to mention that the new Wörterbuch der klassischen Arabischen Sprache of A. Fischer, F. Nöldeke and H. Reckendorf has been announced as “unabhängig von den Werken der arabischen National-lexicographen aus den Quellen direkt erarbeiter”.

2 Or, as the author observes on another page (p. 269), this is styled by modern psychology “the suggestive power and psychic effect words can possess”.

3 al-Fāmm 7 f.
to tracking down all kinds of details in a story. And it was
overlooked that according to the Koran true legitimation of a
prophet does not lie in his knowledge of empiric facts, but in
acquaintance with the unseen world. See S. 3:39/44 which
closes a series of accounts with the statement: “That belongs
to information of the unseen world which We reveal to you” ¹.

A third gravamen of this author concerns theoretic specula-
tions in which the classics, and in particular Fakhr al-Dīn al-
Rāzī, often indulge themselves. E.g. S. 36: 1-9/10 induces them
to long and unprofitable discussions on al-qadā wa'l-qadar (fate
and destiny). That is certainly not the intention of the Koran
in this passage ².

Muslim Modernism has been greatly impressed by the power
of reason, and kept on being fascinated by it, even when in
Europe rationalism had long given place to vitalism ³ and
existentialism. In consequence, one of the main purposes of
modern Koran commenting is to strip the text of legendary
traits and primitive notions.

To this end Koranic tales are ‘reconstructed’. So ‘Abd
al-Ḥakīm notes at S. 7:170/171 (communicating that God
shook the Sinai-mountain over the head of the Israelites):
“Rasta‘nā fawqakumu (in the parallel passage S. 2:60/63) does
not necessarily signify that the mountain was torn up by the
roots and placed above their heads, neither... nataqa‘a 3l-djabala
(in this place) that it was suspended from the air. People who

¹ *id.* 23 ff., 38.
² *id.* 5 f.
³ It is true that Sir Muḥammad Iqbal (1873-1938) liked to refer to
Bergson, but the latter’s vitalistic views have chiefly influenced the ethico-
religious apperceptions the Muslim held. They did hardly affect the
cognitive side of his philosophy. In his thought intellect retains a positive
value and is declared to provide mastery over man’s material environment,
while intuition is ranked higher as a motive force to produce moral and
spiritual significances than as a faculty of cognition.

*Baljon*, Koran Interpretation 3
have rambled in mountainous areas know very well that sometimes stone-blocks jut out so far that they are, so to speak, a canopy, and create the impression on those below of being about to fall upon their heads’.

Parwez considers that *miń ḍindoʾlābi* in S. 3: 32/37 need not mean that the food for Mary came directly from God without secondary means, since worshippers of God frequently apply the same expression to matters gained by secondary means. Hence people brought provisions by way of kindness of their own accord, as is done nowadays for cloisters.

Primitive notions might be taken as symbolic figures: “At the time Dhu ‘l-Qarnain reached a point in the West where civilization ended, it seemed to him as if the sun was setting in a well, though it did not happen in reality.”

Then, allusions to magic are not to be expected in the Holy Book. The to-be-avoided evil of witchcraft, knowing as blowing on knots and indicated in S. 113: 4, is said to refer “either to women who bewitch by their glances, words, and weaken someone’s mind and strength by their coquetry and amorous playfulness, withdrawing him from his duties and work, or to desires and pleasures on account of which the mind and soul of man are injured and cause his eventual ruin.” When in S. 12: 67 the avoidance of the evil eye is hinted at (because the sons of Jacob are recommended by their father to enter the city in Egypt not by the same, but by different gates), then ‘Abd

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1 ‘Abd al-H. 91. Cf. also the explanation of Aḥmad al-Din: “The Sinai was (at that time) a volcano...; an erupting volcano (with accompanying earthquakes) had the effect that people, terrified, thought it coming down upon them” (*Bayān* 203).
2 *Maṣārif* iii, 489.
3 S. 18: 84/86.
4 Ahmad Khān, *Izāla al-Ghair* ‘an Dhi ‘l-Qarnain* (1890), 17.
5 Already surmised by Zamakhsharī (see I. Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung* (1920), 142)
6 *Pāra ʾAm* 205.
al-Ḥakim suggests three rational grounds for the advice: “1) Fear of being mistaken for spies; 2) the consideration that, if they were taken for one family, they would receive only one camel-load of grain; 3) apprehension of attracting the attention of thieves and street-robbers, if seen all together”.

Fable-motives, to be found in S. 27: 17-20, are eliminated by Parwez as follows: “By ṭair (birds) are meant either a kind of doves serving for war-purposes, or (figuratively) swift horses (i.e. an army with cavalry), or a clan (called) ṭair.” About the ḫudḥud-bird we are informed: “In that time people might be named after birds and animals, as in the Tora an Edomite of royal blood was given the name of Hadad (1 Kings 11: 14)”.

Lastly, a favourite method of de-mythologizing is the recourse to lexicographical artifices. So by a cunning application of a secondary meaning of ṭadjīm (stoning), to wit ‘prediction’, S. 67: 5 is said to contain a threat against astrologers (= the ‘satans’ recorded in that verse), and the interpretation runs: “… some swindlers among the astrologers claim that they can prophesy the future on account of their knowledge of stars (= the ‘lamps’ mentioned)… and those astrologers mislead men with their conjectures and phantasies; and through their deceit and agitation they resemble devils.”

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1 For this Āzād refers to Gen. 42: 9 (Ṭardjumān ii, 237).
2 ʿAbd al-H. 678. For a fourth suggestion, see Muḥ. Rashīd Rīḍā in Tafsīr Sūra Yūsuf (1936), 92: “… his (Jacob’s) intention was to enable them to see the impression (ṣr. of a glad surprise) each of them would make upon ‘him (Joseph) separately’.
3 Maʿārif iii, 413. Naml (ant) is said to be a name of a clan (p. 411a).
4 id. iii, 413. Similar hypotheses have been made before by Aḥmad Khān’s disciple Chirāgh ʿAlī: see Tabdhīb al-ʿAkhlāq (ed. Faḍl al-Dīn), iii, 172.
5 “And We have adorned the lowest heaven with lamps and We have set them to pelt the devils with”.
Besides the above-mentioned consistent elimination of all that is supernatural in Koranic narrative we meet amongst more moderate modernists the attempt to minimize as much as possible miraculous elements of the story. When in S. 18: 62/63 it is told that the fish of Moses and his servant took its way in the sea ‘adjaban (‘in a wondrous sort’), then this ‘adjaban is explained by Muḥ. ‘Abduh’s son ‘Alī Fikrā as: “so that the prophet of God was astonished at it”, an astonishment quite understandable, as he and his servant “had not paid attention to the fish they carried in a basket, so that it had been able to dive away into the sea”¹. On account of the words of Jacob in S. 12: 94, “I find the smell of Joseph”, Muḥ. Rashīd Riḍā observes that, though wonders need not be strange to people of our blessed generation, here we are simply told of Jacob’s perceiving the smell of Joseph on his shirt. Not a word about an odour, originating from paradise². The odour of his shirt was nothing but the normal smell of his body³. The request of the apostles that Jesus should bring down a tray from heaven (S. 5: 112) is interpreted by Āzād like this: The apostles had food with them, but a tray was not available. Because of the inconvenience — not out of craving for miracles! — the request for a divine intervention was made (but after all not acceded to). And the author paraphrases the passage: “(And look) when the apostles said: O Jesus, son of Mary! Is your Lord able to send down to us a tray? (i.e. to make a divine provision from heaven for our food), Jesus said: Fear God (and do not give such orders), if you are believing. They said: (By this no test

¹ al-Qurān yanbū‘al-‘ulūm wa‘l-irfān (1948), ii, 305 f.
² The commentators generally suppose it to be the same garment with which Gabriel is said to have invested him in the well, and which was imbued with the scent of paradise.
³ Tafsīr Sūra Yūsuf, 120.
of divine power is meant; but) we want (having obtained food) to eat therefrom” ¹).

Religious ideas of a more doctrinal nature can also be rationalized. The concept of the Love of God endures a rather intellectualistic treatment from Ṭanṭāwī Djawhari when he comments on S. 2:160/165: “Do’nt you see how the blind have no notion of beauty of form, the deaf do not know beauty of music, since they cannot conceive of it. Love is based on knowledge; ‘unknown, unloved’… and who finds the truth of God’s being distinguished for beauty, power, knowledge and nobility…, comes passionately to love His beauty, knowledge, power and nobility… Upright sui’s are content with a partial love of God… they fail in stimulating their disciples to prepare for study of Western and Oriental learning” ². Only a poor bit of belief in the unseen is left over, when Parwez — dealing with the problem how to bring the Koranic demand of belief in the unseen into harmony with the Koranic premise of belief’s rationality (cf. S. 12:108 ‘alā baṣīratīn) — states that for the enforcement of the Koran’s social system firstly human faith ‘without having seen’ is needful, simply because, if its feasibility is to be proved, it has to be put into practice first. Such faith is called ijmān bi’l-ghaibli. Since results did appear after its coming into operation, belief in the truth of this system will be required. That will be belief on rational grounds, acquired by a pragmatic test. Thus in the end one gets a polity tried on its merits ³.

These instances, however, ought not to prompt the thought that by the modernists all religious ideas are deprived of their very content. It is the same Parwez of the rationalization just quoted who also declares that if in heavy case a materialist has

¹ Tardjumān i, 437.
² al-Djawābir i, 161 ff.
³ Salīm 203 f., 253.
come to the end of his tether, a believer still has resort to prayer. And in another place he shows the possible result prayer might have on the course of events. For this one should take notice both of the ‘addition’ God can make to His creation (see S. 35:1) and the favourable psychological effect it can produce on the prayer himself: through it he comes to see his condition in another light and learns e.g. to recognize the relativity of things. A purely religious tone is heard in Sayyid Quṭb’s note on S. 4:130/131. “Taqwā”, he says, is that very specific notion of God’s paternal care and of His being closer by than man is to himself). The elucidation of worship (‘ibāda) by Muḥ. ‘Abduh testifies to a like pious mind: “It refers to complete surrender springing from a deep consciousness of the Worshipped One, without knowing the origin of that sense. And faith in His rule is present without knowing its form or essence. The only thing one knows of is being surrounded by it” 4. S. 97:4 5 gives Āzād occasion to a mystical meditation on rūḥ (spirit) and he claims: Adam was not yet in possession of the rūḥ. This was granted for the first time to Noah. Notice the pluralis majestatis in S. 7:57/59, “We (anā) did send Noah…” But afterwards the rūḥ-energy gradually waned and even disappeared. Through the Koran, however, God infused new life into the dead rūḥ 7. And Khalīfa ‘Abd

1  Maṣārīf i, 387.
2  id. i, 396 f.
3  Q. v, 79.
4  Taṣfīr al-Fātiḥa 56.
5  “The angels and the spirit descend therein (i.e. the night of qadr) (to the earth), by the permission of their Lord, with a view to every dispensation”.
6  Āzād perceives a difference of meaning in God’s use of anī (I) and anā (We). The singular would merely be employed for a creation of minor importance; the plural, however, would point out an important action of His. Thus in the case at issue the gift of rūḥ must be understood!
7  Maṣāmin Āzād 61 ff.
al-Ḥakim emphasizes that belief as such never ends being faith in the mystery (imān bi’l-ghaibī), because God’s greatness is so immense (see S. 31 : 26/27) that in spite of all revelation committed “no mystic or prophet can claim to know all there is to know about the ghāib” ¹).

Next, Western influence is found again in the application of modern psychology. Thus it might have been written by a Westerner, when we read in the study of Khalaf Allāh that the success of the new message was undoubtedly also owing to the deplorable state of religion in Mohammed’s days. “And possibly”, the author continues, “that is indicated by the Koran, when it describes the mission of the Arabian prophet as coming in a time of cessation of messengers (S. 5 : 22/19 ‘alā fatratin mina’l-rusuli’).” In a similar context the Jews felt the desire, formulated in S. 20 : 134, “O our Lord! If only You had sent to us a messenger” ². A psychological interpretation — to take another example — is given to the angelic exclamation towards God: “How is it that You will place therein one (Adam) who shall do evil therein and shed blood? We celebrate Your praise and hallow You” (S. 2 : 28/30). According to Muḥ. Māḥmūd Hidjāzī this should not be apprehended as a critical remark regarding man ³. It is purely envy which made the angels say so. They, and not men, were to be regarded as number one ⁴.

Occasionally the psychological explanation is an apt means of de-supranaturalizing the text. On the legend, recorded in S. 2 : 261/259 ⁵, Sayyid Quṭb comments that “sensations, sus-

¹ Thaqāfat Labore (June-July 1960), 16f.
² al-Fānn 95 ff.
³ The usual interpretation.
⁴ al-Tafsîr al-Wâdhî (1952), i, 23.
⁵ “Or like him who passed by a town which had been laid in ruins; he said: How will God revive this after its death? And God made him die for a hundred years, and then raised him to life. He said: How long have you waited? He said: I have waited a day or a part of a day. He
picions and idées fixes are at times so powerful that—though no rational proof is present—themselves true is not in the least doubted”¹. In other words, in the tale related the unnamed man was not restored to life after a hundred years by a miracle, but the man, subject to a vehement suggestion, was under the impression that a hundred years had lapsed.

Once or twice symbolic meanings are taken from the text. A fine example of it is the exegesis of S. 95: 1-3 ² by Muḥ. Rahīm al-Dīn. He thinks ṭīn (fig) to stand for Mount Sinai or Mount Djūdi, where Noah after the Flood thanked his Lord; zaitūn (olive) would point at Zaita or Syria, where Jesus was active; the Mount Sinīn is identified with the Sinai of Moses, and the balad amin (safe region) is surely the ground of Mecca. Thus the passage would hint at “the four main places where religious and social reforms were started and carried through” ³. In S. 2: 244/243 ⁴), as is demonstrated by some of our commentators, one must not look for a historic account. Its words bear a metaphoric meaning and wish to express: Cautiousness is of no avail, fear does not offer protection and flight does not save life, for the divine dictum; “Die” indicates the inescapable fate of the faint-hearted. On the other hand God’s restoring to life gives us to understand that He may grant the timid a

said: Nay, you have waited a hundred years; then look at your food and drink, they are not spoiled, and look at your ass. And this is to make you a sign to men. And look at the bones, how We set them together, then clothe them with flesh. And when it became clear to him, he said: I know that God is mighty over all”.

¹ Q. iii, 17. See also Ābd al-Ḥakīm who thinks of a vision and a visionary death of a hundred years (“Abd al-Ḥ. 214 f.).

² “By the fig and by the olive; By Mount Sinīn; And by this safe region”.


⁴ “Have you not considered those who left their homes by thousands, for fear of death? Then God said to them: Die—after that He quickened them again”.
spirit of courage and firmness through which the enemy is defeated. Ṭanṭāwī Djawhari, always fond of romanticizing, finds the course of Muslim history reflected in S. 2: 256/255-262/260. He says: "Three wonderful developments of Tawḥīd (monotheism) emerge. It begins with the āya al-kursī... secondly, there is the debate between Abraham and Nimrod, and in the third place the narrative of Ezra and his ass, of Abraham and his birds. At first there is the glorification and doxology of God, the account of His majesty, beauty and wisdom. His marvellous works in heaven and earth; this goes best with the time at the outset and with the first (Muslim) generation... The second resembles the period when quarrels arose about Tawḥīd; opposing parties came into being, as there was Muʿtazilism, Sunnī and Shiʿa. And the third refers to the future of the glorious Nation, when studies shall be made of the wondrous creation, as Ezra was said to observe his ass, the form of its flesh, bones, bowels, kidneys, throat and other particularities of the animal and as Abraham was told to take cognizance of birds, and he anatomized them... This is the future of Islam, and by God, great philosophers and scientists will come to the fore among them (the Muslims), from other peoples they will inherit knowledge".

Incidentally a commentator may reveal himself as a moralist, associating the Koran-text with vices and abuses of his day. From Moses' sarcastic advice to the sulking Israelites in the desert: "Get down into Egypt, so you will have what you ask for" (S. 2: 58/61), Ṭanṭāwī al-Djawhari destils the lesson that luxury and refinement weaken a nation, while simplicity and nomadism strengthen it (see the success of the Huns who

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1 Cf. Q. ii, 87 f. and Maʿārif i, 174.
2 S. 2: 256/255, the renowned verse, containing Muslim belief in a nutshell.
3 al-Djawābil i, 234.
overnor of Rome, and of the Arabs who conquered Persia), and he subjoins the counsel not to make overmuch use of tobacco, wine, tea and cocoa, all disgraceful things of civilization 1. And in another place — when commenting S. 7: 29/31, “surely He does not love the extravagant” — the same author sets the pompous festivities of Yusuf, sultan of Maroc, on the occasion of the wedding of two of his children against the simplicity of the marriage-ceremony of the Belgian prince Leopold and the Swedish princess Astrid 2. From the first sura Ahmad al-Din deduces the moralities: “There are seven evils, causing man to err, to wit despondency, greed, avarice, indolence, self-conceit, superstitiousness and insurrection. In sura al-Hand (S. 1) one finds seven curing verses... If someone starts work with the recitation of bismi ’llahi ’l-rahnwmi ’l-rahimi 3, can he then be depressed by despondency? If he says: “Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds” 4, i.e. understands that in God all perfections are present, while settling everything, making provision for everything and granting everything from His repositories, can there then exist any reason for greed? etc. 5. Azad, being an advocate of a joint India for both Hindus and Muslims, looking for a plea to stop useless religious quarrels takes up the retort of Moses to the debate-inviting question of the Pharaoh concerning different cults of former generations, stating: “the knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a book” 6. The exegete ‘Abd al-Hasan, a former medical student, deems

1 id. i, 76 ff.
2 id. iv, 146. One meets more such-like ‘up to date’ applications! E.g. Sayyid Qutb’s remark on S. 4: 85; “Surely, the weapon of spreading rumours is not a novelty of our days, and the ‘cold war’ not an invention of these days” (Q. v, 49).
3 “In the name of God, the compassionate and merciful” (verse 1).
4 The second verse of S. 1.
5 Bayan 6 f.
6 Tardjumân ii, 462 ff. According to Azad Moses wishes to denote here: That is not a matter of discussion.
concern for hygiene and sanitation an inference implied in the words: "Plunge not yourselves into perdition with your own hands" (S. 2: 191/195). Muḥ. ʿAbduh does not want to decide whether ṣār in S. 103: 1 ought to be taken as standing for ‘time’ or for ‘afternoon’. But if it has the first sense, it contains a divine criticism of people who always complain of ‘the times’, and credit all the good things to the past.

Further, attention might also be called to some ingenious elucidations of intriguing scenes from the lives of the Aṣḥāb al-Kahf and of Dhu ṣ-l-Qarnain, described in the eighteenth sūra. In a monograph on the Aṣḥāb al-Kahf Aḥmad Khān declares against the traditional explanation that the Christian youths, after being locked in a cave, sank into a miraculous sleep for centuries without dying: They really died, and "the true facts of the case are that their bodies, lying in a spot where no air could penetrate, mummified so that from a peep hole they seemed living bodies without any damage. Therefore, people on seeing them thought... they were sleeping". Āzād comes to nearly congruent conclusions. In his view aygāz and ruqād in verse 17/18 do not mean waking and sleeping, but being alive and dead. Here it refers to Christian hermits who were absorbed in devotional acts to such an extent that death overtook them, while still in postures of worship. And their constantly swinging to and fro was caused by cross-ventilation in the cave

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1 Viz. by not joining the Holy War.
2 ʿAbd al-Ḥ. 172 ff.
3 Tafsir Sūra al-Ṣār, 3 rd ed. (1926), 7 f.
4 The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. A.K. suggests they might have been followers of Paul of Samosata, the contemporary Patriarch of Antioch (260-272) whose Christology was of the Adoptionist type (insistence on the genuine humanity of Jesus) (Tāρqīm fi Qīṣṣa Aṣḥāb al-Kahf waʾl-Raqīm 10 ff.)
5 Tāρqīm 18.
6 "And you would have judged them aygāz, while they were ruqād and We turned them about to the right and to the left".
which was open from both sides. Owing to the fresh breeze the corpses were not yet in a state of decomposition. For all that it must have been a weird scene, so that "if you peeped (into the cave) at them, you would turn back from them in flight, being filled with awe of them" (verse 17/18) 1.

When treating the Dhu ḫ-‘l-Qarnain-story, Āzād begins by setting forth that it follows from verse 82/83 2 that the hero’s epithet was familiar to the Jews, being an expression used by the questioners. Then, it must have been a righteous (see verse 86/87) and godly (see verses 87/88, 94/95 and 97 f./98 f.) sovereign. In other words, he cannot represent Alexander the Great 3: “That man was neither godly, nor righteous, nor generous towards subjected nations; moreover, he did not build a wall”. Further, the author points to the vision of Daniel 8 with the two-horned ram, and notes: “This vision held for the Israelites the happy annunciation of a new age of freedom and welfare coincident with the appearance of a two-horned (dhu ḫ-garnain!) king, that is to say: the king of Persia was on the point of making his successful attack on Babylon... Accordingly, Cyrus appeared a few years later! He united the Median and Persian empires... Since in that vision those empires are compared with two horns 4, one should not be surprised at finding among the Jews the Persian Emperor visualized with two horns... However, it is (taken by itself) a hypothesis only... But a discovery in 1838 5, of which

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1 Tardjuman iii, 396 ff.
2 “And they (the Jews) will ask you about Dhu ḫ-‘l-Qarnain”.
3 As is usually assumed.
4 Cf. Daniel 8: 20.
5 Viz. a stone statue of a figure with spread eagle wings and two horns of a ram on its head, found at the ruins of Passargadae. Āzād refers to Dieulafoy who indeed holds it to be a statue of Cyrus (see his L’art antique de la Perse (1884), i, 34 f.) Cf. also C. Huart et L. Delaporte, L’Iran Antique (1952), 302.
the results have come to the public much later, supplies this hypothesis with a firm basis; thus ultimately it became certain that Cyrus had the epithet Dhu 'l-Qarnain’¹. The campaigns of Dhu 'l-Qarnain to “the setting of the sun” (verse 84/86) and “the rising of the sun” (verse 89/90) Āzād interprets as expeditions made “in western and eastern direction”, referring to Zach. 8: 7, “See, I deliver my people from the land of the rising and from that of the setting of the sun”². Verse 84/86 would touch upon Cyrus’ campaign to the West, his conquest of Asia Minor and his defeating Croesus, king of the Lydians. In the neighbourhood of Sardes he reached the Aegean Sea and ashore met with miry water³. Verse 89/90 would relate to eastern nomad tribes of the Bactrians and the Sacae who, according to Ctesias and Herodotus, were overpowered next by the armies of Cyrus. Verse 92/93 would bear upon a northern campaign, during which a mountainpass in the Caucasus was gained. The people who complained of the Mongolian tribes Yāджudj and Māджudj were either Caucasians or the inhabitants of Kulja⁴. The wall, mentioned in verse 93/94, is that of the Darial Pass, to be found between Vladi Kavkaz and Tiflis⁵.

