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INITIATION TO THE
QUR'AN

Abridged & revised

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SECOND THESIS

This book represents one of the two theses, presented on December 15th, 1947 at “Université de Paris”, owing to them, the Author has merited the grade of “Docteur ès-Lettres” with mention “Très-Honorable”

The customary and most respectful salutation on the Prophet, “Peace and blessings of God be upon him” which is made after each mention of his name within this work has been omitted for ease of reading; however the reader is kindly requested to observe this Muslim tradition.

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First Printing, 2017

ISBN 798-977-90-5043-0

The Egyptian National Library and Archives -
Number: 23624 / 2017

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INTRODUCTION

*Of abbreviator for the French abridged version
adapted to this version*

This book “INITIATION TO THE QUR'AN” which I have the pleasure to present today in its English abridged version, is one of the most important books about the Qur'an, in its form and its essence.

Its author, Dr Muhammad Abdallah Draz, one of the eminent scholars of Islam, was a professor at Al-Azhar for several years before he travelled to France to obtain his doctorate. He wrote it in French under the title of “INITIATION AU KORAN” as well as the principal thesis “LA MORALE DU KORAN”, with competence and efficiency.

In my abridgement, I maintained the author's language and style in the whole book, I abridged or eliminated certain passages or details, however without interrupting the chain and consistency of ideas or the equilibrium of the statements, which remain positively faithful to the original.

On the other hand, I added in this summary the complete English translation of the Quranic verses which the author, in his statement, mentioned the surah and verse numbers, but did not state the text of the verse itself. This insertion, in fact, has been added in order to make it easier for the reader to instantaneously refer to a verse and to save him time from looking for an English translation of the Qur'an which may not be available at the time. These texts, as well as the verses mentioned in the content of the book, have been gathered from “The

Noble Qur'an, English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary" edited and published by King Fahd Complex, at Al-Madinah, on 1404H.

The high merit deserved of this book, beyond its highly refined literary style of the French original, principally resides in its methodology in expanding different themes, in managing arguments and evidence, and in analyzing proofs and documents, in a manner so clear and so decisive, able to convince any impartial seeker of truth and virtue.

We hope that the study of such sound doctrine, the Qur'anic one, contributes in diminishing tension, hate and conflicts which infect our century.

Khaled Fahmy

Alexandria, August 15th, 2017

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SUMMARY OF THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

The Gracious Qur'an may be studied from different angles, but they all lead to two principal subjects: *language* and *thought*. The Gracious Qur'an is a literary and a doctrinal book at the same time and with the same degree.

With respect to "*thoughts*", this treasury of ideas which is revealed through its high-level literary style, we shall present three groups of ideas. *First*: the nature of its call, that is to say, the group of solutions which the Gracious Qur'an presents for the two everlasting problems of knowledge and behaviour. *Second*: the ways of convincing which the Qur'an uses to prove the truthfulness of its Doctrine. *Third*: the evidence by which the Qur'an proves the divine and sacred character of its Message.

In fact, the present study aimed originally at extracting the Qur'anic *Law of Moral* separately from what attaches this law to the Gracious Qur'an, which was the theme of another book in French under the title of LA MORALE DU KORAN. Nevertheless, we viewed that it was beneficial to consider the main outlines of this towering doctrinal construction that is the Qur'an, to point out the place of the moral element inside the whole framework and to extract the main ideas existing in each part of the Book of Islam.

In addition to certain indispensable historical points added in accordance with the worthy proposal of Mr. Maurice Patronnier De Gandillac, the professor at

Sorbonne, the essential theme of our book is considering the message of the Gracious the Qur'an as a whole and as it is expounded upon by the Qur'an itself: not as it was more or less loyally transmitted through judgements, interpretations or applications throughout history. As we progress, we shall meet some severe judgements to correct and some precocious conclusions to rectify in relation to the Qur'an. In all this, it is the Qur'an in principle which we shall leave to defend itself and to present proof after proof. Thus the reader will have the opportunity to value such arguments historically and philosophically.

It is worthy to note that the extraction of the ideas of the Qur'an from their envelopes, separating them from their local frame and bring them closer to the European intellect, which is remote from the Arabic language, is a fulfilment of a part of the true mission of the Qur'an. As the Qur'an aims man wherever he is and whatever race he belongs. Constantly appealing to reason, to the good sense and to man noble feelings. The Qur'an is a universal invitation aimed at purifying habits, clarifying creeds, bringing them closer to one another, eliminating racial barriers and national chauvinism and replacing the law of brute force with the law of truth and justice.

Dr M. Draz

Paris, February 21st, 1947.

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PART I
PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL NOTIONS
PREAMBLE

Before engaging ourselves in a methodical analysis of the sacred Book of Islam, we shall remember the circumstances in which it appeared and the stages it went through before reaching us.

First, several dates relating to Prophet Life, the history of one is inseparably bound to the other.

However different may be the nature of our judgement with respect to the origin of the Qur'an, there is no doubt that Historically speaking, the Qur'an is from Muhammad Bin Abdullah, whether he borrowed it from his innermost thoughts and from his milieu knowledge as the disbelievers say, or he received it dictated textually by a celestial messenger, (a mediator between God and him). The Qur'an asserts that it is "*The Trustworthy Spirit*" (XXVI, 193); it is the angel:

"Gabriel" who "has brought it down to your heart by Allâh's permission, confirming what came before it and guidance and glad tidings for the believers" (II, 97).

So long as our experience cannot reach that superhuman source it is from Muhammad definitely, that we have received it, whether he was its true author or its unique reproducer and transmitter to humanity.

* * *

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE MUHAMMAD BEFORE PROPHETHOOD

What is this personage, who is Muhammad?

Muhammad belonged to an illustrious family in Makkah from the tribe of Quraish, from the branch of Bani Hâshim. That family was famous more for religious piety than political power. Tradition considers him a descendant of Ishmael, son of Abraham, by several generations, about the number and names of which we are sure only of twenty-one until ‘Adnan.

According to unanimous opinions of biographers, Muhammad was born on Monday from the second week of lunar month Rabi’I ⁽¹⁾, in the year so-called of the Elephant. That is to say, from the date of the unsuccessful invasion of Hegaz by Abraha, Viceroy of Yemen, under the Byzantine dominion, with an army in which the greatest elephant in the Abyssinia kingdom took part. The most accredited scholars mention that this date corresponds to the 53rd year before Hejira, that is to say, the year 571 A.D.

Muhammad was born an orphan, “*Did He not find you (O Muhammad) an orphan and gave you a refuge?*” (XCIII, 6). His father, Abdullah, had died seven months before his birth.

(1) In his “Memory on the Arab Calendar Before Islam”, (p.38) Muhammad pasha Al-Falaki, the Egyptian astronomer, situates the date of the Prophet’s birth precisely on 9th Rabi’ I which corresponds to April 20th 571 A.D. In accordance in that with Silvestre de Sacy.

Following a consecrated custom of the nobles of Makkah who used to send their newborn infants to be educated in the healthy air of the open desert, he was entrusted to a Bedouin wet nurse, Halima, from the tribe of Bani Sa'd, until the age of four. Then, his mother, Âmma, with the aid of an Abyssinian governess, Omm Aiman, took charge of his education. Unluckily, he did not enjoy that maternal tenderness for long. Having lost his mother at the age of six, he was received by his grandfather, 'Abdel-Mottalib, who showed him a very particular affection and predicted a great destiny for him. He was barely eight years old when he lost his grandfather too. He, henceforth, received the protection of his uncle 'Abd-Manaf, surnamed Abu-Talib, who reserved for him a sincere paternal love although he was not in an easy situation because of his numerous children. Eventually, we see Muhammad (at the age of twelve) accompanying his uncle in his voyage to Syria on 582 for his commercial business.

It is to this voyage that refers the famous story of Muhammad's first contact with the religious milieu in the person of a Christian monk called Bahira at Bosra (in Syria). Tradition tells us that this erudite, having remarked some signs announced in the Sacred Texts accompanying the march of the caravan, invited the travellers to have lunch with him and began to examine their physiognomy and to compare their signals with the documents in his possession. However, he identified nothing. Finally, when he talked to our adolescent who arrived later, he approached Abu-Talib and said to him: "This young man is called to play an immense role in the

world. Return him to his country as soon as possible. However, be always watchful for him and be cautious lest the Jews should hurt him if they knew about him what I know”.⁽¹⁾

We know few details about Muhammad between this time and that of his marriage. As a whole, he had passed his youth in a state close to poverty. The Qur’an testifies to this: “*And He found you poor and made you rich (self-sufficient with self-contentment)?*” (XCIII, 8), and the tradition expounds it. Since his father died young in his grandfather's life, he did not receive heritage at the death of his mother except a black slave, a herd of sheep and five camels. His most frequent occupation in this period was that of a shepherd. The Apostle later said that shepherding had been the occupation of all the previous Prophets such as Moses and David.

Among the adolescents, he was distinguished by his refined manners, his extreme bashfulness, his aversion to cheap entertainment and his absolute chastity. And so, the great confidence he instilled in the hearts of his companions justified his being surnamed “*Al-Ameen*” (the faithful and the trustworthy man). Thus, he was in his early youth (twenty years old) invited to sit with the most venerable chiefs of tribes in the “Foudoul League”.⁽²⁾

Khadija, the rich honourable and noble widow of forty,

(1) See Ibn Hishâm, Sirah, T, 1, P.115.

(2) The word “Foudoul” literally signifies “intervention of good offices”. This Mekkan association has aimed at supporting the weak, achieving justice for the oppressed and establishing intertribal peace.

had charged Muhammad with a commercial mission which he carried out honestly and intelligently. Despite the immense materialistic difference between them, she had made a proposal for marriage which he accepted in spite of the difference of age. She had remained his only wife for twenty-five years. It was only her death that separated them. His fidelity to her recollection aroused the naive jealousy of his later wives. In short, their union was one of the happiest and most fruitful unions. She gave him two boys: Al-Kassim and 'Abdullah, both of whom died at a young age;⁽¹⁾ and four girls: Zeinab, Roqqaya, Omm Kulthum and Fatima. The last daughter would become the wife of Ali (the fourth Caliph). The middle two would successively marry Othman (the third Caliph). As for the eldest, Zeinab, she had married before Islam her maternal cousin, Abou-l-'As, who converted to Islam later. She died two years before her father, leaving a girl, Omama.

Muhammad, as an excellent father and a faithful husband, showed a very profound tenderness towards his children and his grandsons. He used to walk many kilometres just to see and embrace them at the home of their wet nurses. He let them mount his back during prayer, and interrupts his discourse to receive and seat them by his side on the chair.

In the discharge of his debt of recognition to his uncle who had brought him up, he, after he had become rich through marriage, took charge of the education of his

(1) Later, at Al-Madinah, the Prophet would have too a boy, Ebrahirn, of Mary the Coptic. This boy died also some months before his father's death (See Mahmoud Al-Falaki, op, cit., P.7).

cousin Ali and later gave Fatima, the youngest of his daughters, in marriage to him.

A prominent act had been performed when he reached the age of thirty-five during the reparation of the Ka'ba. (The national temple of Arabia which the Arab tribes surrounded with profound veneration in spite of the diversity of their clans). So, all of them were anxious to obtain the honour of participating in its reconstruction. By a sort of work division, all tribes' demands had been satisfied until the competitors found themselves one day in front of an indivisible task, namely, the laying down of the famous "Black Stone". So none was willing to cede his right in taking charge. Yet, before having to resort to arms, they decided to rely on the arbitration of the first person to enter the sacred precincts of Ka'ba through the door of Bani-Sha'iba. Chance had willed that this person would be Muhammad. As soon as he was seen entering, people cried "*Al-Ameen! Al-Ameen!*" (The faithful and the trust-worthy). So, with a presence of mind and an impartiality, Muhammad extended his mantle on the ground, put the Black Stone in the middle and asked each of the principal chiefs of tribes to seize one end of the mantle and to raise it simultaneously to the required level. When they reached the place of the stone, Muhammad took it by himself and positioned it with his own hands. Satisfaction prevailed unanimously and peace was re-established.

Arriving at this age, Muhammad was physically intellectually and morally a man. This spirited character would accompany him until the end of his life. His stature was a bit more improving than the average. He

was strongly built; large chest; broad shoulders; expanded front having always the air of serenity; large mouth with white teeth, a little separated; abundant beard; black curled hair; black eyes with red streaks in the cornea; white complexion but slightly red; agile and impressive walk; simple, proper and neat dress; rare sobriety but not to refuse the good thing on spontaneous occasion; patient in endurance of pain and fatigue without seeking it intentionally. He spoke little but this economy of words did not decrease the beauty of the conversation or his sensibility of innocent enjoyment. When he became the unique master and chief of the state, he kept himself and his family deliberately away from all sorts of luxury. The frank opposition of his wives exploded upon his refusal to respond to some of their materialistic demands,

“O Prophet (Muhammad)! Say to your wives: ‘If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for you and set you free in a handsome manner (divorce). But if you desire Allâh and his Messenger, and the home of the Hereafter then verily, Allâh has prepared for Al-Muhsinât (good-doers) amongst you an enormous reward.’ (XXXIII, 28-29).

Finally, the little in his possession was distributed among the poor after his death.

The Apostle excelled, particularly in social virtue. He was never rough with anyone talking with him, nor would he cut them off. Never was he the first to draw his hand from his interlocutor. In spite of his firmness and impartiality in the application of the common justice, he was indulgent concerning his personal rights. Anas Bin Malik, one of his servants, affirmed that, during the ten

years of his service, he never has been interrogated why he did something or did not do something else.

Although he succeeded in living with people in peace up to that time, he would not belong to provoke the animosity and the opposition even of those who did not cease to cherish him. Now, he was approaching the forties of his life. He was at the point of a decisive event which would stamp his conduct with a new direction and constitute a turning point in history.

The first indication of this prophetic vocation, as narrated by himself to Aïsha, was the fact that all he saw in dreams was punctually realized in reality “with a clarity similar to that of the morning”. Then he felt a certain inclination for solitude and he chose Mount Hirâ or “the Mountain of Light”, in the north of Makkah, where he liked to retire in a cave overlooking the Ka’ba and the landscape behind it. One night, exactly on the 17th of the month of Ramadan, as Ibn Sa’d says, (February, 610 A.D.) Muhammad had his first experience of the properly called revelation. He, himself, reported in the form of a dialogue the process of what had happened between Gabriel and him. “Read! (or recite!)”, said the Angel to him: “I’m not one of those who knows reading”, responded Muhammad astonished. “Read” repeated the Angle after hugging his interlocutor in a scarcely supportable manner. “What should I read?” said Muhammad. The same order of reading was reiterated with a more violent pressure as if he wanted to awake to extreme his attention and inculcate in his soul all the seriousness which deserves the superhuman charge which would be imposed upon him: “But how to read

(or recite).” replied our terrified solitary. Then, the Angel recited before him:

“Read in the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists), He has created man, from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not.” (XCVI, 1-5).⁽¹⁾

These holy words were fixed in his mind and he kept on repeating them after the disappearance of the Angel. Just after Muhammad left the cave to go home, he heard a voice calling him. He raised his head to find the Angel covering the horizon and declaring, “O Muhammad, truly you are the Apostle of God and I am Gabriel”. Afterwards, he saw nothing.

The confusion which Muhammad experienced by this wonderful double phenomenon, auditory and visual, probably gave him, for a moment, some doubt concerning the identity of the revealer voice or some fear of becoming the victim of a diabolic hallucination. He detested nothing more than magicians and fortune-tellers. With this moral and physical trouble, he returned home shaken by a sort of cold fever and asked to be covered by fit covering. When he narrated that incident later on to Khadija, that devoted companion, she did her best to tranquillize him with the most wise and consoling

(1) This first springing of the Qur’anic revelation shows accurately that the aim was the announcement of a science, not acquired yet, but would be received by Muhammad in the future due to the Grace of the Creator. It is evident that the expression would be completely different if this inspiration was the result of a long and mature meditation as some wish to explain.

words: “Verily”, she said to him, “by God, God will never disgrace you because you never do harm; you always say the truth; you keep up good relations with relatives; you aid the weak; you enrich the needy; you show hospitality to your guests, you help all those who suffer for a just cause”.

However, as she was not able to give a positive and certain explanation about the nature of this phenomenon, she decided to go with him to her cousin Waraqa Bin Noufal, an old blind man, who converted to Christianity after he had spent his life in Hebrew readings and had become familiar with the Holy Books. “This is the Namous ⁽¹⁾ which God had revealed to Moses”, said Waraqa to them, “and Muhammad will be the Messenger of God to this nation. How I wish I could be alive until the day when your compatriots will expel you from your country”, added Waraqa. “How come? Are they going to expel me?” Cried, Muhammad. “Certainly”, asserted Waraqa, “Never has a man brought what you bring without having been the object of hostility and persecution.” However, if God extends my days until that moment”, added Waraqa, “I will solidly support you in that struggle.”

Waraqa's life did not last long. Yet his calming words could throw a gleam of hope in this anxious self, we shall see that this hope did not continue for a long duration. So Muhammad used to return frequently seeking a second lesson, to place himself in the original conditions, to cross the mountain and to turn his sight round in all

(1) The “Namous” means the Great Celestial Secretary or the Law.

directions. Days passed, weeks followed, months succeeded months, a year finished, a second one commenced and, as Asha'bi says, a third year, while he was still waiting for the Angel's coming. Every time he was on the verge of despair, he saw and heard. "O Muhammad, you are the Apostle of Allâh and I am Gabriel." These words used to tranquillize him for a short time, but he was always waiting for the substantial revelation. So, he fell again into the same grief and anguish. Some people said: "This was nothing but a fit of madness." Later, others supposed that it had really been an invaluable celestial offer, but the fragile resistance which Muhammad had shown made him seem unworthy of that divine solicitude. However, two short the Qur'anic verses:

"You (O Muhammad), by the Grace of your Lord, are not mad. (LXVIII, 2); "Your Lord (O Muhammad) has neither forsaken you nor hates you." (XCIII, 3), were revealed to reassure him against this double apprehension, but without providing him the instructions so long expected.

Muhammad was now approaching his forty-third lunar year. He always spent a grand part of the night awake waiting for that "*Weighty Word*".

"Verily, We shall send down to you a weighty Word (i.e. obligations, laws)." (LXXIII, 1-5). Even, since the first revelation, he used to retire alone to Mount Hirâ in the month of Ramadan. At last, when he just had ended his seclusion and had begun to get down the mountain, he heard a voice calling him. He turned right, left and back, but saw nothing. Then, he looked to the sky and recognized the Angel whom he had seen before on

Mount Hirâ. However, the suddenness of the appearance of the Celestial Creature and his majestic immensity struck him so hard that his legs could not carry him. He shook with fear and hastened back to Khadija asking her for the same prior care. Nevertheless, the honourable visitor rejoined him at home carrying the decree which was entrusted to him the second attribution:

“*O you (Muhammad) enveloped in garments! Arise and warn*”. (LXXIV, 1-2). From that time on, the role of the apostleship had been added to that of his prophethood. From Muhammad apostolate forth, he received the revelation, I do not say, regularly nor frequently, but with a certain continuity and without undergoing such long ruptures.

The year 612 A.D. is the true point of departure for the career of the Islamic message. The date of the Hejira ⁽¹⁾ divided this career into two nearly equal periods: ten

(1) Hejira means rupture of relations and voluntary remoteness. It is known that Muhammad had to leave Makkah on the point of a conspiracy against his life, and to settle down at Medina where he arrived at the beginning of Rabi'I, (2nd, 8th, or 12th according to historians). The Egyptian astronomer, mentioned before, considered Monday 8th, Rabi'I, the day, of the Hejira correspondent to September, 20, 622 A.D. We should not forget that the Islamic Era started with the beginning of the lunar year in which the Hejira took place (the first of Muharram correspondent to 15th or 16th July, 622 A.D.). So long as the lunar leap-year is 355 days only and that the total of 33 lunar years equals 32 solar years nearly, the Hejirian date (H) can be converted into Christian date (C) or vice versa, by the use of one of the two following formulas:

$$H + 622 - \frac{H}{33} = C \qquad C - 622 + \frac{C - 622}{32} = H$$

years at Makkah and another ten at Medina. Where the Prophet died on the 12th or the 13th of Rabi'I in year 11 H. (7th or 8th June, 632 A.D.) aged exactly sixty-three lunar years or a little bit more than sixty-one solar years.

No doubt, it will be most interesting to follow up the Apostle in his indefatigable preaching activity during those twenty years which had produced one of the most glorious and civilized revolutions which humanity has ever known, but as the principal object of this book is the analysis of the Qur'anic system itself, we will now consider the work which he had left to us. In the following chapter, we shall explain how this Holy Book was composed, organized, preserved and transmitted through history

* * *

CHAPTER II

THE COMPOSITION OF THE REVEALED TEXT

If the text of the Qur'an is remaining rigorously the same as the Prophet had dictated, its aspect has considerably changed. At first, there was nothing that could be called a volume or a compendium. The Qur'an was revealed in fragments whose lengths varied from an entire surah to one verse or even sometimes a part of a verse. Every fragment, inspired to the Prophet, was recited by him, learned by the listeners and diffused among those who did not hear it directly from his mouth. Everybody used to wait for it ardently and desired to take possession of it the instant of its emission.

Yet, the sacred text is not merely a "the Qur'an" or a group of oral recitations, destined to be kept solely in the memories. It is also a "Kitab" that is to say, a book written in ink. These two aspects always corroborate and control each other. And therefore, every fragment, inspired to the Prophet and recited by him, was dictated immediately to the scribes of the revelation to be written down on anything available to them such as paper, wood, pieces of parchment, of leather, flat stone, shoulder blades, etc.... Scholars mention that the number of scribes of the revelation reached twenty-nine. The most famous among them were the first five successors (Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman, Ali, and Mou'auia). However, Mou'auia and Zaid Ibn Thabit were the most attached to this function which took its official character in Madinah. Nevertheless, Muslims at Makkah did not

fail to reproduce the revealed text in personal manuscripts for their private usage.

It had been noticed at an early time that the Qur'anic emissions were neither destined to remain separated completely from each other nor to follow each other according to the chronological order of their revelation. We saw many groups of passages developing apart from other and constituting gradually independent units by the addition of other verses which were revealed later. Some verses were added here and others were adjoined with other ones there, in accordance with the Prophet's express indications which he himself had received from the Celestial Spirit. In order to leave the door open to these progressive constructions, it was necessary to wait for the achievement of the work before putting it into one whole unit. However, this was not a problem for the believers to accurately know the position of every new verse in every surah in all the phases of the revelation. In the Prophet's life, there were hundreds of companions who were called "the porters of the Qur'an" and who specialized in the recitation of the Qur'an and in studying by heart every surah in its temporary or final form. The Prophet had affirmed that every year, in the month of Ramadan, he used to make a sort of general review in the presence of Gabriel reciting the text that had already been revealed. And in the last year, the divine messenger reviewed the Qur'an with him twice, the thing which made the Prophet predict the approach of his death.

Hardly had a year elapsed after the death of the Prophet, when an urgent need to reassemble those dispersed documents in one collection easy to handle and to

consult, was present. This task required that the verses of every surah follow each other according to the order already fixed in the memories. The idea was suggested by Omar to the first Caliph after the battle of Yamama in which hundreds of Muslims were killed including seventy of “the porters of the Qur’an”. Omar's aim was not only to safeguard the whole of the written the Qur’an against any dangers but also to approve the unified form of that document by the authority of the existing “porters of the Qur’an” and by all the companions who knew to recite each part of it.

This task was entrusted to Zaid ibn Thabit. Abu Bakr said to him: “You are an intelligent man; we do not have any suspicion against your probity and you wrote the revelation under the dictation of the Prophet. Under-take the gathering of the Qur’an”.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, Zaid had attended the last review with the Prophet. A rule for work was laid down: that nothing written would be admitted unless it was certified by two witnesses that it was written not from the memory but under the dictation of the Prophet himself and that it was part of the revelation in its final state.

After the work was completed in due form with all these precautions, Zaid gave it to Abu Bakr who kept it throughout the period of his Caliphate. Before his death, Abu Bakr confided it to Omar who put it, at the last moment in the safekeeping of his daughter, Hafsa, one

(1) Calling back this document, Leblois wrote: “Whoever did not desire that after the death of Jesus, one of his immediate disciples undertook the task of writing down his teaching.” (Leblois, *Le Koran et la Bible Hébraïque*, P.47, note 5).

of the Prophet's wives.

This first official collection (which is much like a file gathering arranged but not bound papers) was distinguished from the other manuscripts, complete or incomplete existing with the individuals, by a sort of absolute rigorism and by excluding anything that was not a part of the very text of the last collation. Whatever is the great value of such document and whatever was the care of its assembling and its precious safeguard by the two first Caliphs, it did not acquire its universal authority until the day of its publication. The occasion of that publication presented itself only during the Caliphate of Othman, the third Caliph, after the battles of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

When the armies coming from Syria and Iraq reassembled for these battles, they noticed some difference in their recitations. The Syrians followed the reading of their fellow citizen, Obai; whereas the Iraqis followed that of their fellow citizen, Ibn Mas'oud. They said to one another: "Our reading is better than yours". Scared by this spectacle, Huzayfa Ibn el-Yaman hastened to Othman and asked him to put an end to such disputes which might lead to divisions similar to those of the Jews and Christians concerning their books. Thus, Othman appointed a committee of four copyists; Zaïd himself - from Medina - and three from Makkah: Abdullah Ibn-Ezzobair, Sa'id Ibn El-'As and Abd-Errahman Ibn El-Harith Ibn Hishâm. They were charged to make several copies of the original of Hafsa equal to the number ⁽¹⁾ of

(1) With the exception of Othman's personal copy, the majority of

the principal cities in the Muslim Empire. In this way, the work was completed in a perfect conformity to the original which was returned to Hafsa. While the other copies were bound and distributed as immutable types treating as a nullity all that which may present any deviation from it.

Certain Shi'ites suspected Othman of altering the text of the Qur'an, or more precisely, of omitting from it something related to Ali. If that fact had been true, the "porters of the Qur'an" who were numerous at the time of its publication, would have verified it and compared it with what they had known by heart. Even Ibn Mas'oud himself had acknowledged the exactitude of the work in spite of his dissatisfaction with the politics for many reasons. Due to the zeal of the first Muslims who were even more ardent than their successors towards God's Words, it is impossible for us to attribute the fact that Othman's copy of the Qur'an was accepted by all Muslims without any dispute to a shallow spirit of conformity. Noeldeke concluded that this is the strongest evidence that the Qur'anic text is "as complete and accurate as it may be expected".⁽¹⁾

This edition has been the only one in force in the Muslim world, including the Shi'ites, for more than thirteen centuries. The following is a declaration of the

the Traditionalists agree that there were five manuscripts intended for the following five cities: Makkah, Medina, Basra, Koufa and Damascus. However, Abu Hatim Es-Sidjestani mentions two other copies for the two provinces of Yemen and Bahrein (cf. Ibn Abi Dawood, Kitab-el-Massahif, P.74).

(1) Noeldeke, Geschichte des Korans, 2nd part, P.93.

