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THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

BY THE

Rev. W. R. W. GARDNER, M.A.

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF MAN

ACCORDING to the teaching of the Qur'án, man is the last and noblest of the works of God. All Nature is placed under him and at his disposal. 'It is He who hath created for you whatsoever is on earth. . .' [Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 27]. It was for him and for his needs and comfort that earth and all that it contains was created. It is for him that the winds blow, and the rain falls on the thirsty land that the ground may bring forth its fruits in their seasons. '(Is not) He (to be preferred) who created the heavens and the earth, and sendeth down rain for you from heaven, whereby we cause delicious groves to spring up?' [Súratu'n-Naml (xxvii) 61]. 'Of His signs (one is) that He sendeth the winds bearing welcome tidings (of rain), that He may cause you to taste of His mercy; and that ships may sail at His command, that ye may seek (to enrich yourselves) of His abundance (by commerce); and that ye may give thanks' [Súratu'r-Rúm (xxx) 45. See Súras xv 21–2; vii 55; xxv 50; xxvii 64; xxvi 10; ii 159; xliii 8–12; xlv 11–12].

For man the beasts of burden were made to toil, that they might transport him and his merchandise from place to place. '(It is) God who hath given you the cattle, that ye may ride on (some of) them . . . and that on them ye may arrive at the business (proposed) in your minds, and on them are ye carried (by land), and on ships (by sea)' [Súratu'l-Mu'min (xl) 79]. 'Do they not consider that we have created for them, among the things which our hands have wrought, cattle (of several kinds) of which they are possessors, and that we have put the same in subjection under them?' Some of them (are) for riding. . . [Súratu Yá Sín (xxxvi) 71. See also Súra xliii 6–12].

Man is, in fact, God's viceroy; His substitute, on earth, set over the works of His hands. 'When thy Lord said unto the angels, I am going to place a substitute (Khalífa) on earth, they said, wilt thou place there one who will do evil therein and shed blood?' [Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 28]. His nature is superior to that of the angelic hosts themselves, who at his creation were commanded to bow down before him in acknowledgement of his superiority. See Súras xv 26; vii 10; xvii 72.

But this very greatness and nobility as compared with the other works of God's hands is, at the same time, and of necessity, what makes it possible that he may fall from his high estate to the lowest depths of degradation and infamy. He who has great possibilities of attainment and a high position has likewise great possibilities of loss and shame. And, as a matter of fact, man who is God's greatest work may become, and has become, the vilest of the vile; and falling to the lowest

depths of ingratitude and baseness may endure the greatest sufferings. 'Verily we created man of a most excellent fabric: afterwards we rendered him the vilest of the vile, except those who believe and work righteousness, for they shall receive an endless reward' [Súratu't-Tín (xcv) 4–6].

In the Qur'án, the creation of Adam is described as consisting of two separate phases or processes. First, there comes the formation of the body. This God formed from the dust of the ground, or from clay, very much as a potter fashions a vessel. 'He created man of dried clay like an earthen vessel' [Súratu'r-Raḥmán (lv) 13]. The method by which this was done is not described; for the words 'like an earthen vessel' do not here refer to the process of creation, but to the finished product, and enforce simply the fact that man has no cause to boast of his origin. What is noble in him is not due to the intrinsic value of the elements from which his body is formed but comes from another source.

The method, then, of man's forming or fashioning is not described, and we need not suppose that in using the expression, 'He created man of dried clay', Muḥammad had any clear idea in his own mind as to what the process of creation involved. The words are doubtless figurative, as all words must be whereby man tries to describe or speak of the creative acts of God. A lifeless human body turns to dust. The natural deduction is that it is formed from that dust to which it reverts. It has not made itself; it is the handiwork of God: hence we can but say, 'He formed it of the dust of the ground,' or 'He created man of dried clay like an earthen vessel.'

We see, then, at the outset, that according to the language of the Qur'án 'to create' does not necessarily mean 'to form out of nothing'. To bring into existence something which did not before exist in the form which it now has, though it be composed of elements which previously existed, is, in the Qur'ánic use of the word, 'Creation'.

Further, in the Qur'án, the verb 'to create' (khalaqa) is employed to express not only the acts of God, but also the actions and productions of men. 'Hast thou not considered how thy Lord dealt with 'Ad (the people of) Irem, adorned with lofty buildings, the like whereof hath not been created in the land?' [Súratu'l-Fajr (lxxxix) 5–7]. To erect buildings from pre-existent materials is 'creation'. Indeed, the word 'khalaqa' may be used figuratively to express the arising in the mind of man of any idea or conception. 'Ye only worship idols besides God, and forge a lie (literally, create a lie) [Súratu'l-'Ankabút (xxix) 16]. That the idea of 'creation', as the word is employed in the Qur'án, does not mean *creation* in the strict sense of the word, that is, the making of something out of nothing, is also borne out by those passages in which the verb 'ansha'a' (to produce) is employed to describe what we would expect more particularly to be described by the term 'khalaqa'. For example, in Súratu Yá Sín (xxxvi) 79, we find, 'He shall restore them to life who produced them (Ansha'ahá) the first time: for He is skilful in every (kind of) creation.' And this is further supported by the fact that in many passages in the Qur'án the creation of man is spoken of in connexion with the resurrection, which is regarded as being, in a

certain sense, a 'second creation' [cf. (xxii) 5, and many other passages].

This conception of 'creation', and this use of the word 'to create' must ever be kept in mind in studying the Qur'án and its teaching concerning the relation of God to His universe. Want of attention to this distinction in the use of this and similar words in the Qur'án has been the cause of much misunderstanding on the part of Muḥammadan theologians and of western writers on Muḥammadanism.

Again, the idea of 'creation' which is found in the Qur'án does not dispense with means and processes. Creation is no magic art. It is, when used to describe the acts of God, simply the accomplishment of an omnipotent will directed by omniscience. That the purpose of the omnipotent will is worked out by means and methods does not, in the eyes of Muḥammad, detract from the majesty and grandeur of the act, or from the unsearchableness of its manner of occurrence, which awes and humbles the human mind when it comtemplates the result.

We are here somewhat forestalling the results of our study of the teaching of the Qur'án on the creation of the individual members of the human race. What we have said will, however, be seen to be fully borne out by those passages which speak of the creation of Adam's descendants.

It might, at first sight, be thought that such passages as, Súratu Áli 'Imrán (iii) 42, or Súratu'l-Qamar (liv) 49 militate against this conception of creation. In the former of these two passages we read, 'So God createth that which He pleaseth: when He decreeth a thing, He

only saith unto it, Be, and it is.' In the latter passage the verse runs, 'All things have we created (bound) by a fixed decree: and our command is no more than a single (word), like the twinkling of an eye.' The language of these verses is largely figurative; for whatever they mean we cannot understand them to say that God spoke as with a human voice. Zamakhsharí, commenting on Súra vii, 171, quoted later, states that figurative language is common in the Qur'án, and one of his illustrations of figurative language in the book is this very expression, 'Be, and it is'.

A study of the verses will soon show that they do not, in any sense, imply that God does not employ *means* in creation. The idea that they both convey is that in the act of creation there is nothing difficult to God, however wonderful it may appear to man. All that is necessary for the carrying out of God's will in regard to anything which He creates, is that He says the word (that is, purpose it in His own mind) and immediately His purpose begins to be accomplished, and the work is carried out to its ultimate completion by virtue and in consequence of this single command.

