

MOHAMMEDANISM

UNDER this head is given the history of Mohammed and his successors to the fall of the Eastern Caliphate, with a sketch of the institutions and civilization of the Moslem empire and an account of the Koran. The later history

must be sought under the names of individual countries and dynasties. What falls to be said of the social and religious aspects of Islam in modern times will be given under the two great divisions of SUNNITES and SHĪTES.

PART I.—MOHAMMED AND THE FIRST FOUR CALIPHS.

MOHAMMED¹ or MAHOMET, the founder of Islam, first appears in the full light of history with his Flight to Medina (The Hijra), A.D. 622; and this date, not that of his birth, has been fittingly chosen as the epoch of the Moslem Era. The best-attested tradition² places his first appearance as a prophet in Mecca some twelve years earlier (circa 610). He was then forty years old: the forty must be taken as a round number, but as such is doubtless trustworthy. Thus the birth of Mohammed falls about 570 A.D.: it is said to have fallen in the year when Abrahā, the Abyssinian viceroy of Yemen, made the expedition against Mecca, mentioned in the Koran, when the Arabs first saw the elephant and first suffered from smallpox.³

At the time of Mohammed's birth and youth nothing seemed less likely than that the Arabs should presently make their triumphal entrance into the history of the world as victors over the Greeks and Persians. Nowhere in the Peninsula was there an independent state of any considerable power and importance. At the beginning of the 6th century indeed the princes of Kinda had attempted to form a national kingdom, uniting in particular the tribes of central Arabia; but this kingdom was nothing more than an epic prelude to the true history of the Arabs, which begins with Islam. After the fall of the Kindite dynasty, the old anarchy reigned again among the nomads of the Nejd and the Hijāz; in all other quarters Greek or Persian influence predominated, extending from the frontier deep into the interior by the aid of two vassal states—the kingdom of the Ghassanids in the Haurān under Greek suzerainty, and that of the Lakhmids in Hira and Anbār under the Persian empire. The antagonism between Byzantium and Ctesiphon was reflected in the feuds of these Arab lordships; but indeed the rivalry of Greek and Persian exercised its influence even on the distant South of the Peninsula. Urged on by the Greeks, the Abyssinians had overthrown the Christian-hating realm of the Himyarites, the sunken remnant of the ancient might of the Sabæans (A.D. 526), the Persians had helped a native prince again to expel the Christians (circa 570), and since then the Persians had retained a footing in the land. Toward the close of the 6th century, their direct and indirect influence

in Arabia greatly surpassed that of the Greeks; and since the Kindites had fallen before the kings of Hira, it extended right through the Nejd into Yemen.⁴

In the Hijāz and western Nejd, the district from which Islam and the Arab empire took their beginning, Greeks and Persians, Ghassanids and Lakhmids, had not much influence; the nomad tribes, and the few urban commonwealths that existed there, lived free from foreign interference, after the manner of their fathers. Mohammed's city was Mecca, where the Banū Kināna had formed a settlement round the Ka'ba, the sanctuary of a number of confederate tribes (Ahabish) belonging to that district. The feast annually observed in the days before the full moon of the month Dhū'l-Hijja at Mecca and at 'Arafa and Kozah in the vicinity, presented strong attractions for all inhabitants of the Hijāz, and grew into a great fair, at which the Meccans sold to the Bedouins the goods they imported from Syria. Feast and fair gave the city the prosperity which it shared with other cities which, like Mecca, had the advantage of lying near the meeting-place of the two great natural roads to Yemen—that from the north-west along the Red Sea coast, and that from the north-east following the line of the mountains that traverse the Nejd.⁵

By their trading journeys the Koraish⁶ had acquired a knowledge of the world, especially of the Græco-Syrian world: the relative superiority of their culture raised them not only above the Bedouins, but above the agricultural population of such a city as Medina; the art of reading and writing was pretty widely diffused among them. The Koraish within the city were the Banū Ka'b ibn Loay, those in the surrounding country Banū 'Amir ibn Loay; the townsmen proper were again subdivided into Motayyabūn and Ahlāf—the latter were the new citizens, who were distinguished from the old settlers by the same name in other Arabian towns, as in Taif and Hira. The community was a mere confederation of neighbouring septs, each occupying its own quarter; there was no magistracy, the town as such had no authority. All political action centred in the several septs and their heads; if they held together against outsiders, this was due to interest and a sense of honour, a voluntary union strengthened by the presence of public opinion. In the time of Mohammed, the most numerous and wealthy sept was that of the Banū Makhzūm; but that of the Banū 'Abdshams was the most distinguished. The Banū Omayya were the most powerful house of 'Abdshams; their head, Abū Sofyān ibn Harb, exercised a decisive influence in the concerns of the whole community. Mohammed himself was of the Banū Hāshim; it is affirmed that these had formerly enjoyed and claimed of right the position actually enjoyed by the Banū Omayya, but this assertion seems to have had its origin in the claims to the Caliphate which the Hashimites (the house of 'Alī and the 'Abbāsids) subsequently set up against the Omayyads.⁷