Imamians (the most important Sect of Shi'ism), mentioned in the work of Abu Ja'far al-Omm: "We believe that the quantity of the Qur'an, which God had revealed to his Prophet Muhammad, consists of what is preserved now between its two covers and used by people and nothing more. The number of the surahs known by the generality of Muslims is 114, but in our opinion, the surahs XCIII and XCIV form one surah and so do surahs CV and CVI as well as surahs VIII and IX. Thus, those who attribute to us the belief that the Qur'an is more than this are liars".⁽¹⁾

Accordingly, Leblois affirmed: "Today, the Qur'an is the only Sacred Book which does not contain any notable variations."⁽²⁾ W. Muir had proclaimed before him: "Othman's compilation of the Qur'an had arrived from hand to hand until it reached us without any alteration. It was so scrupulously preserved that there are no important variations and we can even say that there is no

(1) This formal difference does not exist but theoretically, because their copies do not differ in anything from those of the Sounnites. In concern to the "apocrypha piece ["the two lights"] which Garcin de Tassy had published under the title of "An unknown chapter of the Qur'an", Mirza Alexander Kazim had studied the case, and proved that this pretended surah not only had had no trace in the Shi'ites Qur'an, but also had not been mentioned in their works of traditional polemics. Moreover, the title of the "Two lights" applied to Muhammad and Ali, appeared for the first time in the Shi'ites books in the 7th century of Hejira according to Toussi. Enough that you should read this piece, which is not but a mediocre compilation of words and expressions robbed from the Qur'an, that you notice the shocking contrast which it presents with the elegance and harmony of the Qur'anic style. See also Noeldeke II, PP. 107-112.

(2) Leblois, Op. cit, p. 54.

variation because of the numerous copies of the Qur'an which are circulating in the vast lands of Islam. There has never been but one the Qur'an; and this unanimous usage of the same text accepted by all up to today is a proof of the sincerity of the text which we possess and which goes back to the unfortunate Caliph Othman⁽¹⁾ (who was assassinated).

However, we disagree with Muir in two issues. First, he attributed the Qur'anic text to Othman; whereas - as we have seen - Othman did nothing but publishing the manuscript compiled under Abu Bakr. Which was nothing but the integral reproduction, following the order of the last collation of the text registered under the dictation of the Prophet himself (This order should not be confused with the chronological order of the revelation). Second, the judgement asserts that the copies in use do not contain any variations in reading whereas we know the opposite. Long vowels are always written in the body of Arabic words, while short and medium vowels are never written. In addition, a large group of Arabic letters do not differ one from the other except by points are known as diacritics such as (l = ل) may be pronounced (n= ن) or (t = ت) or (b = ب), if one or two points are added above or under. Such points were neither in use in the Prophet's life nor in the period of the first three Caliphs. Most frequently, the pronunciation could not be determined without an oral indication. Nevertheless, Tradition informs us that the

(1) W. Muir, the Life of Mahomet. Quoted by B. St. - Hilaire, Mahomet et le Koran, P. 33.

Prophet in teaching the Qur'an to Muslims did not follow one unique pronunciation. It was not rare that he gave many good and significant readings for one word (rather for the same radical). For example, the word ملك could be read: Mâlik = proprietor, owner, master, and *Malik* = king. The same thing for the word فتنبتوا could be read *fatabayyanou* = فتبينوا “Be informed” and *fatathabbatou* = “act with caution”. These different readings are in accordance with the Tradition. Al-Bukhari narrated that one day Omar was very furious against Hishâm Ibn Hakîme Ibn Hizâm's recitation of surah XXV in a way different from that he learned from the Prophet. At-Tabari said that Obâï Ibn Ka'ab was shocked by a difference in the reading of surah XVI. The Prophet approved later on the two readings and added: “Verily, the Qur'an was revealed in seven readings or variants, therefore recite the Qur'an according to that you find easy”.

In our opinion, the publication of the Qur'anic text by the care of Othman had two objectives. *First*, by legitimizing and protecting the different readings which remained within the limit of the written text and, which have had a commonly recognized Prophetic origin, it prevents impious disputes that may arise concerning these readings. *Second*, by excluding all that which did not present an absolute accordance with the original, it obstructs a very grave split among Muslims and possible alteration of the text itself by the insertion of some more or less questionable variants or explanations.

This does not mean that the Othmanian edition, or its

prototype, contains all the variants which were probably taught by the Prophet under the title of seven letters *سبعة أحرف* or seven methods of reading. If it preserved the readings that the text, in its definite state, had included, the edition excluded, on the other hand, any form transmitted by individual ways. And this fundamental principle won the agreement of companions present.

We add that the exclusion of variants from the written document does not aim the suppression of the oral usage. The rule left to those who affirmed that they had heard the Prophet reading the Qur'an in a certain manner, the liberty to follow their particular lessons under their moral responsibility, without compelling the whole community of Muslims to follow what they affirmed to have heard. This attitude was asserted by Othman himself: "As for the Qur'an, I prohibited you because I was afraid of a split among you and you can read according to the letter you want."

Islamic Jurists have always been interested in studying those particular readings to which they always are addressing a certain sacred character. Also, these readings are still utilized by the Sunnites schools, not as a Qur'anic text but as "hadith *âhâd*" [hadith narrated originally by one person]. They were excluded when the Qur'an was compiled because their authenticity, under their written form, was not sufficiently verified or approved by the Prophet or his representatives. Noting that these unofficial readings do not concern all the surahs of the Qur'an or even the scope of one complete Surah.

The care which appeared to prevail in the constitution of the Qur'anic text by the companions of the Prophet was the strict exactness of every part of the Qur'an with the document first written down under the dictation of the Prophet, then recited in front of him and finally approved by him before his death. It is the absolute objectiveness that remains eternally in their honour.

If the destruction of private manuscripts seems to be excessive, it shows to what extent Othman was foreseeing and realizing the essence of matters ⁽¹⁾. It is to this perceptible act, in fact, that Muslims owe the unity and the stability of their Holy Book. The introduction afterwards of different systems of exterior signs and the existence of this archaic orthography; and of superfluous letters or attached words, in all the actual copies of the Qur'an, and all that exclusively reserved to the Qur'anic writing, are an eloquent testimony of the fidelity with which this holy monument has been transmitted from generation to generation until it reached us. The whole text remains eternally as it was, defying the action of the time.

* * *

(1) In fact, he did not do this from his own will and without consulting the people. His successor, Ali, declared, in one of his speeches, that this rigorous measure was taken unanimously with all the companions present and "If Othman had not done it" added Ali, "I, myself, would have done it" (cf. I.A. Dawood, p. 18-22.)

CHAPTER III

HOW WAS THE QUR'ANIC DOCTRINE ANNOUNCED TO THE WORLD?

All the world knows generally what the Qur'anic Doctrine of what we call Islam is. However, this knowledge is very often limited to exterior features. It is said that Islam is that religious, social and moral Reform which, as soon as it had appeared on the coast of the Red Sea, at the beginning of the VIIth Century A.D., advanced so victoriously northwards, southwards, eastwards and westwards that it spread in a relatively short time over half of the world of that time.

An event with no precedent in the whole history which has ceased neither to captivate human attention nor to excite the curiosity of historians of morals and religions. So they tried in vain to find its prototype in the antiquity. They compared it sometimes to the conquest of Alexander the Great which was rapid and expansive but had never realized change whether in the ideas or in the morals and customs of people and with the spread of Islam, it did not leave any trace behind it.

Alexander's works had never passed the field of urbanism by establishing new beautiful cities in the Orient where the economic life became very prosperous, but the mass of people and the peasantry had always kept intact their proper character, language, habits and political and economic regime. Even in the cities, the Hellenism profoundly affected only a minority of the middle class. Later, Greek colonists were subjugated by other conquerors and those cities were progressively

ruined under the Roman Empire.

In the domain of ideas, it is obvious that the Macedonian conqueror adopted unconditionally the current ideas of the conquered countries and affiliated to their divinities. His successors, no better than him did not revolutionize anything in this domain. Generally, during the Greek and Roman periods, the philosophical and religious ideas which are essentially oriental doctrines, had used the Greek vehicle to be transported to Europe under the names of Neo-Platonism and Christianity. So that, we have the right to say here that it was the Orient which had really conquered its conquerors.

At last, Islam arrived and everything changed in an extremely short time. Change not only occurred in the political and economic facade but also deeply in the hearts of the people. Language, ideas, laws, aspirations, customs and the conceptions of the universe and of God transformed all at once ⁽¹⁾. This conquest of the spirit did not only influence the souls in which it penetrated, but it tends always to spread out and to gain ground anywhere it went showing its primitive simplicity and purity.

This observation, however, contradicts the opinion propagated and spread by those who state that Islam was founded on arms. The actual influence which it exercises at the present time is a tangible proof that it has an internal force and a particular affinity with the human

(1) For better understanding the contrast of this revolution with the other historical conquests, it is profitable to read: Jouget, *l'Impérialisme Macédo, et l'Hellénisation de L'Orient*; Gautier, *Mœurs et Coutumes des Musulmans*, livre III.

nature and the reality of things?

In the first ten years of the Islamic call, the antagonistic powers had poured out their hatred and used their violence in persecuting and martyring the followers of the rising doctrine. In spite of all the obstacles, the simple exposition of the Islamic doctrine led to new conversions every day. At the same time, those years witnessed how with bravery and tolerance, the master and his disciples had accepted not only the mockery and the insults of their fellow citizens but also the isolation and the interdiction of any approach with the public. Sometimes, they accepted the cruellest torture and physical punishment:

“Whoever disbelieved in Allâh after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with Faith; but such as open their breast to disbelief on them is wrath from Allâh, and theirs will be a great torment.” (XVI, 106);

“Of mankind are some who say: “We believe in Allâh.” But if they are made to suffer for the sake of Allâh, they consider the trial of mankind as Allâh's punishment; and if victory comes from your Lord, (the hypocrites) will say: “Verily we were with you (helping you).” Is not Allâh Best Aware of what is in the breasts of the ‘Alamîn (mankind and jinn).” (XXIX, 10).

It was that which compelled hundreds of the first Muslims, among them certain of Quraish most noble, to search for a refuge:

“Then, verily. Your Lord for those who emigrated after they had been put to trials and thereafter strove hard and fought (for the cause of Allâh) and were patient, verily, your Lord afterward is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (XVI, 110), near the King of

Abyssinia.

Yet, the most striking example of that period, which constitutes the most prodigious effect produced by that peaceful call, was set by the inhabitants of Yathrib (called Medina later). Thus, a long time before seeing the face of the Prophet or hearing his voice, and as soon as they merely listened to his the Qur'anic message transmitted by their pilgrims, the Medinian Arabs received it so eagerly that there remained not any family, not including many believers among its members. Moreover, all the divisions and hostilities, which were prevailing among them for a quarter of a century, ⁽¹⁾ faded away suddenly as as if by a divine puff:

“And He has united their (i.e. believers) hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but Allâh has united them. Certainly He is All-Mighty, All- Wise.” (VIII, 63), so that they henceforth became brothers:

“And hold fast, all of you together to the Rope of Allâh (i.e. this Qur'an), and be not divided among your-selves, and remember Allâh's Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic Faith), and you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it.” (III, 103).

At the same time, the Islamic institutions, which could not be observed openly at Makkah, began at once to be practised in public at Medina. It was in that welcoming and hospitable society that all emigrants were received after having abandoned their homes and their

(1) See: Lammens, "Berceau de l'Islam à la Veille de l'Hégire", P.265

possessions:

“For the poor emigrants, who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Bounties from Allâh and to please Him, and helping Allâh (i.e. helping His religion) and His Messenger” (LIX, 8), and after being severely persecuted in Makkah.

Until that time, everything was going on in peace and with dignity at least on the Muslim part. Being reassured about the fate of his disciples and their safe arrival, Muhammad believed that he was required to extend his stay at Makkah and to continue in his call. Yet he received the divine order to emigrate at the same moment when a great plot against his existence was going to be carried out. However, after he had miraculously escaped from danger, shouldn't he think to take vengeance on his enemies who wanted to put him to death? Not at all. And if we follow the stages of his activity at Medina, we would find his efforts consecrated, on the contrary, to blessed and constructive works: the construction of the mosque, the prescription of the fast, the institution of the appeal to prayer, the interior and peaceful organization of the society. Everything seemed to indicate that Muslims were definitely going, and even in the direction of their prayer, to turn their back on their ancient homeland. Nevertheless, towards the middle of the second year, they began to intercept the merchandise convoys of their persecutors.

From where did this sudden turn come?

It is impossible for us - the impartial judgement of the Orientalists being concordant concerning this point - to attribute the cause thereof to the personal psychology of

the Prophet. The martial measures, in fact, were not one of his character or his taste. On the contrary, it was his indulgence and solicitude towards his adversaries that attracted him frequently the reproach of the Qur'an:

“It is not for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war (and free them with ransom) until he had made a great slaughter (among his enemies) in the land. You desire the good of this world (i.e. the money of ransom for freeing the captives), but Allâh desires (for you) the Here-after.” (VIII, 67),

“Whether you (O Muhammad) ask forgiveness for them (hypocrites) or ask not forgiveness for them - (and even) if you ask seventy times their forgiveness - Allâh will not forgive them because they have disbelieved in Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad). And Allâh guides not those people who are Fasiqûn (rebellious, disobedient to Allâh).” (IX, 80),

“It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allâh's forgiveness for the Mushrikîn (polytheists; idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh), even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the fire (because they died in a state of disbelief).” (IX, 113).

In fact, Tradition preserved a multitude of acts of clemency for crimes committed against his own person and his family. ⁽¹⁾

(1) In this manner, Muhammad pardoned the emissary of Quraish who had come to assassinate him after Badr, the Jewish woman who tried to poison him at Khaibar and the other one who hustled his eldest daughter Zainab and caused her abortion. We know his indulgence towards the calumniators of his innocent wife Aisha. We admire particularly his extremely peaceful and generous conduct during and after the conquest of Makkah. (See J.B. St. Hilaire,

None tried to explain that this new orientation was the outcome of a pressure exerted on him by his people whose warlike spirit was an essential characteristic because scholars could not rally to such a hypothesis. Scholars proved, on the contrary, how far the effusion of blood provoked horror in the Arabs and even in those of the desert. They affirmed that the Bedouins never seek out war, but when it is imposed upon them, they accept it instead of enduring shame and humiliation.

It is then in a historical fact that we have to search for something which may have led to the determination of that new reaction. And the Qur'an leads us to look on an exciting spectacle. It makes us hear a distressed cry emitted by Muslims without any support, "men, women and children" residing at Makkah, suffering for their faith and invoking the help of God against the oppression of the disbelievers:

"And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the cause of Allâh, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women, and children whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help". (IV, 175).

Apart from any reviving propaganda, the ancient seeds, the lesson and the example, did not cease to be fruitful. As soon as faith palpitated, fury and cruelty were exerted without any scruples for its suffocation. What! Because the Emigrants and their Hosts were enjoying entire liberty of faith and of the cult in the safe refuge, have

Mahomet et le Koran, P. 125-130).

they the right to lock themselves into their egoism and to remain indifferent to the fate of their brothers?

May we reasonably and impartially refuse the Truth and Virtue of their right to receive help and consequently to let the despotism strengthen itself with weapons against them?

Nevertheless, this material help, justly required, has not been willingly granted by Muslims at least in its real warlike form. Even here, it suffices to consult the Qur'an to see how the hesitations and the retreat which the "free" manifested for liberating the "captives". However, the hour of the supreme sacrifice had rung and God wanted to entrench, between truth and fraud, the actual struggle.

Such were the circumstances. As much as the persecutions represented an individual and sporadic aspect, Muslims, during their stay at Makkah, were obliged to abstain from any violent reaction and to endure their wounds courageously:

"Have you not seen those who were told to hold back their hands (from fighting) and perform As-Salât and give Zakât but when the fighting was ordained for them, behold! A section of them fear men as they fear Allâh or even more. They say: "Our Lord! Why have you ordained for us fighting? Would that you had granted us respite for a short period?" Say: "Short is enjoyment of this world. The Hereafter is (far) better for him who fears Allâh, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly even equal to scallish thread in the long slit of a date-stone." (IV, 77).

Now that the pagans' fury had been generalized and transformed into a combative and decided war:

“They ask you concerning fighting in the Sacred Months (i.e. 1st, 7th, 11th and 12th month of the Islamic calendar). Say “Fighting therein is a great (transgression) but a greater (transgression) with Allâh is to prevent mankind from following the Way of Allâh, to disbelieve in Him, to prevent access to Al-Masjid Al-Harâm (at Makkah), and to drive out its inhabitants, and Al-Fitnah is worse than killing. And they will never cease fighting you until they turn you back from your religion (Islamic Monotheism) if they can. And whosoever of you turns back from his religion and dies as a disbeliever then his deeds will be lost in this life and in the Hereafter and they will be the dwellers of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.” (II, 217), the believers were, at last, after more than ten years of patience, authorized and then committed:

“Permission to fight (against disbelievers) is given to those (believers) who are fought against because they have been wronged, and surely, Allâh is Able to give them (believers) victory.” (XXII, 39) to defend themselves collectively ⁽¹⁾

(1) The transformation of that authorization in the form of an act of commanding occurred in such unfavourable conditions, that we cannot see how to affirm with Sinclair that the Qur’anic law had been modified proportionally according to the arms success of Muhammad (P. 279). This author also reversed the sense of verse (II, 217) which condemns any hostility during the holy month (P. 276) and he considered the methods of repression instituted against the terrorists: *“The recompense of those who wage war against Allâh and His Messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off from opposite sides, or be exiled from the land. That is their disgrace in this world, and a great torment in theirs in the Hereafter.” (V, 33) a new form of war constituting a third stage in*

“Jibād (holy fighting in Allāh’s cause) is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you.” (II, 216) and relieve those among them who were left without any protection:

“And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the cause of Allāh, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women, and children whose cry is: ‘Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help’.” (IV, 75).

On the whole, we cannot objectively make any reproach to such an absolutely defensive and highly devoted attitude.

These have been the circumstances in which the first spark of the armed war started. However, the question is whether the Qur’anic legislation has evolved later and has enlarged this right of legitimate defence to include any operations of offensive initiatives?

The Western World seems to be badly informed about this point. They generally believe that the Muslims have the right and even the duty according to their sacred book, to resort to arms whether for imposing their doctrine or for annihilating those who do not adopt it. To this concept, they give the name of “Holy War”, which they make it corresponding to the Qur’anic word, “Jihad”.

that evolution (P. 277).

The truth is that this generic term which means “effort” has specifically nothing to do with the military meaning because we find it in the Mekkan surahs for designating either an edifying effort of preaching and of peaceful persuasion:

“So obey not the disbelievers, but strive against them (by preaching) with the utmost endeavour with it (the Qur’an).” (XXV, 52) -or a purely personal moral effort

“As for those who strive hard in Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our paths (i.e. Allâh's religion - Islâmic Monotheism). And verily, Allâh is with the Mubsinûn (good doers).” (XXIX, end). As for the term which properly signifies the combat, it is that of “Qital” قتال.

Now, a reference to the Qur’anic text suffices to explain the subject, the objective and the limits which the Qur’anic law assigns for such a fight. “Fight”, it says:

“In the way of Allâh those who fight you but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allâh likes not the transgressors.” (II, 190).

“But if they cease, then Allâh is Oft-forgiving and most Merciful... But if they cease, let there be no transgression except against Az-Zalimin” (II, 192-193).

“So if they withdraw, from you and fight not against you, and offer you peace, then Allâh has opened no way for you against them. You will find others that wish to have security from you and security from their people. Every time they are sent back to temptation, they yield thereto. If they withdraw not from you, nor offer you peace nor restrain their hands, take (hold of) them and kill them wherever you find them. In their case, we have provided you with a clear warrant against them” (IV, 90-1).

Somewhere else, we find the same distinction:

“Allâh does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily Allâh loves those who deal with equity. It is only as regards those who fought against you on account of religion, and have driven you out of your homes and helped to drive you out, that Allâh forbids you to befriend them. And whosoever will befriend them, then such are the Zalîmin” (LX, 8-9).

Even in surah IX, we see the care with which the Qur’an subtracted from this measure those who had not violated their treaty. This breach is not applicable to:

“Those of the Mushrikân with whom you have a treaty and who have not subsequently failed you in aught, nor have supported anyone against you. So fulfil their treaty to them for the end of their term. Surely Allâh loves Al-Mottaqûn” (IX, 4).

The object of fighting for which the Qur’an exhorts its followers is even better defined in verse 13 of the same surah.

“Will you not fight a people who have violated their oaths, and intended to expel the Messenger while they did attack you first? Do you fear them? Allâh has more right that you should fear Him if you are believer”.

It goes without saying that *“Fight against the Mushrikân collectively as they fight against you collectively”* (ibid 36). However, *“As long as they are true to you, stand you true to them. Allâh loves Al-Muttaqûn.”* (Ibid 7).

Nowhere do we see a violent initiative legitimized. It is always stirred by a return of justice adopted by the attitude of the partner. Moreover, for those who have no

pact with Muslims and who demand their protection, the Qur'an engages the Prophet to assure it to them. ⁽¹⁾

“And if anyone of the Mushrikûn (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh) seeks your protection then grant him protection so that he may hear the Word of Allâh (the Qur'an) and then escort him to where he can be sure, that is because they are men who know not.” (IX-6)

All the responsibility of war falls on the people who have engaged in it the first. When the Qur'an says: “Fight those who fight you”, it means to fight those who fight actually and use their weapons. The tradition took great care to establish this condition in such a clear manner as to prevent any confusion. Women, children, old men, blind persons, invalids, the insane, the peasants in their fields and the hermits ⁽²⁾ isolated in their cells; all are immunized against hostilities. Whence, the prohibition of any engine having a general destructive effect such as flooding and fire. On applying rigorously the Qur'anic command which prescribes to pardon those who cease fighting, the Prophet went to the extent of interdicting the pursuit of a fleeing enemy.

What is the purpose of this legislation? We see it now. It aims precisely at dismissing any danger. Islam condemns the spirit of destruction and that of domination:

(1) When he arrived to this point, and after having systematically omitted to mention the verses which restrict resorting to force, Sinclair found himself obliged, in order to be in accordance with his conclusions, to replace by points of suspension this verse which stipulates the protection of neutrals.

(1) If the question is to fight religion, isn't it the persons of religion representatives that would be chosen as targets?

“That home of the Hereafter (e.g. Paradise). We shall assign to who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief by committing crimes and the good end is for Muttaqûn (the pious and righteous persons.” (XXVIII, 83).

It does not aim at imposing a universal ideology, *“if it had not been your Lord’s Will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth! Will you then compel mankind against their will, to believe?” (X, 99).*

Can we change the Will of God? It is by a divine decree that *“there will be always divergences among men” “And if your Lord had so willed. He could surely have made mankind one Ummah: but they will not cease to disagree”.* (XI, 118).

“And most of the mankind will not believe even if you desire eagerly” (XII, 103).

Far from requiring to force consciences and to impede the liberty of faith, *“There is no compulsion in religion.”* (II, 256), on the contrary, Islam opposes those who prevent the expansion of liberty and who put it to their hard ordeals,

“They ask you concerning fighting in the Sacred Months (i.e. 1st, 7th, 11th and 12th month of the Islamic calendar). Say ‘Fighting therein is a great (transgression) but a greater (transgression) with Allâh is to prevent mankind from following the Way of Allâh, to disbelieve in Him, to prevent access to Al-Masjid Al-Harâm (at Makkah), and to drive out its inhabitants, and Al-Fitnah is worse than killing. And they will never cease fighting you until they turn you back from your religion (Islamic Monotheism) if they can. And whosoever of you turns back from his religion and dies as a disbeliever then his deeds will be lost in this life and in the Hereafter and they will be the dwellers of the Fire. They will abide

therein forever.” (II, 217).

Does that mean that the salvation or the damnation of others makes no difference for Muslim? It is this explanation which they sometimes try to give it to the clement spirit of Islam towards the other religions. ⁽¹⁾ But this is another way to not recognize the real character of the Qur’anic doctrine. They give it either too much or too little proselytism; they attribute to it either fanaticism or indifference. In fact, the position of the Qur’an is explained by neither of these two extremes. The Qur’an stated the duty to preach the truth, to exhort the virtue,

“Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islâm), enjoining Al-Ma’ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islâm orders one to do) and forbid-ding Al-Mûnkar (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islâm has forbidden.) And it is they who are the successful.” (III, 104);

“Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma’ruf) which Allâh has ordained and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Mûnkar) which Allâh has forbidden) and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allâh’s Cause during preaching His religion of Islamic Monotheism or Jihâd).” (CIII, 3) and to do it energetically,

“So obey not the disbelievers, but strive against them (by preaching) with the utmost endeavour with it (the Qur’an).” (XXV, 52).

However, our call must be affected by the wisest, the

(1) See: Gautier, Mœurs et Coutumes des Musulmans. P.209.

most persuasive and the softest manners,

“Invite (mankind O Muhammad) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur’an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.” (XVI, 125), giving others the liberty to believe or not to believe. Provided only that one should leave, to those who believe, the freedom to venerate their ideals. As for the rest, everyone must assume his responsibilities,

“Not upon you (Muhammad) is their guidance; but Allâh guides whom He wills. And whatever you spend in good, it is for yourselves, when you spend not except seeking Allâh’s Countenance. And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.” (II, 272),

“O you who believe! Take care of your ownelves. If you follow the (right) guidance [and enjoin what is right (Islâmic Monotheism and all that Islâm orders one to do) and forbid what is wrong (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islâm has forbidden)] no hurt can come to you from those who are in error. The return of you all is to Allâh, then He will inform you about (all) that which you used to do.” (V, 105).

The Qur’anic principle which legally determines the relation of the Muslim community to other nations and religions is generally called “tolerance”. However, this naming may be considered unrealistic in certain aspects, because: 1-The peoples who do not adopt the creed of Islam but submit peacefully to its civil law, are not only tolerated but also respected. Their persons, their properties, their religions and customs are protected.

Islam undertakes to assure these liberties and to guarantee equal protection to every person لهم مالنا وعليهم 2 ماعلينا. - As for those who do not accept the creed or the law of Islam, the Qur'an does request from them an inoffensive attitude to secure for themselves in return the most generous treatment founded altogether on justice and beneficence, "*Allâh does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, Allâh loves those who deal with equity.*" (LX, 8).

However, when incredulity directs its shot against the faith for persecuting and annihilating it, will it be conceivable that the religion will sit with folded arms and look passively on its own extermination?

The first Muslims lived the two experiences early on and noticed, in the favour of faith itself, that nothing is as good as the exchange of ideas in peace and in liberty. Also, it is said that, during the truce of Hudaibya, due to the opening of the frontiers between the two opposite zones, the number of those who converted to Islam exceeded by far that of all the preceding years. Nevertheless, whoever pretends that he has discovered another aim in that struggle is requested to give us an approximate number of the proselytes won by Islam due to severe means.

We can certainly suppose some errors committed, however unavoidable, in the periods of confusion. We can even suspect some deviation of intention from the following generations. Yet, let us first listen to a confession of one contemporary critic who did not

declare himself in favour of the Islamic regime: “In spite of the official obstacles put in the way of conversion, there was conversion by mass (p. 217). Never did the Arabs, in all the ardour for their new faith, seek to extinguish in the blood any rival religion (P. 207). As opposed to the Christians and the Manichaeans ⁽¹⁾, a Caliph never resorted to persecution” (p. 208).

The miseries deplored during the Islamic conquests were so little and the operations were so rapid that we sometimes have the impression that the doorways were already semi-open before the conquerors who had just to push ahead. This rapidity, the establishment of the order and the reign of justice which immediately followed, saved plenty of human and material losses. While the Protestant Reform which had amended only some articles of Christianity cost Europe far more deplorable pains and mournings.