The creation of Adam, then, consists first, in God's forming from the dust of the ground a body in that likeness which we call human. But the body thus formed and fashioned is not yet man; it is only something in the form of man. The first step has been taken; a second is still necessary before it can be said that man has been created. What the nature of this second step must be, may be seen from studying those passages in which the story of the asserted miraculous creation of a bird is related by Jesus. These passages are two. In the first of them we

read, 'for I will make (literally *create*) before you, of clay, as it were the figure of a bird; then I will breathe thereon, and it shall become a bird, by the permission of God' [Súratu Áli 'Imrán (iii) 43]. The second passage runs thus, 'and when thou didst create of clay as it were the figure of a bird, by my permission, and didst breathe thereon, and it became a bird, by my permission' [Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 110]. The creation of a living being is represented as consisting of two parts. There is first prepared a body, and then there is given to this body life, by breathing on it.

Now, this is but an imitation, as it were, of the method whereby God is believed to have created man. When He created man He proceeded similarly. He formed and fashioned the body of Adam from the dry clay, and then He breathed into the body *of His own Spirit*, and man, an embodied soul, came into being. 'And (remember) when thy Lord said unto the angels, Verily I am about to create man, of dried clay, of black mud, wrought into shape; when therefore I shall have completely formed him, and shall have breathed *of My Spirit* into him, do ye fall down and worship him' [Súratu'l-Ḥijr (xv) 26. See also Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 10].

These verses clearly represent the creation of man as a process. Not merely are there two separate phases in the operation, but the formation of the body itself is a process—'and shall have completely formed him'—and the bestowal of a soul is not to take place until the body is completely formed and shall have become a fit dwelling-place for that spirit which God from the beginning purposed to inbreathe into it.

We cannot, of course, claim that, in using such

language, Muḥammad had in mind any thought of evolution; yet it is plain, and worth noting in passing, that the words are not inconsistent with a theory of evolution, and a Muḥammadan may, therefore, believe in evolution and claim that in this verse there is a statement which fully justifies him in doing so.

The second part in the creation of man, then, is according to the Qur'án the bestowal on the body of a soul which is not of the earth, earthly, but is akin to the Creator Himself, for it comes into existence and takes up its dwelling in the body, which was till then only something in fashion as a man, by the direct breathing into that body of the divine Spirit; 'and shall have breathed of my Spirit into Him.'

Whether, according to the mind of Muḥammad, there is a phase in the creation of man, which is passed by in the Qur'án in silence, is uncertain. Whether this spirit, which is bestowed by the inbreathing of the Creator Himself, enters into man with the life or after the life, is not clearly explained. Yet there is much to lead us to suppose that Muḥammad considered man as being not simply dual in his nature, but as possessing a nature which is tripartite. The question naturally arises in our minds, and the teaching of the Qur'án is not explicit on the point. That the inbreathing of the divine Spirit implies something more than the giving to the body of the life-spirit, or principle of physical life, is certain. It was because man possessed, or rather was, something nobler and higher than even the highest of the angels, that the Qur'án represents the Creator as commanding them to bow down before him in reverence. Man is body, spirit, and soul .In the Old Testament the *soul* is the life-

principle, the *spirit* is the more ethereal substance. We cannot say that in the Qur'án this distinction is clearly made; but the tripartite nature of man may be said to be assumed. Muhammad was no metaphysician and was not so careful in the use of his words that we can claim that one word denotes particularly the one principle, or element, and another the other. Yet that such a tripartite distinction of the nature of man is not foreign to the genius of the Qur'án may be safely maintained and the language of not only Muslim theologians, but of Muḥammadans in general, as well as the commonly accepted belief of Muḥammadans, shows this. It is common Muḥammadan belief that man consists of body, soul, and spirit (to use the terms of the Old Testament), and it is the absence of the subtler element of his nature which causes or explains madness. The spirit of the madman is with God; and the man thus deprived becomes a simple human animal without moral responsibility, and is then, in some special sense, under the divine protection and guidance.

Thus far we have dealt only with the teaching of the Qur'án on the creation of Adam, the first man. We must now proceed to consider what it has to say on the 'creation' of the other members of the human family.

From Adam, the first man, God created directly Ḥawa (Eve) the first woman. 'O men, fear your Lord, who hath created you out of one man, and out of him created his wife' [Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 1]. The Qur'án thus teaches the solidarity, on its corporeal side at least, of the human race, which, in this sense, may be said to have existed potentially in Adam. The question which arises here is, Does the Qur'án teach that the

souls of Adam's descendants are descended from him as their bodies are? Or does it teach that the souls of the individual members of the human race were pre-existent? Or, as a third possibility, does it teach that the souls of men are individually created by the direct act of God?

Some think that it is the second of these doctrines which is the doctrine of the Qur'án, and that it maintains the pre-existence of the innumerable souls which have come or are yet to come into this world. Those who think so rely on the following passage: 'And when thy Lord drew forth their posterity from the loins of the sons of Adam, and took them to witness against themselves (saying), Am not I your Lord? They answered, Yea; we do bear witness. (This was done) lest they should say, at the day of resurrection, Verily we were negligent in this (matter, because we were not apprised thereof)' [Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 171]. The commentators, according to Sale, explain 'that God stroked Adam's back, and extracted from his loins his whole posterity, which should come into the world until the resurrection, one generation after another; that these men were actually assembled all together in the shape of ants which were endued with understanding; and that after they had, in the presence of the angels, confessed their dependence on God, they were again caused to return into the loins of their great ancestor. 'From this fact it appears', adds Sale, 'that the doctrine of pre-existence is not unknown to the Muḥammadans.'[1]

Sale, it will be noted, does not claim that the doctrine

[1] Sale's *Qur'án*, p. 122, note.

of the pre-existence of the soul is taught in the Qur'án; but is satisfied with saying simply that this doctrine 'is not unknown to the Muḥammadans'. The passage, however, is very obscure, and it is very difficult to reconcile the text of the Qur'án with the story referred to by Sale. The Qur'án does not say that *Adam's* posterity were extracted from *his* loins; but that *their* posterity were extracted from the loins *of the sons of Adam.* It is more than difficult to know what the passage means; but whatever its meaning may be, it can have, after all, little weight in the matter of the question before us, seeing that there are other passages, not a few in number, which teach a clear and plain doctrine on this point.

We have already seen that, according to the Qur'án, the existence of the ethereal element in the nature of Adam was dependent on a direct act of the Creator, who inbreathed into Adam's body *of His Own Spirit.* We shall now see that, according to the Qur'án, not merely are the descendants of Adam 'created' as truly as he was, but that in this creation, the inbreathing of the divine Spirit into the individual members of the race still occurs.

After the creation of the first man and the first woman, however, God changed His mode of operation. Adam He created from clay; Ḥawa (Eve) He created directly from Adam; but now when He 'creates' a man He employs other means. The *fact* of creation remains, the *method* of creation changes. 'God created you (first) of the dust, and afterwards of seed, and He hath made you man and wife. No female conceiveth or bringeth forth, but with His knowledge' [Súratu'l-

Fáṭir (xxxv) 12. See Súras xvi 4; xxv 56; liii 46–7; lxxv 37–9; lvi 58–9]. 'O men fear your Lord who hath created you out of one man, and out of him created his wife and from them two hath multiplied many men and women' [Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 1]. 'And it shall not be lawful for them to conceal that which God hath created in their wombs, if they believe in God and the last day' [Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 228]. From these and similar passages it is clear that Muḥammad regarded the Creator as taking an active part in the production of the descendants of Adam. Instead, however, of direct creation from the dust, He now employs the physical powers of the existing members of the race in the creation of their descendants. Yet these latter are no less the creation of God, than was their first parent.

In this second or secondary method of creation, God has not done away with the direct creative act whereby He Himself gives to the individual that which still makes him akin to Himself. Even into those who are thus 'created' by ordinary generation, God breathes of His divine Spirit, and not till this is done are they truly men. '(It is He) who hath made everything which He hath created exceeding good; and first created man of clay, and afterwards made his posterity of an extract of despicable water; and then formed him (into proper shape) and breathed of His Spirit into him; and hath given you (the senses of) hearing and seeing, and hearts (to understand)' [Súratu's-Sajda (xxxii) 6]. With this passage may be compared a couple of verses in Súratu'l-Mu'minún (xxiii) 12–14, the last clause of which, 'then we produced the same by another creation', is probably to be taken as referring to the bestowal of the

soul, whereby that which was not yet fully man, became man in deed and in truth (see Sale's *Qur'án*, p. 257 note).

