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### The Koranic Doctrine of Sin

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THE KORANIC DOCTRINE

OF SIN

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Old Testament Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

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June 1952

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The problem that was the occasion for the writing of this thesis is indicated by the title - namely, what is the teaching of sin as it is set forth in the Koran, the Holy Book of Mohammedanism. The problem may be a strictly academic one; but for the writer the problem is one of more than casual importance, since he is a representative of the Christian Church. And the Christian Church in its effort to present the Gospel to Islam, must be vitally concerned with the concept of sin as it is to be found in that theological system.

In considering a doctrine of sin the scope of that consideration must be stated. A teaching of sin may well include such related subjects as the origin of evil, the linguistic problem, the nature of God, the nature of man, the question of free-will, the punishment of sin, the salvation from sin, ethics, the existence of evil spirits, the historical development, the comparative status of the concept. However, in this study certain of these possibilities will be omitted from consideration, and only those factors will be emphasized that are sufficient to make the Moslem doctrine of sin readily understandable to those who must confront it at an existential moment today.

The body of the thesis will be divided into three

heaven may be reckoned with apart from Allah without becoming unrealistic. He is supreme Otherliness and utter Finality and total Cause. Against this background sin takes on an entirely different light from that of the Christian doctrine.

The other two actors in the drama, man and Satan, must likewise be examined as to their natures, since, although they may be under the dominating direction of Allah, they are at the same time His workmanship. Man is created with soul and body, but not in the image of God. He has fallen and is subject to the attacks of Satan. Satan, the tool of Allah, approaches man and leads him into situations where man "sins".

To conclude this chapter it will be necessary in the light of the above factors to question the responsibility of man in the ethical act. The Koran speaks to this problem in two ways: man is responsible and God is responsible. That the latter thought is predominant will be shown by reference both to the Koranic account and to the traditions of Islam.

The last main section will be devoted to a closer inspection of the actual doctrine of sin as it is enunciated by Mohammed and set forth in certain accepted traditions. In so doing there will be differentiated "sin" and "sins". The former may be defined in several ways: as action hurting others, hurting self, false attitude to Allah, pride, weak-

claimed, are abrogated by his later revelations. Once again these are few in number, possibly twenty (although the principle of abrogation that their presence suggests is most revealing) and do not greatly affect the argument of the Koran. In addition there is much disagreement as to which verses have been abrogated.

Mohammed's "revelations" came out of existing situations in his life. As time went on in his personal history the revelations pertained more to the solution of mundane legal and administrative problems that faced him as leader of the Moslem community, in contrast to the fiery preaching of Judgement and Monotheism that marked his earlier career. For the sake of convenience and partly as a matter of historical judgement the early period is referred to as the Meccan period; while the later period following the Hegira (622 A.D.) is commonly called the Medinan period. The chronological appearance of the suras (chapters) of the Koran may be determined to some extent, although certain ones are debatable. The later period is featured by a greater emphasis on sin as the infraction of legal injunctions, while in the earlier period sin is regarded more from the point of view of an attitude toward Allah. To present, however, the particular historical situation that evoked a particular statement on "sin" by the Prophet would be a vast task. Neither is such a procedure necessary to gain an overview of the Moslem doctrine of sin as it exists today, since Mohammedan

tradition itself regards the Koran as a unit, in which the doctrine is not developed by a human, but is rather revealed by a prophet in an exact reproduction of the eternally existing and uncreated Koran which is with Allah.

The original Arabic versions of the Koran are standard as to text, although the versification differs. The Ahmadiya text will be used in this thesis for original quotations. The translation to be used was made by J. M. Rodwell, and has long been recognized as one of the most honest reproductions of the original.

The place of tradition in an essay on a Koranic subject may be disputed. It is not possible, however, accurately to appreciate the status of the problem today without reference to the traditional development of the doctrine. In addition, in an area of controversy such as this, it is necessary to understand how the commentators who have most closely studied the problem and who have the most personal interest in presenting the doctrine, namely the Moslem authorities themselves, have understood the statements of the Koran. In this connection the words of the famous Islamic scholar, Ignaz Goldziher, must be appreciated:

In a comprehensive characterization of Islam it would be a gross error to place the principle importance on the Koran or to found a judgement of Islam simply on this sacred book of the Muslim community. Even though, as a matter of course, later Islam turns back to it as a standard by which to measure the product of all ages and believes it to be or at least strives to be in harmony with it; we must not lose sight of the fact

that it does not by any means suffice for an understanding of historical Islam.<sup>1</sup>

We do not wish to present in this thesis the doctrine of sin in Moslem tradition, but we do wish to present the traditional doctrine of sin as it is interpreted on the basis of the Koran.

It is likewise necessary to indicate the point of view of the writer. I have worked on this thesis from the point of view of the Christian man who is aware that he is studying a teaching of a religion outside the pale of Christianity. Therefore I have not forgotten that the nature of the Moslem faith makes it a burden for the Christian soul, makes knowledge of its tenets necessary in order properly to evaluate the task of the Christian missionary to the Moslems. At the same time I have attempted to present the doctrine of sin in Islam objectively; the few comparisons with the Christian teaching are based on factual teachings, not on prejudice, and the reader is invited to draw his own conclusions as to the implications of this Mohammedan teaching for the Christian witness.

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<sup>1</sup>Ignaz Goldziher, Mohammed and Islam, translated by Kate Chambers Seelye (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917), p. 28.

## CHAPTER II

### THE KORANIC USAGE OF WORDS DESCRIBING SIN

The question of a doctrine of sin immediately involves the problem of a vocabulary. If a language does not possess the means of communicating the idea of sin and evil with their various finer shades of meaning, the obvious conclusion is that the people of the language have not been accustomed to thinking in those terms. If the preacher, Mohammed, purporting to speak to the God-man relationship, does not have at his disposal words capable of transmitting thoughts pertaining to God's transcendancy and man's inadequacy, then the logical and a priori conclusion would be that at least an articulate concept of sin is not possible.

That Mohammed, however, did possess a vocabulary replete with words capable of conveying the essential aspects of sin, will be revealed by the following study. Herewith are listed the forty-three chief words for sin and evil to be discovered in the Koran. The list is not exhaustive, but the significant terms are present. The definitions are taken from E. W. Lane's standard Arabic-English Lexicon,<sup>1</sup> unless otherwise indicated:

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<sup>1</sup> Edward William Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, edited by Stanley Lane Poole (London: Williams & Norgate, 1877).

1. **آذَنَ** -- fall into sin, crime; sinned, did what was unlawful. God reckoned him to have sinned or committed a crime; requited, punished. Fifth stem: abstained from sin, did a work whereby he escaped from sin, repented, begged forgiveness. **آذَانٌ** -- sin, crime, fault, offence, act of disobedience for which one deserves punishment, both intentional. An unlawful deed or a deed which retards from recompense. Sometimes the punishment for the deed. **آذَانٌ** -- sinning, unrighteous.
2. **أَكْفَرُ** -- Gentile, heathen, one not having a revealed Scripture. Or one who is in the natural condition of the nation to which he belongs in respect of not writing or of not having learned writing. Vulgar persons who do not know the books of the law revealed to Moses, or ignorant persons who know not writing so that they may read the book.
3. **بَغَى** -- seek, find. Some claim as primary significance envy, i.e., wish that a blessing might become transferred from someone to self. Therefore **بَغَى** can mean the acting wrongfully, injuriously, tyrannically; seeking or endeavoring to act corruptly, unjustly; or exceeding due bounds, magnifying self. He behaved proudly, insolently.
4. **بَدَّلَ** -- was or became false (opposite of **حَقَّ**) or untrue; wrong, vain, worthless, unprofitable. 7:115 - "what they had done became vain and null. Fourth stem: said or spoke what was false or untrue; make it or render it thus. Fifth stem: they took it by turns to say or do that which was false.
5. **جَنَحَ** -- lean, incline; also passive, regard an act as a crime or sin. **جَنَاحٌ** -- sin, crime; act of disobedience or an inclining thereto. 2:35 - "There shall be no crime chargeable upon you" or "There shall be no straitening of you."
6. **جَنَفَ** -- inclining or declining in speech and in all affairs; deviating from the right course, or declining from the right course. Sixth stem: carried himself in a proud and self-conceited manner; inclined to sin.
7. **حَرَقَ** -- turn a thing from its proper way or manner, alter. Second stem: cause the hearts to turn away and be aloof. Seventh stem: it became turned, be turned aside.

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<sup>2</sup>Mohammed, The Koran, translated by J. M. Rodwell (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1909).

8. **حَرَامَةٌ** -- a thing sacred or inviolable; forbidden; a thing that one is bound to do or from which one is bound to refrain. **حَرَمَاتُ اللَّهِ** -- the inviolable ordinances and prohibitions of God; particularly relating to the rites, ceremonies, and restrictions of the pilgrimage.
9. **خَوَانَ** -- was unfaithful or acted unfaithfully to the confidence or trust reposed in him; acting contrary to what is right by breaking a compact or covenant. 2:183- "Ye ceased to act unfaithfully to yourselves, i.e., to one another." Verbal noun **خِيَانَةٌ** and more intensively is used with **عَهْدٌ** -- he broke the covenant. **إِخْتِيَانٌ**
10. **خَدَعَ** -- hide, conceal; deceive, delude; dissemble, act deceitfully; pretend to him the contrary of what he concealed. 2:8- "They pretend to God and to those who have believed something different from that which is in their minds." 4:41- "They think that they deceive God, but He is (their deceiver), i.e., the requiter to them for their deceit." **خِدْعَةٌ** -- single act of deceit, delusion, guile.
11. **خَزِيَ** -- was or became base, abused, abject, vile. Inf. noun **خِزْيٌ** -- abasement, vileness; manifesting foul actions or qualities for the manifesting of which we deserve punishment. Fourth stem: He (God) abased him or rendered him base or he disgraced him or may he disgrace him. **خِزْيَةٌ** -- habit, quality, practise, action; crime, sin or offence or act of disobedience of which one is ashamed or which is the cause of shame.
12. **خَطِئَ** -- fail, make a mistake, commit a fault, sin, do wrong. Second stem: charge with an error. Fourth stem: commit a mistake, fault. Fifth stem: lead a thing into error or sin. **خَطَاؤٌ** -- wrong, intentional fault. **خَطِيئَةٌ, خَطَاٌ** -- sin, error, mistake.
13. **خَلَفَ** -- Eighth stem: following reciprocally, alternately; disagreeing, differing or varying in a state or condition, being dissimilar, different, discordant, dissentient. Opposite of **إِتَّفَقَ**.
14. **ذَلَّ** -- was or became low, base, vile, abject, mean, paltry, contemptible, despicable, ignominious, inglorious, abased, humble, weak. Fourth stem: rendered thus, or became one whose companions were such, or became in such a state or condition.

15. **ذَنْبٌ** -- to track a thing. Fourth stem: commit an offence, sin, error. Tenth stem: follow a thing step by step, to find a thing guilty. To impute an offence to.  
**ذَنْبٌ** -- offence, fault, sin.<sup>4</sup>
16. **رَكَبَتْ** -- turn it over or upside down; reverse. 4:90- "since God hath subverted them for what they have done or committed, or hath made them to return to their unbelief. Fourth stem: turned back or caused them to return to evil.  
**رَكَبَتْ** -- anything disliked or hated for its filthiness.
17. **زَلَّ** -- moved aside from its place, slipped in speech or in action. 2:205- "But if ye turn away or aside (from entering therein fully)." Fourth stem: caused him to slip in mind or in speech or in judgment or in opinion or in religion. 2:34- "The devil made them, or caused them, both, to slip or fall from it (paradise)." Or some say it means "caused them to commit a slip or wrong action in consequence of it (the tree)." Or "caused them to slip in judgment."  
**زَلَّةٌ** -- slip or lapse; fault, wrong action, mistake, sin or crime.
18. **سَتَرَ** -- Fourth stem: conceal, suppress, as in 10:55 and 34:32. They will conceal repentance, i.e., the chief polytheists from the lower class of the people whom they shall have caused to err. Tenth stem: become concealed.  
**سِتْرٌ** -- secret; a thing good or evil; concealed or suppressed.
19. **سَفَوٌ** -- be quick, blow (wind); be or become lightwitted, unwise, witless, destitute of wisdom and understanding. Fourth stem: do evil, act evilly.
20. **سَفَهَةٌ** -- was or became unwise, witless, lightwitted; ignorant in judgment or opinion; regard the truth as foolishness. Third and sixth stems: act unwisely, ignorantly.
21. **سَوَاءٌ** -- it was or became evil, bad, abominable, foul, unseemly, unsightly, ugly. Fourth stem: he did evil or ill, acted ill. **سَوَاءٌ** Inf. noun, transitive and intransitive, applied to man or action as epithet, a man of evil nature or evil doings. **سَوَاءٌ** -- evilness, badness, foulness, vexatiousness of natural disposition or doing; inimical, unrighteous, wicked conduct. Anything disapproved, disallowed or regarded as evil; any evil, evil affection, evilness of state, calamity, disease. **سَوَاءٌ** -- anus; hence any disgracing action or thing; an evil, abominable, foul or unseemly property, quality,

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 231.

custom, or practise. **سَيِّئَةٌ** -- an evil act or action; fault, offence; act of disobedience; sin or crime for which one deserves punishment. May be trial, misfortune, affliction, straitness of circumstance, unsuccessfulness. Tradition: **الْحَسَنَةُ بَيْنَ الشَّيْئَتَيْنِ** "The good act is between the two evil ones. **أَشْوَأُ** -- most evil, the worst, most scanty and weakest of states and conditions. **مَسْأَلَةٌ** -- evil, cause of grief, vexation. Plural: vices, faults, defects.

22. **شَقَّ** -- split, divide, effect dissension, become a rebel. Third stem: act contrarily or adversely, each doing what is distressing or grievous to the other.

23. **مَوَّعَ** -- First stem and fourth stem: scatter, despise; loathe. Seventh stem: turn away.

24. **شَرَّ** -- was or became evil, wrong-doer, unjust, bad, corrupt, wicked, mischievous, vitious, depraved.

25. **ظَلَمَ** -- intransitive: do wrong, act wrongfully, unjustly, injuriously or tyrannically. Transitive: wronged, treated unjustly, misused. Or: exceeding or falling short or deviating from the proper time and place; or making to suffer loss or detriment--between God and man, between man and himself, between man and men. Fourth stem: become dark. **ظُلْمٌ** -- wrong, injustice, unrighteousness. **ظُلْمَةٌ** -- darkness, ignorance, belief in plurality of gods; transgression or unrighteousness.

26. **عَمَّرَ** and also -- **عَمَّوُ** -- acted corruptly, made and did mischief; act wrongfully, injuriously, unjustly.

27. **عَدَوُ** -- passed from it, left it; went or passed beyond it, exceeded it, transgressed it; acted wrongfully, unjustly injuriously, tyrannically; transgressed against him, exceeded the proper limit against him. Third stem: treated him or regarded him with enmity or hostility. Eighth stem verbal noun: the exceeding the limits of the Prophet's rule or usage that has been transmitted from generation to generation.

28. **عَصَى** -- he (e.g. a slave) disobeyed him or rebelled against him. **عِصْيَانٌ** -- disobedience, rebelling.

29. **عَقَبَ** -- taking another's property wrongfully, unjustly, injuriously, or by violence. But as employed in law it means the taking of property that has a price and is forbidden without the permission of its owner, without stealthiness.

30. **عَجَّبَ** -- do a thing after, follow, take its place. Third stem: punish, requite. Fourth stem: He (God) caused

hypocrisy to follow as a consequence to them; or he caused them to err (because of their evil deed) as a punishment to them.

31. **غَلِبَ** -- be uncircumcised.

32. **فِتْنَةٌ** -- burning with fire, melting of gold and silver in order to separate or distinguish the good from the bad. Hence a trial or affliction whereby one is tried, proved or tested, proceeding from God -37:61, or from man. Hence also punishment, castigation, discord, dissension; misleading or inducing to go astray; temptation of finery, lust, present world, wealth, children, women. Also madness; error, deviation from the right way; infidelity -2:187. Sin, crime, act of disobedience for which one deserves punishment. Disgrace, shame, ignominy.

33. **فَحِشٌّ** -- to become immoderate, excessive, enormous; to be or become atrocious, abominable, foul, obscene; to become ugly (woman). **فَاحِشَةٌ** -- turpitude, excess, enormity, abomination, adultery.<sup>5</sup>

34. **فَسَادَ** -- was or became bad, evil, corrupt, unsound, wrong, devoid of virtue; in a corrupted spoiled state, in a state of disorder, annihilation. Fourth stem: made it bad, evil, corrupt; acted in a bad, evil, corrupt manner; created discord, did mischief. **فَسَادٌ** -- badness, corruptness, impropriety, unrighteousness.