Any artificial construction, if it lives for a moment depending on an acquired force tends to break up as soon as the unusual factors which contributed to its construction disappear. However now, what do we see after the elapse of fourteen centuries and the cessation of the Islamic expansion? Although this institution propagated among people of different races, languages, colours and climates from China to Morocco and from Lithuania to Mozambique, and was exposed throughout history to all the agents of interior and exterior destruction, its religious and moral structure remains solid. Thus, we may affirm with certainty that it has

(1) V. Gautier, Mœurs et Coutumes des Musulmans.

never happened since the beginning of Hejira that a Muslim converted to another religion. ⁽¹⁾ In addition, Muslims are less willing to abandon their belief than the followers of any other religion. Isn't it contrary to psychological interpretations to attribute this indefectible attachment to a sort of an atavistic conduct whose origin was a simple constraint exerted on their very early ancestors and whose remembrance is still kept engraved in their cerebral structure? Consequently, it is inevitable to admit the existence of certain intrinsic qualities which have permitted Islam such an extension and such a fixation in spite of its very distant origin.

(1) "Porter: A Preliminary Discourse" translated into French, in "Préface de l'Alcoran de du Ryer".

PART II
THE QUR'AN
THROUGH ITS THREE ASPECTS:
RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND LITERARY

If the Qur'an has always made its admirable impression on various minds, it must have presented itself to people

- as being adapted to their true manner of thinking and feeling,
- as meeting their requirements for belief and behaviour,
- as bringing solutions for problems which preoccupy them.

In other words, the Qur'an must have satisfied human being need for **Truth**, for **Good** and for **Beauty** through a religious, a moral and a literary work.

CHAPTER 1

THE TRUTH OR THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT

The first feature of the driving force of Islamic preaching resides - in our opinion - in the manner in which it presented the religious truth and tried to cease the disputes about its subject.

The two main theoretical questions, which divided and subdivided philosophical thought are: “*From where does the world come?*” and “*To where does it go?*” We know how revealed religions, after giving a precise response to that, founded a system of dogmas and of cults which varied from one epoch to the other and from one community to the other. They are still varying before our eyes, not only in their form but also in their fundamental principles.

The Qur’an insists with much force and tenacity and affirms categorically that all the Prophets constitute one indivisible religious community under the aegis of their Lord,

“Truly! This, your Ummah [Shari‘ah or religion (Islâmic Monotheism)] is one religion and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me (Alone).” (XXI, 92),

“And verily this your religion (of Islâmic Monotheism) is one religion, and I am your Lord, so keep your duty to Me.” (XXIII, 52).

It also insists that this unity was originally that of all people and it has been the successors who were

disunited,

“Those Messengers! We preferred some of them to others: to some of them Allâh spoke (directly): others He raised to degrees (of honour), and to ʿĪsa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), we gave clear proofs and evidences, and supported him with Rûbul-Qudus [Jibrael (Gabriel)]. If Allâh had willed, succeeding generations would not have fought against each other, after clear Verses of Allâh had come to them, but they differed - some of them believed and others disbelieved - If Allâh had willed they would not have fought against one another, but Allâh does what He likes.” (II, 253);

“Mankind were but one community (i.e. on one religion -Islâmic Monotheism), then they differed (later); and had not it been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord, it would have been settled between them regarding what they differed.” (X, 19).

Always consistent with itself the Qur'an does not define Islam as a new Mohammedanism rivalling with Mosaicism and Christianity and disputing the honour of veracity. To be a Muslim means to belong at the same time to Moses, Jesus and all the divine messengers. To respect them all and give credit to all their teachings without any distinction,

“Or were you witnesses when death approached Ya‘qub (Jacob)? When he said unto his sons, “What will you worship after me?” They said “We shall worship your Ilah (God - Allâh) the Ilah (God) of your fathers, Ibrâhîm (Abraham), Ismâ‘il (Ishmael), Ishâq (Isaac), One Ilah (God), and to Him we submit (in Islâm)” (II, 133),

“The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes

in Allâh, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. (They say), "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers" and they say, "We hear, and we obey (We seek) Your Forgiveness our Lord, and to You is the return (of all)." (II, 285);

"Say (O Muhammad) "We believe in Allâh and in what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Ibrâhim (Abraham), Ismâ'îl (Ishmael), Ishâq (Isaac), Ya'qub (Jacob) and Al-Asbat (the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya'qûb (Jacob) and what was given to Mûsâ (Moses), Isâ (Jesus) and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one another among them and to Him (Allâh) we have submitted (in Islâm)." (III, 84);

"And those who believe in Allâh and His Messengers and make no distinction between any of them (Messengers), we shall give them their rewards." (IV, 152).

To be a Muslim is to belong to God and to follow His will which had successively been manifested on their tongues,

"Were you witness when death appeared before Jacob? When he said to his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship your God and the God of your fathers: of Abraham, Ismâ'îl, and Isaac, the One (True) God; to Him do we submit". (II, 133);

"Do they seek for other than the Religion of Allâh? – While all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, bowed to His Will (accepted Islam). And to Him shall they all be brought back." (III, 84).

From that moment, people will get over schism and rivalry, *"Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects (all kinds of religious sects), you (O Muhammad) have no*

concern in them in the least. Their affair is only with Allâh, Who then will tell them what they used to do.” (VI, 159);

“He (Allâh) has ordained for you the same religion (Islâmic Monotheism) which He ordained for Nûh (Noah), and that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) and that which We ordained for Ibrâhîm (Abraham), Mûsa (Moses) and Isâ (Jesus) saying, you should establish religion (i.e. to do what it orders you to do practically), and make no division in it (religion) (i.e. various sects in religion). Intolerable for the Musbrikin, is that (Islâmic Monotheism). To which you (O Muhammad) call them. Allâh chooses for Himself whom He wills, and guides unto Himself who turns to Him in repentance and in obedience.” (XLII, 13),

Because if the doctrine which those Prophets came to preach is truly identical to mine, there will be no motive for me to reject it. It is in the Prophets unanimity that we find the equilibrium necessary to our interior tranquillity.

The Qur’an calls for a return to the primitive unity. The union which all the good-natured souls cherish and desire. It suffices to pronounce its name for opening the hearts of excellent disposition. Doubtless, this a primary step, but the whole thing resides in the importance of the programme and the method in Islam.

We believe that the point of departure, the nucleus around which the system of the Qur’anic argumentation is organized, consists of a central idea of a transcendent artisan who created all things in the world and on whom they all depend. What makes this idea successful is that it corresponds with the religious unity, which the Qur’an had intended to re-establish because schism cannot spring up without pluralism,

“Say (O Muhammad) “O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians); come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allâh (Alone), and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as Lords besides Allâh. Then if they turn away, say. “Bear witness that we are Muslim”. (III, 64);

“And argue not with the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), unless it be in (a way) that is better (with good words and in good manner, inviting them to Islamic Monotheism with His Verses), except with such of them as do wrong; and say (to (hem); “We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you: our Ilah (God) and your Ilah (God) is One (i.e. Allâh), and to Him we have submitted (as Muslims)”. (XXIX, 46).

On the other hand, being so elevated above all the religious narrow particularities, this idea reminds mankind of the eternal truth which has never ceased to be known or easily recognized by all.

In fact, even the pagan Arabs, who had fallen into idolatry, had recognized a Supreme God, Creator of the Universe and Administrator of the celestial world,

“And if you were to ask them: “Who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon?” They will surely reply: “Allâh”. How then are they deviating (as polytheists and disbelievers)?” (XXIX, 61).

This belief is due to traces of Patriarchs religion (Abraham and Ishmael) and also to a germ in human minds and souls,

“And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the Children

of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loins his offspring) and made them testify as to themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes We testify, "lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: "Verily, we have been unaware of this." (VII, 172).

This primitive monotheism, this natural religion as called by the Qur'an,

"So set you (O Muhammad) your face towards the religion (of pure Islâmic Monotheism) Hanîf (worship none but Allâh Alone). Allâh's Fitrah (i.e. Allâh's Islâmic Monotheism) with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in Khalqillah (i.e. the religion of Allâh -Islâmic Monotheism); that is the straight religion, but most of men know not." (XXX, 30), was to the Arabs a sort of a theoretical idea, enveloped and practically submerged by the cults which they were attributing to inferior divinities,

"And most of them believe not in Allâh except that they attribute partners unto Him [i.e. they are polytheists]." (XII, 106).

They were not calling God except in cases of great danger, *"He it is Who enables you to travel through land and sea, till when you are in the ships, and they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they are glad therein, then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them, from all sides, and they think that they are encircled therein. Then they invoke Allâh, making their Faith pure for Him Alone, (saying :) "If you (Allâh) deliver us from this, we shall truly be of the grateful." (X, 22).*

They were not giving to Him from their offerings but a tiny part, *"And they assign to Allâh a share of tith and cattle which He has created and they say: "This is for Allâh according to their claim, and this is for our (Allâh's so-called) "partners."*

But the share of their (Allâh's so-called) "partners" reaches not Allâh, while the share of Allâh reaches their (Allâh's so-called) "partners." Evil is the way they judge!" (VI, 136).

Because of their contact with nature elements, they were not able to keep from attributing some influences to stars,

"And that He (Allâh) is the Lord of Sirius (the star which the pagan Arabs used to worship)," (LIII, 49),

"And from among His Signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate yourselves not to the sun nor to the moon, but prostrate yourselves to Allâh Who created them, if you (really) worship Him." (XLI, 37) to which they were prostrating. Between God and man, they established intermediary powers, able to bring a man to his Creator,

"Surely the religion (i.e. the worship and the obedience) is for Allâh only. And those who take Auliya' (protectors, helpers, lords, gods) besides Him (say): "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allâh". Verily Allâh will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allâh guides not him who is a liar, and a disbeliever." (XXXIX, 3), or to intercede in his favour,

"And they worship besides Allâh things that hurt them not, nor profit them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allâh". Say: Do you inform Allâh of that which He knows not in the heavens and on the earth? "Glorified and exalted is He above all that which they associate as partners (with Him)!" (X, 18).

Thus the angels, who they considered God's daughters, were the subject of their worship, *"And they make the angels who themselves are slaves of the Most Gracious (Allâh)*

females. Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned! * And they said; "If it had been the Will of the Most Gracious (Alláh), we should not have worshipped them (false deities)." They have no knowledge whatsoever of that. They do nothing but lies!" (XLIII, 19-20).

The statues, "That (Manásik- prescribed duties of Hajj is the obligation that mankind owes to Alláh) and whoever honours the sacred things of Alláh, then that is better for him with his Lord. The cattle are lawful to you, except those (that will be) mentioned to you (as exceptions). So shun the abomination (worshipping) of idol, and shun lying speech (false statements)." (XXII, 30) and the erected stones,

"O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and Al-Ansab, and Al-Azlam (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitan's (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful." (V, 90) which had to possess some hidden principles or to symbolize some invisible divinities, had ended by obtaining the same veneration as the symbolized things. Little by little, the most superstitious imaginations forged, an infinity of small gods for small affairs below the Great God Creator.

The people of the Book had successfully reconciled the unity of God, the Creator, with the plurality of the worshipped gods. With one hand against another, the Qur'an had seized the first concept to destroy the second; and had caught his adversaries by their own confession to show them, if not their absurdity, at least the ingratitude of this mixing and this confusion,

"O mankind! Worship your Lord (Alláh), Who created you and

*those who were before you so that you may become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious) * Who had made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky as a canopy, and sent down water (rain) from the sky and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you. Then do not set up rivals unto Allâh (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped).” (II, 21-22);*

“Is then He, Who creates as one who creates not? Will you not then remember?” (XVI, 17);

“O mankind! A similitude has been coined, so listen to it (carefully): Verily those on whom you call besides Allâh, cannot create (even) a fly, even though they combine together for the purpose. And if the fly snatches away a thing from them, they will have no power to release it from the fly. So weak are (both) the seeker and the sought.” (XXII, 73).

The unity which the Qur’an preaches is founded on an idea, which already existed, although buried under ruins of antagonistic ideas. Consequently, the Arabs denounced the Qur’anic call for worshipping One God and asked sarcastically whether all the gods were made into one God,

“Has he made the âlîhab (gods) (all) into Ilâh (God-Allâh). Verily, this is a curious thing!” (XXXVIII, 51).

In their opinion, this saying was so strange and false that they assumed that they had never heard of this among the people of the preceding celestial religions (ibid 6), such as the Christianity as it had been introduced into Arabia from north and south by some refugee sects. Despite the difference between the deified personages, they had found enough analogy for extracting argument in favour of their gross polytheism,

*“And when the son of Maryam (Mary) is quoted as an example [i.e. Isâ (Jesus) is worshipped like their idols], behold, your people cry aloud (laugh out at the example). * And say: “Are our âlihah (gods) better or is he [‘Isâ (Jesus)?”]. They quoted not the above example except for argument. Nay! But they are a quarrelsome people.” (XLIII, 57-8).*

The Qur’an extracted that submerged idea from its chaotic surroundings and returned its purity. In doing so, it proceeded by eliminating the absurdities, not by adding anything new.

Thus, as we have insinuated before, the force of a religious idea lies in its original character. It calls us to adhere to it with as much attachment as it had plunged its roots in the beliefs of our remotest ancestors. That is why the Qur’an, besides the deductive argument, founded its doctrine of the unity of the prophetic tradition of all epochs,

“Were you witness when death appeared before Jacob? When he said to his sons: “What will you worship after me?” They said: “We shall worship your God and the God of your fathers: of Abraham, Ismâ‘îl, and Isaac, the One (True) God; to Him do we submit”. (II, 133);

“It is not (possible) for any human being to whom Allâh has given the Book and Al-Hukm (the knowledge and understanding of the laws of religion) and Prophethood to say to the people: “Be my worshippers rather than Allâh's.” On the contrary (he would say): “Be you Rabbâniyyûn (learned men of religion who practise what they know and also preach others), because you are teaching the Book and you are studying it.” (III, 79);

“Or have they taken for worship (other) âlihah (gods) besides

*Him? Say: "Bring your proof." This (the Qur'an) is the Reminder for those with me and the Reminder for those before me. But most of them know not the Truth, so they are averse. * And we did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We revealed to him (saying): Lâ ilâha illa Ana (none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allâh), so worship Me (Alone and none else)."* (XXI, 24-5);

"And strive hard in Allâh's cause as you ought to strive (with sincerity and with all your efforts that His Name should be superior). He has chosen you (to convey His Message of Islamic Monotheism to mankind by inviting them to His religion of Islâm), and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship: it is the religion of your father Ibrâhim (Abraham) (Islâmic Monotheism). It is He (Allâh) who has named you Muslims both before and in this (the Qur'an), that the Messenger (Muhammad) may be a witness over you and you be witnesses over mankind! So perform As-Salât, give Zakât and hold fast to Allâh [i.e. have confidence in Allâh, and depend upon Him in all your affairs] He is Maulâ (Patron, Lord), what an Excellent Maulâ (Patron, Lord) and what an Excellent Helper!" (XXII, 78),

"And ask (O Muhammad) those of our Messengers whom We sent before you: Did We ever appoint âlliba (gods) to be worshipped besides the Most Gracious (Allâh)?" (XLIII, 45).

In this way, reason and tradition contribute, according to the Qur'an, to establish the religion of One Unique God and to refute the idolatry and the association under all their forms,

"Say (O Muhammad to these pagans): "Think you about all that you invoke besides Allâh'? Show me. What have they created of the earth? Or have they a share in (the creation of) the heavens?"

Bring me a Book (revealed before this), or some trace of knowledge (in support of your claims), if you are truthful!" (XLVI, 4).

Yet, how do we explain why such a rational proposition, renewed by the positive teaching of the Prophets, can disappear so easily from people's minds and give way to opposing ideas? This is so because man feels inclined to admire the creative power wherever it manifests itself. From admiration to worship the process is continuous and differs only in degree. The powers of nature are marvels apt to captivate the sound mind of a rather attentive observer. What about uncommon or supernatural prodigies of a magician? Guided most frequently by exterior senses, intellect tends easily to localise these phenomena in the immediate milieu which produced them. It attributes them to the object which manifests them as the effect of an efficient and autonomous cause. It is only by a voluntary effort of reflection - which does not often happens - that intellect may elevate from the actual phenomenon to its origins and from the sensible to the intelligible.

One of the first objectives of the Qur'an is to sustain that effort, reminding us that it is impossible for any creature to come out of nothing without a creative act, or to create by himself anything whatsoever in the skies or on the earth,

*"Were they created by nothing? Or were they themselves the creators? * Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, but they have no firm Belief. (LII 35-6),*

*"Do they attribute as partners to Allâh those who created nothing but they themselves are created? * No help can they give them, nor*

can they help themselves. (VII, 191-2).

Even if a fly snatched something from the most powerful men in the world, they would not be able to restore it,

“O mankind! A similitude has been coined, so listen to it (carefully): Verily those on whom you call besides Allâh, cannot create (even) a fly, even though they combine together for the purpose. And if the fly snatches away a thing from them, they will have no power to release it from the fly. So weak are (both) the seeker and the sought.” (XXII, 73).

No one but God possesses even an atom's weight in the heavens or on the earth, *“Say (O Muhammad to polytheists, pagans) “Call upon those whom you assert (to be associate gods) besides Allâh, they possess not even an atom's (or a small ant's) weight either in the heavens or on the earth, nor have they any share in either, nor there is for Him any supporter from among them.”* (XXXIV, 22).

No one but God can change or maintain the order of nature, *“They shall have a curse on them: Wherever they are found, they shall be seized and slain.”* (XXXIII, 62);

“(They took to flight because of their) arrogance in the land and their plotting of evil. But the evil plot encompasses only him who makes it. Then, can they expect anything (else) but the Sunnah (way of dealing) of the people of old? So no change will you find in Allâh's Sunnah (way of dealing) and no turning off will you find in Allâh 's Sunnah (way of dealing).” (XXXV, 43);

“(Such has been) the practice of Allâh already in the past: No change will you find in the practice of Allâh.” (XLVIII, 23),

“See you not that Allâh has subjected to you (mankind) all that is

on the earth, and the ships that sail through the sea by His Command? He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth except by His Leave. Verily, Allâh is, for mankind, Full of Kindness, Most Merciful.” (XXII, 65),

“Verily! Allâh grasps the heavens and the earth lest they should move away from their places, there is not one that could grasp them after Him. Truly He is Ever Most Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving.” (XXXV, 41).

We call this constant order of things in which our intervention cannot modify anything, inexorable laws. The constancy of all the laws of causality owes to one word of God's will. If He willed, He would render rainwater salty and bitter,

“If We willed, We verily could make it salt (and un-drinkable): why then do you not give thanks (to Allâh)?” (LVI, 70).

He would make the heaven fall on the earth,

“See you not that Allâh has subjected to you (mankind) all that is on the earth, and the ships that sail through the sea by His Command? He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth except by His Leave. Verily, Allâh is, for mankind, Full of Kindness, Most Merciful.” (XXII, 65).

He would remove the human race and bring forth other creatures in its place, *“Do you not see that Allâh has created the heavens and the earth with truth? If He wills, He can remove you and bring (in your place) a new creation!”* (XIV, 19),

“If He so pleased, He could blot you and bring in a new creation.” (XXXV, 16). Who could stop His arm if He wanted to ruin all those who live on the earth?

“Surely, in disbelief are they who say that Allâh is the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary). Say (O Muhammad) "Who then has the least power against Allâh, if He were to destroy the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary), his mother and all those who are on the earth together? " And to Allâh belongs the domination of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them. He creates what He wills. And Allâh is Able to do all things.” (V, 17).

God is not only the most powerful, but he is All-Powerful. The chain of near and distant causes is nothing but an instrument in the All-Powerful hand of the artisan of the world, *“Allâh is the Creator of all things, and He is the Wakîl (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian) overall things. * To him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. And those who disbelieve in the Ayât (proofs, evidences, verses, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allâh, such are they who will be the losers.”* (XXXIX, 62-3).

All should be explained by God, *“And that to your Lord (Allâh) is the End (Return of every thing)”* (LIII, 42).

Thus, the man inclined to conclude that there is, not only an absolute destiny rendering vain all human intervention, but an entire passivity of mankind where any relation of causality should disappear. Such a conclusion opposes two groups of the Qur’anic texts: those which are constantly calling for our moral effort and those which explain such physical and historical phenomena by each other. The only reasonable interpretation would be that which admits to each of the given facts a determined scope, and to attribute to the human being and to the world an autonomous power or an absolute impotence. Such is the golden mean in which the Qur’an seems to want to place us.

The Qur'an had not been well understood when some give a bad construction of the Prophet's systematic refusal to be seen as a miracle worker. They insinuated by that that he did not give signs of the divinity of his mission. The truth is that, in all the extraordinary circumstances which accompany the Prophets in establishing their missions and assuring their success, the Qur'anic doctrine never sees in that a direct human work. It is by God's power that such and such marvels are accomplished by the words or by the hand of his Apostles. Noah and the ancient Prophets had already proclaimed that before,

“He said: “Only Allâh will bring it (the punishment) on you, if he wills, and then you will escape not.” (XI, 33),

“Their Messengers said to them: We are no more than human beings like you, but Allâh bestows His Grace to whom He wills of His slaves. It is not ours to bring you an authority (proof) except by the Permission of Allâh.” (XIV, 11).

When the Pharisees had asked Jesus to make them see a sign from the sky, he declined their request and went on (Matthew XVI, 1-4). Moses threw his stick and it is transformed, to his surprise, in a real snake,

“He cast it down, and behold! It was a snake, moving quickly.” (XX, 20). Jesus called the dead person, and it is by God's authority, that the dead person came back to life,

“(Remember) when Allâh will say (on the Day of Resurrection). “O 'Isâ (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Re-member My Favour to you and to your mother when I sup-ported you with Râh-ul-Qudus [Jibril (Gabriel)] so that you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and when I taught you Book, Al-Hikmah

(the power of understanding, the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel); and when you made out of the clay a figure like that of bird, by My Permission, and you breathed into it, and it became a bird by My Permission, and you healed those born blind, and the lepers by My Permission, and when you brought forth the dead by My Permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from you (when they resolved to kill you) as you came unto them with clear proofs, and the disbelievers among them said: "This is nothing but evident magic." (V, 110).⁽¹⁾

It is the same thing concerning Muhammad's action. Thus, at the beginning of the Islamic message, the recitation of several verses of the Qur'an disarmed the most fierce rebels and made them pass from the emotional death to the spiritual life,

"O you who believe! Answer Allâh (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life; and know that Allâh comes in between a person and his heart (i.e. He prevents an evil person to decide anything). And verily to Him you shall (all) be gathered." (VIII, 24).

It was not Muhammad who opened their closed hearts (ibid). Afterward, the society, divided and tormented by hate and domestic war, became one united group of intimate brothers. There is none but God who has the power over hearts or can join them together,

"And if they intend to deceive you, then verily Allâh is All-Sufficient for you. He it is Who has supported you with His Help and with the believers." (VIII, 62);

(1) Compare with the Gospel "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God...? (Matt. XII, 28).

“And hold fast, all of you together to the Rope of Allâh (i.e. this Qur’an), and be not divided among your-selves, and remember Allâh’s Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic Faith), and you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it.” (III, 103).

When finally the triumph of belief and monotheism overcame infidelity and polytheism, it was God who defeated them, *“You killed them not, but Allâh killed them. And you (Muhammad) threw not when you did throw, but Allâh threw, that He might test the believers by a fair trial from Him.”* (VIII, 17).

From beginning to the end of the Qur’an, the same explanation is given of the miracles accomplished through the Prophets, including Muhammad as well. This is neither due to the perspicacity of their intelligence nor to the extent of their human instructions, but to a merciful intervention from which operates any creation, any science and any good grace.

Thus, with the idea of the fullness of divine attributes, the Qur’an has established the first part of the common religious doctrine, namely, there is no but one unique object worthy of our worship. With the same idea, the Qur’an has constructed the second part; the dogma of the future life. It is to God that we shall return,

“How can you disbelieve in Allâh? Seeing that you were dead and He gave you life. Then He will give you death, then again will bring you to life (on the Day of Resurrection) and then unto Him you will return.” (II, 28), to render an account of our deeds and to be rewarded according to our merits.

“And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allâh. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.” (II, 281). It is necessary to distinguish here between two points: the survival of the soul and the resurrection of the body.

Concerning the survival of the soul, it does not seem that the Islamic predication had met some considerable opposition. The Qur’an, which registered with an extreme fidelity all the objections raised by its adversaries, did not mention this. Arab pagans believed in a fabulous entity which they called هامة Hâma, which hovered at night over the victim's sepulchre and cried: “Give me drink!”, and would not cease to reappear until the best retaliation be done for the crime. Prophetic Tradition confirmed that this concept was anti-Islamic: “لا هامة”.

It was against the second proposition that the unbelievers had multiplied their objections and their sarcasm. They say: *“When we are bones and fragments (destroyed), should we really be resurrected (as) a new creation? (XVII, 49). Whoever confirms this assertion may either be a “madman” or “invented a lie against Allâh” (XXXIV, 8). “Then bring back our forefathers, if you speak the truth” (XLIV, 36) “And they say:*

“There is nothing but our life of this world, we die and we live and nothing destroys us except time” (XLV, 24-5).

To all these easy reasoning, the Qur’an opposed its decisive argument drawn out from the open book of nature. It demands minds to meditate a little on the

successive forms which the human being passes through, “*While He has created you in (different) stages [i.e. first Nutfab, then ‘Alaquah and then Mudghab].*” (LXXI, 14), since a drop of blood until his final marvellous state on birth time,

*“And indeed we created man (Adam) out of an extract of clay (water and earth). * Thereafter We made him (the offspring of Adam) as a Nutfab (mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge and lodged it) in safe lodging (womb of the woman). * Then We made the Nutfab into a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood), then We made the clot into a little lump of flesh, then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation. So Blessed is Allâh, the Best of creators. * After that, surely, you will die. * Then (again), surely, you will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection.”* (XXIII, 12-16).

“God brings out the living _from the dead and brings out the dead from the living” (XXX, 19). Isn’t it easier for the artisan who started the first creation to recommence it?

“And He it is Who originates the creation, then He will repeat it (after it has been perished); and this is easier for Him. His is the highest description (i.e. none has the right to be worshipped but He, and there is nothing comparable unto Him) in the heavens and in the earth. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.” (XXX, 27).

The Qur’an draws our attention, particularly to the seasonal events. Don’t we see when God pours down rain on the barren and lifeless earth, “*it is stirred (to life), it swells, and it puts forth every lovely kind (of growth)?* (XXII, 5-7).

“Look then at the effects of Allâh's Mercy! How He revives the earth after its death: Verily, that (Allâh) shall indeed raise the dead, and He is Able to do all things”. (XXX, 50),

On what is the resurrection founded? The Qur'an establishes it not only in a divine decree, this sort of obligation which God has made it a duty to Himself,

“And they swear by Allâh their strongest oaths that Allâh will not raise up him who dies. Yes (He will raise them up), - a promise (binding) upon Him in Truth, but most of mankind know not.” (XVI, 38) but also in the requirement of the supreme justice and of the highest wisdom:

“In order that He may make manifest to them the truth of that wherein they differ”, (ibid, 39) and to reward to everyone his deeds, *“And Allâh has created the heavens and the earth with truth, in order that each person may be recompensed what he has earned, and they will not be wronged.”* (XLV, 22).

Otherwise, the creation of man will be in vain, *“Did you think that We had created you in play (without any purpose), and that you would not be brought back to Us?”* (XXIII, 115);

“Does man think that he will be left neglected (without being punished or rewarded for the obligatory duties enjoined by his Lord Allâh on him)?” (LXXV, 36).

Thus, the unique religion which the Qur'an wants to establish is founded on evident principles.

If the religious theme remains in reality as it had always been, undoubtedly, it had realized a real progress under the form it has taken through the Qur'an. This is because the Qur'an has administered the proof in a manner proper to convince the most rigorous intellects and to

make the hardest hearts vibrate. It has given its extremely comprehensive and penetrating views on the celestial and earthly whole universe and has extracted lessons of every aspect of the internal and external creation. Also because the religious material itself concerning the attributes of God and the destiny of the soul are presented in a stronger development than anywhere else.

