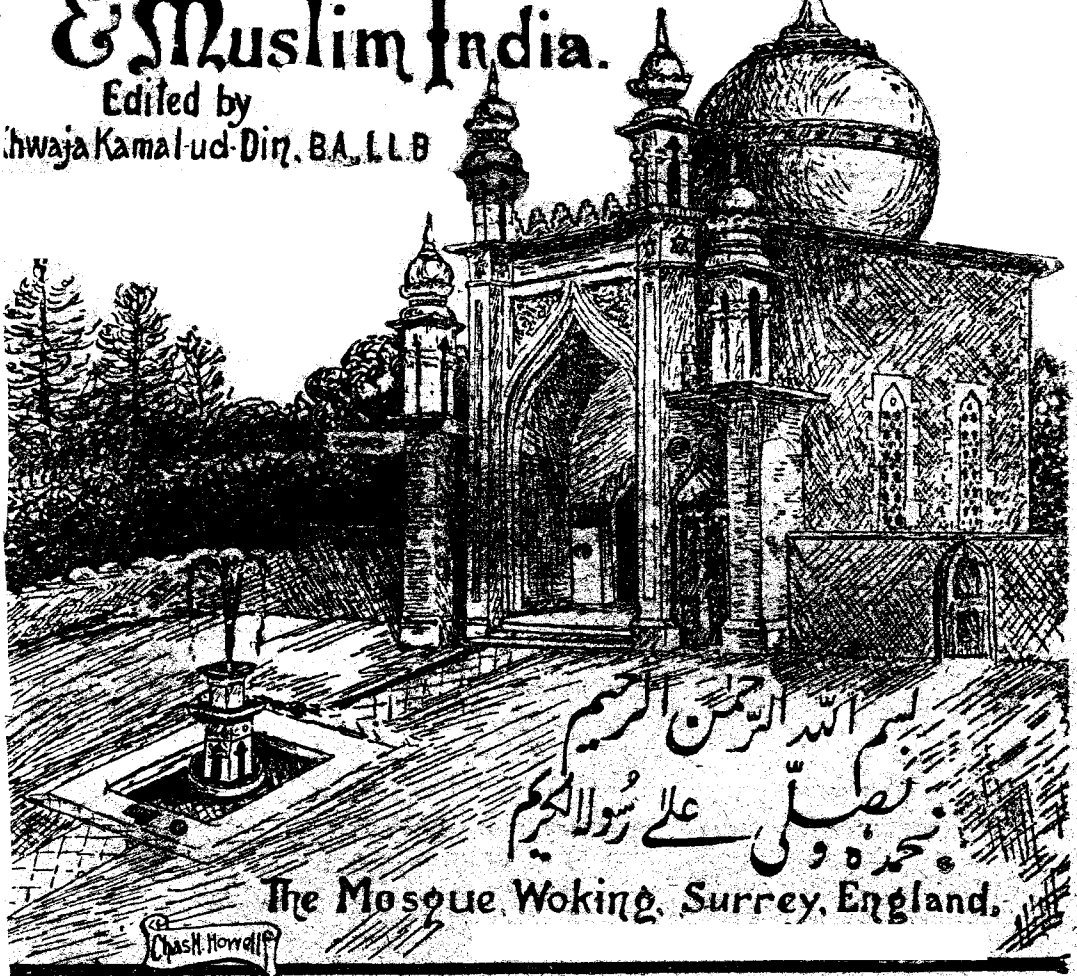


# Islamic Review & Muslim India.

Edited by  
Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din, B.A., LL.B



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
نُصَلِّ عَلَى رَسُولِ الْكَرِيمِ

The Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.

