

of conscious trickery or dishonesty on the part of Mohammed."¹³⁷ "The decisive fact remains," points out Schwally in Noeldeke's *History of the Koran*, "that to his very last breath he laboured zealously for his God and for the salvation of his people, of all mankind, indeed, and that he never lost his firm faith in his divine mission."¹³⁸ And as Tor Andrae has emphasized, the foundations of Islam were laid in those "last terrible ten years of Muhammad's life"; and it is difficult to imagine that the faith and devotion of an Abū Bakr, or an 'Umar, or even an 'Uthmān, were given to a moral pervert. Muhammad may have been psychopathic,—that is more credible today than ever, when genius is again explained as a sort of possession,—but not a degenerate. His conduct of affairs, in fact, during these years discredits that suggestion. He had a gift of judging character, says Professor Macdonald, and a still greater gift of attaching men to himself.¹³⁹ Such gifts are seldom, or never, found with moral perverts; and the quality of the men whom Muhammad attached to himself, is the most trustworthy evidence of the prophet's own character.

The times and circumstances of Muhammad's life are often forgotten, when judgment is passed upon his work and person. The Arabs of the Hijāz and the Najd had been cut off to a large extent by their deserts from the Graeco-Roman world. They were then, as they are even today, if not a primitive people, at least a people living in primitive conditions. Jews, with some sort of a Judaism, inhabited several of the oases in the Northwest of the peninsula; and a Jewish, or a Judaized, king, Dhū Nuwās, reigned for some years in Najrān at the beginning of the fifth century.¹⁴⁰ Christianity was the nominal religion of the tribes whose pastures bordered on Byzantine and Persian territory, such as Bakr, Qudā'a, and Tanūkh. The small Arab princedoms in Syria and Iraq, Ghassān and Hira, were organized Christian centers with bishoprics and a flourishing monastic life. Bahrain formed with Persia Proper, or Persistan, a metropolitanate of the Nestorian Church, to which 'Oman also

belonged. And Nestorians and Jacobites struggled for supremacy in Yemen and Najrān.¹⁴¹

But the tribes of Najd and the Hijāz were pagans still, pilgrimaging for the most part to Mecca and sacrificing in the Valley of Mīna; and the pagan poetry of Arabia reveals a society with a character and customs akin to those of the early Hebrews of the times of Saul and David and the Judges, even of Moses and Abraham.¹⁴² The Hebrews devoted the Midianites and the peoples of Jericho, Ai and Makkedah, just as Muhammad slaughtered the helpless men of Jewish Qainuqā' in Medina. And the uxoriousness of the prophet may be compared with that of Solomon, and the story of Muhammad and Zainab with that of David and Bathsheba; only the prophet does not seem, like David, to have suffered the pangs of remorse. Life in Muhammad's Arabia was governed by much the same factors, social and economic, that swayed the acts and thoughts of the early Hebrew adventurers. The security of a man's life and chattels depended upon his good right arm and the number and nerve of his sons and kinsmen. Virtue meant courage, and endurance, loyalty to family and tribe through thick and thin, and at times a magnificent, spendthrift generosity. "The great gap of twelve or thirteen centuries", as Sir C. J. Lyall says, "seems to vanish entirely." And in Muhammad we have again the judge and seer of early Israel.

Professor D. B. Macdonald has declared that Muhammad "was truly in the succession of the Old Testament prophets."¹⁴³ Many traits of the early prophets of Israel reappear in him; and we also find in him the thought, habits and practice of the days of the Judges and Kings, cheek by jowl with religious ideas of more recent times, such as the notion of a Last Judgment, or of man's individual responsibility to his Creator and Lord, or of a succession of prophets, or of God's care for man. Some of the early chapters of the Koran are either introduced by, or contain, the fulsome oaths of the professional soothsayer and are written in the short, staccato, rhymed lines of the Kāhins,

or seers,¹⁴⁴ and revelation comes to the prophet with the tinkling of a bell, or he sees an angel in the form of a man, who declares it to him in intelligible speech; and while he receives it, they wrap him up in his mantle till fear departs from him, lest he see God.¹⁴⁵ And much more significant, perhaps, his patterns and exemplars were not the Christian Apostles, but the patriarchs and worthies of Old Testament history, Noah and Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, Moses and Aaron, Saul, David and Solomon, into whose ranks the figures of Jesus and John fell naturally in Muhammad's thought. The faith of a St. Paul never swam into his ken; and if it had, he would undoubtedly have rejected it. For a god who died that man might live would have been, not only a stumbling-block to his mind, but sheer foolishness. In his own Arab fashion he understood the old Hebrew worthies and their ways, and saw in them his forerunners. Their life was his life, and their times were in a sense also his.¹⁴⁶ The spirit that flared in him had once blazed in Deborah and Gideon, even in Elijah and Amos; and his mind, for all its new ideas, was very much akin to that of his seminomad, semi-settled kinsmen of Israel some thirteen hundred years earlier.

Lammens has giped at the Prophet's Abrahamic myth, as he calls it.¹⁴⁷ For Muhammad names Abraham the first Muslim and the builder of the Ka'ba at Mecca. But it is a real myth. Lammens has forgotten that Abraham is the pattern of all true believers in the New Testament, and that for Philo he is the type of the man who abandons home and people for the sake of God.¹⁴⁸ And did not Muhammad sever the close-knit ties of Arab tribalism that the One True God might be worshipped? And did he not go forth from his own country to live in a strange land and become the founder of a mighty people?

When Muhammad was distressed in his mind by doubts concerning the source of his inspiration, his wife, Khadīja, is said to have addressed him in these simple words: "God will never discomfort thee. For thou bindest the ties of re-