

THE PEOPLES OF ZANZIBAR

THEIR CUSTOMS AND
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

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BY

THE VEN. GODFREY DALE, M.A.



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RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

BY
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THE UNIVERSITIES' MISSION TO CENTRAL AFRICA
9 DARTMOUTH STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1

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Preface

THIS little book has been written in compliance with a request made to me by the Bishop of Zanzibar some time ago. It has been completed at home, unfortunately without the books of reference used in Zanzibar. It has been compiled with two objects in view. (1) To supply any new-comer to Zanzibar with a small manual which will give him a summary view of the situation, and to suggest to him useful lines of inquiry. (2) To give people at home, who are helping the Mission, some rough kind of idea of the nature of the situation in which missionaries find themselves, and of the difficulties with which the staff in Zanzibar have to cope.

It makes no pretence at all to be a full treatment of any of the subjects discussed in the separate chapters. A large book might be written on any one of them. But the compiler hopes that it may prove a help to some and serve as a bunch of keys with which to unlock the doors of the various subjects contained in the book. Any corrections, criticisms or suggestions will be thankfully received. In dealing with other religions I have tried to write courteously and fairly, and have written not with the intention of scoring points, but of simply explaining how matters really stand. I sincerely hope the book may prove helpful to some interested in the Mission Field to-day.

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MADAGASCAR

CHAPTER I

The Inhabitants of Zanzibar

IT is very difficult, perhaps it is impossible, to procure any certain information with regard to the original inhabitants of Zanzibar. Now and again I have heard of manuscripts in Arabic, or in Swahili written in Arabic characters, which are said to contain all the historical facts available. One such is said to exist in the north of Pemba, another somewhere to the north of Zanzibar, but there seems to be a disinclination on the part of the owners of these MSS. to show them to a European, and it is not by any means certain that, even if procurable, these MSS. would prove to be of any value. Probably they contain traditional lore handed down from generation to generation, and at last committed to writing in fairly recent times by some enterprising scribe. We are therefore compelled to rely on conclusions which rest partly on facts as we see them now, and partly on inferences which the situation of the Island of Zanzibar justifies us in drawing. The reader is asked to remember this in reading the following pages. There is not yet, perhaps never will be, sufficient justification for dogmatic statements that such and such was the order of events.

There is a belief prevalent in the Island that the original inhabitants migrated from the mainland. The Wahadimu say they came from the mainland, from Mrima, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Dar-es-salaam. There is another belief that the Watu-

mbatu, in the small narrow Island off the north-west coast of Zanzibar, came from the Wasegeju tribe on the mainland to the north-west of the Island of Zanzibar. This was probably the case. The cause of immigration we are left to guess. They may have been driven out of their country by war or by famine, or they may have been attracted by the excellent fishing which the Island of Zanzibar affords. Perhaps all these causes combined to induce them to settle down where we find them now. They are not unlike each other, these two peoples. They seem to be a link between the native of the interior and the coast people, the Swahili. They are not so simple as the former, but simpler than the latter in their manner of life. Both peoples have the reputation of being more moral than the people of the coast towns, and it is generally said that they are longer lived and have larger families than the coast folk. At any rate we are not extravagant in the use of our imagination if we picture to ourselves the Island of Zanzibar in the remote past as occupied by these two peoples mostly living in villages on or near the shore, and principally engaged in fishing. Their chief enemies were the wild pigs, which caused so much harm to the crops of maize, cassava and sweet potatoes, that they were compelled in places to surround their plantations with stone walls, roughly built of coral rag. Occasionally a ship of the dhow kind from the North, from South Arabia, from the Persian Gulf, from India, from the Red Sea, perhaps from the Malay Peninsula would put in to one of the harbours, as it skirted the coast of East Africa, in pursuit of merchandise, coming with the North Monsoon. They came and departed and the Watumbatu and the Wahadimu went on fishing.

There is not much to be said about the **Watumbatu**—there are about 1000 of them. They claim to be descended from a Shirazi Princess who was driven from Kilwa centuries ago, but they do not show any resemblance in their features to justify such a claim. They

speaking a dialect of Swahili. They live on the bare and rocky Island of Tumbatu and keep very much to themselves; from all reports they are reserved and not very easy to approach, nor have they been much affected by outside influences. They are fishermen and seamen and are a peaceful folk. They are Mohammedans by profession; a native Christian, who lived among them for a time as a member of the police, told me that he did not find them very friendly. In the days of the slave trade they suffered from the slavers, who used to tempt their children on board the slave dhows, by offering them Arab sweetmeats, and then kidnapped them. Later on they are said to have worked hand in glove with the slavers. I do not remember having heard that the Mission has ever made any attempt to reach them, as our hands are full of other work. They will be difficult people to influence. Any one passing down the coast of Zanzibar can see them in their dug-outs employed in their trade of fishing. There are only a few clusters of their houses on the Island of Zanzibar.

The Wahadimu are far more numerous, and of more importance to us. They are mostly domiciled on the east coast and the south of the Island, but they have also penetrated into the interior, and are met in the markets selling their fish. Since their arrival on the Island they have intermarried with Africans of different tribes, many of whom were probably brought to the Island as slaves. Some of them show patent signs of Arab blood, and there may also be Indian blood in some of them, as Indian traders and small storekeepers have mingled freely amongst them; but there is a strong contrast between them and the population in the town and on parts of the west coast of the Island. They are simpler in their manner of life, and are considered more moral. They are Mohammedans, but do not know much about their religion; nevertheless almost every village has its mosque and its Koran

School. They have a dialect of their own. Possibly a careful study of this dialect would throw considerable light on their origin. I have not found it easy to understand what is said by one fisherman when he calls out to another. They can very easily speak to one another in words which are not comprehensible even to one who is at home in ordinary Swahili.

It seems probable that they have been driven from the interior of the Island by the Arabs from Maskat when they arrived and occupied the more fruitful parts of the interior and started plantations worked by slave labour. Their principal villages now are in the east and south of the Island, Chuaka, Bwejuu, Makunduchi, and Kizimkazi, and on the Island of Uzi to the south-west of the Island of Zanzibar.

Originally the Wahadimu were ruled by a chief who was called Mwenyi Mkuu, the Great Chief, who lived in a large stone house at Dunga in the centre of the Island, surrounded by a very fine clove plantation. This house has recently been pulled down. It had an evil reputation; natives did not like going near it at night. It was said to be haunted by an Arab woman who had been killed by her husband, and it contained some very fine native drums with inscriptions in Arabic carved all over them. These drums were said to be beaten at times by invisible drummers. They are now in the Residency, I believe. This Mwenyi Mkuu received tribute from the Wahadimu, but was himself tributary to the Sultan of Zanzibar. There is no Mwenyi Mkuu now. The last died more than a century ago—in the times of Sultan Majid. The Wahadimu are under the control of local chiefs called Shehas, in Government employ.

The name Wahadimu is interesting. In Arabic the word means slave or servant, but as used in Zanzibar for the Wahadimu it has a better signification—"the manumitted." They are free people, and do not regard the name as other than an honourable one. They

are a very independent folk. There is a curious legend rife among them by which they account for their subjection to the Arabs. There arrived off the coast of the Island a people whom they called Wadebuli. No one has ever been able to discover exactly who they were. I have heard them spoken about constantly. By some they are thought to have been British or Spanish buccaneers. I do not believe this, though no doubt Europeans sailed these waters. They are said to have come in sailing vessels and to have possessed cannon. I have also heard it said that their sails were not made of canvas or cloth but of some kind of palm leaf. Were they from the Malay Peninsula? They had towns on the coast, planted cocoanuts, and sank wells. They also built places of worship. The ruins of these places of worship are found all over the Island of Zanzibar and of Pemba. These ruins seem to me to have been of Persian origin and to be Mohammedan mosques of a kind. Some of these ruins may be of various dates. Those which I saw in Pemba have sunk so deep in the soil that they must be very ancient. The outside appearance of ruins is no criterion in Zanzibar. Fifty years will make a building look very ancient indeed. It is known the Persians were a respectable sea power at one time. I am inclined to think these Wadebuli were either Persian buccaneers; or that the word may be a corruption of Mabedui, just wild Arabs. But so far no one can be certain. Anyhow they have never been forgotten. They treated the Wahadimu most cruelly, using men as beasts of burden. At last the Wahadimu could bear it no longer. The Mwenyi Mkuu appealed to the Arabs of Maskat. They arrived, drove out these oppressors and themselves elected to stay as rulers. I have been told this again and again, and am convinced that it rests upon a foundation of fact. The Wahadimu have never forgotten these Madebuli.

In some of our out-schools we are now in touch with

the Wahadimu, and although they are mostly orthodox Moslems, it is quite possible that we may win a few converts amongst the younger folk. I have often spoken to them about our religion in their villages and have found them at any rate willing to listen to what you have to say. I read the Gospel and the Psalms to one. He had learnt to read at one of our Schools in the centre of the Island, and though he has never become a Christian, it is something gained when they will take the trouble to find out what we really do believe. Their own teachers are often very ignorant of our belief, and fill their minds with the grossest misrepresentations. I like the Wahadimu better than any other natives on the Island. But it must be confessed that they are supposed by the other inhabitants of Zanzibar to be experts in witchcraft. Of this subject I will write in another chapter.

It must not be thought that these Wahadimu are only fishing folk; it is wonderful how they manage to get produce out of the rocky ground in some parts of the Island. The wives of the fishermen will walk miles from the coast in order to see after their plots of land. You meet them coming back to Chuaka in the evening. Many have settled down away from the coast and have nice little plantations with coconut trees and clove trees. Many of the Wahadimu are engaged in the wood trade, cutting down the trees that are used for building and firewood and which grow in the inlets of the sea. These poles are landed at Chuaka and then carried round to Zanzibar in dhows which you see lying off the market-place in Chuaka Bay, on the east coast of the Island.

Their houses are well built. At one time theirs were some of the best built wattle and daub houses on the Island. Many of the men seem to me to be men of simple life and industrious habits, real workers. They are friendly people when once their shyness of strangers has worn off, and they reciprocate friend-

liness on your part. That has been my experience.

As for their religion, what will be said in the chapter on popular Mohammedanism will largely apply to them. I have heard the Muezzin outside the large mosque in Chuaka giving the call to prayer in a very unorthodox way. I do not suppose many who repeat the prayer know the meaning of all that they are saying, however fervently they say Amen at the end. They certainly could not give you a grammatical account of the words they use. On one occasion in Chuaka I saw a lot of boys learning the Koran at a Koran School. The teacher was not there. I had a long and interesting chat with the boys about their studies, and then I asked them if they would read a page to me. They agreed, and the boy read the page in front of him, but, though he was fluent enough, to this day I do not know whether his eyes were on the words he was pronouncing with his lips. It was the chapter of Joseph, and he knew the pronunciation by heart. I asked them the meaning of an Arabic word at the beginning of another chapter. They said they did not know. I then told them to ask their teacher, and they replied, "He does not know either." Now, as they had told me that their teacher was very free with the cane, perhaps they were getting some of their own back. But it is quite probable that it was true. The correct recitation of the words of the Koran is meritorious. Education to them means being able to read the Koran right through, often only in this mechanical parrot-like fashion. I was sorry for those little lads condemned to sit day after day for years on the veranda of their teacher's house, engaged in such a wearisome and uninspiring task. Let us hope there is something meritorious in it. The memory is trained, the habit of application formed, and after all it is obedience to an authority which they consider to be divine. But even the most charitable heart must be forced to admit that in such

an education there is little inspiring power or spiritual enlightenment.

The largest element of the population of Zanzibar is those who are descended from the slaves introduced by the slave-dealers in the past. They hail from all parts of Africa, mainly East and Central Africa. They are divided into two groups: (1) *Wakulia*, those who were brought to Zanzibar in their lifetime, and (2) *Wazalia*, those who were born in Zanzibar of slave parents. Amongst them you will find Mohammedanism and heathenism combined in various degrees. They are all free now in the eyes of the law. Most are quite independent, but some are still connected with their old masters, live in their houses, and work on their plantations. They like to feel that there is some one whom they can regard as their headman. No doubt the Arab who was a kind master is reaping in this way the harvest of his kindness. The tie of a common faith helps to cement this relationship. Wanyasa, Wayao, Wanyema, Wagindo, Wanyamwezi, Wasagara, Wasukuma, Waganda, Wazigua, Wazaramo, are to be found amongst them in various proportions. They tend to exist in groups, in the various districts of the city, have their tribal dances, and often amalgamate in clubs. There is a whole colony from the Comoro Islands called Wangazija. Some of these are fanatical Mohammedans, others have accommodated themselves to European influences and customs and sit very loose to the obligations of their religion. They are to be found in the houses of the Europeans as servants. There is also a colony of the natives of Madagascar.

This element of the population may be divided again into town folk and country folk. Perhaps the latter are the simpler folk, as being less influenced by the curious and confusing jumble of races and ideas which creates the social atmosphere of the town. As you walk through the native quarter, two significant facts impress themselves on your mind: (1) the number of the women;

(2) the scarcity of children. This may be owing to the fact that there was a large number of concubines in the Arab houses before the slaves were set free. When freed many of them were thrown on their own resources, and, as it is against the traditions of the African for a woman to live by herself they naturally, whenever possible, attached themselves to a man. The moral condition of the town is very low. Divorce is so easy to the Mohammedan that I have been told that, in some districts, it would be difficult to find many married couples who had been faithful to one another for any length of time. The women are often averse to child-bearing. They say it makes them grow old before their time ; and so when threatened with child-bearing they think nothing of procuring abortion. Add to this the dissoluteness of the men, and it is no wonder that children are scarce.

An old resident of Zanzibar told me that he believes that the original Swahili population are slowly dying out, and that he rested his hopes for the future of Zanzibar and for Christianity in Zanzibar, (1) on the sterility of large numbers of the Mohammedan population, and (2) on the introduction of labour from the mainland, from tribes unaffected by Mohammedanism and the low moral tone of the Island. Our most hopeful work may be amongst this new element. There are fewer hindrances, but unfortunately the men come alone, and, as it is very difficult for a man in Africa to do his own housework, these men often form temporary alliances with Zanzibar women and become through them contaminated with the evil moral atmosphere of the place. Thorough acquaintance with the actual condition of affairs as to home life in Zanzibar would act as a salutary check on those at home who to-day are endeavouring to loosen the tie which bind man and woman together in wedlock. And it is difficult to understand how any European, who really understands the condition of things in Zanzibar, can justify himself

in adding to the moral corruption by his own dissolute life.

It is obvious that when so many Africans of various tribes meet together, there will be a curious and puzzling jumble of customs and ideas. Some adhere to their old and inherited traditions and are hardly touched by the atmosphere of Mohammedanism which prevails everywhere. Others have made some sort of compromise, so that it is difficult to tell which has the greater influence over their lives, Mohammedanism or heathenism. Many of their teachers seem quite satisfied with a profession of Islam and do not interfere with the more heathenish side of the life of their converts; in fact they make profit out of these ideas by the sale of amulets and talismans and medicines, which it is difficult to distinguish from white magic. Many of these teachers claim to be specialists in dealing with witchcraft, and as the belief in witchcraft widely prevails, they reap no small financial gain from their wares. Now that Western customs and ideas are coming in with a rush, other influences are at work. There are guilds which seem to exist for the most part for the purpose of imitating European manners, often with very amusing and grotesque results. European dances can be seen in the native quarters, and it is very doubtful whether the natives have reached a stage at which such dances are morally harmless. It is no uncommon thing to hear two natives walking together and speaking what they think is English. When they quarrel they use terms which they have borrowed from the European. It is to be hoped that they do not always realize the meaning of the words which they employ. It is possible that there is a brighter side to this habit of imitation and that they derive benefit as well as harm from their contact with the West. Imitation is said to be the sincerest form of flattery. It would be an interesting experiment to see what would be the result if a native community could be brought into contact only with the better

side of Western civilization. They are by no means blind to our hypocrisies and inconsistencies. Let us hope that, at the same time, they are conscious of whatever virtues we possess. Large numbers of them are house servants and have great opportunities of seeing the European as he is. On the whole perhaps the European receives from them the degree of respect which his general conduct deserves. But he would indeed be a prophet who could foresee what the ultimate result of this curious intermingling of races and creeds will be.

The Indians.—Another important element in the population is the Indian. They have been in the Island for centuries, and their language has affected Swahili more than any other language save Arabic. Naturally, Arabic terms which are common to Hindustani and Arabic are very prevalent. The Indian would naturally use all the Arabic words which he found in Swahili, that he knew, to the exclusion of Bantu equivalents, and in this way he assisted in the process which has always been going on, the enrichment of Swahili by the introduction of Arabic terms. A little knowledge of Hindustani confirms this. These Indians come mostly from Bombay and Cutch, but not entirely, and Gujerati is spoken by many of them, but lately I have come to the conclusion that, for general use, Hindustani is the more serviceable language. The Government, however, in the *Gazette* prints important notices in English, Arabic, and Gujerati.

These Indians may for general purposes be divided into two groups, the *Mohammedans* and the *Hindoos*. Here I only intend to give a brief sketch of them, as later on I hope to include a description of the Indian population given to me by an educated Christian Indian who for some years was resident in Zanzibar. What is written here is merely the impression produced on the European by the Indian life in Zanzibar with which he comes into contact. The *Hindoos* have their temples,

their holy cows, and a place on the shore where they burn their dead, not far from Kiungani. They are generally called Banyans by the Swahili population. Those of higher caste are mainly merchants. Among the lower castes you find craftsmen of various kinds, coachmen, barbers and cobblers. They eat no flesh. They bring their wives with them to Zanzibar. They come and go, and like most of the Indians do not regard Zanzibar as a permanent home. It is objected against the Indians sometimes, that they spend very little in the Island beyond what is required for the necessaries of life, and when they return home, take whatever money they have made with them. I do not know however whether this is altogether true. They have always seemed to me a quiet and inoffensive people, quite content to be left alone and carry on their business in their own way. The tone of contempt in which they are sometimes referred to is due mainly to the fact that they are Hindoos, and so considered by the Mohammedan population to be unbelievers. But they certainly render useful service to the community and possibly are less deserving of contempt than some of their detractors.

The Mohammedan Indians outnumber the Hindoos. They are mostly merchants and store-keepers. They serve as middlemen between European merchants and the native population, and are a very useful element in the population for that reason. Many are also needed for the wants of the Indian population. The Khojas are perhaps the most important. They are Mohammedans of the Shia sect, but there are elements of Hinduism in their beliefs and practices. They almost deify Ali and regard the Aga Khan as a kind of Incarnation of the Deity by descent from Ali. Their mosque is styled Jamati and is used for festive purposes. There are two sects of them, the difference consisting largely in the degree of respect that they feel towards the Aga Khan. Some of these Khojas are very rich merchants. Their wives accompany them to Zanzibar and are almost

unveiled. And they are more permanent residents in the Island than other Indians.

The Bohoras are another *Shiite* sect. Some are rich merchants, some craftsmen. Their wives are very strictly veiled. They are a quiet reticent folk, and far less affected by European influences than the Khojas. There are two orthodox Mohammedan sects called Maiman and Sindhi, tradesmen in a small way.

There are also numerous Goanese from the Portuguese Colony in Goa and from Mazagan in Bombay. They are Roman Catholics and form the principal element in the congregation in the Roman pro-Cathedral. They are a most useful portion of the population, rendering valuable services as cooks, bakers, washermen, shopkeepers, photographers, doctors and clerks. Such names as Souza, Silva, Gomez, Diaz, and Fernandez are very common. They affect European dress. With very few exceptions they are the only Christian Indians in Zanzibar, and although some of them are prone to drink, the services of the Goanese population could ill be spared. Some are quite excellent.

There is also a small colony of Baluchis. At one time the Sultan's bodyguard consisted of men of this race. This bodyguard now consists of Indians. The Baluchis are mostly clustered together on the road leading out of Zanzibar to the north.

There are a few Ceylonese, whose religion is a form of Buddhism. They are jewellers and dealers in silk and lace. Their influence on the general population is negligible.

Before speaking of the Arabs, it is well to mention that a few Turks, Persians and Egyptians are to be found on the Island, but any influence they may exert is almost swamped by that of the Arabs, who from time immemorial have played a conspicuous part in the history of Zanzibar. The Persians, in very ancient times, settled in the Island, but very little evidence exists of their occupation except perhaps a local custom or so and some ruined mosques and buildings.

The Arabs.—The Arabs from Maskat are the ancient Lords of the Island. The ruling race is connected with the ruling race of Maskat, and the Arabs from Maskat were the principal owners of slaves and of the largest plantations of cocoanut trees and cloves. They also were the heads of the principal caravans into the interior. Their appearance in the Island *in any numbers* seems to have begun towards the close of the seventeenth century. Previously to this Persians, Indians and Arabs from South Arabia played a more conspicuous part. Even to-day there is a considerable Arab element from Yemen, Sheher, and Hadhramaut, many of whom are more or less permanently domiciled, while many others come with the North Monsoon and return at the beginning of the South Monsoon, for purposes of trade. This annual trade has, in all probability, been going on ever since the Island boasted of a population. They trade in salt, shark, dates and a little coffee. Many Somalis come at the same time bringing goats, sheep and cattle. These Somalis are beginning to show signs of contact with the West as they come from the Benadir coast, now in Italian occupation. You will even occasionally meet a Somali Christian, but as a rule they are Mohammedans of a fanatical type.