35. **فَسَقَ** -- it went forth from another thing in a bad or corrupt manner. Departed from, quitted the right way, the way of truth, the limits of the law, or the bounds of obedience; he forsook, relinquished, neglected the command of God; disobeyed, transgressed, acted unrighteously, sinfully, wickedly, vitiously, immorally; also he declined or deviated from obeying the command of his Lord. **تَفْسِيفٌ** -- pronounced him to be characterized by **فَسَقٌ**, i.e., going forth, departure from the way of truth; relinquishment or neglect of the command of God; inclining to disobedience; unrighteous; sinful conduct; few sins or many -- more general term than **كُفْرٌ**. **فَاسِقٌ** -- mostly applied to one who has taken upon himself to observe what the law ordains and has acknowledged its authority, and then fallen short of observances of all or some of its ordinances. And when the person fundamentally or utterly an unbeliever is thus termed, it is because he falls short of observing the ordinance that the intellect renders obligatory on him and that the natural constitution

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 548.

with which he was created in his mother's womb requires to be concealed; hence the believer is contrasted with him in 32:18.

36. **قَرَى** -- to forge a lie against. Seventh stem: to calumniate.<sup>6</sup>

37. **فَشِلَّ** -- to become cowardly, remiss, weak; to fall short of. **فَشَلَّ** -- remiss, cowardly, apathetic.<sup>7</sup>

38. **قَاتَى** -- Third stem: endure, struggle, contend with or against.

39. **مَرَى** -- draw forth. Third stem: dispute obstinately. Eighth stem: doubt.

40. **كَبَّرَ** -- be great, become great. Fifth stem: magnified himself, behaved proudly, haughtily, insolently. 7:143- he considered himself as of the most excellent creation and as having rights which others have not. He effected to do good actions and boasted of good qualities which he did not possess -40:37. **تَكَبَّرَ عَلَى اللَّهِ** -- he magnified himself against God by refusing to accept the truth. **كِبْرٌ** -- greatness. Also pride, disdain, self-conceit, disdain of submission, unbelief, association of any other being with God.

41. **كَفَرَ** -- veil, conceal, hide, cover. Hence denied or disacknowledged the favor or benefit conferred upon him; be grateful or unthankful. God's favors or benefits are the signs which show to those who have discrimination that their creator is one without partner and that he has sent apostles with miraculous signs, and revealed scriptures and manifest proofs. Hence, absolutely denied or disacknowledged; disbelieved, became an unbeliever or infidel. He was remiss or fell short of his duty with respect to the law and neglected the gratitude or thankfulness to God which was incumbent upon him -30:43. Third stem: deny or disacknowledge. Fourth stem: call him an unbeliever; attribute or impute to him, charge him with or accuse him of disbelief, infidelity; make him a disbeliever, compel him to become an unbeliever.

**كُفْرٌ** -- ingratitude; denial, disacknowledgment of favors and benefits. Four kinds: **كُفْرٌ بِالنُّفُسِ** -- denial with heart and tongue, having no knowledge of what is told me of the unity of God. **كُفْرٌ جُنُودٍ** -- acknowledgment with the heart

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 560.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 563.

without confessing with the tongue. **كُفْرٌ مَعَانِدَةً** -- knowledge of God with the heart and confession with the tongue, with refusal to accept the truth. **كُفْرٌ الْكَيْفَاتِ** -- confession with the tongue with disbelief in the heart. Greatest is denial or disacknowledgment of the unity of God or of the prophetic office of the law of God. **كُفْرٌ كَفِيرٌ** -- disbeliever; miscreant because he conceals the favors of God or because his heart is covered or because he covers the favors of God concealing them from himself.

42. **لَوَمٌ** -- to blame, criticize. Fourth stem: to commit blameworthy actions.<sup>8</sup>

43. **وَلَّى** -- held command. Second stem: cause to turn away or back, turn away -2:136. Fifth stem: turned himself toward or away.

A glance at these words and their meanings -- words which are all used in the Koran -- is sufficient to point up the fact that the voluminous Arabic vocabulary is not deficient in words related to the question of sin. In fact, one might readily conclude, with little fear of contradiction, that the words available to Mohammed for the description of "sin" in all its varied meanings is not less ample or capable of being filled with great and new content than that which was available to David in the Old Testament Hebrew and to Paul in the New Testament Greek.

But what was that content that Mohammed buried beneath the surface connotations of these vocables. This must be carefully estimated, if there is to be any understanding of what the Prophet concluded under the term "sin" and the related synonyms. Upon examination it will be discovered that

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 702.

of the words listed above, six are particularly important for this consideration. The technical words for sin are derived from the roots **خَطَرٌ**, **آثَمَ**, and **ذَنَبَ**. But in addition to these the roots **جَلَجَ**, **سَوَأَ**, and **ظَلَمَ** are of great importance in reaching an understanding of the concept as it is presented in the Koran. Through a brief study of these words as Mohammed used them, some light is shed on the problem.

A. **خَطَرٌ** (ḥaṭi'a) -- This is the technical word for sin in the Koran, corresponding to **שָׁטָן** in the Old Testament and to **ἁμαρτάνω** in the New Testament. The verb along with the derivatives of the root is to be discovered only on twenty occasions in the Koran. Wensinck submits that its root has the meaning of stumbling, committing an error, missing the mark, and that it refers to a sin committed on purpose.<sup>9</sup> Sell<sup>10</sup> concludes from 12:29, 98 that the commission of **ḍanb** constitutes one a ḥa'ti'.

To become a crime a mistake in the matter of naming orphans must be done with intent of heart -33:5. For a believer may kill another believer by mischance, and his only punishment is to free another believer from slavery -4:94.

<sup>9</sup>A. J. Wensinck, "Ḥaṭi'a," Encyclopedia of Islam, edited by M. T. Houtsma (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1905-1938), II, 925.

<sup>10</sup>Edward Sell, "Sin (Muslim)," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings (Edinburgh: Charles Scribner's, 1928), XI, 567.

Hati a is true wickedness when one kills children from fear of want -17:33; the sons of Jacob were sinners against Joseph -12:98, 12:91; thus also were Pharaoh, Haman and their hosts -28:7, 69:9. Potiphar's wife ḥaṭī'a in tempting Joseph.

A ḥa'ti' must ask God's pardon for his ḥata' should he forget or fall -2:286. Jacob asks Joseph's pardon for his sons' errors -12:98. An unbeliever will not bear the responsibility for a believer's ḥaṭa'ya. Believers are confident that the Lord will forgive them in the day of reckoning -26:82. Thus it will be for forced sins -26:51. The Jews are sure of pardon because of the primacy of their faith -26:51. And God promises forgiveness to Jews -2:161- if they enter the city gates with prostrations, crying "Hittat" (forgiveness) -2:55.

But the guilt for ḥaṭī'a will surely be borne by the transgressor -4:110. For example, the opponents of Noah for their sin were drowned and entered into the fire -71:25. There those who were surrounded by ḥaṭī'a will abide forever -2:75; where food will be corrupt sores -69: 37.

B. إِثْمٌ from the root أَثَمَ (itm from aṭima) -- This is the next technical word used to describe sin. The word seems to imply a wrong attitude to others and so injustice -49:12<sup>11</sup>. Itm, corresponding to the Hebrew אִשְׁמוּנָה, is used

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

twenty-nine times in the Koran, referring particularly to the ceremonial offences.

Some general statements of the Koran make use of the word. In 5:67 many are hastening together to itm. The prophet demands the abandonment of the semblance of wickedness and the wickedness itself -- literally, as Rodwell points out, the outside of its iniquity and the inside, some referring these words to open and secret sins. 6:120- Believers are to mark those who talk privately together with itm, neither are they to hold private converse together with itm -58:9, 10. The Lord has forbidden itm -7:31. For he does not love one who is a criminal. -4:107.

It is used to describe transgressions of various ordinances, and it is most interesting to note that Mohammed evidently does not distinguish transgressions of the moral law and lapses of ceremonial observances. There is advantage to wine and games of chance, but the itm is greater -2:216. The hastening together to itm is equated with eating unlawful foods -5:68. The refusal to give evidence makes one wicked -2:283. And falsehood in testimony becomes itm -5:106. A man may make an early agreement with a testator to a to avoid wrong without committing itm -2:177. Changing a will is sin -2:278. Usury makes one an evil person -2:279. Wronging a divorcee is itm -4:24. So also is fighting against one's own blood -2:279. Likewise thievery with knowledge is sin -2:184. So also is the committing of fornication -25:68. Lying becomes

sin, as in 45:6 and 83:12. No one treats the Day as a lie but the sinner -83:12.

Even a rebellious opponent of Mohammed becomes a sinner -2:202. Frequent suspicions are itm for believers -49:12. Believers are to help one another to piety, but not in itm -5:3. Neither should nor shall the sinner hurt one who has guidance -5:105. In fact, Satan will descend upon every evil person -26:22. Sins are the mark of the infidels, who are given length of days that the sins may increase -2:72. The great wickedness is that devised by him who unites gods with God -4:51. This lie against God is manifest itm -4:53.

Yet itm must be committed with intent of heart to be punishable, for Mohammed counts involuntary sins and itm committed in ignorance to be non-punishable. Thus one who is forced to partake of unlawful food without lust -2:168. 5:5 informs the believer that "whoso without willful leanings to itm shall be forced by hunger to trespass, to him verily God will be Indulgent, Merciful." Thus also the stated ceremonial days in the valley of Mina may become only a span of two days without itm -2:199.

Itm will result in punishment. In 24:11 it is to every man according to the offence he committed (in maligning Ayesha). Crime is done to man's own hurt -23:111, 112. 25:68- "He who doth this (fornication) shall surely bear the reward of his wickedness." Whosoever commits an itm will surely bear the calumny -4:110. Abel will not break God's

law and stretch forth his hand against Cain. "Yea, rather would I that thou shouldst bear my sin (or, the sin against me, that is, the sin of slaying me) and thine own sin, and that thou become an inmate of the Fire" - 5:32. There the tree of EzZakkim shall be the sinner's food -44:44.

But there is a portion with God for the believers who avoid the heinous things of *itm* -42:35. God is diffuse of mercy to those who avoid great crimes -53:33. In heaven the believers shall pass the cup which "shall engender no light discourse, no motive for *itm*" -52:23. Neither is there charge for *itm* in heaven -56:24.

C. ذَنْبٌ from the root ذَنْبَ (danb from danaba) --

This is the third technical expression for sin. The word expresses all forms of unbelief and wrong actions proceeding from such unbelief<sup>12</sup>. It occurs thrity-eight times in the Koran, and cannot be sharply defined from its usage by Mohammed.

Accordingly his opponents may hold a danb against Moses for his murder of the Egyptian -26:13. The wife of Potiphar is to ask pardon for her danb, attempted fornication -12:29. Remissness in propogating Islam is just as much a danb -40:51. Hamstringing the camel of God was a danb -91:14.

But more frequently it is the word used to describe the non-acceptance of God's signs which he has manifested to people, and thus it is closely associated with *kufr*, unbelief.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

The infidels who treat signs as falsehoods commit danb -3:9. Pharaoh and those before him did not believe in the sign of God, wherefore God seized them in their danb -8:54. Likewise was this true of the Arabs in and about Mecca -40:22. God seized everyone who opposed Moses and the proofs of his mission, Korah, Pharaoh and Haman -29:39.

The believers and unbelievers are frequently enjoined to ask God's pardon for their danb. 9:91- "Our Lord, forgive us our danb and hide away from us our evil deeds and cause us to die with the righteous." Following a wrong, believers are asked to remember God and to implore forgiveness for their danb -3:129. 141. Since there is no God but Allah, the believer is to ask pardon for his sin and for those of other believers -47:21. In the strange passage, 40:11, danb is seemingly related to the mystery of life and death: "The (infidels) shall say, Twice, O our Lord, hast thou given us death and twice hast thou given us life (probably the union of life and death in the womb, then actual life and death) and we acknowledge our sins. Is there no way to escape?" Usually the pardon is to be asked of God, but in 12:98 and 12:29 the sons of Jacob and the wife of Potiphar are to ask pardon of Joseph and Potiphar respectively.

In several passages it is indicated that not merely is the plea for forgiveness of the danb to be made, but it is to be made with faith. Thus in 3:14- "We have indeed believed; pardon us our sins." So also 61:12. 46:30- "Believe

in Him, that he may forgive your sins." 33:71- "Fear God . . . that God may bless your doings for you and forgive your sins."

And God forgives danb, for He is the Forgiver. He is well-informed of the danb of his servants -17:18; 25:60. But the command is to despair not for God forgives all danb -39:54; 40:2; 71:4. The victory at Hadaibiya is pointed to as token of God's forgiveness of danb. In 3:29 Mohammed makes belief include himself as well as Allah in order to assure forgiveness of danb: "Say: if ye love God, then follow me; God will love you and forgive your danb."

Punishment for danb for the unbeliever particularly is clearly indicated. 5:54- "and if they turn back, then know thou that for some of their crimes doth God choose to punish them; for truly most men are perverse." Whole generations have been destroyed because of danb -6:6. Smiting for sin is often followed by a hardening seal -7:98. The people of Pharaoh especially received the reward of danb -8:54. The punishment of the danb of the Jews and Christians is pointed to as a sign of the universal equality of man in the sight of God -5:21. In a somewhat different sense of the word a danb is threatened for those who injure the Prophet -51:59. On the day of judgment neither man nor djinn shall be asked of his danb -55:39; 28:78. Yet all infidels shall acknowledge their danb, unbelief -29:39.

D. جُنَاحٌ from the root جَنَحَ (ḡunaḥ from ḡanaḥa) --

This is the fourth major word used to describe aberration from the revealed will of God. This word, which, with its derivatives, appears twenty-three times, mostly in the second Sura of the Koran, is almost exclusively used to indicate transgressions of the ceremonial and social laws which Mohammed laid down for the faithful. Nowhere is it used in connection with Allah.

Primarily the word is used in connection with the marital relationship. "A divorced couple may reunite without ḡuna h, if they think they can keep within the God-given bounds -2:230. There is no ḡunaḥ in case of divorce of unconsummated marriage, where no dowry has been settled -2:237. It is no ḡunaḥ if wives quit home and care for themselves -2:241, 229. There is no sin in the marriage of widows of four months and ten days -2:235. Nor is it in marriage with step-daughters when marriage with the mother is not consummated -4:27. If a wife fears ill usage or aversion on the part of her husband, then it will be no ḡunaḥ if they can agree with mutual agreement -4:127. It is no sin to marry women, prisoners of war, provided one gives their husbands dowry -60:10. Neither is an agreement for concubinage over and above the law considered ḡuna h- 4:103.

Other usage of the word is varied. Older women may lay aside outer garments without ḡunaḥ -24:59. Wives may speak to their fathers unveiled without ḡunaḥ -33:55. One may

make the circuit of sacred hills, Safa and Marwah, without ġuna'ḥ-2:153. Trade during the ḥagg is permitted -2:194. A child may be weaned with the mutual consent of the parents without fault -2:233. A notary or witness to a sale must not be harmed -2:282. Cutting short prayer in time of war is no crime -4:102. And one may lay down arms in case of rain or sickness -4:103. There is no blame in regard to food taken by believers -5:94. There is no ġuna'ḥ when one enters vacated homes -24:39. There is no ġuna'ḥ if slaves come before you without permission, except at certain stated times -24:57. It is no crime to allow the blind, lame and sick to eat at your table -24:60. If there is an error in naming orphans, it is no ġuna'ḥ if done without intent -33:5. The word, ġuna'ḥ, seems to have come into use particularly during Mohammed's administrative career at Medina.

E. سَوَاءَ (sawa'a) -- This is the most comprehensive term embracing the general meaning of evil. It abounds throughout the Koran with reference to men and to all conditions of men. But a brief examination of the general usage of the word is most necessary to arrive at any reliable conclusion regarding the nature of sin and evil.