We want to close this chapter with some instances of expositions which bear a remarkable resemblance to results of Western scholarship, nevertheless attained independently of each other.

As motive of the interdiction to employ the apparently ambiguous term rā‘inā ("look at us" in S. 2: 98/104), ‘Abd al-Ḥakim advances the supposition that it might have been

¹ *Tārdjumān* ii, 399 ff.
² It is translated by E. Sellin as "aus dem Ostlande und aus dem Westlande" (*Das Zwölfprophetenbuch*, 1930, ii, 530).
³ In the original: “he found it (the sun) to set in a miry spring”.
⁴ One of the circuits of the Chinese province of Sinkiang.
⁵ *Tārdjumān* ii, 405 ff.
given a mocking and denigrating signification by changing its pronunciation into rāʾiḥā, meaning "our shepherd" ¹.

In his treatise on Dhu ʿl-Qarnain, Aḥmad Khān concludes: “It is beyond doubt that the wall, recorded in the Koran ², is the same ringwall which was built around China and was thrown up by the Chinese Emperor Chi Wang Ti in 240-235 B.C.”³

Parwez compares Mohammed’s way of acting in Mecca and Medina with the activities of an architect. When constructing a building, he is engaged in it from the first blueprint plan until the last stroke of the masons’ adze. No division is to be made in it! One cannot assert that the architect finishes a building only by means of some ideas or a few draughts ⁴.

The cherished view of the modernists that Islam is the universal religion from the beginning of the world ⁵ agrees approximately with G. Widengren’s inference from Koranic thought: “... conceivably all the Apostles were sent out with the heavenly message written in al-kitāb. The congregations founded by the Apostles are said to be all al-kitāb, the people (in possession)

¹ Compare D. Künstlinger in BOAS v, 877 ff. who observes that according to the views of the Arabs it is almost a blasphemy to describe God as a shepherd. Cf. also the plausible assumption of Sayyid Qūṭb who considers it a part of a process of increasing differentiation (ikhtifāʾ) from the Jews, finding its close in the alteration of the qibla (Q. i, 69)
² S. 18: 92/93.
³ Izāla al-Ghain ‘an Dhi ʿl-Qarnain 13. Compare M.J. de Goeje in De Muur van Gog en Magog (1888) arguing that the legend of S. 18: 82 ff. must have originated from the foundation of the great wall of Northern China (p. 11).
⁴ Maʿārif iv, 339. Cf. H.A.R. Gibb’s thesis that Mohammed’s proceeding in Medina is to be regarded as a logical continuation of, and not as tack-changing from, his activities in Mecca (Muhammadanism, 1949, 27).
⁵ E.g. Aḥmad Khān: “Islam is the light of God Himself... That very light of Islam shone in Adam’s breast, that very light of Islam enlightened the hearts of Noah, Seth, Jacob, Abraham, Moses, St. John the Baptist, Jesus and all the prophets” (Lectures kā Madjmūʿa, comp. by Muḥ. Sirādj al-Dīn, 1890, 225).
of the (Heavenly) Book... It goes without saying that the Apostle of God, Muḥammad, received this Heavenly Book, which is identical with the Book handed over to earlier Apostles" ¹.

Then we read in a Muslim commentary: "... a clinching proof that Shu‘aib and Ḥūbāb were different persons ² is the communication after the record of Shu‘aib’s people’s destruction: “Then We raised after them Moses with our signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs” (S. 7: 101/103); i.e. after this people of Shu‘aib We sent Moses... therefor, how can we fancy that Shu‘aib and Ḥūbāb, the father-in-law of Moses, could have been one and the same person?” ³.

After the quotation of 22 Koranic passages in which the ṣalāt is mentioned or implied, Ahmad al-Dīn concludes i.a.: "In the verses... three times of prayer are indicated. One prayer by night and two by day... The point is that no difference exists between the prayers of the first verse (S. 11: 116/114) and of the second one (S. 17: 80/78)" ⁴.

The supposition of some modernists that the annulment of āyāt, stated in S. 2: 100/106, bears upon the message of former prophets (see p. 50), meets with von Grünebaum’s approval: "... the abrogation of individual (Koran) verses has to be seen in parallel with the abrogation of revealed codes by later prophets" ⁵.

In Maʿārif iv, 736 f. Parwez expresses the surmise that in

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¹ Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, and his Ascension (1955), 116 f.
² Classical commentators like to identify them!
³ Mīrzā Bashīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad, Taṣfir al-Qurʾān (1934?) iii, 236. Compare F. Buhl in EI iv, 418: "but there is no foundation for this in the Kurʾān".
⁴ Bayān 69 ff. and 110. Cf. A. J. Wensinck who follows M. Th. Houtsma in setting forth: “With this sūra xvii, 80 agrees, ... We thus arrive at three daily ʿalāts in Muhammad’s life-time.” (EI iv, 104).
⁵ G. E. von Grünebaum, Islam (1955), 86.
S. 17:1 Mohammed’s nocturnal *bidjra* (his shift from Mecca to Medina) is hinted at, and that the *masjid aqṣā* is to be taken for the mosque the Prophet founded in Medina 1.

The striking parallel of Mohammed’s situation with that related of Noah, is pointed out in *al-Fann* 235 f., and on p. 239 the writer arrives at the conclusion: “We think that above all this (i.e. the vicissitudes of Noah’s life) has been the story which found an echo in the Prophet’s heart... and relieved his mind in some degree” 2. And concurrent with the gist of the same work of Khalaf Allāh 3, W. Montgomery Watt is of the opinion that: “... on the assumption of Muhammad’s sincerity, the Qur’ān is not the product of his consciousness, it is preferable to consider it in its relation to the minds of those to whom it was addressed and for whom it was adapted, that is, Muhammad, the early Muslims and the other Meccans” 4.

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1 Muḥ. Abū Zaid who also identifies *al-masjid al-aqṣā* as the mosque of Medina, finds the term *irār* in S. 17:1 to be applicable as well to the nocturnal emigration of other prophets oppressed by their country-men like Moses (see S. 20:79/77) and Lot (see S. 11:83/81) (*al-Hidāya* 219). Compare A. Guillaume who does not want to place the ‘further mosque’ in Jerusalem, but finds it, on the authority of al-Wāqidī and al-Arzāqī, in al-Djiʿrāna, ten miles from Mecca (*al-Andalus* xviii, 1953, 2, 323 ff.).


3 Cf. also p. 41.

4 *Muhammad at Mecca* (1953), 83.
III. CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES
OF THE KORAN

In the classical period of Islam the ‘idżāż (unparalleled uniqueness) of the Koran is recognized in its wonderful composition and high degree of eloquence. Besides this, in particular the Mu‘tazilites like to stress the information the Koran conveys of the hidden future and of details of the past which were unknown to the historians, as constituting ‘idżāż.

The modernists, however, cannot summon up much enthusiasm for these qualities attributed to the Holy Book. Thus its unequalled superiority of idiom and style is contested with an internal argument, derived from S. 28: 49, “Say: Bring then a Book from God which shall be a better guide than both (Koran and Tora)”. “Were”, asks al-Mashriqi, “the so finely polished literary Arabic of the Koran determining for its excellency, how could that apply to the Tora which is not written in this language?” And by our commentators not the heavenly speech but the divine guidance it grants is looked upon as the most specific feature of the Koran. “Its chief object is the perfection of man’s dignity”. Consequently, continuous appeals to the hearts of the believers are found in it, that an organization

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1 There are exceptions. Muḥ. Čamīl Ħusain who is certainly not to be suspected of conservatism, emphasizes in a disquisition of Koranic traits of unsurpassability the point that Islam’s ready acceptance by the Beduins should be regarded as the immediate consequence of their bearing the recital of revelatory texts. “And it is a most extraordinary thing that these illiterate Arabs were disposed to offer their lives, goods and profits for nothing but their belief in a Holy Book” (Mutanawwi‘āt 4)

2 Tadbirra iii, 91.

3 See e.g. Muḥ. Shiblī Nu‘mānī, Maqālāt Shiblī (1930), 35 f.

4 Ma‘ārif ii, 5.

Baljon, Koran Interpretation
of society should be established. Thus "the Koran is a Book of Preaching and Social Order"\(^1\).

And in pursuance of the fact that the attention of the community has to be fixed on its injunctions and social order — and not, for instance, on the history of its revelation — no specified date of its coming down in the ‘night of qadr’ is given; the month only is recorded (see S. 2: 181/185)\(^2\). Similarly other historical details too seem to be considered not relevant, for instead of giving reports the Koran makes use of stage-setting when dealing with history.\(^3\). In this connection Khalaf Allāh sets forth that to dramaturgists history sometimes offers a very suitable frame for the transmission of ideas. Some stories are particularly favoured topics, like that of Cleopatra, utilized by Shakespeare as well as by Shaw\(^4\).

Then, the author draws attention to tales of the Koran which, on account of occurring more than once, are especially apt to show how those stories are stylized after kerugmatic ends. For it appears that the context and situation of one and the same episode varies when repeated\(^5\). To give an example of the way in which this is done, two different versions of the Lot-legend are quoted, to wit S. 15: 61-75 and S. 11: 79/77-84/83. The account, as related in S. 11, is logically arranged: Lot holds a conversation with the people before he understands that his guests are messengers from his Lord. In S. 15 apparently no historical sequence of the events is presented, since it is told that the conversation of Lot with the people follows after

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\(^1\) Q. i, 28.

\(^2\) Muḥ. Dja‘far Shāh Phulwārawī in Thaqāfat Labore, June 1958, 45.

\(^3\) Q. vii, 51 f.

\(^4\) al-Fann 57.

\(^5\) Compare with an analogous observation of Aḥmad Khān in a treatise on the principles of Koran interpretation: "... when we talk (about a thing), on various occasions we need to repeat an earlier statement to suit the demands of a new situation" (Tr. by Muḥ. Dāʿūd Rahbar, MW, 1956, 324).
the notification of the angelic rank of the visitors. This is not logical, for in that case Lot need not have been afraid of being importuned by the people and there would have been no need of ‘offering’ his daughters. The disparity of both records, Khalaf Allāh explains, can be reduced to a difference in function and aim. In S. 11 the encouragement of the Prophet is the point at issue \(^1\), and on that account the Koran is keen on mentioning here the injustice Lot had to suffer as well as his attitude of mind. In S. 15 the object is to make clear what sorts of calamities the unbelievers had to expect; hence in this passage the thing that matters is that the angels shall begin by making themselves known in order to be qualified to announce the disasters that were to be anticipated for the outrages committed. And this again links up with the situation of Mohammed, for at the end of S. 15 one reads: “And say: I am a plainspeaking warner... But, by our Lord, we will question them, one and all, concerning that which they have done” (verses 89 and 92 f.) \(^2\).

Another method of preaching, frequently applied by the Koran, and brought to notice by the Egyptian writer, is the actualization of the past through which the hearts \(^3\) of the listeners are expected to be touched and turned to conversion. (Here Parwez speaks of the inductive way of historic thinking in the Koran. Not the historiography but the lessons of history, the ‘Days of Allāh’, is the point at issue\(^4\).) Thus in S. 2: 46/49

\(^1\) See the verses 15/12 and 121/120 (“And all We relate to you of the accounts of the messengers is to strengthen your heart therewith”).

\(^2\) *al-Fann* 37 ff. and 142 ff.

\(^3\) Also Muh. Kāmil Ḥusain stresses the point that revelatory scriptures appeal to man’s soul and conscience, not to his intellect and reason. Characteristic of human intelligence is to build up a well-ordered line of thought, whereas in man’s subconsciouness the perceptions lack a clear order (think of dreaming!). Analogously, since in those scriptures one does not generally meet with much coherent reasoning, they aim to penetrate into the depths of the soul (*Mutana\\u00e7\\u00e7i\\u00e7* 18).

\(^4\) *Ma\\u00e7rif* ii, 326.
the people of the Book are reminded of the mercy and bounty God granted them in the long-ago. It is done with tenses which shift the past to the very present, as if the event did not concern the forefathers, but the auditors. Also the opposite way can be taken: descriptions of the here-after, as in S. 14: 24/21-27/22, are not put in the future (as would be logical) but in the perfect in order to raise alarm among the contemporaries of the Prophet.¹

Then a means to focus attention on the guidance the Koran wishes to give, is to keep historical details vague, as e.g. in S. 2: 261/259, “Or like him who passed by a town...” In consequence of this, scene and time of action as well as characteristics of the figures appearing are blurred on behalf of the Koranic message.² In S. 54: 18-21 nothing is told of the families, the houses etc. of the Ādites, neither of the dispute between Hūd and his people. But haste is made with describing the chastisement which is clothed in figures of speech suited to rouse vivid emotions. Everything is subordinated to the preaching of doomsday and the narrative serves only as a marginal note and illustration of the warning³.

Furthermore, Khalaf Allāh vindicates a Koranic right of making avail of figurative writing. Not that the Lord Himself would be in want of romancing! It is, however, a concession to human needs. So besides historic tales we meet dramatized (tamthili) stories, like the narrative of S. 38: 20/21-24/25 in which is told how David is visited by two angelic (?) figures. It is wrong to historize the story by presuming that these were assassins who, detected, quickly devised a false account to allay suspicion ¹.

¹ al-Fann 151 ff.
² id. 33. The Manār-commentary which also likes to underline this point, argues that it makes a typical difference with the Biblical presentation. Thus the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible is reproduced as history, because the scene of action is exactly described (i, 279 and 399).
³ al-Fann 138.
⁴ id. 177.
The Egyptian scholar even goes one better, declaring that the Koran does not want to deny that it contains legends⁴; it merely wishes to deny these legends to be a proof of its being composed by Mohammed instead of God. See S. 25: 5/4 ff., “And the infidels say: This (Koran) is a mere fraud of his own devising... Tales of the ancients that he has put in writing... Say: He has sent it down who knows the secret in the heavens and the earth”². Likewise the Koran does not fight shy of having recourse to the fable. See S. 27 in which the ant and ḫudḥud bird are personified, as is done in ‘Kalīla and Dimna’³.

A distinctly recognizable development of themes, ideas and notions in the Koranic narratives is another consequence of the circumstance that they are revealed for the sake of the message of Islam⁴. The first object, in the beginning of Koranic revelation, was to shock the polytheists. The tales in S. 54 and 51 belong to this phase. When some time later on the struggle becomes fiercer, the element of dispute appears in the stories. It is also the period that the main themes of the Islamic message are broached: Resurrection and God’s Unity. Instance of this are met with in S. 25 and 7: 63/65-77/79. After it follows the phase that the Prophet is bowed down by the enmity he encounters. Then revelations for his relief come down. See S. 11, 20, 28, 21 and 12⁵.

¹ Also Muḥ. Iqbal frankly speaks of “the Quranic legend of the Fall” (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Lahore ed., 1954, 85).
² ʿAl-Fann 200 ff.
³ ʿid. 298 f.
⁴ Khalaf Allāh rejects the view-point of Orientalists who reduce varieties of themes etc. to an individual spiritual progress of Mohammed. There is in the Koran, he claims, no unity of characters; there is only one of aim and warning. It becomes apparent, if one tries to combine the stories about one person, e.g. about Abraham. Soon the thread of them is lost. One should not take them as fragments, but as independent narratives, each of them with a specific aim (ʿAl-Fann 221 ff.).
⁵ ʿAl-Fann 346 ff.
And not only do Koranic tales appear to be configurated after the conditions and purpose of the message at the moment of delivery, but also occasionally a detail of a story concerning a former prophet reflects a certain event befallen to the Arabian messenger. An instance of this is the caution which Moses receives in S. 28: 19/20, "The chiefs are consulting together to kill you". According to our author there is no question but that at that time Mohammed himself was acquainted with a conspiracy to slay him.

Not only the narratives but also certain Koranic injunctions should be viewed and evaluated with reference to circumstances obtaining at the moment of their being spoken. In connection with S. 9: 60 Bashir Ahmad Dār observes: "In the Koran new Muslims also shared in the distribution of alms. But in the time of 'Umar such was no longer the case. This is an indication of the fact that at the time of revelation of this verse it was necessary on account of the weak position of Islam... But when by God’s mercy Islam was well established, there was no longer any need of it". The author here mentions the case only as a curious specimen of a Koranic rule which lost its meaning in later times. There is no more to it than that. But for Āṣaf ‘Alī Asghar Faiḍī it constitutes a principle of major importance, and he explains: "Regarding the ordinances occurring in the Koran or Shari‘a, we must decide whether they are legal regulations or moral directions. If they are legal regulations, they are valid for a given space of time; if they are moral regulations, their validity is not time-bound... And when someone says that any injunction (in the Koran) requires strict obedience, I declare most respectfully: I cannot agree with this statement. Laws may change. Religion is of a longer

1 al-Fann 365 f.
2 Thaqāfat Labore, Jan. 1958, 29.
duration than law”¹. Thus out-of-date are in his opinion i.e. the *talāq* (divorce) — institution and the rule, embodied in S. 4: 38/34, “Men are superior to women on account of the qualities God has granted the one above the other”: according to modern standards a wife is no more a toy but a mate of her husband!².

Halide Edib Adivaz draws a practical, yet radical, conclusion from this view-point of Aṣaf A. A. Faiḍi, when she sets forth that “because some parts of the Koran were meant for the people who lived some thirteen centuries ago, and some parts were meant for all human beings and for all time”, one ought not to look for “a reform or a reinterpretation but a Selection of those values from the Koran”³. This proposal has far-reaching implications, and we do not expect it to be realized in the near future. The majority of modernists as yet will consider such a selection derogatory in a great measure to the eminence and perfection of the Holy Book.

The time-bound character of the Koran is most clearly seen, however, when one detects in it various antiquated conceptions and ideas. Referring to the dispute of Abraham with the idolaters (S. 6: 80 ff.) Ṭanṭāwī Djawhari states that in primitive religions, like that of the Sabians, the number seven plays a prominent part, and that this was still the case at the time of Islam’s arrival: “... the Koran was revealed in the location current amongst the nations of the epoch; thus we read: God it is Who created seven heavens and as many earths⁴, and it is known that according to the ancients there were seven climates; the Koran came in the last days of antique knowledge,

¹ *Thaqāfa al-Hind* (New Delhi), Oct. 1959, 104.
² *Thaqāfa al-Hind* (New Delhi), Oct. 1959, 106.
³ Stated in a letter to Shaikh Muḥ. Ashraf, published in *The Islamic Literature* (Lahore), March 1953.
⁴ S. 65: 12.
and with that it joined” 1. In a similar strain Ḥmād Khān expresses himself in an essay on Koranic oaths. He says i.a.: “People might wonder why so often in the Koran God swears an oath. Such an objection, however, arises, because they do not make a study of Koranic idiom. Firstly, one should recognize that, even though the Koran is undoubtedly the Word of God, it is revealed in the language and locution of man, and its way of expression is exactly the same as that of a well-spoken Arab whose eloquence is unparalleled. Just like human speech, the Word of God uses metaphors, tropes, figures and offers facts. That goes so far that even loan-words are found in the Koran... e.g. the word surādīq is not Arabic but the arabized Persian term sarāparda... In other words, the Koran is revealed in the Arabic idiom of its time... In those days it was a habit with the kāhins (shamans) — who were regarded as saints — to employ eloquent speech, rhyming prose as well as oaths. And the things they considered as a kind of kabāna, i.e. a communication from the mysterious world, and about which they wanted to give certainty to others, they explained with oaths... In the same way in the Koran things about which one ought to have certainty, are explained with oaths; and it is for that reason that the Arabs thought the Prophet to be a kāhin” 2. Ḥmād al-Dīn holds it to be one of the benefits of the ĥurūf muqta‘āt (enigmatic letters before certain sūra’s) that they must have had a magic sound for the superstitious Meccans. “When these people heard ĥurūf muqta‘āt as ʿṣqa, ḥīm, ḥāīm they strained their ears in amazement... In consequence they started to pay attention and to listen” 3. Khalaf Allāh remarks

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1 *al-Djawābir* iv, 61. Regarding the tale of Šāliḥ and the she-camel (S. 7: 71/73) Āzād observes that it was an old custom, also known from Babel and India, to let animals loose for Heaven’s sake (*Tārdjmān* ii, 18).

2 *Akbīr Maḏāmin* (1898), 44 f.

