

Masonry being the first advocate of Ecumenism, its teachings in fact considered religion in its objectivity, it is well for Masons to learn how religions came into being. This time we shall trace the history of Islam, in its Mohammedan version.

To understand this subject it is necessary to first clarify the meaning of certain terms:—

ISLAM — This is the faith itself, the formula of which is identical to the Jewish religion called Judaism: — There is only one God, Allah. The Judaists believe: There is only one God, Jehovah.

MOSLEM — Those who believe in Islam are called Muslims or Moslems, regardless of their citizenship or nationality.

MOHAMMEDANISM — This is a modification of the original Islamism, which will eventually be explained in our discussion of the subject. It is identical to the Christianity of Martin Luther, that is, Protestantism, in contrast with the Christianity as understood by the Roman Catholic Church, said to be the original creed.

I — GNOSTICISM

All religions of the world, except the Japanese Shintoism, originated from a common source: Gnosticism. Gnosticism is defined as "A philosophic-religious movement of pre-Christian times and later, having several forms, Pagan and Christian, all of which were characterized by the central doctrine that emancipation came through knowledge, gnosis, the possession of which saved the initiates from the clutch of matter."

This definition from a standard dictionary is objectionable in the

sense that all religions, not Christian, are generalized in that word "Pagan" which is unacademic.

But the definition is still very instructive. It projects the proposition that *gnosis* (knowledge of the Will of the Supreme Being) is the cause of emancipation, the application, fulfillment or implementation of it in an individual's life "saves him from the clutch of matter."

It must be perceived that without application or implementation of the knowledge into practical life is no knowledge (*gnosis*) at all, and, therefore, emancipation does not also operate — it aggravates, on the other hand!

But why should "initiates" fear the "clutch of matter?"

"Matter" in this case refers to flesh and bones into which the SOUL of a man is incarnated. The Spirit becomes *flesh*. One cannot be properly called a man unless he is in material form, regardless of sex,—a spiritual body *manifested* in matter.

Gnosticism projects the Trinitarian Principle (Triad) the belief that an individual person is a trinity by nature, consisting of the soul, the mind, and the physical body. The soul, however, is the real Self, the Ego: and while being a *man* this Ego is incarcerated in matter, its physical body.

The suggestion here is very apparent: — that matter, the physical body, is a *bane* to the Ego, so that, by the nature of existence it inducts him (the Ego) to seek emancipation and release from this baneful condition.

Egyptian Princess, *Thonoris*, daughter

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er of *Sesostri-Ramses*, by virtue of this adoption he was legally initiated into these Mysteries.

Excepting Shintoism and the purely pagan faiths of aboriginal savage tribes, all religions in the world derived their existence from Gnosticism. This is the subject in the XXVI degree: Prince of Mercy, or Scottish Trinitarian."

Gnosticism does not only explain the trinitarian principle of an individual, but of the Unit, the boundless nature of INFINITY itself. God is the Infinite Spirit, of which the Ego of a man is just a spark: so that the struggle for emancipation and release from "matter" (the physical form of man) is the natural sequence in the order of creation to attain what is known in Mysticism as the *Unitive Life*.

"Thus dust returns to dust from whence it came," while the soul returns to its Source, the Sublime Spirit, God,—of course, if and when the soul has been absolutely and completely "released from the clutch of matter."

II — THE SCRIPTURES

Although the so called "Scriptures" is generally attributed to the Hebrews, there are those who believe that it is impossible it did not suffer from influences of Arabic cultures and traditions. Ruth of the Old Testament of the Bible was not a Jewess, but an Arab, and she had *mothered Jewish kings* that is, Ruth mothered a son who ushered the dynasty of Jewish kings which reigned over the kingdom for centuries. Modern psychologists would tell us how mothers share in the formation of the minds of children that spring from their wombs, especially in those good old days when the careers for women were concentrated to the bearing and rearing of children.

But the original Islam is said to have been founded upon the Scrip-

tures, because the Muslims (prior to Mohammedanism) were generally of the Meccans, an Arabic tribe that claims descent from Abraham, through his son Ishmael. Verse 15 of chapter XVI of Genesis records: "And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael." Abram is the same person whose name was afterwards for cause changed to Abraham, in the same manner that Simon, the fisherman of Galilee, for his great faith in Jesus of Nathareth, became known as Peter, the Rock. Ishmael founded the City of Mecca, and the Meccans look back to Abraham as their patriarchal ancestor. But although their descent is from Abraham, a *Jew*, the Meccans, nevertheless, clung to their racial or tribal identity as Arabs.