The Maskat Arabs are divided. Some are Ibadhis and some Sunnis, and there are a few Wahhabis. The court religion is of the Ibadhi sect, who claim their religious descent from the separatists who broke away from Ali when he submitted his claim to human arbitrators. There is no love lost between the Sunnis and Ibadhis.

To me there is always something melancholy about these Maskat Arabs. There is an air of departed grandeur about them. They were once undisputed Lords of the Island and the representatives of civilization to East Africa. Now their power is gone, and to a considerable extent their influence. The bombardment of Zanzibar in 1896 had a far-reaching

effect over the whole of the territory once dominated by them. The guns of the British men-of-war sounded their death knell. Often men of handsome countenance and dignified mien, with a certain grave courtesy and beautiful manners, hospitable and generous, you can see them, on Fridays especially, the Mohammedan Sunday, walking in a stately manner along the streets, with their wonderful turbans, their silver daggers, and their camel-hair burnouses ornamented with gold thread, accompanied by a little group of their kin and their retainers. They always seem to me like a vision from the remote past, the last representatives of a condition of things purely Oriental, which have been and may never be again. The abolition of the slave trade hit them very hard, and many of them are now in the hands of the Indians with their plantations mortgaged up to the hilt. They still carry with them the demeanour of a ruling race. By general consent there are not many highly educated persons among them, and in their general conversation there is a curious blend of noble thoughts with an almost childish credulity. It will be highly interesting to see what will be the effect on these men of close contact with Western manners and ideas, if ever their sense of superiority yields to the inrushing tide of progress and enlightenment. It is impossible not to find in them something to like and even to admire. Perhaps with the new rule of the King of the Hejaz, who has claims to his position which the Sultan of Turkey never possessed, we shall see the beginning of a new state of things.

A mere handful of Europeans, British, French, Portuguese and Germans, a Norwegian or two and some Greeks, exert an influence on the general life of the Island out of all proportion to their numbers, and increase the confusion caused by the mingling together of East and West, and varieties of race and creed. Truly Zanzibar is a wonderful place. And now from the Far East have appeared a few Japanese and Chinese. Here

then we have a large number of people of all nations and kindreds and tongues, bound up together, for good or for evil, in the bundle of life, acting and reacting on one another, and all under a British Protectorate. That brings with it obligations and responsibilities. In the Providence of God, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, the Roman Catholic Mission, and the Society of Friends, represent Christianity to the peoples of the Island. We are compelled to face these responsibilities, and however great the difficulties are, and however insuperable they may appear to be, we are the instruments whom it has pleased God to call and send as His witnesses to all those in the Island who either do not as yet know Him, or serve Him with an imperfect knowledge of His ways, or of the salvation which He freely offers to all the children of men. If we make but few converts now, we can at least prepare the way for greater victories in the years to come, so that others through our labours may succeed where we have seemed to fail.

CHAPTER II

The Religious Ideas of the Africans

IT is not altogether an easy matter to give an accurate account of the religious ideas of the East African people, viz. of the religious ideas which are entirely African, because the East African has been in touch with Mohammedanism for so many centuries, and has often lived in a Mohammedan atmosphere which has influenced his religious ideas to a very large extent. This is notably the case in Zanzibar and in the coast towns. Nevertheless, in dealing with the African in Zanzibar it is never wise to forget that he is an African first and a Mohammedan afterwards. You will only understand his type of Mohammedanism if you have some acquaintance with the dominant religious ideas of the African. As far as my experience goes, these dominant ideas are as follows:—

(1) There is first a vague indefinite idea of God somewhere in the background. It is an idea that does not enter very largely into their everyday life, but it is there.

(2) Then, very much more important, there are the spirits of the dead, the "wazimu," who are believed to possess great influence over the lives of the living.

(3) Then there are spiritual beings or forces, it is difficult to say which, not necessarily evil, but invisible forces, which must be recognized, worshipped and pro-

pitated ; and which have local habitations. To neglect them is to suffer unpleasant consequences. This belief corresponds with what is called "animism."

(4) Then there are unseen spiritual beings, who are in intimate connection with families and individuals. They can possess the bodies of people, not necessarily, but often, with harmful results. This belief accounts for the general custom of exorcism, which does not seem to consist so much in the attempt to *expel* the spirit, as to make the spirit a friendly tenant rather than a hostile one. Exorcism seems therefore hardly the right word. These spirits are called "pepo."

(5) Then there is the large circle of ideas connected with medicine. Medicine pure and simple, talismans and amulets, and divining, and black and white magic. It is all mixed up with religion. Even amongst the tribes of the mainland, the native medicine man will begin his incantation with the words, "The Great Medicine Man is God," and I should not care to say that this phrase is purely the result of contact with Mohammedanism.

(6) Then there is a conception of the human soul as something which exists in the body or some part of the body, and which is capable of existence apart from the body.

(7) Then there is a view of nature which consists in regarding nature as a round of *ordinary* events, but everything extraordinary, viz. twins, malformation of the human body, eclipses, disease and death, as unnatural and due to some malignant agency.

In this chapter let us consider briefly these seven dominant ideas, keeping in mind that what is written is only a sketch, and does not pretend to be a complete account of the subject. Witchcraft is dealt with in a separate chapter.

(I) **The Idea of God.**—In Zanzibar the Mohammedan conception of God has largely ousted the African conception. In one respect the Mohammedan idea

resembles the African, it is an idea of God in which force or power is predominant, and this may account for the easiness with which Mohammedanism makes converts. The Christian idea makes greater demands on the moral and spiritual elements in human nature. The African idea may be illustrated by three remarks made to me by Africans with regard to natural events.

First, *thunder*; they say "God thunders." Thunder is the voice of God, an objective manifestation of His Presence in the sky. It is something astonishing and overwhelming, a manifestation of force and power, something to overawe the feeble spirit of man, an expression of power without moral significance. The African feels as if he is in the presence of an angry chief, who has absolute power over him for life and death. Perhaps he thinks that God is *in* the thunder.

Secondly, *natural catastrophes* such as famine or disease. The first instinct of the African is to defer to the spirits of the dead. He gets into communication with the spirits of the dead through mediums, who are in touch with them. He asks the reason of what is happening. He seeks advice. He offers sacrifice in case of offence. This is his first thought. But if all these means *fail*, then he will say, "It is the hand of God," like the Egyptian magicians. In fact I used to point out to them that the only events that they attributed to God were unavoidable evils, and that their idea of God was that of a cruel force, to which they must submit. They could propitiate spirits of any kind, but I never came across an attempt to propitiate God, nor do I remember ever hearing from an African in the early days of my life in the Mission anything that would point to a belief that natural catastrophes occurred on account of the *righteous* indignation of God on account of their sins. And I lived among them during a great locust famine. Again it was a case only of the manifestation of power or force.

And thirdly, when I was discussing with them the

custom of infanticide, in the case of twins or malformation, and attempting to prove that it was illogical, I argued naturally that the gift of life was a proof that the child was designed by the Author of life to live, and that they had no right to deprive the child of the gift of life which God had been pleased to bestow; and then I added that God knew before the child was born that the child would not be a normal child, and that nevertheless the gift of life had been bestowed. To my surprise, the African replied that God did *not* know. Now that interested me. It seems to show that God to them has limitations, and that in these cases something interferes with His exercise of power, something which He cannot control; but what the exact agency was that was at work and in this case produced the abnormal I could not find out. They were quite convinced that it was an evil agency. The result is fear, and the child is not allowed to live. It is regarded as a living power of evil threatening the welfare of the community.

(2) **The Soul.**—The African would accept the view that man consists of two parts, the soul and the body, that the soul is the more important part, that death consists in the separation of the soul and body, and that the soul survives the separation. There is much difference in their opinions as to the part of the body in which the soul resides. Some seem to think that it resides in the whole body, and this may account for their dislike to being operated upon. I know of one man whose life was saved by an operation. His leg had been mangled by a crocodile. It was amputated and he recovered. But he never forgave the operator. Part of his "wholeness" was gone for ever! Some seem to think that the soul resides in the heart, or the head, or the eye, or the blood. This last view is illustrated by the custom of blood brotherhood. The belief that it resides in the eye accounts for the belief of the evil eye, the soul being in this case a malignant,

invisible force which uses the eye as its instrument for inflicting an injury. So close is the union of soul and body that nail-parings and hair after shaving is scrupulously removed and hidden lest an enemy should get possession of it, and do your life or soul deadly harm. Europeans have sometimes wondered why their servants have not removed the paper they have used when shaving. The reason is that the servant is afraid of being suspected, if anything happens to you afterwards. Even cannibalism is explained as grounded on a desire to share the virtues of the deceased. The breath, again, in Bantu as in other languages, is akin to the word used for spirit. *Roho*=the soul, in Swahili is the Arabic *ruhu*, and Hebrew *ruakh*. To tread on a man's shadow may cause him alarm. His photograph may be regarded as something taken from his soul, to say nothing of superstitious fears as to what you may do with the likeness afterwards!

Dreams are thought to be real experiences of the soul when absent from the body. It is dangerous to startle any one in their sleep. The soul may be absent and have no time to return. Nightmare is due to some enemy who is trying to catch your soul while absent from the body, and there are medicine men who claim to be able to restore to its body a soul so captured.

They believe that the soul exists after death. Many customs prove this beyond all doubt. The careful funeral ceremonies in which all members of the family partake, the common funeral feast which they all share, the preservation of parts of the body, "hair and nails," to be inserted in lumps of earth and kept with the relics of other members of the family in a bag in the Chief's hut, the sacrificial feasts and offering at the grave, the belief that they actually see the dead and converse with them in dreams, that these spirits can enter into the bodies of animals, the belief that they have some sort of influence over the lives of the living, helping them or injuring them as they please—all confirms this statement.

Sometimes natives have been known to mock the dead in order to deter them from returning to harm them. It is even said that the burning of witches was due to a belief that in this way the souls of the witches would be prevented from returning to injure the living, which they assuredly would do if buried in the ordinary way. Then there is the desire of the dead to be *remembered* by the living. They are resentful if forgotten, and show their resentment by causing sickness or loss to the forgetful person. The Bondeis believed that the spirits of the dead, who lived on a mountain called Mlinga, considered to be sacred, helped the living in their wars; they declared that they heard the spirit war drums beating. This belief gave point to the remark made to me by an old heathen after the return of our staff from Tabora and the expulsion of the Germans from the country, "You and your dead have conquered." Our "dead" had helped us. One curious case I remember of a man who had shot an antelope and found a python in possession of the body. He went home and asked the medicine man what it meant. He was asked if he had completed all the funeral rites to his deceased relations, and answered that there was the sacrifice of a goat still owing to his grandmother's spirit. He was then told that the spirit of his grandmother resented his neglect, had entered the body of the python and stolen his antelope. The funeral ceremonies, needless to say, were soon completed. The man was a hunter.

I cannot say that I found much sign that they thought the soul was capable of *moral* growth. Their proverbs, however, show signs of moral wisdom.

(3) *The Spirits of the Dead.*—I should say that the African is more afraid of injuries to the unseen part of him which he calls his soul than he is of injuries to his body. Of *moral* injury to his soul—apart from Mohammedan influences—there is little evidence. Moral wrong in his eyes is to offend the law or custom of the

tribe or village or family. A bad man to them is a man who does injury to others through force of jealousy or passion or covetousness. He has a feeling he has done wrong afterwards, and he has an uneasy conscience. But his real terror is lest his *roho* should suffer from some invisible power, like witchcraft, evil spirits or the spirits of the dead. It is curious how they fear the spirits of the dead, even if the departed have been quiet, peaceful, harmless people while alive. Often I have asked them, "Why should you suppose they have changed and want to hurt you now? They never injured you in real life." It is a belief that dies hard. You can never be quite certain that it has vanished. Sickness or misfortune will set them thinking, or a dream of the departed will revive the dying superstition.

The spirits of the dead are not always thought of as harmful. There is a friendly communion possible with the spirits of the dead. There are common meals at which the dead are believed to be present, and, after death, there is something of the same kind during the period of mourning. Certain trades like that of the smith and the potter are hereditary, and when sickness occurs among the children of the deceased smith or potter, it is thought to be due to the annoyance of the spirit because the trade is not being carried on in the family. Neglect exasperates, remembrance propitiates, the spirits of the dead. Such remembrance very easily passes into a kind of worship, in which the spirits of the dead are propitiated by prayers and offerings.

A general idea of the state of mind of the ordinary heathen African can be formed by considering what passes through his mind when he is suffering from an illness which does not immediately yield to treatment. The illness to him is not natural. Therefore the cause is not natural. He searches for the cause—perhaps with the help of the medicine man, and generally selects one of three invisible causes, not his sins or past indul-

gences, but witchcraft, evil spirits or the spirits of the dead. His feeble conception of his soul, his vague, indefinite and almost impersonal conception of God, are poor barriers against the evil powers which surround him. Is it surprising that he needs the support of charms and talismans whether he be heathen or Mohammeden? He wants something visible and tangible and objective with which to sustain himself, the only difference being that the Mohammedan introduces the name of God, some knowledge of the divine attributes, and verses from the Koran, into the idea of the talisman; but even to him the virtue of the talisman is the talisman itself, rather than his faith in God. The virtue is inherent in the talisman. He will write out the verse of the Koran he requires on a plate, then mix the written words with water and swallow it. Until the African's ideas of God and of his soul, and of the power of faith in God, are different from those which he has inherited from the past, it seems unlikely that he will abandon the use of talismans and protective charms, and it is cruel to deprive him of them.

It may well be that the habit of continuing the same name in a family may be also due to this prevailing idea that the spirits of the dead are near at hand, are friendly if honoured and remembered, hostile if neglected or forgotten.

(4) Then there is another kind of spiritual force—the mizimu. The prefix, mi, is one used for the plural of the words for trees of all kinds, and these spirits are thought of largely as inhabiting trees. Now if it were not for the fact that the word is pure Bantu we might think that here we only have the Arab Jinn in another form, but the word for Jinn, "jinni," is used by the natives of the mainland and Zanzibar as well as mizimu, and this rather points to the conclusion that there is a distinction in the African mind. The mizimu are feared, worshipped by sacrifice, and propitiated. Often these trees in which they reside are near a village and

the inhabitant of the tree is regarded as having an influence over the village, mostly of a malignant kind. He needs keeping in a good temper. If unrecognized or unknown, he has unpleasant ways of making his presence felt. Here is a mainland ceremony of propitiation given to me by a mainland African. Something has happened in a village, a misfortune, illness, etc. They make a path to the foot of the tree and sweep it carefully. The men, women, and children are all present. It is a corporate act. The head of the village brings a sacrifice, part of which is offered to the mizimu, with these words:—

“ O father, we did not know that this was thy dwelling place. We have sinned and we repent. We are all here with our wives and our little ones. This is the offering which we bring to you. Oh, give us life.”

Then a part is offered up in dumb show and the rest of the sacrifice is eaten by the assembled company.

Now there are two theories about these mizimu known to me between which the reader may choose until the point is cleared up. One is, that we are dealing with “ animism,” that there is a living power in the tree which is either impersonal or very vaguely personal. The African’s idea of personality is of the flimsiest kind. He is part of a group, one of a swarm. The word “ father ” here would merely mean a complimentary term addressed to a superior force, which demanded submission, quite apart from any moral reasons.

The other explanation is this. That after death the soul of the departed gradually grows weaker and weaker. The voice of the spirits is said to be of a thin type. It may even be that, as the remembrance of the spirit by the living becomes weaker, the spirit wanes and wanes until at last the personal element disappears ; but the life force still exists, and is naturally malignant because its present condition is due to the forgetfulness of the living. It seeks a habitation near the living and then sets to work to secure recognition. This theory

fits the facts, but it is perhaps a trifle too ingenious!

These trees exist everywhere and the dwellers in them can be made use of either in a friendly or a hostile way. The medicine man possesses magical control over them and the Mohammedan medicine man boasts that he can shut them up in a bag all through the month of Ramadhan, thus securing peace. I have often asked them why they did not confer a permanent benefit on the Island by locking them up for good and all. But the trade is too lucrative!

(5) Then there are the demons called "pepo." These pepo may be called Sickness demons, because they are mainly connected with sickness. They are dwellers in the bodies of people and can be inherited. They are not necessarily evil. I should prefer to call them "touchy." The waganga wa pepo, or devil doctors, do not appear to claim to expel them but to appease them. The patient is called "the chair" on which the spirit sits, thus showing that the idea is not that of possession for a time, but that the patient is the home of the spirit. Sickness is caused by the demon because annoyed. The drums are said to cause the demon to enter the head of the patient, and then in answer to questions he announces his name and the reason for the trouble he has caused. Gifts suitable to the demon in question (there are many kinds) are promised, and a devil dance if the patient gets better. The demon is then considered to be a good tenant instead of a troublesome one, until further annoyance is given. This belief has a very strong hold on the people. It is probable that the diviner who says a pepo is the cause of the sickness, and the medicine man who professes to appease the pepo, are in collusion, for it is a lucrative trade. But it is equally true that the people in such a state do extraordinary things. It may of course be mesmerism, hypnotism or suggestion; and those possessed have been familiar from childhood with the ritual, and know what is expected of them. A

pepo dance in Mohammedan Zanzibar attracts large crowds, and the Mohammedan teachers themselves are not at all averse to attending them.

Who are these pepo? They are more akin to the Arab jinn than anything. In fact the words seem almost interchangeable. The jinns are nature demons. Perhaps they owe their origin to something in nature which strikes terror into the primitive heart. The weird solitude of the wilderness, wild rocky places with little vegetation, the glow of the setting sun on the bare branches of the uncanny baobab trees, or the same tree illuminated by the silvery beams of the moon, dark silent pools in the gloomy shades of a thicket, caves which seem to suggest an invisible tenant—all these lend themselves to a primitive imagination under the influence of chronic fear. It is so easy to offend unintentionally. Sometimes these spirits are said to drop on people who are passing their lair. In process of time you can almost tell by the look of the place that it is a place of demons in the eyes of the native. But there seems to be nothing moral in the conception. The Satan of the Mohammedan who whispers evil thoughts into the heart of man is quite another sort of person. The pepo is Bantu, I think, not Arabian. He is first cousin to the jinn but a homelier type. That is only my guess, however.

There is the permanent pepo, and he can be a protective spirit or even beneficent. I was told by a teacher in the North of Pemba that he had seen an Arab having a thorough search in his house for the family pepo which had somehow got lost, under the impression that unless he was found luck would desert the house. Perhaps it is best in accord with the facts to distinguish between two kinds, the permanent and protective, though touchy, pepo, and the more malignant type who attacks, knocks down and possesses a person's body for a time until appeased by drums and dances and a feast,

There are other places where pepo take up their abode, noticeably cross-roads, and offerings will often be seen in these places, mud cakes, fag ends of sugar cane, eggshells and ashes, a feast for the pepo. There is almost a touch of humour about it: "This is all you are going to get, but I must give it you or you will make a nuisance of yourself." The medicine man, too, speaks quite familiarly to the pepo he is appeasing. He is almost an old crony to judge by the conversation.

You also see heaps of grass by the wayside. Each passer-by has dropped a handful. It is a pepo's dwelling place. To pass by without a sign of recognition is dangerous, but the sign of recognition is only a handful of grass.

Those spirits whether of the dead or spirits of another kind can be useful or harmful. They can serve you or injure you. You can even make use of them to injure others as the medicine man claims to use them. If any one has injured you, you can secure something belonging to that person and go to the spirit tree or habitation and ask the spirit to take the matter in hand and avenge you of your adversary. You take your offering—it may be incense. You can also ask a blessing, viz. a woman can pray to bear a child.

It is interesting to see how Mohammedanism affects these beliefs. There are the tombs of their saints who have led such holy lives that they have been given power to bestow benefits on mankind called "Karama"; but it is observable that these Karama are of two kinds—you can ask a blessing on your friend or a curse on your enemy. So gradually and almost imperceptibly does one African belief pass into another, that it is very difficult to decide what exactly is the difference between the wazimu, the mizimu, and the pepo. Often they seem to merge into one another. But they share one feature in common. They are all dangerous and require careful treatment. They are like people with grievances, but they compose the invisible world as conceived

by the timid African soul. It is a world of ghosts, nature spirits and demons, and it is this fearsome world in which they live. How else account for all the ills that African flesh is heir to and to which he can assign no obvious cause? His soul, his life, is so frail a thing, and so easily captured or injured, and God is so far away, an absentee landlord, who very rarely intervenes, and then only to add to the sorrow and sufferings of life.