Here again, then, we see that in 'creation' God employs means. The human parents are instruments in the hand of God, yet not mere machines. On the corporeal side there is again solidarity, all are descended from Adam; but on the spiritual side solidarity does not exist. The passage quoted above (xxxii 6) is clear on this point. Muḥammad regarded the individual soul as being inbreathed by God, and as being thus His direct creation, using the word in its primary meaning and not in any secondary sense. When this creation of the soul takes place is not clear; but apparently it is at or about the time of birth. Indeed, the common expression among the Arabs fails to distinguish clearly between birth and creation. The greater is, as it were, overcome of the less; and *to be created* has become the synonym of *to be born*. An Arab boy, at least in the Yemen, would as naturally speak of his birthday as the day on which he *was created* as a boy in other lands would speak of his as the day on which he *was born*. Indeed, he does not distinguish between birth and creation.

The Qur'án, too, regards natural generation as being as much an act of God as is the direct bestowal by Him of the soul, and we thus see that according to the Qur'án, when God creates man He does so by *means*, yet all in virtue of the one word 'Be'. This act of creation—the accomplishment of the will of God in the matter of the production of the individual members of the human race—takes place in time and space by and through those means which He has seen fit in His wisdom to employ;

and when He now creates man, all the various changes and stages of development prior to birth occur in their regular and necessary order and sequence in virtue of, and in consequence of, the single word 'Be', which is simply the expression of the divine purpose, and the assertion of His will. Were any further passage necessary to show that natural generation in all its stages, is regarded in the Qur'án as being a creative act of God, we shall find it in the words 'He formeth you in the wombs of your mothers, by several gradual formations (literally "creation after creation") within three veils of darkness [Súratu'z-Zumar (xxxix) 8].

We find, then, that the Qur'án teaches, That God formed the body of Adam, and then breathed into it of His Spirit, whence Adam became truly a human being; and that similarly, but by another process, He forms the bodies of Adam's descendants and breathes into them also of His Spirit, and thus they too become living human beings.

The doctrine of the Qur'án, in regard to the creation of man, may thus be said to be 'Creationism', in contrast on the one hand to 'Traducianism', and on the other hand to the theory of the pre-existence of the soul; and all that we shall see in our consideration of the teaching of the Qur'án as to the moral qualities and characteristics of human nature, and specially in our consideration of its teaching concerning sin, will bear out this view as to its conception of the origin of the individual soul.

The question is not one on which Muḥammadan theologians appear to have spent much thought. They have not developed it and stated it precisely and clearly;

yet here it stands at the commencement of our study of Qur'ánic teaching, and the effects of its tacit acceptance show themselves through the whole circle of Muḥammadan theology.

Humanity is not really and essentially one. There is, in fact, no such thing as *humanity*; there is only the human race, and the only true solidarity of the race is to be seen on its corporeal side. The bodies of the innumerable members of the humam race have something in common, because they are all descended from Adam; but the individual soul is the direct creation of God, implanted by a divine act in the body which is descended from the first parents.

This common descent is sometimes spoken of as an act of creation, but it is so indirectly, in the same sense in which the springing up of every seed, and the blooming and fruit-bearing of every tree, and the falling of every drop of dew on the thirsty land, are acts of God.

Thus far we have dealt with the teaching of the Qur'án on creation in respect of the origin of the human race, or the individual members of that race only. There is, however, another side, and that a very important one, to the question of creation; namely, the teaching of the Qur'án with regard to creation in general; but it should come up for consideration more naturally elsewhere in connexion with the doctrine of God, and His relation to the world.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF MAN

HAVING seen what the Qur'án teaches concerning the origin of man, let us now pass on to consider what it has to say about the moral characteristics and qualities of that nature with which he has been endowed.

There is no need to discuss those passages which speak of man's *condition*, such as that found in Súratu'l-Balad (xc) 4, where we read, 'Verily we have created man in misery.' This misery is a physical, not a moral condition, and though the words state that he has been created in this state, they undoubtedly mean nothing more than that the common lot of man in this world, is one of hardship and toil, and may be compared with the expression in Job v. 7, 'Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.'

There are other passages which similarly need not be considered in detail, such as those which speak of man's hasty and impatient temperament. 'Man is created of precipitation (hastiness)', we find in Súratu'l-Anbiyá' (xxi) 38; and again in Súratu'l-Mu'árij (lxx) 19, we read, 'Verily man is created extremely impatient.' Such passages, however, do not really touch the point before us. It is true that they refer to the natural disposition of man—a disposition which is so general as to be

practically universal, so that it can be said, 'man is created extremely impatient'—yet it is the disposition of the individual rather than the nature which he has in common with his fellowmen which is thus described. We may therefore pass by such passages.

Of more moment is the following passage: 'By the soul and Him who completely formed it, and inspired into the same its (faculty of distinguishing and its power of choosing) wickedness and piety; now is he who hath purified the same happy; but he who hath corrupted the same is miserable' [Súratu'sh-Shams (xci) 7–10]. Both Baiḍáwí and Zamakhsharí interpret these verses in accordance with the explanation given by Sale in the clause in parentheses; and there can be no doubt but that this is the true meaning of the passage. The verses do not teach that man's evil and good actions are alike from God; but that God has given men understanding, to distinguish the good from the bad, and power or liberty to choose one or other of them. On this point Zamakhsharí especially is very explicit indeed that the last clause of the verse demands absolutely that the words be thus interpreted.

Man, then, has not merely the power of moral discrimination, he can not only distinguish the good from the bad; but he has also such freedom of will that he can choose the one or the other, and on the choice which he makes depends his happiness or his misery, 'Now he that hath purified the same is happy; but he who hath corrupted the same is miserable.' The teaching of the Qur'án on the freedom of man's will must come up again when we consider what Muḥammad has to say about man's responsibility to God, and we may therefore pass

on without entering into this question further at present.

Seeing then that man has this power of moral discrimination, and a certain freedom of will in choosing between good and evil, the next question we naturally ask is, Is there any bias in this choice? Or, we may put the question in another form and ask: Is the will of man as created, in itself or of its own nature, upright or evil?

In Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 32, we read, 'for man is created weak'. The reference here is not to the physical weakness of the new-born child, from which he passes to the strength of manhood, and then again to the weakness of old age. This physical weakness is spoken of elsewhere; thus we find in Súratu'r-Rúm (xxxv) 53, '(It is) God who created you in weakness, and after weakness hath given (you) strength; and after strength He will (again) reduce (you) to weakness, and grey hairs: He createth that which He pleaseth.'

But in the former passage (iv. 32), it is moral weakness which is spoken of, and the verse teaches that by nature —by the direct creative act of God—mankind is morally weak. To assert that man's nature is weak is not, however, the same thing as to say that his nature is sinful. The latter expression implies that in the nature as a whole there is a bias to evil. Christianity teaches that this bias is the result of the fall affecting human nature which was originally created pure and upright, but which mankind since Adam's sin, has inherited in a vitiated or corrupted condition. The Qur'án does not go so far; or rather, it takes another turning on the road of investigation into the nature of human nature, and coming to another conclusion, says that man was created *weak*.

We must now consider a series of passages which speak of the *soul* or *spirit* (*nafs*); and we shall endeavour to see whether the Qur'án teaches anything about the weakness or corruption of the soul. As soon as we look at these passages, we find that the use of the word 'nafs' is very varied, so that we cannot say that what is affirmed of the 'nafs' always refers to the ethical or spiritual element in human nature.