Now, the Scriptures, particularly the first five books of the Old Testament of the Bible, was not written in their original forms, but were kept in the minds of men, and were handed down from generation to generation as "tales" or unwritten "annals" for many centuries. In this process, until the Scriptures were finally reduced to writing Gnosticism must have given a hand in its formation. Moses, to whom authorship of these books is attributed generally, was initiated, when he was still a boy, into a "brotherhood" of Indian origin. It was a mystic fraternity, like Masonry, which taught ethics and morals by symbolism, and, again like Masonry, and the Essenic organizations that existed in the centuries immediately before and after the First Year, A.D., this "brotherhood" into which Moses was initiated admitted men only to the masculine sex. There was a royal decree in Egypt at the time that all male members of the Egyptian Royalty must be initiated into this Mystic Brotherhood, and

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Moses having been adopted by the Jews.

If the first five books of the Old Testament of the Bible, the Scriptures, is attributed to Moses, whose background is traceable to the Egyptian Mysteries, a gnostic brotherhood of Indian origin, can the Scriptures be free from influences other than Hebrew or Jewish culture and tradition?

III — THE "HUNAFÄ"

In this city of Mecca a temple, the *Ka'bah*, was built by Abraham, according to tradition, for the worship of the only One God. Islamism at the beginning, in its ritualistic forms of worship, included the requirement that worshippers turned their faces towards the city of Jerusalem, where the Temple of Solomon was located. The Muslims were taught the ethics and morals contained in the Scriptures and in Gnosticism, including the evils of *fighting*. That fighting was an evil to be ingrained in the minds of the Muslims, that, as Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, a translator of the Koran, had written, 'the Muslims would not fight even in self-defense.'

But as the years passed by, Islamism in the temple of *Ka'bah* became influenced by idolatry, and "intercessors" called the "daughters of Allah," were worshipped as idols. This idolatrous practice incurred the objection of some Muslims who openly rebelled by refusing to participate in the worships in temple of *ka'bah*, but would rather worship in isolation, avoidance or retirement. These Muslim "turn-aways" were considered "agnostics" and were called the *Hunafa* (the singular of which is *Hanif*) enemies of Islamism. "*Mohammad*, son of Abdullah, son of Abdul Mutalib, of the tribe of Querysh, born

in Mecca fifty-three years before the Hijrah" (Hejira, the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622) was a *HANIF*. The rebellious spirit of Mohammed was shown by his refusal to participate in the Islamic worship of the "intercessors" the "daughters of Allah" in the temple of *Ka'bah*. He retreated to some isolated and secluded places to worship with those who rebelled with him, the *Hunafa*, which according to history, steadily increased in number. The favorite retreat of the *Hunafa* was on the *Hira*, a desert hill not far from Mecca, and in the "month of the heat," *Ramadan*, it is recorded that Mohammed personally sought the isolation and seclusion of the hill for his meditation.

At this juncture we invite attention to the fact that historical accounts of the *Hunafa*, and of Mohammed the *Hanif* in particular, give indications that the Psychology of Mysticism prevailed among the members. In other words, they were inclined to seclusion and meditation, like the Essenian cults that were very common some two hundred years B.C. The *Hunafa* were not called mystics, however, neither were they given the attributes of Essenes, but "agnostics."

The *Hunafa* were not "agnostics" in the real sense of the word, which means believers in the doctrine that the existence or nature of God, nor the ultimate origin of the universe, is known or knowable. The *Hunafa* were merely faithful Muslims who would not join the other Muslims in the Temple of *Ka'bah* in worship. The Temple of *Ka'bah* was still recognized by the *Hunafa* as that of Abraham, and given the reverence it was due according to their custom and belief, but they turned away in worship from the temple only because of their rejection of the worship of "the daughters of Allah" the "intercessors."

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Muhammed (Mohammad is also correct) was a *Hanif*, and history reveals that he was subject to *contemplative life*. This term "contemplative life," is a stage, the third stage, in "mysticism" according to the Psychology of Mysticism, a scientific study of the subject. We will discuss it in brief, for the reader's benefit.

The stages of Mysticism are: 1. Purgative Life, 2. Mediative Life, 3. Contemplative Life, and 4. Unitive Life. When the "unitive life" is attained, the *subject* is considered a "mystic."

In the first stage the physical body of the *subject* is purged of its sensual feelings and wants; in the second, the mind is trained to function in the normative formal principles of reasoning and thinking; in the third, the mind is trained to focus intently on a particular subject (contemplation) so that while in this contemplation of a topic the physical body of the person, the one in contemplation, is insensitive to all influences of its surroundings, and of its own physical demands, like hunger, thirst, etc., etc., etc.

Muhammed, as a *Hanif*, and an illiterate, (he could not read or write,) became some kind of a "mystic" of the third stage, the "contemplative life."