And so it has come about that their souls are on the *qui vive* for maleficent influences and that every unusual occurrence sets their hearts beating. The abnormal, the unusual, the unprecedented, startles them and fills them with suspicion. Sudden diseases, the birth of twins, cutting of the upper teeth first, the birth of a child whose mother has not been through the customary rites—all these things and innumerable others, excite their superstitious fears. Some evil thing is at work. What a magnificent field for the seller of charms and talismans, for the medicine man, for the man who wishes to win reputation as a dealer in white magic, for the old woman whose day is over and who sees that her only chance of achieving notoriety is to prey upon the fears and superstitions of men, and who is determined that if she cannot retain the affection of her fellows, she will at any rate win the notoriety possessed by the person supposed to have uncanny knowledge of the unseen world, and the magical power of using its secrets to gain her own ends.

CHAPTER III

Witchcraft and Magic

BELIEF in witchcraft and magic seems to be universal amongst the people of Africa, and even in Zanzibar and Pemba, in spite of the presence of Islam, has a very strong hold on the minds of the people. Mohammed himself evidently believed in it, is said to have suffered from the consequences of it, and to have been given the two last chapters of the Koran in order to enable him to recover from these consequences. In fact these two last chapters are considered to be of great value as a preservative against witchcraft, and are constantly inscribed on talismans or recited for this purpose.

Nor is it wonderful that there should exist such a belief; granted the absence of scientific knowledge, the absence of a faith in the protecting care of God sufficiently strong to act as an antidote, the obvious presence of evil wills in men, and the prevailing belief in the existence of invisible and dangerous forces and spirits, and all this joined with a strong belief in the vulnerability of the soul or life of man, and you have all the conditions required for the practice of magic and witchcraft, and for the belief in the dangerous power of such practices. Given the belief that the soul exists in the body, the skull, the blood, or the hair, and it is easy to understand how power can be gained over the soul by the

possession of the hair and blood and skull and body. This power can even be gained by anything that has come into contact with the body, such as part of the clothes worn on the body, or by making figures and representations of the body. A photograph is a source of danger, and even a man's shadow or name can be used in order to do him an injury. The African believes in these powers, and he not only guards his person, his village, and his plantation against them by charms and talismans, but he will employ these powers in order to protect himself from their use by others; and the victory goes to the man whose magic is strongest.

His life largely consists of wants and hopes and fears. He wants a good harvest, good hunting, good fishing; he wants security for his house and person and property; he wants health and recovery from sickness; he wants to win his case before the judge, he wants to catch a thief, or recover stolen property; he wants a man who has injured him to be removed from his neighbourhood, or to be removed altogether; he wants to stir up strife in a neighbour's house in order to win his neighbour's wife; he wants to recover the lost affection of his own wife; he wants to win the love of a woman; he is jealous of another's prosperity and wants to deprive him of that prosperity; he wants to be safe from all the injuries which others are trying to inflict on him; he is going on a journey and wants to reach his goal in safety, and start on a propitious day; he is going into battle and wants protection from the weapons of the enemy; and he fears the pepo, the mizimu, wild beasts and the wizard or witch.

What an opening here for the medicine man! The medicine man himself believes in the power of magic. He is not only a herbalist. He has a knowledge of poisons. The same man is quite prepared to use medicine proper, white magic, or black magic, to save life or to destroy it, to help or to hinder; and if he is a Moslem he will cast over all his practices, good and

bad, the glamour of the Mohammedan faith. I know this as a fact. A very suspicious death took place in Pemba. The police investigated it and searched the house of a medicine man who was suspected, and discovered some documents forming part of the medicine man's stock-in-trade. These documents they asked me to decipher in order to discover if they contained evidence of a nature to justify prosecution. My reply was that there was no evidence to show that poison had been used in order to destroy life, or that any means had been employed which a civilized court of justice would consider capable of causing death, but there was plenty of evidence of a desire to injure on the part of the people who resort to the medicine man, and of a belief on the part of the medicine man that the means he employed were effectual. But what astounded me was the truly wonderful blending of religion and devilry. The books were sometimes in Arabic, sometimes in Swahili in Arabic characters. They were badly written. The author was neither a scholar nor a penman. Swahili in Arabic characters is difficult to read at any time, but in this case it was more difficult than ever. The books contained parts of the Koran, and constant use of the Name of God. Every receipt, good or evil, began with the Bismillah. The Archangels were constantly mentioned. There were curious names of devils, and quaint talismanic signs and letters. There was astrology. The answer to be given to a man or woman who wanted to do good or evil depended on the planet that was in the ascendant. The man had a complete knowledge of the desires of his fellow man, good or bad, and was prepared to gratify them. He knew their fears and played upon them. He encouraged their hopes. As I said before, they claim to have spirits under their control whom they can restrain, or send on their errands in order to injure some one. These spirits can enter into the bodies of wild animals and kill the enemy of the man who has applied for

medicine. The fact that they "tie up the bags" in which the spirits dwell, in the month of the Great Fast of Ramadhan, seems to show that they realize that their trade is not a holy one, as the practice of it would deprive them of plenary indulgence gained by the Fast.

Magical means are employed in order to secure something beneficial. Pastor Meinhof quotes cases when water is boiled in order to secure rain, and tells how the women put on men's clothes when their husbands are absent in war time in order to strengthen and encourage their husbands. Such actions are considered to have real magical power. They want something to happen and they imagine that they bring about the realization of their desires by such symbolic acts. So a man will wear an eagle's feather, or the claw of a lion or a panther, in order to gain strength and power over others in act and speech. Amulets and talismans are supposed to possess real power to protect the wearer, whether composed merely of natural substances, or extracts from the Koran. The house, the village, the children, the fruit trees are protected in this way. A curious case of symbolic magic was in the books I mentioned. A man and his wife had quarrelled. The man went to the medicine man for a remedy, and was told to place a red stone in the hot embers on the hearth! Then love would return. The symbolism is obvious. But the same medicine man might sell a love philtre in order to enable the man who buys it to win the affection of his neighbour's wife, so easily does white magic, which aims at securing some benefit or warding off some danger, pass into black magic, which is dangerous, and intended to be so. The man who can secure the benefit by his white magic is without difficulty supposed to be able to secure the deprivation of the benefit.

In times of sickness and especially in certain forms of sickness the African mind turns to the thought of witchcraft. Few were thought to die a natural death.

Jealousy and revenge are known to be powerful motives, not easily subdued, and magical powers were at the disposal of the jealous and revengeful man and woman. Medicine is placed on the threshold of a man's door, or in his plantation, or on the road by which he goes to his field. It will harm only him for whom it is intended. It is not poison. It is sufficient that he pass over it.

Sometimes we find sympathetic magic. For instance, in these books I found two cases. A man wanted the death of his enemy. He is told to get a piece of the garment of his foe, and a live fish, and then to bury them both together with appropriate words. In a day or two the man would be dead. The death of the live fish would affect the living man through the medium of his own garment.

There was another case when a man is told to make a small image of his enemy and then damage it, saying certain words. A woman was once seen at a funeral, who instead of casting earth from near the grave into the grave, carried it off. Many wanted to know what she was going to do with it and for whom it was intended. A whole book would scarcely contain the various forms which black and white magic assume. All that is attempted here is merely to give sufficient instances to throw light on the motives and ideas which underlie the belief and the practice of it in the African mind.

The most developed form of witchcraft in Zanzibar and Pemba is the "Guilds." The native account of these guilds is more or less as follows. They consist of people, men or women, initiated into the secrets of witchcraft. You have to purchase initiation into the guild by the offering of one of your near relations. It may be your wife or your child. Some of the details are too gruesome to be related. There are suggestions of cannibalism. By initiation you seem to gain the power of becoming invisible to the uninitiated. These guilds have intercommunication and regular meeting-

places. The time of meeting is at night. Graveyards are frequented and the members of the guild claim the power to extract bodies from the graves without the process of disinterment. On one occasion the authorities permitted the opening of a grave from which it was believed that the body had been removed. The body was found intact inside the shroud, as was to be expected, but did this shatter the belief in the power? Not a bit of it. It was stated that all present, clergy, police and medical men, were under the influence of mesmerism and saw what they were meant to see and nothing more. The body was not there, they only thought it was there!

If you combine the African belief concerning sickness and death as being mainly due to magical causes, with the belief in the power of magic and in the existence of wizards and witches possessing this power, with the desire of notoriety and influence over others, with the very vague belief in beneficent spiritual powers which are mightier than maleficent invisible powers, with the horror of darkness, with the undoubted existence and use of virulent poisons, you will have a fairly accurate idea of the atmosphere of fear in which the superstitious and unscientific mind of the ordinary African is enveloped. True religion, sound education, and perhaps dealing with all who claim the power of witchcraft as guilty of a crime in the eyes of the civil authorities, seem to be the only efficacious remedies. Patients in a native hospital suffering from a well-known disease, which only yields slowly to medical treatment, have been known to entreat dismissal in order to go through a course of native treatment and medicine against witchcraft; if this is refused and they recover, they will even then account for their recovery by saying that the European doctor has better witchcraft than the author of the disease. Nevertheless faith in European medicine is growing rapidly. Admirable work is being done in the various hospitals. Of all those

who are taking part in the creation of a new state of things, no class of men or women have a greater claim to the gratitude of future generations of Africans than the doctors and nurses of the Mission and Government Hospitals.

Such, then, are some of the beliefs with which we have to contend, and to which is due that look of fear you so often see lurking in African eyes. The spirit of fear ; to exorcise that by various means, is one of the tasks of religion and civilization in the years to come. There has been marked progress. The fear of ghosts, tree spirits, evil spirits, "pepo and jinns," the fear of witchcraft, with the accompaniment of talismans, charms, amulets and divining, are slowly yielding to the entrance of light. Many who once feared now treat all these things with indifference and even ridicule. But these beliefs are not dead, though they may be moribund. You cannot hurry the East. Human nature still remains the same, subject to the same passions, the same desires, and the same fears. As long as envy, malice, jealousy, revenge and covetousness remain in African hearts, so long will there be a danger of the recurrence of all these practices, which claim to be able to assist the evil soul to attain its desires and to gratify its lusts ; and to show the timid soul how to guard itself against the hatred and the spite of its real and imaginary adversaries.

CHAPTER IV

What Mohammedans in Zanzibar Believe about Our Lord

WE now come to the ideas that are prevalent in the minds of the Mohammedan population with regard to Christianity. . These thoughts centre mainly round the Person of our Lord, whom, as a prophet, they profess to revere. The principal source of these ideas is the Koran. A secondary source is the traditions.

They call our Lord the Son of Mary, and believe the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Adam, they say, had neither father nor mother. Our Lord had a mother but no father, and Mohammed had both father and mother. There is an orthodox tradition that both our Lord and His Mother were born untainted by sin. The tradition runs as follows. "Satan declares that he had managed to pollute, by his touch, every child of man at its birth save Jesus and His Mother."

With regard to the Nativity of our Lord, full information can be found in the Koran, in the chapter called "Mary" (cf. Rodwell's edition in Everyman's Library, pp. 117-124). This chapter also includes an account of the birth of John the Baptist. The

sources of these accounts seem to have been floating Christian traditions, the Apocryphal Gospels, and personal intercourse with such people as the monk Boheira and Christian slaves in Mecca and elsewhere. If we knew more of Christianity in North Africa and Abyssinia in Mohammed's days than we do, we might get a clearer view of the sort of beliefs that were rife among the kind of Christian folk with whom Mohammed had intercourse. Waraka, the cousin of Mohammed's first wife, and an intimate friend of Mohammed, is said to have been well acquainted with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. In his earliest journeys Mohammed travelled as far as Bostra, and must have become more or less acquainted with the Christianity prevalent in that region. He said that he had heard a Christian Bishop preaching at the market of Okadh, and that he had been impressed by what he heard. There are passages in the Koran which it is hard to suppose were not inspired by his knowledge of Christian teaching, though they scarcely amount to quotations. Christian teaching he approached with a mind prone to credit the marvellous, but very sceptical with regard to anything that seemed to conflict with his conception of the unity of God. This scepticism we must regard as natural to one who had been converted from the idolatrous tendencies of his fellow countrymen. He had no patience with any one who seemed to associate others with God. He teaches, therefore, that our Lord began to be in the womb of the Blessed Virgin by an act of the divine Will. God said, Be, and He was. He was created, not begotten, and because of the creative word to which He owed His existence, He is called the Word of God. It is therefore neither safe nor wise to make use of such a name as a proof of our Lord's Divinity in talking with Mohammedans about the Incarnation. They accept the Name, but deny its implication. Mohammed denied the divine Sonship and the divinity of our Lord. He uses expressions like "servant," "with

God's permission," in order to make this quite clear. Although born of a Virgin without a human father, our Lord was a mere man. This was his belief. To believe anything else was inconsistent with the Unity of God as he conceived it. Our Lord, to the Mohammedans of Zanzibar, is one of the prophets, one of the greatest, but created after the likeness of Adam; Mohammed they consider the last prophet and the seal of the prophets.

Of the manger birth, the Angelic hymn, the visit of the Shepherds and the Magi, there is no mention in the Koran. The manger birth he may have regarded as being derogatory to the dignity of a Messenger of God. He believed that the Virgin Birth was no secret confined to the few who could be trusted with it. It was notorious, and the account in the Koran may be due to the knowledge of later Jewish slanders after the secret had been published to the world. The account of the nativity is embellished with miraculous circumstances which would naturally appeal to such a mind as Mohammed's.

The other chapter of the Koran which requires careful reading is the "Family of Imran" (Rodwell, pp. 388-392). The passage seems to have been the outcome of a controversy with a Christian deputation from Najran, with their Bishop Abu Harith at their head. It should be carefully read with Rodwell's notes. Here Imran is said to be the father of the Virgin. Mary and Elizabeth were sisters, and these, with Jesus, John and Zechariah, make up the family of Imran. Personally I am convinced that Mohammed confused Miriam the sister of Moses with Mary the Mother of Jesus. That does not surprise any one who knows the Arab's wonderful ignorance of chronology, and is borne out by other similar errors in the Koran. In this passage there is an allusion to our Lord's miracles. The healing of a leper, of a man born blind, and the raising of the dead, are combined with the Apocryphal legend of the creation

of the birds from clay, and with the belief that in the cradle our Lord, when only a babe, gave testimony to His Mother's innocence. This confusion is again quite characteristic of the Arab mind, in which the sublime and the ridiculous exist side by side without any suspicion being entertained of their incongruity. The three great miracles, however, are attributed to our Lord without hesitation, but the conclusion we might draw from this as to our Lord's superiority over Mohammed is countered in the Koran by the statement that, as men disbelieved after the witnessing of such miracles, miracles were abandoned as a means of creating belief; and Mohammed was only sent as a "preacher and warner." However, the force of the argument from miracles seems to have proved too strong for later generations of Moslems, and so, in spite of the plain words of the Koran that Mohammed was not empowered to perform miracles, many miracles, mostly of a magical type, have been assigned to him. In Zanzibar he is regarded as a miracle worker.

There is an allusion to the twelve Apostles on page 391 of Rodwell's Koran, but the principal allusion is in the chapter called "The Table," which deserves careful study (Rodwell, p. 499). I have little doubt that the passage refers to the Eucharist; materialized by the tendency of Mohammed's mind. In the traditions the account seems to be a truly astonishing jumble of the feeding of the five thousand, the parable of the Great Supper, the Eucharist, and St. Peter's vision in the Acts of the Apostles. The phrases "recurring festival," "to the first of us and the last of us," seem to show beyond all doubt that there is an allusion to the Eucharist. We wonder if the Bishop of Najran celebrated in Medina on the occasion of his visit, and whether Mohammed heard of it, and made inquiries and was told just so much as the Bishop thought fit to tell him. Anyhow, the Mohammedans believe that our Lord did institute at the Apostles' request a

Table, and a recurring festival, that they might eat from the table and be nourished, and that there was a danger from unworthy reception. But of the real nature of the Feast he knew nothing because he was told nothing. The connection of the Eucharist with the Passion would have been unintelligible to him. He would have rejected the association with indignation and scorn. He did not believe in the Incarnation. He categorically denies the Crucifixion. What could the Eucharist mean to him except the magical feast which he describes in the Koran ?

Again, with regard to our Lord's preaching, it is necessary to remember that the Mohammedan thinks of Mohammed as of a man repeating words which he has been taught. He may forget, then he will be given something better. He may be tempted to mix with the words he has been taught, other words which he has not been taught. The Book is everything. The man is but the mouthpiece of the Book. It is God who wrote the Book, not Mohammed. In the same way our Lord was given the Gospel, David the Psalms, and Moses the Law. The human element is reduced to a voice that repeats a lesson committed to memory. That is the meaning of the words, "We gave Jesus the Son of Mary the Gospel." Mohammed could not understand that our Lord—the Word made Flesh—is the Gospel that He came to preach. Far from it. Our Lord is the *instrument*, the mechanical instrument of the Revelation of the Gospel. In no sense is He the Gospel itself. The Moslem in Zanzibar thinks either that the Gospel Jesus was given is lost ; or that the one we have is so changed that it is no use reading it ; or that, even if it is genuine and intact, *he* stands in no need of it, as it is all contained in the Koran. If you say that it differs from the Koran in important points, he will reply : That is why we know it has been altered ; were it genuine, it would agree with the Koran.

Then about the Crucifixion. What does the Moslem

think when he sees the crosses on our Churches, on our Altars, or on Christian graves? It is generally known that the Koran denies that the Crucifixion ever took place. The Jews are accused in the chapter "Women" (Rodwell, p. 429), of many things, and among these many things, that "they said, We have slain the Messiah, Jesus, the Son of Mary, an Apostle of God. Yet they slew Him not, and they crucified Him not. They only had His likeness" (some one like Him). Mohammed could not bear the Cross. In the traditions it is said the crosses fell down (like Dagon), and were broken when Mohammed was born, and that when our Lord returns in order to kill the Anti-Christ He will also break all the crosses. They must wonder then how it is that we make so much of an event which never took place. They see our people flocking into Church by the hundreds on Good Friday and they know why. And they remember the vacant place by Mohammed's grave at Medina where the prophet Jesus will be buried when He dies after slaying Anti-Christ. He was raised up to heaven, He is there now, they believe, above Adam, with John the Baptist in the second heaven, and *above* Him, Aaron, Joseph, Enoch, Moses and Abraham. But they are quite certain that He was never crucified, and that His body bears no mark of the spear. He was taken up like Elijah and translated like Enoch, that is all.

And of course they do not think that He is the Conqueror of death. Having never died, He cannot have risen. He is in no sense the "First-fruits of them that sleep." What must they think of our Lord's day, and of our Easter day, the Day of days! We are commemorating something that never took place; for they only know of a general Resurrection at the Last Day, and it is an open question whether Mohammed or Moses will rise first.

So again, when we mention the Holy Spirit, they think of the Archangel Gabriel, who is given the name

in the Koran ; and they believe that our Lord, when He mentioned the Holy Spirit in the Gospel, was prophesying the coming of Mohammed (cf. Rodwell, p. 406, and note). One of the reasons why the Christians are accused of changing the Gospel is because we deny that there is any notice in the Gospel of the coming of Mohammed as a divinely sent Prophet. To the Mohammedan in Zanzibar the words "I believe in the Holy Ghost" have no meaning except as an assertion of belief in the Archangel Gabriel, or in Mohammed the illustrious one, whose name Ahmad in the Koran is, they think, the same as the name Paraclete in the Gospel of St. John.

And again, if they know the Koran, they must know that in the Koran Jesus is asked of God whether He has taught men to take Him and His Mother as Gods in addition to the True God, which our Lord indignantly denies (Rodwell, p. 499), and that again in the chapter "Women" (p. 428) it is written, "The Messiah Jesus son of Mary is only an Apostle of God and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him. Believe therefore in God and in His Apostles (who were all men and creatures) and say not, [Three viz. there is a Trinity]. Far be it from His Glory that He should have a Son."

Mohammed seems to have argued in this way. The Christians call Jesus the Son of God. They must then believe Him to be God. They call Mary, Mother of God. They must therefore believe her to be God. So that they must say, Three—Father, Mother and Son, separate and all divine. This is the belief he denounces in the Koran when he says Christians have overstepped the bounds. It sets us questioning whether, in Mohammedan lands, it is wise to use the phrase, Mother of God. It is in the ancient Liturgies. It is almost universally used in Christendom as one of the safeguards of the doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord, but it seems clear that it suggested to Mohammed

the idea that Mary was in some sense the Author of our Lord's Divinity. But probably the best way is to use the phrase and be very careful to explain its meaning. For we cannot cease to use the Name "Son of God" because it suggested to Mohammed the pagan ideas of the Arabs of his time as to the daughters of God. We must meet misunderstanding by explaining, not by suppressing the truth.