At times the word is employed simply for emphasis, to express *self*, without implying any shade of distinction between the various elements which go to the making up of human nature. Thus, in Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 28, we find, 'Moses said, O Lord, surely I am not master of any except *myself* and my brother.' This use of 'nafs' is very clear in the following passage, where there can be no thought whatever of suggesting any distinction of 'elements' in the composition of the divine nature: 'He (Jesus) shall answer, Praise be unto Thee! it is not for me to say that which I ought not; if I had said so, Thou wouldest surely have known it: Thou knowest what is in me (má fi nafsí), but I know not what is in Thee (má fí nafsika)' [Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 116].

At other times the word 'nafs' is employed to express *life*. 'We have therein commanded them, that (they should give) life for life, eye for eye . . .' [Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 49; see also Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 150].

The commonest use of the word in the Qur'án is, however, that in which it denotes the whole man without any implication of there being higher and lower elements in his nature. In this use it corresponds to the English *man* or *person*. The following may be noted as examples of this use of the word. 'O Moses, dost thou intend

to kill me as thou killedst a man (nafs) yesterday?' [Súratu'l-Qaṣaṣ (xxviii) 18]. 'Your creation and your resuscitation are but as (the creation and resuscitation) of one soul (nafs)' [Súratu Luqmán (xxxi) 27]. 'It is He who hath produced you from one soul (nafs)' [Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 98]. 'Every soul (nafs) (is) given in pledge for that which it shall have wrought, except the companions of the right hand' [Súratu'l-Mudaththr (lxxiv) 41]. This last passage might at first sight seem to make or suggest a distinction between the *man* and the *soul*, but that there is no desire in the words to distinguish between the higher and the lower elements of man's nature is clear when we compare them with the following verse from another Súra. 'Every man (imri'in) (is) given in pledge for that which he shall have wrought' [Súratu'ṭ-Ṭúr (lii) 21].

Similarly, in those passages which speak of every soul tasting or experiencing death, there can be no doubt as to the sense in which the word 'nafs' is used. It stands simply for *man* or *person*. 'No soul can die unless by the permission of God, according to (what is written in) the book containing the determinations of things' [Súratu Áli 'Imrán (iii) 139]: and again in the same Súra verse 182, 'Every soul shall taste of death, and ye shall have your rewards on the day of judgement.' There are, indeed, many passages in which 'nafs' is thus used to express man in his whole nature.

On the other hand, there are some passages in which the word 'nafs' is apparently employed in a somewhat different sense; it appears to be used to denote more especially the seat of intelligence, desire, and passion. 'They follow no other than a vain opinion, and what

(their) *souls* desire' [Súratu'n-Najam (liii) 23]. 'Therein (shall they enjoy) whatever (their) *souls* shall desire' [Súratu'z-Zukhruf (xliii) 71]. 'He (Sámeri) answered, I saw that which they saw not; wherefore I took a handful (of dust) from the footsteps of the messenger (of God) and I cast it (into the molten calf); for so did my *mind* (nafsi) direct me' [Súratu Ṭa Ha (xx) 96]. 'But his (Cain's) *soul* (nafsuhu) suffered him to slay his brother' [Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 33]. 'We created man and we know what his *soul* (nafsuhu) whispereth within him.' [Súratu Qáf (l) 15]. And meditate on thy Lord in thine own mind (nafsika), with humility and fear' [Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 204].

It is a little difficult to decide whether it is the soul or the man in his whole nature that is spoken of as the *soul* in such passages as the following. '(And the angels shall say unto him), Read thy book; thine own soul shall be a sufficient accountant against thee this day' [Súratu Baní Isrá'íl (xvii) 15]. 'But whoso shall have dreaded the appearing before his Lord, and shall have refrained (his) soul from lust; verily paradise shall be (his) abode' [Súratu'n-Názi'át (lxxix) 40]. 'And I swear by the soul which accuses (itself)' [Súratu'l-Qiyámat (lxxv) 2]. 'Neither do I (absolutely) justify myself since (every) soul (an-nafs) is prone unto evil, except those on whom my Lord shall show mercy; for my Lord (is) gracious (and) merciful' [Súratu Yúsuf (xii) 53]. 'By the soul and Him who completely formed it and inspired into the same (fa'lhamahá) its (faculty of distinguishing, and power of choosing) wickedness and piety: now is he who hath purified the same, happy; but he who hath corrupted the same, is miserable'

[Súratu'sh-Shams (xciv) 10]. '(Men's) souls are naturally inclined to coveteousness' [Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 127].

It would seem that in the last three passages, at least, there is a tendency, if not more, to distinguish between the man as a whole, and something in him, or belonging to him, which is called the 'nafs'. In xii. 53, this soul (nafs) is said to be *prone to evil.* Baidáwí and Zamakhsharí both take this as applying to the human race, and as being equivalent to '*every one* is prone to evil.' Ghazálí would interpret this 'nafs' as being the *lower* nature of man—man's natural animal desire—which, according to this interpretation, the verse states is prone to evil. He finds the word used here rather in that sense of 'nafs' which is common among the Ṣúfís. In either case, the sense is not just exactly that which would have been conveyed by the expression had it come from the pen of St. Paul, for instance. The very exception by which it is followed ('except those on whom thy Lord shall show mercy') changes considerably the force of the words, whichever way the words of the exception are to be explained, and the commentators are not quite certain how they are to be taken. It would seem that what is meant is that those who are not experiencing, or who have not experienced the mercy of God (which is sometimes employed in the Qur'án to express what we would more naturally describe as *grace*, and which according to the Qur'án is offered to all, though it does not become effectual in all), who are actually described as being prone to evil, or, following Ghazálí's interpretation, are fiercely tempted by this 'nafs', whose inclinations are towards evil.

In either case the passage does not teach that man is sinful by nature even after the fall.

Looking at the next passage [Súra (xci) 7–10] we see nothing, in the words employed, to lead us to the conclusion that all men are by nature sinful or even prone to evil. The verse simply states, as has already been explained (p. 13), that man has the power of discriminating between good and evil, and the power of choosing the one or the other; and that the happiness or the misery of the individual depends on what that choice is.

In the last of these three passages [Súra (iv) 127], Sale's translation, by inserting the word 'naturally', changes very much the meaning of the verse, and even Rodwell's 'prone' is rather strong. The idea of the verse, as it stands in its context, appears to be that *coveteousness* or *avarice* is ever a present temptation to mankind, and what is spoken of is not so much the nature or disposition of the human soul, as the terrible temptation which avarice is to it. A careful study of the whole passage in which this verse occurs, but which cannot be given here in detail, leads to this conclusion.

It is hardly possible to say that the Qur'án represents human nature as *sinful*. Even if it teaches that man is *prone to evil*, though this, too, is doubtful, the inclination is not regarded as being in itself in any way sinful, but as arising simply from human weakness which, as we have seen, is regarded as belonging to man by creation.

On the other hand, the Qur'án, while admitting that the lower or animal side of man is the constant cause of great temptations to evil, asserts that there is in human nature a capacity for, nay a tendency towards higher things. Thus we find such passages as, 'Wherefore be

thou orthodox (ḥanífan) and set thy face towards the (true) religion, the institution of God to which He hath created mankind disposed' [Súratu'r-Rúm (xxx) 29].

There is, therefore, in man a certain capacity for and tendency towards the higher life, an inclination to worship God, and an ability to comprehend something at least of Him. This capacity, inclination and ability are his by nature. He is created with them, and nothing which has happened in the course of human history has deprived him of them. We are probably not saying too much when we claim that they are regarded as arising from the fact that God breathed of His Spirit into man.