In the desert cave at *Hira* in the month of *Ramadan*, while in retreat with his family, it is written of Muhammad: —

"He was asleep or in a trance when he heard a voice say: 'Read!' He said: 'I cannot read.' The voice again said: 'Read!' He said: 'I cannot read.' A third time the voice, more terrible, commanded: 'Read!' He said: 'What can I read?' The voice said:

"Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createth.

'Createth man from a clot.

'Read: And it is thy Lord the Most Bountiful

'Who teacheth by the pen, Teacheth man that which he knew not.'" (Surah XCVI, 1-5.)

"When he awoke the words remained 'as if inscribed upon his heart.' He went out of the cave on to the hillside and heard the same awe-inspiring voice say: 'O Muhammad! Thou art Allah's messenger...."

The tradition of Mohammed continues that he was awed when he saw the angel Gabriel, "in the form of a man, standing in the sky above the horizon." The account, (call it *History* or *Tradition* as you may please,) continues:

"Muhammad (God bless and keep him) stood quite still, turning away his face from the brightness of the vision, but whithersoever he might turn his face, there always stood the angel confronting him. He remained thus a long while till at length the angel vanished, when he returned in great distress of mind to his wife Khadijah. She did her best to reassure him, saying that his conduct had been such that Allah would not let a harmful spirit come to him and that it was her hope that he was to become the Prophet of the people. On their return to Mecca she took him to her cousin, Waraqa Ibn Naufal, a very old man, 'who declared his belief that the heavenly messenger who came to Moses of old had come to Muhammad, and that he was chosen as the Prophet of his people.'" (From the Introduction to the Koran.)

There—we have a mental picture of Muhammad, (Mohammed) who was not a "mystic" in the standard of the Psychology of Mysticism, but an ordinary man who fell into periodic *trances* (contemplative life) to "read" the "Will of Allah."

There are various writings attributed to Mohammed, or claimed to have originated from him: — those coming from him while in his normal senses are called or classified as

the *Hadith* or *Sunnah*, and those that came from him, while in the condition of *trance* are classified as the *Surah*, numbering all in all, CXIV, and make up the KORAN of the Mohammedan Muslims.

Thus, we hope, we have explained satisfactorily the difference between the original ISLAM and the MOHAMMEDAN ISLAM. But before concluding we would like to state that we have written this article for its *literary* value, and not to proselyte. Ecumenism being the order of the day, conceived and started by no less than Pope John XXIII, a Roman Catholic, and the Muslims in the Philippines are a small minority group, it is only proper that we should also know and understand their culture.

JUDAISM, the religion founded by the Jews upon the Scriptures, which were largely influenced by Gnosticism, had its counterpart among the Arabs in ISLAM, their ancient religion. Fundamentally there was no difference between these two faiths, but in the name, and Muslims also claim that their knowledge of the Scriptures is authentic, having originated from Abraham, through his son, Ishmael — the Jews descended from Abraham through his son, Isaac.

V — CONCLUSION

For conclusion we just want to recapitulate the facts without any commentary. The original Muslims were the Meccans, an Arabic tribe descending from Ishmael, son of Abraham, who founded the city of Mecca. Abraham built a temple for his children to worship the One God, this temple to come down through the generations as the temple of Ka'bah. The One God, whom the Muslims worshipped was to them called ALLAH.

in contrast with the same One God, whom the Jews called JEHOVAH.

For centuries and generations, Islamism was devoted to monotheistic worship of Allah, until afterwards the faith developed the belief of worshipping also certain "daughters of Allah" who could "intercede" for them to Allah. This belief has been accepted for centuries without question, until about the birth of "Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Abdul Mutalib, of the tribe of Qureysh, when some Muslim thinkers began to question the propriety of this form of IDOLATRY. These Muslims, who refused to worship these "daughters of Allah," were branded as "agnostics" or who did not believe in the existence of God. They were classified as the HUNAFU, (the singular term is HANIF,) but they were not really "agnostics." They believed in Allah, and they were interested to know really what was the truth, the Will of God. But the Scriptures, if by that time were already written, were not available to them, and many of them were actually illiterates. So to search the true Will of Allah, they resorted to *mystic* contemplation.

When Muhammad was already of age, who was a *Hanif*, he would retreat in a desert cave in the hill of Hira, in the month of Ramadan, a summer month, or "the month of the heat," for such devout worship and contemplation. It was in one of these times that Mohammed saw the vision of Gabriel. For this vision, his wife Khadijah, sought the help of her cousin, Waraqa Ibn Naufal, a very old man, and considered an authority of the "Scriptures of the Jews and Christians," and the old man confirmed that "Muhammad, by Allah's will, is the Prophet for his people."

Thus ISLAM gave birth to a new version, MOHAMMEDANISM. △