So far, then, we have seen what must be the thoughts of the average Mohammedan in Zanzibar with regard to Christianity. The teaching of the Koran necessitates such an attitude, and these ideas crop up in any conversation you may have with any Moslem who knows something of his faith. Our Lord was only a man although born of a Virgin Mother, was untainted by sin, was a miracle worker from childhood upwards, a great prophet, commissioned to teach a Holy Book, the Gospel, accompanied in His ministry by helpers or Apostles, the institutor of a recurring Festival called the Table. But He was *not* divine, He was *not* the Son of God, He was *not* crucified, He did *not* rise from the dead, He was translated to Heaven where He is now. He prophesied the coming of Mohammed. He is not thought of as having all authority in heaven and earth, or as the One Mediator between heaven and earth. He never taught the doctrine of the Trinity. He was always careful to teach that He was a servant, not a Son. He is to return to earth but not as supreme Judge. He will then preach Mohammedanism, will marry and die and be buried at Medina. He is thought of always as one of the prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, Enoch, David, Solomon, Jonah and Mohammed; but Mohammed is greater than He, as being the last and final Messenger of God to man. Perhaps the most noticeable omission in the Koran is the omission of the teaching of our Lord. It seems either that Mohammed knew little or nothing about it, or that it made little impression on his mind. As is known, his own teaching

on such subjects as divorce, ceremonial uncleanness, and the life hereafter is entirely different from the teaching of our Lord.

But this is far from being a complete account of the case. There is a large amount of traditional teaching based upon the teaching of the Koran. This is contained in books circulated in Zanzibar, read by those familiar with Arabic, and then handed on to the general folk by oral teaching. It must suffice from this mass of traditional teaching to select a few instances which will serve the purpose of conveying to the reader a general idea of the kind of statements which find credence in Zanzibar.

It is believed that the parents of the Virgin Mary were Hanna and Imran, that they died while she was still young, that then Zechariah took charge of her, that she lived in a chamber in the temple precincts and was miraculously fed. Gabriel came to her in the form of a young man and announced to her the coming of her Son. He breathed upon her and so she conceived. She gave birth to our Lord by the trunk of a palm tree in Bethlehem. The palm tree had been barren up to that time, but it now became fruitful. She shook its branches and the fruit fell down. She was accused by the people, and her innocence was proved by her child who spoke in His cradle; but the child, though testifying to the miraculous nature of His birth, denied His own divinity, thus giving the lie to those who taught that He was the Son of God. When Jesus grew up He had no home. His food was supplied by His Mother's spinning. He came to Nazareth when He was grown up. Herod had wished to kill Him because of His miracles and because the people believed in Him. Then came the flight to Egypt. The first miracles must have been performed when He was a child, for He was still a child when He was in Egypt. He grew up in Egypt and performed miracles and prophesied that Egypt would be a Mohammedan country. When

He returned to Syria His miracles had made Him notorious, but the Jews refused to believe in Him until He raised Ezra. There seems to have been some confusion here. It looks as if the raising of Lazarus is meant, but it is Ezra. Ezra was raised and testified to Jesus.

There are truly wonderful legends about the Table. It was a large red tablecloth descending from heaven between two clouds, and Jesus prayed, "Make it a source of mercy, not of vengeance." On the table there was a cloth which covered it. When it appeared Jesus and the Apostles fell down and worshipped God. It was then uncovered, and on it was seen a roasted fish, and near the head of the fish, vinegar and salt, and near its tail five large cakes, each cake having on it olives and dates. Simon, the greatest of the Apostles, asked: O Lord, is it earthly or heavenly food? He was rebuked for his unbelief. The fish was then restored to life by Jesus and afterwards returned to its roasted condition. When Jesus was asked if He would partake of it, He said, I take refuge in God. He only eats of it who asks for it. The Apostles feared to touch it, and then the poor and deformed were invited, and a thousand and three hundred partook and were healed. Then people came to eat of it from the four quarters of the earth, and Jesus divided it amongst them. The Table came down once every two days: This lasted for forty days, the table descending and ascending. The children of Israel disbelieved in it and were turned into swine and apes.

The whole story shows what a credulous folk we have to deal with, how hungry they are for the marvellous, and how devoid of spirituality of mind.

We find the same ignorance and confusion in the current beliefs of the Mohammedans about our Lord's Passion and Crucifixion. We read that hostility was caused because the religion of Jesus gained ground and that of the Jews waned. The miracles of Jesus caused

a combined conspiracy of the Jews and King Herod. So they attacked Him when He was with His Mother Mary. One of them entered the room in which they were and failed to return. While the others were waiting for their companions, Jesus escaped, and their companion was miraculously changed so as to be the exact image of Jesus. His companions then arrested him, put a crown on him, covered his face, made him ride upon a palm branch, took him round the town, and then set up a cross, and fastened his hands and feet to the cross with ropes. Two thieves were crucified with him. All this is a commentary on the words of the Koran. "They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but a likeness of him was made. It is certain that they did not kill him, but God took him to Himself." The man who was crucified in our Lord's stead was an elder of the Jews. All this took place on a Friday. There was darkness over all the land for three days until 3 p.m., and there was an earthquake. Jesus was thirty-three years old when He was taken up to Heaven. "When He was taken up, God clothed Him with angelic attributes and cut off from Him the desire for food and drink. He is alive still. This is the orthodox belief."

Mary died six years after the death of her Son. She was sixty years old. When she died she was buried in the Holy House and her tomb is visited to this day.

There is an allusion to the Invention of the Cross. The Festival of Holy Cross is called, The extreme limit of the Christian's belief in the Cross.

So we see that the Crucifixion of our Lord, His Death and Burial and His Resurrection, find no place in the current Mohammedan belief about our Lord. Nothing seems known of Gethsemane, or the Last Supper, and the Ascension is changed into an Assumption like that of Elijah and Enoch.

There is an allusion to our Lord's last Discourse in the Upper Chamber, and this allusion is in the Koran, the passage is as follows :—

“ When Jesus said, O ye children of Israel, I am the messenger of God to you, confirming the previous books, and the Law; and bringing you glad tidings of a messenger who is to come after Me, whose name is Ahmad.”

Now this is constantly quoted by Mohammedans in Zanzibar, and it is obvious that it is an attempt to explain our Lord's teaching as to the Comforter, and the nature of the good tidings of the Gospel; and it is directed against the Christian belief in the *Finality* of the Gospel. It has been suggested that some Moslem convert, or pervert from Christianity, who knew Greek, changed the word Paraclete into Periclutos, that is “ Comforter ” into “ The Praised One.” This latter phrase coincides with the meaning of the Arabic name Ahmad, which is equivalent to Mohammed. Thus our Lord's teaching on the Holy Ghost is taken to refer to the Coming of Mohammed. It seems quite evident that Mohammed knew nothing about this teaching. Had he known he could never have made so gross a blunder. But the words of the Koran stand in the way of any real understanding of the Third Article of the Christian Faith, and any appreciation of the Person, Work and Office of the Holy Ghost. It was partly because Christians refused to admit this interpretation of the prophecy of the Coming of the Holy Ghost, that Mohammed changed his attitude towards Christianity and accused the Christians of changing, concealing, or misinterpreting the text of their sacred books. He believed that the Gospel prophesied his own Advent, and accused the Christians of lying when they denied that it was so.

In order to give a clear account of the ideas circulating in Zanzibar about our Lord, it is necessary before concluding this chapter to say something about the Second Coming. There is a great deal of eschatological teaching abroad in Zanzibar.

The Mohammedans love to discuss the signs and

events of the Last Times. Most of their beliefs are traditional. Here is one tradition curtailed.

At the approach of the Hour, Jesus will descend or alight on the White Tower on the east side of the Mosque of Damascus! He will enter the Mosque and sit in the pulpit. Mohammedans, Jews and Christians will all come to listen to Him, jostling one another. The Muezzin will give the Mohammedan call to prayer, and Jesus will pray the prayer of Day-break, standing behind the Mahdi who will act as Imam or Leader in Prayer. Our Lord will then slay Dajjal, the great opposer of revealed faith. This done, He will desire to judge mankind according to the Mohammedan Law, but will fail to find a copy of the Koran because Dajjal will have destroyed all the Sacred Books. However, such a difficulty had been foreseen. In a legend recalling the legend of Excalibur, we are told how an old Sheikh had ordered his pupil to throw a box containing the Koran into the Gihon. This the boy only pretended to do, but his trick was detected, and he at last obeyed. He was then told why the order had been given. The Book would be required at "the Hour." This Book will be brought by Gabriel to our Lord in the Last Times. All the world will be converted to the religion of the Mahdi, and Justice will reign on the earth. Then a period of forty years will follow. The lion and the lamb will feed together, as in Isaiah's prophecy. At the end of this period our Lord will go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and then visit the Prophet's tomb at Medina. There He will fall ill and die, and be buried in the vacant place in Ayesha's house near the prophet's tomb. Then the Mahdi will die, and then the Last Day will arrive. Good Mohammedans will rise first. Then a barrier will be broken down, and the Juju Majuju (Gog and Magog) will come in vast numbers and destroy Syria, using all the trees as firewood, and drinking up the rivers and lakes, even the Sea of Tiberias. The only people un-

affected by this appalling disaster will be the people of Mecca and Medina. These are protected by Angels. Neither Dajjal or the Juju Majuju nor the plague can enter there!

Also we get allusions to the Beast and the False Prophet of Revelation. The "Beast," as a sign of the Last Times, is mentioned in the Koran. He will appear at Mecca when our Lord is walking round the Kaaba. The head of the Beast is like a bird, and it has two wings; like the angel of Revelation its head is in the heavens and its feet are under the confines of the earth. The eyes are like the eyes of a pig, the ears like those of the elephant, its colour like that of the tiger, its heart like that of the lion, and its horns like the horns of a stag, its tail like the tail of a ram, its feet like the feet of a camel, and its face like the face of a man. It has the staff of Moses, and the seal of Solomon. It will seal the faces of unbelievers with the seal of Solomon. The believers will also be sealed and will shine. Here we have the mark of the Beast and the corresponding sealing of the servants of God. The sun will then rise in the West. Men and jinns will die from heat and the door of repentance will be closed.

So much then for the Beast. Now for the False Prophet, and we shall have heard enough if not more than enough.

Dajjal is to come from Ispahan. He is ten cubits high. One of his eyes has been touched from the beginning, so he is one-eyed. The devout traditionalist hopes something may happen to the other eye. Between the eyes, the letters K.F.R. are inscribed, the consonants in the Arabic word for an unbeliever, Kafir. Under this is written, Blessed is he who disobeys him, accursed is he who obeys. Men will think that he is Lord of Paradise and Hell, but his Paradise is Hell and his Hell Paradise. He will kill all who worship God. He will lead a huge army from Ispahan to the Holy House, apparently at Damascus. Then the Mahdi will appear. Jesus will descend to help the Mahdi, and with His own

spear will kill Dajjal, and then will follow what I have recounted above.

Now symbolism as a garment for spiritual conceptions is one thing, but this kind of legend is not symbolism proper. It is symbolism without spirituality. And a general account like that given above will, I think, produce on the reader the same impression, that here we have some of the facts and teaching of Christianity stripped of that spiritual element which is so vital to their interpretation. And it all goes to confirm the trenchant criticism of Bishop Steere, that Mohammedanism is a religion without the Holy Spirit and without grace. The reader, I think, will realize from what has been written, all derived from Mohammedan sources, how great are the difficulties which we encounter in such a place as Zanzibar.

CHAPTER V

What is Believed about Mohammed in Zanzibar

PERHAPS there is no historical religion in the world which has deviated more from historical facts than Mohammedanism, owing to the tendency to idealize. It is hard not to sympathize with this tendency, because it is the outcome of much that is good in human nature, loyalty and reverence and devotion. And yet it is impossible to ignore the fact that it often blinds men to the claims of historical truth. Popular beliefs as to Mohammed are a very clear proof of the truth of this statement. There seem to be three Mohammeds. (1) *The Mohammed of the Koran*. If you read the chapters of the Koran in chronological order as far as that is possible, it is not difficult to form some conception of the real man, his environment, his conversion, his work, and the development of his character, religious ideas, and purposes. (2) And then there is the *Mohammed of the Traditions*. In them we begin to see the process of idealization at work. (3) And then there is the *Mohammed of the uncritical Mohammedan world of the present day*, in whom it is sometimes difficult to recognize the man of Mecca and Medina with his honest statements that he was only a preacher and warner.

In Zanzibar there are books the reading of which is associated with some of the principal events in the life of the ordinary Mohammedan, and it is in these books that we see the truly surprising results of this process of idealization. And I have no hesitation in saying that it is the Mohammed of these books and not the Mohammed of the Koran who is the object of their devotion and their championship.

It is well to begin this chapter with a very brief sketch of the historical facts of the life of Mohammed, facts which can be gleaned from the Koran itself and from the earlier and more orthodox traditions.

He was born in Mecca, a member of the house of Hashim and of the tribe of the Koreish. His mother's name was Amina and his father's Abdallah. His parents were poor, so poor that when Amina sought for some one to bring up her child in the desert away from the unhealthy climate of Mecca, it was with great difficulty that any one was induced to undertake the office. The woman Halima, who eventually accepted the office, only did so because she did not want to return home after a fruitless errand. Abdallah died before Mohammed was born. Halima's hesitation was due to the fact that it did not seem evident that Amina would be able to pay the customary fee. It is clear that his parents held the ordinary religious beliefs of the Arabs of the day. It is as certain as anything can be that Mohammed at some period of his life abandoned the creed of his forefathers and accepted the doctrine of the Unity of God. The Koran is the proof of these statements—

Did He not find thee an orphan and gave thee a home ?

Did He not find thee erring and guided thee ?

Did He not find thee needy and enriched thee ?

These words are in the XCIII chapter called "Brightness" (Rodwell, p. 26). The Prophet remembers the mercies of God to him in his childhood and comforts himself in a time of depression by the remembrance.

And there are traditions which no one would be likely to invent, that he said he could not pray for Abu Talib his uncle because he died in infidelity, that he shed tears at his mother's grave because she died an unbeliever. His grandfather Abdul Muttalib is said to have taken Mohammed into the Kaaba when a babe, carrying him in his arms ; and the Kaaba was then a pagan temple. We shall see how very different is the account of his childhood which finds acceptance to-day in Zanzibar.

So he was brought up by Halima. As a child he seems to have been subject to fits, but he helped his foster-brother to look after the herds, and in after-life compared himself to other prophets who had been shepherds. He learned to speak a pure dialect of Arabic. When he returned to Mecca, he lived for a short time with his mother. When she died, his grandfather Abdul Muttalib looked after him, and after the death of his grandfather his uncle Abu Talib took care of him. His youth and early manhood were uneventful. He says he heard a Christian Bishop preach at Okadh. He took part in local fighting, picking up arrows and handing them to the combatants, and went on journeys to the North of Arabia with his uncle for purposes of merchandise. There, no doubt, he heard something of Christianity. When about twenty-five he married a rich widow, Khadija, and lived with her as his only wife until her death ; continuing no doubt to travel for purposes of merchandise : a life which has left its mark on the language of the Koran. Through Waraka, Khadija's cousin, who is said to have read the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and to have died a Christian, he must have heard more about Christianity, though nothing seems known as to the kind of Christian Scriptures familiar to Waraka ; they were possibly, if not probably, apocryphal. But we have no evidence at all that Mohammed became a convert to Monotheism until he was forty years old or thereabouts. Even when his visions first came to him, he did not quite realize what

they meant, he became depressed because they ceased, he even, it is said, meditated suicide; and Khadija was called upon to decide whether he was receiving a revelation or was possessed by an evil spirit. All this is very human, but it is not the popular belief as to the date of his first belief in the Unity of God. He first preached to his own folk and then claims to have received a charge to speak openly to every one. He gained a few adherents only at Mecca, mostly poor people. He was assaulted, ostracized, ridiculed and rejected. Some of his adherents had to find shelter in Abyssinia, and at last he himself migrated to Medina where he had family ties, only too glad to respond to the welcome given him there by some converts whom he had made amongst the pilgrims to the Kaaba at Mecca.

Then things changed. He gradually became a power. Khadija was dead, and Abu Talib. He now began to take unto him many wives, and when criticized in one case justified his action by declaring that he was obeying a divine command, even though the woman in question was some one else's wife. He lies in wait for Meccan caravans. He countenances raids on neighbouring Arab tribes. He attacks the neighbouring Jewish tribes, deprives them of their property and banishes them from their homes. There is war with varying fortunes between his followers and the people of Mecca, which ends finally in the capture of Mecca, so that Mecca becomes the centre of the Mohammedan world. The Arab tribes send messages to him at Medina and begin to accept, even if nominally, yet in large numbers, the Mohammedan creed. He begins to have larger visions of the spread of the Mohammedan faith and sends letters to the rulers of the principal countries known to him, to Egypt, Byzantium and Persia, summoning them to accept his religion; and then death overtakes him, he dies at Medina and is buried in Ayesha's house, without naming a successor to his position as leader of the Mohammedan people.

Three great results of his life and teaching are specially remarkable: (1) The victory of the belief in the Unity of God over Arab paganism. (2) The welding of the Arabs into a nation, with some degree of unity of faith and aim. (3) The removal or diminution of some of the social evils which affected the lives of his Arab contemporaries. Thus it can truly be said that he raised the moral standard of his fellow-countrymen. His was a great career, and he won for himself a place amongst those who have left a deep and lasting impression on the history of mankind. A strong man, an earnest man, a religious man, but beyond all question a man of like passions with ourselves. Such is a brief account of the historical facts as known to us.

But shortly after his death the process of idealization began, and the result of this process is the teaching about Mohammed which we find existing in Zanzibar at the present day.

It is difficult to say what were the motives which lie behind this process of idealization; partly, no doubt, the love and devotion of his followers, who believe him to be the perfect pattern of manhood and the final exponent of God's revealed will to men; partly the necessities of the case, such as contact with Christians of more orthodox belief than that known to Mohammed, and partly the desire to prove that in all respects Mohammed was superior to those who preceded him as God's messengers to mankind. Let us take a few instances and let it be kept in mind that the statements made are taken from Arabic books in circulation amongst the Mohammedans of Zanzibar. It will be seen how very far the popular idea of Mohammed is from agreeing with the statements of the Koran or even with some of the statements in the traditions generally accepted in the Mohammedan world.

(1) The date of Mohammed's conversion. A critical study of all the historical facts confirms the statement of the Koran, "we found thee *wandering* and set thee

right." Over against this set (1) the fact that previous prophets were believers in the Unity of God from *childhood*, and (2) the Gospel of the Nativity of our Lord. The Jews would naturally make use of the first set of facts and the Christians of the second set. We can imagine them arguing as follows. Granted that your prophet was a prophet, why should we leave our religion for that of a man who was originally an unbeliever, and was only converted in middle age, a prophet whose ancestors were polytheists, whose parents were polytheists, a prophet who helped to build again the Kaaba when it was full of idols. Which is the most perfect prophet, he who has been a believer all his life, or he who only emerged from the darkness of heathenism when he was forty years old?

Now one of the most popular books in Zanzibar is a book called *Maulid Barazanji*, a kind of Gospel of the Nativity of Mohammed. It must not be supposed that it only circulates amongst ignorant or ill-instructed Mohammedans. Far from it. Amongst its readers are the principal Kadhi and the leader of prayers in the principal mosque. Here are some of the statements in this book. Mohammed at his birth inherited from Adam, through a long line of pure ancestors, a light which was created before the creation of the world. His mother during pregnancy was visited each month by one of the prophet's predecessors in the prophetic office. The list includes our Lord. Angels in heaven and earth proclaimed the wonderful news of Mohammed's advent. The women who ministered to his mother were a woman of the household of the Pharaoh of the Exodus who had been converted to the true faith, and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mohammed was born with his eyes darkened with antimony, and already circumcised. His grandfather carried him to the Kaaba and then uttered a prayer of thanksgiving, which only a devout Moslem could have composed. Great wonders appeared at his birth. Crosses were broken, there was a miraculous

light which flashed from Arabia and illuminated the Palace of the Persian king, and the sacred fire of the Zoroastrians was extinguished. When Halima was conveying Mohammed to her home, her ass, which owing to a famine had lingered and loitered on the way to Mecca, fully recovered its vigour owing to its precious burden, and completely outdistanced the asses of the other women who had accompanied Halima to Mecca. Halima had no need of a light in her house because of the light that streamed from the forehead of her foster-child. Mohammed prayed and made a declaration of faith as soon as he was born.

Now it is very difficult to understand how an educated and intelligent Mohammedan, *who knows the Koran* and has studied the orthodox traditions, can reconcile these legends with the statements of the Koran and the Traditions. I have asked them for explanations, but have never received a satisfactory answer. But it is not difficult to perceive how such beliefs arose. If Islam is the final religion, and Mohammed the best and most perfect of prophets, it is natural that men should believe that from childhood upwards there would be signs of his superiority over his predecessors. It was difficult to believe that his predecessors at their birth and during their childhood should have been favoured with signs and wonders which were not bestowed on him who was greater than they. From thinking that it should be so and desiring that it should be (especially owing to the pressure of controversy), it was not a very far step to believing that it had actually been so, and thus, facts notwithstanding, the Koran and traditions notwithstanding, they reached their present stage of belief. They are not the only people who have allowed the devotion of their hearts to blind their reason to the claim of historical truth.