Whether, however, the Qur'án thereby teaches that man is created with a capacity of not sinning is doubtful. The general teaching of the Qur'án appears to be that there can be no true uprightness of life as a matter of actual experience except through the favour and mercy of God to men. Thus, in Súratu'n-Núr (xxiv) 21, the believers are addressed in the following words: 'If (it were) not (for) the indulgence of God and His mercy towards you, there had not been so much as one of you cleansed (from his guilt) for ever: but God cleanseth whom He pleaseth; for God (both) heareth (and) knoweth.' But this is not exactly the same as to say that by nature man cannot but sin. It only teaches that, as a matter of experience, *all men* are sinners; for if all *believers* are or have been sinners, and all *unbelievers* are sinners (and this the Qur'án certainly teaches), then we can unhesitatingly conclude that the doctrine of the book is that *all men* are sinners. There is, however, in the book at least one passage which appears to incline to

the idea that there is in man as created a capacity for not sinning. In Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 85, we read: 'And if the favour of God and His mercy (had) not (been) upon you, ye had followed the devil, except a few (of you).' The last clause of the verse appears to suggest that the inclination and tendency towards good, and the power of will to choose good, are so strong in some men that without any special mercy of God they can resist the wiles of the devil. The meaning of the verse, however, is not absolutely clear. It is possible that it was not meant to express a general doctrine but to refer only to the circumstances in which the verse was revealed. In fact, the teaching of the Qur'án as to the nature of man is, on the whole, wanting in sharpness and clearness.

What the Qur'án appears really to teach in regard to this point is, that man is created with a capacity to worship and serve God and with a certain inclination and bent to do so, but yet with such moral weakness that he can do so but very imperfectly. He is thus certain to fall from time to time, and this, because of the weakness of that higher element which God has breathed into him, a weakness not inherent in the soul itself, but arising from the limitation of its power over the will and the inclinations of the lower nature which has been inherited from Adam. Thus we see that the position of the Qur'án is very far from being that of the Christian Scriptures. According to these, man's nature as a whole, suffers from the effects of Adam's Fall, and his weakness of will towards good is one of the greatest of these effects, if not the very greatest. According to the Qur'án, man's moral nature is not corrupted through and by Adam's sin, but is weak by creation.

And now we must approach the subject from another side, and ask: What does the Qur'án teach in regard to Adam's transgression and Fall?

There is not much to be learned from the story of the Fall as given in the Book. It is meagre and wanting in detail. In Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 33–7 we find the following, 'And we said, O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in this garden, and eat (of the fruit) thereof plentifully wherever ye will; but approach not this tree, lest ye become of the number of transgressors. But Satan caused them to forfeit paradise, and turned them out of (the state of happiness) wherein they had been: whereupon we said, Get you down the one of you an enemy unto the other, and there shall be a dwelling-place for you on earth and a provision for a season. And Adam learned words (of prayer) from his Lord, and God turned unto him, for He is easy to be reconciled and merciful. We said, Get ye all down from hence; and hereafter there shall come unto you a direction from me, and whoever shall follow my direction, on them shall no fear come, neither shall they be grieved; but they who shall be unbelievers, and accuse our signs of falsehood, they shall be the companions of (hell) fire, therein shall they remain for ever.' In Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 18–24, the same story is told with a little more detail as regards the actual temptation.

In considering this account of the Fall we desire to see at present only what it has to say about the result of the Fall on man's nature, and shall leave out of consideration what it teaches as to the effects produced by the Fall on man's relation to God. The two sides of the question are, of course, related closely, yet they are not one. The effect of the Fall on man's relation to God

must be glanced at, yet only glanced at; for it comes more especially demanding investigation when we consider the teaching of the Qur'án on sin and salvation. Here we confine ourselves to considering the effects of the Fall on human *nature*, and in doing this we shall not enter in detail into the nature of the Fall. We shall consider the Fall simply as a fact taught in the Qur'án, and without asking wherein consisted its sinfulness, shall endeavour to see what Muḥammad considered its effects to be on Adam's nature, and the nature of mankind in general.

We note first that the temptation came from without, not from within human nature. It is represented as being a misleading of man by Satan, his deadly enemy against whom he was specially warned by God [Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii). 21]. The result of the Fall is loss of Eden and the springing up of enmity between the members of the human race. 'Get you down the one of you an enemy to the other.' The loss of Eden involves the loss of the favour of God; hence we see that man now required to be taught words of repentant prayer, that he may again be able to come before his Creator with acceptance. But, once the repentance is demonstrated by prayer, he is easily received again into favour, though he does not thereby regain his lost happiness in Eden.

The most important point in the narrative with regard to our present investigation, is that Adam and Eve are represented as saying when reprimanded by God for their disobedience, 'O Lord, we have dealt unjustly with our own souls; and if thou forgive us not, and be not merciful unto us, we shall (surely) be of those who perish' [Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 22]. Their sin comes home to

them, but it is a sin not so much against God, as against themselves—a foolishness whereby they have spoiled their own chance of happiness. Their regret for what they have lost is uppermost in their minds, not any thought of how they have angered and wronged a holy God.

It is true they are represented as being in need of instruction as to how they are properly and fittingly to ask for His forgiveness, and therefore Adam is taught words of prayer; but there is nothing whatever to suggest that in and through the Fall human nature has lost anything which it once possessed. Their 'repentance' is of themselves and the need of instruction is not that they may be led to see the heinousness of their sin, but that they may know the proper form in which they must seek forgiveness.

Beyond this instruction in the proper form of prayer, they further require 'a direction' from God. By this appears to be meant a second instruction as to the means whereby they may regain the happiness which they have forfeited. This 'direction' includes instruction as regards both faith and works. They must know what to believe concerning God, and what to do to be pleasing to Him. And in connexion with these, the Qur'án appears to teach that man needs grace that his faith may be not merely intellectual acceptance of certain doctrines but personal experience, and that his performance of the duties demanded may be not mere outward act but the inward desire of the soul.

Yet this double need is not anywhere in the Qur'án represented as the consequence of the Fall, which has in some way vitiated or corrupted human nature, but as being inherent in human nature as created.

Muḥammad, in fact, does not seem to have recognized that the first transgression was pregnant with consequences for human nature. There has been no ruin of human nature, and simple repentance was all that was required of Adam that he might again enjoy God's favour. For Adam's descendants the results of the Fall are no more disastrous than they were for him.

The conception of the creation of human souls which we have already seen to be set forth in the Qur'án, appears altogether to preclude any true realization of the tremendous consequences to human nature of the sin of the first parents of the race. They sinned and forfeited for themselves and their descendants the blessedness of Eden and the favour of God; but the Qur'án says nothing of human nature being ruined in consequence of their sin.

Each individual soul, coming direct from its Maker at the birth of the individual human being, comes uncontaminated. It is placed in a body which has inherited evil tendencies and appetites; for the natural life, as distinct from the soul—the life which man has, so to speak, in common with the lower animals—feels the effect of this sin of Adam; and the soul—that which is inbreathed into the human animal *of His Spirit*—is placed at a disadvantage at the very commencement of its life on earth, and continues all through life to wage a more or less successful warfare with its passions and lower desires. But there is no guilt which is common to the human race.

There is nothing in the Qur'án to correspond to the words of the Psalmist, 'Behold I was shapen in iniquity' (Ps. li. 5). The soul has a hard struggle from

the beginning, against all that we are accustomed to call *the flesh*, but is not in itself *sinful* by the loss of an original righteousness through the fall of the first parents of the race. It is even doubtful whether the Qur'án regards *the flesh* as truly pertaining to man's *nature*, or as being simply something belonging to the physical body as a living organism, the seat of all those qualities and tendencies against which man has to struggle.

But, however this may be, the Qur'án nowhere teaches that in Adam mankind fell; it nowhere recognizes that man is born *under sin*. He becomes a sinner only when, following in the footsteps of his first parents, he, as an individual, acts contrary to the commands of God.

How greatly this view of the nature of man affects other doctrines such as those of sin, and salvation, appears clearly when these are studied in the light of the teaching of the Qur'án.