⁴ On the state of Arabia before Islam see Cassin de Perceval, *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes*, vol. ii.; Muir, *Life of Mah.*, vol. i.

⁵ Marr al-Zahrān, near Mecca, is accordingly said to have been the point at which the great emigration of tribes from Yemen parted into two streams, moving north-west and north-east respectively.

⁶ The Koraish were the branch of Kināna settled in and about Mecca. They are called also Ghālib and Fihri, but the last name is particularly applied to those of the Koraish who did not live within the town.

⁷ Sprenger, vol. iii. p. cxx. sq.

¹ The name Mohammad means in Arabic "the praised," and it has been supposed that this epithet was conferred on the Prophet after his mission to mark him out as the promised Paraclete. This, however, is incorrect (Nöldeke, *Gesch. d. Korans* [Gött. 1860], p. 6, note 2; Sprenger, *Leben und Lehre des M.*, i. 155 sq.). The name is found, although it was not common, among the heathen Arabs. Renan has shown it to occur on a Greek inscription of the early part of the 2d century of the Christian era (Boeckh, *C. I. G.*, 4500), and Mohammed ibn Maslama of Medina, a contemporary of the Prophet, bore it as his original name, as appears from the fact that his brother was called Mahmūd, it being a favourite practice to give to brothers variations of the same name, as Anas and Mānis, Sahl and Sahil, Monabbih and Nobahil (Sprenger, i. 158, note 2). That Mohammed calls himself Ahmad, in sur. lxi. 6, in order to adapt his name to a supposed prophecy, proves nothing; on the other hand, the men of Mecca, on occasion of a treaty with the Moslems, demanded that the Prophet should not call himself messenger of God, but Mohammed ibn 'Abdallāh, using his old familiar name; see J. Wellhausen, *Zeit-d's Kitāb al-Magħnī in verkürzter deutscher Wiedergabe* (Berl. 1882), p. 257.

² Nöldeke, *ut supra*, p. 54 sq.

³ Nöldeke, *Gesch. d. Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (Leiden, 1879), pp. 205, 218.

Mohammed's father, 'Abdalláh b. 'Abdalmottalib, did not live to see the son's birth, and his mother Ámina died while he was still a child. Mohammed was then cared for first by his grandfather, 'Abdalmottalib, and after his death by his oldest paternal uncle, Abú Tálib b. 'Abdalmottalib. He was kindly treated, but shared the hardships of a numerous and very poor family; he herded sheep and gathered wild berries in the desert. This is all that we know of his youth (sur. xciii. 6), all else is legend, containing at most an occasional fragment of truth.¹

It was, we are told, in his twenty-fifth year that Mohammed, on the recommendation of his uncle, entered the house and business of a wealthy widow named Khadíja. For her he made commercial journeys, thus learning to know part of Palestine and Syria, and perhaps receiving impressions which fructified in his soul.² By and by he married the widow, who was much his senior; he was a shrewd man, with prepossessing countenance, fair of skin, and black-haired. The marriage was happy, and blessed with several children. The two sons, however, died young; from the elder the father received the surname Abú 'l-Kásim. The most famous of the daughters was Fátima, who married her father's cousin, 'Alí b. Abí Tálib.

During his married life with Khadíja, Mohammed came in contact with a religious movement which had laid hold on some thoughtful minds in Medina, Mecca, and Táif. In Mecca, as elsewhere, Arabian heathenism was a traditional form of worship, chiefly concentrated in great feasts at the holy places; it was clung to because it had come down from the fathers. The gods were many; their importance was not due to the attributes ascribed to them, but to their connection with special circles in which they were worshipped. They were the patrons of sept³ and tribes, and symbolized, so to speak, the holy unity which united the present and past members of these. Above them all stood Alláh, the highest and universal God.⁴ By him the holiest oaths were sworn; in his name (*Bismilka Alláhumma*) treaties and covenants were sealed; the lower gods were not fit to be invoked in such cases, as they belonged to one party instead of standing over both. The enemy was reminded of Alláh to deter him from inhuman outrage; enemy of Alláh (*aduw Alláh, θεοστρυψ*) was the name of opprobrium for a villain. But, since Alláh ruled over all