(2) Again it is the plain teaching of the Koran that Mohammed like his fellow-men was *a sinner*. In the Koran Mohammed is told to pray for pardon, for his own

sins and for the sins of the people. That is to say, according to the Mohammedan belief in the literal inspiration of the Koran, he is told *by God Himself* to seek for pardon. It is difficult to see how such a plain statement can be explained away. In the chapter of "Victory" (Rodwell, p. 460) we read, "We (God) have won for thee an undoubted victory in token that God forgiveth thine earlier and later sins." This is clear enough if taken as a divine statement, and simple and honest if taken as a human confession of sins of youth and old age by a man who knows he is nearing his end. This passage is quoted in the traditions and there is no attempt made to change the obvious meaning of the words. Some of the commentators go so far as to tell us the actual sins to which reference is made. Another tradition represents Mohammed saying that he prayed for forgiveness seventy times a day.

And yet the process of idealization has been at work, and you are not liked if you speak of the sins of Mohammed. He was exempt from sin, you will be told, or at least he was so after his call; or what would be sin in another man was not sin in him, or it was not sinful because God gave him permission or commanded him to do the particular act, or if he mentions his sins that is his humility of heart; and so the legend grew.

There is a story which perhaps started the idea of the sinlessness of Mohammed. It is in the earliest biography. It runs as follows: Mohammed used to go with his foster-brother to feed the family flocks. One day his foster-brother returned home and announced that some one had attacked his brother. They all started out, and found Mohammed, who told them that some one had come with a golden cup filled with snow, had cut open his breast and taken out his heart and cleansed it, removing a black clot. His heart had then been replaced and the wound sewn up. This story is *constantly* repeated in Zanzibar. It reads like an attempt to show that the taint of original sin had been removed.

However, there are two traditions which conflict with this legend. They tell us how Mohammed as a young man started out for Mecca with the intention of committing sin but was providentially prevented from carrying his intentions into effect. And yet, as I have said, it is not wise to mention the word sin in connection with Mohammed. How has this come about? Perhaps as follows. Take into consideration the Christian and Mohammedan belief as to the sinlessness of our Lord, and contrast it with the statements in the Koran and the traditions about Mohammed's prayers for forgiveness. Here was a marked difference between the two prophets. Was it likely that Christians would abandon a sinless prophet to follow a sinful one? What a temptation to the Mohammedan controversialist to escape from the force of such a contention! He yielded, prompted by his devotion to his prophet and influenced by this tendency to idealization.

(3) Then again with regard to *miracles*. Moses and Elijah and our Lord are acknowledged by Christians and Mohammedans to have worked miracles. Our Lord is stated in the Koran to have worked striking miracles by the permission of God both in His childhood and manhood. Mohammed is represented in the Koran in the chapter "The Night Journey" (Rodwell, p. 169) as being told by God: "Nothing hindered us from sending thee with the power of working miracles except that the people of old treated them as lies." This is plain enough. And again we read in the Koran: "I am only a preacher and a warner." Yet in spite of this, in such a book as the *Maulid Barazanji*, and in the traditions, we read of miracles accompanying the birth of Mohammed and performed by him after the commencement of his mission. The three greatest wonders generally believed in by the Mohammedan of to-day are the Night Journey, of which more hereafter, the splitting of the Moon! and the Koran. As to the Koran, the reader must decide for himself. It is not an exaggeration.

tion to say that, if all the circumstances of Mohammed's life and times and country are taken into consideration, there is no book that can more easily be accounted for on natural lines than the Koran. As to the splitting of the Moon, in the Koran the following words occur in one of the earlier chapters, "The Moon" (Rodwell, p. 76): "The hour has approached and the moon has been cleft." And whenever they see a miracle they turn aside to say "This is well devised magic." Now later on, as we have seen, Mohammed is told that there was a reason why he had not been given the power of working miracles. Could this have been said if he had split the moon? Here was a sign from heaven indeed! The passage in question is said to be a quotation from an early Arabian poet, and has been explained by the fact that the moon on a certain occasion rose behind a sharp pointed mountain and appeared to be cleft. But how is it possible to reconcile the statement that the moon had been cleft by Mohammed with the later statement that God had not seen fit to grant him the power of working miracles? It is difficult to resist the conviction that here again the tendency to idealize proved too strong. The Mohammedan in his devotion to his prophet could not bear to think that other prophets possessed credentials which were not granted to Mohammed, and so we find it established in the popular belief that Mohammed did work miracles.

So we come to the Night Journey, or Mohammed's ascent to heaven, called the Miraj, commemorated on one of the principal festivals of the Mohammedan kalendar. It is based on a verse in the Koran called the Night Journey (Rodwell, p. 164): "Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night from the sacred temple of Mecca to the temple that is more remote [Jerusalem] whose precinct we have blessed that we might show Him our signs." It took place about a year before the departure of Mohammed to Medina. We observe that nothing is said here about a journey to heaven. And

moreover some Mohammedans regard the whole event as merely a vision. As Rodwell says, it was probably a dream, which was afterwards regarded as an actual event and embellished by the devout imaginations of later believers. It is well to remember that, at the time of the dream, the attitude of Mohammed towards the Jews and Christians was not hostile and that Jerusalem was a sacred place to both Jews and Christians. Mohammed had heard a great deal about it (cf. chapter "Mary") and much wished to see it. The legend as embellished is as follows. At Jerusalem he was mounted on a wonderful horse named Boraki by the Archangel Gabriel, and so passed through the seven heavens. He passed Adam in the first Heaven, our Lord and St. John the Baptist in the second Heaven, and then Aaron, Joseph, Enoch, Moses and Abraham. This order varies. Then after going a little further the Archangel Gabriel could accompany him no more, and so Mohammed proceeded all alone until he reached the Presence of God. There he was told to pray fifty times a day. On his return, Moses questioned him, and on being told that the Mohammedans were ordered to pray fifty times a day, he replied, They will never manage that, you must return and get a reduction. Mohammed returned several times, each time getting a reduction to five times. Then Moses said, They may manage that.

Now, granted that some Mohammedans do not accept this legend as a fact, yet the Festival of Miraj shows the hold which the legend has on the general public. In Zanzibar there is a Swahili poem in Arabic characters commemorating it, and it is a most conspicuous part of Mohammedan belief in the Island, and very generally in the Mohammedan world. At the same time most of the details are not in the Koran, only the verse quoted above. The legend is a growth. What was the motive of the embellishment? The Mohammedans knew about Enoch and Elijah from the Jews. They had heard of our Lord's Ascension, and the Christian belief of

His Session at the Right Hand of God. The Koran itself describes our Lord as being carried up to heaven. It is difficult to resist the conviction that here too the process of idealization has been at work, and that we have an attempt to prove the superiority of Mohammed to his predecessors. He went where they could not go. Our Lord we notice is in the second Heaven only. And although Abraham is in the seventh and highest heaven, Mohammed's intercession is more prevailing. Abraham stopped at ten in his pleading for Lot, Mohammed succeeded in reducing the prayers to five. It is the outcome of a belief in Mohammed as the prophet and final revealer of God's will to man. It is necessary that in all things he should have the pre-eminence. And where it is obvious that he did not possess the pre-eminence, they invented it.

Two curious omissions may be noted. I have never heard any Moslem claim that Mohammed had risen from the dead, and, as far as the ordinary belief of the general folk goes, they do not seem to think of him as in heaven. They invoke him and they think he has appeared to people, but they think of him also as being like the rest of the dead, inasmuch as his body lies in the grave at Medina awaiting the General Resurrection.

His name is constantly invoked in public speech. His name is written on their doorposts and talismans. It is used to confirm an oath. There is a litany often sung in his praise, a litany to the name of Mohammed. Every detail of his life as described in the traditions passes from person to person and as far as is feasible is copied in their daily life. They walk in his footsteps. He is their great example, the ideal of true manhood. He dominates their thoughts. The words of the Koran, to them divine, are their standard of correct belief and action. The life of Mohammed is the illustration of how this standard can be carried out in everyday life. So that in Zanzibar there are two standards of human character: the standard set by Mohammed, and the standard set

by Him Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life ; and they conflict. We Christians have no sort of doubt which is the highest and the best. Neither have the Mohammedans. We may balance the Christian belief in the superiority of Christ over Mohammed by the Mohammedan belief in the superiority of Mohammed over Christ. That is the situation, and that will continue to be the situation wherever and whenever the two religions exist side by side. It must continue to be the situation until the Mohammedan begins to see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. The victory of Christianity will be gained only when the daily lives of Christians so conform to the Great Pattern which they profess to follow that the good and honest heart, wherever it exists, can detect on which side the superiority lies. The leaders of Christian thought have their part to play in the controversial side of the great conflict, but the victory can only be won by the rank and file. If they fail they have only themselves to blame. It is absurd to contrast good Mohammedans with bad Christians, or good Christians with bad Mohammedans. The contrast to be fair must be between the Christian who follows faithfully in the footsteps of his Master, and the Mohammedan who follows faithfully in the footsteps of his master. Personally I have no doubt as to what the result would be, if such an experiment could be made on a large scale. It rests with each one of us to see that, as far as he or she is concerned, the necessary proof is given. The strongest evidence of Christianity is the life of the true believer.

CHAPTER VI

The Parsees

THE Parsee community in Zanzibar, though small, is by no means the least interesting. Their history goes so far back, and their religion has played so conspicuous a part in the religious thought of mankind. There are said to be only 100,000 Parsees in the world to-day, most of whom are domiciled in India, with Bombay for their headquarters. A few thousands, ten thousand it is said, still remain in Persia, their original home. There are very few in Zanzibar, but, as in Bombay, they are an element in the population which cannot be disregarded. They claim to be the lineal descendants of the powerful race which inhabited Persia many centuries before the Christian era. It is impossible to see a Parsee in Zanzibar without recalling what we learnt at school about a people who taught their youths to ride, to draw the bow, and to speak the truth. We remember all we read about such kings as Darius, Cyrus, Cambyses. We remember how the armies of the Persians captured and spoiled Nineveh, how they fought the Greeks at Marathon and Salamis, how they contended with the Roman Empire and defeated the Roman armies under Valerian and Julian. Those of us who are interested in Mohammedanism call to mind the part they played in South-West Arabia in the time of Mohammed, and

how the Persian king tore to pieces the letter he received from Mohammed summoning him to embrace the faith of Islam ; not foreseeing how, in the near future, the armies of Islam would overrun his kingdom, and that the great majority of his people would be converted to the religion of their conquerors. Nor must we forget that the Persian armies were investing Constantinople at the very time at which the Meccans threatened to capture Medina. Perhaps no race and no kingdom had suffered more at the hands of the Mohammedans. The first invasion of Persia began by order of the Khalif Omar A.D. 633, when Khalid defeated the Persian governor Hormuz. The greatest and most decisive battle was fought at Kadesia A.D. 636, and in A.D. 641 the battle of Nahavand decided the fate of the Persian Empire. Persia became part of the dominion of the Arabian Khalif. The soldiers of the Arabian Khalif passed through the length and breadth of the land, presenting to the followers of Zoroaster the alternative of Islam or the sword ; the fire temples were destroyed, and nearly the whole population of the country embraced the Mohammedan faith. The Parsee historian who writes the chronicles of his race speaks with justifiable indignation of the cruel bigotry and fanaticism of the Mohammedan conquerors. The people became demoralised. A few who remained faithful to their Zoroastrian faith fled to Khurasan, where for 100 years they retained and practised their religion. Then again they suffered persecution and fled to the island of Ormuz in the Persian Gulf.

At last, despairing of safety, they decided to set out for another country and India became their asylum. They are said to have settled first in a small island in the Gulf of Cambay, called Diu. From thence, by the advice of an astrologer, they departed to Gujerat in the year A.D. 716. The Prince of Sanjan received them kindly and they succeeded in presenting their religion to him in such a form as not to offend Hindoo susceptibilities.

Even their own historian does not acquit them of "having played the part of dissemblers." It is not possible to do more here than to select some of the explanations of their religion which they offered to the Indian Prince. They said—

(1) We are worshippers of Ahura Mazda, the sun, and the five elements.

(2) We observe silence while bathing, praying, eating, and making offerings to fire.

(3) We use incense, flowers and perfumes in our religious ceremonies.

(4) We are worshippers of the cow.

(5) We wear the sacred garment the Sudra, the cincture Kusti and the cap.

(6) We are enjoined to be liberal in charities and to dig wells.

(7) We practise ablutions.

(8) We feed the sacred flame with incense.

(9) We pray five times a day.

(10) We perform annual ceremonies on behalf of our ancestors.

(11) We are careful observers of purity and conjugal fidelity.

Certainly there was dissembling here if we are to accept the statement of the modern Parsee that their religion is a pure Monotheism. They were indeed tender to the susceptibilities of their Hindoo brother! However, they were between the devil and the deep sea, and it would be invidious to judge them too harshly.

The Prince proved favourable and gave them leave to settle in the country on condition that they learnt the language of the country, dressed their women in Indian dress, carried no arms, and performed their marriage ceremonies at night. They accepted these conditions and asked permission to build a fire temple in Sanjan; and, as the Hindoos venerate fire, no objection was made. In the year A.D. 721 the sacred fire was kindled.

During the next three centuries they spread over

Western India, but for a long time we hear little of them. However, in the year A.D. 1305 they came into collision with their old enemies, the Mohammedans. They bravely assisted the then Prince of Sanjan to retain his independence by sending 1400 soldiers to swell his army. The Prince was victorious and the Mohammedan general Alp Khan fled. He returned however with a greater force and on this occasion was successful. The allies were defeated, and the Parsees, knowing by bitter experience what to expect from Mohammedan conquerors, left Sanjan. They appear to have removed the Sacred Fire to Naosari A.D. 1419, and then to Surat in A.D. 1733, and at last to Udwada in A.D. 1742. There it still remains. We do not know the exact date of their settlement in Bombay, but it was before the cession of Bombay to the British by the Portuguese in A.D. 1668.

It is from these Parsees of Bombay that the Parsee community in Zanzibar originates. We are concerned now with them and not with the 10,000 remaining in Persia. It may suffice here to say of these Parsees in Persia that their history is one long account of the cruel persecution and injustice which they experienced at the hands of the Mohammedan population.

There are said to be about 82,000 Parsees in the Presidency of Bombay, scattered amongst an Indian population of some sixteen millions. In the city of Bombay itself there are about 50,000. They are a healthy people, full of vitality. They are an industrious and moral community. Although special emphasis is laid on the importance of agriculture in their ancient books, the Parsee of to-day is almost entirely a city man. In spite of their ancient imperial record, the military profession does not seem to have much attraction for them. It might be supposed that to people who venerate fire as a symbol of the Deity, firearms would be an abomination, as a profane use of so sacred a thing, but the Parsee will not listen to such a supposition. They occasionally join the Volunteers. However, they

are nothing if not adaptable. The real reason is a pecuniary one. There are more lucrative professions, and a Parsee's style of living is above that of the Indian who enlists. Possibly the defilement of the earth by dead bodies has something to do with it. Anyhow the fact remains that to-day they are mostly mercantile, and very good and prosperous merchants at that.

Socially, they are a self-contained, self-reliant and exclusive community, and so present the appearance of an undivided body, but on matters religious there is a division. They are divided into two sects called Shehenshais and Kadmis. The difference is a difference in chronology only, as to what is the correct date for the celebration of New Year's Day, the Persian Naoroz. The Shehenshais or the Royalists, who are the majority, keep the New Year in one month. The Kadmis keep it a month earlier. The difference came about in this way. The Persian year contained 365 days and each month 30 days. Five days therefore have no month. They are called Gathas and added to the end of the year. This still leaves five hours and fifty-four seconds unaccounted for. The Persians made up for the omission of these hours and seconds by adding a month to the year every 120 years. This intercalation they called Kabisa. The Ancient Persians forgot the intercalation, but the Parsees at Khurasan remembered it *once*. This caused no strife at first, but at Surat in A.D. 1746 some of the Parsees introduced the old date, and called themselves Kadmis—the Ancients. The bulk of the people called themselves Shehenshais, or "Imperialists," and adhered to their own kalendar. The strife became very bitter at the beginning of the present century, but investigation led to the conclusion that both were wrong. The Kadmis were wrong, for they said it was a mistake to make any intercalation. The Shehenshais were wrong in saying that it had been made ever since the fall of the Empire. A simple matter to adjust, one would think, but the adjustment is resisted on the ground of the

confusion which would be caused by the dates in the records of old events. The parties now live in concord, the principal distinction being this—A Parsee mentions the name of the month and the day when he prays, and so the Shehenshai says one name and the Kadmi says another. They observe the same Festivals but on different dates. It is like the dispute as to Easter.

In manner and dress they are adaptable. Now, European fashions are in vogue, and in other matters they have shown themselves adaptable without departing from the main principles of their faith. They have no objection to having their meals with their womenfolk, who occupy a higher position in the house than that assigned to the Hindoo and Mohammedan women. The Parsee women appear in public unveiled. Parsee domestic life bears comparison with that of any race.

We are mainly concerned, however, with the religious ideas of the Parsee. The kalendar plays an important part in their religious life, and we cannot do better than give a brief sketch of this first, and then pass on to the salient ideas and principal customs of the Parsee religion.

Each day of the Zoroastrian month has a name and is thought to possess peculiar virtues and to be suitable for special undertakings. Thus the 1st day, Ahura Mazda, is "The Lord's Day," and should be devoted to the remembrance of God. It is a day for rejoicings such as weddings, benedictions and religious actions. Bahman is the name of the 2nd day, and is also the name of the greatest of the Angels. It is suitable for counsels of state. The 7th day is Anverdad. This is a day of rest for body and soul and for calling to mind religious duties. The 8th day is called Depardar, Creator of the universe, and a day for acquiring religious knowledge and so on. However, we must not suppose that every Parsee carries out this system in his daily life. It is an ideal. The great Festivals, as with us, exert a far greater influence. The object of these Festivals

is to promote harmony, charity, philanthropy and innocent recreation.

They are as follows :—

Pateti, or New Year's Day. It is the day of Ahura Mazda in the month Fravardin and should be called Naoroz. Pateti means repentance. On this day the Parsee should seek forgiveness for the sins of the past year. He performs ablutions, makes offering of sandalwood in the Atash Behram or chief-fire temple, if there is one. He prays for a blessing on himself and his family and gives alms to the priest and to the poor. Then follow social rejoicings.

The Jamshidi Naoroz, or Jamshidis New Year. This is the vernal equinox. It is so called from King Jamshid. It is also called Sultani Naoroz. It is of great antiquity. It is the New Year of the Ancient Persians and a great holiday.

Zarthoshti Diso. On the 11th day of the 10th month Deh. It is kept as the anniversary of the death of Zoroaster.

Muktad, "released souls," the last ten days of the Zoroastrian year including the last five days of the last month, Spendarmad, and the five days called Gatha Gahambars. These days are dedicated to the pious Frohars, the spirits of the departed. It is the Parsee All Souls' Day. The souls of the departed are believed to visit the living in these days and provision is made for them ; viz. many vessels filled with water and fruit and flowers. It is thought that the dead partake. A lamp burns night and day. Sandalwood and incense are burned in an urn. The departed are represented as saying "Who will praise us and meditate upon us and invoke one of us, or worship one of us by sacrifice?" It is a time of prayer in memory of the dead.

In each month there is a day bearing the same name as the month and this day is set apart for Jasan. These days are in honour of the Ameshaspand or of the Gazad-

angel to whom the month belongs. *Jasan* means feast. It is a time of public prayer and other ceremonies, with distribution of fruit and flowers. The four principal days are as follows:—

1. The *Farvardin Jasan*, or *Requiem Day*. It is the 19th day of the 1st month. The name is derived from the *Fravashi*, Guardian angels who keep the living and the dead from harm. These angels are honoured on this day in the towers of silence where these are to be found.

2. *Avan Ardinsara Jasan*. This is on the 8th month and the 10th day. The Angel *Ardinsara* presides over the sea. Sugar, flour and cocoanuts are offered to the sea on this day. This is a custom borrowed from the Hindoos and discarded by the well instructed Zoroastrian. A similar custom is known in Zanzibar.

3. *Adar Jasan*, the 8th day of the 9th month. This day is dedicated to fire. The Parsees go to their fire temples on these days.

4. The *Rahman Jasan*. It is on the 2nd day of the 11th month. It belongs to *Vohu Manah*, "good thought," one of the *Amesha Spenta* or archangels, who is the guardian of cattle. On this day stray animals are fed and no flesh is eaten. In fact special kindness to animals is a note of the whole of this month.

There are two others:—

1. *Rahithvan*, the 3rd day of the 1st month. It was intended to announce the summer, but leap year was forgotten. There is a ceremony in the chief fire temples in honour of the archangel *Ardibehesht*, who presides over fire.