The most general usage of the term and its several derivatives must be examined first. The believers are warned not to ask of things which will pain them -2:101. The unbelievers plot evil -35:41. Others have owned their faults

-9:103. Unbelievers rejoice when ill befalls you -3:116.  
 "If good fortune betide them, they say, 'This is from God,'  
 and if evil betide them, they say, 'This is from thee.'  
 Say: All is from God." -4:80. Proving is done by good and  
 by evil -7:167. Evil should not be a matter of public talk  
 -4:47. No evil was to be done to the camel -11:67. Sinners  
 will say in the last day "no evil have we done" -16:30.  
 The opponents of Lot had done evil -11:80. Workers of evil  
 will not escape -16:47; 40:9. Mohammed's men thought evil  
 of an expedition -48:12. The father of Aaron's sister was  
 not a man of evil -19:29.

These passages express some of the wide range of the  
 term. But the true evil once again is unbelief. Ill did  
 the idolatrous Arabs judge in giving sacrifices to idols  
 -6:31. Evil is the result for those men and women who join  
 other gods with God and think evil thoughts of Him -48:5.  
 Walking proudly is in itself evil and odious to the Lord  
 -17:40. Even the turning of others aside from the way of  
 God is the tasting of evil -16:96.

Though man is held responsible and warned not to sawa a,  
 yet the Koran also points to Satan as responsible for evil.  
 2:164- "Follow not the steps of Satan . . . he only enjoineth  
 you evil and wickedness and that ye should aver of God that  
 which ye know not." 9:37- "The evil of their deed hath been  
 prepared for them (by Satan), for God guideth not the people  
 who do not believe." Perhaps the one insight into the uni-

versal evil of man's heart, which is to be found in the Koran, is in 12:53- "Yet I (Joseph) hold not myself clean, for the heart is prone to evil, save theirs on whom my Lord has mercy." (The Arabic of prone to evil is as follows: **إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ** -- "verily the soul is inclined to passions with evil").

What is man to do then in the face of evil? He is to repent, believe, and ask God for pardon. If someone does saw' through ignorance and afterwards turns and amends, God is surely gracious -6:54; 7:152. Especially at the point of death must the evil-doer be turned to God -4:22. To those who repent God will change the saw' into good things -25:70. But he who commits evil must ask for pardon -4:110; 3:191- "O our Lord, forgive us our sins, and hide away from us our evil deeds."

God, the Forgiver, blots out saw'. He first of all averts and removes an evil fate from believers, as in the case of Joseph -12:25. God answers the oppressed who cry to Him and takes off their evil -27:63. This is the result of His favor -11:13. It is belief that ultimately causes God to put away saw' -5:70. To this must be added good works -64:9. This is the keeping of the pillars -5:15. This fear of God then results in the removal of evil -8:29. This faith must, however, include the Koran, if God is to cancel evil -47:27. The saw' will be passed by for Moslems -46:15. Especially is this true of the worst actions -42:24;

29:36- For repentance is accepted. And yet this pardon is never sure, for Mohammed cries in 66:8- "O believers, turn to God . . . haply your Lord will cancel your evil deeds."

Saw will receive its deserving punishment, which will rest on the heads of those who commit it. The evil-doer will not be deemed equal to the believer who does right -40:60. For that would not be fair to those who follow the clear teachings, if one did not differentiate them from those who follow their lusts -47:15; 45:20. The Day will bring evil and shame upon the infidels -16:29. Hell is prepared for them, and an evil journey thither -48:5. There shall be recompence for the worst saw -29:27, according to the deeds -6:61. Punishment will be severe -35:11. Those whose only gains are evil works will be inmates of the fire -2:75.

F. *ظلم* (zalama) -- This is the final term of this important sextet. Starting from the root meaning of darkness it is easy to arrive at this word's meaning of evil and evil-doer. It is used with great frequency by Mohammed. These are some of the instances of its general usage: The Lord did not desire to destroy the cities in their sins -6:31. The wickedness of certain Jews -4:158. Wicked cities -11:104. The people of Noah were most wicked and perverse -53:53. Likewise the people of Pharaoh -26:9. The doers of *zulm* are one another's portion -45:18.

But the *zulm* becomes more specific. There should be no *zulm*, save to the wicked -2:189. Following the Jewish

qibla makes one a *ẓalim* -2:140. Swallowing the substance of orphans is done with *ẓulm* -4:11. Trafficking may be done unjustly -4:34. The eating of the tree was forbidden to Adam lest he become one of the *ẓalim* -2:33. The profaning of the holy mosque is impious -22:26. He is most evil who hinders the remembrance of God's name in the temple -2:108. Overstepping the bounds of God puts one in the class of the *ẓalim*.-2:229. It is bad to avenge one's self after *ẓulm* has been done to him -42:37. Even the desire to see God plainly is *ẓulm* -4:152.

Once more, however, the word for sin is most closely — attached to infidelity, the joining of other gods with Allah. This is the great *ẓulm* -31:12. The Jews did *ẓulm* when they took the golden calf -2:48. Infidels are wrongdoers -2:255. The command is not to make idols, lest one become of the *ẓalim* -10:106. For idols cause one to err -76:28; 6:82; 49:11; 17:101.

This type of *ẓulm* is closely associated with a refusal — to accept the signs of God to the people. It is often used in this connection. In *ẓulm* and pride one denies the signs of God -27:14; 6:21. Concealing the witness is faulty -2:134. Devising a lie of revelation is very wicked -6:58; 93:145; 3:88. Nothing is worse than the turning away and forgetting of the signs -18:55; 32:22. If one does not judge by the revelation, he is one of the *ẓalim* -3:49. This applies to the persons of the prophets -6:52. Believers

are told to avoid the ungodly people who forget the signs -6:67. For these unjust persons say "ye follow but a man enchanted" -25:9. None except the wicked reject the clear signs -29:48.

There is punishment for *zulm*. God is not irregardless of the deeds of the *zalim* -14:43; neither does His covenant embrace them -2:118. God does not love those who act unjustly -42:38; 3:50. Neither does He guide them -3:80; 28:50. Especially is this true of those who disbelieve the revelation -46:9. Wretched will be the mansion of the evil-doers -3:144. They will not prosper -28:47. For the evil-doer He has prepared an afflictive chastisement -76:31. This will be Fire, because of *zulm* -71:24. Great will be the torment -42:20; 42:44; 59:17. On that judgment day the *zalim* will be alarmed at their own good works -42:21.

Neither is God to be counted unjust in His dealings with the *zalim*, and with his servants. He is not evil with respect to man -8:53; 22:10; 41:46; 50:28. He will not destroy cities unjustly -11:119. Neither is he unjust to his servants -40:33; 3:178. Rather He is merciful despite their *zulm* -13:7. For would he punish evil-doing there would be nothing moving left on earth -16:63. Therefore Moses can plead not to be placed among the *zalim* -7:149. For God will turn to whomever turns to Him after *zulm* -40:17. And He will not fear *zulm* or loss at that time -20:111.

From an examination of these vocables as they are used in the Koran, it is evident that usage there conforms in range to the word patterns of other languages distinguished by large vocabularies. That Mohammed, however, did not fill them with new, meaningful content, as did Paul with *κακία* and *ἀνομία* in the New Testament, and that he did not make much distinction in the use of his terms, is also evident.

When we consider a passage like 76:31- "He causeth whom he will to enter into his mercy. But for the evil-doer he hath made ready an afflictive punishment" -- it is clear that a mere word study of technical phrases in the Koran will not lead to an understanding of the Islamic doctrine of sin. But rather the concept of Allah must be scrutinized because of the vast influence it plays upon Mohammed and his followers in determining wherein lies sin.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE ROLE OF GOD, MAN AND SATAN IN THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

In any attempt to determine the status of a doctrine of sin in a religious system theology in the narrow sense of the term plays an influential role. The tension between God's design and man's responsibility must needs reflect on his attitude toward right and wrong. Where a doctrine of man exists which includes only a very superficial concept of sin, the origin may be traced to an inadequate realization and appreciation of God Himself. It may be that His attribute of love is emphasized to such an extent that His wrath is not considered. It may be that the holiness of God is not properly brought out. It is possible that God becomes only an instrument of Will, the cause of all actions, including evil.

For a proper delineation of sin in Islam it is inevitable that the essence of Allah be confronted. Every doctrine of Mohammed is referred to Allah as the true originator thereof. But even more, the personality of Allah is at the background of Mohammed's formulation of sin. Allah is so completely final and other that man is infinitesimal; what he does cannot finally influence Allah, and despite the many ethical demands in the Koran, man is not ultimately responsible, since God is the responsible party involved. Accordingly it is necessary briefly to examine the personality of

Allah where it is tangent to a doctrine of sin in man, as it is set forth in the Koran and explained in certain traditions.

The attributes of Allah are revealed in the ninety-nine names which are ascribed to Him in Traditions. These titles are taken from the Koran on the basis of 7:79- "Most excellent titles hath God; by these call ye on Him, and stand aloof from those who pervert His titles." The lists of these names differ somewhat in various Moslem books.<sup>1</sup> They are frequently repeated mechanically by the devout Moslem with the aid of a rosary. These attributes are commonly divided into Isma-ul-Jalalijah -- the terrible names, and the Isma-ul-Jemaliyah -- the glorious names. Seven of the ninety-nine names of Allah describe His unity; five describe Him as Creator, twenty-four as merciful and gracious (to believers); thirty-six describe His power, pride and absolute sovereignty; five reveal Him as Hunter and Avenger; four seem to refer to Him as a moral deity.<sup>2</sup>

The attribute which seemed to stand near the forefront of Mohammed's thinking is that of God's power. In Sell's words "He is almighty. His power is eternal, a priori and a posteriori. It is not a posteriori to His essence."<sup>3</sup> Many

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<sup>1</sup>S. M. Zwemer, The Moslem Doctrine of God (Boston: American Tract Society, 1905), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Edward Sell, Faith of Islam (London: Truebner and Co., 1880), p. 117.

are the expressions such as these "O men of Mecca, adore your Lord, who hath created you and those who were before you: haply ye will fear Him." The creation itself is not intended so much for the manifestation of God's glory or the outburst of His love, as for a sample of His power, for which honor is due Him. "He hath created the heavens and the earth to set forth His truth; High let Him be exalted above the gods they join with Him." -16:3. Also 50:37, 41:8, 13:2, 35:12. He also keeps control of the forces of nature- 13:13. Likewise He has the power over life and death -75:40. And as He created men and all things, so all things must return to Him -19:94. For "God's, the kingdom of the heavens and the earth" -42:48. In some of his rhapsodies over the power of God Mohammed at times approaches in majesty of expression the exclamations of the Hebrew prophets and psalmists. But even of these great similarities the sympathetic Thomas Carlyle said in his "Hero-worship": "I make but little of Mohammed's praises of Allah, which many praise; they are borrowed, I suppose mainly from the Hebrew, at least they are far surpassed there".<sup>4</sup>

The attribute that must be found in the Koran if there is to be understanding of sin is that of Holiness. But in the Koran God is called Holy only once -59:23- "He is the

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<sup>4</sup>S. M. Zwemer, op. cit., p. 34.

God beside Whom there is no god; He is the King, the Holy ( **الْقُدُّوسُ** ), the Peaceful, the Faithful, the Guardian, the Mighty, the Strong, the most High!" Scholars of Islam would say that the Hebrew idea of "apartness" expressed in the qadosh of the Old Testament is adequately presented in other terminology in the Koran. It is true that a comparison with "Who is like Thee among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness . . . ?"<sup>5</sup> could be made, by pointing to expressions in the Koran which convey the idea of the absolute separation of Allah from man. But nowhere to be found in Mohammed's revelation is the repeatedly expressed idea of Is. 6:16- "The holy God sanctifies Himself in righteousness" or that of 1 Sam. 6:20- "Who can stand before Jehovah, this holy God?". Even in the single passage quoted above there is conveyed no idea of moral purity or perfection. The Arabic Sunni commentator, Beidhawi, says in this connection: "Holy means the complete absence of anything that would make Him less than He is."<sup>6</sup> "Tahir", used as a synonym for moral purity, means ceremonially clean, referring to the outward purity of the body -- as in "None shall touch it but the purified", a passage generally applied to circumcision or to the washings required for those who handle the holy Book. Its relation to qadasa is revealed by the definition of the

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<sup>5</sup>Exodus 15:11.

<sup>6</sup>S. M. Zwemer, op. cit., p. 59.

word qaddus, given in the Taj-el-Aroos dictionary: "a vessel used to wash the parts of the body in the bath; this is the special name for such a vessel in the Hejaz."<sup>7</sup> Arnold sums it up when he says:

'Das Attribut der Heiligkeit wird im Koran durchaus ignorirt; alles was ueber die unnahbare Reinheit und Heiligkeit dessen der in der Bibel als der Dreimal Heilige dargestellt wird, gesagt ist laeszt sich von jedem ehrenhaften Menschen sagen.'<sup>8</sup>

God's justice is also declared in one of the names of Allah. But the title "the Just" does not occur in the Koran, but is put in the list by Tradition.<sup>9</sup> Even the word 'dl, justice, is found twelve times only in the Koran, never used of the righteous acts of God and only once of His words -5:115. It is true, however, that here too a double thread runs through the Koran, for in speaking of the unbelieving cities God says in 11:103- "We dealt not unfairly with them, but the dealt unfairly with themselves, and in 7:28, 3:80, 2:24, 20:84, 16:106, and 92:5-10 God declares that He will punish or bless according to man's actions. But that Allah does not appear bound by any standard of justice, but rather that morally as well as physically He is Almighty and can do what He pleases is seen from the fact that Allah punished Satan for not being willing to worship a creature, Adam

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 49. Quoted from Der Islam.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

-2:28-31.

Al-Ghazali says: 'Allah's justice is not to be compared with the justice of man. For a man may be supposed to act unjustly by invading the possession of another, but no injustice can be conceived on the part of God. It is in His power to pour down upon man torments, and if He were to do it His justice could not be arraigned. Yet He rewards those that worship Him for their obedience on account of His promise and beneficence, not of their merit or of necessity, since there is nothing which He can be tied to perform nor can any injustice be supposed in Him, nor can He be under an obligation to any purpose whatsoever.'<sup>10</sup>

This shading of God's justice comes out more clearly when considered in connection with His will.

Allah is also called El-Hak, the Truth. 22:61- "So shall it be, for that God is the truth; and because what they call on beside Him is vanity." But that truth in the Koran is not interpreted in the absolute sense is seen in the orthodox tradition, for there a lie is justifiable in three cases -- to reconcile those who quarrel, to satisfy one's wife, and in case of war.<sup>11</sup> Abu Hanifah makes the statement that if one should swear by the truth of God it would not necessarily constitute an oath.<sup>12</sup> As a matter of fact it is pointed out that God is cunning -86:15,16- "They plot a plot against thee and I will plot a plot against them." In speaking of unbelievers it is said in 8:30- "They plotted -- but

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 55. Quoted from History of the Sarazens.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 41. Quoted from El Hidaiyah, IV.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

God plotted: and of plotters God is the best!"

God is love is one of Christendom's answers when questioned as to the being of God. In the Koran the attribute of love is absent from Allah. 2:160 says: "Yet there are men who take to them idols along with God and love them with the love of God: but stronger in the faithful is the love of God." "With the love" or better "as (ka) the love of God" is explained by orthodox exegetes to mean "as his greatness and the impulse to obedience which he causes".<sup>13</sup> Dr. Otto Pautz, who made a close study of the passages relating to this theme, came to the conclusion "In no case is there any reference to an inner personal relation."<sup>14</sup> Indeed the love of Allah for man seems to be directed to man's good qualities, rather than to the man himself.

Naturally the mercy of God stands in close relation to His love. "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate" stands at the head of every Sura in the Koran, except the ninth. Er-Rahman and Er-Rahim are noble terms that are frequently used in the Koran, expressing the mercy of Allah which reaches to all men. Likewise He is often termed the Forgiver. In Sura 11:92 and 85:14 He is called the Affectionate. Other times He is called the Relenting -9:119- "He hath also turned Him unto the three who were left behind, so

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 101. Quoted from Beidhawi, I.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

that the earth, spacious as it is, became too strait for them . . . Then was he turned to them, that they might be turned to Him, for God is He that turneth, the merciful." Likewise He is frequently termed the Kind or Indulgent -2:138. That this attribute of mercy and forgiveness is radically modified, however, by the attribute of will, will now be pointed out.

That which is determinative in the Koranic doctrine of Allah, and that which has beyond all doubt become the leading motif in Sunni Islam from the day of Mohammed to the present is the will of Allah. The in  $\text{In\`sa}^{\text{a}} \text{`Allah}$  (if God wills) note is the leading theme in the Koran, in Mohammed's conception of what God is like. This one fact, next to God's existence itself, is that which is most evident to a humble man -- that is, that God does as He pleases, and His actions are not subject to judgement by His creatures . . . For "God doth His pleasure" -14:32, and this pleasure means that "God misleadeth whom He will and whom He will He guideth; and He is the Mighty, the Wise" -14:4.