Add to this that the divine sense is at the same time characterized by a very particular purity, which alienates it from any rude anthropomorphism and by an invasive force, which transports the audience into the sublime world of the spirit.⁽¹⁾

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(1) Read for e.g. Surahs XIII, XX, XXXIX, XL, XLI, XLII and II, 255-260; III, 190-195; IV, 77-79; V, 109-end; VI, 95-104; LVIII, 7; LIX, 21-end.

CHAPTER II

THE GOOD OR THE MORAL ELEMENT

In addition to his need to know and to believe, a human being needs a practical rule proper for steering his activity whether in his personal behaviour or in his relationship with others and with God. The last Revelation satisfies this need in the largest and most precise manner. It traces for every branch of human activity a determined and a clear way to follow.

The practical side in the Qur'an is so important that it is repeated frequently and in an explicit manner as a necessary condition for the final salvation and eternal happiness. We shall simply point out certain sides by which the Qur'anic teaching has that control on the souls by its content and by its style of presentation.

First, the method..

Inside every one of us, there is an innate moralist. We recognize, we love, and we admire the virtue in itself as well as in others, even if we do not have the courage to elevate ourselves to its level. The spectacle of an indignant attitude is repugnant to us. We hate in ourselves our own faults and we always seek to justify ourselves. This is because we never accept to be stigmatized by any vice whatsoever.

It is this more or less universal feeling of justice and injustice, of good and evil, that the Qur'an relies most frequently on its prediction. It is also to that feeling that it refers in determining its practical doctrine. The Prophet, it is said, commands,

*“Them for Al-Ma’ruf and forbids them from Al-Munkar; he allows them as lawful Al-Tayyibat and prohibits them as unlawful, Al-*khabaith*” (literally and figuratively) (VII, 157).*

The things that God *“has indeed forbidden are Al-Fawāhish, whether committed openly or secretly; sins (of all kinds), unrighteous oppression”*, (ibid, 33).

It suffices to note that the reference to this universal moral conscience, to this innate feeling of good and evil, is repeated in the Qur’an in more than 45 verses.⁽¹⁾

Nevertheless, this natural sentiment, upon which the Qur’an is always calling, is not always sufficiently ardent in all men for determining their submission to the rule, it was necessary to prescribe a complete method of education relying on intelligence and reason as well as on this innate moral sense. If this permanent feeling of good and evil was lacking, the idea of universal duty would always remain. The best way for animating this idea and for making it transcend our actual sentiments is to invoke for its support the witness of competent: i.e. the sages and the saints of all times.

That is why the last Revelation is attached solidly to the Revelation which preceded it. All the Messengers of God had maintained Justice, *“Indeed We have sent our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice that mankind may keep up justice. And We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind that Allāh may test who it is that will help Him (His religion) and His Messengers in the*

(1) See, for example, our “La Morale du Koran” chapter III, parag. III. A.

unseen.” (LVII, 25).

All had been ordered to work honestly for their living, to worship God and to practice virtue

“O (you) Messengers! Eat of the *Tayyibât* [all kinds of Halâl (lawful) foods (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, milk products, fats, vegetables, fruits, etc.) and do righteous deeds. Verily I am Well-Acquainted with what you do. * And verily this your religion (of Islâmic Monotheism) is one religion, and I am your Lord, so keep your duty to Me.” (XXIII, 51-2).

Prayer and alms had been instituted by Abraham, Isaak, Jacob, “And We made them leaders, guiding (mankind) by Our Command, and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds performing *Salât* (*Iqâmat-as-Salât*) and the giving of *Zakât* and of Us (Alone) they were the worshippers.” (XXI, 73), Ishmael, “And he used to enjoin on his family and his people *As-Salât* (the prayers) and the *Zakât* and his Lord was pleased with him.” (XIX, 55), Moses, “Verily! I am Allâh! *Lâ ilâha illa Ana* (none has the right to be worshipped but I), so worship Me, and perform *As-Salât* (*Iqâmat-as-Salât*) for My Remembrance.” (XX, 14), and Jesus “And He has made me blessed wheresoever I be, and has enjoined on me *Salât* (prayer), and *Zakât* as long as I live.” (XIX, 31).

Fasting also had been prescribed to ancient people

“O you who believe! Observing *As-Saum* (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become *Al-Muttaqûn* (the pious).” (II, 183), and pilgrimage by Abraham, “And proclaim to mankind the *Hajj* (pilgrimage). They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from every deep and distant (wide) mountain highway (to perform *Hajj*). (XXII, 27). All nations had their sacred

rites, “*And for every nation We have appointed religious ceremonies, that they may mention the Name of Allâh over the beast of cattle that He has given them for food. And your Ilâh (God) is One Ilâh (God-Allâh), so you must submit to Him Alone (in- Islâm).*” (ibid 34),

“*For every nation We have ordained religious ceremonies [e.g. slaughtering of the cattle during the three days of stay at Mîna (Makkah) during the Hajj (pilgrimage)] which they must follow; so let them (the pagans) not dispute with you on the matter (i.e. to eat of the cattle which you slaughter, and not to eat of the cattle which Allâh kills by its natural death), but invite them to your Lord. Verily you (O Mubammad) indeed are on the (true) straight guidance (i.e. the true religion of Islâmic Monotheism).*” (ibid 67).

Materialism, excessive love of worldly life, aggression and corruption were condemned by Hud and Saleh,

“*Do you build high places on every high place, while you do not live in them?*” (XXVI, 128),

“*And follow not the bidding of those who are extravagant,*” (XXVI, 152). Lot revolted against his people debauch,

“*Go you in unto the males of ‘Alâmîn (mankind)*” (ibid 165) and Choâib against trading fraud, “*Give full measure, and cause no loss (to others). * And weigh with the true and straight balance. * And defraud not people by reducing their things, nor do evil, making corruption and mischief in the land.*” (ibid 181-3). The wise Luqmân recommended his son to exhort others to do good and prevent them from doing evil,

“*O my son! Aqim As-Salât (perform As-Salât), enjoin (on people) Al-Ma‘ruf (Islâmic Monotheism and all that is good), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief in the Oneness of*

*Allâh, polytheism of all kinds and all that is evil and bad), and bear with patience whatever befalls you. Verily, these are some of the important commandments (ordered by Allâh with no exemption). * And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through earth. Verily Allâh likes not any arrogant boaster. * And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is braying of the ass". (XXXI, 17-19).*

It is not by coincidence that Muhammad teaches the same law of his predecessors. Properly speaking to Muslims, the Qur'an says: "*God wishes to make clear to you and to show you the way of those before you*" (IV, 26).

In addressing the Prophet himself after having enumerated the divine messengers, his predecessors, God says: "*They are those whom Allâh has guided so follow their guidance*"! (VI, 90). In fact, we do not find any moral precept reported by the Qur'an, as being taught by such Prophet or such sage, which was not retaken by it somewhere else as a duty for the Muslim community.

Do you want to see the moral laws of Moses and those of Jesus as they were pronounced in the Holy Bible? You will find them preciously preserved in the Qur'an. Certainly not given as a whole as they are in the Decalogue or in the Sermon on the Mountain, but spread out in various surahs, mekkan and medinian, and mostly each of them manifested as a sentence destined to judge a particular situation.

Besides the Sabbath which considered by the Qur'an as a local and conditioned duty, here are the Ten Decalogue Commandments.

The Bible (Exodus 20)	The Qur'an
Thou shalt have no other gods before me.	Between Others ... <i>worship none but Him</i> " (XVII, 23).
Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image	" <i>...So shun the abomination (worshipping) of idol</i> " (XXII, 30).
Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain	<i>And make not Allâh (Name) an excuse in your oaths against your doing good....</i> (II, 224); " <i>Allâh will not punish you for what is unintentional in your oaths, but He will punish you for your deliberate oath.</i> " (V,89)
Honour thy father and thy mother	" <i>... you worship none but Him and that you be dutiful to your parents ...</i> " (XVII, 23)
Thou shalt not kill	" <i>.. And do not kill yourselves (not kill one another).</i> " (IV,29)
Thou shalt not commit adultery	" <i>Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things) and protect their private parts...* And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking forbidden things) and to protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except</i>

The Bible (Exodus 20)	The Qur'an
	<i>only that which is apparent etc.” (XXIV, 30-1).</i>
Thou shalt not steal	<i>And (as for) the male thief and the female thief, cut off (from the wrist joint) their (right) hands as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allâh.” (V, 38); “O Prophet! When believing women come to you to give the Bai‘ah (pledge), that they will not associate anything in worship with Allâh, that they will not steal ...” (LX, 12)</i>
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour	<i>“... and shun lying speech (false statement)” (XXII, 30).</i>
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house... nor anything that is thy neighbour’s	<i>“And wish not for the things in which Allâh has made some of you to excel others...” (IV, 32).</i>

These are the bases of the moral law about which Jesus said: “Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever

shall do and teach them the same, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5: 19). However, it will be an underestimation of Moses' work if it is reduced to those elementary duties. If we extend our search in the Torah, we would find a few other scattered commandments (Exode, 22-23; Levitic, 19-25; Deuteronomy, 6) which concern the act of the heart as well as the exterior action and which predicted the Evangelical precepts.

Bible	The Qur'an
<p>Thou shalt not raise a false report (Ex. 23: 1)</p>	<p>Between others</p> <p><i>Verily those who brought forth the slander (against 'Aishah, the wife of the Prophet) are a group among you. Unto every man among them will be paid that which he had earned of the sin, and for him among them, who had the greater share therein, his will be a great torment.</i>" (XXIV, 11); <i>"Verily, those who like that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter."</i> (XXIV, 19); <i>"O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another."</i> (XLIX, 12)</p>

<p>Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil (Ex.23:2)</p>	<p>“... <i>Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwâ (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression.</i>” (V, 2)</p>
<p>.. neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause (Ex. 23:3)</p>	<p>“... <i>be he rich or poor; Allâh is a Better Protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you avoid justice.</i>” (IV, 135).</p>
<p>..thou shalt surely help with him (Ex. 23:5)</p>	<p>“<i>Let not the hatred of some people... lead you to transgression.</i>” (V, 2).</p>
<p>But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you (Lev. 19:34)</p>	<p>“...<i>and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, Al-Masâkîn (the poor), the neighbour who is near, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet) and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess ..</i>” (IV, 36)</p>
<p>Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land (Deut,15:11)</p>	<p>“<i>And those in whose wealth there is recognised right. * For the beggar who asks, and for the unlucky who has lost his property and wealth, (and his means of living has been straitened)</i>”. (LXX, 24-5).</p>

<p>Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him (Ex. 22:21)</p>	<p><i>“... and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, Al- Masâkîn (the poor), the neighbour who is near, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet) and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess ...” (IV, 36)</i></p>
<p>Ye shall not afflict any widow, nor fatherless child (Ex. 22:22)</p>	<p><i>“They ask your legal instruction concerning women, say: Allâh instructs you about them, and about what is recited unto you in the Book concerning the orphan girls whom you give not the prescribed portions (as regards Mabr and inheritance) and yet you desire to marry, and (concerning) the children who are weak and oppressed, and that you stand firm for justice to orphans..” (IV, 127); “Therefore, treat not the orphan with oppression.” (XCIII, 9).</i></p>
<p>Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgement (Lev. 19:15)</p>	<p><i>“And that when you judge between men, you judge with justice.” (IV, 58)</i></p>

<p>Keep thee far from a false matter (Ex. 23:7)</p>	<p><i>And among mankind is he who disputes concerning Allâh, without knowledge and follows every rebellious (disobedient to Allâh) Shaitan (Devil) (devoid of every kind of good). (XXII, 3); “And of mankind there is he whose speech may please you (O Muhammad) in his worldly life, and he calls Allâh to witness as to that which is in his heart, yet he is the most quarrel some of the opponents.” (II, 204); “And argue not on behalf of those who deceive themselves. Verily, Allâh does not like anyone who is betrayer, sinner. * They may hide (their crimes) from men, but they cannot hide (them) from Allâh; for He is with them (by His knowledge) when they plot by night in words that He does not approve. And Allâh ever encompasses what they do. (IV,107-8)</i></p>
<p>Thou shalt not avenge (Lev. 18:19)</p>	<p><i>“... who repress anger and who pardon men ...” (III,134)</i></p>
<p>Ye shall do no unrighteousness...in meteyard, in weight, or in measure (Lev. 19:35).</p>	<p><i>“Woe to Al-Mutaffifin (those who give less in measure and weight). * Those who, when they have to receive by measure from men, demand full measure, * And when they have to give by measure or weight to (other) men, give less than due.” (LXXXIII, 1-3).</i></p>

<p>Thou shalt not.. bear any grudge against the children of thy people (Lev. 19:18)</p>	<p><i>“And those who came after them say: “Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed.” (LIX, 10).</i></p>
<p>Ye shall be holy (Lev. 19:1)</p>	<p><i>It is not (possible) for any human being to whom Allâh has given the Book and Al-Hukm (the knowledge and understanding of the laws of religion) and Prophethood to say to the people: “Be my worshippers rather than Allâh's.” On the contrary (he would say): “Be you Rabbâniyyîn (learned men of religion who practise what they know and also preach others), because you are teaching the Book and you are studying it.” (III, 79); “Never stand you therein. Verily, the mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety is more worthy that you stand therein (to pray). In it are men who love to clean and to purify themselves. And Allâh loves those who make themselves clean and pure [i.e. who clean their private parts with dust and water]” (IX, 108)</i></p>

<p>.. thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. 19:18)</p>	<p><i>“And (it is also for) those who, before them, had homes (in Al-Madinah) and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given (from the booty of Banî An-Nadîr), and give them (emigrants) preference over them-selves even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.” (LIX, 9)</i></p>
<p>And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart (Deut. 6:5)</p>	<p><i>“... But those who believe love Allâh more (than any-thing else) ...” (II, 165)</i></p>

Thus, the Qur’an fulfils marvellously its primary mission, of being the faithful guardian of all the Sacred Books

“O you people of the book! Believe in what We have (now) revealed confirming what was (already) with you, before We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition. And turn them hind wards, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers, for the decision of Allâh must be carried out.” (V, 48).

Only, instead of accumulating all pieces of advice at the same time, it very often prefers not to give each lesson except at the right moment. Let us follow, little by little, that Evangelic preaching and let us see how the same principles are confirmed in the Sacred Book of Islam.

The Gospel	The Qur'an
<p>Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3)</p>	<p>Between others <i>“Beautiful is the life of this world for those who disbelieve, and they mock at those who believe. But those who obey Allâh's Orders and keep away from what He has forbidden, will be above them on the Day of Resurrection. (II, 212), “Beautiful for men is the love of thing they covet; women, children, much of gold and silver (wealth), branded beautiful horses; cattle and well-tilled land. This is the pleasure of the present world's life; but Allâh has the excel-lent return (Paradise with flowing rivers) with Him.” (III, 14)</i></p>
<p>Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.(Matt. 5:4)</p>	<p><i>“And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sâbirûn (the patient) * Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: “Truly! To Allâh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.” (II, 155-7).</i></p>
<p>Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth (Matt, 5:5)</p>	<p><i>“And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for Al-Muttaqûn (the pious) * Those who spend (in Allâh's Cause) in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men; verily, Allâh loves Al-Muhsinûn (the good-doers).” (III, 133-4); “And when the</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
	<p><i>Word is fulfilled against them (the unjust), We shall bring forth from the earth a beast to speak unto them because mankind had no faith in our signs.” (XXVII, 83)</i></p>
<p>Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled (Matt. 5:6)</p>	<p><i>“Or do those who earn evil deeds think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe (in the Oneness of Allâh - Islâmic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, in their present life and after their death? Worst is the judgement that they make.” (XLV, 21); “Verily (during the worldly life) those who committed crimes used to laugh at those who believed. * And whenever they passed by them, used to wink one to another (in mockery). * And when they returned to their own people they would return jesting: * And when they saw them, they said: “Verily these have indeed gone astray”....* But this Day (the Day of Resurrection) those who believe will laugh at the disbelievers. * On (high) thrones, looking (at all things) * Are not the disbeliever paid (fully) for what they used to do?” (LXXXIII, 29-36)</i></p>
<p>Blessed are the pure in heart (Matt, 5:8)</p>	<p><i>“But only he (will prosper) that bring to Allâh a sound heart.” (XXVI, 89); “Who feared the Most Gracious (Allâh) in the Ghaib (Unseen) and brought a heart turned in repentance (to Him and absolutely free from each and every kind of polytheism).” (L, 33)</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
<p>Blessed are the peacemakers: (Matt; 5:9)</p>	<p><i>“There is no good in most of their secret talks save (in) him who orders Sadaqah (charity in Allâh's Cause), or Ma'rif (Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allâh has ordained), or conciliation between mankind and he who does this, seeking the good pleasure of Allâh, We shall give him a great reward.” (IV, 114)</i></p>
<p>Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake (Matt. 5:10)</p>	<p><i>“Or think you that you will enter Paradise without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty and ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who be-lieved along with him said, “When (will come) the Help of Allâh?” Yes! Certainly, the Help of Allâh is near.” (II, 214); “You shall certainly be tried and tested in your wealth and properties and in your personal selves, and you shall certainly bear much that will grieve you from those who received the Scripture before you (Jews and Christians) and from those who ascribe partners to Allâh; but if you persevere patiently and become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious), then verily, that will be a determining factor in all affairs. (and that is from the great matters which you must hold on with all your efforts).” (III, 186).</i></p>
<p>Blessed are the merciful: for</p>	<p><i>“Then he became one of those who believed (in the Islamic Monotheism) and recommended one</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
they shall obtain mercy (Matt. 5:7)	<i>another to perseverance and patience, and (also) recommended one another to piety and compassion. * They are those on the Right Hand (i.e. the dwellers of Paradise)."</i> (XC, 17-18)

Let us go through with our approach.

Jesus had rigorously said the truth when he affirmed that he had not come "to destroy the law or the Prophets", "but to fulfill" (Matt 5:17) and that he would continue the work of moral purification already begun before him but still was leaving place for progress and for the best.

The Gospel	The Qur'an
Thou shalt not kill... That whosoever is angry with his brother ... and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger (Matt. 5:21-22).	<i>"Those who spend (in Alláh's Cause) in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men..."</i> (III, 134), <i>"And those who avoid the greater sins, and Al-Fawahish (illegal sexual intercourse), and when they are angry, forgive."</i> (XLII, 37).

The Gospel	The Qur'an
<p>If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother ... (Matt. 5:23-24)</p>	<p><i>“O you who believe! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad is it to insult one's brother after having Faith [i.e. to call your Muslim brother (a faithful believer) as: “O sinner” or “O wicked”] And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed Zâlimûn (wrong doers, etc.), “So fear Allâh and adjust all matters of difference among you, and obey Allâh and His Messenger (Mubammad), if you are believers.” (XLIX, 11); “And (O Mubammad) recite to them (the Jews) the story of the two sons of Adam (Hâbil and Qâbil) in truth; when each offered a sacrifice (to Allâh), it was accepted from the one but not from the other. The latter said to the former: “I will surely kill you”. The former said: “Verily Allâh accepts only from those who are Al- Muttaqûn (the pious)” (VIII, 1); “And (O Mubammad) recite to them (the Jews) the story of the two sons of Ad am (Hâbil and Qâbil) in truth; when each</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
	<p><i>offered a sacrifice (to Alláh), it was accepted from the one but not from the other. The latter said to the former: "I will surely kill you." The former said: "Verily Alláh accepts only from those who are Al- Muttaqún (the pious) (V, 27).</i></p>
<p>Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matt. 5:27-28)</p>	<p><i>"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things) and protect their private parts...* And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking forbidden things) and to protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent ... etc." (XXIV, 30-1).</i></p>
<p>Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself... But I say ... swear not at all (Matt. 5:33-34)</p>	<p><i>"And make not Alláh (Name) an excuse in your oaths against your doing good...." (II, 224)</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
<p>Ye have heard. Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say... Love your enemies... (Matt.5:43-44)</p>	<p><i>“Lo! you are the ones, who love them but they love you not, and you believe in all the Scriptures ...” (III, 119).</i></p>
<p>Do good to them that hate you (Matt. 5:44)</p>	<p><i>“And those who remain patient, seeking their Lord’s Countenance, perform As-Salât (Iqamat-as-Sâlat), and spend out of that which We have bestowed on them, secretly and openly, and defend evil with good, for such there is a good end.” (XIII, 22); “The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e. Allâh orders the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly) then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend.” (XLI,34)</i></p>
<p>... Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you (Matt. 5:44)</p>	<p><i>“Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Mubammad) from amongst yourselves (i.e. whom you know well). It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He (Mubammad) is</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
	<p><i>anxious over you (to be rightly guided, to repent to Allâh, and beg Him to pardon and for-give your sins in order that you may enter Paradise and be saved from the punishment of the Hell-fire); for the believers (he, peace on him, is) full of pity, kind, and merciful.” (IX, 128).</i></p>
<p>And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? (Matt. 5:47)</p>	<p><i>“And the (faithful) slaves of the Most Gracious (Allâh) are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness, and when the foolish address them (with bad words) they reply back with mild words of gentleness.” (XXV, 63); “Allâh does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, Allâh loves those who deal with equity.” (LX,8)</i></p>
<p>Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away (Matt. 5:42)</p>	<p><i>“It is not Al-Birr (piety, righteousness, and each and every act of obedience to Allâh, etc.) that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but Al-Birr is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allâh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to Al-</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
	<p><i>Maskîn (the poor), and to set slaves free, performs As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Sâlat) and gives the Zakât and who fulfil their covenant when they make it, and who are patient in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles). Such are the people of the truth and they are Al-Muttaqûn (the pious). (II, 177); “And in their properties there was the right of the Sâ’il (the beggar who asks) and the Mabrûm (the poor who does not ask others).” (II, 19); “And prevent Al-Ma’ûn (small kindnesses like salt, sugar, water).” (CVII, 7).</i></p>
<p>Take heed that ye do not your alms before men (Matt. 6:1)</p>	<p><i>“Those who do good deeds only to be seen (of men).” (CVII, 6)</i></p>
<p>If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you (Matt. 6:14)</p>	<p><i>“Whether you (mankind) disclose (by goods words of thanks) a good deed (done to you in the form of favour by someone); or conceal it, or pardon an evil ... verily, Allâh is Ever Oft-Pardoning, All-Powerful.” (IV, 149); “And let not those among you who are blessed with graces and wealth swear</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
	<p><i>not to give (any sort of help to) their kinsmen, Al-Massâkin (the poor) and those who left their homes for Allâh's Cause. Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not love that Allâh should forgive you? And Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.</i> (XXIV, 22)</p>
<p>Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth (Matt. 6:19)</p>	<p><i>“And you devour the inheritance all with greed. * And you love wealth with much love.”</i> (LXXXIX, 19-20)</p>
<p>But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (Matt. 6-20)</p>	<p><i>“Whosoever desires (by his deeds) the reward of the Hereafter, We give him increase in his reward...”</i> (XLII- 20)</p>
<p>No man can serve two masters (Matt. 6:24)</p>	<p><i>“Allâh puts forth a similitude a (slave) man be-longing to many partners (like those who worship others along with Allâh) disputing with one another, and a (slave) man belonging entirely to one master (like those who worship Allâh Alone). Are those two equal in comparison? All the praises and thanks are to Allâh! But most of them know not.”</i> (XXXIX,29)</p>
<p>... Take no thought for your life ...</p>	<p><i>“And so many a moving (living) creature carries not its own provision!</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
Behold the fowls of the air ... your heavenly Father feedeth them (Matt. 6:25-26)	<i>Allâb provides for it and for you. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.” (XXIX,60)</i>
Judge not ... why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye (Matt. 7:1-3)	<i>“O you who believe! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad is it to insult one's brother after having Faith [i.e. to call your Muslim brother (a faithful believer) as: “O sinner” or “O wicked”] And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed Zâlimûn (wrong doers, etc.)” (XLIX,11)</i>
Give not that which is holy unto the dogs (Matt. 7:6)	<i>“Therefore remind (men) in case the reminder profits (them).” (LXXXVII, 9)</i>
Ask, and it shall be given you ... (Matt. 7:7)	<i>“And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or</i>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
	<p><i>intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright.” (II, 186), “And your Lord said: “Invoke Me [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islâmic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything.] I will respond to your (invocation). Verily! Those who scorn My worship [i.e. do not invoke Me, and do not believe in My Oneness, (Islâmic Monotheism)] they will surely enter Hell in humiliation!” (XI, 60)</i></p>
<p>All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them (Matt,7:12)</p>	<p><i>“O you who believe! Spend of the good things which you have (legally) earned, and of that which We have produced from the earth for you, and do not aim at that which is bad to spend from it, (though) you would not accept it save if you close your eyes and tolerate therein. And know that Allâh is Rich (Free of all needs), and Worthy of all praise. (II, 26 7); “And let those (executors and guardians) have the same fear in their minds as they would have for their own, if they had left weak offspring behind. So let them fear Allâh and speak right words.” (IV, 9)</i></p>
<p>Enter ye in at the strait gate (Matt.</p>	<p><i>“But he has not attempted to pass on the path that is steep (i.e. the path which will lead to goodness and</i></p>

The Gospel	The Qur'an
7:13)	<i>success).</i> " (XC,11)
Beware of false Prophets, which Come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves (Matt. 7;15)	<p><i>"And of mankind there is he whose speech may please you (O Muhammad) in his worldly life, and he calls Alláb to witness as to that which is in his heart, yet he is the most quarrel some of the opponents * when it is said to him: "Fear Alláb", he is led by arrogance to (more) crime. Enough for him is Hell; an evil bed indeed (to lie on)!"</i></p> <p>(II, 204-6).</p>

In the course of this enumeration, we omitted two articles of the New Testament which seem to contradict the Law of Moses. They concern the divorce and the retaliation.

It is a liberty without restriction which the Pentateuch seems to allow to the husband to repudiate his wife when he finds in her anything: "shameful" or when he feels an "aversion" for her. The Gospel seems to oppose the dissolution of marriage, except for the cause of infidelity.

The same way, against the implacable demand of the murderer's blood and the reparation of any received offence by the like, Jesus teaches the duty not to resist the wicked and to pardon him.

In considering these principles word by word, it seems that Christianity abolished previous laws. However, in

regarding things more closely, we shall see two aspects or two degrees of the same eternal law. The one is called justice and the other charity. Justice assigns human conditions which should not be exceeded if one wants to use his right, whereas one who wants generously to abandon his right, has nothing to be reproached for.

Therefore, in our opinion, the two schemes of the Ancient and the New Testaments, should both be contained and recognized mutually in their alternation, or it should be admitted that they were intended not to govern separately except one restricted group of humanity or a limited period of history.

The true moral rule, then, is that which the two Sacred Books retained apparently each one part, leaving the other part more or less implicit. The Qur'an took charge of proclaiming this integral rule in the most explicit manner and did not omit to emphasize both elements by manifesting their respective value;

“And if you punish, then punish them with the like of that with which you were afflicted. But, if you endure patiently, verily, it is better... And endure you patiently” (XVI, 126). This is what concerns retaliation and pardon.