¹ The tradition relates that as an infant Mohammed was entrusted to a Bedouin foster-mother, Halíma, who brought him up among her people, the Banú Sa'd b. Laith. Sprenger (i. 162 sq.) will have it that this precise statement is also a fiction; but he is probably wrong. It can hardly be disputed that Bedouin women were accustomed to suckle the children of townfolk for wages, and Mohammed's "milk-kinship" with the Banú Sa'd b. Laith is confirmed by what happened at and after the battle of Honain. A nephew of Mohammed was also brought up among the Sa'd. Comp. *Vakidi, ut supra*, pp. 364, 377 sq., 431, note 1.

² He saw the mute witnesses of divine judgment, the rock-dwellings of Híjr and the Dead Sea; perhaps, too, he was impressed by the figure of some venerable monk (Bahíra legends). Comp. Ibn Hishám, p. 115 sq.; Sprenger, i. p. 178 sq.

³ *Vakidi*, p. 350: Idols were found in every house, and homage was paid to them when men went out or in to gain their blessing. Abú Bajrá made and sold them; there was a lively trade in idols with the Bedouins.

⁴ The particular gods are said to have been regarded as children of Alláh (بنی آله). From sur. liii. 21, xxxvii. 149, it appears that the Meccans called their goddesses daughters of Alláh; perhaps it was their disputes with Mohammed that forced them to this view. At first, certainly, al-Lát and al-'Ozzá were names of the wife of the supreme god; sexual dualism dominated in the oldest Arab idea of the godhead. It was Mohammed who first reduced the gods to Jinns—i.e. to subordinate demons and kobolds—as he did not deny their existence, but only stripped off their divinity. To say that the oldest Arabs worshipped Jinns is as unreasonable as to say that they worshipped the devil; for Islam degraded the gods to Shaitáns as well as to Jinns. Superstition certainly played its part among the Arabs, but superstition is not religion.

and imposed duties on all, it was not thought that one could enter into special relations with him. In worship he had the last place, those gods being preferred who represented the interests of a specific circle, and fulfilled the private desires of their worshippers.⁵ Neither the fear of Alláh, however, nor reverence for the gods had much influence. The chief practical consequence of the great feasts was the observance of a truce in the holy months, and this in course of time had become mainly an affair of pure practical convenience. In general, the disposition of the heathen Arabs, if it is at all truly reflected in their poetry, was profane in an unusual degree. Wine, the chase, gaming, and love on the one side; vengeance, feuds, robbery, and glory on the other, occupy all the thoughts of the old poets. Their motives to noble deeds are honour and family feeling; they hardly name the gods, much less feel any need of them. The man sets all his trust on himself: he rides alone through the desert, his sword helps him in danger, no God stands by him, he commends his soul to no saint. His reckless egoism may expand to noble self-sacrifice for the family and the tribe; but in this heroic religious impulses have no part, there is nothing mystical in these hard, clear, and yet so passionate natures. The only vein of what can in any sense be called religious feeling appears when the volcano has burned itself out and the storm of life is over; then, it may be, a wail is heard over the vanity of all the restless activity that is now spent.⁶ It is very possible that religion meant more to the sedentary Arabs than to the nomads, to whom almost all the ancient poetry belongs; but the difference cannot have been great. The ancient inhabitants of Mecca practised piety essentially as a trade, just as they do now; their trade depended on the feast, and its fair on the inviolability of the Haram and on the truce of the holy months.⁷

The religion of the Arabs before Mohammed was de-^{The} crepit and effete.⁸ Many anecdotes and verses prove that indifference and scoffing neglect of the gods was nothing uncommon. The need for a substitute for the lost religion was not very widely felt. But there were individuals who were not content with a negation, and sought a better religion. Such were Omayya b. Abí 'l-Salt in Táif, Zaid b. 'Amr in Mecca, Abú Kais b. Abí Anas, and Abú 'Amir in Medina.⁹ They were called Hanífs, probably meaning

⁵ *Vakidi*, pp. 363, note 1, 370, note 1; Sprenger, iii. 457 sq., 512. Whether the feast at Mecca was celebrated in honour of Alláh before Mohammed, is very doubtful. It would seem that Hobal was worshipped in the Ka'ba (Ibn Hishám, p. 97 sq.), and Kozah in Mozdalifa (*Vakidi*, p. 423); it is possible, however, that Alláh stood to Hobal among the Arabs as El to Jahwé among the Hebrews. Ritual sacrifices were generally presented to a god who had a proper name; but the trace of a religious rite which still survived in the ordinary killing of beasts for food, possibly consisted even before Mohammed in the invocation of the name of Alláh (Sprenger, ii. 478, note 1; but comp. *Vakidi*, p. 160, note 1, p. 159).