He can do what He wills and whatever He wills comes to pass. He is not obliged to act. Everything good or evil in this world exists by His will. He wills the faith of the believer and the piety of the religious man. If He were to change His will, there would be neither unbelief nor irreligion. All we do we do by His will: what He willeth not does

not come to pass.<sup>15</sup>

Everything is subservient to the absolute which challenges all human understanding it. If He wills He leads aright; if He wills He leads astray. If He wills He forgives; if He wills He punishes.<sup>16</sup>

W. G. Palgrave, the geographer, learned to know the theology of Islam from extensive personal experience with its advocates who have retained the heritage of Mohammed most purely. In his famous characterization of Allah as will Palgrave accurately describes this "Pantheism of Force":

. . . the words (of the creed) in Arabic imply that this one Supreme being is also the only agent, the only Force, the only Act, existing throughout the universe, and leaves us to all beings else, matter or spirit, instinct or intelligence, physical or moral, nothing but pure unconditional passiveness, alike in movement or quiescence, in action or incapacity. The sole power, the sole motor, movement, energy and deed is God; the rest is downright inertia and mere instrumentality, from the highest archangel down to the simplest atom of creation. Hence in this one statement, *la ilaha illa Allah*, is summed up a system which for want of a better name I may be permitted to call the Pantheism of Force or Act, thus exclusively assigned to God, who absorbs it all, exercises it all, and to Whom alone it can be ascribed, whether for preserving or for destroying, for relative evil, or for equally relative good. I say relative because it is clear that in such a theology no place is left for absolute good or evil, reason or extravagance; all is abridged in the autocratical will of the one Agent: '*sic volo, sic iubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas*' or more significantly still in Arabic '*kama yesha*.'

. . . God is one, the totality of omnipotent and omnipresent action, which acknowledges no rule, standard or limit, save His own sole and absolute will. He communicates nothing to His creatures; for their seeming power and act ever remain His alone, and in Him, by Him

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<sup>15</sup>Sell, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>16</sup>E. E. Elder, "The Development of the Muslim Doctrine of Sins and Their Forgiveness," The Moslem World, XXIX (April, 1939), 16.

and from Him only. And secondly, no superiority, no distinction, no preeminence, can be lawfully claimed by one creature over another in the utter equalization of their unexceptional servitude and abasement; all are alike tools of the one solitary Force, which employs them to crush or to benefit, to truth or to error, to honor or shame, to happiness or misery, quite independent of their individual fitness, deserts or advantage and simply because He wills it as He wills it.

. . . He Himself, sterile in His inaccessible heights, neither loving nor enjoying aught save His own and self-measured decree, without sin, companion or counsellor, is no less barren for Himself than for His creatures; and His own barrenness and lone egoism in Himself is the cause and rule of His indifferent and unregarding despotism around. The first note is the key of the whole tune, and the primal idea of God runs through and modifies the whole system and creed that centers in Him.

. . . Every phrase of the preceding sentences, every touch in this odious portrait has been taken to the best of my ability, word for word, or at least, meaning for meaning, from 'the Book', the truest mirror of the mind and idea is fully confirmed by the witness tongue of contemporary tradition.<sup>17</sup>

That there is a "witness-tongue of tradition" to this conception of Allah is shown by this statement of Mohammed al Burkawi:

'Allah can annihilate the universe if it seems good to Him and recreate it in an instant. He receives neither profit nor loss from whatever happens. If all the infidels became believers and all the wicked pious He would gain nothing. And if all believers became infidels it would not cause Him loss. He can annihilate even heaven itself.'<sup>18</sup>

In the face of this overwhelming stress on God as sheer Agency and Power it is doubtful whether any prophet could

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<sup>17</sup>Zwemer, op. cit., p. 65. Quoted from Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia, I.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

hold to a conception of God as a moral being. Certainly His morality cannot be conceived to be on the same plane as man's moral belief, not adhering to the same standard of justice, His goodness not a quantitative extension of man's appreciation of goodness and morality on a nobler level. As W. St. Clair Tisdall points out:

The fact that it is a moral impossibility for God to sanction, much less command, the commission of distinct breaches of the eternal Moral Law is quite beyond their comprehension, and the enunciation of such a theory strikes them as blasphemous, because it contradicts in their opinion the doctrine of the Omnipotence of Deity.<sup>19</sup>

Samuel Zwemer in pointing out that Mohammed saw God's power in nature, but never had a glimpse of His holiness and justice, declares that the reason for this failure is plain, namely "Mohammed had no true idea of the nature of sin and its consequences."<sup>20</sup> In actual fact, however, the deduction must be reversed. God's will, capricious and inevitable, is not governed by the idea of the Holy. Thus sin does not enter in.

However much he discourses about His righteousness, His wrath against sin, His grace and mercy, yet (according to Mohammed) Allah is not holy love, not a negation of all self-seeking and sensuality. Neither in Holiness nor in Love is He just. Towards the ungodly love does not attain its right; Allah is quick and ready enough to punish them, to lead them astray and to harden their hearts; His wrath is not free from passion. Towards believers that Holiness which can love nothing impure is defective. Allah can permit His prophet to do things that would otherwise be objectionable. To the rest of

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<sup>19</sup>W. St. Clair Tisdall, The Religion of the Crescent (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1910), p. 62.

<sup>20</sup>Zwemer, op. cit., p. 49.

the believers also He can allow what is not of itself good . . . The commandments which God gives are not the expression of His nature; they are arbitrary, and can therefore be retracted and replaced by others."<sup>21</sup>

This Allah may best be described as the Arabian sheikh, the true Oriental despot. For as Soper well points out:

Islam has failed in its morality and its ethical system, not being able to think of right and wrong as involving a distinction in the essential nature of God. What God wills is right, because He wills it, and not because it expresses what is even deeper than will, the very nature of God Himself, which is righteousness and love. Sin, then in man is not a breach of a moral law founded on an eternal ethical cleavage which goes right to the heart of the universe itself, but a mere violation of an arbitrary command which might be changed according to the whim or caprice of Allah. He thus becomes an Oriental despot, irresponsible and unrestrained by an undeviating principle of righteousness within."<sup>22</sup>

It is this God who confronts the follower of the Prophet. And it was primarily with this God that Mohammed was concerned. It was his intention to relate this Allah to man, to call man to the recognition of his supremacy; rather than to expound a doctrine of man, he presented a doctrine of God to his fellow Arabs. This theistic emphasis resulted in Mohammed's failure to articulate a doctrine of man. E. Bevan Jones quotes the observation of a Unitarian writer: "Islam saw God but not man; saw the claims of Deity, but not the rights of humanity; saw authority, but failed to see freedom."<sup>23</sup> And yet the Koran does have something to say about man -- and we

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<sup>21</sup>Tisdall, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>22</sup>Edmund D. Soper, The Religions of Mankind (New York: Abingdon Press, 1938), p. 304.

<sup>23</sup>E. Bevan Jones, The People of the Mosque (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1932), p. 102.

must consider its conclusion in order to formulate a statement on sin.

Stanton sums up the Koranic teaching concerning the nature of man in the following way, basing his summary on the definite statements of the Koran:

. . . created of fine clay, for the service of Allah, to die and rise again; created in trouble, being mortal and inconstant when tested with good and evil. He commonly wills as Allah wills, for the human race was drawn forth from the loins of Adam to make a covenant with Allah; He has balanced the soul and inbreathed it with wickedness and piety; one keeps his soul pure, another corrupts it. Man was created good but was brought very low; he fell through the temptations of Iblis, but received guidance from Allah who makes his burden light, because he was created weak. Man has failed to accept the revelation of Allah; when in trouble he cries to Him, but when helped forgets Him. He is capricious, covetous, proud and universally sinful. Mankind was descended from one pair, originally one religion. Articulate speech was taught him by Allah, who subjected all things to him and feeds him through the bounties of nature. Man springs from the earth and returns to it, and like all other things to Allah. Man is universally sinful in act, but this comes from his weakness and not from a sinful taint. Man is prone to sin, but not of a sinful nature. He has lost Paradise, but he is not radically estranged from God.<sup>24</sup>

Napier Malcolm claims:

There is an absolute denial of the statement upon which most Christians more or less consciously base their belief in the perpetuity and absolute nature of the law of human morals that 'in the image of God created He man.'<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>H. U. Wietbrecht Stanton, The Teaching of the Qur'an (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919), p. 55.

<sup>25</sup>Robert E. Speer, The Moslem World of Today, edited by John R. Mott (New York: George H. Doran and Co., 1925), p. 349. Quoted from Five Years in a Persian Town.

The Koranic account of man's creation and fall reveals foundation for this stern judgement -15:26-28:

We created man of dried clay, of dark loam moulded . . . Remember when thy Lord said to the Angels, 'I create man of dried clay, of dark loam moulded: And when I shall have fashioned him and breathed of my spirit into him, then fall ye down and worship him.'

Nothing is said of the image of God. 82:7,8 say: "Who hath created and moulded thee and shaped thee aright, In the form which pleased Him hath He fashioned thee." These along with a few other passages state that man was created upright, but the general teaching is that man's nature is sensual, and man was created weak -4:32:

God desireth thus to turn him unto you: but they who follow their own lusts, desire that with great swerving should ye swerve! God desireth to make your burden light: for man hath been created weak.

Thus the creation of man was in no sense the creation of a free agent. Therefore it was not the creation of a moral agent. Thus it introduced no new element into the world, and set up no possibility for moral struggle.<sup>26</sup>

Islam regards man's nature today, his fallen nature, as his original one and believes that it will always remain as it is now. The doctrine of the transmission of sin as a result of the fall is entirely unknown. Man's nature never was in accord with God's and never can nor should be so.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>W. H. T. Gairdner, The Reproach of Islam (London: Young Peoples' Missionary Movement, 1909), p. 149.

<sup>27</sup>Tisdall, op. cit., p. 85.

Adam committed a fault, zillat, when he ate of the forbidden fruit, but no spiritual consequence is in any way inherited by his children. This is shown in the narration of man's fall in 7:10 ff., which bears striking similarity to the Old Testament accounts, but omits or corrupts the essential features:

We created you; then fashioned you; then said we to the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves unto Adam: and they prostrated them all in worship, save Eblis: He was not among those who prostrated themselves. To him said God: 'What hath hindered thee from prostrating thyself in worship at my bidding?' He said, 'Nobler am I than he: me hast thou created of fire; of clay hast thou created him'. He said, 'Get thee down hence: Paradise is no place for thy pride: Get thee gone then; one of the despised shalt thou be.' He said, 'Respite me till the day when man-kind shall be raised from the dead.' He said, 'One of the respited shalt thou be.' He said, 'Now, for that thou hast caused me to err, surely in thy straight path will I lay wait for them: Then will I surely come upon them from before, and from behind, and from their right hand, and from their left, and thou shalt not find the greater part of them to be thankful.' He said, 'Go forth from it, a scorned, a banished one! Whoever of them shall follow thee, I will surely fill hell with you, one and all. And, O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in Paradise, and eat ye whence ye will, but to this tree approach not, lest ye become of the unjust doers.' Then Satan whispered them to shew them their nakedness, which had been hidden from them both. And he said, 'This tree hath your Lord forbidden you, only lest ye should become angels, or lest ye should become immortals.' And he sware to them both, 'Verily I am unto you one who counselleth aright.' So he beguiled them by deceits: and when they had tasted of the tree, their nakedness appeared to them, and they began to sew together upon themselves the leaves of the garden. And their Lord called to them, 'Did I not forbid you this tree, and did I not say to you, Verily, Satan is your declared enemy.' They said, 'O our Lord! With ourselves have we dealt unjustly: if thou forgive us not and have pity on us, we shall surely be of those who perish.' He said, 'Get ye down, the one of you an enemy to the other; and on earth shall be your dwelling, and your provision for a season.' He said, 'On it shall ye

live, and on it shall ye die, and from it shall ye be taken forth.'

It is nowhere indicated that Adam would not have died had it not been for his error. His error was his own, and remained in him. It passed on to his descendants only as a pattern of failure, rather than an inherited taint. And compared to the immediate promise of Gen. 3:15 Adam in the Koran is offered the cold comfort of 2:36 "We said, Get ye down from it altogether: and if guidance come to you from me, whoso shall follow my guidance, on them shall come no fear, neither shall they be grieved."

It is well to look more closely at the constitution of man in order to understand how evil may assail him. In the Koran man consists of material body and immaterial soul. In the resurrection the whole man meets his Maker and both parts of his nature are punished or rewarded for that for which both parts are responsible. The soul often means the whole man. Being the active principle it is that which desires good and evil -53:23, 41:31. The heart is the seat of the soul, both the affections and the intellect. The soul believes, or the man believes with the heart -10:100, 16:108. The conclusion is that there is no trichotomy in man according to the Koran, and the seat of sin is not the body alone. It is interesting to note that the souls of jihad martyrs dwell in heaven while the body is in the grave -- evidently the soul is capable of its full life apart from the body. The life-giving process was the breathing of spirit into

man -32:8 -- but Mohammed nowhere speaks of the spirit of man. The teaching that the soul is the man precludes the idea that sin is the evil of the body or that flesh is the seat of sin. This is not contradicted by the prominence given to the desires as the source of sin, for the desires pertain to the soul.<sup>28</sup>

Al-Ghazali developed most fully a discussion of the nature of man as it becomes liable to evil influence. The heart is like a round building with doors open to all sides. It is like a target struck by arrows. It is like a mirror over which forms are continually passing. It is like a pond into which waters are constantly flowing. Impressions come through the senses externally, internally through the complex nature of man. The most specific of these impressions are ideas which come to mind, coming from thoughts and recollections. These move operations of the will. Then the will moves the body. Ideas can be divided into those which summon to good and those which summon to evil.<sup>29</sup> The good impulses are called inspirations and the evil impulses are called suggestions. The inspirations come from angels, the suggestions from demons.<sup>30</sup> To illustrate the quickness of change

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<sup>28</sup>Henry Preserved Smith, The Bible and Islam (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897), p. 201 ff.

<sup>29</sup>Duncan Black MacDonald, The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1909), p. 274 ff.

<sup>30</sup>George F. Moore, History of Religions (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), II, 463.

in the heart and its sensitivity to influence, the Prophet compared it to a sparrow turning at every moment, to a pot boiling up altogether, and to a feather blown up on the surface of the desert. But it is always in the hand of God. From the point of view of stability in good or evil or the swaying between the two, hearts are of three kinds: 1) Fixedly good, unassailable by the devil, the heart of rest -13:28. 2) Hopelessly bad, reason subdued by lust. 3) Heart in which there is constant swaying and contest between good and evil. The devil urges upon the heart the pleasures of the world and the examples of learned theologians. But the angel urges the abiding joys of heaven and the pains of hell. The position is frankly otherworldly and the fear of the Fire is the great motive urged. According then to the Satanic qualities or the angelic qualities in each heart will the issue be; and all that will happen will be in agreement with the decree of God. To him who is created for the Garden the causes of obedience will be made easy; to him who is created for the Fire the causes of rebellion are made easy -82:13, 14; 21:33.<sup>31</sup>

A major factor playing into man's relation with Allah is Satan and his cohorts, as has already been noted in part. In this connection MacDonald points out:

The emphasis on the absolute sovereignty of Allah naturally negates the interdependence of an evil power, and

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<sup>31</sup>MacDonald, op. cit., p. 299 ff.

the sense of Allah's immediate working negates Satan's isolation. He no longer, it is true, appears in the courts of heaven, but he says 'My Lord' and regards himself as part of the necessary apparatus of things.<sup>32</sup>

That this judgement of MacDonald is true, and that the working of the devil is not only done with the permission of Allah, but by His very command, is illustrated by the Koran itself:

. . . But Satan said, 'O my Lord! If thou dost not help me against this creature whom thou has honored over me, I shall not be strong enough for him.' The Lord said, 'There shall not be born to him a child, but one shall be born to thee also.' But Satan said, 'O my Lord, give me more.' The Lord said, 'Assemble upon them with thy horse and with thy foot and share with them wealth and children and promise them'<sup>33</sup> and the devil promised them naught except deceit.