3 *Bayān* 46.
that the dominant factor of the Arab environment also becomes evident from the datum that in the Koran women (e.g. Eve) are mostly not mentioned by name. Arab custom of the time required that a wife should follow her husband. And in the case of Eve the impression should not be created that she played the leading part in the seduction. It was her part to follow Adam in everything 1. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Maghribī urges the necessity of a profound knowlege about the circumstances, customs and speech of the Arabs at the time of Revelation in view of the figure 'sparks like a qasr' (castle) (see S. 77: 32). If uninformed, one does not understand the simile and might ask mockingly: What sort of a fire must that be if already a spark is equalled to a castle? The point is that the Arabs in those days applied the qualification 'qasr' to every kind of building, even though it had merely the size of a tent 2. Muḥ. Kāmil Ḥusain calls attention to the peculiar desert atmosphere, conveyed by Koranic figures of speech. So he points at the admonition to proclaim Allāh akbar ('God is greater') (cf. S. 74: 3 and 17: 111). A Westerner being told of this expression wishes right away to make further inquiries, and asks: "Yes, but greater than who or what?" The Beduins, however, living in the wideness of the desert, do not require a fuller explanation of the phrase, since they find no scenic distinction in land lying beyond or below the horizon. This is an impossibility for people in mountainous regions, who realize that behind every top all kinds of unexpected surprises may be found 3. Next, this author shows how the desert is full of winding paths. But travellers in the desert keep a fixed eye on the goal to be attained and they know how to find their way, tortuous though it may be. "In a like manner for the Koran the end to be attained is the

1 al-Fawā’id 317.
2 Tafsīr Djuz Tabāraka (1948), 291 ff.
3 al-Mutanawwi`āt 9 ff.
praise of God... However numerous the expressions and however divergent the meanings applied by it may be, the direction remains always the same... And the difference between the Koran and a non-Arab logic is that which exists between the desert-road from al-masjīd al-harām (Mecca) to al-masjīd al-aqṣā (Jerusalem) and modern autostrada”¹. The frequent repetitions in the Koran the author associates with the monotony of the desert landscape which has for the Beduins a charm of its own. And the well composed stories, like that of Joseph, which are also demonstrable, are compared with oases. They are like a resting-point, where one can recover from the harsh threats and stern preaching of foregoing pages ². Muḥ. Kāmil Ḥusain also comes to speak of the sadj’s, a figure of style often used in the Koran. It is prose built up of long and short pieces all ending in rhyme, and agrees exactly with the scene of a desert. “For he who tries to bring a long desert-journey to a happy conclusion feels obliged to cut the route in front of him in pieces of different length which are all closed off by similar marks”³.

We should be well aware that we must speak of a new insight among the modernists into the historical setting of Revelation. For in a restricted sense there was an interest in the historical background of the Koran from the beginning. It has always been a favourite occupation of the classical interpreters to find out what might have been the concrete situation of sundry revelations (the so-called asbāb al-nuzūl).

This sort of historic ‘research’, however, which recalls the rabbinic way of tackling Scripture-texts, finds little favour in the eyes of the modernists. To their mind the Koranic message is disrupted through it and outlines get lost. Certainly they do

¹ *al-Mutanawwiʿāt* 17 f.
² *al-Mutanawwiʿāt* 19 and 22.
³ *al-Mutanawwiʿāt* 20.
not deny that originally the Koran was revealed to Mohammed by bits and pieces and did not form a whole at once. "For the Prophet himself", as Aḥmad al-Dīn observes, "this state of affairs caused misunderstanding now and then. Therefore God said: Be not hasty in (reciting a part of) the Koran as long as its revelation to you is incomplete" ¹. But the point that really matters is to notice its remarkable continuity of thought. Consequently, it is attempted to show close connections in the sūra's, as well in their succession as in their constitutive parts. To give some examples: After having rejected the efforts of the commentators to connect S. 2: 109/115 with a certain event of Mohammed's life, Sayyid Quṭb declares: "We take it in its general meaning... and think that in the context a connection must be extant between the assurance that East and West belong to God and the pointing out of the tyrannical and perfidious manner in which people try to prevent God's name being adored in places of worship (verse 108/114).... The hearts wishing to put themselves in God's hand are informed that annoyance in places of worship does not prevent participation in divine mercy, and that everywhere on earth there is a place of worship" ². In S. 2: 239/238 the subject of prayer is broached. Before that, various matrimonial regulations are mentioned. For Āzād the connection is obvious: It is indicated that the only way of standing firm in the midst of the moral trials of marriage is prayer and true worship ³. Muh. Raḥīm al-Dīn constructs a continuous line of thought in S. 80 as follows: In vs. 1-10 instruction is given by the Prophet to two sorts of people, 1) men of standing (the Quraishites with whom he is conversing) and 2) the poor (the blind man who interrupted, desirous of knowledge); vs. 11-15/16 treats of the Koran, i.e. the instructor; vs. 16/17-22

¹ S. 20: 113/114. See Bayān 95.
² Q. i, 77.
³ Tardjumān i, 288 f.
gives instruction about human existence, vs. 24-32 about instruments and media which are at the disposal of man, who is taught; vs. 33-42 instruction ends with examination, i.e. the Last Judgment ¹. A close connection between sūra 9 and 10 is reasoned out by another writer in this way: Sūra 10 begins with pointing to what is related in the closing verses 129/128 f. of sūra 9: the significance of the Book (verse 1) and the Prophet (verse 2). So in this way sūra 10 rounds off the contents of sūra 9. While it appears from sūra 9 that some people doubted on account of their numerous sins whether God would accept their repentance, it is stated in sūra 10 that God’s mercy predominates ²).

A prophet does not pay heed to coherent reasoning and well-balanced systems. His words are directed to a special critical situation and they are poorly suited to the preparation of a dogmatics, an ethical manual or a civil code. Posterity is left with the problem of finding its way about in the recorded sayings of the holy man, which appear to be full of contradictions. As a result all kind of technics of harmonization are tried.

The Koran as a collection of revelatory dicta passed on and pronounced by Mohammed, does not make an exception to the rule. Former Muslim scholars, in the course of time regularly confronted with this vexed situation, found an easy solution: discrepancies in the Koran were smoothed away simply by declaring contradictory statements or injunctions to be out-of-date. For that they referred to S. 2: 100/106 ³, in which God Himself is said to annul foregoing revelations. Thus the theory of nāṣikb-mansūkh was framed, i.e. the rule that in the Koran verses are cancelled (mansūkh) by cancelling (nāṣikb) ones.

¹ Pāra 'Am 25 ff.
² Mīrzā Bashīr al-Dīn Māḥmūd Aḥmad, Tafsīr al-Qurān iii, 3 ff. p
³ “For whatsoever ʿāya We cancel or cause to forget We bring a better or the like”.
No agreement, however, has been gained regarding the number of verses to which the rule must be applied. Some speak of more than two hundred and fifty, others want to reduce it to five.

In general 1) the modernists again are not much pleased with this doctrine of their ancestors: “God’s words are too lofty to be abrogated by human opinion” 2. Indignantly Aḥmad Khān declares that in this way the Koran is made ‘a note-book of a poet’ 3.

In refutation of the naskh-principle it is first demonstrated that in various so-called mansūkh-cases there is no question of cancellation by other verses. As an example, Sayyid Quṭb takes S. 2: 173/178 which is considered to be abrogated by S. 5: 49/45. The author argues that in both verses different subjects are touched upon: the first verse bears upon personal retaliation, the second upon collective requital 4.

Then an effort is made to connect the abrogation, mentioned in S. 2: 100/106, with another object. Instead of relating it to Koranverses and their commandments, it is put together with: a) the succession of natural phenomena. “In this verse”, so ‘Abd al-Ḥakim explains, “God refers to the world-order in illustration of His omnipotence and He formulates the interrogation: If you behold the alternations of day and night, is for you therein not an indication of God’s omnipotence?” 5); or with

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1 There are exceptions: “Le Maître (Muḥ. ‘Abduh) admet... l’existence de versets abrogés et abrogeants dans le Coran... Mais, le principe une fois posé, Cheikh ‘Abdoh demande que l’on soit sobre dans son application” (J. Jomier, Le Commentaire Coranique du Manār 196).
2 Džairādīdpi in the Preface to Maṣārif i. Aḥmad al-Dīn notes down at S. 2: 2; “Of a perfect book not even one verse can be annulled” (Bayān 32).
3 Tafsīr al-Qurʿān (1880) i, 162.
4 Q. i, 33.
5 ‘Abd al-Ḥ. 134. This interpreter refers to S. 2: 159/164, 3: 187/190 and 6: 35 as parallel passages in which God’s omnipotence is pointed out and the word ʿayā is equally left indefinite.
b) the message of former prophets. So Aḥmad Khān draws the conclusion: “From this verse it becomes evident that the subject treated touches upon the shari‘a of foregoing prophets.” On the second passage quoted in support, S. 16: 103/101, Aḥmad Khān comments: “The point here is: who are the subject of qālī? The exegetes write: The disbelievers of Mecca. This, however, cannot be right, for the Meccan disbelievers were ignorant of the revelatory character of the āya that gets changed as well as of the āya that causes the change. But it is only the Jews and Christians who think Koranic instructions, contrary to those of the Bible, to be forged by the Prophet”.

Along with the application of nasīkh (abrogation) to something else, a concealed sense is detected in it: an evolutionary principle is found at its root. Thus Ṭanṭāwī Djawhari enunciates: “Know that al-mansākh and al-nāsīkh belong to the greatest secrets and finest divine rays shining over humanity; verily, both of them are a secret of progress... firstly God showed men how night and day ‘abrogate’ each other and makes it clear that the difference in (the appearance of) arable land is the outcome of the difference of seasons... and it is as if He spoke: O my worshippers... with big letters I have described how in

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1 S. 13: 38, “... And no messenger could bring an āya except by God’s permission. For every period there is a book”.

2 Similarly Muḥ. Tawfīq Ṣiḍqī elucidates S. 2: 100/106 with the help of S. 13: 38, but he comes to another result. The āya in S. 2: 100/106 would refer to the prophetic legitimation which, according to God’s will, would be no longer needed. If in former days the ‘miracles’ were an indispensable requisite of the prophet, at the time of Mohammed’s mission they were abolished. Then “humanity stepped from infancy to maturity” (Dīn Allāh fi Kutub Anbiyā’ih, 1912, 180 ff. and 200 ff.).

3 “And when We change one āya for another — God knows best what He sends down — they say (qālī): You are but a forgeter”.

4 Ākhirī Maḏāmin 24 ff. Shaikh ʿAbd al-Subhān assumes equally in respect of S. 2: 100/106 that “the controversy here is carried on with Jews... who rejected the Quranic revelation, because it supplanted the law of Torah” (The Isl. Lit., Oct. 1952, 26).
heaven and earth night and day, sowing-land and land under crop ‘cancel’ each other and give way to each other; next, I have instructed the nations on earth; then they began to ‘abolish’ old methods to make room for more modern methods” ¹.

A much discussed and disputed point is further the question of the mutashābihāt (ambiguous Koranverses), indicated in S. 3: 5/7 ². Usually, the classical commentators understand by them verses whose meaning is obscure because they are capable of various interpretations. Sometimes the ‘cancelled’ verses, being neither authoritative for belief nor for morals, are reckoned among them (see e.g. al-Ṭabari d. 922).

The modernist trend is by no means inclined to consider the Koran an obscure book, even less to assume that it might contain superfluous parts ³. At the most it may be acknowledged that verses dealing with subtle subject-matters such as the Essence of God, the Hereafter, might be classed among the ambiguous verses. But, so Āzād immediately adds: “These things are not anti-rational” ⁴; or, as ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm suggests: “It refers to matters which, if one has just set about the way of insight, might still be regarded mutashābih, whereas if more insight is gained, they no longer offer any difficulty” ⁵.

Mīrzā Bashir al-Din Maḥmūd Aḥmad draws a parallel between the distinction made in S. 11: 1 concerning fundamental and elucidating Koranic verses (kātābun nākimat āyātubu thumma

¹ al-Djawābī, i, 110 f. Cf. also Ma‘ārif iii, 641.
² “He it is who has sent down to you the Book, of which there are some verses that are of themselves perspicuous (mūhkamāt) — they are the basis of the Book — and others are ambiguous (mutashābihāt)”.
³ Seemingly, so al-Mashriqi admits, one comes upon contradictions and repetitions in the Koran. But they have the mere intention of serving as an incentive for man, lazy by nature, to take thought and to find out why there is actually no question of a real contradiction or a gratuitous repetition (Tādhkira ii, 38).
⁴ Tārdjumān i, 313.
⁵ ‘Abd al-Ḥ. 231.
fussilat) and the differentiation found in S. 3: 5/7 concerning muḥkamāt and mutashābibāt, and he thinks that in S. 3: 5/7 basic instruction is distinguished from explanatory information of the Koran.

Ṭanṭāwī Djawhari connects the question with a beloved principle of the modernists, to wit the assumed correlation between Revelation, the Word of God, and Nature, the Work of God. Both categories, he claims, are retraceable in the animal world. Al-muḥkam might be qualified as the numerous species occurring; and referring to all the disputes being carried on about Darwinian theories, one might define al-mutashābib as the question of their order and descent. So the analogy between Koran and the Book of Nature is manifest.

Like Zamakhsharī, some of the modernists allot to the mutashābibāt the merit of inciting to study, or to put it shortly in the words of Aḥmad al-Dīn: “The Koran-verses which relate to fact (haqīqat) are exact (muḥkam), and those which are the object of investigation (tahqīqāt) are not clear (mutashābib)”.

As an illustration of this rule Parwez takes the case of the man who was killed and had to be struck with part of a sacrificed cow (S. 2: 67/72 f.). The author is at loss what to think of this passage, and says “Surely it concerns a historic event and in the light of historic research a correct apprehension will be gained... The verses belong to the list of the mutashābibāt. History will turn up a following page; then these verses will be transferred to the list of the muḥkamāt.”

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1 Tafsīr al-Qurʾān iii, 141.
2 al-Djawābir ii, 43 ff.
3 See I. Goldziher, Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung 128.
4 Bayān 414. Cf. also al-Djawābir ii, 41.
5 Maṣārif iii, 355 f.
it a special duty of scientists to make *muhkamāt* of the *mutashābīhāt*. As a case in point he cites S. 36: 38, "And the sun runs on to a resting-place for it". Not until the Western scholar F. M. Herschel (1738-1822) had proved a spheric motion of the sun could this verse be added to the *muhkamāt*.

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1 *Tadhkira* ii, 47 ff. Cf. also *al-Djawābir* ii, 15. More plausible is the attractive theory developed by Muḥ. Dāʾūd Rahbar, making use of the idea of 'similarity' the term *mutashābīh* conveys. *Mutashābīhāt* are to be viewed as "verses of the Qurʾān which resemble other verses of the Qurʾān, but are confused by reason of their brevity of expression, and can be understood only by being referred to such similar verses as contain their purport more fully and clearly" (*God of Justice*, 1960, 208).
IV. THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

THE IDEA OF GOD

When Āzād in the letters, written during his imprisonment in fort Ahmadnagar, reveals his innermost thought on life, he confesses at a given moment to be not very pleased with the notion of a Personal God. Owing to this conception “at every turn a hood of one or another expression has to be put on the face (of the Godhead). Now it is a gloomy one, then an affable one, here it frightens, there it attracts, but never can the hood be taken off the face. Hence in the end one becomes tired of seeing only the outside” ¹. Apart from the manifestly mystic trend emerging from this feeling of discomfort in regard to a personalistic conception of God, it is an utterance symptomatic for modernist leanings to a depersonalized Deity, a ‘Natura naturans’. Such writers do not shrink from defining Allāh as ‘The Real’ ², ‘Absolute Reality’ ³, ‘The Ideal’ (naṣḥ al-cā‘īn) ⁴ or ‘Ultimate Reality’, qualified as “pure duration in which thought, life and purpose interpenetrate to form an organic unity” ⁵.

The gist of modernity’s idea of God is this: God reveals Himself in cosmos ⁶ and man. The laws of Nature — the ‘Work of God’ — are the divine words recorded in the Book of Nature. The laws of God for man — the ‘Word of God’ — are the divine words embodied in the Koran. Work and Word

¹ Ghubār Khāṭir 154.  
² Ghulam Sarwar, Philosophy of the Qur‘ān (1938), passim.  
³ Salim 376.  
⁶ In the terminology of Muḥ. Iqbal: “Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self” (Reconstruction 56).
of God correspond with each other, or to put it in al-Mashriqi’s formulation: ‘there is no doubt that the regulations of that Book (Koran) stemmed from the instruction of God’s Book, i.e. the Book of Nature. And there is no doubt that its regulations confirm what takes place in nature’ 1.

Seemingly, the not altogether harmless implications of such a Naturalism for religiosity itself have not eluded the attention of Parwez, though he himself operates occasionally with the terms ‘The Real’ and ‘Absolute Reality’. For he sets forth that the laws of Nature are subordinated to the will of God, and that the inherent qualities of substances, being caused by the divine will, should not be considered as gifts of Nature. “Water quenches thirst, but this is not a natural effect of water. The special quality of satisfying the longing for moisture is put in it through the laws of Gods will” 2.

Very frequently the doctrine of the analogia entis is brought to the fore. S. 30: 29/30 3 is the basic passage quoted in support of the favourite theme that man’s nature is to be regarded as an offshoot of God’s nature, as well as the theorem subjoined that Islam is the very religion chiming in with human nature. al-Mashriqi produces the following address of the Creator to man: “Be aware that I am God; you should be God’s counterpart (maghar), an incarnation in little of the divine attributes; hear and see, like I do (‘so We have made him hearing, seeing’ 4) My spirit I breathe into you (“and I breathed into him of My spirit” 5). This is so because I want you to be what I am... powerful and mighty; I want you to be possessed of power and dominion... I am the great Creator; similarly I expect

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1 al-Tadbîra i, 84.
2 Ma’ârif ii, 148.
3 “Then lift up your face towards religion, as a Godfearing man, according to the natural ability God created in men”.
4 S. 76: 2.
5 S. 15: 29 and 38: 72.
from you great creations and inventions”. According to Muḥ. Raḥīm al-Dīn the divine attributes, mentioned in S. 112, are to be reflected in the believer as follows:

“In view of God’s Tawḥīd the Muslims are required to build on one foundation; in view of God’s Samadīyyat they are required to be independent of others in every sphere of life; in view of God’s Wūdūjūd Muḥlāq they are required not to give themselves up to worldly concerns; in view of God’s ‘Uluwīyyat they are required to stake everything, trying for the highest degrees (of perfection)”.

Analogously, the Godhead grants a considerable part of His guidance through the medium of human nature. And on account of S. 10: 36/35 Āzād observes: “Since in this verse both the notions of bidāyat (guidance) and haqq occur, the commentators think that by bidāyat the ‘guidance of Revelation’ and by haqq the ‘religion of Truth’ is meant... (but) it is clear that the persons addressed represent pagans who absolutely denied the religion of Revelation and also its demonstration. In other words, supposing that by bidāyat the guidance of Revelation were meant, then what sort of conclusive force could it have?... (The point, however, is this that) here a matter of faith is dealt with, towards which those addressed did not and could not stand negatively... (Therefore) by bidāyat the guidance, not of Revelation, but of intuition, senses and reason is intended, and by haqq not the religion of Truth, but literally

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1 Tadhkira ii, 79.
2 I.e. to keep unity. Cf. also Maʿārif i, 53.
3 Pārā Ḥam 201 f. Mīrzā Bāshīr al-Dīn Māḥmūd Ahmad translates S. 51: 56 (“I have not created djinn and men, but that they should worship Me”) as follows: “I have not created men, either great or small, but that they should develop in themselves My attributes” (Abmadiyyat or the True Islam, 1924, 241).
4 “Say: Is there any of your associates who guides (yahdī) to the truth (al-haqq)? Say: God guides to the truth”.

the true and right course is meant. Again and again the Koran ¹ explains the truth that, just as Divine Government assigns creatures a living in accordance with their needs, it provides them equally with the natural means for being guided on the path of life” ².

On this topic of the *analogia entis* Parwez again appears to hold a dissenting opinion. It is incomprehensible to him how exegetes may derive from S. 30: 29/30 the doctrine that human nature is an offshoot of God’s nature. How is this to be reconciled with all the human failings, put on record by the Koran: man is quarrelsome (S. 18: 52/54; 36: 77), unjust and ignorant (S. 33: 72), impatient (S. 70: 20), ungrateful (S. 80: 16/17) etc. The fact is that our idea of nature does not cover the Koranic concept of *jitra*. That is a derivative of the verb *fatara*, ‘to rend, cleave something’; with as second meaning ‘to originate, create’, i.e. by cleaving, something new comes out of that which is cleaved. Hence *jitra* does not signify the ‘nature of God’ but the ‘creative rule of action’, according to which God created the world and man. According to this creative rule of action, potentialities which have to be developed are placed in all things of the world. Thus man has latent faculties. Purpose of human life is the full development of those faculties. In man, however, are faculties of integration as well as of disintegration (see S. 91: 8 ³ where man’s possibilities both of integration and disintegration are pointed out ⁴).

The other, often repeated, conculsion from S. 30: 29/30 concerning man’s being Muslim by nature, is implicitly denied by al-‘Aqqād. He asserts that religion ought by no means to be

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¹ Further reference is made to S. 20: 52/50 and 87: 2 ff.
² *Tardjumān* ii, 179 f. See also ii, 287 where it is argued that the guidance, described in S. 14: 15/12, relates to the general (and not special) grace of Divine Providence.
³ “And breathed into it (the soul) its refractoriness and its piety”.
⁴ *Salim* 288 ff.
held a biological necessity. "For, as a biological being man is attached to life. But as a religious being he is attached to the essence of life". To Khalaf Allāh's mind one is only allowed to infer from this text that man is religious by nature, without any further qualification about a specific religion. And man's innate religiosity, so he says, finds expression in a sense of awe man manifests with respect to his Ummelt (mawdjidāt).

Then, typical of modernist theology are the attempts aimed at the elimination of daemonic features from the conception of God. The makr (craft) of Allāh in S. 7: 97/99 is rendered as 'God's concealed decree' and in a note there is referred to catastrophes of nature which happen unexpectedly. For the sense of the divine name al-Djabbār (the Tyrant) use is made of the derivative djibāra — 'setting of a fracture of a leg', i.e. binding fast a broken leg between two laths. "Thus Djabbār is a name of the Being that ties up the whole universe under its authority so that, while all things are put in their proper place, nothing can be shifted, not even an inch. This tying up is only based upon wisdom and sound policy without the least taint of suppression or despotism".