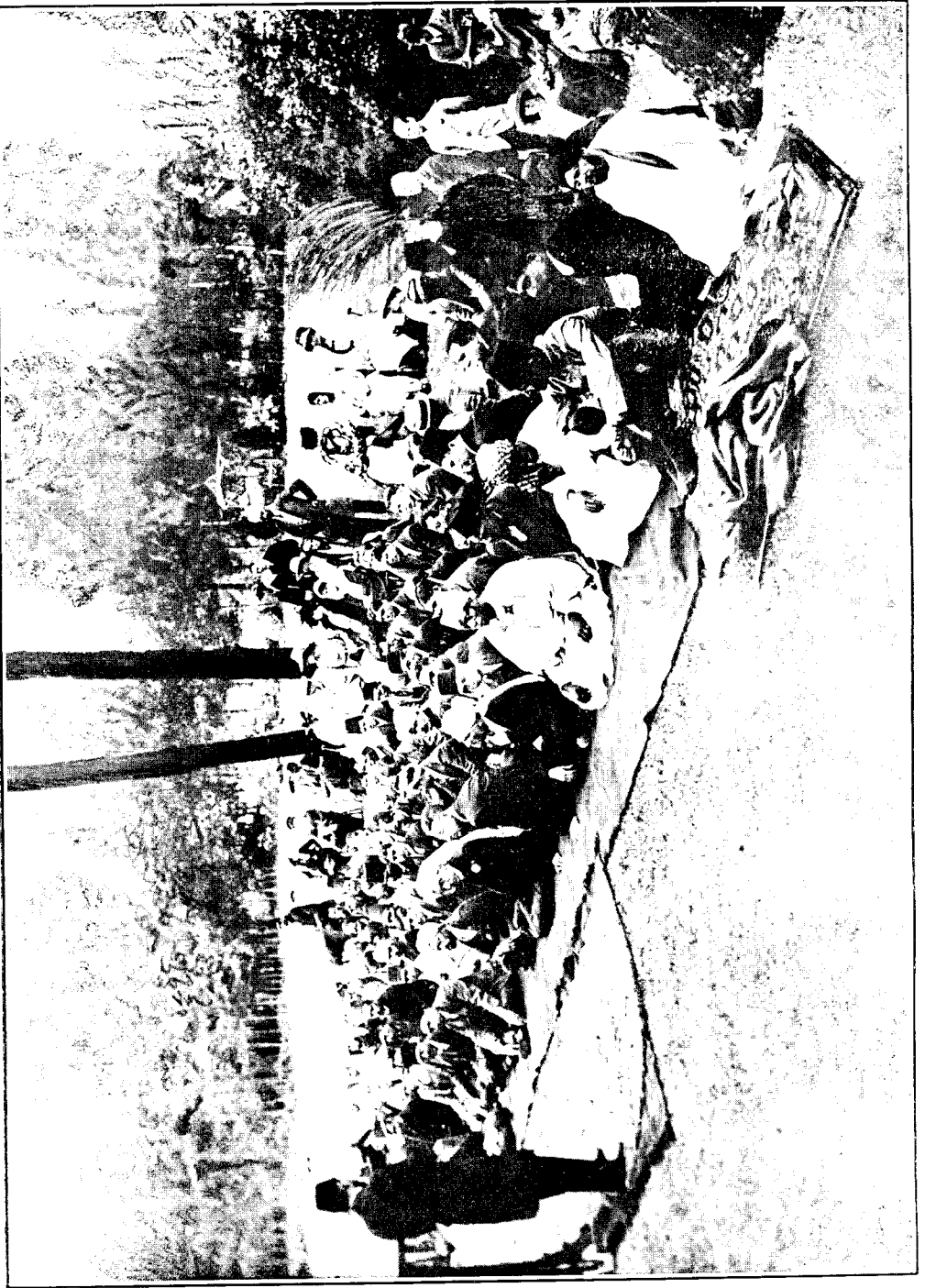
## CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
Imam Delivering Sermon after Prayers	220	Religion of Nature. Lecture by KHAWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN	257
Frontispiece	220	The Excellent Name of Allah. II. By Professor	261
Id-Fitr, or the Feast of Ramazan	224	H. M. LEON, M.A., LL.D., F.S.P.	261
Prophet in War-Time. By MAULVI MUSTA- AKHAN, B.A.	227	God Speaks to Man (Revelation). By M. MUHAMMAD YAGUB, B.A.	271
Old Talk. By KHAWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN	239	Islam and Progress. By Mr. KHALID SHIELDRAKE	276
Birth of Islam. IV.—The Preaching and the Persecution	254	The Origin and Development of Sacrifice. By D. M. SADRQ	281

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# ISLAMIC REVIEW

AND

## MUSLIM INDIA

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[Nos. 6, 7

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### THE HOLY QUR-ĀN

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### NOTES

#### "Religious Reconstruction."

The Western world, sick as it is with the unintelligible dogmas of Christianity, has begun to cry that "the religion should be placed on an inductive basis instead of being allowed to remain on an essentially deductive one." A series of interesting articles has appeared in the *Nation*, on the reconstruction of the religion; and one of the correspondents has hit the point where lies the failure of Christianity. He says:—

"One practical result of the accepted method of treating theology has been the giving rise to a vast amount of disingenuousness on the part of the exponents and adherents of orthodox religion, which has sapped the moral strength of the Church. So long as membership of the Church is based upon creed or dogma, it is difficult to see how the evil can be cured. The sole bond uniting religious people should be aspiration—effective aspiration, that is—not creed. The Church would then become an organism capable of growth and sure to grow, for the desire for good or God, however much it may be obscured or mutilated, is present in some form or other, at some time or other, in the bulk of mankind.

"If creed were abandoned the Church might possibly begin to understand and practise the rudiments of Christianity. Hitherto the signs of such understanding and practice have not been too numerous. The enormous dynamic of Christianity, which, judging it by its moral and spiritual potentialities and not by its creed, does indeed seem to be the ultimate religion, has, after all these centuries, hardly been tapped. (By Christianity I mean the religion of Christ, not the perversion of it which, for example, enabled, if it did not move, the Church to bestow its benediction on the whole policy of the war.) There is vitality in the Church, but at times it is lowered almost to the point of extinction by thick incrustations of dogma. Instead of lamenting the decay of Christianity, one should pray for its speedy and unhampered growth. It has never really flourished yet. The Church has, but not Christianity.

"Why should not the same methods be applied to theology as are applied to every other branch of human knowledge? The only result of the present system is that piece after piece of the structure is being pulled away. That is necessarily so. Deduction after deduction is being disproved and the major premise is being more and more shaken. The demoralizing effect can only be arrested by reversing the process,

## NOTES

by using the inductive method and following the light whithersoever it leads us. The *morale* of religion would be greatly heightened. Accretion and growth would take the place of crumbling away and decay. For making the change true faith, as distinct from theological faith, would be required. Such faith would be a far more profound faith in God than that insisted on by the Churches. It would be a faith in the inherent truth and goodness of God as shown in his works, and in particular in his chief work, the mind and spirit of man. Theological faith is often the negation of faith, it is often used to extinguish faith. True faith is free from authority, and its essence is that man is made in the image of God."

It is a healthy sign that the Christian world has begun to realize the importance of studying Religion on scientific basis and is on its way to do away with the creed and dogmas which play no part in moulding one's character—the chief function of a living religion. It is the triumph of Islam that the measure which the civilized world has now recognized to be the basis of religion was preached in the Holy Qur-án thirteen hundred years ago. The Holy Qur-án says:—

"Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men. There is no altering of Allah's creation. That is the right religion, but most people do not know."

In this verse it has been plainly stated that the true religion is based upon human nature.

As to the principle that the same methods should be applied to religion as are applied to every other branch, it will be sufficient to remark that we have already discussed this subject at length in these pages. Our article, "The Religion of Atoms," is a clear exposition of the fact that there is a perfect harmony between science and religion; and therefore religion should be studied on scientific lines. But it should be remembered that it is only the religion of Islam that receives science with open arms; and therefore those who want to study religion in the light of science are requested to study Islam particularly.