2. *Khordad Sal*. *Khordad* is the name of the angel who presides over water and vegetation. This festival occurs in the month of *Farvardin*. It is the anniversary of the birthday of *Zoroaster* and observed as a holiday in honour of the revelation made to him.

The idea of creation plays a great part in the Zoroastrian Year. They believe that the world was created

in 365 days, at six unequal intervals. At the end of each interval came a day of rest. These intervals are called Gahambars. Each lasts five days. Originally they had reference to the seasons, but through neglect of the necessary intercalation they fall now six months too soon. On these days the Parsees, rich and poor, meet together and after prayer share a common meal. Their names are as follows :—

1. **Mediozarem**, the 11th-15th of the 2nd month Ardibehesht.

2. The 11th-15th of the 4th month. The Presiding Angel is the angel of wealth and the sender down of rain.

3. The 26th-30th of the 6th month Shahrivan, and is the season of harvest.

4. This is called **Eathrem**, summer farewell, and represents the creation of trees. It is on the 26th-30th of the 7th month.

5. **Mediarem**, the 10th month, 16th-20th days. It commemorates the creation of the lower animals.

6. **Hamaspathmadin** (winter farewell), the last five days of the year. These five days are called Gathas and are observed with great honour. The Parsees recite the Gathas, or sacred songs of their faith, on these days because man was created, and the priests pray for the souls of the departed.

CHAPTER VII

The Principal Events in the Life of a Parsee

BEFORE the birth of a child presents are exchanged between the two families and visits paid. The principal ceremony is called Agharni. An auspicious day is chosen and presents are sent to the parents of the future mother, fish, curds, milk and sugar. These are increased and returned, and a feast is prepared in the house of the mother-in-law, who is a very important person. A room facing eastwards is ornamented with lime and coloured powders and pictures of fish and peacocks and other animals and flowers. The young mother-to-be stands on a wooden stool two or three inches high, placed on the ornamented ground. She has a new dress and a red mark is made on her forehead. In the folds of her sari fruit is placed. Then as she is she goes to her parents' house where she is received with showers of rice. She then goes to the room where the child is to be born, holding a light in one hand and a cup of water in the other. She goes round the room seven times, sprinkling it with water, symbolical of prosperity. She then is given another new dress and goes home. Her mother sends presents to her son-in-law, clothes, rings, shawls, etc.

For forty days after the birth of the child the mother is not allowed to touch anything or to be touched by

any one. A special room is reserved in large houses, with bare floor, for these occasions. On the 40th day there are ceremonies of purification and everything except the iron bedstead of the mother and the iron cot of the child is thrown away. Even an English doctor, if called in to attend such cases, cannot shake hands with the head of the family on leaving the house. Some Parsee doctors bathe and change their clothes before departing. If they do so they give great satisfaction. The exact time of the birth is noted down. The 5th day is a day of rejoicing, and on the 6th day a tray with a blank sheet of paper, ink, a pen, a cocoanut and red powder is placed near the bed of the mother for the use of the spirit who presides over the destiny of the child. This destiny is thought to be fixed on the 6th day. Later on a goshi or astrologer is called, either a Parsee or a Hindoo Brahmin, to cast the horoscope of the child. He asks the exact moment of birth in order to know under the influence of what star the child was born. He declares what name it is possible for the child to bear. He is then questioned and replies that the child will be fortunate. He prepares the horoscope, for which he is paid a few rupees. Their methods of vaticination remind one of *Old Moore* and *Zadkiel's Almanack*.

After the child has reached the age of six years and three months it can wear the "Sudrah" and the "Kusti." The Sudrah is the Parsee sacred shirt, and the Kusti the sacred girdle. A Parsee priest is summoned and the child sits before him. The priest prays and then makes the child drink the sacred nirangdin and chew part of the leaf of a pomegranate tree. Up to this present point the child has worn a pair of trousers and a cap, and a white sheet has been folded round its body. There are many people present all in their best garments. Then the child, on a flat wooden stool, before the dastur or chief priest, says the "patet" or prayer of repentance. The dastur then gives the child the Sudrah and the child repeats the Zoroastrian creed: "I believe

in the wisdom and holiness and power of Ahura Mazda, and in the religion which Zoroaster received from him." The sheet is then removed and the Sudrah put on. The Kusti is passed round the child's waist three times, a sermon is preached, and pieces of cocoonut, almonds and rice thrown over the child. Then follow festivities. The Sudrah is of fine linen like gauze and worn next the skin. The Kusti is a thin woollen cord of seventy-two threads, corresponding to the seventy-two chapters of the Sacred Books of the Parsees, called the Yazashni. The Sudrah means, The garment of the "good and beneficial way." The Kusti has four knots, two in front and two behind. When the front knot is tied the child says, There is only one God and no other can be compared with him. When the second knot is tied he says, The Zoroastrian religion is the Word of God, and we must have full faith in it. When the third knot is tied he says, Zoroaster is the true prophet who derived his mission from God. When the fourth knot is tied the child says, Do good actions, abstain from evil ones.

It is a very significant fact that the Parsees are opposed to the admission of people of other faiths to membership of the Zoroastrian community, and to their being invested with the Sudrah and the Kusti. They are not a proselytizing body. It is very questionable whether this exclusiveness is a carrying out of the intentions of the founder of their religion. It has been suggested that it is due to a desire to keep the social privileges of the community within as narrow bounds as possible. There may be other reasons.

The next important event in the life of a Parsee is **Marriage**. Until quite recently marriages were arranged for very young children, even for two children as yet unborn. The Parsees used to feel ashamed if they failed to arrange for the marriage of their children in their infancy. Nowadays the majority marry between the years of fifteen and twenty. The other custom seems to have been due to Hindoo influences.

The Priests are said to be match-makers. They suggest possible marriages, and inquiries are then made by the parents. The astrologer is given the horoscope of the couple and everything depends upon his decision. After the stars have been consulted, come the financial considerations, and the very important question as to the character of the future wife's mother-in-law! The astrologer fixes the date of the betrothal. There is no betrothal ceremony. Certain days of the year are considered favourable for weddings. On the occasion of a wedding there is much feasting and exchange of presents. As in the case of the Indians, weddings sometimes involve the poorer folk in financial ruin.

The wedding takes place in the evening after the Hindoo custom. The bride and bridegroom are seated opposite one another, and a piece of cloth held between them as a curtain. Under the curtain each holds the right hand of the other. A piece of cloth is passed round so as to encircle them both and is fastened with a double knot. Raw twist is wound round them seven times while the Priest says the short prayers of the Gatha Ahuna Vairya: "As Zoroaster is the Lord for us to choose so is he our judge, according to the right, he that brings the life-works of good thought unto Mazdah, and the dominion unto Ahura, even he whom he made shepherd of the poor."

The twist is then tied seven times round the joined hands of the pair, as well as round the double knot. Incense is burnt in a fire, the curtain is dropped, and the couple throw rice at each other. Then they sit side by side. The two dasturs (high priests) present recite "ashirwad" or blessings, one standing before the bridegroom, and one before the bride. Thus the marriage knot is securely tied, suggesting indissolubility, seven being a sacred number, corresponding to the seven archangels and the seven heavens of the Ancient Parsees. Two men representing the parents are then asked whether they consent to the wedding, and the couple themselves

are asked the same question. A short address is given of a practical kind dealing with the business side of the bridegroom's life as well as the matrimonial side. It concludes with the following words: Recognize only Ahura Mazda, the omniscient Lord, as your God. Praise Zoroaster as your spiritual leader. Treat Ahriman, the evil spirit, with contempt.

Then follows a prayer for social and moral gifts in the name of the thirty angels after whom the days of the Parsee month are named. The prayer begins as follows: May Ahura Mazda bestow upon you good thoughts through Bahman. A few words in the language of the Avesta or sacred book are recited as a blessing; a few passages are recited from the Yasna, the Parsee prayer book. The names of departed kings and heroes are mentioned with a view to the imitation of their virtues. The sun, moon and planets are mentioned, and the wish expressed that the pair may possess the attributes which the planets are supposed to possess. Then follows a prayer for "tandarusti" or physical well-being, and the register is signed.

After this comes the wedding feast. No flesh is eaten, a survival from the old days when it was very necessary to be very careful not to wound Hindoo susceptibilities. No objection to wine exists. These ceremonies, it is to be observed, are being modified by present circumstances. The young couple do not often leave the parental roof. Widows are allowed to marry again, but it is said that they do not often do so.

The Burial of the Dead.—Here we come into touch with some of the peculiar customs and ideas of the Parsees. On the approach of death the body of the dying person is washed and clad in clean clothes. The priests read prayers from the Zend Avesta to comfort the soul of the dying man, and they pray for the forgiveness of his sins, and that he may obtain a happy abode in the life to come. After death the body is placed on an oblong piece of polished stone, and then placed

on an iron bier. Two priests recite seven "has," viz. prayers from the Yasna, with a sermon on the brevity of human life and on the necessity of virtue. The idea also prevails that these prayers avert any evil influence which might injure the departed, or any evil influence from the departed which might injure the living.

The body is then carried to the "tower of silence," called Dakhma, if there is one, otherwise the body is buried, but with reluctance. The house from which the body comes, and the path along which it is carried, are said to be purified with gomez or cow's urine. On reaching the dakhma the mourners have one last look on the face of the dead, and the body is then delivered to the vultures.

There is one curious custom. The face of the deceased is exposed to the gaze of a dog three or four times during the sermon. This dog is considered to be a sacred animal, to guide the deceased to heaven, and to ward off evil spirits. This belief is dying out. Another suggestion is that the eyes of a particular kind of dog annihilate the impurities connected with a dead body. This dog is called the four-eyed dog, a yellow spot on the side of each eyelid being regarded as an additional eye. The dog has yellow ears, and his general colour is yellow and white. The eyes have a kind of magnetic influence. The mourners wash their faces and pray and then return home and receive visits of condolence.

Then follows the "uthamna" ceremony. The soul is thought to remain on earth for three days, and for this reason a priest prays for three days before a burning fire near the spot where the body was placed. On the morning of the fourth day the soul is believed to depart to the other world, and a special ceremony is held. Sums of money are given for the benefit of the departed soul. The charitable bequests of the deceased are announced. The priests, the lame, the halt, and the blind are feasted in the interests of the deceased.

At the tower of silence care is taken to prevent the earth from being contaminated by the corpse. The burial of the dead body is regarded not only as insanitary but as a profanation of the earth. When a dakhma is to be built, nails are fixed in the ground or a particular spot is enclosed by a thread, for the sake of isolation. Then prayers called Baj are said. Baj is a manner of utterance with closed lips. One prayer is in honour of Sraosh, the guardian angel of the dead. The second is in honour of Ahura Mazdah, the third in honour of Spendarmad, the guardian angel of the earth, the fourth in honour of Ardafrash, the departed, the fifth in honour of the Aneshaspands, the archangels. These prayers are really prayers said in order to obtain forgiveness for defiling even a small portion of the earth's surface.

The dead are commemorated on the anniversary of their deaths and on the last ten days of the year. For these ten days one of the rooms of the house is cleansed, whitewashed and set apart. Flowers and fruit are placed on trays which rest on stands, and prayers are said throughout the day. The room is made fragrant in memory of the dead and as an incentive to memory. The souls of the deceased are considered to be conscious of what is being done in their honour and are gratified. The practice is intended to keep affection alive, to bring the other world to the mind, and to suggest the idea of reunion hereafter. The patet or prayer for forgiveness is also said on these occasions.

It now remains to give a brief sketch of the salient points of the Zoroastrian faith. It is thought to be over 3000 years old, and to have flourished from the reign of Vishtaspa, Zoroaster's royal patron, until the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great. It revived again in the reign of Ardashir the Sassamian king about 226 A.D. This king collected the sacred books and had them translated into the Pehlevi dialect. This

reformation lasted until the conquest of Persia by the Mohammedans.

The date of Zoroaster's birth is not known. He is said to have been born at Rai in Media and to have flourished in Bactria. The language in which he wrote is the parent language of which the inscriptions of Cyprus and Darius are a later dialect. The meaning of the name Zoroaster is not certainly known. Some say it means "The old camel-keeper." He is called Spitama Zoroaster because of the family of Spitama. His father's name was Pourshaspa, his mother's Doghdo. An angel is said to have presented his father with a glass of wine, the juice of the well-known Homa plant, which the Hindoos call Soma. He performed religious ceremonies and then drank the wine and prayed for a child. His prayer was heard and Zoroaster was born.

The child's life was in danger from a wicked governor, but was preserved by divine intervention. As a youth he was addicted to philosophical studies and to meditation on divine things. Like Mohammed he claimed to have received his mission when so engaged. At the age of thirty he left Rai and went to Balkh, the capital of King Vishtaspa, and appeared before him with the Sacred Fire. He performed miracles and obtained the royal favour. His religion was to be spread by preaching, not by force. He says that he saw the truth coming out of the flames. He cried, "Hearken to the soul of nature. Contemplate the beams of fire with a pious mind." He had brought the sacred books with him.

The Parsee Scriptures are called Zend Avesta. The Avesta dialect belongs to the East Iranian branch of the Aryan stock. The book is written in two dialects. The five Gathas, known as the prophet's own writing, which probably contained his teaching in its original purity, are in the Gatha dialect; the rest is in the Avesta dialect, which is 200 or 300 years later than the Gatha dialect. Zend comes from a root meaning "to know,"

and refers to that part of the Avesta which is explanatory of the original text. The majority of the original books are said to have been destroyed by Alexander the Great and during the Arab conquest. Descriptions of their contents are found in a book called the Dinkardvi in Pehle. These books contained the whole of the Avesta literature on religion, science, medicine, botany, astronomy, etc. Only the 19th volume called Vendidad remains intact. This together with the Yasna and Visparad forms the Vendidad Sada. These, with a book of prayers called the Khordah Avesta, mainly concern us. A few words about each must suffice.

The Vendidad. This has been called the Leviticus of the Parsee canon. It was revealed to guard against demons and evil spirits and influences, and contains the code of civil and criminal law of the ancient Iranians. It also gives an account of the dissemination of the Zoroastrian faith, recommendations of agriculture, laws, ceremonies and observances, information as to the fate of the soul after death, an account of the opposition of the devil to the Zoroastrian faith, etc. There is an extraordinary jumble of moral and ritual errors. Gross moral offences are found side by side with such an offence as bringing fire into a house in which some one has died within a month. Such a mixture of sins is almost certainly a later development, alien to the teaching of Zoroaster. No one can read the Vendidad without being struck by this ethical confusion.

The Yasna. This is a sort of prayer book of the Avesta. It contains the Gathas, also miscellaneous prayers. The Frvads or first grade of priests must learn the whole of it, if they wish to become Mobeds or priests of the fire temple. It has 72 "has" or chapters and is in the Gatha and Avesta dialects. The word "Yasna" means "offering" with "prayer." Chapters i.-xxvii. contain liturgical matters. The remaining chapters contain the Gathas, which are religious hymns like the Vedas.

The *Visparad* contains 24 pieces in honour of the heavenly authorities. It forms part of the Parsee liturgy and is recited in the six *Gahambars* after 12 at midnight. The laity do not attend. It contains invocations of Ahura Mazda, of good genii, and the lords of purity, that they may be present at the coming ceremonies.

The *Khordah Avesta*, or little Avesta. This contains the remaining part of the *Zend Avesta*. Any layman after ablutions can recite the whole or part and without ceremonies. It contains (a) *The Gahs*, five in all, prayers to be recited during the five divisions of the day: (1) dawn till noon, (2) noon till 3 p.m., (3) 3 p.m. till nightfall, (4) nightfall to midnight, (5) midnight till dawn.

(b) *The Nyayish*, petitions to the powers of nature, sun, moon, dawn, light, water and fire. Some regard these as prayers and praise to the Almighty for His creations.

(c) *The Yashts*. There are 21 of these, songs in praise of angels which, under the supervision of God, preside over physical objects and mental qualities. In each, one attribute of God is praised, the Guardian Angel presiding over that attribute is invoked, and an account given of services rendered to illustrious persons.

(d) *Afringans*, miscellaneous ritual pieces. These are recited by priests on a carpet spread on the floor with a tray containing flowers and fruit, glasses of milk, water, wine and sherbet. The dead are remembered and the aid of guardian angels invoked.

There are many other religious books of a later date in the Persian dialect, of the Iranian branch of the Aryan stock. The Avesta gives the main outlines of the faith, the other books the details, but in the later books the simplicity of the religion of the Avesta yields to complex forms and minute ceremonies. As has been said, we must go to the *Gathas* if we wish to get at the heart of the Parsee religion.

Before the times of Zoroaster the Persians were monotheistic with a polytheistic taint. Zoroaster's

task, like that of Mohammed, was to cleanse it from that taint. The old Aryan word for God was derived from a root Div "to shine." Daeva meant God. When Zoroaster became a monotheist he declared the old daevas or gods to be demons. He gave the word a bad meaning, viz. "all that is evil." Ahura Mazda means "the Wise Lord."

The Parsees believe that there is one God, Ahura Mazda, the creator, preserver and ruler, who is without form and invisible. He is an immense light, the source of all joy, glory, bounty and goodness, mighty, just, benevolent and merciful. He alone is to be worshipped. This belief, however, was modified by Zoroaster's speculative philosophy, and has, at times at least, the appearance of dualism. There are two primeval causes, principles or spirits at work in the Universe: Spenta Mainyu, the kindly spirit or power, and creative, and Angra Mainyu, or Ahriman, the enemy spirit, destructive, the antithesis of good. God, as cause of causes, works through these two spirits. The Parsee affirms that the destructive spirit is not independent. There are real things and these are good, and there are delusive things and these are evil. There is a good mind, Vohu Manah, an attribute of Ahura Mazda, one of the Amesha Spenta or Ameshaspands conjoined with Mazda, and addressed in the Vocative, and there is an evil mind, Akemmano. These two causes are called twins, and exist in Ahura Mazda as well as in man. God and man are contending with Druj—falsehood, which stands over against God. There is some confusion between Angra Mainyu and Druj. Sometimes they appear to be identical. But as a rule Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu are as inseparable as night and day, and as indispensable in the present scheme of things. The beneficent spirit appears in the blazing flame, the evil spirit in the wood changed to charcoal. The former created day, the latter night; the former arouses to activity, the latter lulls to sleep; the former causes

life, the latter death. What is beneficial is traced to the former, what is harmful to the latter. This is the Zoroastrian solution of the existence of evil. If it is not a dualism in the sense of their being two Gods, it is at least a dualism in God, or created by God. But it must always be remembered that the evil spirit is destined to ultimate destruction. As the late Professor Moulton, to whose book, *The Treasure of the Magi*, I am much indebted, tersely puts it: "It is not the case of a game of chess between two players, the issue of which is uncertain, but rather a case of white to play and mate in a certain time and a certain number of moves." Parsees deny that they are dualists.

Then there is a celestial hierarchy of angels and archangels. Of the latter there are six called Ameshaspands, immortal holy ones or beneficent ones, who seem to be six attributes of Mazda personified. Sex is attributed to them. They are almost, if not quite, divinities. It is difficult to discover exactly what they are. They are: (1) Vohu Manah, good thought. (2) Bahman, the vital faculty in all good creation. (3) Ardibehest, light or brightness, representing the Omnipresence of God. (4) Khshathra, who presides over the gift of wealth. (5) Spenta Aramaiti or Spendarmad, the pious and obedient devotion of the holy heart. (6) Haurvatat, presiding over welfare and salvation. (7) Ameretat or Amerdad, immortality preserving from change and corruption. In the Gathas these archangels are placed on a level with Ahura Mazda, and it may be inferred that they are divine attributes, as Professor Moulton says, "the facets of a diamond the unity of which represents deity."

Man and his Destiny.—Man has free choice and has two kinds of intellect, innate wisdom, and this is superior and heavenly; and acquired wisdom, the result of observation and education. He is compounded of two lives, bodily and mental. He has a life here and a life hereafter, the connection between the two being righteous-

ness. The Parsee believes in a Resurrection and the life of the world to come. This belief is clearly expressed in the Gathas. Heaven is called Garodemana, "the house of song," or Vahistem, "the best life." Hell is called "the house of the lie," the worst existence, the worst thought, place of corruption, and in later theology has a purgatorial character. Between heaven and hell there is a bridge called Cinvato Peretu, the Bridge of the Separator. The good can pass over it, the evil cannot pass. The resurrection is probably conceived of as bodily. The idea of a body polluting the earth seems to be Magian and of later date. All life of good creation bodily as well as spiritual is a trust, and man who has freedom is under an obligation to keep the life pure, and God is under an obligation to destroy death and restore life in all the forms of life which come under the power of death.

As to the practical side of the religion, there are three pillars on which its ethical system rests: (1) Humata or purity of thought, (2) Hukhta or purity of speech, (3) Hvarshta or purity of action. The main question then is, What is meant by purity? The Parsees insist that virtue alone spells happiness in this world, that good deeds are the most acceptable sacrifice we can offer to God, and that a clear conscience alone secures inward peace. Truthfulness, industry, hospitality, benevolence and philanthropy are elements in this virtue.