In line with this blurring out of terrifying traits of the Godhead is the accentuation of affable aspects in Allāh. That He is to be looked upon as the Friend of man we find expounded in a curious excursus on S. 53: 9: "Among the Arabs the custom existed of uniting one's bows, if two men wished to conclude a league of amity, whereupon the bows, joined into one bow, shot one arrow. It was a symbol of two bodies with one soul... The relation of God and man is a relation of friendship (God is the highest friend). If man's will and activity are working in

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2 al-Fāmm 115 f.
3 Tarjumān ii, 24.
4 Maṣārif i, 236.
5 "And was at the distance of two bows, or even closer".
friendship with divine law, creative additions arise in the universe, beauty and harmony increase. So in man a balanced personality develops. This is the aim of Revelation” \(^1\). Much weight is attached to the divine attribute of grace. In answer to the question why in S. 1: 1 ‘gracious’ is defined with two different wordings (rahmān and rahīm), Āzād says: “Because the Koran wants to stamp rahmat (grace) on man’s memory as the most obvious and conspicuous attribute in the idea of God; nay, it wants to express that God is entirely rahmat” \(^2\). Among the aspects of divine grace this commentator reckons the diversity and variety man finds about him. It belongs to the peculiarities of human nature to become dejected and gloomy, if everything round it be uniform and dull. The extant diversity gives joy of living. Hence in S. 28: 73 alternation of day and night is held a token of mercy \(^3\). And his final conclusion is: “From beginning to end the Koran is nothing else than the message of divine rahmat” \(^4\). The romantic Tantāwī Djawhari likes to look for marks of grace in the open air, and argues that he who is attentive to the subtle nuances in the realm of nature—how everywhere signs of divine care are found—knows God to be merciful and full of commiseration” \(^5\).

**THE QUESTION OF FREEDOM OF THE WILL**

In the dynamic structure of modern life, as is easily understood, human will must left scope for action. Accordingly,

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\(^1\) Parwez in Salīm 248. The insider will easily recognize in these sentences echoes of Muḥ. Iqbal’s teachings. Compare e.g. with the latter’s statements: “he (man) alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker” and “The ‘unceasing reward’ of man consists in his gradual growth in self-possession” (Reconstruction, Lahore ed., 72 and 117).

\(^2\) Tārjumān i, 62.

\(^3\) Tārjumān i, 79 ff.

\(^4\) Tārjumān i, 101.

\(^5\) al-Djawābīr ii, 82.
by our interpreters every available sign of a choice or decision entrusted to man is hunted out from the Koran. That the Creator intended to endow man with a free will, follows from the interdiction to eat a certain fruit of the garden of Eden. "For, without the forbidden no will can be shaped" ¹. Man is set to battle with evil. This is plainly depicted by the kneeling down of the angels before Adam and the refusal of Iblis to join in (S. 15: 30 f.). All powers in the cosmos (= the angles!) man has at his disposal, with one exception (the devil), and that one he has still to get control of. He then becomes a true servant of God ².

Cited as loci which stress personal responsibility are i.a. S. 6: 164 ("No soul earns but for itself, and no bearer of burden has to bear the burden of another"), S. 74: 41/38 ("Every soul is held in pledge for what it earns"), S. 2: 286 ("... It — the soul — shall have to its credit that which has been credited to it, and to its debit that which has been debited to it") ³. And sayings of a determinist purport may receive a contrary sense. Thus it is stated about S. 2: 6/7: "... this act of setting a seal upon the hearts is attributed to God in a like manner as at evening-time we speak alternatively of 'God has put darkness' or of 'it's getting dark'. That which actually happens is the darkening caused by sunset. Likewise is the seal upon the hearts the logical result of man's actions" ⁴. S. 10: 99 ⁵ is rendered paraphrastically: "And (o Prophet), if your Lord had pleased, all the inhabitants on earth would have believed (and no distinction would have remained in the matter of faith and works! But you see that this is not the intention of God; it is His

¹ Q. i, 31.
² Târdjumân ii, 304.
³ ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād, al-Falsafa al-Qur’ānīyya 27.
⁴ Maʿārif i, 362.
⁵ "And if your Lord had pleased, all who are in the earth would have believed altogether; will you then force men to become believers?"
will that different characters and abilities shall come to light; therefore, if men do not believe) why would you force them?”

Thus the translator has managed to deduce from a determinist text the implication that it is up to man, and not to God whether he believes or not. The function left to God is that of a “co-ordinating Authority” who maintains the Universe by superintendence of His creatures and by curtailment of disproportionate forms of egocentric individualism.

**Reason and Revelation**

More or less in line with traditional thought of Islam, the relation of reason and revelation is not regarded as antipodal, but as complementary — we might say, in the strain of Thomas Aquinas’ famous *adagium*: “Grace does not repeal nature, but perfects it.”

Or, like Parwez formulates it: “Since man is something more than physical and empirical world, it is incumbent on him to get acquainted with life’s mystery... And this is not possible without light, gained from the outside, which surpasses reason. The field of that light coming from the outside is so large that it amply embraces the sphere of

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1 *Târîj-i-i, 170.
2 *Ma‘ârif i, 315. Not consistently, however, does the author stick to the claim of a free will for man. At times Parwez comes very close to the orthodox *kasb*-doctrine (i.e. the human acquirement of acts which have already been created by God). Thus with reference to S. 8:17 (“... and you did not shoot when you shot, but God did shoot”) he explains: “They were your arrows, but they were the decisions of divine will which were wrapped round your arrowheads as firm decrees” (*Ma‘ârif iv, 524*).
3 It is significant that on this issue the Dominican J. Jomier recognizes view-points of the modernists Muḥ. ‘Abdul Rashīd Riḍā corresponding with ‘la sclastique chrétienne’ (*Le Commentaire Coranique du Mouâb* 82).
4 I.e. the continuance of his soul (cf. *Ma‘ârif ii, 54*).
5 For a concurrent line of thought in liberal Protestant theology, see P. Tillich’s assertion: “Reason does not resist revelation. It asks for revelation, for revelation means the reintegration of reason” (*Systematic Theology, 1951, i, 94*).
reason” 1. “Reason has a fragmentary view of life. But a mind, enlightened by revelation 2, sees the reality of an undivided life. The prophet creates that new world of life’s self-revelation and the individuals, enlightened by light of revelation, partake in that reality” 3. Àzâd, following in the footsteps of Muḥ. ‘Abduh 4, distinguishes 5 four stages of guidance for man: 1) by instinct; 2) by the senses; 3) by reason; 4) by revelation and prophets. Each of the first three stages is in need of a higher one for check and correction. If, for instance, our senses tell us that the sun has the size of a golden dish, correction by the intellect is required. Thus revelation ‘perfects’ the guidance, offered by reason. And in a comment on S. 3: 2/3 f. 6 the same writer sets forth how God’s revelation, embodied by al-Kitâb (Koran), grants guidance leading to happiness; spade-work for it is done by al-Furqân (= man’s intellectual faculties), procuring insight into revelation. Or, as Parwez defines it: “Science gathers mere facts, but the object of revelation is not only gathering of data concerning reality, but also construction of human personality” 7. “It is revelation which draws up principles of social life, and it summons reason to look for means of their application” 8.

According to those elucidations, it is clear, human reason is an expedient, though essential, for revelation’s coming into

1 Maṣāʾirf ii, 190.
2 What is designated here as ‘revelation’, is called by Muḥ. Iqbal, the mystic, ‘love’ (‘isbâq). See his Gulshan Râz Djadid (1927), 229: “Reason deals with plurality, with parts while Love grasps the whole, the one”. Both these terms reach back to Bergson’s concept of Intuition.
3 Maṣāʾirf ii, 240. See also Maẓhar al-Din Şiddiqi: “Revelation is only Reason operating at a deeper level” (The Isl. Lit., Aug. 1953, 8).
4 Tafsîr al-Fâtîha 66 ff.
5 Târdjumân i, 174 ff.
6 Târdjumân i, 312.
7 Maṣāʾirf ii, 243.
8 Maṣāʾirf ii, 249.
operation, and consequently subservient to it. On the other hand, sometimes revelation seems to have to be content with a minor part, and in the next exposition it must yield priority to man’s nature: “The Koran calls revelation (or its bearers) *nadhir*. *Indbär* means ‘to caution, wake’... Therefore, the Koran styles itself *Tadhbira* (see S. 73: 19). *Tadhbír* means ‘to remind’ of something that was forgotten... Thus revelation is after all a mouthpiece of the soul’s most noble intentions and exhibits nature’s most pure impulses”\(^1\). And Aḥmad al-Dīn points out that, whereas at the outset man was simply guided by his own pure nature, he was not in need of revelation until his lapsing into error”\(^2\).

A special issue of the relationship reason-revelation is the question of the miracles recorded in the Koran. Here we may distinguish three tendencies among modern Muslim expositors: 1) all supernatural origin is denied to them; 2) the possible occurrence of wonders is not negated but their relevance to faith is reduced to a minimum; 3) tentative efforts are made to show their ground for existence, even over against the spirit of modern times.

*Ad* 1) One of Aḥmad Khān’s most beloved themes is to set forth that nothing in the Koran contradicts the laws of Nature (see above p. 55). Consequently, the Koranic contents are to be demythologized. Of the way, in which the modernists manage to perform this, we may offer as example the historization of the legend narrated in S. 34: 13/14\(^3\) by Aḥmad Khān’s disciple Chirāgh ‘Alī. The interpreter states that here a mummification of Solomon is alluded to (compare Gen. 50: 2, 3,

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\(^1\) *Ma‘arif* ii, 253.

\(^2\) *Bayān* 172.

\(^3\) “When We decreed death for him (Solomon), nothing showed them that he was dead but a reptile of the earth that ate away his staff. And when he fell down, the *djinn* perceived that if they had known the unseen, they had not continued in the shameful torment”.
26, the embalmment of Jacob and Joseph). Next, with a reference to 1 Kings 11:14, 23 f., one is reminded of the fact that at the end of Solomon's reign many wars were raging which caused discontent among the people, because of obstruction of trade. A great revolt was the outcome. Then it has struck historians, the author continues, that no mention is made of a magnificent funeral of the great king. This, however, is comprehensible when having regard to circumstances: it was expedient not to divulge the news of his death; it would merely incite to further revolt. Hence it was wise of the authorities to embalm his corpse and to put it up in a place where many could watch him standing erect, leaning on a staff. Accidentally, however, a worm began to gnaw at it, and when it was gnawed through the corpse fell over through its weight. Thus his death became known and the forced labourers of the *djinn*-nation (Tyrus and Sidon) declared: "It is a pity. Had we known the unseen, we had not lived at high pressure" ¹. The underlying idea of such-like expositions 'Abd al-Ḥakīm defines, when he declares: "Wonders are matters shown by prophets and saints at special times and occasions in a special way through a special favour of God, (but occur) according to fixed laws which, however, their contemporaries could not yet detect with the empiric methods at their disposal... It is a wide-spread mistake to call them 'violations of the usual course of Nature' (*kharg al-‘ādā*) and to consider them as contrary to the divine laws of Nature" ².

*Ad 2)* The following reasonings are in point here: "And the position of Koran is this that it does not deny the existence

¹ *Tabdhib al-Akhlāq* iii, 202 ff. A noteworthy feature of Chirāgh 'Ali's interpretation is his free use of Biblical sources (the tale itself probably goes back to a Talmudic fable!). It is a typical trait of modernist exegesis to avoid — in contradistinction to the classics — illustration by Talmudic parallels. Biblical passages are preferred!

² 'Abd al-Ḥ. 248.
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of wonders but it denies that faith rests on this or is relevant to it. Consequently, we see how it reports wonders of previous prophets, of Moses and Jesus, as it (also) makes mention of Šāliḫ’s she-camel and of Abraham’s being cast into fire. But simultaneously it makes it clear that they do not bear upon faith, since miraculous signs are of too short duration to serve as proof. They merely serve for intimidation and warning... God speaks 1: And nothing hindered Us from sending with signs... so We gave Thamūd the she-camel before their very eyes, but they maltreated her! And so We do not send with signs but to strike terror.” 2. Having described man’s strong inclination ‘in the age of childhood’ to credit events with an unknown cause to heavenly intervention, Parwez argues that the prophets “resisted demands to produce phenomena contrary to Nature, but for all that it could happen exceptionally that for the eventual success of their enterprise they had to use in the struggle for truth arms which their opponents were handling... Since the Koranic period (however) no more miracles occurred” 4.

Ad 3) al-Djawhari is willing to attach two restricted functions to miraculous stories. Firstly, a positive effect they may produce on ‘the poor in spirit’. For, if you say to them: Look at the wonders of your body and your fields, they think you a bit off. But if you tell them that Mary received food straight from Heaven 5, they get it and praise God from morning till

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1 S. 17: 61/59. On the next page (al-Fann 126) the author (Khalaf Allāh) remarks that he has much more to say on this subject, but that he knows by experience originality in these matters is not exactly something eagerly expected!
2 al-Fann 125.
3 As an instance of this, Moses’ being necessitated to it in the presence of the Pharaoh is adduced.
4 Ma‘ārif iv, 702 f. and 706.
5 The argument is part of a comment on S. 3: 32/37, “... whenever
night. The Koran has been granted for thinkers as well as for such-like people. For the second purpose ascribable to Koranic legends, the Egyptian apologiste quotes from J. J. Rousseau’s *Emile* the passage in which is set forth that nursery-tales are useful for children, as they may stimulate their imaginative faculties, and as such they are preparative for the study of natural science. On that account the Koran offers a combination of wonderful stories — meant to tickle the imagination — together with teachings of Nature. Muḥ. Rashīd Riḍā vindicates the *raison d’être* of āyāt deviating from the course of Nature, as far as man has knowledge of it, by pointing out that otherwise the world would be nothing but a dull mechanism. Moreover, they shield the absolute power of the Creator, because in that way He appears not to be tied down to the laws (*ṣunan*), according to which He settled the Universe.

**The Prophets**

The prophet is the link between revelation and reason, between God and man. “God is the light of heaven and earth, His light shines upon the apostle, and the latter illuminates mankind... Know, that (this prophetic function of) mediation (ṣḥafā‘a) has seeds, plants and fruits; its seeds are knowledge, its plants action and its fruits salvation in the hereafter; for the prophets instruct men in this life... and if men act according to what they have heard... they have prepared for themselves the yield, and receive the fruits on the Day of Resurrection”.

The mediatory part Muḥ. Iqūbāl assigns to the prophet is to

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Zacharias went in to Mary at the sanctuary, he found her supplied with food.

1 *al-Djawāhir* ii, 107 and 109 f.
3 *al-Djawāhir* i, 64 ff. (explanation of S. 2: 45/48).
prepare the ground for "the birth of inductive intellect... which alone makes man master of his environment". Actually his work effects not much more than control of the forces of collective life, and properly speaking he himself belongs to an earlier stage of human evolution! Therefore, it is a great idea in Islam to discern "the finality of the institution of prophethood". In the end man has to "be thrown back on his own recourses".

An open and much-discussed poser is the question in which way a prophet is made capable of his task, whether predisposition and surroundings are to be taken into account, or not. According to Muḥ. ʿAbduh it is thanks to the fortunate possession of a special natural talent on account of which a prophet "transcende les frontières entre ce monde et l'autre... et apprend ce qu'est l'autre vie, et les moyens d'y parvenir". Parwez, however, rejects the idea that revelation would be acquirable by effort (iktisābī), as if prophetic genius were a possibility in human nature, by merely developing which man could become a prophet. Likewise Muḥ. Rashīd Riḍā scorns the view that man, however gifted he might be, could attain information of the other world on his own. For the Israelite prophets prophecy was obviously an acquired skill, since most of them were singers and musicians, but that only

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1 *Reconstruction*, ed. Lahore, 125 f. 'Finality' must point to the Islamic tenet concerning Mohammed's closing the row of prophets.

2 An old point in contestation: see e.g. F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, 1958, passim.

3 By him (cf. *Risāla al-Tawḥīd* 61) and Aḥmad Khān a factual plausibility of prophetic illumination is demonstrated in view of analogous experiences to which mental patients are exposed: "So it is not incompatible with human nature", the latter concludes, "that to such a heart which has no connection with objects perceptible to the senses and is turned to spiritual instruction, revelations descend" (*Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* i, 29).


5 *Salim* 44.
underlines their inadequacy! The very apostle is wholly dependent on God’s revelatory, otherwise unattainable, tidings. Contrary to this, Muḥ. Dāʾūd Rahbar thinks of a pre-Wahy preparatory period, in which Mohammed’s “spiritual and mental faculties were equipped to receive the ideas of the Qur’ān as true... and to say that the Prophet’s knowledge of the accounts of earlier prophets was zero before Wahy is too extreme and unpalatable a position”.

In the train of modernity’s thought the prophet is in the first place the educator to impart guidance men are badly in need of. To this end he remains a man like others and is not metamorphosed into a deified figure. And for the following reasons:

a) lest the divine message should be accepted on the ground of impressive effects of a supernatural kind: Man should choose it as guidance agreeing with his own disposition;
b) because the inhabitants of the earth are men, a messenger ought to be one of them (and not e.g. an angelic being: cf. S. 17: 96/94 f.) Furthermore, from this it follows that he is not only responsible for delivery of the heavenly messages (as it is the task of a postman to deliver letters), but also that he has to be an embodiment of divine instruction in order to show men by his way of living that this instruction is feasible.

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2 *MW*, Oct. 1958, 280 f. Following up Rahbar’s opinion, Aṣaf ʿAlī Asghar Faidī deems it of great importance to study Koranic sources by historic standards: “The better we get acquainted with the contribution of Judaism and Christianity, the fuller insight we gain into the message and doctrines of the Prophet” (*Ṭbaqāfa al-Hind*, Oct. 1959, 96).
3 When S. 7: 83/85 says that Shuʿailib brought a divine token (*bayyina*), Azād argues that “according to the Koran prophetic teaching in itself already constituted a *bayyina* and an evidence. There is no need of an accompanying sign (*nisbān*) or a legitimating miracle (*muʿdżīza*) in the technical sense of the word” (*Tāḏjumān* ii, 20).
4 *Maṭārif* ii, 308 ff.
The object of the instruction and guidance imparted is “to present mankind with such a knowledge and apprehension of both of these (i.e. the material and immaterial) that extremes are avoided and the right middle course can be entered” ¹.

A curious application of these premises is effectuated by Parwez in the way he criticizes and corrects the picture of Jesus, transmitted by the Gospel-writers. Pointing to Matth. 5: 38-45, he exclaims: “How can this be instruction for human nature!... The prophets have come to remove destruction, violence, injustice and oppression, and it is as plain as a pike-staff that such a lofty aim cannot be achieved by giving wrong-doers a free run and by offering a cloak to him who asks for a shirt”. It was Jesus’ mission “on the one side to free the Israelites from slavery and the domination of the Romans, and on the other side to found society on ethical principles which former prophets too had come to build up”. That Jesus had really wished to become a national liberator the author deduces from a) Matth. 10: 34 ff., b) crucifixion’s representing a typical Roman punishment of rebels, and c) the superscription on the cross: ‘This is Jesus, the king of the Jews’. But since in particular after the crucifixion it turned out a danger to be a Christian, Jesus’ disciples invented all sorts of false sayings in support of their mansuetude (like: “Love your enemies”), political harmlessness (like: “Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s”) and so on, in order to allay the suspicion the authorities were harbouring against them ². Then, the virgin birth being a mark of Jesus’ divinity is denied by Parwez, though in a more cautious manner than it was done by Āḥmad Khān ³. He writes: “Nowhere in the Koran it is stated clearly that the

¹ Sayyid Abu ²l-ʿAlā Mawdūdī, Taḥdīmät (1940), i, 29.
² Maʿārif iii, 501 and 506 ff.
³ Compare the present writer’s The Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid Āḥmad Khān (1949), 82.

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birth of Christ happened without the intermediary of a father, nor that he was a son of Joseph — Still, in the case of other Koranic prophets no mention of a father is made. See e.g. Moses: his mother, not his father, is mentioned! — When Mary received the annunciation of a son, she was leading the life of a nun in the temple. It is unthinkable for a nun to have a family. On that account Mary raised the objection: My Lord, how shall I have a son, when man has not touched me (S. 3: 42/47). Thereupon the answer comes: Even so, God creates what He will. Observe! The very same answer also was given in connection with the birth of St. John (see S. 3: 35/40), and it simply means to say: Like all that is created under God’s will . . . And in due course Mary shall become pregnant. The Koran does not deem it necessary to give a detailed description of it. Everybody knows how pregnancy comes about. Kadhalika, i.e. in the way which is known to everyone”

Further, an Ascension of Christ is usually not admitted. On that account S. 3: 48/55, the passage which denotes this event, has been paraphrased by Muḥ. Maḥmūd Ḥidjāzī: “God said: o Jesus, I shall complete your term of life (i.e. you shall not die prematurely through a murder of the Jews) . . . and I shall raise you to a high rank”. Such an elevation, so he comments, pertains to somebody’s social status and not to his geographic position, as the Almighty says about Idris (S. 19: 58/57):

\[1\] That would follow from S. 19: 28/27 where, it is supposed, Mary is accused of unchastity because of the unusual spectacle of a nun with a babe on her arm.

\[2\] Maʿārif iii, 547, 550 f. and 553. Yet the virgin birth remains a point open to controversy. Āzād shows that nowhere in the Koran the doctrine of Virgin Birth is contested. Of course, so he continues, it is possible “to claim the opposite by tearing verses out of their context”, as Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Dr Tawfīq Ṣidqī and others tried, but if one bears the context in mind, “one must acknowledge without hesitation that the Koran accepts the dogma” (Tardjumān ii, 444 f.). Equally ‘Abd al-Ḥakim combats Aḥmad Khān on this issue (‘Abd al-Ḥ. 244, 247 f.).
"And We raised him to a lofty place"... and it does not signify — and God knows the best — that Jesus ascended to heaven 1.

If officiating as the Ideal Educator, the prophet must be provided with an irreproachable character. If in the beginning the 'isma-doctrine 2 may have been regarded by Muslim orthodoxy as a more or less irrelevant affair, it is now for most of the modernists a matter of the greatest moment. As a rule, blameworthy behaviour of prophets is smoothed over by means of all possible acumen. Āzād supplies in explanation of Abraham's dealings in S. 21: 53/52 ff. 3 the following intricate disquisition: In an assembly of laity and priests Abraham wanted to show up the impotence of the images dedicated to the sun (Shamas), and therefore he answers: "Rather, this their chief Shamas has done it; he, before whom you always bring your questions"... (meaning to say by this: If indeed images reply to questions, ask them. Why ask me?). Learning this answer, all of them became greatly confused, being at a loss what to say against it. They could not declare a reply not to be expected from an idol. Thus this was an indirect demonstration (budjijat ilzāmi) of Abraham by assuming hypothetically an absurdity over against an opponent 4). Then, to render S. 21: 87 as:

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1 al-Tafsīr al-Wādiḥ, 1951, iii, 56 f. Sayyid Qūţb remarks at this verse: "And God wished him to die a natural death and to take him unto Himself as He takes the souls of righteous worshippers unto Himself" (Q. iii, 76) Parwez points out that a bodily ascension must presume a local limitation of God which runs counter to the concept of His ubiquity (Ma‘ārif iii, 534).