As for the right of divorce, we ought to read the Qur'an,

“O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will; and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the Mahr you have given them, unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse, and live with them honourably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allâh brings through it a great deal of good.” (IV, 19),

“And if a woman fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no sin on them both if they make terms of peace between themselves; and making peace is better. And human inner-selves are swayed by greed. But if you do good and keep away from evil, verily, Alláh is Ever Well-Acquainted with what you do.” (IV, 128),

“If you fear a breach between them twain (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbitrators, one from his family and the other from her's; if they both wish for peace, Alláh will cause their reconciliation. Indeed Alláh is Ever All-Knower, Well-Acquainted with all things.” (IV, 35), to realize the barriers which should be overcome before exercising such a right,

“And divorced women shall wait (as regards their marriage) for three menstrual periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Alláh has created in their wombs, if they believe in Alláh and the Last Day. And their husbands have the better right to take them back in that period, if they wish for reconciliation. And they (women) have rights (over their husbands as regards living expenses) similar (to those of their husbands) over them (as regards obedience and respect) to what is reasonable, but men have a degree (of responsibility) over them. And Alláh is All-Mighty, All-Wise. (II, 228).

The divorce is twice, after that, either you retain her on reasonable terms or release her with kindness. And it is not lawful for you (men) to take back (from your wives) any of your Mahr (bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) which you have given them, except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Alláh (e.g. to deal with each other on a fair basis). Then if you fear that they would not be able to keep the limits ordained by Alláh, then there is no

sin on either of them if she gives back (the Mahr or a part of it) for her Al-Khula' (divorce). These are the limits ordained by Allâh, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits ordained by Allâh, then such are the Zalimûn (wrong-doers) (II, 229)

And if he has divorced her (the third time), then she is not lawful unto him thereafter until she has married an-other husband. Then, if the other husband divorces her, it is no sin on both of them that they reunite, provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allâh. These are the limits of Allâh, which He makes plain for the people who have knowledge. (II, 230);

“O Prophet! When you divorce women, divorce them at their ‘Iddah” (prescribed periods) and count (accurately) their ‘Iddah (periods). And fear Allâh your Lord (O Muslims). And turn them not out of their (husband's) homes nor shall they (themselves) leave, except in case they are guilty of some open illegal sexual intercourse...” (LXV, 1),

(Then when they are about to attain their term appointed, either take them back in a good manner or part with them in a good manner. And take as witness two just persons from among you (Muslims). And establish the testimony for Allâh....” (LXV, 2), and to know how many trials of reconciliation should be made. However, the one who withdraws his decision of separation obtains the divine mercy,

“Those who take an oath not to have sexual relation with their wives must wait for four months, then if they re-turn (change their idea in this period) verily, Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (II, 226). Because divorce in Islam cannot be considered an absolutely permitted or an indifferent act. The Prophet had affirmed: “Among the things tolerated,

the act which God mostly detests is the rupture of marriage”.

Thus, the Qur’an explains the messages of the Prophets and justifies them by joining together and synthesizing their works. We believe that we find in this unity of the variety and in this manner of admitting in the bosom of the moral law several degrees more or less meritorious, one of the very important factors by which the Islamic doctrine had been able to spread to a considerable part of humanity. It has also sheltered, under one orthodoxy, so various ideas, tendencies and characters that neither an abstract and intransigent rigorism nor an excessively inert tolerance could satisfy.

By indicating this conciliatory method of the Qur’an, we have broached at the same time the subject which forms the purport of its teaching.

However, the Qur’an does not stop here.

If its first aim is to safeguard and to consolidate the moral inheritance bequeathed by the previous Revelation, there is another mission no less precious, which the Qur’an also should fulfil. It is, as the Prophet said, to complete, to achieve, to crown the divine edifice which the Prophets before him had little by little erected. The Prophet says: “I’ve been sent for completing, crowning and putting the finishing touches on the divine building which the Prophets had elevated little by little before me. ”إنما بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق“ ، ”مثلى ومثل الأنبياء كرجل بنى بيتاً“.

The Qur’an itself confirms this fact when it says: “*Verily this Qur’an guides that which is most just and right*”. (XVII, 9). What is new and progressive in the moral teaching of the

Qur'an?

1- Personal Virtue:

At the level of the individual moral, we find a new rule and a new principle in the Qur'an.

The rule is the prohibition of alcoholism and the destruction of its sources by the suppression of any use of intoxicating drink,

*“O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and Al-Ansab, and Al-Azlam (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitan's (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful. * Shaitan (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling and hinder you from the remembrance of Allâh and from As-Salat (the prayer). So will you not then abstain?”* (V, 90-1).

As for the principle, it is that which concerns the moral intention. For exhorting his people, Moses made glittering to their eyes the prospect of the Promised Land, the victory over their enemies and the benediction and the abundance in all the domains of the present life. The coming of Christ marked a new era because the promised happiness is not in this world here below, but the eyes of the soul should always be elevated rather towards the heavens. Finally, the Qur'an arrived, and by its constructive method contained both promises, while each is still solidly maintained. The aim of a virtuous man is placed, neither in the world of heavens nor in the ownership of this lowly life but higher than that in the absolute Good. It is God Himself who we must have

within our sight when we are realizing His Will. (Between others:

“Not upon you (Muhammad) is their guidance; but Allâh guides whom He wills. And whatever you spend in good, it is for yourselves, when you spend not except seeking Allâh’s Countenance. And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.” (II, 272);

“Except to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High.” (XCII, 20).

2 – Inter-individual Virtue:

With the precepts of the Pentateuch and those of the Gospel, we have seen the tree of virtue with its leaves and branches. On the Qur’anic ground, this evergreen tree will blossom out and carry its fruits. The Qur’an added an excellent chapter on what could be called the ethical civilization. It is a veritable code of politeness: greeting,

“When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in turn with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally. Certainly, Allâh is Ever a Careful Account Taker of all things.” (IV, 86), entering houses of others,

*“O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted those in them ... * And if you find no one therein still, enter not until permission has been given. And if you are asked to go back, go back. For it is purer for you.”* (XXIV 27-8), asking permission,

“(XXIV, 58) O you who believe! Let your slaves and slave- girls and those among you who have not come to the age of puberty ask your permission (before they come to your presence) on three

occasions; before Fajr (morning) Salât (prayer) and while you put off your clothes for the noonday (rest), and after the 'Isha (late-night) Salât (prayer). (These) three times are of privacy for you; other than these times there is no sin on you or on them to move about, attending to each other. * And when the children among you come to puberty, then let them (also) ask for permission, as those senior to them (in age).” (XXIV, 58- 9), eating at relatives houses,

“There is no restriction on the blind, nor any restriction on the lame, nor any restriction on the sick, nor yourselves, if you eat from your houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers; or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your father’s brothers, or the houses of your father’s sisters, or the houses of your mother’s brothers, or the houses of your mother’s sisters, or (from that) whereof you hold keys, or (from the house) of a friend. No sin on you whether you eat together or apart.. etc. * The true believers are only those who believe in (the Oneness of) Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad); and when they are with him on some common matter, they go not away until they have asked his permission ... So if they ask your permission for some affairs of theirs, give permission to whom you will of them, and ask Allâh for their forgiveness.” (XXIV, 61-62), lowering one's voice,

“O you who believe. Raise not your voice above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another ... * Verily! Those who call you behind the dwellings, most of them have no sense. * And if they had patience till you could come out to them, it would have been better for them...” (XLIX, 2-5), secret conversation,

“Have you not seen those who were forbidden to hold secret counsels, and afterwards returned to that which they had been

forbidden, and conspired together for sin and wrong doing and disobedience to the Messenger (Mubammad). And when they come to you, they greet you with a greeting wherewith Allâh greets you not, and say within themselves: "Why should Allâh punish us not for what we say. Hell will be sufficient for them; they will burn therein. And worst indeed is that destination!

** O you who believe! When you hold secret counsel, do it not for sin and wrong-doing and disobedience towards the Messenger (Mubammad), but do it for Al-Bir (righteousness) and Taqwa (virtues and piety) ...*

** Secret counsels (conspiracies) are only from Shaitan (Satan); in order that he may cause grief to the believers. But he cannot harm them in the least, except as Allâh permits. And in Allâh let the believers put their trust. * O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies (spread out and) make room. Allâh will give you (ample) room (from His Mercy). And when you are told to rise up [or prayers, or Jihâd (holy fighting in Allâh's cause), or for any other good deed], rise up. Allâh will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge..." (LVIII, 8-11), suspicion,*

"O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another." (XLIX, 12), lowering one's gaze,

*"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things) and protect their private parts... * and tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking forbidden things) and to protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent ... etc." (XXIV, 31) outer-clothing,*

"And as for women past child-bearing who do not expect wed-lock,

it is no sin on them if they discard their (outer) clothing in such a way as not to show their adornment. But to refrain (i.e. not to discard their outer clothing) is better for them.” (XXIV, 60), mode of speaking,

*“O wives of the Prophet! you are not like any other women. If you keep your duty (to Allâh), then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease (of hypocrisy, or evil desire for adultery) should be moved with desire, but speak in an honourable manner. * And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance.”* (XXXIII, 32-3), entering the Prophet's houses,

“O you who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses, unless permission is given to you for a meal (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, enter, and when you have taken your meal, disperse without sitting for a talk. Verily, such (behaviour) annoys the Prophet, and he is shy of (asking) you (to go); but Allâh is not shy of (telling you) the truth. And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen: that is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. And it is not (right) for you that you should annoy Allâh Messenger, nor that you should ever marry his wives after him (his death), Verily! with Allâh that shall be an enormity.” (XXXIII, 53), and veiling,

“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies. That will be better, that they should be known, so as not to be annoyed.” (XXXIII, 59).

3, 4 - Collective Virtue and Universal Virtue:

A salient point in Judaic moral law is that watertight partition set up between the Israelite and the non-

Israelite. The charity which an Israelite has to do, if it is not limited to his people, it never passes his country and does not reach the stranger who resides with him. “Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother, thou shalt not lend upon usury” (Deut. 23: 20). “Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again, but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release” (Deut. 15:3). “Thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant” (Lev. 25:39). “Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour ... Shall be of the heathen that is round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids... of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them ye buy” (ibid 43-45).

This is in addition to the collective adherence and the sense of collective responsibility (Deuter. VI, 7; XIII: 5; Levit. XX, 22).

Christian moral law has the grand merit of making this barrier fall down: “For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?” (Matt, 5: 46-47). However, we do not notice here this feeling of the collective responsibility which the Hebrew texts reveal. The Christian social virtue, as the Gospel presents it to us, is rather more related to inter-individual order than to a proper collective one. By stretching outside its frontiers and by seeking to embrace humanity, Christian love had done well when it suppressed that exclusivist aspect and replaced it with a universal fraternity. However, it did not insist enough to consolidate the sacred bond of the community to a particular extent.

It is the Qur’an which had solemnly concluded that

happy marriage between the universal virtue and the collective virtue. It teaches us, in fact, that beyond the fraternity in faith, there is the fraternity in Adam,

“The believers are nothing else than brothers. So make reconciliation between your brothers...” (XLIX, 10),

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allâh is that (believer) who has At-Taqwâ” (XLIX, 13), That diversity of religious sentiments should by no means prevent us from being charitable and benefactors towards the others, *“Allâh does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, Allâh loves those who deal with equity.”* (LX, 8).

That the cruelty of the infidels should neither lead us to take an aggressive attitude nor prevent us from being just with them,

“Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwâ (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression.” (V; 2),

“O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allâh as just witness; and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety.” (V, 8).

It is forbidden for Muslims to lend with interest to anyone whosoever [usury],

“Those who eat Ribâ (usury) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Shaitân (Satan) leading him to insanity. That is because they say: “Trading is only like Ribâ (usury)”, whereas Allâh has permitted

trading and forbidden Ribâ (usury). So whosoever receive an admonition from his Lord and stops eating Ribâ (usury) shall not be punished for the past; his case is for Allâh (to judge); but whoever returns [to Ribâ (usury)], such are the dwellers of the Fire - they will abide therein.” (II, 275).

The one who is pious and just in the bosom of the community is equally so outside it,

*“Among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) is he who: if entrusted with a Qintar (a great amount of wealth, etc.), will readily pay it back and among them there is he who, if entrusted with a single silver coin, will not repay it unless you constantly stand demanding, be-cause they say: “There is no blame on us to betray and take the properties of the illiterates (Arabs). “But they tell a lie against Allâh while they know it. * “Yes, whoever fulfils his pledge and fears Allâh much; verily, then Allâh loves those who are Al-Muttaqûn (the pious).” (III, 75-6).*

Particular care should be taken for delivering their brothers in captivity, “It is not for a believer to kill a believer except (that it be) by mistake; and whosoever kills a believer by mistake, (it is ordained that) he must set free a believing slave and a compensation (blood-money, i.e. Diya) be given to the deceased's family unless they remit it. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you and he was a believer, the free-ing of a believing slave (is prescribed).” (IV, 92) and for setting slaves in general at liberty, “... or manumit a slave ...” (V, 89),

“It is not Al-Birr (piety, righteousness, and each and every act of obedience to Allâh, etc.) that you turn your faces towards east and (or) west (in prayers); but Al-Birr is (the quality of) the one who believes in Allâh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the

orphans, and to Al-Maskîn (the poor), and to set slaves free, performs As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Sâlat) and gives the Zakât and who fulfil their covenant when they make it, and who are patient in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles). Such are the people of the truth and they are Al- Muttaqûn (the pious).” (II, 177); “(It is) freeing a neck (slave)” (XC, 13).

Thus, the idea of a universal virtue announced by the Gospel is developed and is spread over the diverse domains of life.

Does this mean that the Muslim community should relax its internal bonds and perish in that ocean of humanity? On the contrary, two principal commandments are reminding it of its role as a distinct and more organic collectivity.

The first one invites believers to prove themselves to be an indivisible unity, without schism or dissension, around their ideal and behind their leader,

“And hold fast, all of you together to the Rope of Allâh (i.e. this Qur’an), and be not divided among your-selves, and remember Allâh’s Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic Faith), and you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it.” (III, 103);

“O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Mubammad) and those of you (Muslims) who are in Authority” (IV, 59);

“And obey Allâh and His Messenger, and do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength departs, and be

patient” (VIII, 46).

The second aspect is that obligation of all not to let evil triumph among them,

“And fear the Fitnah (affliction and trial) which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong (but it may afflict all the good and the bad people).” (VIII, 25). We all should collaborate to make virtue and piety reign among us,

“Help you one another in Al-Birr and Al-Taqwâ (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression.” (V, 2).

By such values, the Qur’an has made the criterion of the best nation that had ever existed in history.

“You [true believers in Islamic Monotheism and real followers of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma’ruf and forbid Al-Munkar, and you believe in Allâh.” (III, 110).

In spite of this, certain Western Orientalists delighted to depict the Muslim as an “incoercible individualist” who have never known “the bond of solidarity”⁽¹⁾ at any time and said that: “Islamic religion respects and consecrates individualism; and never knows the souls fellowship in a grand general whole. The common acts such as the prayer of Friday, the ceremony of *Arafa*, the prayers of the feasts are individual acts accomplished by believers at the same moment and in the same place; but they are not elaborated ceremonies for a grand whole duly conducted,

(1) Gautier, Mœurs et Coutumes des Musul. P 216.

organized and harmonized”.⁽¹⁾

Whoever assists a Muslim common prayer will realize that nothing is more inexact. As he will see all the believers well arranged in perfect order, close up at one's elbow, the rich besides the poor, the chief close to his inferior; all observing the same position, the same direction, the same words, each one praying for all,

“You (Alone) “we” worship, and you (Alone) “we” ask for help. Guide “us” to the Straight Way” (I; 5-6).

All of them wishing the salvation, not only for their present assembly but for “all the good servants of God”, in any place they may be found. Islam is not only a religion but also a fraternity, *“The believers are nothing else than brothers. So make reconciliation between your brothers.” (XLIX, 10).*

The two essential duties are the prayer and the Zakat [the obligatory charity]. These, among others, are an eloquent testimony of the spirit of solidarity in Islam.

5- International and Inter-confessional Virtue:

This is a completely new chapter established by the Islamic Moral. Neither Judaism nor Christianity, at the time of their founders, have had the occasion of maintaining relations with adverse states, whereas Muhammad was in constant contact with other nations and confessions sometimes hostile and sometimes peaceful.

(1) Gaudefroy - Démombynes, l'islam, in Histoire et Historiens P.739.

These particular circumstances which made Muhammad a diplomat and a commander had required a moral legislation stipulating the conditions to peace and war. The legitimate war is that which takes the defensive position,

“And fight in the Way of Allâh those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allâh likes not the transgressors. (II, 190) and which should cease as soon as the enemy aggression ceases,

“Except those who join a group, between you and whom there is a treaty (of peace), or those who approach you with their breasts restraining from fighting you as well as fighting their own people ... So if they withdraw from you, and fight not against you, and offer you peace, then Allâh has opened no way for you against them.” (IV, 90); “But if they incline to peace, you also incline to it, and (put your) trust in Allâh.” (VIII, 61). Besides, the concluded treaty must be loyally and piously respected even if it is manifestly disadvantageous to us,

*“And fulfil the Covenant of Allâh (Bai‘ah: pledge for Islâm) when you have covenanted and break not the oaths after you have confirmed them - and indeed you have appointed Allâh your surety * And be not like her who undoes the thread which she has spun, after it has become strong, by taking your oaths as a mean of deception among yourselves, lest a nation should be more numerous than another nation. Allâh only tests you by this [i.e. who obeys Allâh and fulfils Allâh’s Covenant and who disobeys Allâh and breaks Allâh’s Covenant). And on the Day of Resurrection, He will certainly make clear to you that wherein you used to differ.” (XVI, 91-2).*

If the adversary begins to betray our pact, we do not

have the right to attack him before warning him,

“If you (O Muhammad) fear treachery from any people throw back (their covenant) to them (so as to be) on equal terms (that there will be no more covenant between you and them)” (VIII, 58) ⁽¹⁾.

Moreover, there are the rules already established by the Hadiths, concerning this matter which succeeded, at least in attenuating considerably its unfortunate consequences.

(1) Goldziher committed here a contrary sense in translating this verse as follows: “If you fear a treason from a people, give them like for like” (Le Dogme et La Loi, P.23). Same error by Kasimirski: “give him like for like” as well as Savary: “Treat them as they do”. Suffice it to read the end of the same verse, to realize the incompatibility of such interpretations with the text.

CHAPTER III

THE BEAUTY, OR THE LITERARY ELEMENT

As we have said before, there is, at the bottom of the human soul, a sort of internal sight by which it distinguishes truth from untruth, good from evil, however different they may appear, provided only that the human being sees clearly and with cold blood. Clear minds and well-disposed souls do not demand anymore to adhere to a new doctrine as long as it fulfils for them that double condition i.e., it teaches truth and exhorts to virtue. Thus, the ignorance of the Arabic language did not prevent the Roman Emperor, Hercules, from judging the message of the Prophet Muhammad in the light of certain moral conditions, estimated by him as necessary and sufficient for establishing the divinity of a mission.⁽¹⁾

However, in the common run, it is not the same. It is the charm of the form which attracts our attention in an offer more than the solidity of its content. Any mediocrelly dressed novelty is repugnant to us. This is because we judge things quickly by their appearance before knowing what they are. Hence, how much precious the help which literature may present to science and wisdom for assuring the triumph of truth and virtue which they want to preach.

(1) See Boukhari, K. Al-Jihad, H. 101; See also, J.B. St. Hilaire, Mohamed et le Koran, P 150-1. See also hereinafter footnote p. 105 [Conclusion]

In this respect, the Islamic doctrine leaves nothing to be desired. By its form as well as by its content, it gives satisfaction to those who understand its language. The Qur'an, its vehicle, was and still remains the preeminent model of Arabic literature. The beauty of its style is universally admired. Considering abstractly the literary qualities that it has, we can even say that it represents the ideal of what can be called literature in general.

Let us say at once that the beauty of the Qur'anic language lies on the sublime and the majestic not on the seductive enthusiasm. It takes possession of the heart more than it flatters the ear. It creates the admiration, not the charm. It strikes with wonder more than it excites. It procures pleasure in keeping quiet not in movement.

In the golden age of the Arabic eloquence, the apparition of the Qur'anic verb, swept away the enthusiasm for poetry and for prose. The Seven golden Poems suspended on the Port of Al-Ka'ba were descended and all the ears were turned to listen to that new marvel of the Arabic expression.

The Qur'an's language is a phonetic material apart from both the nerveless style of the sedentaries, and the roughness of the nomads, gathering in a measured way the sweetness of one and the firmness of the other, and achieving by this manner the dreamy charm of all of them to a harmonious resonance.

It is a syllabic disposition in an arrangement more sustained than prose, less rigorous than poetry, rather varying in the course of the verse, for grasping the

ardour of the auditor, but homogenized enough at the end so that the general tune of the pause in every chapter does not break off.

Its vocabulary is chosen from the best-known words in practice, without falling in the banality, and from the noblest words, without reaching the rarity but exceptionally.

The admirable economy of speech by which the smallest number of words is utilized for expressing the richest ideas. To this purity of the expression and to this extreme density, it is joined, as a defiance, a clarity that the less educated man may say to himself: I have very well understood. In the meantime, we find profundity, suppleness, suggestiveness and radiance from all sides, similar to the faces of a diamond. It is a fact always observed that all people, distinguished or common, superficial or assiduous searcher, agree on the understanding of the Qur'an as if each formula has been measured for everyone according to his own mind.

Also, all this is relating to subjects which were not included among the current themes of the pre-Islamic literature. So that, from the linguistic point of view, we can affirm without hesitation that the Qur'an had been the creation of a new language as well as a new style.

However, what seems to us to be truly superhuman in this Qur'anic discourse is that it does not comply with the psychological law according to which intelligence and sensibility do not function normally except in alternation and in an inverse proportion. We see here a constant cooperation between these two antagonistic powers

across all the subjects. Beside the eternal musicality, the words themselves, act together by an instructive, persuasive, and emotional force, and grant the heart and the reason nearly an equal part. The discourse itself maintains always an astonishing gravity and a strong majesty which is neither affected nor troubled by anything.

We are in a hurry to leave this abstract enumeration which is of no value except upon a verification of the text. Such a study has been already done by us elsewhere and we cannot repeat it here. (See النبأ العظيم). [The Great Tidings]. A pure Arab, who has the instinct of the language in his blood, is not in need of that analysis for appreciating the inimitable character of the Qur'anic expression. He feels it as something coming from heaven piercing his heart and dazzling his eyes. The unbelievers at the time of the Prophet found in it a phenomenon so extraordinary that they called it "magic". Even at our epoch, the Arabs, whatever their confession is, recognize the very particular nobility which characterizes this text in comparison to the Arabic literature in general. With regard to the Hadiths of the Prophet himself, already known by a superior eloquence, the revealed text is clearly distinguished as, through the lustre of candles, we perceive a ray of the sun. It is recognized at once as a special tone whose source is not but a divine breath.

However, we should focus a little on a point which has been missed not only by the occidental orientalist but also by some oriental scholars. It concerns the way in which the Qur'an treats varied subjects in the one and the same Surah. Some orientalist saw the Qur'an as a

formless chaos of disparate ideas, treated confusedly, without any logical care. Others believed that they have sufficiently justified the disparity by the necessity of relieving the boredom of the uniformity and the sadness of the monotony which is contrary to the ideal of the Arabic language. Others also wanted to find in the poetic unity of each surah - such unity being impossible to be expressed in a translation whatsoever - a substitute, a sufficient compensation for this lack of the fundamental unity. Finally, others, representing the majority of the orientalists, willing to exonerate the Prophet, threw the blame of the incoherence defect on the compilers who committed this unhappy mixing by assembling the Qur'anic fractions and classifying them in chapters.

None of these explanations seems satisfactory to us because all the Prophetic Tradition agree the fact that all the Surahs, as we read them today, have received both their composition and their denomination since the Prophet's lifetime.

For grasping well the beauty of a drawing, we should not concentrate our glance on a narrow part, but we have to move a little backwards in order to enlarge the visual scope and embrace all in a general view. It is under similar conditions that we must scrutinize each chapter of the Qur'an to give judgment thereon. Formerly, in the course of our lectures at Al-Azhar, we had tried to apply this rule in the study of a Medinian Surah (Surah II) and of two Mekkan ones (X and XI) which had been on the program. We discovered more than we were seeking. What had been revealed, to our astonishment, was a veritable plan, definite and composed of an introduction,

a development and a conclusion. In a small number of verses in the beginning of the surah, the subject matter, which the surah intends to expose, is mentioned in its headlines. Then the development follows in such an order that each part is found in its right place. Finally, comes the conclusion which exactly replies to the introduction.

If we look at the innumerable dates as well as the extreme fragmenting with which the Qur'an had been revealed, and if we know that those revelations were connected to particular circumstances, we will find ourselves led to inquire about the time at which the organization of every surah in one whole unit took place. This question will put us in a dilemma because if we suppose this arrangement happened before or after the achievement of the work, we would judge that it had to follow, either the chronological order or the logical order based on the homogeneity of the subjects. Whereas the multifarious aspects which the surahs offer and which does not comply with one or the other order leads us to think about a complex plan which would have been concluded even before the appearance of the text.

However, we have to turn away from such a hypothesis, because we imagine how it would be imprudent to establish, in advance, an arbitrary order for several discourses which will be called to be pronounced during twenty-three years and which will be subordinate to thousands of circumstances neither foreseen nor foreseeable. Yet, the Prophetic Tradition confirms this strange hypothesis. It taught us, in fact, that as soon as any fragment of the Qur'an, small or grand, was emitted,

it was classified, according to a specific Prophet's order, in such or such chapter among those ones which remained uncompleted, at a determined place of that chapter, at such a number of the verses, in an order which was not always that of the chronological date. In addition, once the verse was put somewhere it had to rest there forever without being subject to any alteration. Hence, there must not only have been a plan for every surah but also a general plan for the Qur'an as a whole by which every new revelation had to join immediately its place in such or such surah among those which rested still open.

The way in which, the Qur'an had been composed is unique. A book has never been written in such a way. It seems that the verses of the Qur'an were like several detached and numbered pieces in a construction which was to be rebuilt somewhere else. Otherwise, how can that immediate and systematic classification managed simultaneously in many chapters be explained?

However, to establish such a plan, what historical guarantee, any man may possess, not only regarding the events to come, their legislative requirements and the issues which should be given, but also concerning the linguistic form through which such solutions should appear, as well as their stylistic relationship between chapters? How, despite their natural diversity and their historical dispersion, these scattered pieces, simply approached each other, and without any retouching, or any strange welding, or any intermediary joints, were able to form one organic body complying with our cohesion and beauty requirements? Should such an ambitious

project not proceed either from a chimerical dream or from a superhuman power?

In other words, if a logical disorder or a rhetorical hiatus must be the inevitable result expected for such a human project, so complex and so defiant, shouldn't we conclude that the successful achievement of such a plan supposes the intervention of a superior power having the capacity of establishing this coordination?. What is the creature who can conduct the events exactly at the profit of such an enterprise? How can such a fine work of art be brought out from a group of hazards?

Thus, obtained in those conditions, the logical and literary unity of the Qur'anic surah is, in our opinion, the miracle of miracles. The principle of this unity is already proclaimed by innumerable competent authorities. Among others: Abu-Bakr En-Näisabury, Fakhr Ed-Din Er-Razy, Abu-Bakr Ibn El-'Arabi, Burhan Ed-Din El-Bika'î and Abu-Ishaq El-Chatibi. For verification of this fact, you can consult our aforementioned study "النبا العظيم". [The Great News].