CHAPTER III

THE PURPOSE OF THE CREATION OF MAN AND HIS RELATION TO GOD AND HIS WILL

As a starting-point from which we may commence our study of the teaching of the Qur'án concerning the divine purpose underliyng the creation of man, let us take the following passage: 'We created not the heavens and the earth, and that which is between them, by way of sport' [Súratu'l-Anbiyá' (xxi) 16. Compare Súras xliv. 38; xxxviii. 26; iii. 188].

In the creation of the world God was guided by His omniscient wisdom, and had a purpose in what He did. The creation of the world was no mere *whim*, no idle thought; but the working of a divine plan which had existed from all eternity. This conception is one which underlies the whole teaching of the Qur'án on man and his responsibility to God. All that preceded the creation of man was but a preparation for the final accomplishment of this purpose which was achieved in his creation. Man is no chance product evolved in the process of creation—a by-product of the activity of the divine omniscience. The Creator, from the beginning, knew the end towards which He was working, and in His wisdom, created man adapted to the end

He had in view; and endowed him with those qualities and capacities which would make it possible for him to realize this *end* of his existence.

What this end or purpose was, is clearly explained in such passages as the following: 'I have not created genii and men (for any other end) than that they should serve me' [Súratu'dh-Dháríyát (li) 56]. The end God had in view was the creation of a being who should be able to serve Him, and who should *find himself* in such service. With this thought agrees the teaching of the Old Testament according to which the wisdom of man consists not in any scientific or intellectual attainment, but in the *fear of God*. 'To fear God,' and 'to serve God' are but two ways of expressing the same idea.

In fearing God, then, or in serving Him, man accomplishes the end for which he was created.

This idea is also brought out in those passages which speak of the Face of God. Thus in Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 274, we find, 'The good that ye shall give (in alms shall redound) unto yourselves; and ye shall not give unless out of desire of (seeing) the Face of God.' Again in Súratu'r-Ra'd (xviii) 22, we read, '. . . and who persevere out of a (sincere) desire to please their Lord (literally out of desire of the Face of their Lord), and observe the stated times of prayer. . . .' See Súras xcii. 20; vi. 52 and other passages.

All service of God, whether in formal acts of worship, or in upright life, or in humanitarian conduct towards one's fellow men, must have as its well-spring the desire to please God. In other words man's whole life, in regard to faith as well as to conduct, must be lived

in relation to his Creator whose favour is to be the chief end sought. In most of the passages in which the 'Face of God' is spoken of as to be desired, we cannot claim that the thought underlying the words is more than that of seeking God's favour—when the divine face is lifted upon man, and not removed from man. In Old Testament terms, men are to seek the light of His countenance, and look for their chief reward and happiness in the knowledge and experience that it is lifted upon them. But other passages in which the 'Face of God' is referred to, seem to go somewhat further and deeper, and appear to suggest that man's chief joy and blessedness is to be found in God himself. 'To God (belongeth) the east and the west; therefore whithersoever ye turn yourselves to pray, there is the Face of God; for God is omnipresent and omniscient' [Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 109]. All prayer, all true devotion, is in these words assumed to be a seeking of the 'Face of God'; but there is a hint at least in the words, that it is God Himself who is referred to in the expression 'His Face'. This becomes more clear in such passages as the following, 'Everything shall perish, except His Face . . .' [Súratu'l-Qaṣaṣ (xxviii) 88; see also Súra lv. 26]. When all created things shall have perished and passed away the 'Face of God' shall still endure; but there appears to lie in the words the thought that those on whom the light of His face shall shine shall in virtue of that fact continue in rest and peace.

We do not desire to say anything here on the doctrine of the vision of the face of God as developed by Muḥammadan theologians. The object we have in referring here to these passages which speak of the face of

God, is solely to bring out the thought that they appear to support the idea that man was created for the service of God, and that he might find his supreme joy and happiness in seeing that face turned towards him, and thus find peace and satisfaction for all his heart's desires and longings; and that this was the end for which man was created.

In creating man to serve Him, God did not, however, purpose to produce a mere piece of mechanism which would fulfil this end. The service of God, which according to the Qur'án is man's chief end, was to be rendered consciously and intelligently; and with this end in view God endowed man with self-consciousness, intelligence, and reason, that he might be able to render to Him a voluntary homage.

From this point of view it may be said that man's life on earth is an opportunity afforded him of giving or withholding this homage or service, and it may thus be said that in the creation of man God's purpose was to prove him. 'Verily we have created man of the mingled seed of both sexes, that we might prove him, and have made him to hear and see' [Súratu'l-Insán (lxxvi) 2]. This, of course, does not mean that God created man simply with a view to see or find out whether he would serve him or not. What is meant is that God created man to serve and worship Him, and find in Him the satisfaction of all those longings and desires implanted within his soul; and therefore so created him, and so circumstanced him, that he had the capacity and opportunity of serving Him or of refusing to serve Him; and that in this sense, his life on earth is a trying or testing.

This thought is frequently brought out in the Qur'án, and perhaps in no passages more clearly than in those which, by way of illustration, refer to the course of Jewish history, such as the following: 'And We proved them with prosperity and with adversity, that they might return from their disobedience.[1] The same thought is generalized in another verse in which we read, 'God hath created the heavens and the earth in truth, that He may recompense every soul according to that which it shall have wrought: and they shall not be unjustly treated' [Súratu'l-Já<u>th</u>iya (xlv) 21]. Many other passages bring out the same thought.

All this, of course, must mean that man is dependent on God. And this dependence is seen in the fact that man has to look to God for the supply of all his physical needs, and the Qur'án has much to say on this point; but it is in respect of his moral and spiritual needs that the Qur'án specially emphasizes the dependence of man on God.

With regard to this spiritual dependence, if we may so describe it, the Qur'án throughout represents God as ever planning and working for the supply of man's needs. Thus we see it teaching that God in His love and mercy did not leave man when he fell without some hope of restoration to his lost blessedness; but gave him a promise of direction and guidance whereby he might again recover his former happy condition. 'We said, Get ye all down from hence; hereafter there shall come unto you a direction from me, and whoever shall follow my direction, on them shall no fear come' [Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 36]. This verse teaches

[1] Rodwell translates thus, 'that they might return to us' [Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 167].

the mercy and loving-kindness of God which did not cast off mankind because of the Fall, but held out a hope of pardon and of restoration to His favour. But this point we do not, at present, desire to emphasize. What we appeal here to this verse for is not to claim that the Qur'án teaches the mercy and loving-kindness of God; but simply to bring out the fact that is implicitly assumed in it, that fallen man required, and, of course, we may make the application general and say, still requires, the help of God's grace in some way or other which is left undefined, that he may find his way back again to the favour of God of which sin has bereft him.

Further, the Qur'án goes on to teach that those who desire to please God, must realize and acknowledge this dependence. This realization and acknowledgement of dependence on God is the beginning of true religion in the heart. The first step in the embracing of Islám is to realize that there is but one true God, to acknowledge one's dependence upon Him, and to resolve to submit to His will as the guide of life. This, however, is not the whole of religion. God claims of man much more—nay, very much more. He demands that man, having recognized his dependence on Him, and having resolved to submit to Him, must learn from Him the way of salvation, and become experienced in it through practice. 'The Arabs of the desert say, We believe. Answer, Ye do by no means believe; but say, We have embraced Islám: for the faith hath not yet entered into your hearts' [Súratu'l-Ḥujurát (xlix) 14]. In other passages the distinction is, perhaps, not so clearly insisted on; but this one verse is sufficient to show that it exists.