2 Dogma of prophetic immunity from sin and error. Cf. Tor Andrae, Die person Mubammeds im lehre und glaube seiner gemeinde (1918), 138.

3 When commenting verse 64/63 the commentators usually catch Abraham in a lie on account of his denial of having broken down the Chaldean images. But such a supposition, as Āzād asserts, cannot be made at all in view of verse 58/57, in which Abraham had denounced beforehand: "And by God, I will certainly foil your idols".

4 Tardjumān ii, 498 f.
“When he (Jonah) went off in anger and deemed that *We had no power over him*”, makes — according to the same expositor — a blasphemous imputation against the prophet Jonah and his opinion of God. The passage is to be translated as: “We would not put him into strait circumstances”\(^1\). In order that there need be no thought of an infliction Solomon had to undergo on account of a sin he had committed, Chirāgh ʿAlī gives of S. 38: 33/34\(^2\) the version: “We placed upon his throne (of jurisdiction) the body (of a living or dead body)”, thus putting it into the context of 1 Kings 3: 16-28\(^3\).

Though the supposition that a prophet might be disposed to sin is quite rejected\(^4\), it may, however, be acknowledged that Mohammed shows himself at times a bit loose and tactless in his proceedings, as for instance in the case, hinted at by S. 9: 43\(^5\). Accordingly, one ought to apprehend his *dhumab* (see S. 48: 2) as ‘errors of policy’\(^6\), he could commit because of the circumstance that he lacked knowledge of the unseen world (*ghayb*), known to God alone. He could only draw his conclusions by deductions from what he saw happening around\(^7\). Khalaf Allāh diagnoses moments of mental weakness prophets suffered from: Moses’ getting into a flurry (S. 28: 33), Mohammed’s becoming desponent (S. 11: 15/12), Dhu ḫ-Nūn

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\(^1\) *Tardjumān* ii, 489.

\(^2\) The traditional interpretation of this verse is that it indicates how as a punishment for his absurd fondness of horses Solomon lost his kingdom, his throne being occupied by someone in his likeness.

\(^3\) The story of Solomon’s wise verdict in the matter of the two babies. See *Tabāḥib al-Akhlāq* iii, 195 ff.

\(^4\) With the exception of Ahmad al-Dīn. Fighting Muslim saint-worship of Mohammed, he states with a reference to S. 2: 286: “From this it turns out that prophets as well as other believers might be forgetful and sinful” (*Bayān* 406).


\(^6\) Cf. *Maʿārif* iv, 553.

\(^7\) Cf. *Maʿārif* iv, 676a
no longer capable of restraining himself (S. 21: 87), etc. ¹.

A different function which especially al-Mashriqi likes to allot to the prophet is that of scientist, inasmuch as he is at the same time the man who is conversant with the Word of God, i.e. with the universal laws, established by the Lord ². Properly speaking the modern research-worker acts as successor and substitute of the old-time prophet ³. This is elucidated by a rather amusing explanation of S. 27: 18 ⁴. The speaking ant is accounted representative of insects charged to spread bacteria into Solomon’s camp. The king and prophet Solomon, however, knows how to stem the danger, and our interpreter infers: “I am inclined to assume that for the protection of his soldiers from these insects Solomon prepared all the scientific means which modern nations nowadays prepare” ⁵.

Lastly, it might be worth-while to mention the evaluation Parwez offers with respect to the classic dogma of Mohammed’s being the ‘seal of prophethood’ and the old question of the identity of or distinction between nabuwva and risāla. After Mohammed, he sets forth, nabuwva i.e. ‘personality’ as decisive and most important factor, has been closed, and risāla i.e. the ‘ideology’ written down in the Koran, has been left to us. How relevant this is for the present appears from the fact that in the world of to-day there is not a fight between personalites but between ideologies, not between individuals but between systems of life ⁶. Furtheron the author argues: Nabuwva and

¹ *al-Fann* 109 ff.
² *Hadith al-Qur‘ān* 41.
³ *Hadith al-Qur‘ān* 251. Conformably to the tradition: The scholars are the heirs of the prophets (Bu. 3, 10; Tirm. 39, 19).
⁴ “Thereupon, when they (Solomon’s army forces) reached the valley of the ants, an ant said: O you ants, enter your dwellings, that Solomon and his hosts may not crush you while they do not perceive”.
⁵ *Hadith al-Qur‘ān* 172.
⁶ *Salim* 235.
risāla belong together; the one cannot do without the other. If after the receipt of revelation the prophet remained sitting hidden in a nook, his nabuwwa would be senseless. Nabuwwa and risāla are two sides of one and the same truth: the one is its power, the other its practice.

Universalism

Following up the theory that man is a Muslim by nature and that the idea of God’s Unity is “easier to be had than water” 2, the modernists maintain emphatically Islam as the universal religion for and from all times: “God’s religion is one, without discontinuance (naskēb) and without any discrimination between the prophets 3; by the Koran it is called Islām (S. 3: 17/19 )”4. Outward distinctions, so Āzād expounds, are indeed met with in the sundry religions. That is so, because religion itself aims at happiness and prosperity of human society. And the conditions and patterns of human societies neither are nor can be uniform in every epoch and in every country. The disparities in the extant religions, however, are not fundamental 5. And

1 id. 264. The same theory also affords the author an argument against the claims of Mīrzā Ghulām Aḥmad (1839-1914), the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. The Mīrzā’s contention does not hold, if pretending to be a nabi but not a rasūl, since he had come without a Book: “According to the Koran no nabi can come without a Book. If a postman has not got letters with him, what is the good of his coming? The task of a rasūl is to deliver divine messages. If he has not got one with him, he makes himself ridiculous” (Ma‘ārif iv, 807).

2 Bayān xxv.

3 Some modernists give evidence of an exceptional liberality in this respect and include in the list of prophets divine messengers not in possession of the Scriptures like Rama, Krishna (Mīrzā Abu ’l-Faḍl, The Life of Mohammed, 1910, 198), Buddha, Confucius (Ṭanṭāwī Dżawhari, al-Dżawābir iii, 45) and Zarathustra (‘Abd al-Qādir al-Maghribi, Tafsīr Dżuz Tabāraka 95).

4 Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Raziq, al-Dīn wa ’l-Wāhy wa ’l-Islām (1945), 96 f.

5 Tarđживān i, 186 f. Parwez, however, makes a stand against what he
on S. 21: 92 the same author comments: “In one verse three unities are enumerated, the unity of the community, of the godhead and of religion + worship. These three unities are the substance of the Koranic message... By the unity of the community is meant that in the veils of the mass and of the distribution of human individuals one community lies concealed... By the unity of the godhead is meant that however many different names you may give it, however many different houses of worship you may build, you cannot be different in essence. As you are made up of one community, so your Lord is one and besides Him no other can exist. By the unity of worship is meant that, if the community and the Lord are one, religion too must be one”. “There is”, so ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm thinks, “no verse in the Koran that merely touches upon a single event, place or time; on the contrary, each verse contains a universal and eternal truth”. And commenting S. 1: 7 he rectifies the traditional explanation as follows: Those upon whom God’s wrath is resting, are not the Jews but the atheists; those who err, are not the Christians but people who do not make use of the talents, granted by God, and do not exert themselves with their physical and mental powers. Another specimen of anti-particularistic thought may be recognized in Muḥ. ‘Abduh’s interpretation of the word ṣāliḥāt, occurring

calls “the idea caught on nowadays that if every religious person would act according to the ‘sound faith’ of his private religion, it would be conducive to the world’s welfare and happiness” (Maʿārif iv, 5), and he fears that in this way Islām’s superiority is seriously endangered. As for the divine names he differentiates deliberately between Ilah, a term fitting to every worshipped one, and Allāh, the truly worshipped Godhead (Maʿārif i, 28).

1 “Verily, this your community is one community; and I am your Lord, so serve Me”.
2 Tarjumān ii, 490.
3 ‘Abd al-Ḥ. 65.
4 id. 43 f.
in S. 103:3. These are works, he says\(^1\), to be found among nations in the possession of a prophetic shari‘a, as well as among nations to whom no prophet was sent, since the principles of the sāliḥāt are universal; hence they are indicated by the Holy Book as bi‘l-ma‘rūf\(^2\).

For the effectuation of such universalism al-Mashriqi assigns a prominent part to the ʿālim, the man of learning who by virtue of his objectivity would be most qualified for elimination of religious discrepancies, etc. And the author outlines the Utopian scheme: “The ʿālim will get the opportunity to snatch away (the citizens) from the grip of unjust capitalists and political swindlers, to rule the world under the laws of the Book of Nature, to look upon mankind as a whole instead of dividing it into various small nations, to stop definitely war and the fighting of men, and to establish a new political Paradise, corresponding to the Paradise of his own scientific findings, through which eventually mankind will build up one community with the aid of knowledge from the Book of Nature”\(^3\).

THE ‘PILLARS OF ISLAM’\(^4\)

1) Ṣalāt.

Quite often an unmistakable anti-ritualistic tendency is noticeable, and in particular it finds expression in dissertations about what is to be understood by acts of devotion. In a paper on ʿibādat Aḥmad Khān expounds that worship should not be confined to strictly religious duties, but that it embraces as much the development of all powers created in man\(^5\).

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\(^1\) Tafsir Sūra al- ‘Asr 19.

\(^2\) I.e. in the Koranic phrase amara bi‘l-ma‘rūf — ‘to enjoin the known’ (= the proper). See S. 22: 42/41 and 31: 16/17.

\(^3\) Hadith al-Qurān 266 f.

\(^4\) For the first pillar, the shahāda (creed as to God and His messenger), see the preceding paragraphs on the Idea of God, and the Prophets.

\(^5\) Also a Hindu conception! Cf. The Times, July 9, 1954: “When Mr.
among which the cultivation of science ranks first. “Ṣalāt”, so it says in al-Mashriqi’s principal work, “is nothing else but arrangement and order, concord of the community and obedience to the leader, public spirit and self-command, battle against and firmness towards the enemy, deliberateness and justice. Control of land and sea, as reptiles have it, command of the air, as birds have it... All Westerners know what ṣalāt means, occupying the earth from top to bottom”.

Further, it is attempted to prove a broad sense of ṣalāt and its components on etymological grounds. “al-Ṣalāt”, it is argued, “is a term for ‘walking on a straight road’... munṣallī is a word for a horse running in a race right behind the first group of horses; no munṣallī is a zigzagging horse. Accordingly, it is stated about somebody who turns away from the body of Islam that “he does not believe, does not observe ṣalāt but denies truth and takes by-roads” (S. 75: 31 f.)”). And Parwez holds forth in another excursus: “Ṣabbī signifies ‘to swim, to race with the fierceness of a horse’, that is to say: as, while swimming, the arms are spread widely, so it is called sabbī if a horse gallops at full trot. Consequently, in this notion both the elements of fierceness and expanse are implied. So e.g. sabbaṭa fi ’l-ard means ‘to travel in distant countries’; inma laka fi ’l-nabārī sabhan ṭawîlan (S. 73: 7) — “you have in the daytime an extensive and busy occupation”. Hence, if it

Nehru saw the headworks (of the Bhakra canal system) to-day he said that they were temples and places of worship”.

1 Tahdhib al-Akkâlī, ii, 167 ff. Similarly Mawdūdī: “… fasting, ṣalāt, Ḥādīd, zākāt, ḍibir and ṣabhī are in fact training-courses for man to fit him for the great worship which leads human life from the low stage of animal existence to the lofty stage of true humanity” (Tasfīmāt i, 61).

2 al-Tadbkira i, 64.

3 Saṭīm 209. See also al-Mashriqi’s statement: “On the whole sudjūd in the Koran does not stand for ‘to rub the forehead on the ground’ but ‘to act upon the commands of God’. Thus S. 55: 5/6, “And the herbs and trees made a sadjīda” (i.e. obeyed the laws of God) (Tadbkira iv, 107 f.).
says\(^1\) that everything in the creation is ‘doing sabh’, it signifies that everything is busy with carrying out appointed duties in a scrupulous way” \(^2\).

A final aspect of this subject we should like to mention, is the liberty Aḥmad al-Dīn takes with regard to the \(\text{ṣalāt}\)-rituals themselves \(^3\). He sets forth that verbalism does not exist in the Koran. The same things may be defined by different wordings. Take for instance the address of God: now we find the name ‘Allāh’, then the designation ‘Raḥmān’. From this it follows clearly that the worshippers are allowed to formulate \(\text{tasbih}\) (praise of God) with their own words. Next, the author rejects a fixed order of the \(\text{ṣalāt}\). As in the Koran \(\text{qiyaṣm}, \text{rukūʿ}, \text{sadjda}\) are recommended separately, one is permitted likewise to perform them separately. So the commemoration (\(\text{dbikr}\)) of God may be performed with a \(\text{qiyaṣm}\) only, without a \(\text{sadjda}\) and \(\text{rukūʿ}\) (cf. S. 4: 104/103). Lastly, our reformer wishes to reduce the amount of \(\text{ṣalāts}\) to two in a day. In S. 11: 116/114 and S. 17: 80/78 ff., he admits, three prayers are summed up but in S. 17: 81/79 one of them is styled \(\text{nafl}\) (supererogatory), so that only two are left \(^4\).

2) Zakāt.

The institution of the alms tax is put on a socio-political level. It is pointed out that it remedies in part the inequality

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\(^1\) E.g. in S. 17: 46/44.

\(^2\) \(\text{Maʿārif i}, 520.\)

\(^3\) Cf. also Muḥ. Iqbāl: “The form of prayer ought not to become a matter of dispute. Which side you turn your face is certainly not essential to the spirit of prayer. The Qurān is perfectly clear on this point: “The East and West is God’s: therefore whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God” (2: 109)” (Reconstruction, ed. Lahore, 93).

\(^4\) \(\text{Bayān 63 f., 104 f., and 114 ff. On page 119 the middle \(\text{ṣalāt}\), recorded in S. 2: 239/238, is explained away as “the prayer which is to be a medium to bring about contact with God”. Muḥ. Abū Zaid may not impossibly be suggesting in covert terms the sufficiency of one \(\text{ṣalāt}\) in a day, when he comments on this text: “The middle one is the best and the most appropriate” (\(\text{al-Hidāya 32}\)).\)
of poor and rich, that it offers the solution of the posed alternative communism or capitalism, as it represents a kind of happy mean, and that it is an effective instrument for restraining the greed of the rich. Muḥ. Dja‘far Phulwārawī makes the bright suggestion to speak no longer of income tax, but of — what would amount to the same thing — zakāt! The great advantage of such a metonymy would be that in that way people will pay their taxes with pleasure and no more attempts will be made to conceal receipts.

3) Sawm (Fasting).

By Muslim modernity this religious duty is mainly, if not exclusively, valued as an institution for the good of morality. “En Islam, le Jeûne se destine à l’amélioration des conditions morales et spirituelles de l’homme, ainsi que le montre clairement ce verset coranique: ò vous qui croyez, le Jeûne vous est prescrit, ainsi qu’il l’a été a ceux qui vous ont précédés, pour que vous puissiez vous préserver du mal. Moralement ou spirituellement, le Jeûne sert donc à se garder du mal: en pensée, en paroles et en actes. Car l’homme capable de renoncer à la satisfaction illicite de ses désirs, c’est-à-dire: nourriture, boisson, sexe et propriété, en obéissance au commandement divin, acquiert certainement le pouvoir de renoncer à leur satisfaction illégitime.” Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rafi‘ī advises European socialists to adopt the custom of fasting in the month

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1 See i.a. Ḥadīth al-Qur’ān 249n.
3 Thaqāfat Labore, July 1959, 62.
4 S. 2: 179/183.
5 The last clause is a translation (!) of the words: la‘allakum tattaqūna — “perhaps you may become God-fearing”.
6 Shams al-Nahār Maḥmūd in Jeune Islam (Alger), mai 1949, 3. For the same see also Muḥammad ‘Āli: “... hence fasting in Islam does not mean simply abstaining from food, but from every kind of evil” (The Holy Qur’ān, 1920, note 225).
Ramaḍān, because this system of obligatory poverty compels the people to equality of their belly, irrespective whether one possesses millions or only a penny.  
Whereas in this way the typically religious structure of fasting is affected, it is not amazing that it is beginning to lose its obligatory character. In a perturbative essay of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Bakhīt, professor of Islamic History at al-ʿAzhar, the bold view is launched: “Everyday we see hundreds of people who are unable to keep Ramaḍān go into isolated places where they eat and drink... Fasting should be observed only by those who can stand it. Those who cannot fast, may acquit themselves before God by feeding the poor or giving them money”.

4) Ḥadjdj.

To an equal extent as the preceding rite pilgrimage has become rationalized. In the opinion of Parwez the very purport of it is to serve as a broadcasting station for Islam. By ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm we are told that as good points of it may be marked: a) the opportunity it creates to contrive reformatory schemes, since through it representatives from all over the Muslim world are brought together; b) the curing effect it has on bad habits, owing to the hardships to be endured before reaching Mecca; c) the educative element it possesses: on account of the long travels to be made one passes several foreign countries, and this broadens people’s mind. An advantage Aḥmad al-Dīn wants to ascribe to it, is that such an annual international conference ought to be of avail for prevention of wars.

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1 Wahy al-Qalam (1936), ii, 73.
2 Appeared in al-Akhrār, mai 9, 1955.
3 Maʿārif iv, 763.
4 ʿAbd al-Ḥ. 292 ff.
5 al-ʿAqqād cites in this connection S. 22: 45/46, “Have they not travelled all through the world so that they should have hearts with which to understand and ears with which to hear?” (al-Falsafa 162).
6 Bayān 326.
The diverse rituals of *hadjaj* are no matters for much argument. There is only some comment on the true purpose to be attached to the pilgrimage sacrifices. Āzād finds it explained by S. 22: 29/28, when it says: “Eat of this meat yourselves and feed the distressed one, the needy”. That means to express that not — as it is generally assumed — the shedding of animal blood is the real object but feeding of the poor. And in verse 38/37 there is plainly stated: the heart of worship is the surrender of souls, not sacrificed animals and oblatory blood ¹.

**POLEMICS**

From the outset Muslim Apologetics has made a welcome use of the fact that Mohammed appeared after Moses and Jesus in order to claim Islam to be the crown and perfection of all that Jewish and Christian faith have to offer ². The modern version of the same idea is the favourite enunciation about Koran’s exclusive quality of supplying the last — and consequently the most perfect — edition of all heavenly books ³; or as Sayyid Qutb defines it in a somewhat rhetorical manner with reference to the covenant concluded between God and the Israelites (see S. 2: 38/40): “And Islam with which Mohammed came, is nothing but the eternal religion in its final form; it is an extension of the message and covenant of God, relative to the first men; it spreads its wings over the past and takes man by the hand into the future; it unites the Old Testament the New Testament and the Last Covenant (= the Koran)” ⁴. And inasmuch as the Koran includes the basic fine qualities and enduring values, proper to all religions, shows the right

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¹ *Tardjumān* ii, 510. Aḥmad al-Dīn observes on that account: “God is not bloodthirsty” (*Bayān* 331).
³ See e.g. the Introduction of *PāraʾAm*.
⁴ Q. i, 36 f.
direction and corrects the principles of all believing people, it is the pre-eminently capable arbiter of religious dissensions ¹.

Before dealing with the more elaborate polemics against Christianity, we would first draw attention to the attacks of the modernists against Hinduism. They are scarce: the Koran-text does not give much cause for it, and also Muslim and Hindu faith have very little in common with each other ². An objection against the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is made by Parwez in connection with the story of Adam. Here the Koran teaches us that no influence is exerted on man by deeds of a former existence (djama) ³. Then, the commentator finds three aspects of human evil represented by three characters in the Moses narratives, to wit “the Pharaoh as the impersonation of tyranny, Haman ⁴ as the diabolic representative of Brahmanism, while Qārūn serves as an illustration of the curse resting on great riches” ⁵. An unequivocal hint at Hindu worship of cows is made by ‘Abd al-Ḥakîm, when he notes on S. 2: 63/67 ff.: “Because this people acted very silliily and was guilty of trespasses, impiety, cult of calves and cows, Moses said to them: God commands you to kill a cow… The ordered slaughter was intended to put an end to the cult and excessive veneration of this animal” ⁶.

As for polemics against Christianity, besides several charges already repeatedly advanced by classical opponents of Christian

¹ Bayân lxxxiv ff.
² A point of contact may be furnished by the Hindu concept of bhakti. In a dissertation on it Bashîr Aḥmad Dār tries to demonstrate that the idea grew up in India under influence of Islamic mysticism with its corresponding notion of tavakkul (trust in God), retracable in S. 6: 79, 162/161 f. (Thagāfat Lahore, March 1958, 37 ff.).
³ Maʿārif ii, 33.
⁴ Parwez thinks him to belong to the circle of magicians who are put on the scene to fight Moses (Maʿārif iii, 361).
⁵ Maʿārif iii, 186.
⁶ ‘Abd al-Ḥ. 95.
belief like Ibn Ḥazm and al-Qaraḍī also more original views crop up. Parwez compares the Christian dogma of original sin with the Hindu doctrine of migration of souls. Muḥammad ʿAlī sets his opinion against the *sola fide* of Protestantism, declaring: "Various religions before the advent of Mohammed (صلى الله عليه وسلم) believed that faith alone could secure the salvation of an individual. But Islam made personal endeavour, conduct, a *sine qua non* of salvation. Says the Qurʾān: "And the followers of other religions) say: Fire shall not touch us but for a few days (Our faith will be enough to save us from that). Say: Have you received a covenant from Allah, then Allah will not fail to fulfil His covenant, or do you speak against Allah what you do not know." And Muḥ. Abū Zaid attacks Roman Catholic Mariolatry, when he states in reference to S. 1: 4/5: "Who seeks help beyond God, commits *shirk*, like him who seeks help from virgins, asking for support and intercession."  