⁶ "We hasten towards an unknown goal, and forget it in eating and drinking. We are sparrows and flies and worms, but more daring than famishing wolves. . . . My roots reach down to the depths of the earth; but this Death spoils me of my youth, and of my soul he spoils me and of my body, and right soon he lays me in the dust. I have urged my camel through every desert, wide-stretching and shimmering with mirage; and I have ridden in the devouring host, reaching after the honours of greedy perils, and I joined in the fray under every sky till I longed for the home-coming instead of booty. But can I, after Harith's death, and after the death of Hojr, the noble host—can I hope for a softer lot from the change of time, which does not forget the hard mountains? I know that I must soon be transixed by his talon and tooth as befell my father and my grandsire, not to forget him that was slain at Koláb."—Amraalkais, ed. Slane, No. 10, p. 33; ed. Ahlwardt, No. 5.

⁷ See, on Arabian heathenism, Pococke, *Specimens hist. Arabum*; Krehl, *Religion der vorislamischen Araber* (Leip. 1863); Sprenger, i. 241 sq.

⁸ *Vakidi*, p. 293, note 1.
⁹ See, for Omayya, *Kitáb al-Agháni* (Bulák ed.), iii. 186 sq.; for Zaid, Ibn Hishám, p. 143 sq.; for Abú Kais, *id.* 348 sq., 39 sq.; and for Abú 'Amir, *Vakidi*, pp. 103, 161, 190, 410.

"penitents", men who strive to free themselves from sin.¹ They did not constitute a regular sect, and had in fact no fixed and organized views. They had, no doubt, intercourse with one another, but were not a close society; they thought more of their own souls than of propaganda; only in Medina they seem to have been more numerous. They rejected polytheism and acknowledged Alláh, but not so much on intellectual grounds as on grounds of conscience. Faith in the one God was with them identical with pious resignation (*Islám*) to his will; their monotheism was most closely allied to the sense of responsibility and of a coming judgment; it stood opposed to the worldly ideas of the idolaters, and was an impulse to upright and sin-avoiding walk. They were not theorists, but ascetics. It was the primitive ideas of Law and Gospel ("the religion of Abraham") that lived again in them. They felt on the whole less attracted towards the developed forms of the religion of revelation; they rather sought after some new form; few of them attached themselves to existing religious communities.

Mohammed, it would appear, came into connexion with these Hanífs through a cousin of his wife, Waraka b. Naufal, who was one of them. Their doctrines found a fruitful soil in his heart; he was seized with a profound sense of dependence on the omnipresent and omnipotent Lord, and of responsibility towards him. Following the example of old Zaid b. 'Amr, he now frequently withdrew for considerable periods to the solitude of the bare and desolate Mount Hírá, and meditated there with prayer and ascetic exercises. For years, perhaps, he went on in these purely individual exercises, without anything to distinguish him essentially from the others who held similar views. But in him the Hanífite ideas lodged themselves in a natural temperament which had a sickly tendency to excitement and vision, and so produced a fermentation that ended in an explosion.² Thus he became a prophet; he felt himself constrained to leave the silent circle of ascetics and make a propaganda for the truth. In this resolve he was unquestionably influenced by what he knew of the example of the Biblical prophets, perhaps also by the circumstance that a longing after a new founder of religion was diffused among the Hanífs, and found support in some dim acquaintance with the Messianic hopes of the Jews.

That Mohammed did not independently produce his own ideas is indisputable; nor is it to be doubted that he derived them from the Hanífs. But what was the ultimate source of these first notions towards Islam? In general they are ascribed to a Jewish source. Jews were very numerous in Hijáz and Yemen, and had perfectly free intercourse with the Arabs, to whom they undoubtedly imparted a quantity of Biblical and religious material. Mohammed in particular was indebted to the Jews for almost all the stories and a great part of the laws of the Koran (laws of marriage, purity, etc.), and the theological language of Islam is full of Jewish words. But the original and productive forces of Islam did not spring from Judaism, least of all the ideas of the Judgment and of the inexorable demands set before the creature by his Creator,

¹ Sprenger (p. 38 sq.) connects Haníf with ٥٥٥, and expounds it per antiphrasin as *lucens a non lucendo*, on the ingenious fashion of A. Geiger. As *tahannuth* = *tahannuf* is the technical name of such solitary ascetic practices as Mohammed himself engaged in before his call, Haníf may be taken to mean a *mutahannif* by profession. The connexion between *hanif* and *tahannuf* is certain, and it seems equally certain that *tahannuf* as an equivalent of *tahannuth* comes not from *hanif* but from *hinná* (for *hinn*), and means not to play the Haníf but to concern oneself with one's sin, to purge oneself of it.