### The Status of Women in Islam.

Among the many unfounded charges levelled against Islam, perhaps the most oft-repeated is the alleged degradation of the fair sex. A correspondent of the *Daily News* in its issue of May 9th has repeated the same accusation. He says:—

"There is one phase of Egyptian life which may explain a good deal—sex and the social habits and religious sanctions appertaining thereto. The Egyptian woman is a beast of burden—like the camel or the donkey. The wife can be divorced at will; she has no status, even when she is but the

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

one wife—which is, of course, the rule. She is regarded as inferior and, in a sense, the exclusive property of the man. She shrouds her face when abroad from her home—which, as a rule, is a miserable mud brick hovel ; she is generally dressed in black, and she is altogether a sombre and pathetic figure. This is the darkest phase, indeed, of Egyptian life. “ All this has its origin in history ; and—still worse—has the sanction of the Qur-án.”

Evidently the writer has but little knowledge of the Holy Qur-án and the Islamic dispensation ; otherwise he would not have ventured to pass this verdict against the Book which has done so much to elevate the status of women. The Holy Qur-án has “ sanctioned ” the title of heritage to women ; it has described them to be the “ garment of men,” implying that the men should be as particular and careful in their treatment of women as they are about their own dress ; it has explicitly ordained men to treat the women politely. Besides this, Islam has recognized the equal share of women in spiritual blessings, it has declared that women have received inspiration from God, and thus has established the equality of men and women in the domain of spirituality. The Holy Prophet was invariably kind and considerate to the fair sex. He once released a number of the war prisoners without any condition merely at the request of his nurse. He was so polite to his wives that whenever any of them came to visit him in the mosque, he used to stand up in respect to her. Is it not strange, then, that people have still got the audacity of charging Islam with maltreatment of women ?

Let us see, however, for the sake of comparison, what position is granted to women by the Church. In the first place the sin is originated from a woman, in the ecclesiastical history, and she is thought to be the source of the sins of humanity. Decidedly this is not a compliment to the fair sex. Then, Jesus Christ is reported to have addressed his mother in the harsh words—“ Woman, what have I to do with thee ! ” And this mode of speech is assuredly far from being polite.

We think that the Christian writers will do better by referring to the Holy Bible than finding fault with the teachings of the Holy Qur-án.

### “What Civilization owes to Christianity.”

Under the above heading a correspondent of *Sunday Pictorial* in its issue of May 16th, pleading for Christianity, writes :—

“ Is the Gospel a failure ? People are telling us on all sides that it is.

“ They assert that its claims have been utterly discredited in the eyes of the world by the events of the last five years.

## NOTES

They point with triumphant conviction to the visible decline in church attendance.

"They prophesy that this decline will be vastly accelerated in the next generation, that Christianity is slowly but surely losing grip.

"Curiously enough, a great number of those who take this doleful view are themselves professing Christians.

"For my own part I am perfectly certain that the profession of Christianity excludes any possibility of pessimism. Those who have any lurking doubt as to the ultimate triumph of the Christian ideal are self-convicted of a lack of genuine belief in the reality and truth of that which they profess.

"It is easy to point out all that Christianity has not yet done, but if we cast our glance backwards instead of forwards, and enumerate some of its accomplished triumphs, we shall find ample ground for optimism as to the future.

"As the Bishop of London said recently, 'The wonder is, not that Christianity has done so little, but that it has done so much.'

"I am convinced that the effect of Christianity upon the world must be tested, less by the number of those who are at present definitely allied with any of our religious organizations than by the prevailing standard of public opinion.

"And I say without hesitation that in this, the foremost Christian nation, you find a progressively sound public opinion on all essential points—a public opinion in advance of what it was fifty or a hundred years ago—and this advance I trace to the working of the Gospel.

"Further, I find throughout history that the Christian nations have been consistently the progressive ones. Every great nation of to-day had the foundation of its greatness laid in an age when the Christian religion was acknowledged to be the best and highest ideal.

"The Eastern nations, with the exception of Japan (which, since its renaissance, has absorbed a large amount of the Christian ethics), have remained backward and unprogressive.

"The whole conception of modern democracy is coloured, to an extent that we often fail to recognize, by the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount. The Gospel works silently and unnoticed, as leaven in the mass of human society.

"Progress comes through failure. We are beginning to see that only by a common fusing of interests can our individual interests be conserved."

The writer in his eagerness for pleading the cause of Christianity has not taken the trouble to be accurate in his statements. He says that the civilization of the modern times owes much to Christianity; and in support of it he refers to the Sermon on the Mount. But any one who has studied the Gospel and the movements of the present times



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

with a critical eye can hardly be able to follow the force of his contentions.

Our modern democratic Governments have but recently emerged from a victorious war which engaged their whole-hearted attention for about five years. The same democratic Governments have drawn up several drafts of treaties, and in fact the terms of one treaty are still under contemplation. Does the writer of the above-quoted passage think that these Governments have followed the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount in (1) their waging the war and (2) in offering the peace terms to the vanquished foes? In the Sermon on the Mount we have:—

(1) "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

(2) "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also."

Had the Christian Governments acted according to the teachings of Christianity, there would have been no war nor the new inventions which owe their existence to the war. Perhaps we would have taken another fifty years to attain to that perfection of aircraft which we have attained in these five years. According to the tenets of Christianity we should not have only tolerated the possession of Belgium by the German troops, but would have gladly welcomed them to France, and thence eventually to the coast of England. The Archbishop of York spoke of war as signifying the "miserable breakdown of Christianity," and Mr. Rowntree said that was the sign of bankruptcy of religion.