Then, an important part of these polemics consists of criticism on the Biblical version of ancient history. The Biblical accounts of what happened to the prophets, so Muḥ. Rashīd Riḍā supposes, "are comparable with a garden full of trees, grass, thorn-bushes, fruits and insects, whereas the Koranic accounts of them are more like the fragrance which rises from those flowers and like the molasses prepared from those fruits when fresh-gathered." As another case in point the contents of Genesis 1-3 are adduced by Parwez and found inferior because of the following misrepresentations:

1 *Salim* 327.
2 S. 2: 74/80.
3 *Islamic Culture* (1928), ii, 449.
4 *al-Hidāya* 66.
5 *al-Wāḥy al-Muḥammadi* 17.
a) Man’s creation after God’s image. God goes beyond human imagination;
b) Paradise. In the Bible it is a piece of land, surrounded by Tigris and Euphrates. Thus the Biblical narration of Adam bears on a concrete human individual on God’s earth, and is not a description of human nature. The particularity of the Koranic report of the story is that name nor place are recorded; by which it suggests a deeper meaning.
c) The forbidden tree. Knowledge of good and evil is the very base of mankind’s special status! To keep man from knowledge is the same as to prevent him from attaining the level of true humanity;
d) The creation of Eve. In the Torah woman is stigmatized as the cause of evil. As a result in the eye of Christians woman is held a cursed being and up to the sixth century A.D. the question was discussed in sober earnest whether or not she had a soul.

Further, the author enumerates as disparities between the Biblical and Koranic tale of Noah:
a) Motivation of the Flood is according to the Koran the

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1 But according to another apologete this Biblical view has its counterpart in S. 30: 29/30 (Bashir Ahmad Dar in Thaqafat Lahore, March 1958, 38 f.).
2 In other words: the Koranic account is to be preferred because of being not historical but metaphorical with a moral import. Cf. also Yusuf ‘Ali in Isl. Culture v, 549.
3 Cf. also K. A. Hamid: “‘The Garden’ in which Adam and his wife lived was obviously the garden of innocence... The twain’s eating of that forbidden tree put an end to that state of Innocence” (Isl. Cult. xix, 154). Muh. Iqbal asserts: “The Old Testament curses the earth for Adam’s act of disobedience”, whereas the Koran makes mention of the Fall in order “to indicate man’s rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience” (Reconstruction, Lahore ed. 84 f.).
4 Ma‘arif ii, 65 ff. “The Koran, however”, so Azad demonstrates, “... puts an equal blame on both of them (Eve and Adam)”. Cf. S. 2: 34/36 (“And Satan made them both backslide therefrom”) (Tardjuman ii, 266).
requital of the unbelievers’ sins, according to the Bible; God’s regret at having created the earth (see Gen. 6: 5-8); b) In the view of the Bible the Flood was universal\textsuperscript{1}, whereas the Koran takes it for local only; c) Whilst in the Koran the wicked son was drowned too (S. 11: 45/43) — his blood-relationship with the prophet could not save him from a condign punishment! — we read in Gen. 9: 20-27 that not Cham was punished but that the curse struck the guiltless Kanaan, a son of his \textsuperscript{2}.

An imputation of a more theological nature we meet in Sayyid Quṭb’s explanation of the divine predicates al-Rahmān al-Rahīm in S. 1. He argues that they relate to “a bond of love with the Creator, free from terror and compulsion”. The Lord is not the vindictive Godhead of the Old Testament who wanted to revenge Himself on the worshippers, “because He feared that they would lose their heads completely, if they were to find themselves capable of constructing whatever they wished, as it says in the myth of Babel’s tower” \textsuperscript{3}.

Not always such a sharp tone is adopted. Seeing that in S. 48: 29 Torah and Gospel are mentioned in a favourable sense, we may conclude so al-Mashriqi remarks — that also Jews and Christians possess qualities of faith and good works. For a further proof the author refers to the construction of the atomic bomb and the ascent of Mount Everest. People with such achievements must be following the right religion! \textsuperscript{4}. And in another place the same writer is so kind as to note: “Undoubtedly the Christians of to-day have asked God’s forgiveness..., for as a rule they no longer stick to the divinity of Christ... and

\textsuperscript{1} In contradistinction to the Biblical narration of Adam, here the attack is directed against an unhistorical account of events by the Bible; a universal Flood is a factual absurdity!
\textsuperscript{2} Ma‘ārif ii, 378 ff.
\textsuperscript{3} Q. i, 10.
\textsuperscript{4} Hadith al-Qurʾān 183 and 190.

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they make no more idols of him, as in earlier ages... (They declare:) We do not believe him to be the Son of God in an ontological sense, only we regard him so in a metaphorical and figurative sense”\(^1\).

More than once it happens that our expositors call in the assistance of the Bible as clarification of a Koran-passage. When elucidating S. 72: 9b (“... but he\(^2\) who composes himself to listen\(^3\), finds forthwith a shooting-star for him on guard”), al-Maghribī states: Just as in the Bible the rainbow (see the Noah-story) serves as a token of God’s covenant and promise, so here meteors are set as a token to indicate that owing to Koran’s verdict and Mohammed’s mission human reason is to be liberated from delusive ideas with which magicians (= the djinn\(_s\)) were tricking it\(^4\). Āzād declares in explanation of the vague determination of ‘an eastern place’ in S. 19: 16, “that Mary departed from the temple, where she got her education, going to her native town Nazareth, situated N.E. of Jerusalem. This is corroborated by the New Testament (see Luke 1: 26)”\(^5\). And this author arrives at the conclusion: “Ultimately there exists no real fundamental difference between the doctrines of Christ and those of the Koran. Both of them apply the same criteria to their precepts. There is merely a difference in respect of the conditions under which they had to be explained and the form in which they had to be clothed. For Christ it was sufficient to lay stress on ethics and purity in heart, since the Mosaic Law was available... But the Koran had to explain at the same time ethics and regulations. Therefore it chose such a mode of expression in which precepts and regulations were explained

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\(^1\) Tadhkira i, 91.
\(^2\) I.e. a djinn.
\(^3\) In order to overhear the discourse of the inhabitants of heaven.
\(^4\) Tafsīr Djuw Turānka 155.
\(^5\) Tardjumān ii, 433.
in clear, practical and precise wordings, instead of in metaphors and similes (as Jesus did)" ¹.

Lastly, once or twice a commentator carries on a controversy against atheists. So Aḥmad al-Dīn combats the view that God does not exist ‘in actual fact’ (fī ḫarīḍ), but only ‘in the mind’ (fī ḫbīn). It is just the reverse! “A rational being does not exist ‘absolutely’ (fī ḫbīrid). It is dependent on reason... And one cannot be self-existent, if reason be the mere ground of existence. If the Self-existent were simply an invention of human reason and could not tread outside Himself, He cannot possibly be self-existent... In other words: the Self-existent, i.e. God, exists out of necessity” ². By Muḥ. al-Tanikhi conclusions are tried with Existentialism and over against the statement of J. P. Sartre: “Everybody is born into the world without any rational cause or motive”, he puts forth that every born child is destined to cultivate the earth and to be tried on it. See S. 67: 2 ³.

¹ id. i, 109 f.
² Bayān vii.
³ Madjalla al-Azhar, 13 Febr. 1956, 752.
V. KORAN AND MODERN TIME

Scientific aspects

Every Holy Book is loaded with the ambivalence both of being originated in a given space of time (its ‘earthly’ character) and of pretending to offer transcendent information and everlasting values for the believer of whatever age (its ‘heavenly’ aspect). The ineluctable consequence of this contradictory datum for the interpreter who wants to keep pace with the times, is to engage in apologetics in order to prove that the Holy Scripture adequately meets the needs of the present, both materially and spiritually. Consequently, the transcendent has to be made actual!

Muslim commentators of the Koran and Christian exegetes of the Bible are faced with the same awkward problem, and both of them sometimes cut queer capers. So — to begin with an instance of the latter — the Protestant Dutch economist W. J. van de Woestijne claims that Jesus’ paraenesis in Matth. 6:26 not to worry about the day of to-morrow does not preclude the possibility of keeping a savings-bank book 1. Such a treatment of Bible wording may hardly be qualified as an interpretation e mente auctoris; modern life, however, has its exigencies... Analogous elucidations of Muslim modernists with regard to the Koran text soon caught the attention of European orientalists, and the paradigm, adduced by I. Goldziher and derived from the ‘Abduh-school, finding telegraph, telephone, tramway and microbes recorded in Koranic passages 2, have become almost classical. And indeed,

2 Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung 356.
here our expositors stick at nothing: even a vexed question such as the existence of flying saucers does not offer any trouble. For this S. 17: 72/70 b. is cited and rendered: "... but among all creatures created by Us We presented many with superiority (above men)". The comment follows: It is just the flying saucers on account of which "people on earth are more or less getting the feeling that on other planets there might live creatures, superior to us, whose scientific achievements are likely to surpass ours".

Further, not only are results of modern research to be rediscovered in the Koran, but the reverse also holds good, viz. that the present-day state of science may make divine statements transparent. So in respect of S. 4: 59/56 it is noted: "Whenever their skins burn, God changes them for other skins in order that they (the damned) will suffer the most severe tortures... And the late Dr 'Abd al-‘Aziz Bāshā Ismā‘il declares in his book al-Islām wa‘l-Ṭibb al-Ḥadīth: The reason of it is that the pain-nerves are in the epidermis; in tissue, muscles and internal organs pain-feeling is comparatively weak. Hence the physician knows that burning of the scarf-skin occasions the most severe smart".

As for apologetics applied to doubts rising from intellective deliberation a distinction is to be made between a) endeavours to blur out or to 'explain' antiquated conceptions met with in the Koran and b) attempts to bring forward Koranic notions appropriate to the thought-world of to-day.

A fine specimen of the first category is the shrewd application of a divine accomodation-theory, made by Khalaf Allāh with

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1 *Hadīth al-Qur'ān* 209 f.
2 With reference to S. 6: 98 b. ("We have detailed the signs unto men of intelligence") Muḥ. Aslam Djairāʤpūrī notes: "In proportion to the increase of his knowledge about natural phenomena, man shall be enabled the better to understand Koranic expositions" (See his Preface to *Ma‘ārif*).  
regard to primitive ideas occurring in the Koran. He enunciates in this connection that in the story of Dhu 'l-Qarnain views of the Arabs of Mohammed's days concerning sunset are reflected. The same is relevant to some notions about hell, devils and *djinn*. In S. 37: 6-10 and 72: 9 the Koran speaks as if devil and *djinn* could eavesdrop in heaven on what is going to be arranged for the future. But when afterwards Islam is getting a stronger hold in Arabia, the Koran comes to combat pagan views. Then it proclaims that the *djinn* are not acquainted with the unknown; for had that been the case, they would not even after Solomon's death have tired themselves out with the arduous construction of the temple (see S. 34: 13/14). If, therefore, the Koran does not combat immediately such heathen conceptions, it is not on account of considering them to be right, but merely out of the desire to nullify them little by little.

The desire of modernity is not only to dismiss the appearance of primitive notions but also the references to barbarous practices. In a dialogue with a Western-educated youth Parwez remarks on S. 4: 38/34b. (passage in which it is recommended to chastise wives in case of stubborn disobedience against her husband): "At this passage thoughts occur to you which I understand. Surely you will say: It is barbarous to beat women. Indeed, it is a very special matter if a man arises to beat his wife. But this thought came to you, because you suppose it a regulation for individual life, i.e. a sanction for every husband to punish his wife. This opinion is not right. It is a regulation for social life — not for individuals — i.e. such an affair is to be propounded to magistrates." In former ages already

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1 See S. 18: 84/86, "he found it (the sun) to set in a miry spring".
2 *al-Fann* 66 ff.
3 *Salihi* 60. The same Ahmad al-Din who fancies that the men, mentioned in that verse, are truly protectors of women, viz. in their capacity of persons in authority (*Bayân* 581).
commentators and jurists made so many stipulations for the execution of the punishment of cutting off the hands for theft (see S. 5: 42/38) that the actual application seldom, if ever, took place. But it testifies to typically twentieth century morality, if it is argued that the prescript refers only to thieves who steal craving for more riches — and not to him who steals out of poverty. Since it is the community which bears the responsibility that everyone should receive his daily bread, belonging to him by right. Accordingly, in that case the community — and not the thief — is guilty 1.

The above-mentioned instances of apologetics are of a more defensive nature: the aim is to demonstrate that it is to mistake the shadow for the substance, if one suspects the Koran of being not disinclined to the use of primitive and obsolete notions and to prescribing uncouth manners and rules. On the other hand, the second kind of intellective apologetics we now have to deal with, appear to be bent on the exhibition of undeniably positive points which are simply to the advantage of the Holy Book. Here most energy is spent to show what an eminent promoter of science the Koran proves to be. To this end al-Mashriqi, himself once a physicist and mathematician by profession, points at S. 32: 15-17 2 and states that in the text

1 Q. vi, 57.
2 This passage is rendered paraphrasingly as follows: "Only those people put faith in Our ayat (i.e. the ordinances derived from the Book of Creation: the statutes of Revelation) who — having discovered these ayat — fling themselves down before them trembling, praise their Lord (with all their hearts) — and they are not conceited (by fancying these ayat not worthwhile or by considering them useless). They (are fascinated by the study of them to such a degree that they) do not notice the beds next to them. On account of fear of punishment or out of desire (for profit by the Book of Nature) they call to their Lord (for an encounter by studying continuously His creation), and with (much of) the blessing derived from the study of the Book of Nature they benefit the community. Hence (o people!) nobody knows how many refreshing blessings (from
“neither the throwing down of *salāt*-ritual nor the execution of devotional acts in the way of the Jews are indicated, as short-sighted *mawlawī*s think, nor the performance of *tabadduldjud*-prayers\(^1\) for which one gets up from bed; nor does *āyātinā* refer to the recitation of Koran verses, nor does *dhukkirū bi-hā* mean that somebody should remind other of Koran verses... but the *āyātinā* touch upon the ordinations of creation which are to be taken from the Book of Nature, and by *sadjda* and *tasbih* it is meant that after having acknowledged their divine origin one must study them restlessly so that no time is left for sleeping\(^2\); and that he who studies is either afraid that, if he should not do so, divine punishment would come down upon mankind on account of neglect, or desirous that divine blessings will be acquired through his inventions. In view of this God says, that, if the divine *āyāt* are observed, you do not know what pleasant sensations for the eye, i.e. blessings, you might not receive from God\(^3\). Another vindication of its scientific character, so the same writer asserts, is the fortunate circumstance of Koran’s being the only heavenly book in the world whose text has been guarded from revisions and interpolations later on. From the contents of such a well-preserved Scripture a Westerner might confidently adopt a great deal\(^4\). In Egypt Ṭanṭāwī Djawhari has become a regular champion in exhibiting science-promoting trends in the Koran. According

\(^1\) Nocturnal devotions.

\(^2\) In an analogous manner al-Mashrūq remarks on p. 190 of *Hadīth al-Qurʾān* that in S. 48: 29 (‘‘... their marks are in their faces from the effects of *sudjūd*’) it is not stated ‘on their foreheads’, like the *mawlawī*s perform *sadjda* with rubbing the forehead. No, it is recognizable ‘in their faces’, i.e. in their pale complexion, due to unbroken study of the Book of Nature!

\(^3\) *Hadīth al-Qurʾān* 79 f.

\(^4\) *Tadhkira* ii, 20 f.
to him, the enigmatic ḥurūf munqatīʿ ḥm, ṭṣ and so on, are put down with the divine purpose that people be shown the necessity of reducing words into letters, since there is no other method of learning a language. Similarly sciences and crafts go back to their roots: how can, for instance, somebody operate with bronze without knowledge about the properties of copper and tin? ¹. Then, it must be encouraging to hear from the same apologist: “Muslims should be aware that they—and not America—have laid the foundations of the science of spiritualism, because God told us in Sūra 2 (vs. 67/72 f.) to strike the man who was slain that he be restored to life and may communicate who killed him” ². But equally with the two fervent defenders just mentioned, the most other modernist exegetes stand in the breach for the scientific purport attributed to the Koran, though they appear less frequently in this rôle. Āzād e.g. exclaims with an undisguised pride at S. 10: 40/39 (“No, they ³ charged with falsehood that of which they had no comprehensive knowledge and the ta`wil ⁴ of which had not yet come to them”): “... and consider how in a few words the Koran has laid the foundation for the whole development of human research and intellect... (by establishment of the truth:)
There is no call to reject something on the mere ground that it is too difficult to be compassed. And how could such enormous intellectual progress have been made (as has actually been done in the course of time), if men of knowledge and research

¹ al-Djawābir ii, 11 f.
² al-Djawābir i, 84 ff.
³ I. e. those who were in the wrong.
⁴ ‘Interpretation’. The commentator, however, renders this word as ‘result’. Equally, the gift of ta`wil al-ahādith, ascribed to Joseph in S. 12: 6, would not signify ‘the ability to read dreams’ (the usual version), but ‘the knowledge of discerning aim, result and issue of affairs’ (Tārdjumān ii, 262).
(had not observed this maxim and) had rejected things not yet understood?!" \(^1\).

In this field of apologetics the nineteenth century theory of evolution \(^2\) is a much repeated theme. The announcement of an increasingly better and braver world was the gospel of the West for some decenniads before World-war I. But among the awakening nations of Asia and Africa its resonance is heard right up to the present day. The duration here of such utopian ideals is not a matter of surprise, since such perspectives find, of course, more credence in countries lately freed from colonial domination and still capable of being spell-bound by the wonders of modern technics than in the bombed areas of a crippled Europe. Accordingly, also in quite recent commentaries Darwinian trends are traceable. In the fourth volume of his study of Koranic Ideas, published in 1949, Parwez makes the following classification of history: 1) The age of childhood, in which people used to credit incidents with an unknown cause to supernatural intervention; 2) The period of youth, in which prophets appeared; however, man did not yet possess the divine guidance in its original form; 3) The age of discretion, starting with the Koranic revelation; had religion been based upon emotions before, from now onwards ‘the invitation to God’ (\(\text{\`a}\text{w}t\text{\`a} \text{ll} \text{\`a} \text{b}\)) was founded upon reason. See S. 12: 108\(^3\).

By Muḥ. Raḥīm al-Dīn \(^4\) a depiction of man’s religious and social evolution is detected in S. 79: 1-5 \(^5\), and the next stages of his development can be discerned:

\(^1\) Tarḍjumān ii, 181.

\(^2\) By “nineteenth century” we do not mean to say that evolutionism has been rendered out of date by recent discoveries. On the contrary, lately a scientist declared with conviction: “It is no longer a theory, it is a fact”. But nowadays there is an old-world ring about the optimistic deductions the public drew from it in the beginning, believing that a golden age of an uninterrupted progress had come.

\(^3\) Maṣārif iv, 793 ff.

\(^4\) Pāra ‘Am 17 ff.

\(^5\) Presumably five classes of angels are described in those verses.
In a social respect.

Vs. 1 After the troubles and bodily inconveniences of childbirth a new human being comes into the world.

Vs. 2 When the time of childbirth has come, all connections with the womb appear to be broken very smoothly so that the act of birth passes off easily.

Vs. 3 When the child grows up and the period of youth has come, one begins to realize that, so to say, the years of this period of life glide past gently, and at that age sorrow and grief, inherent to life, are scarcely felt.

Vs. 4 At this age life reaches its zenith. One has his family, his regular habits, receives a liberal salary, enjoys a good health and takes the best of cultural and social life.

Vs. 5 Finally, the day of old age and the experiences of

In a religious respect.

At first human faith has to stand the attack of worldly pleasures and carnal lusts.

When the first endeavours are successful and one has a hold over the flesh, one easily gets rid of the clinging connections with the world.

When the pursued objects are attained, gradually things become easier. Trust in God and devotion increase and scope is given to one’s natural gifts; a clear way is shown, few obstacles remain and swift progress is made.

When this point is reached, one excels and ranks first among contemporaries. Worship becomes still purer, good works still finer.

Finally, the worshipper chosen by God makes the requisite

1 “By those who pull out from the depth”.
2 “And by those who go forth briskly”.
3 “And by those who float jauntily”.
4 “And by those who hurry along swiftly”.
5 “And by those who draw up the dispensation”.
life lead man to meditation, and with complete surrender, bending a keen eye upon life after death, he prepares for the hereafter, absorbed in thought. Dispositions for himself and others, and through divine grace he attains the stage of perfection.

Furthermore, Koranic passages point out a similar evolution regarding the cosmos: “Creation of heavens and earth took place by means of a matter, indicated by the Koran as dukhān (cf. S. 41: 10/11). This gaseous mass, produced in the beginning, was (at first) undivided. Thereupon its components were disunited and from that the celestial bodies came into being (cf. S. 21: 31/30). The whole universe has not been brought about all at once, but creation passed through successive periods. There were six of them (cf. S. 10: 3). Planets were completed in two periods (S. 41: 11/12). The earth was created in two periods (S. 41: 8/9). The genesis of plants and highlands and the completion of vegetation likewise occurred in two periods, and thus (see in the creation of earth) there were four periods altogether (S. 41: 9/10). Creation of all organisms (i.e. of plants and animals) took place from water (S. 21: 31/30). Man passed through a series of developmental stages (S. 71: 13/14)”¹. A detailed report of man’s evolution is supplied by Parwez². Starting-point was the stage of inorganic nature. Life was still unconscious (cf. S. 2: 26/28). Life woke up through besprinkling with water (cf. S. 21: 31/30; 25:56/54). Through

¹ Tardjuman ii, 175. At times Christian theologians may equally exhibit the desire to ascribe advance knowledge of modern biological views to their Holy Book. So P. J. Roscam Abbing, a professor of one of the Dutch universities, writes: “Genesis 1 indicates that God created by degrees and by steps. He created the new by means of the old. In this way man is a ‘sudden mutation’ (sprongmutatie) of animal organism, effectuated by God” (De Mondige Gemeente, 1958, 34).

² Māʾārif ii, 6 ff.
mixing of the essential parts of water and earth protoplasm takes shape as a cell, which matter the Koran indicates as *tin lāẓib* ('sticky clay'; cf. S. 37: 11). The stage of life-cells is described in S. 6: 98. Next comes the sexual reproduction of life-cells (cf. S. 35: 12/11), *etc*. In the opinion of al-Mashriqi man's evolution does not stop when his creation is finished, but will go on ending in his 'meeting the Lord' (in this connection the words of S. 13: 2, *bi-līqā'ī rabbikum* are quoted). And the writer continues: "...at this stage of the development of this 'Man', the Supreme Divine Intelligence that originally created this Universe... bursts into a Universe-wide Handshake with Man... the Divine Trumpeter announcing that the Purpose of Creation had come to a successful End... the Two Portions of One Soul that had separated numberless millions of years back had at last united to become One still Everlasting Eternity".