² It is disputed whether Mohammed was epileptic, cataleptic, hysteric, or what not; Sprenger seems to think that the answer to this medical question is the key to the whole problem of Islam. It is certain that he had a tendency to see visions, and suffered from fits which threw him for a time into a swoon, without loss of inner consciousness.

which are so dominant in the older súras. A distinction must be drawn between the primitive impulses and the material added later; Mohammed did not get his leaven from the Jews, they only supplied him afterwards with meal. Neither in truth can Christianity be viewed as the proper source of Islam—Christianity, that is, in any of its great historical developments. The Arabs knew Greek, Syrian, and Abyssinian-Himyaritic churches; manifold influences from these doubtless reached Islam, but in none of them did the idea of Judgment still stand as the central point of religion; the living sense of divine reality ruling over the life was half extinguished by the developments of theology. But in the Syro-Babylonian desert, off the line of the church's main advance, primitive forms of Christianity, perhaps also of Essenism, still survived, which the course of church history had left untouched. To these belong on the one hand the Sabians ("Baptists," from ٥٥٥), on the other the numerous anchorites of these regions. The connexion of Islam with the Sabians appears from the fact that in Mecca and Táif its adherents were simply known as Sabians.³ From them, however, were derived, it would seem, for the most part only externals, though the importance of these must on no account be undervalued. The deepest influence exercised on the Hanífs, and through them on the Prophet, appears to have come from the anchorite ascetics. How popular they were with the Arabs, appears from the Bedouin poetry; what power they exercised over the minds even of the heathen, is proved by various episodes in the history of Ghassán and Hírá; how well the Arabs knew the difference between them and the shaven clergy, is seen in the instructions of Abúbekr to the commanders in the Syrian campaigns. It was not their doctrine that proved impressive, but the genuine earnestness of their consecrated life, spent in preparation for the life to come, for the day of judgment, and forming the sharpest contrast to the profanity of heathenism. Asceticism and meditation were the chief points with the Hanífs also, and they are sometimes called by the same name with the Christian monks.⁴ It can hardly be wrong to conclude that these nameless witnesses of the Gospel, unmentioned in church history, scattered the seed from which sprang the germ of Islam.

The tradition gives a telling story of the way in which Mohammed at length came to proclaim openly what had long been living and working within him; in other words, how he became a prophet. Once, in the month of Ramadan, while he repeated his pious exercises and meditations on Mount Hírá, the angel Gabriel came to him by night as he slept, held a silken scroll before him and compelled him, though he could not read, to recite what stood written on it.⁵ This was the first descent of a passage of the heavenly book, the source of revelation from which Moses and Jesus and all prophets had drawn; and so Mohammed was called to be a prophet. The words with which Gabriel had summoned him to read, remained graven on his heart. They were the beginning of sur. xvi.—

³ Ibn Hishám (p. 835) relates that the Banú Jadhíma announced their conversion to Islam to Khálid in the words, "We are become Sabians." Renan, *Études d'histoire rel.* (1863), p. 257, misunderstands this utterance.

⁴ Abú 'Amir is as often called Ráhib as Haníf. All the accounts indicate that the Hanífs stood nearer to Christianity than to Judaism, not only in Táif but elsewhere. Interesting in the highest degree is a verse ascribed to Sakhr al-Ghay in the Hodhailian Poems, ed. Kosegarten 18, 11. A thundercloud is there described, the centre of which is an impenetrable mass; only on the outer fringe a restless motion is discernible. "Its fringes on the mountain-ridge (al-Malá) are like Christians celebrating a banquet when they have found a Haníf (and so run to and fro in the restlessness of glad excitement)."

⁵ Of course any one can read in a vision. The question discussed even by Moslems, as to whether the Prophet could read or not, has at least no place in this connexion.