The devil has the art to suggest things praiseworthy in themselves, so to develop them, however, that they lead to destruction. He is the Whisperer -7:119, 20:118, 50:15. He never sleeps. "The Prophet once drew a line upon the ground. 'That is the path of God,' he said. Then he drew many lines to the right and left. 'On each of these,' he said, 'stands the devil calling you.'<sup>34</sup> He is like a hungry dog coming at man. There are armies of devils, and each kind of sin has a devil of its own -- all spring from Satan who is their father. 17:66- "And entice such of them as thou canst

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<sup>32</sup>MacDonald, op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid. Quoting from The Koran.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 279.

by thy voice; assault them with thy horsemen and thy footmen."<sup>35</sup>

Al-Ghazali once again presents the classical orthodox view of this Koranic doctrine. The locus -- 7:10 ff. -- has already been quoted above. The devil according to Ghazali is an expression for a creature whose business is the promising evil and the commanding vileness and scaring by the threat of poverty where there is solicitude for the good - 2:271. So the devil is opposed to the angel, and his "whispering" against "ilham." So the heart, which by its created nature is equally fitted to be affected by either, is pulled about between the devil and the angel. In the one case the devil settles in the heart and rules it; in the other case the angel does so. But no heart is free from fleshly appetite, anger and desire, and the devil with his whisperings always haunts it. The Prophet said once that there was not one of them who did not have a devil. To their question whether this applied to him also he replied that it did, but God aided him against Satan who gave it up and commanded only good. Thus when fleshly appetites keep within due measure, the devil who has clothed himself in them can command only good. On the other hand, those in whose hearts passion and the lusts are strong came to be ruled by the devil, who becomes their real god. The lusts then so run in the flesh

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

and blood of men, the rule of the devil over them is so normal, that at all points the devil lies in wait for them.<sup>36</sup>

As to whether the devil is seen, this is a disputed issue. Al-Ghazali claims that the devil is seen sometimes by way of symbolization and likeness, and sometimes, but very much more rarely is able to be seen in his true form. He who sees him by a symbol differs from the dreamer only in the fact of an actual beholding with the eye.<sup>37</sup>

The devil approaches man in a variety of ways in an attempt to lead him astray. The world is an enormous gateway for the devil, or rather a multitude of gateways. First, he approaches man through his sins; if he is repelled, he then approaches through advice, until he makes him fall into some innovation (*bid'a*); if he is repelled in that, he leads him into abstinence until he regards something as lawful which is not so; if he is repelled in that, he raises doubts as to whether his ablutions or his prayers have been legally sound; and if he is repelled in that, he makes deeds of piety easy for a man, so that men regard themselves, admire themselves and perish. This is the last stage of temptation; the saint who escapes self-admiration is safe from Satan.<sup>38</sup>

Thus we find three important elements involved in the

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 277 ff.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

concept of sin -- the nature of Allah, the nature of man, and the work of the Whisperer. The problem then is -- where does responsibility for action ultimately lie. On which of these three must the onus of sin be laid. Some primitive religions make the evil spirits responsible for whatever evil is to be found in and about man. Christianity, while it cannot and does not attempt to resolve the ultimate problem of evil nor the tension between God's supreme will and man's freedom, nevertheless attributes to man all responsibility for his own sin and its lasting results. Islam, on the other hand, turns to Allah, as the Cause of all action, so also the ultimate cause of all evil and sin of man. This has already been stated in the review of Allah's attributes, but it bears closer examination as the crucial factor in the Moslem doctrine of sin.

That man is conceived of as being a responsible being in the mind of Mohammed is certainly at least partially true. For the Koran is filled with ethical demands and moral and ceremonial injunctions whereby man is exhorted to follow a certain course of action. A double thread of reasoning, humanly contradictory, may be discerned in the Koran. At the same time as the absolute will of God is asserted, man is commanded to do and to act by his own will and power. William Watt<sup>39</sup> claims that the Mohammedan attitude is not fatalistic

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<sup>39</sup>William M. Watt, "Free Will and Predestination in Islam," The Moslem World, XXXVI (April, 1946), 129.

submission to Allah, as the pre-Islamic Arabs fatalistically bowed to austere Time. But rather the attitude is one of din, religion, a positive life of good and forgiveness. What is properly described as fatalistic attitude -- using the omnipotence of God as an excuse for evading plain duties -- is explicitly condemned. The same writer cites as the best proof of man's responsibility in the Koran the whole conception of the Last Judgement -18:28-30, 21:48, 36:54. Rewards and punishments are meted out to men in seeming accordance with certain principles of Justice. Mohammed's warnings and calls to repentance likewise imply that his hearers have the capacity to respond. In one case even the people who are described as deaf to warning, as if it were not their fault, later admit responsibility for their actions -21:46: "Yet if a breath of the Lord's chastisement touch them, they will assuredly say, O, woe to us! we have indeed been offenders." In many of the passages that speak of God guiding men or leading them astray, what God does appears to be the consequence of the previous conduct of men. Pertinent passages that illustrate this point have already been listed under the discussion of God's justice. As George F. Moore points out:

In Islam as in other systems which have exalted the supremacy of God and extended the scope of his decrees to all the actions of men, the common sense and conscience of mankind has always been sounder than the logic of determinism.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Moore, op. cit., p. 490.

The above statements, however true they may be in themselves, nevertheless lose their compelling force in the face of the fact that Mohammed does not regard man as finally responsible, despite his calls to moral decisions. Rather, ever lurking in the background of his thought, and articulated with great frequency in the Koran, likewise attested to by tradition, is a sensitive regard for the complete sovereignty of God, in good and in evil. True, the Koran says -4:81- "Whatever good betideth thee is from God, and whatever betideth thee of evil is from thyself." And man is offered the choice between belief and unbelief, 18:29- "let him then who will, believe; and let him who will, be an infidel." But the significance of these fades in the light of Allah's qadar, absolute decree. This governs all actions of men, 54:52- "And everything that they do is in the books; each action, both small and great, is written down." 6:108- "Thus have we planned out their actions for every people." 14:4- ". . . but God misleadeth whom He will and whom He will He guideth." He assigns both men and jinn to hell, 7:178-:

Many, moreover, of the jinn and men have we created for hell. Hearts have they which understand not, and eyes have they with which they see not, and ears have they with which they hearken not. They are like the brutes. Yea, they go more astray; these are the heedless.

He creates good and evil in the soul -91:8- "By a soul and Him who balanced it, and breathed into it its wickedness and piety." Mohammed must betake himself "to the Lord of the Daybreak, against the mischiefs of his creation" -113:2. In

creating hell, Satan, and evil jinn He made them evil in the same sense as He made the scorpions poisonous and arsenic deadly.<sup>41</sup> His decree rules every act of life and death - 3:139- "No one can die except by God's permission, according to the Book that fixeth the term of life." 8:17- "So it was not ye who slew them, but God slew them; and those shafts were God's, not thine." 37:94- "God hath created you and that you make." Thus He is not merely He Who predetermines, but the very Actor in every movement of man. And surely the height of absolute decree is expressed in the clear words of 76:29,30- "This truly is warning. And whoso willeth, taketh the way of his Lord. But will it ye shall not, unless God will it, for God is knowing, wise."

Thus God necessarily becomes the author of belief and unbelief -16:38 f.- ". . . Some of them there were whom God guided, and there were others decreed to err . . . If thou art anxious for their guidance, know that God will not guide him whom He will astray." 10:100- "No soul can believe but by the permission of God: and He shall lay His wrath on those who will not understand." Furthermore in 36:6-9:

Just now our sentence is against them; Therefore they shall not believe. On their necks have we placed chains which reach the chin and forced up are their heads. Before them have we set a barrier, and behind them have we set a barrier, and we have shrouded them in a veil so that they will not see. Alike is it to them if thou warn them or warn them not: they will not believe . . .

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<sup>41</sup>Zwemer, op. cit., p. 70.

And everything have we set down in the clear Book of our decrees."

In twenty passages of the Koran Allah is said to "lead men astray."<sup>42</sup> Allah created multitudes of spirits and men especially for torture in hell, and he decree is not frustrated -32:13- "Had we pleased we had certainly given to every soul its guidance. But true shall be the word which hath gone forth from Me -- I will surely fill hell with jinn and men together."

Zwemer says<sup>43</sup> that the Latin *fatum* is equated by Allah *kitab*, God wrote it. By this doctrine of God's writings, the eternal decrees, Islam exalts the Divine, not to combine it with but to oppose it to the human. This not only leads to the neglect of the ethical idea in God, but puts fatalism in place of responsibility. To the Moslem God's will is certain, arbitrary, irresistible, inevitable before the event transpires. "Thy will be done" is little less than blasphemy to a strict Mohammedan, since Allah only reveals His will in accomplishing it; man submits. Archangel and murderer, devil and gnat, equally execute the will and purpose of Allah every moment of their existence. Thus also *Alhamdu lillahi* (praise to God) rather than express active praise, denotes submission, inevitableness, passivity, fatalism.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 75. Quoted from Selections from the Coran.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 98 f.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

That Tradition sided with Allah in the struggle between God's dominance and man's activity is evidenced in many traditions and commentators. Watt claims that Tradition gives us a picture of a struggle between the activist ethics of the Koran and the fatalistic conceptions so deeply embedded in the Arab soul -- between the Koranic conception of God actively will and righteous, and the fatalistic ethics of pagan manliness and inactivity.<sup>45</sup> But even this sympathetic student comments on Wensinck's statement that "Tradition has not preserved a single hadith in which *librum arbitrium* is advocated" by admitting that it "is true in the main, but is almost too sweeping."

That tradition does maintain the autocracy of Allah as the major emphasis of Mohammed is shown by the comments of al-As'ari on the statements of Al-Ibanah. The former, who lived in the ninth century A. D., was the ex-rebel who stabilized orthodox Moslem theology. He says:<sup>46</sup>

God gives the faithful grace to be obedient to Him . . . whereas He causes the infidels to err, does not guide them, does not give them the grace to believe. God has the power to do what is salutary for the infidels and to be gracious to them that they may become believers; nevertheless He wills that they be infidels. He forsakes them and seals up their hearts . . . and good and ill are dependent upon the general and particular decrees of God. And we know that what passes us by was not to

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<sup>45</sup>Watt, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>46</sup>Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali Ibn Isma 'il Al-As 'Ari, Al-Ibanah 'An Usul Ad-Dujanah -- The Elucidation of Islam's Foundation translated by Walter C. Klein (New Haven: The American Oriental Society, 1940), p. 51.

befall us, and what befalls us was not to pass us by. Again,<sup>47</sup> "Since infidelity is one of the things He wills, He makes it and predetermines it and originates it and develops it and creates it." In commenting on 14:32- "but the wicked shall he cause to err" he plainly says that the meaning cannot be that of judgement.<sup>48</sup> He states: "If infidelity is among the things He wills He makes it and predetermines it and refuses the individuals the gifts of grace."<sup>49</sup> Scholastic is the approach made to the contrary passage "God wills not injustice to His sêrvants" -40:33 . . . "and to the worlds" -3:104, when he says: "Its meaning is that He wills not to do them injustice because He said God does not will injustice to them, but He did not say, 'He does not will their injustice to each other'. "<sup>50</sup>

Al-Taftazani in his commentary on the Creed of Islam as set forth by Al-Nasafi, is one of the foremost exponents of Sunni Islam. As such he reiterates the position of Mohammed. Nasafi said, "And Allah has created you and what you do."<sup>51</sup> Taftazani comments:

Allah is the creator of everything. . . i.e. everything possible, and the action of the creature is the possible

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>51</sup>Sa'1 al-Din al-Taftazani, A Commentary on the Creed of Islam, translated by Earl Edgar Elder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 82.

thing. Allah does not therefore do the actions of His creatures for the one of whom something is predestined is that one in whom it subsists, not the one who brought it into existence.<sup>52</sup>

But Nasafi also said, "Allah is the creator of all the actions of His creatures whether of unbelief or belief, of obedience or of disobedience."<sup>53</sup> Taftazani responds, "Allah willed for them unbelief and evil-doing by their own choice, so it is not sound to make them legally responsible for the impossible."<sup>54</sup> The Mu'tazilites, whom Taftazani was opposing, denied that Allah wills wicked and vile things even to the extent of saying that He wills of the unbeliever and of the evil-doer that they believe and obey. For them most of the actions of the creatures that occur are contrary to the will of Allah. Taftazani says:

That position is abominable. Do you not perceive that the Master whenever He wishes to demonstrate before those present with Him the disobedience of His slave, commands him to do something and yet does not will that he do it?<sup>55</sup>

Nasafi said, "Allah leads astray whom He wills and guides aright whom He wills."<sup>56</sup> "This means," says Taftazani, "that He does so by creating the acts of going astray and being

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

being guided, for He alone is Creator. Nasafi states that it is not incumbent to do that which is best for the creature. Taftazani commented that if there is any denial of good to the creature by one who has the right to deny this, then there is absolute justice and wisdom.

The commentator, Al-Berkevi, states:

It is necessary to confess that good and evil take place by the predestination and predetermination of God, that all that has been and all that will be was decreed in eternity and written on the preserved table; that the faith of the believer and the piety of the pious and good actions are foreseen, willed, predestined, decreed by the writing on the preserved table. The impiety of the impious and bad actions come to pass with the foreknowledge, will, predestination, and decree of God, but not with His satisfaction and approval. Should any ask why God willeth and produceth evil we can only reply that He may have wise ends in view, which we cannot comprehend.<sup>57</sup>

William Watt quotes several traditions which support predestination as it is set forth in the Koran. "God wrote down the decrees regarding the created world fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth."<sup>58</sup>

I heard the Apostle of God say ('Ubada b.al-Samit is reported to have said): The first thing God created was the Pen. He said to it: Write. It asked: Lord, What shall I write? He answered, Write the distance of all things till the advent of the Hour. My son, I heard the Prophet of God say: Whoso dieth with a belief differing from this, he belongeth not to me.<sup>59</sup>

When the embryo has passed two and forty days in the

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<sup>57</sup>Sell, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>58</sup>Watt, op. cit., p. 127. Quoted from Muslim.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid. Quoted from Abu Dawid.

womb, God sends an angel, who gives it a form and creates his hearing, sight, skin, flesh and bones. This having been done the angel asks: O Lord, shall this be male or female? Then the Lord decrees what He pleaseth, and the angel writes it down. Then he asks, O Lord, what shall be his term? Thereupon the Lord will say what He pleaseth, and the angel will write it down. Then the latter will go away with the scroll in His hand, and nothing will be added to or subtracted from the decree.<sup>60</sup>

The Prophet said: It may be that one of you performs the works of the people of Paradise, so that between him and Paradise there is only the distance of an arm's length. But then his book overtakes him and he begins to perform the works of the people of hell, the which he will enter. Likewise one of you may perform the works of the people of hell, so that between him and hell there is only the distance of an arm's length. Then his book will overtake him and he will begin to perform the work of the people of Paradise, the which he will enter.<sup>61</sup>

Concerning this Qadar Samuel Zwemer quotes from the Mishkat-al-Misabih:

God created Adam and touched his back with His right hand and brought forth from it a family. And God said to Adam, I have created this family for Paradise, and their actions will be like unto those of the people of Paradise. Then God touched the back of Adam and brought forth another family and said, I have created this for hell, and their actions will be like unto those of the people of hell. Then said a man to the Prophet, Of what use will deeds of any kind be? He said, when God creates his slave for Paradise, his actions will be deserving of it until he die, when he will enter therein; and when God creates one for the fire, his actions will be like those of the people of hell till he die, when he will enter therein.<sup>62</sup>

Adam and Moses were once disputing before their Lord,

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid. Quoted from Muslim.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid. Quoted from Muslim.