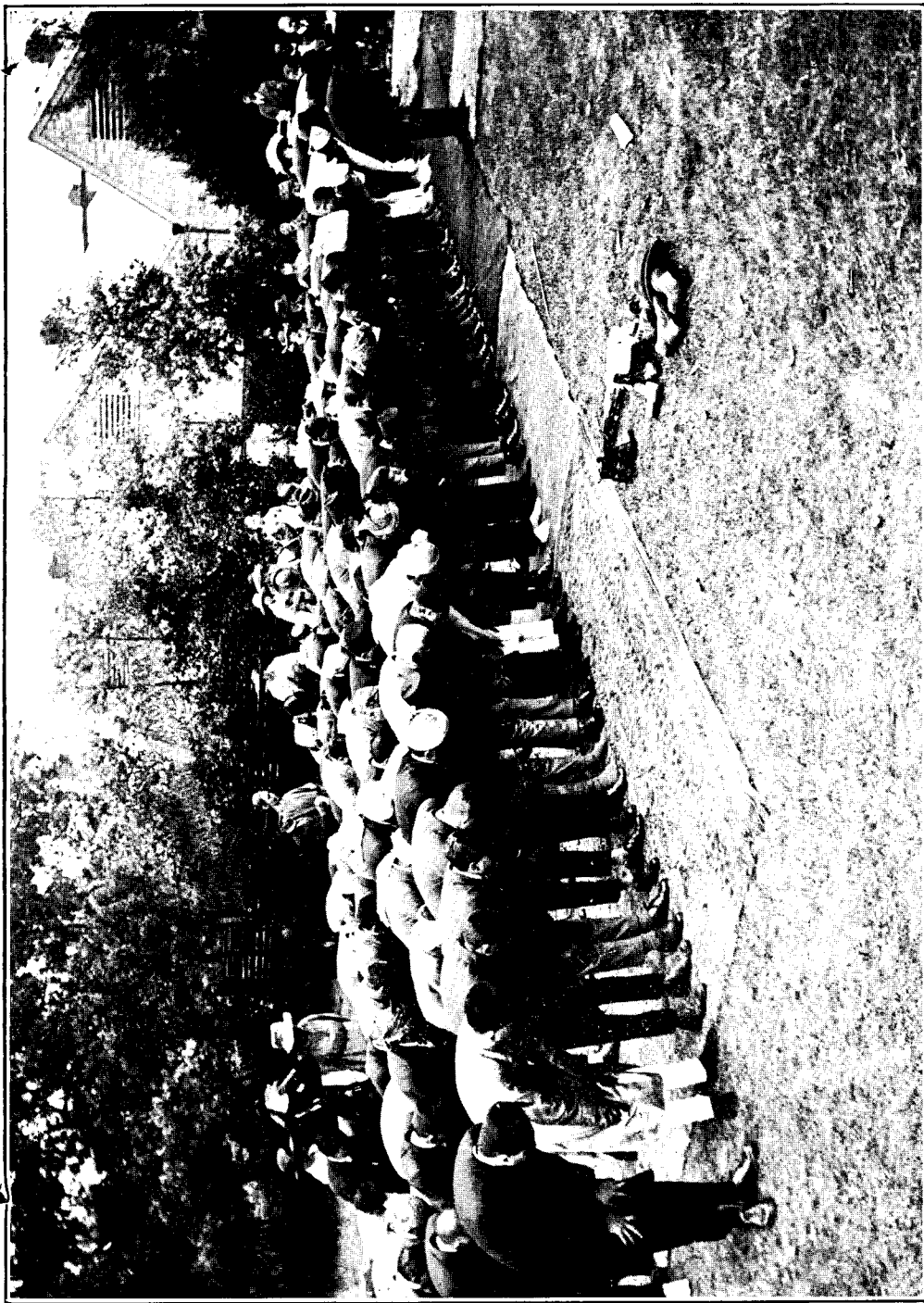
And again, the British Government is now bent upon to punish the defeated foes. The Premier has plainly said so, in his reply to the representation by the Khilafat Delegation. Is this policy, in the opinion of the correspondent, actuated by the teachings of Christianity? The fact is that the dispensation of the Church is quite inadequate to govern the new forces of the modern times. The European nations are making progress because they have abandoned Christianity so far as their practical life is concerned. Thus civilization owes nothing to Christianity; but Christianity owes its existence to the State, because, fortunately, it has become the State-religion.

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## EID-UL-FITR

### OR THE FEAST OF RAMAZAN

THE great Muslim Festival of Eid-ul-Fitr or the Feast of Ramazan came off on Thursday, June 17, 1920, and was celebrated with great *éclat* at the Mosque, Woking. There



Eid-ul-Fitr Prayers.



Eid-ul-Prayers :—Prostration.

## EID-UL-FITR

were, roughly speaking, about three hundred people of various nationalities, including the press representatives and photographers, who came to take down the proceedings and photos of the festival for the various periodicals. There were Indian Muslims in turbans of different colours, there were Muslims from Egypt and Arabia in red turbouches, there were Muslims from the heart of Africa in long-flowing robes, and above all, there were British Muslims in their English dresses. And yet, as it was a working day, quite a large number of Muslims, specially those living in distant parts of the country, and the students at the Universities, could not find it possible to join the festival. The most important guests were: the Hon. Sahibzada Aftab Ahmad Khan, member of India Council; Mr. Mohammad Ali, Head of the Indian Khilafat Delegation, with his colleagues; the Paramount Chief of Lagos (Africa), with his devoted son who held the gorgeous umbrella over his father's head; Nawab Sarwar Ali Khan, Chief of Kurwai, with his nephew Faiz Mohammad Khan, Chief of Maler Kotla; Dr. H. M. Léon, M.A., Ph.D.; Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall; Mr. Habib-Ullah Lovegrove; Mr. Abdul Karim Lofts, Magnetic Healer; Dr. Charles Garnett, M.A., D.D.; and other British Muslim brothers and sisters.