But to understand the word purity as they use it we must also know what appears to the Parsee mind to be impure. There are moral impurities, murder, adultery, theft, falsehood, dishonesty, rebellion, apostasy, abuse of authority, avarice, idleness, pride, envy, slander and calumny, a list practically identical with the sins and crimes condemned in the 2nd table of Mosaic law. But there are other ideas connected with the subject of purity, and this is where Zoroastrian ideas diverge from Christian ideas. We can only select some

instances. It is a sin to contaminate fire or running water by throwing impure matter into them, to extinguish fire, and especially sacred fire, to use public baths, to carry a dead body *alone*, to eat when talking, to eat grain intended for sowing, or to walk with bare feet. Here sanitation and morality seem to be considered of equal importance, moral uncleanness and ceremonial uncleanness to be equivalent.

The matter can be illustrated by giving a brief sketch of their feeling about sacred fire, to show why they are afraid of contaminating fire. What is this Sacred Fire that burns continually in their fire temples, of which there are three kinds of descending degrees of holiness: (1) Atesh Behram, (2) Atesh Adaran and (3) Atesh Dadgah, the kind existing in Zanzibar? Why do they reverence fire, and to what extent? They emphatically claim to be monotheists and yet they have constantly been called fire worshippers. They say they reverence fire but do not worship it. But they do use the word worship in connection with it. They do not as a general body regard fire as a deity. It is the purest symbol of Deity, but a symbol only, and the reverence they pay it is only a method of approach to God; and so with the reverence paid to angels, spirits, and sacramental elements. A Parsee in prayer stands before the Sacred Fire and turns his face to the sun because they appear to him to be the best symbols of the Deity.

They give three reasons for their reverence for Fire:

(1) Because of its glory and radiance. It is active, pure, incorruptible, etc.

(2) Because of its usefulness, and the large part it plays in the universe.

(3) Because of the religious ceremonies which are performed in connection with it, before it is installed in the proper place.

As to this third reason we are told that it is installed in a proper place in a vase on an exalted stand, and in a chamber set apart. It is not common fire, it has

been consecrated. It is the reserved Sacrament of the Parsee. It has been most carefully purified. It is compounded of sixteen different fires, all prepared after a long and careful ritual; one of them is the fire from the burning of a corpse, the last indignity which can be offered to the Sacramental element. Sandal logs are kindled from the cremation. Above the flame, too high to touch it, a metal spoon with small holes is held, containing chips of sandalwood: when these ignite, another fire is kindled from it, and this process is repeated ninety-one times. This purified fire is set aside in an urn and kept burning with special care. Fire kindled by lightning needs ninety purifications. Sixteen of such fires are placed in one urn on the first of the Gatha days. Daily prayers are chanted over it through the first month of the New Year. Then on a lucky day a procession of priests is formed. Under a silver canopy the urn is carried and set in its place in the inner room. This account applies to the holiest Fire Temple only. The fire of the second grade is taken from four home fires of the members of the four classes in the old Persian community. The third grade has an ordinary house fire.

Religious Parsees visit the fire temple daily almost. On four days of the month, 3rd, 9th, 17th, and 20th, many attend. There is no distinction between men and women. Arrived at the temple, the worshipper washes the bare parts of the body, and recites the Kusti Prayer. He then goes barefoot through the inner hall to the threshold of the room where the fire burns and recites prayers standing. Only the priest is in the room itself. He receives sandalwood from the worshippers, and a piece of money, and brings him ashes from the urn in a ladle, which the worshipper applies to his forehead and eyelashes. After prayers the worshipper retires to the place where he left his shoes. As he looks at the fire he thinks: Here is the purest quintessence of fire procurable. It is a symbol of deity, and has to

be purified before it fulfils its appointed task. How much more necessary is it for me, a sinful mortal, to undergo a purification of my thoughts, words and deeds so that I may enjoy an exalted position in the world to come; for "our God is a consuming fire." The general conclusion of competent inquirers seems to be that in the earliest days and at the present time Parsees have been and are monotheists, but their faith passed through a dark period when the worship and reverence due to God was diverted to the symbol, and then the suspicion arose that the Parsees were fire worshippers.

It is needless to say that the Parsee priest has to pass through a careful initiation and purification of soul and body and should have a thorough knowledge of the books and religious ceremonies of the Parsee faith.

CHAPTER VIII

The Hindoos in Zanzibar

THE present chapter is largely the composition of an educated and intelligent Indian Christian, resident for some time in Zanzibar. I have edited it, but I am not responsible for the opinions expressed. I believe that they are substantially correct.

It should be remembered that the non-Mohammedan portion of the Indian people resident in Zanzibar are here spoken of, and that they come from the West rather than the East of India. Also it should be kept in mind that Siva and Vishnu are the Indian gods specially revered by these people and that Krishna and Rama are incarnations of Vishnu.

The Hindoos in Zanzibar are called Banyans and the name includes Brahmins.

The old distinctions of caste have less effect and importance under foreign rule and in a foreign country. Nevertheless, the Banyans in Zanzibar can be classed under three principal heads,—The High Castes, The Middle Castes, and The Menial Castes.

The High Castes.—In this group the Brahmins are included. They call themselves the supreme lords of mankind and claim superiority over all other castes in matters social and religious. They base their superiority on the claim that they proceeded from the mouth

of Brahma, the Lord of Creation, according to the teaching of the Hindoo Shastras. The sacred books are full of stories as to their sacred origin, and this makes it very difficult to attempt to lower their prestige in the eyes of the Indian population. Even were a Brahmin a great scoundrel, even were he to perpetrate the greatest crimes, nevertheless to kill him would be the worst sin imaginable in this world and in the world to come.

Also in this highest group there are the Bhatiyas, the Jains and several Banyan sects, but the Brahmins consider these to be beneath themselves in rank and dignity. These other sects, generally speaking, have the same footing and position in Indian society and are called Vaishyas in the Indian Scriptures.

The Middle Class comprises the Luwanas, the Kumbis and the industrial classes, such as carpenters, smiths, tailors, barbers and leather workers. They also call themselves Vaishyas. Touching is allowed as far as these classes, and a little lower down to the Kumbhars or porters.

The Menial Class comprises the Kumbhars, Meghwars and Chamars. The last two are untouchables. If touched by them, the upper classes, even in Zanzibar, sometimes undergo strict purification. The high caste, although they call the carpenters, smiths, tailors and barbers menial, regard them as touchables, because their services are necessary to their comfort, and because they do not handle the unclean things which the High Castes are forbidden to touch.

The occupations peculiar to these several castes.—The Brahmins form the priestly caste. It suffices if the Brahmin is able to mutter some Sanscrit verses from the Vedas. He will gain a living thereby. They are not at all ashamed to go about begging. This is their special privilege. They are the boldest beggars in Hindoo society. To refuse a Brahmin alms is an unpardonable sin. The Brahmins are the only literate

class among the Banyans. Study is enjoined on them as a religious duty. They are adepts at story telling. They may often be seen in Indian houses telling their stories, explaining to the owner of a house how or why a certain misfortune befell him, or how to obtain a remedy. They have wonderful persuasive powers, and thereby gain great personal advantage, and the listener a blessing. There is not a Hindoo household in which the Brahmin cannot receive a hearty welcome, and an attentive hearing, or in which his services will not be called into requisition. Of all the Brahmins in Zanzibar the vagrant beggars are the richest and the most idle and in consequence the most vicious. The working Brahmins are not so well off. Some of the vagrant Brahmins engage in brokerage and speculation and prosper on account of the influence which they possess among the Hindoo population. Some are good cooks, and as every one can eat and touch what they cook, are sometimes hotel keepers. Others are astrologers and secure a good income from their astrology. At all public and private ceremonies the Brahmin is the principal figure and is only satisfied when he receives the lion's share of the funds devoted to the celebration of the particular ceremony.

The Brahmin is a worshipper of Siva or Shaiva, at least about 80 per cent. are said to be so; the rest are Vaishnavas or worshippers of Vishnu.

The occupations of the Bhatiyas.—They are an influential class. They are mostly engaged in trading on a large scale. Some of them are bankers and speculators. They are the most enterprising class, and some have received an English education and are fairly literate. They are worshippers of Vishnu and call themselves Vallabhacharya, after a religious leader of that name, who founded the particular type of religion to which the Bhatiyas belong. This founder was a very strict ascetic. His successors call themselves

Gosainjies in Zanzibar. They claim to be direct descendants of Krishna. Their religious ceremonies contain some abominable rites.

As a caste the Bhatiyas keep themselves aloof from the other Banyans, going so far as to refuse others sympathy in their troubles. I heard that some time ago there was a money collection in aid of the destitute Banyans in Zanzibar, but the Bhatiyas flatly refused to subscribe. This caused much irritation to the promoters of the scheme and to the Banyan community at large. I do not know why they are disliked by the other Banyans. Perhaps the dislike is due to envy at their prosperity and to their lack of sympathy towards others. The Bhatiyas have only one place of public assembly, near the Post Office. No one is admitted except a member of the Bhatiya community. Their manner of living is good, they keep their houses very clean, they eat no flesh and they do not touch intoxicants. They are honest and upright in their dealings and it is safe to trade with them. As far as my observation goes, they alone among the Banyans possess character and nobility of bearing.

There are *Jains* in Zanzibar. They are divided into two castes. These two castes refuse to eat together, or to intermarry. They are called Shvetambers and Digambers. The Shvetambers are the higher class and wear white cloth. This is why they are called Shvetambers. The Digambers wear yellow cloth. The Digambers recognize and practise idol worship. Their place of worship is near the Euan Smith madrasa, and that of the Shvetambers not far away from the same spot.

Like the Bhatiyas they are traders and merchants, but not on so large a scale, and like the Bhatiyas they have a reputation for fair dealing. They may be reckoned amongst the well-to-do people of Zanzibar. They are cleanly in their customs as regards bathing,

eating and drinking, and strict in their observance of fasts. The killing of any creature is a heinous offence in their eyes. When saying their prayers they place a piece of cloth called Mumti before their mouth to keep any invisible insects from being destroyed by their breath, and a friend of mine refused to walk along a certain piece of road with me because the ground was swarming with ants and he feared to tread on them. On fast days they either drink no water, or boiled water only, if to drink is necessary. They are not Monotheists. They believe in 24 Thir thankars, who, they say, like Buddha, attained to annihilation. They are an offshoot of the Buddhist creed. Buddhism was becoming too abstract for the Hindoo mind, they needed something objective like idol worship. This was discarded by Buddha, and so the Jains started their own sect. The Hindoo mind cannot be satisfied with abstractions. It craves for a personal God.

There are other Vaishya castes, but as they are only represented by one or two individuals scattered here or there in Zanzibar, it is not necessary to describe them.

Amongst the industrial classes there are the Kunbis, or those engaged in agriculture. They make good farmers, and are generally employed in cultivating the ground. Some are masons. They all believe in Swami Narayan, an incarnation of Vishnu. A few may be found worshipping a goddess or some other god such as Siva. Very few of them have any education. They are easy-going, simple folk, contented with their lot, and full of superstitions. Some of them have more than one favourite god. Some of them wear tokens of attachment to a particular Guru or religious teacher. They are one of the most devout sects. They use the rosary of "Mala," and meditate morning and evening. They are a quiet, peaceable people but very credulous.

The industrial classes are as a rule illiterate and believe in many gods and goddesses. Their chief object

of devotion is Ram, an incarnation of Vishnu. Among these industrial classes there are various subdivisions of caste, who refuse to eat together or to intermarry. The higher classes have the right to wear the sacred thread, like the castes of the first grade. It must not be supposed that all members of the same caste have the same god or goddess. Even among members of the same family there may be worshippers of Siva, and goddess worshippers. Yet they live in harmony.

The Barber is a well-known figure. He not only shaves but helps at funeral ceremonies and at marriages. He carries the tidings of death, is torch-bearer, and bearer of the fire at the burning of a corpse. He is a go-between at betrothals, carrier of invitations to guests, and a torch-bearer in processions.

The Kumbhar is mainly a water-carrier and is often employed in Hindoo houses to clean cooking vessels and dishes and pots. Some are employed as peons under Government. The smiths are workers in metals, viz. Kansars, Sonaras and Luwars.

The Mochis are workers in tanned skins. The tanning is done by the Chamars who are for this reason untouchables. When an animal dies in a Hindoo house, the Meghwar comes with a few others of his caste to bear the dead body away. The skin is removed by the Chamars and made into leather. The Meghwars then divide the dead flesh amongst themselves and eat it. These Meghwars are the most ignorant and debased element in the Hindoo community. They have their own gods and goddesses and Gurus, and Matas or mothers. They may not enter the temples of the higher castes. It would be pollution. People may not touch them or allow their shadow to fall over them. They receive no sympathy. In Zanzibar many of them live in huts on the plantations, coming to town only once a week to buy things and exchange the product of their toil. (My informant does not say how

this is possible!) All social comforts are denied them. Some of them carry manure to the plantations and dispose of it, and gather fodder for cattle in the town. You meet them coming into town with their loads of grass. They never think of getting employment under the Government, not only because of their ignorance, but because of the contempt in which they are held by all other classes of Hindoo society. The Gaikwar of Baroda tried to better their position. He gave education to some of them. In one place he employed one of these educated Meghwars as a peon. All the other peons left their posts at once, preferring misery and poverty to association with a Meghwar.

Marks on the Forehead.—Marks are often seen on the foreheads of Hindoos in Zanzibar. There are three principal marks: (1) This is like a capital V with a dot in it, signifying Divinity, and is a sign that the person in question is a worshipper of Vishnu; the mark representing the footmark of Vishnu, the second God of the Hindoo Trinity. (2) The second mark is three curved loops one over the other with a perpendicular loop almost bisecting the three curves. This sign represents the Hindoo Trimurti or Trinity, and the loop bisecting the three curves represent the Unity of the Trinity. The Hindoos believe in three manifestations of the Supreme Spirit, Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh, each of whom has a distinctive attribute. Brahma implies Life, Vishnu Preservation, and Mahesh Destruction. These are three attributes of the Supreme Being, Life, Preservation and Destruction. These marks are no part of the original faith of the Hindoo. (3) The third mark is a simple vermilion dot between the eyes, and rather above them. Some say this is a sign of blood and typifies the idea of sacrifice. All Hindoos believe in incarnations of their Deity. There are ten principal incarnations of Vishnu alone. This third mark betokens adhesion to and faith in that particular Deity of which it is a recognized symbol,

and is therefore placed on the most prominent part of the body.

From the highest Brahmin to the lowest Vaishya, all are called Dvija, or twice-born, and have a right to wear the sacred thread. In India this thread is put on with much ceremony. The Brahmin wears it when eight years old, the Kshatriya or military class (apparently not represented in Zanzibar) when eleven, and the Vaishya when twelve. It is worn over the left shoulder and allowed to hang on the opposite side. It consists of three cotton threads twisted together, and signifies three things: (1) Atma runa, or the indebtedness of the soul; (2) Pitru runa, or indebtedness to parents and ancestors; (3) Deva runa, or indebtedness to God. When a person puts on his thread he makes a solemn vow to fulfil all these conditions. He is called Dwij, or twice-born, and is regarded as regenerate. It is not unlike the baptism of Christians. The wearer fulfils the first kind of indebtedness by acquiring knowledge until he is twenty-five years old. It is the development of individuality according to the injunctions of the Shastras. Until he is fifty he fulfils the second obligation to his forefathers by continuing the race. Begetting a son is sufficient to secure the happiness of heaven. Their word for son means, a deliverer from hell. This is why a second marriage follows a childless marriage, and is the justification of polygamy in the eyes of the Hindoo. A childless man is considered to be a bearer of misfortune, and even his neighbour will avoid seeing his face in the early morning. A barren woman receives little respect. To call a woman barren is to insult and reproach her. The third stage begins at fifty and lasts until the end of a man's life. In this stage he fulfils his obligation to God by giving up his house and family and living a retired life in a solitary place, working out his own salvation by means by holy exercises, fasting and penance. In

these days such practices have fallen into disuse, the man merely gives up active pursuits. The thread is changed once a year and discarded at the close of the second stage.

Hindoo Customs, Social and Religious.—The family is the pillar of Indian society. So strong are family ties that they result in credulousness and the blind following of opinions and traditions. The head of the house is as a god, and little attention is paid to the opinions of the younger members, however learned or intelligent they may be. The effect is a loss of individuality, lack of original thinking, and a fatal habit of indecision.

The low position of women is another weak point in Indian social life. The girl is taught to be servile, the wife is under the dominance of her husband and the older members of the family, and when old is under the rule of her grown-up children. She has no voice in the affairs of the household. She is nothing apart from her husband, and unfortunately it is the teaching of the Shastras which is the cause of this loss of individuality. Is it surprising then that her sons grow up with all the rougher qualities of their sex unaffected by the gentler qualities of the other sex? If the women have any effect at all upon their male offspring it is by imparting to them a superstitious awe of the unseen powers of the air, which tends to make them moral cowards unless this evil influence is counteracted by a sound education. Living as she does in such a state of thralldom, visible powers dominating her in every small detail of her daily life, she inclines to think much of invisible powers. She bears without complaint the tyranny of her husband, the taunts of her mother-in-law, the abuse of her own children. The newly married woman may not talk with her husband in the hearing of her father-in-law or mother-in-law. All the menial duties of the household are imposed upon her. I have heard of husbands of young wives being scolded by their mothers for going

to a doctor for medicine without their knowledge. The mothers say that the young wives only pretend to be sick in order to escape their household duties. If the husband dies, the wife is thought to be the cause of his death, and for the rest of her life is subjected to every kind of abuse and reproach for this reason.

Almost all the Banyans in Zanzibar come from the least enlightened elements of the Indian population, and therefore much of what has been said will be found to occur amongst them. Yet every custom amongst them has a religious basis. And in spite of the degeneracy that exists in the Hindoo world, the Hindoo is essentially a religious person. There is not a substance in nature to which he will not bow if persuaded by his religious guide or Guru to do so. Any person displaying unusual intelligence is to him as a god, and, if not deified during his lifetime, will be deified after his death. Many facts go to prove the power which religion has over the Hindoo mind. The numerous Hindoo shrines and places of worship, the gorgeous and expensive ceremonies, the multitude of ascetics (ascetics only in practice, but far from ascetic in their private life) who make a living out of the credulity of the general folk, the ascendancy and prosperity of the large class called Brahmins—all these facts combine to prove that religion occupies a large place in the Hindoo mind. The minister of the Gospel can make use of this religious instinct and give it the right stimulus.

Hindoos migrating to a foreign country say that they cannot carry their gods with them. Their gods will not go to countries inhabited by Mlechchas, viz. non-Hindoos. It is for this reason that all the important ceremonies are performed in India, such as investing a person with the sacred thread, marriages, performing vows, cutting a child's hair for the first time, and scattering the ashes of a dead body in a sacred river, if a body has been cremated in a foreign country.

As for their morning and evening prayers, they direct

their prayers to the rising sun, regarded as a visible symbol of Deity, or towards a trident kept in a cavity of the wall of the house, a symbol of the God Siva, or towards a Tulsi plant, the holy basil, the special favourite of the God Vishnu. (My informant here adds that the worship of money has a large place in Indian life, and the love of money has a more powerful influence than moral instincts.)

There is one important religious ceremony among the Indians in Zanzibar which I have attended myself. It is called Sat Narayan Katha. Narayan means the God Vishnu, the second God of the Hindoo Trinity. The ceremony takes place on various occasions, such as a festivity in the event of a birth, marriage, advent of good luck, on the payment of vows, or in order to invoke a favourite god and secure good fortune for the family. The head of the family sends invitations to his friends the day before the ceremony. This takes place at night with much music which precedes and follows the actual rite. A small pavilion is made with banana leaves and banana stems. The outer side is decorated with flowers. The God Narayan is represented by a brass jug, on the mouth of which is placed a cocoanut smeared with vermilion. In India the ceremony is very expensive, a gold or silver image of the god being used instead of brass. This image becomes the property of the Brahmin after the ceremony is over. This Brahmin has been summoned and comes with his sacred loin cloth and a bundle of books out of which he will read the Katha or Story. As soon as the Brahmin enters and commences chanting, the place becomes sacred. During the ceremony the Brahmin sits in front of the pavilion; his task is to impart divinity to the image. When this is over, a tray is brought containing all sorts of fruit, cocoanut scrapings, nuts, dried fruits and other things, and is presented to the god, who not only blesses it but partakes of it, as the Hindoos suppose. When this has been done those present bow reverently

before the image and pray for blessings. The contents of the tray are now sacred and are distributed among the worshippers. I did not partake, but some Moham-medans who were present accepted their share. The ceremony reminded me of the Communion. I imagine the ceremony is a vestige of the sacrificial system in vogue among the Hindoos of the Vedic period, although present Hindoo reformers of the Samajist type deny that their sacred books speak of animal sacrifices.