While this dependence on God is general, and is not confined to the moral and physical needs of man, yet it is in connexion with these that man's need of God is specially felt. It is in any attempt that he may make to attain to that goal for which he was created that man, as a matter of actual fact, feels and experiences most keenly his need of God's help. Without God and His grace man could never overcome those evil tendencies against which the soul has such a fierce battle to fight from the very commencement of its earthly life, and so attain to righteousness and the blessed mansions above. Thus we find in Súratu'n-Núr (xxiv) 21, 'If (it were) not (for) the indulgence of God and His mercy towards you, there had not been so much as one of you cleansed (from his guilt) for ever' (cf. iv. 85; ii. 61). And that this is the feeling of those who have experienced God's grace and help is seen from such passages as, 'Praised be God who hath directed us into this (felicity)! for we should not have been (rightly) directed, if God had not directed us' [Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 41]. They know that what they have attained to has been reached through no merit of their own but solely because God has directed them.

This direction includes not merely knowledge through the revelation of His will, but also the influencing of their hearts and minds to accept His guidance. Man, then, needs God's enlightening revelation, but also His guidance that he may personally accept this revelation and incline his heart to obey it. This question of 'direction' and what is meant by it must come up again in considering the doctrine of salvation. We shall take for granted here that it includes both of these

means of grace—the knowledge of God's will through the revelation He has given, and the guidance of God to accept this revelation and to fulfil its demands.

We shall, therefore, go on to see how, according to the Qur'án, all that man needs of direction and grace is offered to him—all that is necessary to enable him to attain is freely presented to him for his acceptance or rejection; and it is because this is so that man is responsible for the course of his life and the ultimate destiny of his soul.

This responsibility of man may be said to be one of the main doctrines of the Qur'án. A day lies in the future when man must give account to Him who created and formed him, and breathed into him of His Spirit, of the actions done in the body. It is quite unnecessary to quote passages in support of this statement; the doctrine is well known and is admitted by all. The Qur'án clearly and forcibly teaches the same truth on this point as does the New Testament—that after death there is the judgement.

Further, man's responsibility in this respect is individual. None can claim exemption for himself on the ground that he has been misled by others, and has only followed the advice or example of those around him. 'A burdened (soul) shall not bear the burden of another, and if a heavy burdened (soul) call (on another) to bear part of its (burden), no part of the burden shall be borne (by the person who shall be called on), although he be (ever so nearly) related' [Súratu'l-Fáṭir (xxxv) 19]. The Qur'án has no doctrine of collective salvation, or salvation through inheritance of national blessings and promises. Each individual stands or falls by himself:

each man must bear the consequences of his own sins and disbelief, just as he will receive the reward for his individual belief and good deeds; and none shall be unjustly treated.

This responsibility of man implies that he has the power of accepting or rejecting the offer of God's mercy; and we therefore find the Qur'án plainly teaching that man has the power and the opportunity of choosing which of the two he will do. It asserts that man has a choice in the matter of that which he makes his aim and chief desire in life. Some, it asserts, choose this world and the things of this world, others choose the world to come; some set their affection on the fleeting things of time, others seek those things which are eternal. 'Some of you choose this present world, and others of you choose the world to come' [Súratu Áli 'Imrán (iii) 146]. 'Whosoever chooseth (this) transitory (life), we will bestow on him therein beforehand that which we please' [Súratu Baní Isrá'íl (xvii) 19]. 'Whoso chooseth the present life, and the pomp thereof, unto them will we give (the recompense of) their works therein, and the same shall not be diminished unto them' [Súratu Húd (xi) 18]. 'Whoso chooseth the tillage of the life to come, unto him will We give increase in his tillage, and whoso chooseth the tillage of this world, We will give him (the fruit) thereof; but he shall have no part in the life to come' [Súratu'sh-Shu'ará' (xlii) 19]. 'But man chooseth to be wicked (for the time which is) before him' [Súratu'l-Qiyámat (lxxv) 5]. 'Whoso chooseth the reward of this world, We will give him thereof; but whoso chooseth the reward of the world to come, We will give him

thereof; and We will surely reward the thankful' [Súratu Áli 'Imrán (iii) 139]. In this connexion we may again quote the passage from Súratu'sh-Shams (xci) 7–10, already quoted (p. 13), 'By the soul and Him who completely formed it, and inspired into the same its (faculty of distinguishing, and power of choosing) wickedness and piety: now is he who hath purified the same happy; but he who hath corrupted the same is miserable.' It is this knowledge of the distinction between good and evil, and the power to choose the one or the other, to which reference is here made; and the ultimate destiny of the individual is said to be dependent on the choice which he makes.

What the Qur'án has to say on the justice with which man is, and will always be treated by God, also bears on this point. The refrain, 'nor shall he be unjustly treated', is a common one, and undoubtedly it meant on the lips of Muḥammad just exactly what the words literally mean, whatever the theologians may say to the contrary. Man will be rewarded or punished according as he has lived on earth, for he is *responsible*. God's direction and guidance have been offered to him, and he will be judged by God according as he has accepted and followed it, or rejected it and despised it.

How far this choice extends, or rather, how far it is free, is a hard question to decide. The Qur'án does not help us much to develop this doctrine, and hence it is that Muḥammadan theologians have developed it on the one side and on the other, from a speculative or philosophical, rather than from a theological or practically religious point of view; for the question of free-

will or want of free-will is one on which the human soul seeks light—it matters not whence the light comes.

The Qur'án, we have said, does not help us much to develop this doctrine; yet it undoubtedly teaches that man has some capacity or power which it describes as will or choice. He can will to do this or that, and in accordance as he wills good or evil, so is he praiseworthy or blameworthy. And it is quite beside the question to speak of the will as not being free, because it has choice only within those limits which are imposed upon it by the constitution of man's nature.

As regards religion the point at issue is a practical one, and the question must be looked at from a practical point of view. Man may be a free agent within the limits of his own sphere, so to speak; and that he has not power of will or choice in the sense and on the plane on which God Himself is a free agent, is no ground for maintaining that he is the plaything of destiny.

The Qur'án teaches that the whole world, and man, naturally, as a part of that world, is under the beneficient rule of an all-wise and all-powerful God; but the doctrine of the absolute decrees of God, as developed by the schools of orthodox Muḥammadanism, is a very one-sided exposition of the Qur'án and is quite contrary to its general teaching. The Qur'án gives due emphasis to both God's decrees and man's freedom of will, and any doctrine developed on this point, truly based on the teaching of the Qur'án, must recognize both and endeavour to find for each its proper place and value. It must not accept the one and explain away the other, however difficult it may be, or even impossible, to formulate such a doctrine to the satisfaction of the human mind.

It is no part of our intention in these pages to attempt to develop or formulate such a doctrine. We desire only to point out that the orthodox Muḥammadan doctrine is one-sided, and does injustice to the teaching of the Qur'án. But this point must come up rather in connexion with the teaching of the Qur'án on God and His will, and there and not here would be the place to consider the other side of Qur'ánic teaching on this question.

Here we seek to emphasize the human side of the question. The message of Muḥammad to his contemporaries consisted largely of command and prohibition; but there is always closely associated with these an appeal to their heart and conscience, urging them to choose the good and avoid the evil. 'Verily this (is) an admonition, and whoever is willing to be admonished, will take the way unto his Lord' [Súratu'l-Muzzammil (lxxiii) 19].

This same thought of the responsibility of man, as based on the fact that he can choose for himself, is often brought out in the Qur'án in those passages which speak of the vain endeavour which sinners will make on the day of judgement to excuse themselves. 'They will iterate discourse with one another; those who were esteemed weak will say unto those who behaved themselves arrogantly (Had it) not (been for) you, verily we had been true believers. They who behaved themselves arrogantly shall say unto those who were esteemed weak, Did we turn you aside from the (true) direction, after it had come unto you? On the contrary, ye acted wickedly (of your own free choice)' [Súratu's-Sabá' (xxxiv) 30]. The clause in parentheses is not in the

original, but it is no rash addition to the meaning of the text. The text as it stands in the Qur'án undoubtedly conveys this sense. Again, in Súratu'ṣ-Ṣáffát (xxxvi) 28–31, we find the following, '(And the seduced) shall say (unto those who seduced them), Verily ye came unto us with presages of prosperity; (and the seducers) shall answer, Nay, rather ye were not true believers; for we had no power over you (to compel you); but ye were people who (voluntarily) transgressed: wherefore the sentence of your Lord hath been justly pronounced against us, (and) we shall surely taste (His vengeance). We seduced you; but ye also erred yourselves' [see Súras xxxix 58–60; xliii. 19; xxv. 19; xx. 108].