<sup>62</sup>Zwemer, op. cit., p. 95. Quoted from Mishkat.

and Moses said, Thou art Adam whom God created with His hand, and breathed into thee of His spirit, and angels worshipped thee, and He made thee dwell in Paradise, and then thou didst make man to fall down by thy sin to the earth. Adam replied, Thou art Moses whom God distinguished by sending with thee His message, and His book, and He gave thee the tables on which all things are recorded. Now tell me how many years before I was created did God write the Torat? Moses replied, forty years. Said Adam, And did you find written therein, Adam transgressed against his Lord? Yes, said Moses. Said Adam, then why do you blame me for doing something which God decreed before he created me by forty years?<sup>63</sup>

It is related that 'Aisha said, 'The Prophet was invited to the funeral of a little child. And I said, O Apostle of God, Blesses be this little bird of the birth of Paradise; it has not yet done evil, nor been overtaken by evil. Not so, 'Aisha, said the Apostle, Verily God created a people for Paradise, and they were still in their father's loins, and a people for fire, and they were yet in their father's loins.<sup>64</sup>

Zwemer quotes Al-Chazali: "There is nothing which He can be tied to perform, nor can any injustice be supposed in Him, nor can He be under any obligation to any person whatsoever."<sup>65</sup> And Al-Berkevi must admit:

If all the infidels became believers and all the wicked pious, He would gain nothing. And if all believers became infidels, it would not cause Him loss. He can annihilate even heaven itself.<sup>66</sup>

Naturally the necessity of holding on to man's responsibility in the face of God's action in taking all responsibility on Himself results in great tension and struggle as

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 56. Quoted from History of the Saracens.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

man resolves the paradox between God's supposed righteousness and man's inability to act. This conflict is portrayed in this tradition:

The fifth sect of the 'Ajarida is the Shu'aibiya, the disciples of Shu'aib. He was one of those who dissociated himself from Maimun and his doctrine. He asserted that no one is capable of doing anything except what God wills, and that the acts of men are created by God. The root of the separation of the Shu'aibiya, and the Maimuniya was the Shu'aib had some money belonging to Maimun, the repayment of which he demanded. Shu'aib said to him: I shall give it to you, if God will. Maimun replied: God has willed that you should give it me now. Shu'aib replied: If God had willed it, I could not have done otherwise than give it to you. Maimun said: Verily God has willed what He commanded; what He did not command, He did not will; and what He did not will, He did not command. Then some followed Maimun and others Shu'aib; and they wrote to 'Abd al-Karim b. 'Ajarrad, who was held in prison by Khalid b. 'Abdallah al-Bajali. When the dispute of Maimun and Shu'aib was made known to him, 'Abd al-Karim wrote; Our doctrine is that what God willed came about and what He did not will did not come about; and we do not fix evil upon God. This letter reached them at the time of the death of 'Abd al-Karim. Maimun claimed that his view had been approved in that it was said 'we do not fix evil upon God', while Shu'aib claimed the Abd al-Karim had rather approved of his view in so far as he had said 'what God willed came about, and what He did not will did not come about'. Thus they both associated themselves with 'Abd al-Karim, but dissociated themselves from one another.<sup>67</sup>

This over-emphasis on one attribute of God finally invalidated any true doctrine of sin, although sin may still be spoken of in the Koran and in tradition. Eventually, however, it will force any reasoning Moslem to the conclusion of Omar Khayyam:

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<sup>67</sup>Watt, op. cit., p. 133 f.

Tis all a checkerboard of nights and days. Where  
 destiny with men for pieces plays; Hither and thither  
 moves and mates and slays, And one by one back in  
 the closet lays.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Zwemer, op. cit., p. 93.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TRUE NATURE OF SIN

So then, what is sin? Allah is Allah, supreme over all. And so Moslem intellect asserts that God is not to be questioned as to what he does. Moral goodness is a finite affair, and to apply it to Allah is a vain thing to do. He does not feel the passionate spiritual need of falling back on an unseen ultimate goodness. He demands of His follower no scruples or soul struggles. The slave asks no question of his sultan; what the sultan does is right because he does it, not for any quality in the action itself.<sup>1</sup> Right and wrong, good and evil, are in this light seen to be deprived of intrinsic meaning. The reasons for any decree are not to be sought; they are not believed to exist at all either in the nature of Alla Himself or in the nature of right and wrong itself. The decree pronouncing certain things right and certain things wrong as "permitted -- *halal*" or "non-permitted -- *haram*" and not as odious in themselves, but as infringing the fiat of the Absolute Sultan. Orthodox Moslem theologians have not scrupled plainly to assert that it is only Allah's decree that constitutes

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<sup>1</sup>W. H. T. Gairdner, The Reproach of Islam (London: Young Peoples' Missionary Movement, 1909), p. 141.

"good" actions right and "bad" actions wrong, and that had the decree been the other way around, as it might have been, the whole of mankind's moral judgments would have been reversed.<sup>2</sup> Hauri states:

Wie in jeder Gesetzesreligion, so stehen auch im Islam die goettlichen Gebote dem Menschen als ein Fremdes gegenueber, durch das er sich in der Entfaltung seines wahren Wesens gehemmt fuehlt.<sup>3</sup>

Gairdner concludes, however, by declaring:

Fortunately for Islam and the world Islam is assigned on the whole a certain consistency in His decrees upon these matters, and the uniformity with which He has tabooed adultery . . . conveyed to the ordinary Moslem no doubt the sense that these things are necessarily in themselves evil.<sup>4</sup>

"Sin to the Mohammedan is a failure to accomplish all that is commanded by the law, rules, precedent and regulations of Mohammed."<sup>5</sup> And the commands of Mohammed are naturally the will of Allah.

Sin to him is not a perversity of character but a perversity of deeds, and the remedy is not through any system of atonement, but by a fulfilling of the demands of his religion sufficiently to secure a cancellation of his debts in the books of eternity.<sup>6</sup>

Stanton says that "in the main sin is disobedience to the

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>3</sup>W. St. Clair Tisdall, The Religion of the Crescent (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1910), p. 86. Quoted from Der Islam.

<sup>4</sup>Gairdner, op. cit., p. 144

<sup>5</sup>James L. Barton, The Christian Approach to Islam (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1918), p. 56.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

to the command of Allah."<sup>7</sup> Robert Speer defines the sin of the Moslem as "a conscious act of responsible being against known law."<sup>8</sup>

This is perhaps over-simplification of an element which is spoken of in a variety of ways in the Koran, although these definitions do attack the central point.

W. R. W. Gardner, who has done a careful analysis of the Koranic doctrine of sin on the basis of Koranic terms arrives at a more detailed analysis:

We have seen that some of the terms are at times employed in such a way as to suggest that the actions are against the interests of the sinner himself, and entail on him loss and injury when he expected gain and advantage. This may be said to be the lowest view that we find in the Qur'an, yet it is a perfectly correct view insofar as it goes, and when we remember that it does not stand alone as a complete doctrine of sin, there can be no objection to its presence. Sin is the doing of what is contrary to one's own interests, or the not-doing of what is for one's best interests either in this world or in the world to come. The motive of the action and the morality of the action scarcely come into consideration at all, or, if they do, the judgment on the action depends not on the motive which led to it, but on the consequences which resulted from it. From this point of view sin is the outcome of foolish ignorance; but ignorance in such matters is culpable, and is in fact only another name for unbelief.

But, again, there are passages in which actions are spoken of which are considered wrong or sinful,

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<sup>7</sup>H. U. Weitbrecht Stanton, The Teaching of the Qur'an (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919), p. 55.

<sup>8</sup>Robert E. Speer, The Moslem World of Today, edited by John R. Mott (New York: George H. Doran and Co., 1925), p. 349.

because they are contrary to the interests of one's fellowmen, or to the rights of Deity. From this point of view the nature of the action comes clearly into consideration, and the principle of sin is seen to be selfishness. Sin is selfishness or self-assertion without regard to the rights of others who have also claim on one's consideration.

In other passages actions are regarded as sinful because they imply and arise from a mistaken view of man's relation to God. Man is God's creature and subject, and failure to realize this relation makes it impossible for man to come up to the required standard of service and is therefore sinful. There may not be any want of disobedience or any conscious despite toward God, the Sovereign Lord of all, but there is a failure to yield to Him what is His due. Sin, from this point of view, is a failure to take up the right attitude toward God. The evidences of the Creator's existence are so many, and the proofs of man's dependence on Him are so varied and numerous, that to fail to rec- the attitude which one should assume towards God is blameworthy and deserves condemnation.

Or again, sin may be something more positive than this simple failure on the part of man to realize his true relation to God. It may be the result of taking up a false or wrong attitude towards him, and this may lead a man to actions which are contrary to that system of law and order which God has determined for the guidance of men in the sphere of both morality and ceremonial observance. From this point of view sin is opposition to God, whether it takes the form of refusing Him obedience or of transgressing His direct commands. In either case the spirit which is manifested is that of self-confidence and self-assertion whereby he sets himself and his judgment in conscious opposition to God and His will.

Or finally, sin is non-recognition of the ultimate nature of things -- the putting of that which is false and perishing before that which is real and eternal.<sup>9</sup>

At times this sin as opposition to God may be characterized as pride. Other times it is described as weakness, unhealthy desire, external pollution, or the infringement

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<sup>9</sup>W. R. W. Gardner, The Qur'anic Doctrine of Sin (Madras: The Christian Literature Society for India, 1914), p. 19 ff.

of ceremonial and moral decrees.

It is in connection with sin as pride that the origin of sin is set forth in the Koran. It is remarkable that Mohammed should so fully adopt the Biblical account of sin and yet not connect it with the doctrine of the corruption of the race. The story of Adam embodies Mohammed's theory of the origin of sin.<sup>10</sup> Adam and his wife, created of clay, are placed in the Garden of Paradise in heaven. God commands the angels to bow down to Adam as His vice-regent. All obey except Iblis who refuses on the ground that Adam is his inferior. Iblis therefore is expelled from the Garden. But he receives permission to act as the tempter of man. Adam and Eve are commanded not to eat of the one tree in the Garden and are warned against the wiles of Satan. Nevertheless Satan insinuates that the tree is forbidden to them because if they eat they will become angels or immortal. So they eat, and both the tempter and the tempted are cast down to earth to live in natural enmity until the day of final doom.

That this first sin was due to pride is shown by  
38:71 ff.:

And the angels prostrated themselves, all of one accord, save Iblis. He swelled with pride and became an unbeliever. 'O Iblis,' said God, 'What hindereth thee from prostrating thyself before him whom my hands have made? Is it that thou art puffed up with pride?

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<sup>10</sup>Henry Preserved Smith, The Bible and Islam (New York: Abingdon Press, 1938), p. 205.

Or art thou a being of lofty merit? 'I am more excellent than he; we hast thou created of fire; of clay hast thou created him'."

This is the sin of the people also. Haman was proud -7:12. So are the leaders -7:73- "Said the chiefs of his people puffed up with pride . . ." The punishment of this rebellious pride is that those who are in possession of it must remain in it -7:143- "The unjustly proud ones of the earth will I turn aside from my signs." Thus the root of sin is described as pride, and disobedience results from it. Gardner, however, a very fair commentator, points out that Mohammed himself did not have any clear conception that this was so.<sup>11</sup>

Thus sin was disobedience against God. It was transmitted from Iblis to Adam by way of suggestion. That Adam was originally endowed with holiness which was lost in his fall is nowhere affirmed in the Koran. No such solidarity of the race is affirmed or assured which would make all mankind sin in Adam and fall with him in his first transgression.<sup>12</sup> Herein traditon went beyond the Koran:

So Adam denied and his children have inherited this vice; and Adam forgot and ate of the tree, and his children have inherited forgetfulness from him; and Adam committed a fault, and his children inherited crimes from him.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Gardner, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>12</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 206.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

Opposition to God may also be defined as simple weakness. Man does not inherit a sinful nature, but simply a weak one. Sin is not so much a disposition as a habit which men acquire because of their weakness.<sup>14</sup> The willing desire of the natural heart to sin is referred to in what Joseph says, a passage previously quoted -12:58- "yet I hold not myself clear, for the heart is prone to evil, save theirs on whom my Lord have mercy." The sinner is not so much to blame, for he was created weak, and God is merciful. Liability to sin is an ordinary weakness or imperfection or lack of knowledge; neither is absolute purity of heart considered necessary, nor desirable, rather it is impossible for a Moslem.<sup>15</sup>

Sin may also be regarded as a disease -2:9. As such man cannot be blamed for it. God is merciful and compassionate and will not punish severely for being ill in this way. He has created man as he is and fated him to do what he is doing. It is not for him to say that He has liked falsehood or murdered or stolen, and so man confesses that he has done so. Yet the fault is not his.<sup>16</sup> Sin, looked upon as an external pollution, is portrayed in certain

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<sup>14</sup>Edward Sell, "Sin (Muslim)," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings (Edinburgh: Charles Scribner's, 1928), XI, 567.

<sup>15</sup>Tisdall, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

traditions which speak of the deliverance from sin.

If there be a river at the gate of any of you in which he bathes five times every day, will there remain defilement on him? They replied, No dirt will remain on him. The Prophet said, Then that is what the five prayers are like; by means of them God wipes out sins.<sup>17</sup>

Abu Dharr reports<sup>18</sup> that when Mohammed caught hold of some branches, and leaves fell on the ground at his feet, he said: "O Abu Dharr, verily let the believing man offer the prayers by which he seeks the face of God; then his offences will drop from him just as these leaves drop off this tree."<sup>19</sup>

There is some reason for asserting that the Koran also looks upon sin as a sort of concupiscence. Virtue is thus said to consist in restraining the soul from its inclination -18:27- "Neither obey him whose heart we have made careless of the remembrance of Us, and who followeth his own lusts, and whose ways are unbridled." 79:40- "But as to him who shall have feared the majesty of his Lord, and shall have refrained his soul from lust, verily Paradise." These desires are stimulated by the allurements of the world and the suggestions of Satan -6:130- "This world's life deceived them." Thus sin becomes the conflict between the natural desires of man and the command of God. Whether the light of nature is enough to induce obedience we are not told. Rather man is

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 89. Quoted from Miscat.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

a wanderer in a hot desert -- in hopeless perplexity unless he has a guide.<sup>20</sup>

But usually the Koranic view of sin looks upon it as the neglect of the arbitrary decrees of an absolute ruler. The words "permitted" and "forbidden" have superseded guilt, sin, and transgression because in the Koran nothing is wrong by nature, but rather by the command of Allah. What Allah allows is not sin and cannot be sin at the time He allows it, though it may have been before or after. Thus there is little distinction between the ceremonial law and the moral. It is as great an offence to pray with hands unwashed as to tell a lie.<sup>21</sup> Pious Moslems nightly break the seventh commandment but will shrink from a tin of English meat for fear they be defiled with swine's flesh. Following this observation Zwemer describes Islam as "Pharisaism translated into Arabic."<sup>22</sup> Barton also points out that there can be no belief in Islam of the permanency of moral law, for nothing is thought of by the Mohammedan to be necessarily permanent. "Thus sin is the infraction of imposed law, not bias of nature, nor a flaw of character, nor a fundamental congenital trait in humanity."<sup>23</sup>

In connection with this discussion it might well be

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<sup>20</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 208.

<sup>21</sup>S. M. Zwemer, The Moslem Doctrine of God (Boston: American Tract Society, 1905), p. 51.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Barton, op. cit., p. 350.

mentioned that both Zwemer and Tisdall (neither may be classed as an impartial observer) point out that there is not even a term available in Arabic to express the English "conscience." This is a relevant observation, especially when compared to the Christian emphasis on the importance of man's conscience. In criticism, however, of this observation of Tisdall, the great Islamic scholar, Goldziher, maintains that the assumption that a word alone can be taken as credible proof of the existence of a conception of the mind has shown itself to be prejudice. He says that "a lack in the language is not necessarily a sign of a lack in the heart." He draws the parallel that one could then assert that the feeling of gratitude was unknown to the poets of the Vedas, because the word "thanks" is foreign to the Vedic language. In support of this thesis<sup>24</sup> he quotes from the orthodox traditions of Nawawi: "In the name of the prophet virtue is the essence of good qualities; sin is that which troubles the soul, and thou dost not wish that other people should know it of thee." He quotes Wabisa ibn Ma bu: "virtue is that which pacifies the soul and purifies the heart. Sin is that which produces unrest in the soul and turmoil in the heart."<sup>25</sup>

Tradition expanded the thought of sin as it is set forth

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<sup>24</sup>Ignaz Goldziher, Mohammed and Islam, translated by Kate Chambers Seelye (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917), p. 16 f.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

in the Koran. As'ari claimed that an act should really only be called sinful when the doer claims it a lawful act:

It is our opinion that we ought not to declare a single one of the people of the Qibla an infidel for a sin which he is guilty, such as fornication or theft or drinking of wine . . . but we believe that he who commits any of these mortal sins such as fornication or theft or the like presumptuously declaring it lawful and not acknowledging that it is forbidden, is an infidel.<sup>26</sup>

Al-Ghazali adds the requirement of intention: "If a man willingly slays a brother Muslim, he is guilty; if he slays him believing him not a Muslim, he is innocent."<sup>27</sup>

Al-Ghazali further adds his conclusions as to the stages in which sin takes place. This once again in its developed and systematized presentation departs from the simple, disorganized statements of the Koran. He says:

First comes the idea thrown into the mind; second an inclination of the nature toward the thing suggested; third, a decision or conviction of the heart toward the thing thus suggested in favor of the thing; fourth, a determination and purpose to do a thing. Then comes the actual doing which, of course, is punishable. The first two stages are to be accounted guiltless. As to the third all depends upon whether the decision is voluntary or not. The fourth is plainly culpable, but if it does not pass into action, the guilt may be wiped out. It may have been only a moment's heedlessness and in the books of the recording angels good is entered at ten times the value of evil. Yet if anyone dies in the purpose of mortal sin, he goes to the fire. By

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<sup>26</sup>Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali Ibn Isma'il Al-As 'Ari, Al-Ibanah 'An Usul Ad-Dujanah -- The Elucidation of Islam's Foundation translated by Walter C. Klein (New Haven: The American Oriental Society, 1940), p. 52.