The congregation stood up for the Eid prayer a little before noon, "the prince and the peasant" standing shoulder to shoulder in the right Muslim way. The accommodation in the Mosque being inadequate to hold such a large gathering, the prayers were held on the lawn, and the congregation consisted of several long rows. The prayer was followed by a sermon from Mr. Mustapha Khan, B.A., the Imam of the Mosque. The cosmopolitan character of the congregation could not but suggest the idea of universal brotherhood of man brought about by Islam. The speaker, therefore, dwelt upon this subject, and pointed out that in ancient days humanity was divided into different groups and families. But as civilization advanced and different peoples came into contact with one another, the conception of Divinity was accordingly broadened, and if the Holy Prophet Jesus Christ represented God as Father, implying that just as a father cannot be partial to any of his sons, similarly God as Universal Father could not be partial to any member of His great family. The Holy Prophet Muhammad went a step forward in establishing the universal conception of God by declaring that God is the "Lord of all the nations." "Thus Islam," he said, "has come to unite the different peoples of the world into one universal brotherhood." "People make leagues of nations," he continued, "to bring about eternal peace among the nations of the world, but no peace can be brought about by treaties and leagues, as real peace springs out from hearts, and unless the hearts are united, there can be no genuine peace in the world."

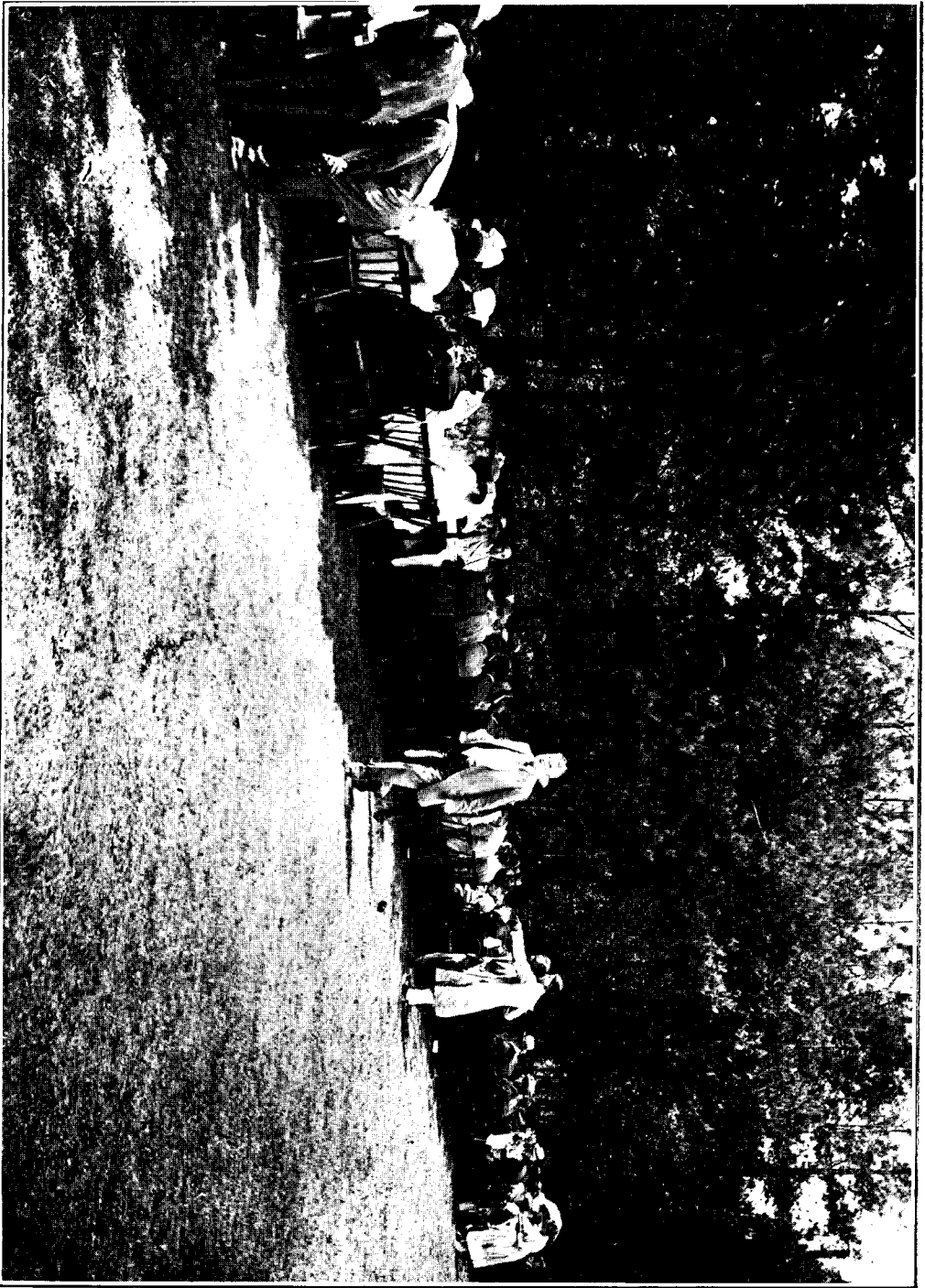
## ISLAMIC REVIEW

The speaker then explained how the common basis of a universal religion could be arrived at by picking up the common element of all the religions of the world, and illustrated this principle by applying it to the three important articles of faith, i.e. (1) existence of God, (2) Unity of God, and (3) Revelation.

The address was followed by the customary Eid greetings. Muslims embraced one another with fervidness and ardour of brotherly feeling. Persons, absolutely unacquainted with one another, speaking different languages, forgot for the time their local characters. They were brethren in faith and that was enough.