However, your admiration would be at its utmost, if you take into account that those fragments had followed, in their appearance, a very different track. Let us glance through the gradual stages of the Qur'anic revelation during its twenty-three years: from the Prophethood to the Apostleship; from "Read", (XCVI, 1) to "Arise and Warn" (LXXIV, 2); from the confidential initiation to the public predication,

"Therefore proclaim openly (Allâh's Message) that which you are recommended, and turn away from Al-Mushrikûn (polytheists,

idolaters, and disbelievers).” (XV, 94); from the call addressed to his close family,

“And warn your tribe (O Muhammad) of near kindred.” (XXVI, 214) to that extended to all Makkah,

“And never will your Lord destroy the towns (populations) until He sends to their mother town a Messenger reciting to them our Verses...” (XXVIII, 59) then to the neighbouring cities,

“And this (the Qur’an) is a blessed Book which We have sent down, confirming (the revelations) which came before it, so that you may warn the Mother of Towns (i.e. Makkah) and all those around it. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it (the Qur’an), and they are constant in guarding the Salât (prayers).” (VI, 92) and finally to all the humanity,

“And We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)”. (XXI, 107); from the institution of the fundamental foundations of Islam (Mekkan surahs) to their application (Medinian surahs); from abhorrence of drinking,

“They ask you (O Muhammad) concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: “In them is a great sin, and (some) benefits for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit.” (II, 219) to its formal interdiction,

“O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and Al-Ansab, and Al-Azlam (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitan's (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful.” (V, 90); from endurance,

“Have you not seen those who were told to hold back their hands (from fighting) and perform As-Salât and give Zakât but when the

fighting was ordained for them, behold! a section of them fear men as they fear Allâh or even more. They say: "Our Lord! why have you ordained for us fighting? Would that you had granted us respite for a short period?" Say: "Short is enjoyment of this world. The Hereafter is (far) better for him who fears Allâh, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly even equal to scallish thread in the long slit of a date-stone." (LV, 77) to the armed resistance,

"And fight in the Way of Allâh those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allâh likes not the transgressors. (II, 190) etc...

From this process, it suffices to register two important dates. The first is the day of the cave where Muhammad had been informed that he would receive a *divine teaching*,

"Read! in the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists)... (XCVI, 1-5) and charged with a heavy load,

"Verily, we shall send down to you a weighty Word (i.e. obligations, laws). (LXXIII, 5). The second is the day of the Farewell Pilgrimage when it had been announced that his mission had been accomplished and that he had nothing more to do on earth,

"... This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion ..." (V, 3).

Therefore, all that development had been taking place in accordance with an educative and legislative plan concluded from the beginning, on the whole, and in detail, by inspirator.

Now that these texts which chronologically followed an impeccable pedagogic plan had turned as soon as their

appearance from the historical position, to be allotted and grouped into several definite frames of unequal lengths. From such a decided dispersion had appeared, in the end, a book destined to be read, composed of complete units having each a literary and rational order. There it is the double plan which cannot emanate from human science.

PART III

THE ORIGIN OF THE QUR'AN

The study of the sources of any book should normally precede that of its content, but the QUR'AN is an exception to this rule. The idea of its divine origin is not only a part of its doctrine but also is the most fundamental part. From beginning to end, the Qur'an speaks to the Prophet or about him and never let him express his own thought. Everywhere, it is God who is supposed to express, to dictate or to decree, to relate or to warn. Constantly, we read in the Qur'an: O Prophet ... O, Messenger... We reveal to you ... We send you... transmit this... recite that ... do this ... do not do that... they will tell you ... answer them ... etc. ... etc...

Nevertheless, how do we not attribute the Qur'anic language and the ideas which it expresses, to the person who announces them? How would we consider this person a mere tool of reception holding his book already done by an external and superhuman entity? Such affirmation, in fact, does not fail to disconcert the mind. It seems to be inconsistent with psychological laws, at least in their usual manifestations.

By this pretention, Muhammad was not the first to pose the problem of the Revelation. He was even more modest in this respect than Moses who received the Pentateuch, as the Qur'an confirms, in a direct communication with the Eternal, whose Word has been heard by him. While, for Muhammad, the Qur'an is the words of a celestial messenger, an intermediary between God and him,

*“Verily, this is the Word (this Qur’an brought by) a most honour, able Messenger (Jibril) * Owner of power, (and high rank) with (Alláh), the Lord of the Throne * Obeyed (by the angels in the heavens) and trustworthy.” (LXXXI, 19-21).*

Apart from this difference, they have one thing in common, that they refer to the supernatural.

As for those who admit the principle of the revelation in general, it is legitimate not to apply it to a certain case except after exhausting all possibilities of a natural explanation. If they resigned to accept the immediate divine origin of a phenomenon, this would be the last recourse and the humble confession of the science for a good reason.

Let us set aside the argument which can be derived from the marvel of the Qur’anic style in favour of its divinity. Let us ask instead whether the ideas it contains can be explained by a way other than the revelation. In all times, studies of this sort were carried out. Therefore we may say that the modern studies are only developing and repeating, under another form, the same trials of the past.

We shall divide the solutions into two groups relating to the pre-Hejira and the post-Hejira periods.

CHAPTER I

SEARCHING FOR THE SOURCES IN THE MAKKAN PERIOD

The pagan milieu -the Hanifites- The Sabeans -Judeo-Christian elements - The Prophet's voyages and observations - His readings - Literature and popular legends - Personal meditations.

The simplest theory is that which tries to find in the restricted milieu of Hedjâz - if not in Makkah - all the necessary elements for building the Qur'anic doctrine. From this view, Ernest Renan presented to us a typical example. In his article on "Mahomet et les origines de l'islamisme", ⁽¹⁾ the French scholar offered us a picturesque description of the VIth century Arabia. Instead of idolatrous people, who all the world knows, Renan depicted a people who had never known variety or plurality in God (p. 1070-1). He emphasized rightly the refined literary spirit of that race and its acute sense of the real, but he passed under silence all the other traits which do not honour them. In the place of that arrogant and corrupted materialism, slightly concerned with speculation on the superior truth, he presented to us a society at the zenith of its religious enthusiasm. In it, all religions and all civilizations have met and everybody was "debating on religion" (p.1089). On the basis of Renan belief, Muhammad did nothing but follow the religious movement of his time (p.1089).

The accurate image of the Arabs life in that epoch can be

(1) Revue des deux Mondes, 15th Dec. 1851.

found in the Qur'an itself. The Qur'anic picture is completely different as we have already seen. ⁽¹⁾ Their lives were that of "manifest error"

Allâh did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among them, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allâh, purifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error." (III, 164);

"He who has sent amongst the unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His signs, to purify them, and to instruct them in the Book and Wisdom, -although they had been, before in a manifest error;-" (LXII, 2) and it was "the time of ignorance",

"And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former times of ignorance; and establish regular prayer, and give Zakat and obey Allâh and His Messenger. And Allâh only wishes to remove all abomination from you, you members of the family, and make you Pure and spotless." (XXXIII, 33);

"While the unbelievers got up in their hearts beat and cant-the beat and cant of Ignorance,- Allâh sent down His tranquility to His Messenger and to the believers, and made them stick close to the command of self-restraint; and well were they entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allâh has full knowledge of all things." (XLVIII, 26).

Certainly, the Arabs conserved in their practices some survivals of the patriarchal religion; for example the rite of pilgrimage. However, those survivals were mixed with

(1) See, Part II, Ch. I.

errors and superstition,

“... It is not Al-Birr (piety, righteousness) that you enter the houses from the back... so when you have accomplished your Manâsik, remember Allâh as you remember your forefathers or with a far more remembrance ...”* (II, 189, 200)

In the annual Fair of “Okaz”, the assembly was not debating about religion but about worldly glories. Every tribe was demonstrating its poetic genius, invoking its chivalrous exploits and evoking that of their ancestors. We cannot find a “religious idea” in the most celebrated poems, “The Golden Odes”

Among these corrupt and ignorant masses, was a distinguished selected little assemblage known in the Tradition as the Hanifites - the rebellious to the common opinion. It is this small number on whom Renan depended for portraying the Arab society of that time. After all, what was the doctrine of those Reformers who preceded Muhammad? Simply they were discontented spirits who aspired for a sound and a sanctified religion which they were trying to find outside their surroundings. Yet, they did not have any precise notion likely to announce the Qur’anic doctrine.

The only thing we could derive from the example of the Hanifites and that Renan formulated, was the existence of “a sort of anxiety and a vague expectation” (p.1090).

At that stage, men repeated in vain the words like God, Cult, Prophets, Books, Paradise; however, such words did not correspond to any clear or distinct idea in their minds.

Before leaving this native milieu, we will speak about Sabeism. The term صابئين which refers to Sabians in the Qur'an, "*Verily! Those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians, and Sabians, whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day and does righteous good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord...*". (II, 62),

"Those who believe (in the Qur'an), those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Sabians and the Christians, -any who believe in Allāh and the Last Day, and work righteousness, -on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve". (V, 69),

"Those who believe (in the Quran), those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Sabians, the Christians, Magians, and Polytheists Allāh will judge between them on the Day of Judgement for Allāh is a witness of all things." (XXII, 17), means a more refined pagan sect; or the same pagan sect under the name of Christians. The question is controversial.

The fundamental ideas and the practical principles attributed to the Sabians are well known and refuted in both the Qur'an and the Hadith. Some of those ideas and practices have been adopted by the Quraishites so widely that it becomes difficult to isolate them from the current paganism. The following points are examples:

- (1) The divinity of the angels and the planets and their influence on earthly events.
- (2) The portion of the lion deducted from their offerings to be allocated to inferior divinities.
- (3) The pilgrimage intended for Harrân in Iraq and not for the Ka'aba. Their offerings had to be entirely

burned. ⁽¹⁾ They prohibited bigamy and did not observe circumcision. Their prayers were a cult rendered to planets and performed three times a day with the rising, the peak and the setting of the sun; contrary to Islamic prescriptions.

Therefore, the paganism of Hedjâz does not provide us with a satisfactory explanation of the origin of the Qur'an.

Perhaps, the Judeo-Christian milieu at that time sheds some light on the question.

We shall not expand on the story of the Christian monk Bahira. Rightness prevents us from considering that accidental meeting as a source of Muhammad's instruction. ⁽²⁾

Another hypothesis refers to the existence of young Roman adventures or Abyssinian Negroes who were "merchants of wine or hard workers" living in the suburb of ⁽³⁾ Makkah. Also, it is said that the Gospel had been taught to uncultivated minds in the taverns. ⁽⁴⁾ Was it there that Muhammad had contact with the religious ideas? Writers leave us in the vagueness. Meanwhile, the occupations of the future Prophet were known and defined by history: as either in solitude, looking after

(1) cf. G Sale, *Observations Hist. et Crit. Sur le Mahométisme* P.30-1

(2) Read in Huart, *une Nouvelle Source du Koran*, *Journal As.* July, Aug. 1904) the following conclusion: The Arabic texts studied from that time see nothing in the role of the Syrian monk except fantasmagoria (p.217).

(3) Massé, *L'Islam*, p.21.

(4) Huart, *une Nouvelle Source du Koran*, p, 131.

sheep, or in grand commerce with the caravans, or in grand society with the tribe leaders.

Moreover, such a relation was useless, because those rough minds did not know their religion well, and because their “foreign language” was for him a natural barrier. ⁽¹⁾ The Qur’anic argument relies on this,

“... The tongue of the man they refer to is foreign, while this (the Qur’an) is a clear Arabic tongue.” (XVI, 103).

We will speak of a broader and more cultivated milieu. We know that the Ghassanids of Syria and Bani El-Hârith of Najran in Yemen had embraced Christianity. We also know that during his youth, Muhammad used to travel to Syria and to Yemen for commercial purposes. As an intelligent observer and an attentive follower of moral matters; why wasn’t Muhammad influenced by more delicate morals and more sound ideas in these societies?

This is the opinion of Goldziher, among others. They imagined that Muhammad had received, in the course of his voyages, the permanent impressions which must have given him the first impulsion of his reform. ⁽²⁾

First, did Muhammad really penetrate in the Christian lands? Some western writers strongly doubt this because of the absence of any allusion to the external features of the Christianity in the Qur’an. In contrast, the Qur’an does speak of the profound spirit of Oriental Christianity: which stands in striking opposition to the

(1) Lammens, L’Islam- p.28.

(2) Le Dogme et la Loi de L’Islam, p.4.

behaviour of the Arab poets who had visited those countries. ⁽¹⁾ At the same time, there are other writers who assured that the caravans, accompanied by the future Prophet, did not lead him far from Souk Hobâsha, in Tuhâma, and Ghorash, in Yemen. ⁽²⁾

Let us suppose that he had had contact with the Christianity of that time. What had he found? Let's read the following remarks of a Christian author, G. Sale: "If we read with attention the ecclesiastic history, we shall see that, since the IIIrd century, the Christian world has been disfigured by the ambition of the clergy, by schism, by controversies on the most absurd futilities, by endless disputes ... The Christians... were so excited to use all sorts of malice, of hate, of wickedness... so that in one way or another they had expelled the Christianity away from the world by the continual controversies on how to understand it. It was in those dark centuries that most of the superstition and corruption had been created and established. After the Council of Nicaea, the Oriental Church found itself... torn in pieces by the disputes of the Arians, the Sabellians, the Nestorians and the Eutichians. The clergy... bethought themselves of granting protections to officers of the army, and under this pretext, justice had been sold in public and all kinds of corruption had been promoted. In the occidental church, the dispute between Damas and Ursician on the Episcopal seat of Rome reached the point of violence and murder ... That corruption of manners and doctrine among the princes and the clergymen was followed by

(1) T. Andrae, Mahomet, Sa Vie et sa Doctrine. P. 37-38

(2) Spenser, mentioned by Huart, une Nouvelle Source. p.128.

the general deprivation of the people whose interest was to gain money by any means and spend it in luxury and debauchery”(1)

In his “Ancient Christianity” Vol, I, p, 266, Taylor writes: “That which Muhammad and his Caliphs had met in all directions ... was a superstition so abject, an idolatry so rough and shameful, ecclesiastical doctrines so arrogant, religious practices so dissolute and childish, that the strong-minded Arabs felt that they were newly inspired as divine messengers for reprobating that errors of the world”(2) Speaking of the same epoch Moshem concluded that the true religion during the VIIth century was buried under masses of senseless superstitions and it was unable to raise its head. (3)

It can be said that these pages have been written to explain the Qur’anic verse which made an allusion to a certain gap between Christianity and the Christians of that time and which announced that their schism will perpetuate until the day of Resurrection,

“And from those who call themselves Christians, We took their covenant, but they abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them. So We planted amongst them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection; and Allâh will inform them of what they used to do.” (V.14).

What about the Arabs who converted to Christianity? Were they behaving better than the aboriginal Christians?

(1) cf. G. Sale, Observations sur le Mahometisme p. 68-71.

(2) Isaac Taylor mentioned by Dr. Sinclair Tisdall, The sources of the Koran p. 136-137.

(3) See Tisdall, ibid.

No. Ghassanids preserved pagan survivals. ⁽¹⁾

Ali Bin Abu Talib said that Taghlib took nothing from Christianity but the habit of drinking wine.⁽²⁾ Huart concluded: “How attractive the idea of the influence of the Christian religion practice in Syria on Muhammad may be, it must be renounced in the presence of the incertitude of historical bases.”⁽³⁾

Let us expand the field of our investigation to include the auditory world and the bookish milieu. The first question that comes to mind is the supposition that Muhammad may have derived his lessons by direct reading of the previous Revelations, Judeo-Christian or others. ⁽⁴⁾

At the beginning, Muhammad did not know how to read or write. The Qur’an confirms this and gives this state of illiteracy as one of the proofs of the divinity of this instruction. Not only does the Qur’an qualify the Prophet as “*Oummi*” of a people of “*Oummiyeen*” ⁽⁵⁾

(1) cf. Massé, L'Islam p.17.

(2) Noeldeke, Geschichte des Korans p.10. See too Zamakhshari concerning sura V, verset 5.

(3) Huart, Nouvelle Source ... p 129.

(4) Dr. S. Tisdall went to the extent of stating that certain Islamic notions were derived from Zoroastrianism, and he devoted one whole chapter for the so-called Zoroastrian elements in the Qur’an and the Sounna.

(5) Imitating other writers, Leblois (ibid p. 34) wanted to prove the antithesis by a tradition according to which the Prophet, in his deathbed, demanded to be given what he could write on his testament on the subject of the Caliphate. However, the argument is not convincing because it is not said that the Prophet actually wrote. The verb “to write” when attributed to the grand chiefs in general,

“Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write (Muhammad) whom they find written with them in the Taurât (Torah) (Deut. XVIII, 15) and the Injeel (Gospel) (John XIV, 16)”

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures), in the Taurat and the Gospel; for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure): he releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him. It is they who will prosper.”

“Those who took the calf (for worship) will indeed be overwhelmed with wrath from their Lord and with shame in this life: Thus de We recompense those who invent (falsehoods).” (VII, 157),

did not signify anything except “to dictate and to append his seal”.

Likewise it was said for the Treaty of Hudaibya *بينما يكتب هو وسهيل إذ*

طلع ... إلخ [while he was writing, he and Sohayl] that one who was writing was Ali, under the dictation of the Prophet. When the Prophet ordered Ali to erase his title, the pious secretary did not dare to submit. Then, the Prophet asked him where the word to be cancelled was to be found and he erased it by his own hand. As for this, there were no difficulties. However, another version adds: “and the Prophet wrote “Muhammad Ibn Abdullah” instead, apparently imputing the writing to the Prophet. Yet this apparent equivocation is rectified in the other versions where it is stated that once the ancient title was erased by the Prophet, Ali replaced it. To act on the authority of this ambiguity, for sustaining that the Prophet knew how to write, would be to forget that he did not even recognize the word to be cancelled. The Prophet’s behavior throughout his life, the attestation of his companions and the statements in the Qur’an, all prove that Muhammad was indeed illiterate.

Allâh did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among them, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allâh, purifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error.” (III, 164);

“He who has sent amongst the unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His signs, to purify them, and to instruct them in the Book and Wisdom, -although they had been, before in a manifest error;-” (LXII, 2), that is to say illiterate, (and not as Spenger wanted it, i.e. belonging to pagan people, not having received the revealed scriptures), ⁽¹⁾ but also it affirms in clear terms that,

“Neither did you (O. Muhammad) read a book before it (this Qur’an) nor did you write any book (whatsoever) with your right hand” (XXIX, 48).

His adversaries must certainly have recognized that illiteracy because when they explained the source from which he may have extracted the history of the antiquity, they did not dare to say “he wrote” “كتبها” rather they said: “he had it written” “اكتتبها”

“And they say: “Tales of the ancients, which he has made written down, and they are dictated to him morning and afternoon.” (XXV, 5) Some Orientalists have confused these two different forms.

(1) His interpretation is absurd in places and contradictory in others, because the word “*Ommi*” is applied to non-educated Jews (II, 78). On the other hand, when the Prophet said about himself and his people “we are an “*Oummiyya*” nation” he explains in clear terms “we don't write or calculate” (Boukh. K. Saoum B. 13).

Even if it is supposed that he knew how to read, there was another insurmountable obstacle specifically that, at the time of the Prophet, there was no Bible in Arabic, Old or New Testament. ⁽¹⁾

Those ancient scriptures were read by bilingual scholars who were keeping them preciously preserved. The Qur'an shows us that these people of the Book were avaricious concerning their science and that they hardly conceded to produce few papers of the Pentateuch, taking great care to hide most of it,

“They (the Jews, Quraish pagans, idolaters) did not estimate Allâh with an estimation due to Him when they said: “Nothing did Allâh send down to any human being (by revelation). “Say (O Mubammad): “Who then sent down the Book which Mûsa (Moses) brought, a light and a guidance to mankind which you (the Jews) have made into (separate) paper sheets, disclosing (some of it) and concealing much. And you (believers in Allâh and His Messenger) were taught (through the Qur’ân) that which neither you nor your fathers knew. “Say: “Allâh (sent it down). “Then leave them to play in their vain discussions.” (VI, 91),

“And verily, among them is a party who distort the Book with their tongues (as they read), so that you may think it is from the Book, but it is not from the Book, and they say: “This is from

(1) Cf. Leblois, *ibid*, p35. Professor Graf affirms that the need for an Arabic translation of the Gospel existed only in the IXth and Xth centuries (The Moslem World, April 1939, article of Miss Padwick on the Origin of Arabic translations). In spite of his untiring searches in various Libraries, the Abbot Chidiac says that the most ancient Arabic translation of the New Testament goes back to the XIth century and not before. (Chidiac, *Etudes sur Al-Ghazâli, Réfutation Excellente* - ch.VII).

Allâh, "but it is not from Allâh; and they speak a lie against Allâh while they know it." (III, 78),

"Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say. "This is from Allâh", to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby." (II, 79).

However, if Muhammad had not drawn his religious ideas from the Sacred Texts directly or from the competent scholars, did he derive them from some poets, Arab, Judeo-Christian or the like? First, it should be noticed that the Qur'an shows the Prophet as little familiarized with poetry in general and considered it as a fun "*not suitable for him*" (XXXVI, 69). Then the question is: What instruction can be learned of this genre of literature.

There were two trends in pre-Islamic poetry. Some poets, such as Al-A'sha, depicted the customs and the religious practices of the Church, matters not present in the Qur'an. In particular, poets' attention was attracted by wine use which the Qur'an forbids. Yet, there was another genre of poetry, entirely consecrated to religious ideas. In this connection, the verses of Umayya Ibn Abissalt which described the future life and the stories of the religious antiquity. Accordingly, Occidental writers considered Omayya verses as the link which connects the Qur'an to the Bible. ⁽¹⁾

To sustain such a thesis, one must first establish the

(1) Spenger, Das Leben und die Lehre des Moh Vol.I, p.78, mentioned and developed by Huart, Nouvelle Source du Koran, p.133.

authenticity of Umayya verses. Furthermore, it must be anterior to the Qur'an.

However, Omayya never prided himself on originality or on prophetic inspirations. Which leads us to believe that he would be impelled to imitate by rivalry spirit. On the contrary, Muhammad maintained that he did not get his teaching from any man. Consider the position of the Prophet's adversaries: they were always on the lookout for the slightest vulnerability to attack him and his doctrine. It was easier for them to put their fingers on his manifest plagiarisms instead of turning their reasoning in all directions and resorting to all the hypotheses, to the extent of accusing the Prophet of madness, for explaining the Qur'anic phenomenon.

Hence, we can conclude that it is rather the Qur'an that has served as a base for the literature of its epoch. The internal criticism of Umayya's verses showed the presence of many different sources. Huart himself remarked this fact. When that poet spoke about the fire, he borrowed the language of the Bible; when he described the paradise, he employed the Qur'anic terms and when he spoke about historical sacred stories he sometimes resorted to popular legends.

There remains the last stage: the popular ideas.

It is illogical to assume that Muhammad lived in a complete isolation from his people. Yet, it seems through the Qur'an that these people possessed some notions of the anterior revelations. They asked the Prophet to bring divine signs similar to those supplied by his predecessors,

“Nay, they say: ‘These (revelations of the Qur’an which are revealed to Muhammad are mixed up false dreams. Nay, he has invented them! Nay, he is a poet! Let him bring us an Ayâh (sign as a proof) like the ones (Prophets) the former were sent (with)!” (XXI, 5).

They opposed his Unitarian doctrine relying on what they had heard concerning the last revealed teaching,

“We have not heard (the like) of this in the religion of these later days (i.e. Christianity). This is nothing but an invention!” (XXXVIII, 7).

They also compared the cult of Jesus with that of their own idols,

*“When (Jesus) the son of Mary is held up as an example, he hold your people raise a clamour thereat (in ridicule) * and say: ‘Are our âlibah (gods) better or is he [Isâ (Jesus)]?’”* They quoted not the above example except for argument. Nay! But they are a quarrelsome people.” (XLIII, 57-8).

However, it is edifying to see how poets’ attention - even of those who travelled and learned - was attracted by things other than religion. In fact, it was always the brightness of worldly life that had attracted them.

In front of the historical silence regarding the degree of the bookish knowledge in possession of that illiterate people, all that we could attribute to it should be some vague and rudimentary notions.

The Qur’an, in fact, did not keep silent concerning the novelty of its teaching. On several occasions, when mentioning a certain episode of the sacred stories, the Qur’an affirmed that Muhammad and his people were

not familiar with that story, *“This is part of the tidings unseen, which We reveal unto you (O Prophet!) by inspiration: you were not with them when they cast lots with pens, as to which of them should be charged with the care of Mary: nor were you with them when they disputed (the point).”* (III, 44);

“This is of the new; of the unseen which We reveal unto you (O Muhammad) neither you nor your people know it before this. So be patient. Surely, the (good) end is for Al-Muttaqîn (the pious). (XI 49),

“We do relate unto you the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to you this (portion of the) Qur’an: Before this, you too was among those who knew it not.” (XII, 3),

“Such is one of the stories of what happened unseen, which We reveal by inspiration unto you: Nor were you (present) with them when they concerted their plans together in the process of weaving their plots.” (XII, 102),

*“Verily, Fir’aun (Pharaoh) exalted himself in the land and made its people sects, weakening (oppressing) a group (i.e. Children of Israel) among them: killing their sons, and letting their females live. Verily, he was of the Mujsidun (i.e. those who commit great sins and crimes, oppressors, tyrants. * And We wished to do a favour to those who were weak (and oppressed) in the land, and to make them rulers and to them the inheritors, * And to establish them in the land, and We let Fir’aun (Pharaoh) and Hâmân and their hosts receive from them that which they feared.”* (XXVIII, 4-6).

If it was otherwise, what response would he have heard from his adversaries?

The current ideas in that Babylon of religions did not have a unique trend. Each of the pagans, the Sabians, the

Mages, the Jews and the Christians were presenting the truth in his own way. Muhammad was not so naïve to entrust masses authority whereas he was constantly mistrustful towards scholars' declarations. If he would care for telling us the doctrine of each community, each sect and each branch of the sect, we would have found a strange mixture in the Qur'an,

“Do they not then consider the Qur'an carefully? Had it been from other than Allâh, they would surely have found therein many a contradiction.” (IV, 82).

Here appears the necessity of interjecting a new factor, that is to say, the personal coefficient.

It can be supposed, that during his short retirements at Mount Hira, before the Revelation or even during his pastoral solitude in his youth, this “pensive man” devoted himself to profound meditations about what may be the truth in such or such subjects and after reflection, he would make his choice.

However, a distinction is necessary here between two domains of human knowledge: the empirical and the rational. There are historical absurdities which contradict our reasoning. It was not until his retirement within himself that Muhammad could have discovered that such or such event took place at such time or such date. Yet, it is precisely the parallelism of the sacred stories in the Qur'an and in the preceding Books on which emphasis is often put for finding the way by which such concordance was effected.

While rational meditations have no effect on the empirical plan, they are an excellent help in discovering

the eternal truths. The scope of pure reasons in the matter of religion is very limited. Pure reason reveals to us the falsity, the emptiness and the folly of idolatry and superstition. Never has a doctrine been uniquely built on negative notions. At that stage, Muhammad must have found himself perplexed and anguished. This is what the Qur'an let us hear when it depicted him on the verge of Revelation as "sad and groaning under a grievous burden", "*Have We not opened your breast for you (O Muhammad)? * And removed from you your burden. * Which weighed down your back?*" (XCIV, 1-3).

Let us admit that the first stage of the research had been accomplished and the most fundamental truth had been discovered early. However, the knowledge of God, the Creator, is not the whole of the religious science of the Qur'an and the way leading to this science is completely closed to limited human minds. By no means, Muhammad could discover the incalculable divine attributes and the most Beautiful Names of God, His relation with the visible and the invisible world and the destiny which God preserves for man after death. Muhammad also did not contradict one truth declared by him and kept at the same time that striking concordance with the particulars of the Holy Books maintained in the hands of savants.