The Idea of Incarnation.—But the *Samajists* also deny the belief in Incarnation, a belief which has so strong a hold on the Hindoo mind even to the present day. Buddha was the first to preach the doctrine of the sacredness of animal life. However, Buddhism has had its day and is fast disappearing in India. The decline of Buddhism is largely due to its attitude towards the idea of Incarnation, an idea so hallowed to the Indian mind. Buddha laid stress on personal acts as a road to salvation, but by salvation he meant what we should call annihilation.

The Hindoo craves for a personal and incarnate God. If Brahminism prevails over India in the future as it prevailed in the past it will be because of the large part that the idea of Incarnation plays in the Brahmin beliefs, the idea that God should take upon Him human nature and so work out man's salvation for him. If Christianity prevails, it will be because of the teaching of the Incarnation.

The Brahmins say that beside the nine incarnations of Krishna there is one yet to come called Kalki Avatar, a sinless Incarnation. Unrighteousness will cease. The teaching as to this Incarnation is very like the teaching as to the Second Coming of Christ and the effect of that Coming.

Another ceremony is called Sradha. This consists in presenting food to the departed spirits of ancestors. This food is thought to invest the spirits with earthly bodies, with which they are sure to come to earth after

their death, and also to nourish them in the life beyond. There are special days in the Hindoo year in which this ceremony is performed in all the minuteness of its Shastric details. The ten days preceding a marriage are specially set apart for performing ceremonies intended to propitiate the departed and secure their blessing on the marriage. Special care is taken that not a single dead relative is left unmentioned in these ceremonies.

Every pious Hindoo says his morning and evening prayers without fail. He fixes his faith on a particular god. He has his Guru or religious guide, whose token he wears on his wrist. His mark and method of worship are the same as that of his Guru. The Guru is a privileged person in the Indian house. He levies contributions which are willingly paid. It is a great honour if a Guru shares a meal with the family, and no expense is grudged in order to please him. When a Guru visits a house all go to meet him. He is given the best seat, his feet are washed, and then the water with which his feet have been washed is drunk.

The Hindoos are very superstitious. Before he lives in a house a Hindoo will carefully inquire if any one has died in it, and whether it is haunted. Before going on a journey he will first inquire what is the most auspicious day for a start. If on leaving the house he sees a serpent or a cat crossing his path, or hears an owl hooting, or a dove uttering a sad note, he will abandon his journey. An ass standing with his back to a person is regarded as an evil omen. A child with food in its hand will not be allowed by its parents to go out lest it attract the evil eye and fall ill. I have seen parents searching anxiously for their child because they heard that it had been given food.

A Hindoo mother does not like to hear her child praised in public lest the evil eye should cause it some harm. Hindoo mothers will quarrel because one has praised the other's child. If a mother thinks her child is suffering from the evil eye, she hastily takes some unbroken chillies,

turns them round once over the child's head, and then burns them in the fire. Or a loaf is made of flour and smeared with clarified butter on one side. The child is told to look on this loaf and the loaf is then thrown to a dog. A handsome man, a beautiful woman, or any one in fine garments is in danger of the evil eye.

The Hindoos are great believers in omens. On the occasion of a marriage, or when a girl is sent to her father-in-law's house for the first time, or when a plough is taken to the fields after the rains begin, omens are sought for. Tuesdays and Thursdays are bad days, and Indian kalendar makers take care that New Year's Day does not fall on either of them.

The Banyan cares more for ornaments than for dress and spends much of his money on them. In many Indian houses ornaments constitute their capital. Doctors' bills are sometimes paid not in money but in ornaments. They do not care to invest their money in banks for the sake of interest. They like to see their wives and children covered with ornaments and they indulge their wives in the matter of ornaments.

They have their festival days and fast days, named after the gods in whose honour they are observed. The fifteenth of each month is observed as a day of rest. On some fast days they even abstain from drinking water. On other fast days it is permissible to eat fruit. It must not be thought that all members of the household observe the fast. It generally falls to the lot of the women, but the merit attaches to the whole household.

High-caste Indian houses are scrupulously clean and the cleanest room is the kitchen. Only the woman enters it and she must change her clothes first. It is a sacred place and must be entered without shoes. This custom of making the kitchen a sacred place is due to the idea that food is a god. If a Hindoo sees a grain of wheat being trodden on, he is horrified.

The Banyan is a thrifty person. However small his wages may be, he will save something. Their debts

are due to their expensive ceremonies and feasts on the occasion of a marriage, or on the death of an elderly member of the family. This last feast is looked upon as a link to keep together the members of a community. By such feasts confined to members of a caste, they not only do honour to the dead but perpetuate their influence in the particular community. The Banyan saves money in anticipation of such occasions.

The Banyan makes vows and is strict in observing them. If some beloved member of a family is ill, a Banyan will make a vow to give a meal to a Brahmin, or to a group of unmarried girls, or to go to a place of pilgrimage, or to dedicate some valuable object to the image of the god to whose favour the cure is attributed, or to give food to cows.

Amulets are commonly worn by young and old alike to ward off evil. These contain part of the ashes of a Guru, a verse from their sacred books, or some charm given them by a Brahmin or medicine man. Also they wear charmed threads on the neck and wrist.

Dancing, in the eye of a Hindoo, is the occupation of a prostitute. Drunkenness is despised. Although the eating of flesh is carried on secretly by the working classes, public opinion and the sacred scriptures are strongly opposed to it, and any one known to indulge in it will be regarded as an outcast. Nowadays a man's religion is tested merely by his observance of caste rules. Even if a Hindoo becomes a Christian, as long as he observes the rule of his caste, he will suffer no inconvenience.

On Festival days Hindoos go in groups to their meeting places and listen to sermons preached by some pious man of their community. The middle and lower classes sometimes have no such place of meeting, so they go to the sea shore, and break cocoanuts in a ceremonial fashion and offer the milk and the shell to the sea. The sea to them is a manifestation of God. The meat of the coconut is eaten by those present. They eat it not because they like it but because of its religious associa-

tions. When a steamer is about to sail you will see this cocoanut ceremony. It is observed in order to propitiate the Deity and to ward off the peril of the sea.

The Arya Samaj in Zanzibar.—This society is spreading in Zanzibar very fast, as in India. It attracts because it has adopted Western ideas and reforms and science. They trace these ideas to the Vedas and claim that they are not indebted to the West for them. They follow up every scientific movement outside India and then search the Vedas for a verse or verses bearing on the subject. They are full of the spirit and enthusiasm of the founders of the Samaj, whom they regard as the true interpreters of the Vedas and as possessing the best Sanscrit learning. They speak lightly of European Sanscrit scholars. They are active and bitter opponents of Christianity and every other religion. They challenge all religions to a public discussion, but are too prone to wrangling at such discussions. They have founded institutions of their own in India, on European models, schools, orphanages, homes for widows and hospitals. They send missionaries to other countries, choosing those who are well read. They issue pamphlets on a large scale in order to propagate their opinions. They preach in special buildings or in the public streets. The success attending their efforts is due to their denunciation of caste, to the advocacy of reforms recognized as beneficial to Indian social life, to the spread of Western education, to the general dislike of foreign rule, and to the growth of the Swadeshi movement; nevertheless, in their specious theories of religion what they contribute to the Indian mind is more than counterbalanced by that which they take away. That mind is essentially religious, and when the disturbance caused by the Arya Samaj has subsided, then this religious mind will fail to find satisfaction in the Vedas. The Gospel of Christ will alone satisfy the Indian mind. The leaders of Indian religious thought have based their dogmas on the Vedas. There is not a single phrase of the old Hindoo religion

which has not had at one time or another its advocates and adherents. It seems, therefore, certain that the Vedas have failed to satisfy, because these movements have gradually drifted into obscurity. The antagonism to Christianity is largely of a political nature. In a season of political calm the religious instinct of India will find its rest and home in the teaching of a personal God.

The principal dogmas taught by the Arya Samaj which conflict with Christian teaching are four: (1) God is not a Person; (2) God is immanent, not transcendent; (3) The transmigration of souls; (4) There is no incarnation possible.

Though their descriptions of God are similar to our own, yet really they are pantheists of a subtle kind. The God whom they confess resembles a silkworm shrouded in its own cocoon, unconscious of its environment. Man is left to himself to work out his own salvation; self-righteousness, penances and a passage through a series of births are the means of salvation, moksha. They explain away the old sacrificial system of the Vedas. The religion they profess does not produce the highest type of character. At the best I regard them as paving a way for Christianity. Missions find caste an almost insuperable barrier. The Arya Samaj is so far helpful to missionary work in that it is dashing itself against caste. Western civilization and the Hindoo reformers are, as it were, the ploughs which break up the hard soil and prepare it for the sower. The Indian religious instinct with its simplicity, its ascetic leanings, its abhorrence of drink and prostitution will then make its own contribution to Christianity.

In Zanzibar the Banyan who becomes a convert to Christianity will have to make great sacrifices. He needs careful preparation and much encouragement. As soon as he becomes a Christian he will be an outcast from his kinsfolk. He will be hated. He will need much support and sympathy. He may need material

support. His shortcomings must be endured, and allowance made for him if he does not attain at once the Christian ideal. He is very sensitive to criticism of his manners and customs. He must be brought to Christ as a sick man to a physician, and his fellow Christians must be patient with him until his cure is completed by the Saviour of Men.

CHAPTER IX

Points of Agreement and Difference

HAVING given this brief and cursory sketch of the religions believed in and practised in Zanzibar, I propose, in this concluding chapter, to point out some of the principal differences and points of agreement, as these should enable us to discover the best methods of dealing with the task which has fallen to our lot.

Points of Agreement.—The African who is unaffected by Mohammedanism believes vaguely in God, he believes he has a soul which survives separation from the perishable body, he believes in some sort of intercourse between those on earth and those in the spirit world, he believes in evil spirits, he believes in the unseen, and so in a sense has faith. He prays, he offers sacrifice and has communion of prayer and sacrifice with the unseen world, he makes a distinction between truth and falsehood, good and evil, and his proverbial philosophy shows that he is conscious, dimly conscious but still conscious, of some kind of moral purpose underlying the experience of life. All this is entangled in a labyrinth of superstitions; but long intercourse with African converts has convinced me that many of these superstitions disappear as soon as the African begins to possess a truer conception of God and of the relation in which we stand to Him. Converts may be and are sometimes unsatisfactory, but the average convert is on an altogether higher plane of thought and belief than the uninstructed

heathen ; what he believes does influence, in many ways, his daily life and conduct. He has advanced.

Mohammedanism, however, has prevailed so long in Zanzibar and Pemba that practically we may leave out of account here the African who simply knows the traditions of his fathers. The majority of Africans in Zanzibar, even when not professing Islam, have been largely influenced by the Mohammedan atmosphere in which they live, so largely that what is written about Mohammedanism in Zanzibar and Pemba can be taken as applying to them to a great extent. That simplifies matters.

The Mohammedan believes in one God, the Creator and Preserver and Ruler of mankind. He believes in good and evil spirits, unseen but active in the affairs of men. He believes in the fall of man in the sense of disobedience to the law of God. He believes in prophets and miracles and sacred books as helps to man's recovery, and as affording revelations of God's will. He believes in a resurrection and a judgment, in heaven and hell. He practises scripture reading, prayer, fasting and almsgiving. He has sacrifices. He believes, though it is not considered orthodox by all Moslems, in the accessibility of the Saints of the Moslem world. He believes in our Lord as a prophet, miraculously born, but a creature who began to exist in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He believes the *original* Gospel to be an inspired book. He believes that our Lord was translated to heaven, is alive, and will come again; that He is called the Word of God. Thus we have many points in common with the Moslem. Many of the ethical precepts of the Koran we can accept. Some of these are common to the human race, some of them obviously borrowed from Judaism and Christianity.

In Hinduism we get the idea of a Trinity, the idea, foreign to Africans and Mohammedans and Parsees, of Incarnation. We get some kind of intercourse between the living and the spirits of the departed, a belief in the

possibility of attaining to a state of bliss called Nirvana. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are practised. The greatest value is attached to the practice of asceticism. There is a very strong sense that man needs some sort of cleansing before drawing near to God. They have a sense of the need of sacrifice as a means of propitiation. In all this we can easily discern points of contact with Christianity.

The Parsee believes in the Unity of God. His worship of fire as a symbol of God, bears witness to the fact that he has a conception of the holiness of God. He conceives of God as Righteous. His ethical standard is that of righteousness. His future life is the reward of righteousness. He has a prophet and sacred books. He has a very strong sense that human nature needs cleansing from various sources of contamination. He prays, he recites the sacred Scriptures. He has a strong belief in the accessibility of the departed and the possibility of communion with them. Here again we see that we have much in common.

There are, then, many points of agreement between ourselves and all those with whom we come into contact. Is it not therefore the truest wisdom to begin by recognizing the fact, so that they may see that we have not come to destroy but to fulfil.

Points of Difference.—It is, however, when we come to the differences, that the real work begins. It would be impossible in a short chapter to deal with them fully. I can only select a few of the most important differences in each case.

First, then, the African. The greatest difference between the African and the Christian, perhaps, is this, that the African thinks of God as far away, and the Christian thinks of Him as near ; that the African thinks of Him as not caring, and the Christian as caring very much. And there is this resultant difference, that fear takes the place of faith in the African heart, and a whole host of unseen malignant agencies oust God from His

Throne in the soul. It is useless, I think, to give the African new moral ideas until you have succeeded in awakening in him a real belief and trust in God. Perhaps one reason why Mohammedanism has succeeded in winning so many converts amongst the Africans is this, that they have been able to concentrate almost wholly on this one point, to substitute faith and trust in one God, for the panic fear produced by belief in a whole host of evil agencies. Where Islam has failed, it has failed because too often they have confined themselves to the thought of the Greatness of God, with the result that only a higher type of dread has succeeded to the lower type, and the African heart has failed to find in the Moslem idea of God the love for which the human heart craves. As I said above, it is astonishing sometimes what a change passes over the African when he has gained the point of view that the All-great is the All-loving too. And it is one of the kindest services which a man can render to his fellow-men to impart to him such a knowledge of God as to free his soul from the superstitious fears which have darkened and poisoned his outlook on life.

Then again in dealing with Mohammedanism. The justification for mission work amongst Mohammedans is based on the fact that though like us they worship the Unity, yet their conception of God is partly defective, and partly untrue, and has influenced and, I think, seriously impaired their ethical standard and their social life. As every one knows who has carefully studied the subject, they misconceive some Christian doctrines, and flatly deny others. It may be true that Mohammed was unfortunate in his experience of Christians, that he did not come into contact with the best type of Christian, or with Christians thoroughly grounded in their faith, and that the teaching which is condemned in the Koran is teaching which was actually current amongst the Christians in Arabia and the neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, it is a fact which cannot be

disputed, that such misconceptions of Christian doctrine as the statement that the Christian Trinity is father, mother and son, and that we believe that our Lord is the Son of God by physical generation, are considered by Mohammedans to be true statements of Christian belief, and to rest on an authority which they regard as divine, the authority of the Koran. Their denial of the Crucifixion, the disbelief in the Resurrection, their misconceptions of the Person and Office of the Holy Spirit, must obviously affect their attitude towards sin, redemption, and the need of divine grace in the spiritual life. There is a pride and a hardness in their character which is in marked contrast with the humility and tenderness of the true Christian. They are in sore need of the belief in the Fatherhood of God, of the belief in Sonship as truly defining the relationship in which we stand to God, of the belief in the enlightening, converting and strengthening power of the Holy Spirit, of the belief in sin, as not only disobedience to positive commands of an arbitrary nature, but as a falling short of the Glory of God, of the belief in the need of redemption, of the belief in the power of the risen life, of the belief in the existence of a true Mediator, the way and the truth and the life to men. They sorely need belief in the Incarnation, to bridge the gulf between God and man. They have no Mediator and no Exemplar. Mohammed, to a certain extent, supplies the gap, but any one can see the tremendous consequences of the substitution of a man like Mohammed for the Only begotten Son of God, His well beloved. And it seems certain that the emphasis which they lay on the Power and Sovereignty of God has very largely deprived the allusions in the Koran to Love and Righteousness as attributes of God of their effect on human life and character. Surely we can see the results of such a distorted and defective idea of God in the Mohammedan world as it exists to-day. What may be the ultimate result of the blending of Christians and Mohammedans in the

world, no one can foresee. It has not been without effect. But I do not see how the Christian Church can refuse to bear its witness, regardless of consequences, in the face of the Christian belief, that "this is eternal life that they may know Thee the Only True God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son hath not life." If we believe these words surely it is an act of kindness to try and convince others that they are true. Their progress, their eternal welfare are at stake.

Again there is the Parsee. It is a cause for rejoicing that they emphasize as they do the Righteousness of God. But there are defects in their conception of this Righteousness. No one can read the Zend Avesta without being struck with the confusion between moral and ceremonial purity. Zoroaster, as the revealer of God's will, does not bear comparison with the one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. We are not told how man is assisted in his efforts to become righteous. The impression left on one's mind by a study of Parsee religion is that it is within the power of the human will to attain to righteousness without the assistance of divine grace. The idea of God as a loving Father as well as a Righteous One, hardly seems to affect their life and conduct. Though they claim to be monotheists, it must still be admitted that there is some ground for the prevalence of the belief that they are dualists, viz. that this world is the scene of a great duel between Ormuzd and Ahriman. It is by no means clear what is the relationship which exists between Ahriman and the Creator. And even if we admit, and I do not see why we should refuse to admit, that they regard the Holy Fire as simply a symbol of the Deity, we must confess that they use language with regard to the Holy Fire which no Christian would care to employ. Like the Mohammedans they need the middle term between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. They seem to me to be nearer Christianity than any other race in Zanzi-

bar, both in belief and in character ; and if ever they accept Christianity, they will have less difficulty than others in complying with its moral demands. They will make noble disciples of Him who came to bring in everlasting righteousness ; Jesus Christ the Righteous One, who is the propitiation for our sins.

And lastly there is the Hindoo. In Hindooism there are three great defects which Christianity can alone remove : unsatisfactory Incarnations of imperfect gods, Pantheism, and the belief in a series of rebirths. It is something gained to be able to speak about Incarnation of the Deity to people to whom the idea is familiar. But if the idea of God is defective, the Incarnation must be defective too. A God, even by Incarnation, can only reveal himself as he is. The river of water of life proceeds out of the Throne of God and the Lamb. And He who is the Lamb said, I and the Father are One, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. It seems to be a natural conclusion that if the source is tainted, the stream must be tainted too.

The Pantheistic taint in the Hindoo conception of God is in strong contrast with the words of St. John : God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all. But to a Pantheist, evil is as much an emanation from God as good. God is the universal soul of things as they are. To us God is the Light and Glory of the Heavenly City, and our Lord is Light of Light. The Hindoo, unlike the African, the Mohammedan, and the Parsee, has "a middle term," but it is unsatisfactory. He accepts the idea of an Incarnation, but he needs to see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. His idea of God needs cleansing by the Revelation of God made by Him who is in the bosom of the Father, and at once Light of Light and the Light of the world, and of mankind.

And their asceticism, very wonderful in its way, is *negative*. It does not build, it destroys. It aims at the annihilation of the individuality, rather than at the development and enrichment of it. The Hindoo God

does not say to the devout believer, I will give thee a new name, but I will obliterate thy name. Life is not an illusion as the Hindoo conceives it to be, it is real and earnest. It is our opportunity for moral growth. It provides us with all that is necessary for the development of character and for our moral probation. Our personalities become perfected through contact with other personalities, and our ideal is that of a perfect community, of unity and harmony with personal distinctions. We look forward to endless development, as the Lamb who has opened the Book of Life leads us onward to rivers of water of life. He calls His own sheep by name.

Here again it seems that we can render a real service. We believe that we have the true revelation of God, we believe that we have a perfect Incarnation of God, we believe that God is Light and that in Him is no darkness at all, and we believe that our personality and individuality is God's great gift to us and capable of endless development. Such teaching if accepted would redeem the Indian character from its passivity and fatalism and change their whole outlook on life. They would no longer have as their goal a colourless absorption. Life would be to them as to the Christian, the great Adventure.

Do we realize as fully as we should, what was the principal aim of the Saviour of men? He tells us, in His Great Intercession, I have manifested *Thy Name* unto the men whom Thou gavest to Me out of the world. Holy Father, keep *through Thy own Name* those whom Thou hast given Me that they may be one as We are. These words alone would justify our attempts to convert men of other races and other creeds. True, we all in different ways worship One God, but we differ in our ideas of God. Our ideas of God must influence our characters, they lie behind all our acts of worship, they assist in the formation of our social institutions and they profoundly affect our hopes with regard to the life to come. The Gods whom we serve write their names on

our foreheads. We must not, we cannot divorce creed and character. As He has manifested the Name, as He has bidden us to pray, Hallowed be Thy Name, so has He committed to us the task of manifesting that Name to our brethren of all nations. We are to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and we are to go on doing so until all nations and kindred and people and tongues stand before the Throne of God, in white robes, serving Him, and having His Name written on their foreheads.

They shall see His Face.

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