Mr. Mohammad Ali of the Khilafat Delegation then delivered a short informal address in keeping with the subject of the sermon. The feelings of Muslim brotherhood, he said, were deeply ingrained in our nature. A Muslim cannot but feel for and sympathize with his Muslim brother whether they be coming from the ends of the earth. A message of prayer and devotion was then decided upon to be sent to the Sultan of Turkey as Khalifa of Islam, and a telegram to be sent to the King-Emperor praying His Majesty that in the revised treaty of Turkey no dismemberment of Turkish Empire and Jazirat-ul-Arab may be allowed. Collections were also made on this occasion for the relief of sufferers from floods at Louth, for which our British Muslim sisters deserve warmest thanks.

Luncheon was then served up in the lawn, consisting of Indian dishes. The special Eid-ul-Fitr dish of India called the *Savayyan* was a remarkable feature of the feast. The gathering then resolved themselves into social groups and enjoyed the day as they pleased. Just after afternoon tea, an informal meeting was held at which Dr. Charles Garnett, M.A., D.D., moved a resolution to the effect that the Government should be moved to see that war relief was distributed equitably between the sufferers from the war, whether they were Christians, Muslims, or Jews. For, he explained in the brief remarks that he made in moving the resolution, it was a shame and a disgrace to see that in the administration of war-relief, distinctions were being made between the Christian and the non-Christian, while, as a matter of fellow feeling and common humanity, our charities should not be determined by the distinctions of creeds or races. The resolution was supported in a short speech by Lady Katharine Stuart, an ardent apostle of Esperanto, and was carried. Another resolution was moved by Maulvi Mustapha Khan, Head of the Mosque, and was passed in silence, that "This meeting of Muslims from all parts of the world places on record its deep regret at the untimely death of Khan Bahadur Khalifa Syed Hamid Hosain, B.A., late Financial Secretary to the Patiala State (India), and a Member of the Jail Reform



**Eid-ul-Fitr Feast :—Muslims at Lunch.**

## THE PROPHET IN WAR-TIME

Committee, and expresses sympathy with the bereaved family."

The day proved an unexpectedly splendid success, and the festival was enjoyed thoroughly by all. A large number of the guests had left after lunch; the rest took their leave after afternoon tea, and a few stayed to dinner. I cannot close this account of the great festival without making a grateful mention of the voluntary work done by our British Muslim sisters, who worked untiringly from morning to evening, and whose labour of love cannot be adequately thanked for. The members of the Mosque also feel thankful to the Muslim brethren who worked in this connection.

FAZAL KARIM KHAN, B.A.

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## THE PROPHET IN WAR-TIME

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JIHAD— THE "GREAT JIHAD" AT MECCA

By MAULVI MUSTAFAKHAN, B.A.

ISLAM has been invariably misrepresented by the European writers under the mask of *Jihad*. The hostile criticism that has been levelled against the pure and simple teachings of the Holy Prophet of Arabia has always culminated in the accusation that Islam was spread by the sword, and that Muhammad (may peace and blessing of God be upon him) had the sword in one hand and the Qur-án in the other. Western writers have, however, never taken the trouble to inquire into the circumstances that led the Holy Prophet to take up the sword. Their case, in fact, is based upon their lack of knowledge of those circumstances. But to judge the matter fairly it is necessary to study in some detail the events which made Arabia once the scene of bloodshed.

It has been universally admitted that for a period of thirteen years, at Mecca, the Holy Prophet was subjected to most bitter persecution. He was mocked, ridiculed, and stoned. His path was sometimes strewn with thorns, which made his feet bleed. When praying, filth and dirt were thrown upon him. In short, he was the butt of every torment and indignity. But he endured all these afflictions with remarkable fortitude, and went on preaching the divine message with which he was charged. His companions, too, were treated ruthlessly, and were, in fact, put to such fearful suffering that in compassion he advised them to betake themselves to the coast of Abyssinia—a migration which is known as "the First Flight" in the history of Islam. The animosity of the Quraish was, however, increasing every day, and when they saw that the Holy Prophet could not, in any way, be dissuaded from teaching his new

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

faith, they resolved to settle the question for ever by putting him to death. They made plot after plot against his life ; and eventually convened a large gathering consisting of a representative from every clan. At this meeting, Abu Jahl, the great enemy of the Prophet, proposed that a detachment consisting of a member of each tribe should fall upon the Holy Prophet and kill him with their numerous swords, so that his blood might not be ascribed to a particular family. This resolution was unanimously adopted, and the day for the murder was fixed. The Holy Prophet, however, received timely information of the plot and managed to escape in the night. A number of Muslims had already migrated to Medina by his order.

It was under these circumstances that the Holy Prophet fled to Medina.<sup>1</sup> He said good-bye to his dear home at dead of night, leaving his devoted cousin and disciple, Ali, in his bed, and escaped in company of Abu Bekr, his staunch friend. The fury of the enemy did not abate when they discovered that he had escaped. The Quraish dispatched an expedition in pursuit to murder him. The price of one hundred camels was offered for his head, and this tempted many a horseman to pursue the fugitive. Siraqa-bin-Khashm, a great warrior, actually overtook the Prophet. But, by the mercy of God, he could not gather courage to attack him ; rather, struck with awe, he entreated the forgiveness of the man whom he had hunted ; which was given in writing by Abu Bekr.<sup>2</sup>

The enemy was unsuccessful in his dark designs, and the Prophet and Abu Bekr reached Medina in safety, where the people of Medina, often called the Ansar (Helpers), on account of the timely help they rendered to Islam, received them with great hospitality.

This marks the termination of the Holy Prophet's mission at Mecca, and up to this time he had never thought of resorting to the sword in order to propagate Islam. The word *Jihad* has always been a source of terror to Europe, and that groundless terror is the base on which the bigoted Christian missionaries have built up the false theory that Islam was spread by the sword. But the fact remains that the Holy Prophet had received the Divine command for *Jihad* in one of the earliest revelations at Mecca ; and he had been obeying that command since then by peaceful means. The misunderstanding under which the opponents of Islam have been labouring is simply this : They in their ignorance imagine that *Jihad* means wielding of the sword to spread Islam, which is not only literally incorrect, but

<sup>1</sup> This is the Hijra or the Flight, from which the era of Islam is dated.