It is clear that pure intellect, not guided by positive teachings is incapable of advancing to that level of the Qur'anic science. The Qur'an affirms this truth declaring that when Muhammad received the Revelation, he did not know, "*What is the Book or what is Faith?*" (XLII, 52).

Ignorant of all that, as he was before Revelation, would

Muhammad be able to guide others religiously, if he did not know how to guide himself? *“And He found you unaware (of the Qur’an, its laws and Prophethood) and guided you?”* (XCIII, 7).

CHAPTER II

SEARCHING FOR THE SOURCES IN THE MEDINIAN PERIOD.

After the general survey we made and ended in a negative result, we should have to elaborate the conclusion if no change had occurred later in the course of the Prophetic period.

In fact, a considerable change took place with the Hejira. From a pagan, ignorant and opposing milieu, Muhammad was transferred to a welcoming and friendly environment, surrounded by his strong and devout disciples. From then on, he was in contact with a religiously organized community: the Jews of Medina.

First, we shall consider the general disposition of the Qur'an, even before the Hejira. We shall see if it judges the new milieu as representing the revealed virtue and as a model worthy of being followed.

Yet, it is curious to note the striking contrast between the Qur'an's attitude towards the Judaic world and the Christian one. When it talks about Christians, we find it - if not speaking in praise of them,

“Verily, you will find the strongest among men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) the Jews and those who are Al-Mushrikûn and you will find the nearest in love to the believers (Muslims) those who say: “We are Christians”. That is because amongst them are priests and monks, and they are not proud.” (V, 82);

“Say (O Muhammad) “O you Jews! If you pretend that you are friends of Allâh, to the exclusion of (all) other mankind, then long for death if you are truthful.” (LXII, 6) - Addresses blame to

them in an attenuated tone,

“And from those who call themselves Christians, We took their covenant, but they have abandoned a good part of the message that was sent to them. So We planted amongst them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection (when they discarded Allâh’s Book, disobeyed Allâh’s Messengers and His Orders and transgressed beyond bounds in Allâh’s disobedience); and Allâh will inform them of what they used to do.” (V, 14).

The Qur’an is different when it speaks about the Jews of that time or the people of the Book in general. For it, they are people who are no more following the Revelation,

“By Allâh, we indeed sent (Messenger) to the nations before you (O Muhammad), but Shaitân (Satan) made their deeds fair-seeming to them. So he (Satan) is their Wali (helper) today (i.e. in this world), and theirs will be a painful torment.” (XVI, 63)

Making allusion to the torture with the Fire of the Ditch which the Jews of Yemen formerly inflicted on Christians, the Qur’an took the part of the latter declaring that the crime was a pre-meditated attempt against the true faith,

*“And they witnessed what they were doing against the believers (i.e. burning them). * And they (the believers) had no fault except that they believed in Allâh, the All-Mighty. Worthy of all Praise.”* (LXXXV, 1-10).

Later, at Medina, the Qur’an maintained its position. It stated that those who received the Pentateuch and improved its texts did not observe it faithfully,

“The likeness of those who were entrusted with the (obligation of

the) Taurât (Torah) (i.e. to obey its commandments and to practise its law), but who subsequently failed in those (obligations), is as the likeness of a donkey which carries huge burdens of books (but understands nothing from them). How bad is the example of people who deny the Ayât (proofs, evidences, verses, signs, and revelations) of Allâh. And Allâh guides not the people who are zâlimûn (polytheist, wrong-doers, disbelievers).” (LXII, 5).

They practice usury and all sorts of illicit gain, “*And their taking of Ribâ (usury) though there are forbidden from taking it and their devouring of men’s substance wrongfully (bribery). And We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful torment.*” (IV, 161).

Owing to a religious illusion, they permit corruption and lying,

“*Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say. “This is from Allâh”, to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby. * And they (Jews) say, “The Fire (i.e. Hell-fire on the Day of Resurrection) shall not touch us but for a few numbered days”. Say (O Mubammad to them): “Have you taken a covenant from Allâh ... Or is it that you say of Allâh what you know not?” (II, 79-80).*

They believe that they are not bound by any justice towards the other communities,

“*Among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) is he who: if entrusted with a Qintar (a great amount of wealth, etc.), will readily pay it back and among them there is he who, if entrusted with a single silver coin, will not repay it unless you constantly stand demanding, because they say: “There is no blame on us to betray and take the properties of the illiterates (Arabs).*

“But they tell a lie against Alláh while they know it.” (III, 75).

It is astonishing to suppose that the very people, whom the Qur’an has judged so severely, can serve as a model for Muhammad or as a source of his teaching.

Some Western Scholars have tried to prove that Revelation to Muhammad was developing, modulating and retreating according to its contacts with the civilized society of Medina. Most of them were stuck by two issues which they regarded as incompatible with the divinity of a message. For them, the *first issue* consists of that aggressive attitude which the Qur’an has taken at Medina and which they considered as a sudden change in comparison to that in Makkah. The *second issue* is the polygamy of the Prophet near the end of his life, which they considered the total ruin of the Islamic ethics in its last phase. Even those who appreciated highly the growing Islam, suffering and persecuted, and its pacifist and monogamous Prophet at Makkah, could not visualize the latter with “bloody hands” and “surrounded by a procession of wives”.

It is easy to discover a base of argumentation that cannot be seriously considered without destroying part of Christian authors own faith in the biblical teaching anterior to Christ, and against which such double argument is to be invoked. Therefore it is proceeded by sentiment more than by rigorous reasoning. Anyway, we have sufficiently shown, the real position of the Qur’anic law related to the *first issue*.⁽¹⁾

(1) See previous. P.I, Ch. III.

As for the *second issue*, it does not relate the subject of our study which is the Qur'an and not the person of the Prophet, but we will see how the private life of Muhammad appears in the Book of Islam.

The intimate portrait of the Prophet can be constituted by the following traits: Sensibility, Will, and Faith. By his nature, he is human as his predecessors were,

“And We sent not before you (O Muhammad) but men... And We did not create them (the Messengers, with) bodies that ate not food, nor were they immortals. (XXI, 7-8).*

He lives on food and works for his living,

“They ate food and walked in the markets” (XXV, 20). He has wives and children,

“And indeed We sent Messengers before you (O Muhammad), and made for them wives and offspring ...” (XIII, 38).

He is not incapable of appreciating human beauty, *“It is not lawful for you (to marry other) women after this, nor to change them for other wives even though their beauty attracts you...” (XXXIII, 52).*

In connection with Will, we see him enjoying a power of abstention so firm that he can absolutely deprive himself of the things he is permitted,

“O Prophet! Why do you forbid (for yourself) that which Allâh has allowed to you?” (LXVI, 1).

Also, ‘Aisha said that nobody ever had control of his senses like the Prophet. Finally, comes his absolute submission to divine commandments. We mention the Qur'anic rule which fixed the categories of women

whom he may marry,

“O Prophet (Muhammad). Verily, We have made lawful to you your wives... and those (slave) whom your right hand possesses ... and the daughters of your Amm (paternal uncles) and the daughters of your Ammât (paternal aunts) and the daughters of your Kbâl (maternal uncles) and the daughters of your Kbâlât (maternal aunts) ... and a believing woman if she offers herself to the Prophet ...” (XXXIII, 50), the other rule which prohibits him from concluding any new marriage, however strong his desire was and from changing his wives (ibid, 52). Also, the rule related to the divorce of Zaid (his adopted son), the only case of marriage mentioned in the Qur’an (ibid, 37). We see him trying all ways to avoid this union but the Qur’anic law imposed it on him for putting an end (not only by the lesson, as the Prophet had desired, but by the example) to the pagan regime of adoption, according to which the adopted son was entirely assimilated as a legitimate son.

When we examine the circumstances in which the other contracts were concluded, we find that most of them are imposed by other human considerations: consoling and honouring the widow of a martyr or a dead person emigrating among his companions; cementing the tribal union by this sacred bond of family concluded with many tribes; creating a favourable reason for liberating the captives of a whole tribe (such captives had already been in hands of Muslims and were liberated at once due to their new relation to the Prophet) etc... We need not be an erudite historian to be able to appreciate the moral character of a man who had spent his youth in absolute chastity and who, once married, observed monogamy

most loyally for about thirty years, and finally began to have a second wife⁽¹⁾ when he was fifty-five years old. If we consider his occupations and preoccupations, his most various charges and concerns, public and private were: conducting the five prayers from the break of day to the night; teaching the Qur'an, distributing alms; settling disputes, receiving delegations, corresponding with kings and governors, commanding expeditions, founding the state ... etc. In short, he was taking care of everybody and everything. Then, he remained awake all nights bowing down or kneeling or standing up facing the sky.⁽²⁾

Not willing to stop at these popular objections against war and polygamy, certain Western Scholars went further

(1) It is true that Aisha had been his fiancée a little before Hejira, but this proves that the principle authorizing bigamy is old, and not the effect of a new moral conception determined by Madinah's environment.

(2) Read Aisha and the other Mothers of Believers telling concerning the manner he used at night. They told us how, by keeping himself every night from sleeping, he devoted himself in prolonged prayers; sometimes standing up to the point of having his feet swell (Boukh. K. Tahaddjod, B.6); sometimes prostrated until they imagined him dead (Baihaqi, mentioned by Nabahâni, Anouâr, p. 522); how sometimes, he went to the cemetery to pray in favour of dead souls (Moslim, K. Djanaiz, B.35) Everything proves that the Prophet's piety has been confirmed and consolidated in Medina, far from diminishing. It has been necessary that the person of the Prophet be surrounded by these pious and honest wives, not only for transmitting to us a considerable part of his Tradition, and particularly the feminine teachings, but also for achieving the Prophet sincere proof by their concordant witnesses about his profound character in his intimate life, in which all social hypocritical masks fall down and are torn in pieces.

in their researches in the sacred text of Islam. They believed that a radical difference would have existed between the two periods of the Qur'anic teaching. In Makkah, Muhammad's understanding of the Judeo-Christian legends was very limited ⁽¹⁾ In Medina, Muhammad's first contacts with the Jews enabled him "to be familiarized with the story of Abraham and the genealogical relations of Ishmael with the Arab people" ⁽²⁾ He "lived from the very beginning in the pleasant illusion that his Qur'an corresponded with the Holy Books of the Jews and the Christians. However, the bitter opposition of the Jews of Medina convinced him of the contrary" ⁽³⁾

At the beginning, prayer was performed twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. In Medina, a third, that of the afternoon, was added: "evidently for imitating the customs of the Jewish community" ⁽⁴⁾ for the same reason, the day of Ashura was instituted, and also facing Jerusalem during the prayer ⁽⁵⁾: these two actions would be retracted later as a result of the hostility of the Israelites. ⁽⁶⁾ Thus, political changes were affecting the ritual law ⁽⁷⁾ Even the conception of God would be modified under the influence of the wars. In the

(1) Massé, L'Islam, p.21.

(2) Lammens, L'Islam, Croyances et Institutions, p.33.

(3) Andrae: Mahomet, Sa Vie et Sa Doctrine, p.139, see also Lammens, L'Islam, P. 28.

(4) Gaudefroy Demombynes, Institutions Musul. p.66; Andrae, Mah, p.81.

(5) Andrae, p, 137.

(6) *ibid*, p.138.

(7) G.Demombynes, p.68.

Medinian period, Gods severity against the obstinate unbelievers was joined with mercy⁽¹⁾

Let us retrace our steps to see what the matter with these observations is.

In regard to Judeo-Christian stories in general, we regret that nothing is found to justify that argument. A simple consultation of the Qur'anic text reveals the contrary. It is in the Mekkan surahs that we find accounts of the diverse episodes of the Biblical stories in their minute details.⁽²⁾ They do not leave to the Medinian period except to extract lessons, often in brief allusions.

Regarding the question of Abraham, the members of the Arab people invincibly persist to conserve in their memories the chain of their ancestors. Anyway, the Qur'an did not seem to wait until its transfer to Madinah for establishing this connection.

“O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House (the Kaaba) in order, O

(1) Goldziher, *Le Dogme et la Loi de L'Islam*, P.21-2.

(2) To guide the reader in his consultation, here are the Mekkan passages treating these stories: Surah VII; Adam 11-25, Moses 102 - 176. Surah X: Moses 75-92. Surah XI: Noah 25-49; Abraham and Lot 69-82. Surah XII: Joseph. Surah XV: Adam, Abraham and Lot 26-77. Surah XVII: Israel people 4-8. Surah XVIII: the Seven Sleeping 9-25; Moses 60-82. Surah XIX: Zachariya, John, Mary, Jesus etc.... 1-33. Surah XX: Moses 9-98. Surah XXI: Abraham 51-70; David, Solomon 78-82. Surah XXVI: Moses, Abraham, Noah etc... 10-189. Surah XXVII: Moses, David, Solomon 7-44. Surah XXVIII: Moses, 3-43; Caron 76-82. Surah XXIX: Noah, Abraham, Lot 14-35. Surah XXXIV: David, Solomon 10-14. Surah XXXVIII: David, Solomon and Job 17-44. Surah LI: Abraham 24-37.

our Lord, that they may perform As-Sâlat. So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allâh) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks.” (XIV, 37).

The Mekkan surahs invited the Prophet to follow the hanifite confession of Abraham, “*He who is averted from (such a torment) on that Day, (Allâh) has surely been Merciful to him.*” (VI, 16);

“Then, We have sent the revelation to you (O Mubammad saying): ‘Follow the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) Hanif (to worship none but Allâh) and he was not of the Musbrikûn.’” (XVI, 123).

The attitude of Islam towards the preceding religions did not change. In Mekkan surahs, the Qur’an invites the People of the Book to give their testimony concerning the Holy Books,

“And those who disbelieved say: ‘You (O Mubammad) are not a Messenger’” Say: “Sufficient as a witness between me and you is Allâh and those too who have knowledge of the Scripture.” (e.g. XIII, end),

“... So ask (you, O pagans) of those who know the Scripture if you know not.” (XVI, 43).

We see it protesting against Scripture holders who followed Satan and allied with him,

“By Allâh, we indeed sent (Messenger) to the nations before you (O Mubammad), but Shaitân (Satan) made their deeds fair-seeming to them. So he (Satan) is their Wali (helper) today (i.e. in this world), and theirs will be a painful torment.” (XVI, 63).

In turn, it maintained its position at Madinah towards the

savants whom it took as witnesses affirming that a number of them did not want to bear that testimony,

“Those (who embraced Islam from Bani Israel) to whom We gave the Book [the Taurât (Torah)] [or those (Muhammad’s companions) to whom We have given the Book (the Qur’an)] recite it (i.e. obey its orders and follow its teachings), they are the ones who believe therein. And whoso disbelieve in it (the Qur’an), those are they who are the losers.” (II, 121),

“Certainly, the people who were given the Scripture (i.e. Jews and the Christians) know well that this is the truth from their Lord...” (II, 144),

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christians) recognise him as they recognise their sons. But verily, a party of them conceal the truth while they know it.” (II, 146).

Thus, in these two cases, the Qur’an makes a clear distinction between the Holy Books themselves and the Scholars who followed them sincerely, and between those who called themselves Jews or Christians and follow their passion.

Related to the number of prayers of Muslims, we declare that, in all the Islamic reference books which we have consulted, we have not found any reference to such an evolution. It is regrettable that Occidental critics do not say from what documents they had derived that strange idea because these prayers are five in number from the first hour of their institution at Makkah.

As for the question of the Day of Ashura which no allusion is made in the Qur’an, we know from

Traditionalists ⁽¹⁾ that the Qurayshites had practised the fast of that day before Islam and the Prophet himself had observed it before Hejira. On the other hand, we know that such observance was recommended by the Hadiths. However, to state that the Prophet took his primary decision for imitating the Jews and then went back on it as a result of a change in the political situation is an affirmation which is not in accordance with the actual facts.

Concerning the Qibla, it is true that the believers had been turning, at the beginning of the Hejira, towards Jerusalem during prayer. However, there is an anachronism in claiming that the change of direction to Al-Ka'ba (which is justified in the Qur'an:

“The fools among the people (pagans, hypocrites, and Jews) will say, “What has turned them (Muslims) from their Qiblah [prayer direction (towards Jerusalem)] to which they used to face in prayer.” Say, (O Muhammad) “To Allāh belong both, east and the west. He guides whom He wills to the Straight Way.” (II, 142),

“And We made the Qiblah (prayer direction towards Jerusalem) which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad) from those who would turn on their heels (i.e. disobey the Messenger). In-deed it was great (heavy) except for those whom Allāh guided.” (II, 143)

“And from wheresoever you start forth (for prayers), turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid-Al-Harām (at Makkah), and wheresoever you are, turn your face towards it (when you pray) so that men may have no argument against you except those of them that are wrong-doers, so fear them not, but fear Me! – And so that

(1) Bukhārī K. Saoum B. 1 and Moslim, ibid. B. 19.

I may complete My blessings on you and that you may be guided.” (II, 150) was determined by the hostility of the Jews. Hostility began in 625 A.D. whereas the definite establishment of the Qibla took place in 623 A.D.).

It remains the last remark regarding the Qur’anic conception of God. What really deserves to be emphasized is the opposite of that remark. In fact, it was in the surahs revealed at Makkah that “the God of War” appeared most frequently, where the History of the sinner Antiquity and of the terrible punishment which it suffered was often discussed. Yet; the fight prescribed at Medina against the aggressors was the execution of an explicit ultimatum already proclaimed and repeated at Makkah, for e.g.

*“Then do they wait for (anything) save for (a destruction) like that of days of the men who passed away before them? Say: “Wait then, I am (too) with you among those who wait”. (X, 102), “Say to those who do not believe: “Do whatever you can: We shall do our part * and wait you! We too shall wait”. (XI, 121 -2);*

“There is not a population but We shall destroy it before the Day of Judgement or punish it with a dreadful chastisement. That is written in the (eternal) Record.” (XVII, 58).

At the base of this objection, we would like to discuss the erroneous belief in the notion of Naskh ⁽¹⁾ or of “the

(1) A primitively equivocal term which signifies transcription or annulment. In law, it is employed in the sense of abrogation i.e. stop the application of a provisional law. However, by extension some commentators use this word to mean explanation or precision given to an expression. Ibn Hazm had abused it in this sense. He went to the extent of considering the preposition ‘except’ and the

abrogation” in Islam. This notion, which is widespread, is imagined by non-Muslim researchers sometimes as the retraction of an order and sometimes as the discovery of a previously unknown truth. Both conceptions differ from the true meaning. In the field of theoretical knowledge, there is no abrogation in the revealed teachings. The truth of yesterday can never be the mistake of today. Here the meaning of “abrogation” would be a science newly acquired which, if applied to God, would be impiety, even absurdity.

In the practical domain, there were abrogations between the teachings of one religion and another. “They said to you something; I say to you another”. Will the divine law be abrogated because experiments have proved it unjust or wrong? This is indisputably unacceptable in the matter of revealed legislation because God does not revise Himself nor does He go back on his decisions. At the same time, the rule which ceased to be applied and that which replaced it is equally sacred and each represents

conjunction “but” as “naskh” of the general term or the opposite term which preceded. His comment on surah (LXXIII) is an example of that strange use where he says “*except a little*” annuls “*nighb*”; “*half of it*” cancels “*except a little*” and “*or a little less*” cancels “*half of it*”. Thus, he counted three places of annulment in this verse. Will it be surprising, if he mentioned the existence of 224 abrogations in the Qur’an? (II,60, 196, 229, 233; IV,19, 22, 23,146; V,34; XIX,60; XXIV, 5; XXV, 70; XXVI, 227; LX, 8-9) ... Some Orientalists took advantage of that number, without taking into consideration his method of counting, and presented it to us with a little exaggeration saying that that was the number of the Qur’anic contradictions admitted by Muslims as being determined by political changes. (Renan op. cit. p.1079) (See also S. Tisdall, the Sources of the Qur’an, (p.278). We see how far words and things are.

the unique wisdom. Change does not reside in the conception of the legislators but in the historical circumstances and requirements of various solutions,

“And We made the Qiblah (prayer direction to-wards Jerusalem) which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad) from those who would turn on their heels (i.e. disobey the Messenger). Indeed it was great (heavy) except for those whom Allâh guided.” (II, 143).

Sometimes, the text which established the first measure bore the title of a provisional law, *“But forgive and overlook, till Allâh brings His command.”* (II, 109);

“... or Allâh ordains for them some (other) way.” (IV, 15).

Most often, such a title was implied. A successful legislator should not treat men within a transitory period in the same manner as after the completion of their evolution. He must change his regime according to the development of men's aptitude and capacity to assimilate. This is the most proper method for forming illuminated souls, solid manners and disciplined nations.

The observations of the European Orientalists which we have examined here aimed to prove, by an internal criticism of the Qur'anic teaching, the existence of some borrowings from the religious documents of Medina. In other words, that would be an indirect way of establishing an exchange of information between the Prophet and the people of the Book. Why didn't they point out the person(s) whom Muhammad would have sought to teach him? No historian, conscious of his scientific responsibility, would dare to do that.

How might it happen that the Prophet had no contact with the Jewish Scholars, while he was living in their midst? What was their attitude towards him? The Qur'an answers us. It divides the Jewish Scholars into two groups.

The majority, already hostile before the Prophet's arrival, not only hid their science but also attempted vainly to deceive and conspire against him. Sometimes, they posed embarrassing questions on the soul,

“And they ask you (O Muhammad) concerning the Rûh (the Spirit); Say: “The Rûh (the Spirit) is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little” (XVII, 85) and historical enigmas,

“Do you think that the people of the Cave and the Inscription (the news or the names of the people of the Cave) were a wonder among Our Signs? (XVIII, 9-25).

Sometimes, they insisted that he makes a book descend to them from the sky,

“The people of the Scripture (Jews) ask you to cause a book to descend upon them from heaven ...” (IV, 153).

Sometimes, they denied certain articles which he assured them existed in their books. They did not recognize them unless they were successfully challenged and their arguments proved to be false,

“All food was lawful to the Children of Israel, except what Israel made unlawful for himself before the Taurât (Torah) was revealed. Say (O Muhammad): “Bring here the Taurât (Torah) and recite it, if you are truthful”. (III, 93- 95);

“But how do they come to you for decision while they have the Taurât (Torah) in which is the (plain) Decision of Allâh: yet even after that, they turn away. For they are not (really) believers.” (V, 43). Thus, we see how those people were far from being kind initiators.

On the other hand, a number of those Israelite Scholars, getting rid of their racial prejudices and personal ambitions, did come to listen to the teaching of the Prophet and to examine his physiognomy. On recognizing him at once by the precise signs “contained in their Books”, they bore testimony of the divinity of his mission,

“Those (who embraced Islam from Bani Israel) to whom We gave the Book [the Taurât (Torah)] [or those (Muhammad’s companions) to whom We have given the Book (the Qur’an)] recite it (i.e. obey its orders and follow its teachings), they are the ones who believe therein. And whoso disbelieve in it (the Qur’an), those are they who are the losers. (II, 121),

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christians) recognise him as they recognise their sons. But verily, a party of them conceal the truth while they know it.” (II, 146);

“Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write (Muhammad) whom they find written with them in the Taurât (Torah) (Deut. XVIII, 15) and the Injeel (Gospel) (John XIV, 16)

“Those who took the calf (for worship) will indeed be overwhelmed with wrath from their Lord and with shame in this life: Thus do We recompense those who invent (falsehoods).” (VII, 157),

“And remember, Jesus son of Mary, said: “O Children of Israel! I

am the Messenger of Allâb (sent) to you, confirming the Taurat (which came) before me, and giving glad tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.” But when he came to them with clear signs. They said, “This is evident sorcery!” (LXI, 6).

The most celebrated name is that of Abd-Allâh Ibn Salâm. The circumstances in which he bore his testimony, are very edifying. That man, recognized by the Jews immediately before the declaration of his conversion, as the most learned and the most virtuous among them, was abruptly disowned by them after that declaration.⁽¹⁾

Between these two categories of the hostile and the submissive, history does not leave any place for “friendly teachers”

Yet, to say that the Prophet received his science from Ibn Salâm, would not only be altering historical facts by inverting the role of the master and the disciple but also committing an evident anachronism⁽²⁾ The substance of the Biblical reality had already been given and clarified at

(1) Ibn Hishâm Sirah, vol. I. p. 141-2; Bukhari, K. Hidjra, B. 1.

(2) A similar anachronism, with a greater swerving, deserves to be reported about the pretended role of Salmân, the Persian, and of Mary, the Coptic, as respectively the initiators of Muhammad to the Zoroastrian and the Christian religions. In fact, Salmân, while converted a little time after Hejira, did not accompany the Prophet except in the Battle of Al-Khandaq in the 5th year after Hejira (Ibn Hishâm, vol. I. p. 141- 2). Mary, the Egyptian, arrived later in the 7th year. It is necessary to recall that if the Qur’an may be bound to the Bible as members of same family, there is rupture between his doctrine and that of Avesta.

Makkah before those persons did have the occasion of “seeing the visage of the Prophet”. On the other hand, it is remarkable that the few verses revealed at Medina concerned Christian religious facts, not recognized by the Jews. However great the trials of accumulating the re-semblances between the Qur’anic facts and the Judeo-Christian ones, ⁽¹⁾ we will not only say: “useless efforts”; but this would be fabricating arms for the usage of the Qur’anic thesis. Whereas it's teaching “... *is* (announced) *in the Scriptures* [i.e. the Torah and the Gospel] *of former people*” and

“Is it not a sign to them that the learned scholars of the Children of Israel knew it (as true)?” (XXVI, 196-7; *“Verily, this is the former Scriptures. * The Scriptures of Ibrâhîm (Abraham) and Mûsâ (Moses).”* (LXXXVII, 18-19).

Yet, concordance is one thing and borrowing is something else. In between, there is a profound gap which has not yet been closed.

* * *

(1) It is on this argument, that the efforts of Dr. S. Tisdall were essentially concentrated in his “Sources of the Koran”. He tried to prove that the Qur’an was connected with historical legends, not History. (p. 61-2). He omitted all analogies found between the Qur’an and the Old and the New Testaments, since the creation of the world. He devoted himself exclusively in discovering the relationship of some details with the Talmud and the Judeo-Christian traditions outside the Bible.

CONCLUSION

We have examined the hypothesis whether the Qur'an doctrine is of a human origin. We have pursued its founder across his double career, secular and sacred, in his native city and in his last residence, in his voyages and his relations, in his capacity of reading and his availabilities of documentation.

All the ways of investigation proved to be impotent to reveal to us a natural route for a satisfactory explanation of that religious, historical, moral, legal and cosmological, colossal construction ... which the Qur'an offers.