The New Testament teaches that it is God who worketh both to will and to do in the heart of the believer, and the message of Muḥammad in the following verses is the same, though in its expression it may not be very carefully guarded or very clearly defined. 'Verily this is an admonition: and whoso willeth taketh the way unto his Lord: but ye shall not will unless God willeth: He leadeth whom He pleaseth into His mercy; but for the unjust hath He prepared a grievous punishment' [Súratu'l-Insán (lxxvi) 30]. 'Whoso, therefore, willeth let him return unto his Lord' [Súratu'n-Nabá' (lxxviii) 39]. 'Whither, therefore, are ye going? This (is) no other than an admonition unto all creatures; unto him among you who shall be willing to walk uprightly: but ye shall not will, unless God willeth, the Lord of all creatures' [Súratu't-Takwír (lxxxi) 27–9].

We have already said that the question must come up for further consideration in another place. At

present it is enough to say that Muḥammad made no attempt to reconcile the two sides of this question; but was satisfied with aserting on the one side man's responsibility and freedom of choice, and on the other the all-embracing character of the divine will in the production, government, and regulation of the world. The same recognition of God's omnipotent will and of man's freedom and responsibility, is to be found in the Old Testament, along with the same absence of any attempt to resolve the philosophical difficulties connected with their reconciliation.

In considering the Qur'ánic teaching on this question one should not lose sight of the fact that those passages which speak of the power of man's will as being dependent on the action of God's will refer to the choice of good, of right, of the true direction. I do not at present recollect any passage in the Qur'án, which, in like clear terms to those found in Súratu'l-Insán and Súratu't-Takwír, quoted above, refers men's choice of evil to the action of the divine will; whereas there are very many passages which state that when a man does evil, or refuses the preferred guidance of God, he is acting of himself, following the guidance of his own desires and lusts, or listening to the mischievous whisperings of Satan or his emissaries. 'And as to Thamud We directed them; but they loved blindness better than the (true) direction' [Súratu'l-Fuṣṣilat (xli) 16]. '. . . or say, If God had directed me, Verily I had been one of the pious; or say . . . ; but God (shall answer), My signs came unto thee heretofore, and thou didst charge them with falsehood, and wast puffed up with pride; and

becamest (one) of the unbelievers . . . ' [Súratu'z-Zumar (xxxix) 58–60]. 'And they say, If the Merciful had pleased, we had not worshipped them. They have no knowledge herein ; they only utter a vain lie . . .' [Súratu'z-Zukhruf (xliii) 19]. 'And Satan shall say, . . . Yet I had not any power over you (to compel you) ; but I called you only and ye answered me : wherefore accuse me not, but accuse yourselves' [Súratu Ibráhím (xiv) 26–7].

The same doctrine may be rightly developed from those passages which plainly teach that when man sins he is not following God's direction. Thus in Súratu'l-Qaṣaṣ (xxviii) 50, we read : 'But if they return thee no answer, know that they only follow their own desires : and who erreth more widely (from the truth) than he who followeth his own desire, without a direction from God ? Verily God directeth not the unjust people' [see Súras ii. 260 ; iii. 80 ; v. 56 ; vi. 145 ; ix. 19, 110 ; xlvi. 9 ; lxi. 7 ; lxii. 5].

The general teaching of the Qur'án is clearly that God's call is to all men, and may be accepted or rejected by them. 'The truth is from your Lord ; wherefore let him who will believe, and let him who will be incredulous' [Súratu'l-Kahf (xviii) 28]. God's grace is offered to all, and all are called to repentance ; but the calling is *effectual* only in the case of those who accept the offer. These are the elect. The doctrine of the hardening of men's hearts stands side by side with the universality of the offer of salvation. The Qur'án, like the New Testament, looks at the matter from a practical standpoint, and says that those who accept the offer of God's grace,

know and feel in their hearts that what they are is of God's mercy alone, and that without His grace they would not differ from the others. They do not will to accept God's grace because they are elect; but they feel that they are elect because they have willed to believe and accept the message of that grace. 'Praised be God, who hath directed us unto this (felicity), for we should not have been (rightly) guided, if God had not directed us' [Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 41].

The offer of God's grace and His direction has a two-fold result according to the reception it meets with on the part of those who receive it. 'Answer, it is unto those who believe a sure guide and a remedy (for doubt and uncertainty); but unto those who believe not, (it is) [Rodwell, "there is"] a thickness of hearing in their ears, and a darkness which covereth them: these are (as they who are) called from a distant place' [Súratu'l-Fuṣṣilat (xli) 44]. 'It will increase the faith of those who believe, and they shall rejoice: but unto those in whose hearts there is an infirmity, it will add (further) doubt unto their (present) doubt: and they shall die in their infidelity' [Súratu't-Tauba (ix) 125; see Súras ii. 24; xvii. 84].

The opportunities which man, as an individual, enjoys of accepting or rejecting God's mercy, are confined to the period of his existence here on earth. After death there is no further probation. This is in agreement with the teaching which we have already noted, that man's life on earth is a period of testing or trial. To every test or trial there must be set a time limit. It cannot continue indefinitely. The new point we desire to bring forward here is that, according

to the Qur'án, the time of probation is limited by the death of the individual. 'On that day their excuses shall not avail those who have acted unjustly; neither shall they be invited (any more) to make themselves acceptable (unto God)' [Súratu'r-Rúm (xxx) 57]. 'Answer, On the day of (that) decision, the faith of those who shall have disbelieved, shall not avail them; neither shall they be respited (any longer)' [Súratu's-Sajda (xxxii) 29; see Súras lvii. 14; xxxv. 34].

Such passages as these make it clear that the Qur'án holds out no hope of any future probation, and this is in accordance with what it teaches as to the purpose of man's creation and the period of his life on earth. 'On the day when some of thy Lord's signs shall come to pass, its faith shall not profit a soul which believed not before, or wrought not good in its faith' [Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 159]. As a man sows in this life, so shall he reap hereafter.

There is yet one more point which we shall consider, and with this close our study of the teaching of the Qur'án on Man, though much more might be said on the subject.

We have already seen that Muḥammad recognizes that man has been created with a capacity for religion, and a power of recognizing and, to some extent at least, *realizing* God. The power of recognizing and realizing God, is what differentiates him from his fellow-creatures, the brute beasts, and exists in virtue of the fact that God in the creation of man breathes into him of His Own Spirit. The lower animals, it is true, nay, all nature is represented in the Qur'án as acknowledging and worshipping God. Súratu'r-Ra'd (xiii) 16 says,

'Whatsoever is in heaven and on earth worshippeth God, voluntarily or by force; and their shadows (also), morning and evening.' And, in Súratu'n-Naḥl (xvi) 50–1, we find, 'Do they not consider the things which God hath created, whose shadows are cast on the right hand and on the left, worshipping God, and become contracted? Whatever moveth both in heaven and on earth, worshippeth God, and the angels also.'

But the worship of nature and of the lower animals is unintelligent, nay, it is compulsory. Man stands on a different level. He has a *capacity* for religion, but he has the power of either rendering that homage which is his Creator's due, or of withholding it. This capacity for religion is his, because he has in him something of the Divine. It is this which makes him akin to God. The Qur'án nowhere teaches, in specific terms, that man is made 'in the image' of God; but the truth lies on the surface of the book from beginning to end; and it is this which makes man immortal. His punishment he finds in unending torment; his bliss in everlasting happiness in the presence of his Lord.

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