"Read! in the name of thy Lord, who created, created man from a drop. Read! for thy Lord is the Most High who hath taught by the pen, hath taught to man what he knew not. Nay truly man walketh in delusion, when he deems that he suffices for himself; to thy Lord they must all return."

What is here recorded is the commencement, not of Mohammed's knowledge, but of his prophesying. That the latter was due to a vision experienced by him on a night of the month Ramadan (sur. xvii. 1, ii. 18f) is certain, and it is at least very possible that the form of the vision was governed by the traditional conception of revelation and prophecy which Mohammed had learned to accept.¹ It is, of course, uncertain whether the words in which the angel called the Prophet are really contained in sur. xvi. Certainly this sūra is very early, and its contents are, indeed, the best expression of the original ideas of Islam. Man lives on content with himself, but he must one day return to his Creator and Lord, and give account to him. This is in a sense the material principle of the oldest faith of Islam; the formal principle is the very prominent doctrine of revelation in writing copied from the heavenly book.

When the angel left him—so the tradition runs on—Mohammed came to Khadija and recounted the occurrence to her in much distress; he thought that he was possessed. She however comforted him, and confirmed him in the belief that he had received a revelation and was called as a messenger of God. Yet his doubts returned, when there ensued a break in the revelation, and they reached a distressing height. He was often on the point of seeking death by casting himself down from Mount Hirá. It is usually assumed that this state of anguish lasted from two to three years. Then the angel is said to have suddenly appeared a second time; he came to Khadija in great excitement and said: "Wrap me up! wrap me up!" This, it must be explained, was done when he fell into one of his swoons; and on this occasion, as often thereafter, the revelation came during an attack. Then was sent down sūra lxxiv. beginning with the address—"O thou enveloped one!" Henceforth there was no interruption and no doubt; the revelations followed without break, and the Prophet was assured of his vocation.

That Mohammed did pass through many doubts and much distress before he reached this assurance, may well be believed (sur. xciii. 3); but the systematic development of the doctrine of the *fatra*, or interval of from two to three years between the first and second revelation, belongs to a later stage of tradition. It appears that it was devised to dispose of the controversy whether Mohammed lived as a prophet in Mecca for ten or for twelve years; perhaps, too, it was desired to solve another difficulty—viz., whether sur. xcvi. or sur. lxxiv. was the beginning of the revelation—in a sense that should do some justice to the rival claims of each.² The tradition may also have been influenced by the circumstance that Mohammed, in the first three years of his mission, did not appear as a public preacher,³ but only sought recruits for his own cause and the cause of Alláh in private circles. First, he gained the inmates of his own house,—his wife Khadija, his freed-

¹ H. Dodwell, "De Tabulis coli," in Fabricius, *Cod. pseud.* v. t., 2d ed., ii. 551 sq. Compare, in the Koran, especially sur. lxxvii. 6, "We will cause thee so to read that thou mayest forget nothing save what God will." The following progress is noteworthy:—Isaiah's lips are touched to purge them of sin (Isa. vi. 7); Jeremiah's are touched by the Lord to put His word in his mouth (Jer. i. 9); Ezekiel receives the revelation as a roll of a book which he has to swallow (Ezek. iii. 2).
² See Sprenger in *Z. D. M. G.*, 1859, p. 173 sq.; Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, 67 sq. Ewald thinks that the vocatives at the beginning of sur. lxxiv. and lxxiii. mean simply—O long sleeper! This view is worthy of consideration. The Moslem exegetes thoroughly understand the art of giving to general expressions of the Koran specific reference to historical events which they have themselves invented to facilitate exegesis.
³ Ibn Hishám, p. 166.

man Zaid b. Haritha, his cousin 'Alí (of whose nurture he had relieved Abú Tálib, a poor man with many children), and finally his dearest friend Abúbekr b. Abí Kōháfá. The last named won for him several other adherents: 'Othmán b. 'Affán, Zobair b. al-'Awwám, 'Abd al-Rahmán b. 'Auf, Sa'd b. Abí Waqqás, Talha b. 'Obaid Alláh, all names of note in the subsequent history of Islam. Soon there was a little community formed, whose members united in common exercises of prayer.

To the Hanífs, especially to the family of Zaid b. 'Amr, their relation was friendly; they had the name of Moslem in common, and there was hardly any difference of principle to separate them. The personality of the prophet had given an altogether new impulse to a movement already in existence; that was all. To found a new religion was in no sense Mohammed's intention; what he sought was to secure among his people the recognition of the old and the true. He preached it to the Arabs as Moses had before him preached to the Jews, and Jesus to Christians; it was all one and the same religion as written in the heavenly book. The differences between the several religions of the book were not perceived by him till a much later period.