<sup>27</sup>Duncan Black MacDonald, The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1909), p. 295.

intention (niya), deeds are judged.<sup>28</sup>

In the Koran the one sin which holds rank over all, the sin for which there is not forgiveness after death, the sin that dooms to the Fire, the sin which Mohammed inveighed against from the inception of his prophetic ministry the sin which is denounced on almost every page is that of kufr or širk, unbelief or polytheism. They are synonymous in the mind of the Prophet. There are many passages which show the importance of this sin. One is 3:81:

As for those who became infidels, after having believed, and then increase their infidelity -- their repentance shall never be accepted. These, they are the erring ones. As for those who are infidels and die infidels from no one of them shall as much gold as the earth could contain be accepted, though he should offer it in ransom. These, a grievous punishment awaiteth them and they shall have none to help them.

Gardner says that through all these views or aspects of sin there can ever be seen the thought, sometimes scarcely perceptible, yet nevertheless present, at other times plain and clear, that all these actions have one and the same fount. This one origin of sin is unbelief. In committing any or all of these various sinful actions man is showing a spirit of unbelief in God, who, even apart from the revelation he has given of himself and of his will, has not left himself without witness in the world of nature.<sup>29</sup> Tradition here stands solidly with the Koran, as does the practise of Islam.

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

<sup>29</sup>Gardner, op. cit., p. 19.

Taftazani says<sup>30</sup> that "the absolutely great sin is unbelief, since there is no offence greater than it." It is unnecessary to adduce further statements of the Koran or Tradition that the denial of God's existence or His unity or the ascribing of others besides Him as gods constitutes the sin of Islam, for even the casual reader of the Koran cannot help but be struck by the importance of this truth in the mind of Mohammed.

In the Koran and in Tradition thoughts as such are not generally considered as sins. At the worst they must be considered as the very lightest of sins. They are the so-called hadith al-nafs, the sinful thoughts which do not issue into reality.<sup>31</sup> It is even said that no account of these thoughts is taken on the Day of Resurrection. Sell here quotes from a tradition that the Prophet of God said: "Allah does not take into account what the members of my community thin as long as they do not pronounce it or carry it out." This mildness must be considered remarkable, because Moslem theology is very strict in matters regarding intention. On the other hand scrupulousness regarding sinful thoughts is praised: "We find in our inner self thoughts which we have scruples to pronounce. He said, Do ye find

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<sup>30A.</sup> J. Wensinck, "Ḥaṭī'a," Encyclopedia of Islam, edited by M. T. Houtsma (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1905-1938), II, 926.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

them really? They answered, Yes. Then he said, This is pure faith."<sup>32</sup>

Outstanding sins which are mentioned in the Koran in addition to kufr and širk are the following: covetousness -92:8-11; envy -113:5; extravagance -17:28; 7:29; niggardly and abstentious alms-giving -4:41 f.; suspicion and slander -49:12; theft -60:12; filthiness -42:35.

Sins are not classified in the Koran. However, the classification of sins has received close attention from the Moslem theologians. One method of classification of unlawful actions has been the following: 1) Haram-- actions and food forbidden either in the Koran or in Tradition. 2) Mukru -- lawfulness not absolutely certain, but generally considered wrong. 3) Mufsid -- actions corrupting or pernicious.<sup>33</sup>

But generally the problem of classification has been between great and small sins. That there is a distinction between great (kabir) and small (sağir) is based on the text 53:33 - "Those who avoid great crimes and scandals but commit only lighter faults, verily the Lord will be diffuse of mercy." Also 4:35- "If ye avoid the great sins which ye are forbidden, we will blot out your faults, and we will cause you to enter Paradise with honorable entry." If a learned

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Edward Sell, Faith of Islam (London: Truebner and Co., 1880), p. 88.

man commits a little sin and thereby misleads those whom he should guide, it becomes great. If small sins are repeated inadvertently, they do not become great, but if knowingly they change into great sins. A Moslem, although he commits sins small and great will not be left in hell forever, provided he does not commit the sin of širk or declare lawful what God has forbidden.<sup>34</sup> It is interesting to compare this division of sin with the Jewish categorization of light and heavy sins, and the Roman Catholic division of venial and mortal sins.

There is vast disagreement as to the number of great sins. Elder names three: giving Allah a partner, infanticide because of selfishness, adultery with another's wife.<sup>35</sup> Ibn Mas ud says four: polytheism, despondency in regard to Allah's mercy, despair of Allah's justice, feeling secure from the plot of Allah. Wensinck mentions even as traditional: polytheism, sorcery, killing for unlawful reasons, spoiling possessions of orphans, usury, fleeing from battle, and abusing the faithful. Others mention seventeen, others seven hundred. Sell<sup>36</sup> includes in his selection murder,

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<sup>34</sup>Sell, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, p. 568.

<sup>35</sup>E. E. Elder, "The Development of the Muslim Doctrine of Sins and Their Forgiveness," The Moslem World, XXIX (April, 1939), 14.

<sup>36</sup>Sell, Faith of Islam, p. 154.

adultery, disobedience to God and to parents, robbing orphans, to accuse of adultery, avoid jihad, drunkenness, give or take ussury, neglect the Friday prayers or the fast, tyranny, backbiting, untrustworthiness, forgetting the Koran after reading, avoiding giving true witness or giving false, lying without sufficient reason, swear falsely or by another god, flattery of tyrants, false judgments, giving short weight or measure, magic, gambling, approval of infidel ceremonies, boasting of piety, calling on the names of deceased persons, dancing, music, neglect when opportunity offers of warning others with regard to commands and prohibitions of God, disrespect to Hafiz, shaving the beard, omitting exclamation of respect whenever the name of Mohammed is mentioned.

One attempt to discover the difference between great and small is a traditional judgment cited by Al-Nawawi and quoted by Wensinck:

Whosoever wished to know when a sin belongs to the class of the light or to the class of the heavy ones may compare its character with the character of the capital sins. If it is lighter than the lightest of the capital sins, it belongs to the light ones; in other cases it belongs to the heavy ones, e.g., Who disdains his Lord or throws the Koran into the mire has committed one of the heaviest sins though the law does not characterize it as such.<sup>37</sup>

He also cites Ibn 'Abbas: "Everything which Allah has prob-

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<sup>37</sup>Wensinck, op. cit., p. 568. Quoting from Al-Nawawi.

ibited when perpetuated is a heavy sin."<sup>38</sup> And other theological authorities have said "Every action contrary to the law is a heavy sin with a view to Allah's majesty."<sup>39</sup> Concerning the results of great sins some commentators said that a great sin does not remove from unbelief the creature who believes, nor does it lead him into unbelief. Allah does not forgive the one who joins another with Himself. But He pardons whomever He wills any sin, whether great or small, except this one. However, a great dispute, which resulted in the appearance of several sects and schools of thought, arose over the question of the status of Moslems who committed great sins. The orthodox view established was that great sins did not destroy faith, but forced the sinner to spend a period of purgative suffering in the Fire before entering Paradise.

According to Mohammedan law light sins are those which are atoned for by five salats, prayers, and by the Ramadan fast or the Hajj, etc. Another view is that while every sin committed with while every sin committed without signs of fear or circumspection or with levity belong to the heavy ones, the sins due to the slips of the tongue, to a relaxed control of the passions and the like are to be regarded as light ones. Abu'l-Hasan al-Wahidi commands men

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

to avoid all sins lest he prove to have committed one of the heavy ones. The 'ulama say that persevering in committing light sins makes them heavy. On the authority of Ibn 'Abbas the sentence is handed down: "No sin is heavy, if forgiveness is asked, no sin is light if the transgressor perseveres in it. These lesser sins are really faults and imperfections which are inherent in human nature."<sup>40</sup> And yet God does not pass by the small sin any more than the great

-18:47:

And each shall have his book put into his hand; and thou shalt see the wicked in alarm at that which is therein; and they shall say, O woe to us! What meaneth this book? It leaveth neither small nor great unnoted down! And they shall find all that they have wrought present with them, and thy Lord will not deal unjustly with any one.

For 99:8:

On that day shall men come forward in throngs to behold their words, and whosoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of good shall behold it, and whosoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of evil shall behold it.

And still, 4:51- "Other than this (shirk) will He forgive to whom He pleaseth."

To conclude this discussion of sins it is well to consider Al-Ghazali's approach. He regards Satan as the Accursed one who makes approach into the heart of man. This approach is made through certain human characteristics, which ordinarily might be regarded as sins in themselves, but which Ghazali looks upon as avenues for the attack of Satan. These include the following: anger and fleshly lust; envy and

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<sup>40</sup>Sell, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, p. 567.

cupidity; fullness of food even though it be lawful and pure; love of adornment in furniture and clothing and house; importuning men for aught, for a man importuned becomes an object of worship; haste and abandoning of steadiness in affairs; money and all kinds of wealth, that is, everything above what is absolutely necessary; miserliness and the fear of poverty; partisanship for schools and leaders in theology and law; attempt of the masses to study the problem of nature and the attributes of God -- they should rather believe and be submissive and occupy themselves with worship and the gaining of daily bread, and leave knowledge to the ulama, lest unbelief enter in; evil suspicion of Moslems -- by it the devil gets hold of a man until he thinks himself better than others. The treatment of all these is to close avenues by purifying the heart from evil qualities with the thought of God.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the fact that nowhere in the Koran is it categorically stated that all men live in sin, yet Mohammed does seem to indicate that the attitude of most men is inimical to God. This raised the question of the status of the prophets of Allah. Are they sinless? Disagreement is evidenced on this point. When Smith<sup>42</sup> suggests that the thought of the Day of Judgment took hold on Mohammed so

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<sup>41</sup>MacDonald, op. cit., p. 278 f.

<sup>42</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 204.

strongly, just because he so vividly realized the fact of sin in himself, this must be disputed, both on the basis of Koran and Tradition. Since God's word is the expression of His arbitrary will rather than of His moral nature, His Word can be abrogated and His commandments subject to change. This is done by Mohammed himself in attempting to prove the justification for his marriage to his son-in-law's wife. 33:36-38 says: "No blame attacheth to the prophet where God hath given him permission. Such was the way of God with those prophets who flourished before thee; for God's behest is a fixed decree." And yet the Koran does speak of the prophets sinning: Adam -7:10-24; Noah -11:4-9; Abraham -26:75-82; Moses -28:15-16; and Mohammed himself -40:57; 47:21; 48:1-2- "Verily we have won for thee an undoubted victory in token that God forgiveth thy earlier and later faults." Accordingly these are varied interpretations on this question. But most orthodox commentators believe that the prophets are sinless.

Some of these commentators attribute this to the exceeding riches of God's grace. The Asharians say that the power of sin is not created in them. The Mu'tazilites admit the existence of some quality which keeps them from evil.<sup>43</sup> All are unanimous that the prophets do not commit

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<sup>43</sup>Sell, Faith of Islam, p. 154.

the greater sins. As for the lesser, some say that they commit these before inspiration has come; others say they commit them even after inspiration, but such little sins in them are mere frailties and slight imperfections not really amounting to sin. Thus, for example, the difficulty of Adam's fall is disposed of. It is not a sin, but a slight fault, which after all proved beneficial to man, for had he remained in Paradise the world would not have prospered.<sup>44</sup> By such reasoning the sins of the prophets are done away with, and especially Mohammed receives the aura of infallibility.

Out of this teaching of sins and the sinlessness of the Prophet develops the ethic of Islam. Goldziher offers the observation:

If Islam held strictly to historical witnesses, it could not offer its followers the ethical mode of life of one man as an example; an imitation of Mohammed would be impossible. But it is not to the historical picture that the believer turns. The pious legends about the ideal Mohammed early take the place of the historical man. The theology of Islam has conformed to the demand for a picture which does not show him merely as the mechanical organ of divine revelation and its spread among believers, but also as hero and example of the highest virtue.<sup>45</sup>

So the Mohammedan in his ethic looks to the glamorized Mohammed and at the same time attempts to maintain a literalistic observance of the Koran. But we must conclude that though

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<sup>44</sup>Sell, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, p. 568.

<sup>45</sup>Goldziher, op. cit., p. 21.

Moslem ethics are of a composite rather than eclectic type -- the four Platonic virtues furnish the general scheme; the definition of virtue as a mean between the two extremes, both of which are vices, is taken from Aristotle; the ideas of the nature and destiny of the soul and the good of moral endeavor are Neo-Platonic -- yet the determining factor seems to be that there is thoroughly wrought into the intellect of the Mohammedans the idea that true character is an endowment of God which cannot be changed.<sup>46</sup> "The very idea of a change of character is omitted from the Koran."<sup>47</sup> And, of course, change of character must undoubtedly be considered difficult to achieve and probably futile when there is no assurance of the existence of a stable and permanent and moral law.

Henry O. Dwight in a paper on the Mohammedan question in Missions reports an incident that represents the logical outcome of this ethical dilemma.

In travelling in Turkey I once fell in with a Pasha governor of one of the provinces of Asia Minor. He was a most agreeable and even attractive man, and during the voyage which lasted several days we talked on almost every conceivable subject of interest to plain and devout men. This sensible and well-meaning man showed me the corner-stone of his character one evening at table in the cabin. He asked me to take a glass of wine with him. I declined. Then the Pasha said: 'You may think it strange that I, a Mohammedan, should ask you, a Christian, to drink with me when

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<sup>46</sup>George F. Moore, History of Religions (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), II, 490.

<sup>47</sup>Speer, op. cit., p. 351.

wine-drinking is forbidden by our religion. I will tell you how I do this thing!' He filled his glass and held it up, looking at the beautiful color of it and said, 'Now if I say that it is right to drink this wine, I deny God's commands to men, and He would punish me in hell for blasphemy. But I take this glass admitting that God has commanded me not to drink it and that I sin in drinking it. Then I drink it off, so casting myself on the mercy of God. For our religion lets me know that God is too merciful to punish me for doing a thing which I wish to do, when I humbly admit that to do it breaks His commandment!' Thus Muslims have found a method of safe sin through the attribute of mercy in God.<sup>48</sup>

The development of the concept of sin in the theological tradition and in the commentary of Moslem theologians, both orthodox and sectarian, is a vast field of inquiry. A few of these traditions have been mentioned in the course of these comments in order to illustrate the general understanding of the Koranic emphasis in Sunni Islam. But it will be useful at this time to briefly sketch the general development in order to illustrate that the Islamic doctrine of sin is still basically the Koranic doctrine of sin.

The earliest dispute affecting the orthodox view came with the appearance of two sects. The first were the Kharidjites (Khawarij) who arose within a hundred years after the death of the Prophet. They were the self-confessed "Furitans" of Islam. They considered the sinner and unbeliever in danger of the Fire. Grave sins are clearly unbelief and those who commit them are punished in hell. Širk is worse than

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 350 f.

kufr.<sup>49</sup> The Murjiites were their contemporaries. They held the opposite view. Faith is the one thing needful; a believer has it; an unbeliever has it not. If faith is present, sins do no harm; if faith is not present, virtuous acts do no good. Some said that all sins were grave, because they were all rebellion against God. Others kept the usual division.<sup>50</sup>

From the beginnings of theology, ca. 111 A.H., three general trends that maintained themselves were to be denoted in the various comments on sin. These were the Qadarians (qadar -- power), the exponents of the free-will of man; the Jabarians (jabr -- compulsion), the extreme fatalists; and those who came to be known as the Asharians -- they endeavored to hold the middle ground and were exponents of "acquisition" (iktisab). It is not difficult to see how each of these could be logically developed from the statements of the Koran.