The most solemn testimony is born by an adversary party who did not embrace Islam until two years later, Abu Sôfian. The Roman Emperor, Hercules concluded thereof: "If he does not lie with men, no way that he lies with regard to God".⁽¹⁾

Had Muhammad tried to interrogate the nature or to interrogate himself? It is possible, but the response he

(1) This phrase is a part of a very precious Arab-roman historical document scarcely known in European annals. It consists of a light interrogatory processed by the Emperor Hercules with the Koraysh leader, Abu Sôfian. It was a methodical interrogatory, full of cleverness and moderation, and which deserves to be recalled. In 628 A.D., the roman Emperor was in Syria, when he has been surprised by a letter by which the Prophet invited him to embrace Islam. More surprised than vexed, the Emperor of Byzantium ordered to bring before him few compatriots of that man to allow him to interrogate them in this respect. Abu Sôfian, who still was of the most obstinate enemies of Muhammad, was in Syria at that moment, as head of a Mekkan tradesmen group.

would have received could not surpass the vague and banal notions* of what is usually called the “natural

Hercules messenger met them, led them and introduced them to the Council Hall. Abu Sôfian was submitted to the interrogatory, while his comrades were placed behind him in order to give notice of any eventual lies. Abu Sôfian confessed later, that if he had not been intimidated by his comrades' presence, he would have made some unfavourable remarks regarding the Prophet; but so, he was obliged to declare the truth. Once the interrogatory ended, Hercules talked to his interpreter and told him to inform Abu Sôfian of the following reflections regarding his answers: I asked you at first about the family of this man and you told me that he is of noble birth. God always chooses his Messengers among nobles of the people to which they belong. I asked you then if ever somebody among you has spoken in the same way of his and you answered me negatively. I thought that if somebody before him has told the same thing, I would rather think that he is a person who was imitating his predecessors. I asked you also if, before he talked in that manner, you had suspected him for any lie, you affirmed the contrary. I understood by that that if he was the man who does not lie to his fellows, he would not be able, to lie to God. I asked you if any of his ancestors had been a king, you answered me negatively. Otherwise, I would say: a man who try to re-ascend to his fathers' throne. I asked you whether his disciples belong to the high class or to the humble one; and you told me that they are of the humble one. It is always the humble ones who constitute the party of the Prophets. I asked you if they are increasing in number or they are diminishing; you responded that they are increasing. It is proper for faith to increase up to its complete evolution. I asked you if any among them denied his religion. You answered “no”. It is quite that way when conviction penetrates hearts. Then I asked you if that man fails in his engagements and you affirmed the contrary. Such is the case of Prophets: they never betray. I asked you about the issue of fights waged between you and him and you told me that sometimes it is in his advantage and sometimes in yours. Such are the Prophets, they sometimes suffer ordeals, but the final success is for them. I asked you finally about the nature of his commandments. You said that he

religion". As for the true knowledge and precise facts in all domains, he will not receive thereof except sparingly and over a duration of twenty-three years.

From where do those inspirations come? Isn't it from the bottom of his soul?

Facts show us otherwise. The ideas transmitted by inspirations generally assume a character either empirical or supra-rational. Both are excluded from the domain of pure intellect and from that of the sentiment at its ordinary resources. Yet, what is remarkable and makes a contrast with the inspiration of poets and philosophers is that revelation to Muhammad is a pure phonetical audition. The ideas do not precede the words and they are also not concomitant with it. For the Prophet that auditive phenomenon was disconcerting at the beginning.

When he wanted to seize the fugitive discourses, he felt obliged to repeat it gradually word by word during the reception. He stopped employing that procedure after he

ordains you to renounce the faith of your fathers, to worship the Unique God, to observe prayer, alms, chastity, fidelity to engagement and the restitution of the entrusted deposits. That all satisfies the portrait of a true Prophet. I was acquainted that such a man was soon to appear, but I haven't supposed that he would be from among you. If you told the truth, it is very nearly that that man will conquer the very place that trample under my feet. As for me, if I can come to him, I would meet him, and if I was near to him, I would wash the dust from his feet. When Hercules had finished speaking, Abu Sôfian related that violent cries were uttered by the grand persons who were surrounding him and a grand tumult arose. Then, the Emperor ordained that we go out. From then, I stayed convinced of the near success of Muhammad.

received the formal order, with the guarantee that God will teach and explain it to him,

*“Move not your tongue concerning the (Qur’an) to make haste therewith. * It is for Us to collect it and to recite it. * But when We have recited it, follow you its recital (as promulgated). * Nay more, it is for Us to explain it (and make it clear).”* (LXXV, 16-19).

“Then it is for us (Allâh) to make it clear (to you)”. This is a sentence which deserves to be underlined and which puts us in the presence of a pure and simple textual revelation.

Everyone knows the intermittent and instantaneous character of the Qur’anic apparition. The contemporaries of the Prophet had attended frequently. They were present as eyewitnesses of the exterior signs of the inspiration, then as auditors of the admirable text which was the issue thereof. For him, it was a real experience which he lived and never provoked. It was an operation he underwent passively and from which he could not escape nor for which he could prepare himself. ⁽¹⁾ It is here that we have to try to find the true source of Muhammad’s instruction. Every lesson was a new chapter added to his bag of knowledge. Away from that light, the Prophet is once again acting within the limits of

(1) We know the story of the incident of the slander which had offended his familiar honour. A rectification was urgently needed, but the inspiration was a month late and the Prophet was unable meanwhile to say anything from his own authority affirming or denying the rumours. Wasn’t he capable of clarifying the situation eloquently or of attributing what he said to the Revelation if the thing depended on his arbitrariness?

the human capacity. In front of all what is impenetrable by the light of the sane human intelligence, he puts modestly and loyally a grand question mark.

We know the pious attitude which the Prophet had always observed towards the revealed text and his conviction that it was God's own word. He cannot revise it,

“And when Our clear Verses are recited unto them, those who hope not for their meeting with Us, say: ‘Bring us a Qur’an other than this, or change it’. Say (O Muhammad): ‘It is not for me to change it on my own accord; I only follow that which is revealed unto me. Verily, I fear the torment of the Great Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) if I were to disobey my Lord.’” (X, 15).

And for interpreting it, he adopted exactly the manner of a commentator in the presence of a text which is not his own. (Compare:

“Whether you (O Muhammad) ask forgiveness for them (hypocrites) or ask not forgiveness for them - (and even) if you ask seventy times their forgiveness - Allāh will not forgive them because they have disbelieved in Allāh and His Messenger (Muhammad). And Allāh guides not those people who are Fāsiqūn (rebellious, disobedient to Allāh).” [IX, 80] with, “It is equal to them whether you (Muhammad) ask forgiveness or ask not forgiveness for them. Allāh guides not the people who are the Fāsiqūn (the rebellious, the disobedient to Allāh). [LXIII, 6].

We see him trembling at the idea of attributing to God something which was not said by Him,

*“And if he (Muhammad) had forged a false saying concerning Us (Allāh) * We surely would have seized him by his right hand (or*

*with power and might). * And then We certainly would have cut off his life artery (aorta). (LXIX, 44-7).*

He felt surrounded by celestial guardians and observers attentive of his attitude towards his mission,

*“Except to a Messenger (from mankind) whom He has chosen (He informs him of unseen as He likes), and then He makes a band of watching guards (angels) to march before him and behind him. * [He (Allâh) protects them (the Messengers)], till He sees that they (the Messengers) have conveyed the Messages (of their Lord (Allâh)). And He (Allâh) surrounds all that which is with them, and He (Allâh) keeps count of all things (i.e. He knows the exact number of everything).” (LXXII, 27-8).*

It is not true that the Qur'an reflects the character of the Prophet. Most of the time, whenever he is mentioned, it is for judging, governing and dominating him. Do you see the least echo of his joys and his sufferings in the Qur'an? Once it is a matter of a moral conduct, we see the contrast clearly between the legislative authority and the subjugated soul. It is not rare that the lesson contains severe reproaches for the least deviation related to the proposed ideal,

*“It is not for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war (and free them with ransom) until he had made a great slaughter (among his enemies) in the land. You desire the good of this world (i.e. the money of ransom for freeing the captives), but Allâh desires (for you) the Hereafter. * Had it not been for a previous ordainment from Allâh, a severe punishment would have reached you for the (ransom) that you took.” (VIII, 67-8);*

“May Allâh forgive you (O Mubammad). Why did you grant them leave (for remaining behind; you should have persisted as

regards your order to them to proceed on Jihad), until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had known the liars'?" (IX, 43),

"It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allâh's forgiveness for the Mushrikîn (polytheists; idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh), even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the fire (because they died in a state of disbelief)." (IX, 113),

"There is nothing but our life in this world! We shall die and we live! But we shall never be raised up again." (XXIII, 37),

*"... But as him who came to you running, * And is afraid (of Allâh and His punishment). * Of him you are neglectful and divert your attention to another." (LXXX, I -10)⁽¹⁾*

As long as he is not in possession of an order or a precise teaching of that source, Muhammad appears timid,

"O you who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses, unless permission is given to you for a meal (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, enter, and when you have taken your meal, disperse without sitting for a talk.

(1) If we examine the facts for which the Qur'an grieved him, we will be astonished to find that they have common traits. In front of two equally permissible solutions (the most often explicitly expressed ones). (XLVII, 4; XXIV, 62; IX, 80; XXXIII, 4, 38), the Prophet chose that which he judged as the most favourable for the general cause and which was the best possible for a human mind (IX, 47). Yet, in the eyes of the Divine sagacity, the choice had nuances less good. It was a little premature (in the first two above verses), a little indulgent (in the third), less daring (the fourth) and it aspired to an unattainable ideal (the fifth).

Verily, such (behaviour) annoys the Prophet, and he is shy of (asking) you (to go); but Allâh is not shy of (telling you) the truth. And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen: that is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. And it is not (right) for you that you should annoy Allâh Messenger, nor that you should ever marry his wives after him (his death), Verily! with Allâh that shall be an enormity.” (XXXIII, 53), sensitive to what may be said about him,

“... *But you did hide in yourself (i.e. what Allâh has already made known to you that He will give her to you in marriage) that which Allâh will make manifest, you did fear the people (i.e. their saying that Mubammad married the divorced wife of his manumitted slave) whereas Allâh had a better right that you should fear him ...*” (ibid, 37) and hesitating. He consults his companions in the affairs,

“... *and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allâh ...*” (III, 159), observes an entire abstention in the slightest doubt,

“*But if they turn back, say: “I have proclaimed the messenger to you all alike and in truth; but I know not whether that which you are promised is near or far.”* (XXI, 109),

“... *I know not whether (the punishment) which you are promised is near or whether my Lord will appoint for a distant term.*” (LXXII, 25), and admits his ignorance of his own destiny and that of others,

“*Say (O Mubammad): “I am not a new thing among the Messengers (of Allâh) nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which revealed to me, and I am but a plain warner.”* (XLVI, 9).

In contrast, as soon as he is enlightened by that mysterious voice, we see him transmitting his message with the authority of a master who nothing in the world can confound. He takes the position of the universal teacher for the instructed and the ignorant, “... *your duty is only to convey the Message; and Allâh is All-Seer of (His) slaves.*” (III, 20).

Since before the Hejira, he declared that an essential part of his mission is to enlighten the people of Israel and the nations which had received a divine message. He is charged to say to them the truth on the subject of their disputes,

“And We have not sent down the Book (the Qur’an) to you (O Mubammad), except that you may explain clearly unto them those things in which they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a folk who believe.” (XVI, 64), *“Verily, this Qur’an narrates to the Children of Israel most of that in which they differ.”* (XXVII, 76). In his judgement, he never manages the ones or the others,

“They ask you (O Mubammad) what is lawful for them (as food). Say; “Lawful unto you are At-Tayibât (all kinds of lawful-good foods).” (V, 4),

*“O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allâh, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety, and fear Allâh for Allâh is well-acquainted with all that you do * to those who believe and do deeds of righteousness has Allâh promised forgiveness and a great reward.”* (V, 8-9);

“So unto this (religion of Islam) then invite (people) (O Mubammad) and stand firm as you are commanded, and follow

not their desires ...” (XLII, 15).

Straight, with a sure step, he settles and decides. Behind this inflexible push, a force outside of this person is discovered. That is why, against the powers of the world and in the most crucial hours of his life, he shows a clear soul, confident in the divine presence and solicitude,

“If you help him not (it does not matter), for Allâh did indeed help him... in the cave, he said to his companion. “Be not sad (or afraid) surely, Allâh is with us. “Then Allâh sent down His Sakînah (calmness, tranquillity, peace) upon him and strengthened him with forces (angels) which you saw not...” (IX, 40).

He willingly exposes himself and his family to the consequences of the “Mubâhâla” or ordeal (The Mubâhâla is a solemn prayer in which both sides invoke God's curse on those who lie), while the Sceptics moved backwards,

“Then whoever disputes with you concerning him [‘Isa (Jesus)] after (all this) knowledge that has come to you [i.e. ‘Isa (Jesus) being a slave of Allâh, and having no share in Divinity], say: (O’ Muhammad) “Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves – then we pray and invoke (sincerely) the Curse of Allâh upon those who lie”. (III, 61). Because he was sure of the divinity of his mission.⁽¹⁾

In the presence of an infinity of tangible proofs, those who search impartially for truth among the Christian Scholars⁽²⁾ agreed that the Arab Prophet is sincere and

(1) See Massignon, *The Mubâhâla*, p. 11.

(2) Among others: Andrae, B. St. Hilaire, Carlyle, Goldziher,

has an extraordinary power of persuasion.

Illusions and weakness of memory are symptoms of an abnormal mental state; which is far from being applicable to our case with respect to both the *object* and the *subject*.

Concerning the *object*, we are in presence of the exhausting of popular sources and of vague or contradictory rumours, incapable of explaining the singleness of the line followed by the Qur'an.

As for the *subject* himself, there is not the least indication of any mental weakness. Quite the contrary is true. We shall not find better than the confession of Renan to be registered here without adopting his conclusion: "Never has a mind been so lucid as his; never has a man possessed thinking better than his." (op. cit. p.1080). It is by the confrontation of the data of the two systems, by the degree of their concordance or their discordance that we can judge their objectivity with certitude.

Now after having made the two experiences, Muhammad spoke to us quite awake of his double contact with the visible and the invisible, the matter and the spirit. For him, it was a live experience repeated and verified thousands of times. Not only had he heard the divine speech carrier, but he had also seen him by his own eyes, with all clarity, under his majestic form,

*"Verily, this is the Word (this Qur'an brought by) a most honour, able Messenger (Jibril) * Owner of power, (and high rank) with (Allâh), the Lord of the Throne * Obeyed (by the angels in the heavens) and trustworthy."* (LXXXI, 19-21).

Massignon, Nœldeke, Turpin ...

He had seen him many times and “*The (Prophet's) heart lied not in what he (Muhammad) saw*” (LIII, 1-11). May we dispute with a person sound in body and mind about what he has seen? (ibid, 12). Yes indeed, but we, audiences, cannot make the experience of the subject again or live it as he had lived it.

We may still verify to realize whether it is a matter of hallucinatory exaltation, a pathological phenomenon, “by which the supermen only are struck”;⁽¹⁾ or it is the voice itself of the Truth which inspired him.

To do so we must consider not his affirmation and his conviction, but the content of his teaching.

Here are three samples:

I- Religious, moral and historical truths: ⁽²⁾

It would be of great interest to establish a parallel to the subject of divine attributes, angels, Prophets and beyond the grave matters... However, this exceeds the frame restricted to our “Initiation”. Suffice it to say that as long as the two religious monuments meddle with the same subject, ⁽³⁾ the common fundament is proved to be a striking identity, and does not differ except in secondary nuances. Most of the time, the Qur’anic account is distinguished by its sobriety, its manner in exposing the religious lesson and its accentuated orientation in

(1) Goldziher, *le Dogme et la Loi*, p.3.

(2) See in P.II, Ch. I & Ch. II, the concordance of the Holy Books and the Qur’an [the abbreviator].

(3) Because, in reality, each conserves its specialty. For example, the genealogies in the Bible and the history of the ‘Adites and the Thamudites in the Qur’an.

deriving each story.

In his “Analogy and Divergence between the religious legends of the Bible and of the Qur’an”, Jules David wrote: “The essence is the same and the differences are but in the form only or in some insignificant details.”⁽¹⁾

We call “divergences” the oppositions and the contradictions. These are extremely rare between the two documents and are often susceptible to inter-pretation.

The sceptics insist on such tiny differences for rejecting Islam, as a whole. Logic necessitates a very different attitude. While giving credence to the sincerity of all the narrators deserving credit, we should stop in front of the divergent points only, either for suspending our judgements or for searching for a hierarchy which permits us to give more credit to one version over another. This very procedure, which is employed for reconciling the four Gospels, must be applied to the whole religious legacy left to us by the messengers of God. All of them are to us saintly and sacred. All of them had had the same experience with the divine. The concordance of their testimony in the essential of their teaching must open eyes to the truthfulness of their teaching by which they had described to us the supreme reality from the diverse sides.

2 - Scientific Truths:

In its exhortations to faith and virtue, the Qur’an utilizes the constant cosmological facts and calls our attention to

(1) Rev. de la Société des Etud. Hist. IVth series, Vol, II, March-April 1884, p. 125.

ponder on their positive immutable laws. The Qur'an does not call us to deal with them for their own sake, but for the sole reason that they remind us of the Creator. We note that the formulas correspond exactly with the last data of science. Example: The source from which the genital element of our being springs out,

*“He is created from a water gushing forth. * Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs (LXXXVI, 6-7) and the different phases of our creation in mothers' wombs,*

“O mankind! If you have a doubt about the Resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of leech-like clot, then out of a morsel flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We may manifest (our power) to you; We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term, then do We bring you out as babes, then (foster you) that you may reach your age of full strength; and some of you are called to die, and some are sent back to the feeblest old age, so that they know nothing after having known (much). And (further), you see the earth barren and lifeless, but when We pour down rain on it, it is stirred (to life), it swells, and it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs),” (XXII, 5);

“Then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and we clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allâh, the best to create.” (XXIII, 14). The number of the dark cavities at whose bottom the creation is accomplished,

“... He creates you in the wombs of your mothers: creation after creation in three veils of darkness ...” (XXXIX, 6). The aquatic origin of all the living beings,

“... *And We have made from water every living thing.*” (XXI, 30). The formation of the rain,

“Allâh is He Who sends the winds, so that they raise clouds, and spread them along the sky as He wills, and then break them into fragments, until you see rain drops come forth from their midst!..”. (XXX, 48).

The sphericity of the sky and the earth, *“He has created the heavens and the earth with truth. He makes the night to go in the day and makes the day to go in the night ...”* (XXXIX, 5); the sphericity of the earth being uncompleted towards the extremities,

“See they not that We gradually reduce the land from its outlying borders? (Where) Allâh commands, there is none to put back His command: And He is Swift in calling to account.” (XIII, 41);

“... See they not that We gradually reduce the land (in their control) from its outlying borders?” (XXI, 44). The course of the sun towards a fixed point,

“And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (appointed). That is the Decree of the All-Mighty. The All-knowing.” (XXXVI, 38). The way in which animal societies live in collectivities not less coherent than human’s collectivity,

“There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you.” (VI, 83). The description of the life of the bees,

*“And your Lord inspired the bees, saying “Take you habitations in the mountains and in the trees and in what they erect. * Then, eat of all fruits, and follow the ways of your Lord made easy (for you)” There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying colour wherein is healing for men. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for*

people who think.” (XVI, 68-9). The parity (the duality of sex) in plants and other creatures unknown by the world of that time,

“Glory is to Him Who has created all the pairs of that which the earth produces, as well as of their own (human) kind (male and female), and of that which they know not.” (XXXVI, 36);

“And of every thing We have We have created pairs: That you may reflect.” (LI, 49). Fertilization by the winds,

“And We send the winds fertilizing...” (XV, 22) etc.

The value of the Qur’an is not only in what it says but also in what it refrains from saying. (What is the soul? The last word of a philosopher in this respect has been and will remain: I don't know!),

“And they ask you (O Muhammad) concerning the Rûh (the Spirit); Say: ‘The Rûh (the Spirit) is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little’.” (XVII, 85).

The above examples involve marvellous concordance between the Qur’anic elucidation itself and the scientific one which has been proved after much research throughout history and through the participation of specialists. Is this a mere coincidence? Is it possible that, at the era of ignorance, a man, deprived of all technical equipment, depending exclusively on his own natural light and on his very limited observations, might treat matters of anatomy, meteorology, cosmology, human and animal psychology and many other branches, and might give us universal and eternal formulas on each subject?. (In addition to his essential book containing

moral, religious and social rules).

3- Predictions:

In addition to these realities already well established, the Qur'an announced events which we saw realized punctually just as it had foreseen. It forecasted: The three changes of attitude of the Prophet's adversaries (unfavourable at the beginning, then conciliatory, hostile at the end). The vicissitudes of fate which they encountered: famine, prosperity, defeat,

*“Then wait you for the Day when the sky will bring forth a visible smoke * Covering the people: this is a painful torment * (They will say): “Our Lord! Remove the torment from us, really we shall become believers” * How can there be for them an admonition, when a Messenger explaining things clearly has already come to them. ..Verily We shall remove the torment for a while. Verily, you will revert (to disbelief.) * On the Day when We shall seize the great seizure (punishment.) Verily, We will exact retribution.”* (XLIV, 10-16).

The defeat which they suffered at Badr in the second year of Hejira, announced many years before Hejira, that it must occur simultaneously with the Persians defeat by the Romans,

*“(The Romans) ... after their defeat, will be victorious. * Within three to nine years. The decision of the matter, before and after is only with Allâh. And on that Day, the believers (i.e. Muslims) will rejoice. * With the help of Allâh ...”* (XXX, 3-5), A fact of Badr's battle, which prediction occurred at the beginning of Islam, is that a stab of the sword which Al-Walid Ibn Al-Mughîra received on his nose and which mark has been the subject of his compatriots mockery,

“We shall brand him on the snout (nose)!” (LXVIII, 16).

Needless to say in what hopeless conditions, the Qur’an has assured not only its near triumph and permanence of its Doctrine,

“He sends down water from the skies, and the channels flow, each according to its measure: But the torrent bears away the foam that mounts up to the surface. Even so, from that (ore) which they heat in the fire, to make ornaments or utensils therewith, there is a scum likewise. Thus does Allâh (by parables) show forth Truth and falsehood. For the scum disappear like forth cast out; while that which is for the good of mankind remains on the earth. Thus does Allâh set forth parables.” (XIII, 17),

“See you not how Allâh sets forth a parable? A goodly word as a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the sky (i.e. very high).” (XIV, 24) but also the foundation of the rising empire of Islam,

“Allâh has promised those among you who believe and do righteous goods deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the land, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practise their religion which He has chosen for them (i.e. Islam). And He will surely give them in ex-change a safe security after their fear (provided) they (believers) worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with me. But whoever disbelieves after this, they are the Fasiqûn (rebellious, disobedient to Allâh).” (XXIV, 55) and the inability of all the earthly forces to annihilate it,

“Verily, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to hinder (men) from the Path of Allâh, and so will they continue to spend it; but in the end it will become an anguish for them. Then they will be overcome. And those who disbelieve will be gathered unto Hell.”

(VIII, 36). In addition, the Qur'an stated the future of each of the two previous communities: the eternal schism of Christianity,

“And from those who call themselves Christians, We took their covenant, but they abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them. So We planted amongst them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection; and Allâh will inform them of what they used to do.” (V, 14), the dispersion of the Israelites on the earth, their being an object of persecution until the end of the world and their constant need of an ally,

“And (remember) when your Lord declared that He would certainly keep on sending against them (i.e. the Jews), till the Day of Resurrection, those who would afflict them with a humiliating torment ... And We have broken them (i.e. the Jews) up into various separate groups on the earth: some of them are righteous and some are away from that. And We tried them with good (blessings) and evil (calamities) in order that they might turn (to Allâh's Obedience).* (VII, 167-8);

“Indignity is put over them wherever they may be, except when under a covenant (of protection) from Allâh, and from men; they have drawn on themselves the Wrath of Allâh, and destruction is put over them. This because they disbelieved in the Ayât (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allâh and killed the Prophets without right. This is because they disobeyed (Allâh) and used to transgress ...” (III, 112); the superiority of the Christians over the Jews until the Day of Resurrection,

“...and I will make those who follow you (Monotheists, who worship none but Allâh) superior to those who dis-believe till the Day of Resurrection.” (III, 55) etc...

Thus, the past, the present and the future, in the realm of

reality, adapt themselves to the world of ideas and contribute to confirming it. What must we conclude thereof? One of two things: either God deceives us when He leaves all the signs of veracity in favour of a liar without giving us the necessary light for discovering his imposture, or that there has been a pact with the Providence by which He has been looking after that teaching for safeguarding it from any error.

The Qur'an in its course across the science never stumbles. The truths it announces are and will remain unbeaten and unbeatable,

“Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it: (it is) sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise (Alláh).” (XLI, 42).

The Qur'an does not fall in the Antiquity hereditary errors or those characteristic of Arabia and does not stop before flat detail bearing the terrestrial stamp of its surroundings. In “Berceau de l'Islam à la Veille de l'Hégire” [Islam cradle the day before Hejira], Lammens expressed his regret that the Qur'an has not furnished utilizable traits of the climate graphics and meteorological description of his country, whereas it is ravished before stars, mountains, clouds and the other most ordinary phenomenon that it calls marvels (Berceau p.89). This is, why we think, one of the proofs that the Qur'an is not a local Book. All the truths it presents are those which all minds are capable of understanding and of extracting moral profit from them. That is why the Qur'an is placed very highly overall geographical and racial particularities. That is why it does not name generally the persons or the places about which it speaks and only retains the lessons necessary for the education

of humanity.

This fully integrated method pertaining exclusively to the Qur'an is in itself a proof and what a proof. The Qur'anic Doctrine certainly took its flight in Arabia and has been diffused at first among the Arabs, but it is destined for the whole universe, "Blessed is He Who sent down the criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this Qur'an) to His slave (Mubammad) that he may be a warner to the 'Alamîn (mankind and jinn)." (XXVI), "And you shall certainly know the truth of it after a while" (XXXVIII, end), "But it is nothing else than a Reminder to all the 'Alamîn (mankind and jinn). (LXVIII, end).

* * *

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Among all the literature consulted by us for this book, we shall exclusively mention hereinafter the books from which any quotation has been noted, whether in accordance or in opposition to our thesis. They are classified in the alphabetic order of authors' names

IN ARABIC LANGUAGE

1936 م	المطبعة الرحمانية بالقاهرة	كتاب المصاحف	ابن أبي داود
1335 هـ	8 أجزاء طبع ليدن	الطبقات	ابن سعد
1872 م	طبع لبيزج	الفهرست	ابن النسيم
1929 م	جزءان طبع صبيح بالقاهرة	سيرة الرسول	ابن هشام
1310 هـ	4 أجزاء طبع الحشاشاب بالقاهرة	السنن	أبو داود
	على هامش الزرقاني على الموطأ		
1289 هـ	9 أجزاء طبع بولاق بالقاهرة	الجامع الصحيح	البخارى
1292 هـ	جزءان طبع بولاق بالقاهرة	الجامع (أو السنن)	الترمذى
1352 هـ	طبع المليحي بالقاهرة	النبأ العظيم	دراز
1278 هـ	6 أجزاء طبع بولاق بالقاهرة	مفاتيح الغيب (المعروف بالتفسير الكبير)	الرازى
1323 هـ	طبع بطرسبورج	تاريخ القرآن والمصاحف	راستدوفانى
1935 م	طبع لجنة التأليف والترجمة والنشر بالقاهرة	تاريخ القرآن	الزنجاني

السيوطي	الاتقان في علوم القرآن	جزءان المطبعة الأزهرية بالقاهرة (على هامش تفسير الجلالين)	1344 هـ
السيوطي	الجامع الصغير (مع زيادته التي ضمها إليه النبهاني وجمعها تحت اسم الفتح الكبير)	3 أجزاء طبع الحلبي بالقاهرة	1350 هـ
السيوطي	الدر المنثور	6 أجزاء طبع الحلبي بالقاهرة	1314 هـ
طاهر الجزائري	التبيان لبعض المباحث المتعلقة بالقرآن	طبع المنار بالقاهرة	1934م
العقاد	الله	طبع دار المعارف بالقاهرة	1947م
مالك	الموطأ	جزءان بشرح السيوطي - طبع الحلبي بالقاهرة	1349 هـ
مسلم	الصحیح (أو الجامع الصحیح)	8 أجزاء طبع استانبول	1334 هـ
النبهاني	الأنوار المحمدية	طبع بيروت	1312 هـ
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