It is not difficult to understand why Mohammed should in the first instance have turned to those who were most readily accessible to him; but the nature of his mission did not suffer him to rest content with this; it compelled him to make public proclamation of the truth. One of his dependents, Arkam b. Abí Arkam, offered for this purpose his house, which stood close by the sanctuary, and thus the Moslems obtained a convenient meeting-place within the town, instead of, as hitherto, being compelled to resort to ravines and solitary places.⁴ Here Mohammed preached, and here too it was that he received some converts to Islam. But he did not obtain any great results among the Meccans. What he had to say was already in substance familiar to them; all that was new was the enthusiasm with which he proclaimed old truth. But this enthusiasm failed to make any impression on them; they set him aside as a visionary, or as a poet, or simply as one possessed. In their eyes it was a fatal flaw that his supporters were drawn from the slave-class and the lower orders, and the ranks of the young; it would have been quite another matter if one of the rulers or elders had believed in him. This circumstance was a source of annoyance to the prophet himself; in sur. lxxx. we find him rebuked by God for having repulsed in an unkind way a blind beggar who had interrupted him as he was endeavouring to win over a man of influence—an endeavour which proved of no avail.

This indifference of the Meccans embittered the messenger of God, and led him to give to his preaching a polemical character which it had not hitherto possessed. In the oldest sūras we have monotheism in its positive and practical form.⁵ God is the all-powerful Lord and all-knowing Judge of man; he demands loyal self-surrender and unconditional obedience; the service he requires is a serious life, characterized in particular by prayer, almsgiving, and temperance. That the worship of other gods beside Alláh is excluded by these views, goes without saying; still it is

⁴ It does not appear that Arkam's house was of the nature of an asylum to which Mohammed betook himself for refuge from the ill-treatment to which he was subjected in his own home, nor is there any evidence that he ever lived in it. It was simply the meeting-house of the oldest Islam. Prayer continued to be offered within it until the conversion of 'Omar, who was bold enough to choose the Ka'ba itself, the centre of heathenism, as the Moslem place of prayer. Comp. Muir, ii. p. 117; Sprenger, i. p. 454.

⁵ What is meant by practical monotheism is most easily understood by reference to Matt. vi. 24 sqq., x. 28 sqq., and to Luther's exposition of the first commandment in the catechisms; it is the essence of religion. We do not, of course, mean that this practical monotheism is expressed in the Koran with as much purity and depth as in the Gospel.

noteworthy that the sharp negations of monotheism acquired prominence only by degrees. It was in his indignation against the cold mockery with which he was met that Mohammed first assumed an attitude of hostility towards the worship of polytheism, while at the same time he gave much greater prominence to his own mission, just because it was not acknowledged. He now began to threaten the infidels with the judgment of God for their contempt of His message and His messenger; he related to them the terrible punishments that in other cases had fallen on those who refused to hear the voice of their prophet, applying the old legends to the circumstances of the present with such directness that it was superfluous expressly to add the morals. This could not fail to irritate the Meccans, especially as after all the new religion gained ground. What Mohammed attacked as ungodly and abominable were their holy things; they were jealous for their gods and their fathers. Their attachment to the traditional worship was the greater that the prosperity of their town rested upon it; for they had not yet learned that the Ka'ba was no institution of heathenism. They found, however, no other way to remove the public scandal than to approach Abú Tálib, the Prophet's uncle and the head of his family, asking him to impose silence on the offender, or else to withdraw from him his protection. Abú Tálib was not personally convinced of Mohammed's mission, but he did not choose to impose conditions on the enjoyment of his protection. At length, however, when the Meccans adopted a threatening tone and said that he must either restrain his nephew from his injurious attacks, or openly take side for Mohammed and against them, he sent for his nephew, told him how things stood, and urged him not to involve them both in ruin. Mohammed was deeply moved; he thought his uncle wished to get rid of him; yet he could not and would not withdraw from the divinely-imposed necessity which impelled him to preach his convictions. "Though they gave me the sun in my right hand," he said, "and the moon in my left, to bring me back from my undertaking, yet will I not pause till the Lord carry my cause to victory, or till I die for it." With this he burst into tears, and turned to go away. But Abú Tálib called him back and said: "Go in peace, son of my brother, and say what thou wilt, for, by God, I will on no condition abandon thee."