Reading such fantastic interpretations one is induced to make the sarcastic comment: "But how will this end, if later on scholarly views change?" By some of the modernists the point has been foreseen. The inferences made, however, differ. Parwez testifies simply: "The Koran will not follow human hypotheses, but man's research-work is to follow the Koran. If a certain research line up with the exposition of the Koran, it will be a cause of due pride and great joy for the research-workers... But if the result of their research does not agree with the Koran, they should continue their work". Āzād gives evidence of a better judgment. Having discussed Koranic conceptions of creation, he continues: "These indications (about cosmogony) seem to corroborate theories of to-day with respect to the first creation of the heavenly bodies and the origin of the

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1 *The Human Problem* (1955), 15.
Firstly, illustrative of the dislike to other-worldliness ¹ is the vigorous fight, put up against the view that this world is merely a vale of tears and all is to be expected from the hereafter. A fundamental text in refutation of it is: "And He has made subservient to you all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth" (S. 45: 12/13) ².

al-Mashriqi counts it a ridiculous idea to think the ḏiyyāt (see S. 85: 11) to be pleasure-gardens in which 'good' people are seated at rivulets in the companion of sweet ḥurī-girls: ḏiyyāt is world-dominion and is unrelated to a hereafter! ³. And Mażhar al-Din Şiddiqi observes, after having cited S. 17: 20/19: "... those who work and live for higher things and disregard immediate difficulties and losses for the sake of nobler and more lasting benefits make their mark on history. This is the true meaning of Akhirat (hereafter), for there is a hereafter in this world also" ⁴. On the ground of S. 16: 113/112b. ⁵ Parwez puts forward: Hunger and indigence are judgments from heaven; 'honourable sustenance' (cf. S. 8: 4, 75/74) is for the

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¹ On the strength of S. 7: 29/31 ("O sons of Adam! take your embellishments to every place of worship"), Muḥ. Abū Zaid declares embellishments to form part of God's grace and their use to be an expression of thanks to Him (al-Hidaya 118).

² See e.g. Salim 27 f. Here Parwez sneers at the mawlavi's who accept the use of a telephone but reject that of a loudspeaker, since the first instrument is supposed to transmit the real voice of the speaker and the second to produce scrambled speech.

³ Ḥadīth al-Qur'ān 155a. Apprehensive for the eventual deduction from the story of the asbāb al-kahf that after their example one would be warranted to lead a hermit existence, Parwez expressly notes in the end of his exposé on it: "Their monasticism, however, was in contravention of Islam" (Maʿārif iii, 604).

⁴ The Isl. Lit., June 1957, 4.

⁵ "... but it (Mecca?) became ungrateful to God's favours; God therefore made it feel the clothing of hunger and fear, for what they had wrought".
faithful 1. In the words: "... who wander about in the earth seeking to secure the favour of God" (S. 73: 20), al-Maghribī reads an eulogy of trade, "as it constitutes one of the mightiest factors for the strength and self-preservation of the nations" 2

"The Koran", 'Ali Vahit proclaims in one of his sermons, "does not praise gold and silver, but iron 3, and wants to turn our attention to the seas and ships 4. It requires us to work for our country like lions" 5. The salāts 6 in S. 9: 100/99 and 104/103 which the Prophet has to carry out for the Beduins, are to al-Mashriqi’s mind ‘applauses’, intended as incitements to step out of the darkness of ignorance, etc. 7. Shākūr ('grateful': S. 14: 5) is, in the opinion of Åzād, "he who values as well as uses in a proper way the endowments granted to him by God" 8.

As an example pertinent to the fight against ritualism and priesthood, the following sarcastic address of al-Mashriqi might serve: "O muttī’s of to-day, to whom people go for fatwā’s (notifications of the decision of the sharī‘a in or respecting a particular case) and who strew their fatwā’s like the heaven which showers down a pouring rain, to hit whosoever they wish, and who consider themselves to be superintendents on earth, directed to pour out God’s wrath on men by means of their deceitful pamphlets... According to you people become

1 Ma‘ārif i, 127. Justifiable poverty is, as Ahmad al-Din remarks at S. 2: 274/273, if one gets into financial difficulties owing to college expenses, training for a trade, spending time for work of charity (Bayān 388 f.)

2 Tafsīr Dīwān Ṭabārākha 189.

3 Allusion to S. 57: 25.


5 Quoted by H. E. Allen in his The Turkish Transformation (1935), 216.

6 According to al-Ṭabarī here prayers are meant to invoke God’s forgiveness.

7 Taḥkīra iv, 133a.

8 Tardjumān ii, 284. Equally Ibrahim al-Djibālī derives from S. 31: 11/12 ("We did give wisdom to Luqmān, saying: Be grateful to God") the lesson that the best expression of gratitude is to make an intelligent use of God’s gifts of grace (Majalla al-Azhar, 1937, 319).
Muslim through their beard, clothes and turban, and become disbelievers if they do not wear your clothes and turban” ¹.

The ‘ancestral worship’ to be combated is in fact the evil of taqlid (traditionalism), i.e. of walking in the forbears’ ways. According to Parwez, at the root of it lies a struggle, fought for the preservation of self and against an inferiority complex, nourished by fear. All the time it has been a hindrance to the message of truth. See S. 43: 22/23 ². In connection with S. 9: 6 ³ Āzād notes that such a thing happened “in order that the man, arrived at a safe place, could contemplate freely and independently which way he would like to take. Hence it follows that as to religion mere taqlid does not meet the case. Understanding and confidence too are required. Otherwise there was no need of affording an opportunity to listen to the Koran and to meditate on it” ⁴.

To be enabled to get rid of transmitted but antiquated institutions and rules and to adjust Muslim life to the requirements of the age, necessarily requires the attribution of a high degree of flexibility to the injunctions dictated by the Koran. To this end the following argumentation is given: “It is obvious that — though human nature may be invariable — alterations appear in respect of human wants on account of the process of time and changed conditions. Nobody can deny the fact that there exists a manifest distinction between the social problems of the Arabs of thirteen centuries ago and those of our days... The principles for the solution of present-day social problematics are found in the Koran and they are to be

¹ Tadhkira i, 109 f.
² Salim 73 f.
³ “Aid him (i.e. the idolater asking for help) in order that he may hear the word of God, then let him reach his place of safety”. The most cited saying in refutation of taqlid is S. 2: 165/170 (see e.g. Muḥ. Rashid Riḍā, al-Wāḥi al-Muḥammadī 116).
⁴ Tādżjamān ii, 77.
worked out in detail according to the needs of the age. By way of illustration one might conceive it like this: When having fixed certain restrictions and rules for football, it is left to the players to score goals on their own insight. For the ‘play of life’ the Koran calls those rules ḥudūd Allāh (cf. S. 58: 5/4 and 2: 183/187). It delimits the way of life by those ḥudūd while man, going on the road traced out, is given free play to solve on his own questions and problems of his time... If, for instance, the Koran forbids ribā, it does not furnish details, reckoning with all possible shapes ribā (interest, usury) may assume in later times”¹. Similarly, Khalifa ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm contests the view that Islam offers a fixed and uniform pattern of culture, right for every epoch and place. Already at the time of ‘Umar civilization had been changed since the days of Mohammed. An Englishman who becomes a Muslim, retains a culture different from that of a Pakistani Muslim, etc. “The train of Koranic thought is this that every culture bears a certain pattern for a certain period. When that pattern has had its day, it does not return”. The text, cited in support of this thesis, is S. 7: 32/34 (“And every nation has its set time. So when their time is come, they shall not retard it an hour, nor shall they advance it”)².

Political thought

“Islam never developed the idea of ‘the State as an indepen-

¹ Maʿārif iv, 648 ff. For a similar view, expressed by an Egyptian modernist see Qāsim Amin, Tahriʿr al-Marʿa (1899), 157 (cf. J. Brugman, De betekenis van het Mohammedaanse recht in het bedendaagse Egypte, 1960, 84). The untenability of this theory of Parwez is demonstrated by Muḥ. Ḥanif Nadawi. He says i.a. that one cannot maintain the Koran merely deals with fundamental questions, leaving details for what they are. In S. 2: 222, e.g. a side-issue like that of menstruation is treated, whereas by S. 17: 87/85 the essential matter of the essence of the spirit (rūḥ) is broached (Thaqāfat Labore, Jan. 1959, 3 f.).

² Thaqāfat Labore, June 1959, 20 f.
conduct in the Civil Law” 1). Finally, it is Muḥ. Mażhar al-Dīn Siddiqī who pushes things to extremes, when declaring in regard to legislation and in reference to S. 4: 169/171 (“O people of the Book, do not exceed the limits in your religion”), that it is quite beside the mark to assert that a law cannot be an Islamic law as long as it has not got a religious base. Neither in former days nor in the modern age has the greater part of laws been deduced from religious principles 2. Here, indeed, one is very close to the conception of a secular state!

However vague, sketchy and incongruous the political theories may be, there exists an unmistakable consensus of opinion regarding the inadmissibility of communist ideology. “Islam endorses whole-heartedly”, as Parwez is ready to admit, “a socialism which works against misery of the poor and the weak, but it can certainly not advocate a socialism which denies the existence of God and bases equality of men on equality of the belly” 3. Āzād points to a like direction and says that the Koran, contrary to Communism, deems diversity in standard of life a natural fact. Otherwise man would not have any stimulus to develop his natural abilities. 4. And al-‘Aqqād

1 *The proposed political, legal and social Reforms in the Ottoman Empire and other Muhammadan States* (1883), 17. For a similar argumentation see also Muḥ. Uthmān who, referring to S. 5: 101 f., concludes that it is up to man to fix the most appropriate form of government (*Thagāfat Labore, Nov. 1959*, 8 f).

2 *Thagāfat Labore, May 1958*, 47.

3 *Ma‘ārif i*, 123 f. The author refers for the latter thesis to S. 16: 73/71 (“And God has abounded to some of you more than to others in means of subsistence”). This, however, he continues, does not imply inequality of opportunities for those who forge ahead. See S. 41: 9/10 b. which he renders as: “... and for the four seasons He fixed (the means of) livelihood which are equally (within the reach of) anyone who is in want of them”.

4 *Tardjumān ii*, 136. This commentator refers to S. 6: 165 (“And He it is who made you vicegerents on the earth, and raised some of you above others in rank, that He might try you by what He has given you”); S. 16: 73/71 and 43: 31/32.
postulates that the Koran does discern diversity in talents (and accordingly in responsibilities), but does not accept inequalities in social intercourse and racial relations.  

In refutation of the claims of Communism, writers like to demonstrate that the Koran as well is of an anti-capitalistic tenor. For this the most frequently cited locus probans is S. 59: 7, rendered by Muḥ. Maẓhar al-Dīn Ṣiddiqī as: “What God has bestowed on His Apostle, and orphans, the needy and the wayfarer in order that it may not (merely) make a circuit between the wealthy among you.” One of the texts Parwez adduces against Communism is S. 9: 112/111 (“God has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have Paradise”), and comments on it: This is the agreement upon which the social structure of Islam has been established. There are two partners: God and the faithful. There is something that is sold and there is a selling-price. In the agreement it is settled that one personally entrusts one’s property, i.e. the goods earned and one’s natural abilities, to God, i.e. the millat (religious community) which is responsible for putting God’s law into operation. In exchange for it, the millat provides Paradise which not only embraces the hereafter but this world’s life just as well. It is realized, if e.g. somebody who earns five rupees but needs ten for his daily requirements, receives five above them, whereas somebody who earns ten rupees but needs only five, gives the remaining which the Koran calls al-‘afw, to the public weal. The only thing one is allowed to consider

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1 al-Falsafa 35 ff. This author quotes S. 43: 31/32 (“... and We raise some of them above others in rank”); S. 49: 13 b. (“Truly, the most honourable of you with God is the most pious of you”) and S. 49: 10 a.

2 The Isl. Lit., Dec. 1955, 4. On the other hand, as is explained on the foregoing page: “... the right of private property is expressly recognized by the Holy Qur’ān when it says: ‘For men is that (portion of income and property) which they earn and for women is that (portion of income and property) which they earn’ (iv, 32)"
private property is that which pertains to necessaries of life, like clothing, domestic utensils, furniture, cattle.\footnote{1} Also in a more metaphysical way swords are crossed with Communism. Against Marxian materialism Parwez sets Islam’s philosophy of life which values spirit as the decisive factor and he states: Islam sees matter as a manifestation of the spiritual word, the ‘ālam amr.\footnote{2} So it is spirit in a tangible form. And it was with a well-defined purpose that God created the universe. That involves implicitly that things do not happen by chance but under direction. Man receives direction from the ‘ālam amr. It is called ‘revelation’ and determines permanent values. Among these there is for the Muslim society iḥsān (‘doing well’), implicative of ‘adl (‘justice’). Iḥsān is a derivative of ḥusn, an equivalent of tawāzūn (‘proportion’). By the system of Darwin that which is not the fittest has no right of continuance. But by the polity of ‘adl and iḥsān that which is not the fittest shall be made the fittest through adjustments of shortage and surplus, so that proportion shall be restored.\footnote{3}

The Western world with its humanistic traditions takes tolerance and freedom of thought and opinion for granted. Hence it stands to reason that the modernists are trying to mitigate the ḍijbād-doctrine as much as possible. One is warned not to apprehend it as ‘a fight for war-booty, or acquiring dominion’... God wills (only) that righteousness, fairness and truth shall be established on earth.\footnote{4} And when it is ordered in S. 9: 29 to join battle with the Jews and Christians, it should

\footnote{1}{\textit{Salim} 156 ff.}
\footnote{2}{Parwez adopts this notion from Muḥ. Iqḥāṣ who defines it as “the world of directive energy” (Reconstruction, ed. Lahore, 194). Iqḥāṣ borrowed it from Sufism, and the latter derived it from the obscure passage in S. 17: 87/85 (“And they ask you about the Spirit. Say: the Spirit belongs to the amr of my Lord”).}
\footnote{3}{\textit{Salim} 145 ff.}
\footnote{4}{Q. v, 40 and 43 (at S. 4: 73/71 ff.)}
be regarded as ‘an isolated case’, applied to people past recovery
“who had turned away completely from the religion of truth
taught by Moses and Jesus” 1. The very reason why in S. 22: 40/39 ff. Muslims are permitted to wage war is that religious
liberty would be guaranteed. And if a nation should have the
intention of ruining a sanctuary of Hindus, Christians or Jews,
the Muslims as soldiers of God are in duty bound to prevent
it 2. Virtually djihad carries, as is claimed in multifarious ways,
a most constructive purport: “The believer’s total life is djihad
to bring his human worthiness and spirit on an increasingly
higher level” 3.

So it is a sad misunderstanding to suppose a spirit of intol-
erance to prevail in the Koran. The contrary is true. No better
proof than the verdict: “There is no compulsion in religion” 4.
Other texts adduced are S. 109: 6 8; 9: 6 8 and 2: 3/4 7. On
S. 10: 108 b. (“... and I am not a custodian — wakil — over
you”) Āzād makes the comment: “I.e. I (Mohammed) have
to sound a warning note; not this: I am placed over you as a
superintendent to domineer you... If the world would under-
stand the spirit of this message, how could men continue com-

1 Tardjumân ii, 121 f.
2 Ma‘ārif iv, 443.
3 Ma‘ārif iv, 489.
4 S. 2: 257/256. This is, indeed, for Muslim modernity the most favourite
saying of the Koran!
5 “Auch aus dem Koranvers ‘Euch eure Religion, mir meine!’ liest er
(Muṣṭafā Kāmil) einen Appell zur Toleranz heraus” (F. Steppat in W I
iv, 1956, 4).
6 “In this verse (“And if one of the idolaters seek protection from
you, grant him protection”) the Qurʾān commands the highest form of
tolerance in the shape of the protection to those who do not believe in
Allah” (Nūr Ahmad in The Isl. Lit., March 1957, 43).
7 Viz. the words: “... who believe in what is revealed to you, and what
was revealed before you”, which are said to be “a purification of the mind
from prejudice against (other) religions and founders of religions (Q. i, 21).
batting each other only on account of disparity of views on faith and works?!. . . Consider, what is the very cause of all religious quarrels? This, that men do not distinguish between tadhkir (‘drawing attention to’) and tawkeil (‘bossiness’) 1. And that Mohammed’s private dealings were in line with this Koranic teaching, one may deduce from the fact that he, though “strictly opposed as he was to the religion of the idolaters, had married three of his own daughters to them” 2.

Then, according to ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Maghribī, the Koran also pleads for liberty of the press. This can be read out of the words: “. . . and let not scribe or witness come to harm” (S. 2: 282 b). That would imply: “Do not permit journalists to be obstructed in the execution of their duties” 3. And one of the Koranic arguments brought forward by another apologist concerning freedom of opinion is S. 16: 126/125, “Summon to the way of your Lord with . . . debates with them on what is the best” 4.

A delicate point as to the subject of tolerance is the poser, broached by Muḥ. Dja‘far Phulwärawi: “Can a fiduciary position be given to a non-believer?” 5. Treating the problem the author starts with a reference to S. 3: 114/118 (“O you who believe! do not make friends from among others than your own people”). In view of this verse one might be warranted to answer in the negative the question: “Could a key-position in an Islamic state be entrusted to a non-Muslim?” Yet, there is an episode in the history of the Prophet deserving of notice. At the Assembly of ‘Aqaba, al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib acted as protector of Mohammed. At that moment al-‘Abbās

1 Tārdjumān ii, 173 f.
2 Mīrzā Abu Ḥ-Faḍl, The Life of Mohammed (1910), 201.
3 ‘Alā Hāmish al-Tafsīr 87.
5 Thaqāfat Lahore, March 1958, 48 ff.
was still a non-believer. Nevertheless, as is to be concluded from this, he appeared well informed on the secret *bidjra*-intention of the Prophet! Therefore, the inference can be drawn, that the command of S. 3: 114/118 must be held for a general rule, to which exceptions are conceivable, inasmuch as not all unbelievers are alike. Notwithstanding wide divergences of religious issues, one should never forget that they too are human.

**SOCIAL LIFE**

For Muslim modernity society must be in the sign of progress. Utterly improvements should be pursued. For that, Darwinian evolutionistic thought is put into a utilitarian frame: more and more the useless becomes superseded by matters of value. Thus, as is claimed by Āzād, the Koran is denoting the permanence of the most useful (*anfa*), not the survival of the fittest (*ašlah*), since in its view the fit is above all the useful ¹. When in S. 11: 2 Mohammed is said to become a *bashir* (‘proclaimer’) for his community, then that can only mean that he is urged to supply the means for mankind’s march of civilization ². Over against the Christian dogma of God’s love manifested in Christ, Āḥmad al-Dīn sets: “God’s love is that of a wise man... Thus He procures expedients and ways as circumstances may require: means for reclamation of criminals, remedies for the sick, food for the hungry, etc. He prepares everything. For the righteous He gives the resources for a better future. His wisdom is identical with His mercy, His penalties identical with reformation. Hell is a hospital...” ³.

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¹ *Tārījumān* ii, 278 f. (comment on S. 13: 18/17).
³ *Bayān* 453. Or, to put it in the poetical language of Muḥ. Iq̄bāl: “Hell is a corrective experience which may make a hardened ego once more sensitive to the living breeze of Divine Grace” (*Reconstruction*, ed. Lahore 123).
To succeed in ameliorating social and human conditions one should act from a typically bourgeois morality, of which moderation, utility and common sense are the main constitutive elements. “Islam”, so Mawdūdi expounds, “does not suppress any human desire, but it keeps every passion within a fitting and rational frame. It does not reject soaring ideas, yet it lends their flying a better sphere and a more precise direction”¹. God charges His worshippers with the ‘mean’ (al-masaf) and asks obedience of what they are equal to ². Regarding the Koranic statement: “Fair-seeming to men is the love of desires, of women and sons and hoarded treasures of gold and silver” (S. 3: 12/14), we are told: “These are favoured and delightful pleasures. For all that they are not presumed impure or repelling, nor is there the idea of coming to think them impure and repelling... Such is a distinguishing feature of Islam, namely to consider human nature and to take it as it is” ³.

Human worthiness is zealously upheld. Slavery, as is asserted by Parwez in imitation of Aḥmad Khān ⁴, has already been abolished in principle by the wording of S. 47: 5/4 (“... take prisoners; and afterwards release them out of kindness or in return for ransom”). And the Koranic provisions concerning slaves are merely relevant to those who had been enslaved before ⁵.

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¹ Taṣḥīḥāt i, 29.
² Q. ii, 50. Comment on S. 2: 203/207 b. (“And God is clement to the worshippers”).
³ Q. iii, 56. Next, the author notes gladly that modern psychology has found harmful issues resulting from repression of inner impulses.
⁴ See the present writer’s The Reforms 28 f.
⁵ Ma‘ārif iv, 505. Of quite a different opinion is Muḥ. Ḥanīf Nadawi. He admits frankly that — however reprehensible the institution of slavery must be held, especially nowadays — the existence of regulations for slaves in the Koran cannot be disavowed. Consequently, it is an extremely weak and unbased excuse to declare that actually the Koran regards slavery as not permitted. Nowhere is this confirmed. In view of the stage
Further, as a rule, a better status of the Muslim woman is sought after, and in that light Koranic sayings are interpreted. In the opinion of A. de Zayas Abbasi the phrase: “And men have a standing above them (women)” (S. 2: 228 c.) “refers to the obligation of women whose menfolk provide for them, to adapt their style of living to the economic capacity of the wage-earner... This is the single degree of advantage which the Holy Qur‘ān, in all justice, grants the Muslim men over their womenfolk”¹. Aḥmad al-Din limits the purport of S. 2: 228 c. by declaring that it does not apply to married people but to men only; so it has simply a bearing upon the position of men in councils and committees². Equally S. 12: 28 b. (“This is a trick of you women; surely, your tricks are frightful”) is to be understood in a restrictive sense. The judgment, as Āzād notices, touches merely upon the Egyptian women who are addressed, not upon women as such. And it is inadmissible, as the commentators use to do, to quote the text as an argument for the contention that women, in comparison with men, are more crafty and immoral. The Koran (see S. 4: 36/32 and 33: 35) does not distinguish between man and woman³.