<sup>2</sup> This indicates that the pen and inkpot were always kept with the Holy Prophet with a view to take down the divine words when revealed ; and hence the authenticity of the text of the Holy Qur-án.



## THE PROPHET IN WAR-TIME

historically too. Literally, *Jihad* means "to strive," i.e. for the spread of Islam, or in more general terms the effort for good against evil, and in the same sense the word has been used in this verse of the Holy Qur-án :—

"And strive against them a mighty striving with it," i.e. the Holy Qur-án.

This verse was revealed at Mecca, and it was in compliance with this Divine injunction that the Holy Prophet went on preaching his gospel of truth under most trying circumstances. In this verse the Holy Prophet was ordered to do *Jihad* by means of the Holy Qur-án, and it was solely due to this message of truth that he got men like Abu Bekr and Umar, who afterwards proved to be a source of great strength to the cause of Islam. Undoubtedly the Holy Prophet was doing *Jihad* when he was preaching the eternal truth to the people of Mecca, and this was indeed a "great *Jihad*," in the words of the Holy Qur-án. Thus historically, too, the word *Jihad* has no direct connection with the battles that the Holy Prophet has to fight against his foes. The warfare of Islam begins after the Flight to Medina, while the Divine injunction of *Jihad* was revealed and carried out in practice, long before, at Mecca.

It will not be out of place here to mention that to use force in matters religious is against the fundamental teaching of the Holy Qur-án. The idea of peace is a very dominant idea in Islam. A Muslim is supposed to greet another Muslim with the words "Peace be with you." Heaven, as represented in the Islamic gospel, is the abode where peace and tranquillity will reign supreme. A Muslim, again, according to the Holy Qur-án, is one who has made peace with God and man. The Holy Prophet was repeatedly enjoined to preach his gospel in a peaceful manner. The Holy Qur-án says :—

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation" (ch. xvi. 125).

And elsewhere it clearly lays down that :—

"There is no compulsion in religion."

### THE SELF-SACRIFICE OF THE PROPHET.

It is sometimes said by hostile critics that the Holy Prophet was helpless at Mecca, and, therefore, was forced by circumstances to remain peaceful; but at Medina he was supported by the Ansar (the Muslim converts of that city), and thus for the first time had opportunity to wield the sword with some slight prospect of success, and to make conquests for his own aggrandizement. People, who think so, can have but little knowledge of human nature. Human nature is always the same. If a man is greedy by nature, he will be greedy under all circumstances. His native character will show itself in whatever circumstances

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

he may be placed : if the Holy Prophet had been an ambitious personality, desiring means for personal aggrandizement, that defect in his character should have shown itself on some occasion of his early life, for youth is the period in which men are led by their passions. But, on the contrary, we find him always evincing self-control, and modesty and patience. At the age of twenty-five he marries a widow named Khadijah, who is senior to him by fifteen years ; and, in spite of the fact that the whole of Arabia was given up to polygamy, the Holy Prophet never thinks of taking another wife until Khadijah dies, when he is fifty-five. He thus spends the best part of his life with an old lady, who has lost all her personal charm, but to whom he is devotedly attached throughout. This is a sufficient testimony to the Prophet's self-control. But here is another example. In the early years of his prophethood, when he was about forty years of age, an assembly of the chiefs of Mecca tried to turn him from his mission by offering him strong worldly temptations. They sent Utba as their envoy. Utba came to the Prophet and said : " O son of my brother, you are distinguished by good qualities and your descent. You have sown division among our people, and cast dissension among our families, you denounce our gods, and tax our ancestors with impiety. We have a proposition to make to you ; think well if it can suit you to accept it." " Speak, O father of Walid," said the Prophet, " I listen." " O son of my brother," said Utba, " if you wish to acquire riches by this affair, we will collect a fortune larger than is possessed by any of us ; if you desire honour and dignity we shall make you our chief, and if you want to marry a beautiful girl we are ready to give you the hand of any maid you choose. If you desire dominion, we will make you our king." In reply to all this the Holy Prophet simply recited these verses of the Holy Qur-án :

" Praised, glorious God ! This is a revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful God : a book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur-án for a people who know : herald of good news and a warner, but most of them turn aside so they hear not ; and they say : Our hearts are under covering from that which you call us to, and there is heaviness in our ears, and a veil hangs between us and you ; we, too, are working. Say, I am only a mortal like you, it is revealed to me that your God is one God, follow the right way to Him, and ask His forgiveness ; and woe to the polytheists, to those who do not give alms, and they are unbelievers in the Hereafter, and for those who believe and do good, they shall surely have a reward never to be cut off " (ch. xii).

Hearing this, Utba went back in despair. This is a brilliant illustration of the Holy Prophet's self-denial ; and

## THE PROPHET IN WAR-TIME

establishes the righteousness of his cause, and his intense sincerity. He would not yield to any sort of temptation. His character is far above those base selfish and carnal desires which cause men to forsake high principles of life. He would not give up his faith, even to save his life.