The Qadarian trend finally resulted in the development of the Mu'tazilite (secessionist) sect, who were those who held the view that God could not predestiate men's actions because he was a moral being who was bound to do that which was righteous.<sup>51</sup> Abu Hudhail (ca. 200 A. H.), of Basra was

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<sup>49</sup>A. S. Tritton, Muslim Theology (London: Luzac and Co., Ltd., 1947), p. 39.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>51</sup>Alfred Guillaume, The Legacy of Islam, edited by Sir Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 262.

the real founder. Leaders in its development were Al-Nazzari, pious pupil of the founder; Ja'far b. Haib (d. 236); Al-Ishafi (d. 240); Abbad b. Sulaiman (d. 250); Al-Jabbai (d. 303).<sup>52</sup> This sect played a massive role in the development of Moslem theology. "In their eyes their task was to defend the unity of God against all encroachment and to show that no shadow of evil fell on his providence."<sup>53</sup> Their emphases, important to the development of the doctrine of sin were these: God is one, is righteous, rewards the good, punishes evil, sinful Moslems are corrupt, and men must uphold right and resist evil. They were rationalists. They reasoned that if man's actions were determined, it would be unjust in God to punish him for them -- the premise of their argument being this, that God must be just, that is, He must do what the common sense and conscience of men deem just. Men by reason can recognize some actions as good and right, and others as bad and wrong. This difference is independent of God's will. He does not make a thing good by commanding it, but commands it because it is good. Men are under obligation to make this distinction between right and wrong and to conduct themselves accordingly; and if they do not do so, they are justly punished.<sup>54</sup> God is

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<sup>52</sup>William M. Watt, "Free Will and Predestination in Islam," The Moslem World, XXXVI (April, 1946) 138.

<sup>53</sup>Tritton, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>54</sup>Moore, op. cit., p. 418 f.

not the author of evil, but it is not for men and devils to be irresponsible for their acts. God has given them power to use as they like, and they are answerable for it. Why then did not God created men good and prevent them from being bad? This question is impossible. Goodness is only good when the doer acts from his own choice; when he is forced there is neither good nor bad in him.<sup>55</sup> In Al-Jabbai this position showed two important tendencies: 1) A lessening emphasis on man's power and self-sufficiency to win Paradise for himself. 2) Increasing recognition that God's ways are partly beyond man's comprehension.<sup>56</sup> This led to the inevitable reaction.

After an interlude the doctrine of sin received its next definitive form under the hand of Al-A's'ari (d. 324 A. H.) who ushered in the reaction to the Mu'tazilites. As one Moslem writer puts it<sup>57</sup> "The Mu'tazilites held their heads high till God sent al-Ash'ari and he made them withdraw into sesame shells." He stands as the Athanasius of Islam. Himself at one time a devoted rationalist he turned back to traditionalism and became their bitterest foe, taking a stand midway between rationalism and anthropomorphism. He established Moslem orthodoxy, also with reference

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<sup>55</sup>Tritton, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>56</sup>Watt, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>57</sup>Tritton, op. cit., p. 166.

to free-will and sin. With him revelation was to be supreme and reason held only a very secondary position. Man cannot by aid of his reason alone rise to the knowledge of good and evil. He must exercise no judgment at all, but accept all that is revealed. He has no right to apply moral laws which affect men to the actions of God. Man must always approach God as a slave in whom there is no light nor knowledge to judge the actions of the Supreme. Whether God will accept the penitent sinner or not cannot be asserted, for He is an absolute sovereign, above law.<sup>58</sup> Allah is the only being in the world who has the power to produce and to create. He is the Creator of men and their acts not only in the physical but also in the intellectual sphere. In what we regard as voluntary acts God creates in man, in addition to the power to act, a power of choice; and in accordance with man's choice, God creates the act itself, so that potentially both the choice and the act are the work of God. Thus all the acts of men are not merely predetermined but they are actually effected by God. For example, in the case of a man writing God created first the potentiality of moving the pen; then the will to move it; third, a bodily motion of the hand; fourth the action of the pen. Herewith Asari abolishes altogether the category of causality. There is no such thing as law in nature, not to say, law of

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<sup>58</sup>Sell, Faith of Islam, p. 130.

nature. All we can affirm is that certain antecedents are usually followed by certain consequences, because God commonly acts in this way.<sup>59</sup> This is the most extreme determinism. Later in life As'ari developed his doctrine of acquisition. God creates in the man the resolve to do something and the deed. The man has no effective but only an acquisitive part in the deed. Acquisition is the connection of human power with the deed, but without causation. There is a proverb: "More subtle than the acquisition of al-As'ari."<sup>60</sup> But acquisition still leaves no room for man's responsibility, and every sin thus becomes the act of God, making both morality and immorality meaningless words. This is orthodox Islam. .

Following As'ari there came a period corresponding to medieval Christian scholasticism. As a reaction there arose the movement of the Sufis, the Moslem mystics. In their ethical and mystical literature, as Wensinck points out,<sup>61</sup> we find a more systematic classification of sins. Sufism remained a sectarian movement until Al-Ghazali, who died 505 A. H., and who has often been compared in stature to St. Augustine. He among other things "succeeded in assuring the mystical or introspective attitude a place within of-

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<sup>59</sup>Moore, op. cit., p. 425.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Wensinck, op. cit., p. 926.

ficial Islam side by side with the legalism of the lawyers and the intellectualism of the theologians."<sup>62</sup> Ghazali's emphases with respect to the doctrine of sin have already been pointed out. His revitalization of Islam did not materially change the Asharian construction of sin.

That modern Islam still regards sin as but a pollution, with all the Koranic implications as pointed out above, rather than a deadly disposition and state of man is shown by this quotation from a Lahore journal, a letter to the editor:

I am a girl of 20 and from the age of 12 I have done every sin that you can think of. In fact I have tasted every leaf of the tree of life. Alas! There is nothing left for me but Hell when I die. I ask you sincerely, what can I do to be saved? I have put this question to a (Muslim) priest. He has told me to repent, but the truth is that I cannot repent, as what I have done I have enjoyed doing, though it was a sin. Now will you advise me what I am to do so as to be saved from hell? And to this poor soul the editor replied: Turn a new leaf. Lead a righteous life henceforth. Time alone can wash off past sins. This is the only true atonement. Sins are washed off, the Qur'an assures us, in 11:16, by good deeds and these alone.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the intrusion of liberalism the position of modern Islam on the question of sin is fundamentally the same as Al-As'ari formulated it on the basis of the Koran of Mohammed.

To conclude the discussion of this chapter I present

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<sup>62</sup>A. J. Arberry, Sufism (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1950), p. 82 f. Quoted from La Pensee de Ghazali.

<sup>63</sup>E. Bevan Jones, The People of the Mosque (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1932), p. 259.

some conclusions of Christian commentators who have had intimate contacts with Islam and are aware of the present status of sin in Islam and the resulting affect it has on the religious life of the followers of the Prophet.

E. E. Elder makes this judgement:

Islam has no doctrine of sin; it has the problems of sins and their classification and respective punishments. To Christian thinkers sin is a state of rebellion against the righteousness and holiness of God. To the Muslim the power and will of the Deity cannot be so resisted as to frustrate His desires.<sup>64</sup>

W. H. T. Gairdner says: "Muhammedanism in its whole tendency opposes statute to principle, isolated acts to the attitude of the soul."<sup>65</sup>

W. R. W. Gardner writes:

Sin is not then a state into which man is born. He (the soul) is born pure and upright, but is weighed down with a body whose appetites and passions are a constant drag to his higher and purer aspirations. He is weak and easily falls into sin, but this weakness and liability to sin does not, in the Qur'anic teaching, involve any personal guilt. By proneness to sin . . . is meant simply the fact that sin is an evil ever-present, and a supremely powerful temptation. All men are sinners, not because they have been born under sin, but because, being born weak, they have all as individuals fallen and become guilty. Yet even thus, it hardly appears to be the fact that the Qur'an knows anything of a sinful disposition. Sin is an attitude of the heart and soul toward God, not in the disposition of mankind. The rebellious thought is hardly a sin, but only a temptation to sin. There is no sinful bias in the human nature which needs to be counteracted. There may be a sinful habit; but it is the habit of the in-

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<sup>64</sup>E. E. Elder, "The Muslim Doctrine of Sins and Forgiveness," Religious Digest, VIII (May, 1939), 16.

<sup>65</sup>Gairdner, op. cit., p. 168.

dividual and not of the race. Nay, it is an acquired habit and not an innate disposition.

. . . It is not because of the heinousness of sin that its results are so far-reaching; but because where there is sin there cannot be obedience. And it is the absence of obedience rather than the active presence of sin which entails condemnation and judgement.

That any very deep conviction of sin was felt by Muhammed does not appear from the pages of the Qur'an. He marvels at the wickedness of men and their foolishness in opposing God, and in setting Him at defiance by word and by deed; yet while he calls to humble and repentance and true faith in God, he nowhere explains the need of a broken and contrite heart. All through the Qur'an, the message is that while repentance must be sincere, it is a very easy matter, while forgiveness is a question scarcely worth troubling about, so simple is its attainment. Mohammed nowhere displays anguish of heart and a contrition in the sight of a pure and holy God, and therefore does not demand that others should experience that of which he himself had no knowledge.

. . . Throughout the whole account of Ghazali we look in vain for any mark which denotes that they had a real conviction of sin. What they felt seems rather to show simply that the new religion brought no real comfort to the heart and soul; for there was never any personal sense of assurance that they had been forgiven and would therefore escape the dread punishment of hell. A gloomy despair arising from an ever-present realization of the threatened torments denounced on the damned is not a conviction of sin.

. . . His teaching is rather that sin, though a great offence against God, is not something which puts a man where he needs redemption. God does not redeem man, he simply forgives when he repents, for God is easy and merciful to men whenever they turn towards Him. Muhammed's message to mankind on this matter was contained in words such as the following: 'Say, O My servants who have transgressed to your hurt, despair not of God's mercy; for all sins doth God forgive. Gracious and merciful is He.' -39:54.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Gardner, op. cit., p. 37 f.

Hauri, the German Islamic scholar, says:

Neither in His holiness nor in His love is Allah righteous. As regards the wicked, His love does not receive its due: He is quick to punish, to lead astray, to harden; His wrath is not free from passion. As regards believers His holiness comes short of its right. Allah allows His prophets things otherwise forbidden and wrong.<sup>67</sup>

Jones has this to say:

The most serious defect in the body of Islam is the absence of a channel for the inflow of regenerating power for men enslaved by sin and what is worse the lack of a sense of need for it. Islam quite frankly does not claim to be a spiritual religion in the sense in which that phrase is used by Christians, that is to say a religion which brings back lost man to God and lifts the fallen up to Him. It has so stressed God as to do less than justice to man. It has failed to provide a way through which man's desire to sin is eradicated. It does not attempt to reach the foundation of human action in order to cleanse them.<sup>68</sup>

Melanchton says in an "introduction to a Latin Koran" that he thinks Mohammed "was inspired by Satan, because he does not explain what sin is and showeth not the reason of human misery."<sup>69</sup>

Even Preserved Smith makes the remark:

But while we find some indication of a real spiritual apprehension of religion, it must be confessed that the emphasis of Mohammed is placed largely upon externals . . . In laying so much stress upon the rewards of piety he fell short of the New Testament ideal. And this is accounted for largely by his conception of revelation as a law. It is indeed a grace of God that

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<sup>67</sup>Zwemer, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>68</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>69</sup>Zwemer, op. cit., p. 50.

men are appointed to the right path. They do attain salvation by following the direction thus imparted. But in practice this means their salvation consists in the performance of ceremonies whose only reason is that they are enjoined by God.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 227.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

To summarize the findings of this paper one could say the following: The Arabic language available for the use of Muhammed as he preached to the Arabs was rich and full of possibilities. The words studied show that the probability of his expressing a doctrine of sin was not lessened by a deficiency of vocables; on the contrary, the words available are profuse and signify all the finer shades of meaning. Their availability and their usage does indicate the existence of a doctrine of sin, although this does not necessarily presuppose a sense of sin.

The philological usage, however, is less important for determining the nature of the Mohammedan idea of sin than is the prophet's conception of God. In fact, this may be regarded as the most determinitive factor discovered. God is Power and Will. The attribute of Holiness is absent. Truth, justice and love, while mentioned are of secondary importance and are relative to Power and Will. There is, accordingly, no absolute standard of morality, since God is arbitrary and cannot be held to standards of judgement set up by His creature.

The doctrine of man is neglected in the emphasis on the sovereignty of Allah. Man is created by God, in weakness, with soul and body. He falls through the temptation of Sa-

tan, but this fall is an error committed against himself and does not transmit a sinful taint to all men. All mankind is sinful in act and prone to sin because of this weakness of his created nature, but this sin is not a disposition, does not radically estrange him from God and does not place him in need of salvation.

Satan is a tool of Allah, who presents his temptations to man. He fell away from Allah when he would not reverence man. He as well as man is not a free agent, but is able to do only what Allah wills. Thus his temptations are necessarily in accordance with the will of Allah. He approaches man through life's circumstances and through man's own qualities, and stands as an ever present danger to the unwary. Man must expel him from his heart with the thought of Allah.

Ultimate responsibility then for all action is God's. This is not always clearly stated in the Koran, which also speaks in various ways of man's responsibility for ethical action without reconciling the two. However, by far the greater emphasis is on Allah's predestination of all acts, good and evil. This emphasis of the Koran is established in Moslem theology by the consensus of the Moslem doctors. Thus God, in His eternal decrees becomes the author of faith and unbelief. What the creature can do in the way of evil can not offend One Who is so completely above him. But the real reason why he cannot offend is because his every action is in effect the capricious will of Allah who cannot be judged

by man's terms. Thus, despite any references to the contrary, since man does not have the free will to act as a moral agent, his "sin" is unavoidable, and may more accurately be a "decreed evil act".

Sin, however, is defined in a variety of ways in the Koran. It is more accurate to say that it is described in a variety of ways, despite the fact that it is a matter of decree. Sin may be regarded as an action hurting self, as an action hurting others, as a false attitude toward God, as pride, weakness, disease, desire, or neglect. It first took place when Adam sinned, but it originates in every man by virtue of his weak nature which is created in him and which does not have the strength to withstand temptation.

All sins are relative in importance, although they may be warned against in the Koran, with the exception of shirk and kufr. These express the similar meanings of polytheism and unbelief. The latter at times in the prophet's revelation includes various matters of faith. But usually both denote a denial of the absolute unity and supremacy of Allah. This is the great sin. Other sins are mentioned and are variously classified as great and small by later Muslim commentators. All of these may be forgiven the true Muslim as God desires and wills. Only the sin of unbelief is beyond forgiveness. The prophets in the Koran commit sinful acts, but in Tradition they have largely been cloaked with the veil of sinlessness with the help of certain scholastic

distinctions. The ethical demand of the Koran is to follow the commands of Mohammed's writings, while Tradition adds as a pattern of behavior the life of the hero-Prophet himself. However, because of the contradictory dilemma facing the Moslem in the light of the unrelieved tension between God's decree and man's free act, which is in reality not free, the thinking Moslem is forced into a position of extreme fatalism and resulting carelessness in the performance of the ethical act.

The traditional development of the doctrine revolved around the question of whether a sin makes a man an unbeliever or not. The Kharidjites took the positive view, whereas the Murjilites took the opposite viewpoint. In later development the main question at issue was the free-will of man and God's responsibility in evil. Both opposite viewpoints were represented by a mediating group which finally also shifted its support to the sovereignty of Allah. The rational Mu'tazilites upheld the place of reason in the faith, the impossibility of making God responsible for evil and the freedom of man. The orthodox viewpoint finally won out under Al-As'ari and was confirmed by Al-Ghazali, so that the question of "sin" took its place in Moslem theology as a problem of secondary importance which must remain subservient to the central doctrine that God is One and is the Absolute Controller of the universe.

Christian commentators have almost to a man found this

to be the deciding fact in affirming the Moslem doctrine of sin.

In conclusion it may be stated that the writer of this thesis regards as the chief difference between the Moslem doctrine of sin and the Christian (with its Old Testament background) to be the absence of the idea of the Holy in God. If God is holy, He cannot create evil (and man must judge His holiness from his own conscience, else how can he ever know anything of Him). And if God is holy, He will react to evil as it exists in man. The second major weakness in the Moslem and Koranic doctrine is that the sense of sin in the heart of man is not properly evaluated as to its validity, origin and result. These two are concomitant and must be adduced together if there ever is to be a true sense of sin as well as a teaching concerning sin. It is in these two deficiencies that the Christian observer must recognize the divergence between the Moslem doctrine and that of the Christian, and it is in these deficiencies that the Christian missionary must find a way of meeting the Moslem believer with the message of the Cross.

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