Similarly, abuses sanctioned by or founded upon texts from the Holy Book are denounced. Thus one is not entitled to cite, in support of child-marriage, S. 65: 4 in which it is stated that the ‘idda (appointed term for divorced women to wait before contracting a new marriage) is only three months for

of civilization at the time of Revelation the Koran was forced to acknowledge the institution as a reality (Thaqāfat Lahore, Oct. 1958, 5).

¹ The Isl. Lit., Oct. 1953, 54.
² Bayān 357. al-ʿAqqād, however, likes to support masculine sentiments of superiority and adduces as one of the proofs of man’s excellence that — though from time immemorial mourning over the dead is a typically female occupation — literary activities of women have never produced a mourning poem equal to the products of their male confrères (al-Falsafa 48).
³ Tardjumān ii, 265 f.
'such as have not menstruated too'. That does not relate to children but to certain morbid symptoms and to women who on account of a bodily defect do not have their courses. In connection with the so-called ḥidjāb-verse (S. 33:53) the definition is given: "‘Hijab’ is the psychological ‘veil’ of reserve which each Muslim must set up between him (herself and his) her fellow human beings, and which constrains each individual Muslim to the self-imposed observance of the rules of decency, propriety and self-respect". After a fierce condemnation of the easy divorce proceedings made up of ‘three times calling ṭalāq and there you are!’, Parwez points out with the help of S. 4:38/34 f. how according to the Koran a lot of requirements are to be met for ultimately attaining a divorce. Firstly, with softness ("admonish them") and hardness ("beat them") a reconciliation must be striven after. Next, after a report of a third party ("then send a judge from his people and a judge from her people") a righteous verdict must be passed in order to see whether a modus vivendi can be found ("If they wish for reconciliation"), or a divorce remains the only solution left.

1 Salim 70.
2 A. de Zayas Abbasi, The Isl. Lit., Nov. 1953. Muḥ. Djaʿfar Phulwārāwī shows the improbability of a customary wear of a burqa (veil) in Koranic times, when making the matter-of-fact observation that there would be little sense in commanding men to cast down their looks (see S. 24:30) in the presence of women, if the latter were already wrapped in a veil (Thuqafat Labore, Jan. 1960, 37). Muḥ. ʿUthmān, an other contributor of this Lahore periodical — though himself an adversary of parda — believes the ḏjalātīb, recommended in S. 33:59, to be head-covering wraps (ghʻandhat), not a coating around (lapet). But, so he adds, the verse has only a temporary rule in view, necessitated by the calumniations of the wicked ‘hypocrites’ and Jews to which virtuous Muslim women were exposed. In such a case it was expedient to avoid every occasion to rumour (Thuqafat Labore, May 1960, 11).
3 Salim 61. Above that, the writer claims, in view of S. 2:228 ("... And the same is due to them as from them"), the wife, just as well as the husband, may ask for divorce (Salim 67). Pointing at S. 65:1 ("... Do not drive them out of their houses, nor allow them to depart, unless they have
Also the claim is often made that polygamy is not propagated by the Koran, and we are told that "the verses in the Qur'ān relating to polygamy refer specifically to the war-orphans, girls and widows. This means that polygamy was allowed only for abnormal times, specially during a period of war to solve an urgent social problem" ¹. Though in the beginning polygamy may have been connived at, and there was up to the year 4 A.H. "no clearly stated Quranic sanction against the pre-Islamic custom of polygamy", the verses 3 and 128/129 in Sūra 4 ², dating from the fourth year A.H., however, "lay down the principle of monogamic marriage in Islam" ³. Lastly, the same author wishes to draw attention to the ending of S. 33: 50 ("that no blame may attach to you") dating from "the end of year 5 or beginning of year 6", and concludes from it: "In other words, the ordinary Muslim, if in the same position as the Prophet, i.e. with a plurality of wives (married after the revelation of verses 3 and 128/129 of Sūra 4), would be blame-worthy according to Quranic tenets" ⁴. By Muḥ. Abū Zaid S. 4:29/25 is advanced in refutation of the admissibility of taking bondmaids or prisoners of war as concubines⁵. And the furūṭ, which according S. 70:30 need not be guarded from the glances of wives and slaves, are not the private parts but concealed physical defects which might injure somebody's reputation, if seen by other people than the housemates⁶.

committed an open indecency") Muḥ. Abū Zaid declares violation of the rules established for married life the only legitimate ground for divorce (al-Hidāya 445).

² The loci usually quoted by Muslim advocates of monogamy: The impracticability of the required equitable treatment of several wives would implicitly entail the rule of monogamy.
⁴ A. de Zayas Abbasi, The Isl. Lit., March 1956, 47.
⁵ al-Hidāya 64.
⁶ al-Hidāya 455.
Besides by its matrimonial morality the Koran gets Muslim modernity into trouble by food regulations which have lost all meaning for present-day society. Through a subtle reasoning Aḥmad Khān tries to suggest the lawfulness of eating strangled hens which is interdicted in S. 5: 4/3. To this end the verse undergoes the following philological treatment by him: “Now I declare that to my mind in these four words 1 ‘t’ represents the ‘t’ of a feminine adjective, while each time the noun bātima, meaning ox, quadruped or herbivore has been left out. In other words, this verse prescribes: Forbidden to you is the quadruped which is strangled, beaten to death, killed by a fall or being smitten with horns. Birds do not come within this regulation” 2. Āzād eases the problem by appealing to S. 10: 60/59 (“Say: Have you seen what God has sent down for you of sustenance, of which you made thereupon unlawful and lawful categories?”). Taught by this as Peter by the vision of Joppa (Acts 10: 11 ff.), he concludes: “According to the Koran all things created for food and drink are pure (ḥalāl) in principle and not tabu, i.e. all that is eatable is pure. If the Koran forbids something to be eaten, it is because of being harmful and rotten. This verse is a clinching evidence against all those severe fiqhi-scholars who simply on the ground of private opinion and inference label lawful things as unlawful, as well as against those people who deem denial of lawful things a deed of piety rendering access to God” 3.

Then, the prohibition in S. 2: 276/275 with respect to taking ribā (interest) which is rather awkward for modern trade and industry requires a re-interpretation or at least a fuller elucidation. Aḥmad al-Dīn urges to pay heed to the verses 273/270 ff., preceding it. There alms-giving to the poor is discussed. Hence

1 al-munkhābin, al-mawqūdhat, al-mutaradiyyat, al-naṣīḥat.
2 Tādhīb al-Akhlāq ii, 228.
3 Tādhīb al-Akhlāq ii, 162 f.
it follows that the ribā-interdiction bears only upon taking interest from money lent to the poor. For the rest: “If an artisan or homo practicus says to a moneyed man: Take me on and give me a suitable pay, then it is a lawful arrangement, when entered into by mutual agreement. Conversely, a moneyed man might say with as much right to an artisan: You are a director of a concern. With the aid of my money I give you work as if you were an employee. If you return later on as much as is reasonable, you may use it for your business”\(^1\). Likewise Ya‘qūb Shāh holds the view that the condemned ribā refers to poor people who on account of want of vital necessaries of life are compelled to borrow money on interest.\(^2\) This is emergent and ‘consumptional interest’, and with good reason it was interdicted. But one has no right to declare without comment certain forms of interest to be forbidden which did not yet exist in or before the time of Revelation. Thus the ‘productive interest’ in behalf of large concerns is quite justifiable. Notice also S. 2: 216/219, where is spoken of matters whose loss\(^3\) (ithm) is greater than their profit. From this Āzād draws the conclusion: “One should keep balance between loss and profit. One ought to let that go whose loss is on the increase, even if at some moment there is a little bit of profit. And one ought to choose that whose profit is on the increase, even if losses are bound up with it”. After this quotation of one of Āzād’s Koranic explanations, Ya‘qūb Shāh goes on to state: “In accordance with these principles productive interest is to be tested. If the profit of something becomes gradually greater

\(^{1}\) Bayān 393 ff.

\(^{2}\) Ātā Allāh Pālawī demonstrates that the prohibition of asking for ribā only bears upon persons who have a title to alms (ṣadqāt), and bases this supposition mainly upon S. 2: 277/276; “God brings ribā to nought and He causes alms to prosper” (Thaqāfat Lahore, Oct. 1958, 27 ff.).

\(^{3}\) The author attributes this signification of ithm (‘sin!’) on the authority of Mawdūdī and Āzād.
than its loss, why are people who lend money to it on interest to be stigmatized as inhabitants of Hell?" Finally, the writer mentions that in the present state of mundane affairs no Muslim nation can do without loans, and in view of this one should recall the words of S. 2: 181/185b.: "God desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty" 1.

Not every modernist, however, takes such a liberal view of *ribā*-affair. Sayyid Quṭb thinks *ribā* censurable, since 1) it does not render the community any help and 2) no risk is run: capital increases in that way automatically. On these grounds he declares the holding of debentures at a permanent and guaranteed rate of interest to be unlawful 2. On the other hand he does not object to keeping share-holdings, for that may be of a profitable and helpful use to share-issuing companies, and at the same time one shows oneself ready to run an eventual risk of loss 3. (Curiously enough, the author does not seem troubled by the then emerging element of ‘gambling’, condemned by S. 2: 216/219. Similar is the case with orthodox Protestants who reject lotteries and football-pools, but do not mind speculating on the Stock-Exchange!).

Occasionally complications arise through developments of social life which did not or could not happen in the time of Relevation, but on which the Book of divine guidance nevertheless must enlighten its believers. Thus there is nowadays in the Eastern countries the vexed problem of a high birth-rate, furthered by better medical provisions. Muḥ. Dja’far Phulwārawī who on other occasions also does not fear to touch on ticklish matters, remarks on it: "There is no doubt that children

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2 The reason why in S. 2: 276/275 commerce is stated to be lawful and *ribā* forbidden Shaikh Maḥmūd Aḥmad ascribes to the circumstance that the former requires labour, the latter does not (*Thaqāfat Labore*, Oct. 1960, 22 ff.).

form God’s greatest gift of grace. But when this gift takes the shape of an inundation\(^1\), is then the limitation of it to be branded as a religious sin?!” He draws attention to the rule of S. 2: 216/219 (“Their evil is greater than their profit”), and argues that this does not only apply to intoxicants and gambling. Moreover: the Koran enjoins as for our conduct to keep balance and to practise equity (cf. S. 55: 7/8 and 5: 46/42 b.). And for balance and equity extremes are to be avoided. Among the practical measures for a reduction of the birth-rate the author mentions also the checking of polygamy as an advisable means\(^3\).

Lastly, modern Muslim Koran interpretation sets itself the task to prepare the ground for cultural activities. Chirāgh ‘Ali writes a paper to prove\(^4\) that the prohibition of making images lacks any Koranic foundation. To this end he cites S. 34: 12/13 which says that djinns constructed for Solomon what he pleased of palaces and images. In other words, Solomon commissioned the making of images. And he could know what was permissible, since he was a prophet!\(^5\) While in the hadith-literature (Bu. Buyū‘ B. 104; Mu. Libās 100) the interdiction of making images is chiefly based upon the Koranic conception of God as the great Muṣawwir (Fashioner; cf. S. 59: 24) — and man should not imitate the godhead! — it is precisely the same Koranic datum which is seized upon by Muḥ. Dja‘far Phulwārawī to claim the opposite. He argues that man is allowed, if not bidden, to cultivate plastic arts in view of S. 59: 24 and the Koranic

\(^1\) Already al-Ghazālī considers the fear of too great a number of children which one will not have the means to feed, a legitimate ground for coitus interruptus (al-Iḥyā‘ ii, 34).

\(^2\) I.e. of wine and game of hazard.

\(^3\) Thagāfat Labore, April 1958, 49 ff.

\(^4\) With good reason; see A. J. Wensinck’s art. in EI on Šūra: “... the prohibition of images... is erroneously traced to the Kurān”.

\(^5\) Tabdib al-Akhlāq iii, 125 f.
incitement to take on the *sībgha* (dye) of God (S. 2: 132/138), i.e. to acquire the divine attributes ¹.

Then, a much disputed ² cultural expression is music. But according to Muḥ. Djaʿfar Phulwārawī one does not need to have scruples about it. The Koran makes mention of it in a positive sense, stating in S. 43: 70 and 30: 14/15 that the inhabitants shall enjoy music and song (*ḥabra*). He admits that one of the meanings of *ḥabra* is ‘gladness’, and that generally these passages are understood as announcing people’s happiness in Paradise. To reinforce his argument he refers to the explanation of the Tāḏj al-ʿArūs (iii, 118) where it is said that *ḥabra* denotes listening to music in Paradise, as well as to an exegesis of Zadjdjādj who states that it is a term for every fine and edifying song. Above this one should bear in mind that “even supposing that the Koran does not mention song *expressis verbis*, it is not necessarily a negation of its being a gift of grace. Countless gifts of grace in this life and the hereafter are recorded in the Koran, but nowhere is there an explicit mention of a flowerbed. Would that mean that a flowerbed is not a gift of grace?!” A *locus probans* in his opinion is also S. 41: 31 b. (“And you shall have therein what your souls desire and you shall have therein what you ask for”) which warrants the supposition that one may assume the existence of a Paradise for the ear too ³.

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¹ *Thaqūfat Labore*, March 1960, 17.
² Invention of the devil in the eyes of Muslim legalists and also an indispensable part of a *ṣūfī’s* equipment.
³ *Thaqūfat Labore*, April 1958, 51 ff. The same author derives a new argument from the example set by David, the prophet, who all the days of his life sang and executed music (*Thaqūfat Labore*, March 1960, 17).
VI. CONCLUSION

By Western scholarship modern Muslim argumentation is in general cried down as 'mere apologetics'. Certainly, the good intentions of the authors are acknowledged, but little value can be attached to it.

For this, at least two reasons are accountable. Firstly, Orientalists base such an opinion too exclusively upon works of Muslim modernity, written in European languages, and in particular Amir 'Ali's renowned The Spirit of Islam (1922) is taken as typical. These writings, however, are unfit to serve as specimens, because of the simple fact that the authors are too much conscious of being read by Westerners, and are constantly jealous of the good name Islam must maintain. Consequently, the exposé's are a-priori of an apologetic nature in a much restricted sense of the word. To the Western reader's mind the arguments put forth seem overdone and carry little conviction. In contrast with this, the views expressed by apologists in their home languages (Urdu, Arabic), are far better balanced. Here no anxiety with regard to Christian readers prevails. Moreover, the instrument of speech employed lends itself more readily to formulate specific Islamic ideas with all the subtle shades they imply. Secondly, as a rule Western Orientalists do not realize apologetics to be actually implicative of religion as such. Virtually, religion represents the human response to transcendent realities. A response like that is eo ipso bound to the limitations of man's inherent faculties. Faith, therefore, has to make use of ordinary language and has to follow the rules of sound reasoning and denotation. And speech as well as thought are products of the age. So religion must accommodate itself to the spirit and conditions of the moment. Otherwise,
it does not function really. And from that dire necessity to communicate with 'the world' follows naturally the demand for apologetics...

Yet, one should be careful as to apologetics: different degrees of value and plausibility are found in it, so that a normalization appears to be incumbent. For our purpose we deem it relevant to differentiate between apologetics pertaining to primarily intellectual problems and apologetics regarding existential needs and moral issues.

Intellective apologetics, if efficacious, yield a way of defence through the manifestation of a deeper evidence than that observed by the opponent. In that manner the challenge directed to religion is answered with the counter-challenge: "You are mistaken, for in fact you do'nt see the point!" A fine paradigm of such 'rectifying' apologetics is offered by Paul's argumentation in the first epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 15, vss. 35 ff. The opponents are Greeks who could not imagine the resurrection of the body. The apostle begins by thinking and expressing himself in terms of the adversary. He reminds them of empiric facts they themselves could observe, viz. that in nature decomposition and continuity need not be mutually exclusive: "The seed which you yourself sow can have no new life given to it, unless it die", i.e. the sprouted plant is a new creation after the seed's decomposition. Having made a statement on common ground with the questioner, the Christian apologist points out deeper evidence: "It is virtually God who gives it a body just as He ordained it from the first", i.e. it is a divine law of nature, no separate decision of God is required for each case! This counter-offensive intends to explain: Reality is not, as you may think, the result of blindly acting laws of nature, but the work of a Creator who established natural laws through which both seeds and people who have died acquire new bodies, appropriate to them (In a debate with Meccan
sceptics on the same question of the possibility of bodily resurrection Mohammed assumes the existence of gods besides Allāh as a common ground to start from. Suppose, so he asserts, it were as you imagine, the whole creation would necessarily be overturned by the competition of such powerful antagonists. Cf. S. 21: 21 f.).

The second kind of apologetics bearing upon problems and difficulties man is confronted with, if alive to his responsibilities and to the precariousness of existence, tries "to correlate the questions implied in the situation with the answers in the message" ¹. An instance of it are the words of Jesus on the pressing feeling of uneasiness, inherent in human nature. Attention is drawn to an observation everybody can make: Look at the exemplary behaviour of birds and plants! They do not worry. So it is up to you. When that has been said, a specific religious view of the matter is broached, and the subject is brought into a different context. There is more than that, so it continues. The care for food and drink is after all a matter of pagan concern. Relevant to the believer's proper ambition is the search for his spiritual life (see Luke 12: 22-34).

If we now apply the above-denoted standards for justifiable forms of apologetics to the endeavours of Muslim modernity in this field, we find that in so far as intellectual problems are at issue, its chief concern is concentrated on the challenge: "Your religion does not leave scope for the march of science". The answer is, as we have seen in the foregoing chapter: "The Koran does not only admonish to the study of nature, but it also confirms scientific results, men have only reached many centuries after its coming down". Formally this response agrees with the scheme sketched above: Challenge met by a counter-challenge. Materially, however, the statement is only partly

¹ P. Tillich, Systematic Theology i, 8.
provable. Plausible arguments are adducible, if one holds that the Koran does not tend to hinder scientific research, but on the contrary wants to advance it. The Koran, indeed, in support of its message also appeals to man’s intellectual faculties. And its repeated urge to take note of natural phenomena (as in S. 2: 159/164; 3: 187/190; 10: 6; 16: 67/65; 45: 4/5) justifies A. J. Arberry to speak of an “acceptance of reason as an ally to faith” by the Koran. Moreover, a certain attempt at logical reasoning cannot be denied to it: a favourite method of argumentation is the deductive of an *a minore ad maiorem*. The continuous regeneration observable in nature is a sign, if not a proof, of man’s resurrection (S. 7: 55/57; 22: 5; 43: 10/11; 50: 9 ff.). By Jesus also the same rule of logic is applied (see e.g. Matthew 6: 26 ²), and rabbinic exegeses as well could take advantage of it ³. In short, to our mind it is the good right of Muslim modernity to argue in view of these demonstrable Koranic trends and the vital interest for the Muslim world to get speedily acquainted with Western knowledge and technics that, if in the time of Revelation people were stimulated to study nature and its wonderful workings — though that may have been done first and foremost with the religious intent to render disbelieving Meccans attentive to Allāh’s omnipotence—, in the present circumstances this should be interpreted as a task the Almighty charges His believers with in order to create for their compatriots a more tolerable standard of living. But if in addition the contention is made that the Koran was far ahead of its time with regard to physics and biology, Muslim

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1 *Revelation and Reason in Islam* (1957), 12.

2 “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?”

apologetics overshoots its mark. This is in flat contradiction with the simple and unquestionable fact, that the Koranic notions are adapted to the world-view of the first hearers of Allāh's recited revelations. And when it comes to constructing correlations between the requirements of the hour with answers from the message through 'interpretation' of Koranic sayings which plainly clashes with their actual meaning, such apologetics is no longer admissible. Gradually however, — and that has been equally noted in the preceding chapter — the insight into the historical context of Koranic description of nature is increasing among our expositors. And it is really a promising sign that nowadays by scholars like Amin al-Khūli the so-called scientific exegesis of the Holy Book is refuted and rejected in unequivocal terms. Moreover, such commentators do not confine themselves to explaining that the Koran ought not to be consulted for scientific questions, but are even ready to admit that it makes use of an antiquated Weltanschauung and of obsolete social norms, in particular with regard to the position of slaves and women. Here a beginning of Muslim historical criticism of the Koran is noticeable.

As for the second way of apologetics with which it is attempted to correlate the needs of man experienced in his naked existence with Koranic guidance, we observe among several apologists a keen sense of being responsible for help to the people, perplexed by the dazzling changes in the world of to-day. And we saw in the last chapter quite a lot of actual problems are tackled, as the disputed admissibility of interest-account, birth-control and the like. By our expositors the Holy Book is not approached out of a purely scholarly interest, as is the case with a great many studies of the Bible in Europe and America. That is not timely! As a drowning person derives no benefit from swimming theories, the confused Muslim world at the moment is not served in the first place with clever essays on
the background of Koranic ideas. Accordingly, present-day Muslim interpretation follows a pragmatic line. The principle started from is the firm belief in the everlasting guiding value of the sacred writings. That is a correct starting-point, for it is the very message of the Koran to grant divine direction to man. Consequently, in interpreting such an authoritative religious book, one has — in compliance with its set purport to offer guidance for all times — to distinguish between the attempts to search for the original (e mente auctoris) meaning of the text, and the further efforts to find out the connotative sense it might have as an imperative word relevant to the believer's attitude towards the actuality, in which he lives. The former design may interest the savant chiefly, if not exclusively; notwithstanding, his inquiry has not yet been exhaustive. On the other hand the Orientalist has every right to apply the criterion whether the derived rule or attained solution of the Muslim apologist be relevant to the tenor of the text and the leading features of the Koran. This is not always easy to decide, and in general a Muslim believer will sooner recognize a connection than an 'outsider'. But that does not alter the fact that, while the Western scholar must take modernity's apologetic endeavours seriously, Muslim modernists on their part should acknowledge the scientific criteria with which the West wants to operate in reviewing the specimens of their Koran interpretation.
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