The protection of his uncle did not relieve Mohammed from all manner of petty insults which he had to endure from his enemies from day to day; but no one ventured to do him serious harm, for the family feud which this would necessarily have produced was not to be lightly incurred. Less fortunate than the Prophet, however, were such of his followers as occupied dependent positions, and had no family support; especially the converted bondmen and bondwomen, who found no consideration, and were often treated with actual cruelty. For some of these Abúbekr purchased freedom. There seem to have been no martyrs, but the situation of many Moslems became so intolerable that they fled to Abyssinia. The Abyssinian Christians were quite looked upon as their religious kinsmen.

A breach with one's people is for the Arab a breach with God and the world; he feels it like a living death. Mohammed, who remained in Mecca, naturally made every effort to heal the breach with his townsmen, and, as naturally, the latter met him half-way. He even went so far as to take the edge from his monotheism. Once, when the heads of the Koraish were assembled at the Ka'ba, Mohammed, we are told, came to them and began to recite before them sur. liii.¹ When he came to the passage,

¹ The authorities for this are Ibn Sa'd, the secretary of Wákidí, to whom we owe the preservation of Wákidí's materials for the Meccan period, and especially Tabarí; comp. Muir, ii. 150 sqq. The common

"What think ye of al-Lát and al-'Ozzá, and of Manát the third with them?" the devil put words in his mouth which he had long wished to have by revelation from God—viz. "These are the sublime Cranes," whose intercession may be hoped for." The auditors were surprised and delighted by this recognition of their goddesses, and when Mohammed closed the sūra with the words, "So prostrate yourselves before Alláh and do service to him," they all with one accord complied. They then professed their satisfaction with his admissions, and declared themselves ready to recognize him. But the messenger of God went home disquieted. In the evening Gabriel came to him, and Mohammed repeated to him the sūra; whereupon the angel said: "What hast thou done? thou hast spoken in the ears of the people words that I never gave to thee." Mohammed now fell into deep distress, fearing to be cast out from the sight of God. But the Lord took him back to His grace and raised him up again. He erased the diabolical verse and revealed the true reading, so that the words now ran—"What think ye of al-Lát and al-'Ozzá, and of Manát the third with them? The male [offspring] for you and the female for God? That were an unjust division!" When the new version reached the ears of the Meccans they compared it with the old, and saw that the Prophet had broken the peace again. So their enmity broke out again with fresh violence.

It is generally and justly suspected that this compromise did not rest on a momentary inspiration of Satan, but was the result of negotiations and protracted consideration. Nor was the breach so instantaneous as is represented; the peace lasted more than one day. There is no doubt as to the fact itself. Every religion must make compromises to gain the masses. But for Mohammed the moment for this had not yet arrived; later on he used the method of compromise with great effect.

The news of the peace between Mohammed and the Meccans had recalled the fugitive Moslems from Abyssinia;² on their return the actual state of affairs proved very different indeed from what they had been led to expect, and it was not long before a second emigration took place. By degrees as many as a hundred and one Moslems, mostly of the younger men, in little groups, had again migrated to Abyssinia, where they once more met with a friendly reception. Among them were Ja'far, the brother of 'Alí, and the Prophet's daughter Rokayya, along with her husband 'Othmán b. 'Affán.³

Mohammed's position was very considerably altered for the worse, both subjectively and in other respects, by his precipitate withdrawal from the compromise almost as soon as it had been made. He himself indeed, although long and salutarily humbled by the remembrance of his fall (sur. xvii. 75 sqq.), never abandoned faith in his vocation; his followers also did not permit themselves to be led

tradition ignores the fact itself, but knows its result, the return of the Abyssinian fugitives.

² "*Al-gharānīk al-'oldā*," fine-sounding but perhaps meaningless words—
"Herzlich, etwas dunkel zwar,
Doch es klingt recht wunderbar."

Comp. Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, p. 80. Hobal, though the chief god of the Meccans, is not mentioned in the Koran either here or elsewhere. Perhaps as God of the Ka'ba he was already identified with Alláh by the Meccans, or was so identified by Mohammed.

³ The date assigned is the month Rajab of the fifth year of the Call, corresponding to the eighth year before the Flight (A.D. 614-615). The compromise must have been made in the interval. The chronology of this period is of course in the highest degree uncertain, and the order of the events hard to ascertain. Thus it can scarcely be determined whether the above-mentioned scene with Abú Tálib ought to be placed before or after the compromise.

⁴ 'Othmán and Rokayya, however, members of the noble house of Onayya, soon returned, along with many others. The rest remained in exile until the seventh year of the Flight.