Once a body of the Quraish came to Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet, and said to him: "We respect your age and rank, but our respect for you after all has some limits. Certainly we can have no further patience with your nephew's denunciations of our gods and his disparaging words against the beliefs of our ancestors. Therefore, you should either prevent him from doing so, or you, too, should take part with him, so that we may settle the matter with our weapons until one of the parties is exterminated." Having given this ultimatum, they departed, and Abu Talib began to think over the matter. He was not willing to separate himself from his people, nor did his profound affection for his nephew allow him to abandon the Holy Prophet and hand him over to the tender mercy of the idolators of Mecca. He, however, sent for the Holy Prophet, informed him of the challenge of the Quraish, and begged him to give up the task he had undertaken. The Holy Prophet thought that his uncle was going to get rid of him and wished to withdraw his protection; but his high determination never flinched, though the thought of his beloved uncle's desertion made him weep. He replied firmly: "O, my dear uncle, if they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left to force me to renounce my work, certainly I would not desist therefrom till Allah made manifest His cause, or I perished in the effort." Hearing these words from the lips of his dear nephew, the heart of Abu Talib was touched, and he said: "Say whatever you like, for, by the Lord, I shall not abandon you." Thus, neither temptation of power and wealth nor threat of death could prevail upon the Holy Prophet to abandon his task. It is, therefore, quite inconsistent and illogical to conclude that he was led to wage wars at Medina with a view to acquire dominions or wealth. Had he been greedy for temporal power, he could have achieved it at Mecca very easily by acceding to the ardent request of the Quraish. But neither power nor wealth was his object, his single aim was to propagate the truth which he had brought with him. He was prepared to lay down his life in defence of truth.

### PERMISSION TO FIGHT.

But the question remains: If the Prophet did not take up the sword for the propagation of Islām, nor for personal aggrandizement, what was the object of the battles which were fought by him? The reply to this question is simple enough. The Quraish of Mecca, as we have seen, were

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

determined to annihilate Islam ; and the Muslims were permitted to resort to the sword simply in self-defence. Thus we have in the Holy Qur-án :—

“ Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made ; because they are oppressed ” (ch. xvii. 39). According to the IMAM ZAHRI this verse forms the basis of permission to the Muslims to unsheath the sword against the heathens of Mecca, who were already in a state of war against them. IBNI JARIR, however, thinks that the permission for fighting to the Muslims was given in the following verse :—

“ And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you ; and do not exceed the limits ” (ch. ii. 190).

Personally, I am inclined to agree with the IMAM ZAHRI, because in the former verse the words “ permission is granted ” appear to indicate a new commandment. However that may be, the texts of both the above verses—and of how many others in the Holy Qur-án !—speak for themselves, and hardly need any comment. Permission for fighting is granted to the Muslims ; but they are to fight only against those who are already at war with them. This clearly shows that the Muslims never took the initiative in fighting, but were obliged to fight in self-defence. The particular point, however, to which I should like to draw the reader’s attention is, that the word used in these verses is not “ Jihad,” but “ Qital ” (fighting). The subtle difference between the meanings of these two expressions becomes clear when we observe two points : (1) The first of the two verses above quoted, which according to the Imam Zahri, grants, for the first time, the permission to fight, evidently contains a new commandment ; as the words “ permission is given ” clearly show. Therefore, it cannot be a repetition of a previous injunction, while the commandment of JIHAD, as we have seen, was clearly given at Mecca, and the Holy Prophet put it into practice there. (2) The measure suggested in the verse is a tentative one, and subject to a certain condition, as the words—“ because they are *oppressed* ”—indicate, whereas the order for JIHAD is quite imperative, subject to no conditions whatsoever. As is clear from the words of the Holy Qur-án :—

“ And strive against them a mighty striving with it,” i.e. the Holy Qur-án. It follows, then, that the significance of JIHAD is quite different from that of QITAL (fighting). “ JIHAD ” is compulsory for Muslims, and should be carried out in all times and under all circumstances. It is just like other religious injunctions, such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, etc., while QITAL, or fighting, is conditional and permissible only in self-defence.

The Muslims are then supposed to do “ JIHAD ” in all times and under all circumstances, that is to say, they

## THE PROPHET IN WAR-TIME

should invariably strive to spread Islam, as it is the last eternal truth taught to mankind, and the Muslims as true believers are required to communicate this eternal truth to all the people of the world. This is in the words of the Holy Qur-án the "*great Jihad*," and the Holy Prophet continued to do this Jihad for thirteen long years at Mecca. This significance of JIHAD is clear from other verses of the Holy Qur-án as well. In the opening verses of section 10, chapter ix, we have :—

"O Prophet! strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be unyielding to them."

In this verse the Holy Prophet was required to do *Jihad* not against the unbelievers only, but against the hypocrites as well, and it is a historical fact that he never used the sword against the latter. Had "*Jihad*" meant to *wield the sword*, the Muslim arms would have been directed against hypocrites too, because the divine injunction clearly lays down that Jihad should be done against them along with the unbelievers, but it was not so.

Imam Razi, a great authority in Islam, commenting on this verse, says :—

"The correct rendering is that '*Jihad*' signifies *striving*, or exerting oneself, and there is nothing in the world to indicate that the striving is to be effected by the sword, or by the tongue, or by any other method."

So much for the literal meaning of the word. But we have seen that the Holy Prophet was explicitly required to do Jihad with the Holy Qur-án, he was also required to do Jihad against hypocrites, but he never took up arms against them, which clearly shows that the primary significance of *Jihad* is simply to strive by means of exhortation in the spread of Islam, and in this very sense the word has been repeatedly used in the Holy Qur-án.

But why did the Muslims take up the sword at all? For the propagation of Islam? No; the verse giving permission for fighting gives the reason. It clearly says that fighting is allowed simply because Muslims are being attacked and oppressed. How they were attacked and oppressed is an historical question, and let us go to history for the verification of the fact which is clearly stated in the Holy Qur-án in the form of a religious commandment.

### THE HOSTILE ATTITUDE OF THE QURAISH.

The Quraish of Mecca, as we have seen, were the relentless enemies of the Holy Prophet. It was owing to their wicked designs to exterminate his religion that he and his followers were obliged to take flight to Medina. Here, too, they would not allow him to pass his days quietly. They began to instigate the people of Medina, and to threaten them for giving shelter to the Holy Prophet. Thus we find that

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

after his arrival at Medina, the Quraish wrote a letter to Abdulla Bin Ubayy, the Chief of Medina, to this effect :—

“ You have given refuge to our man and we swear by Allah that either you shall kill him or expel him, otherwise we will attack you, annihilate you and will take possession of your women.”

This was a sufficiently strong threat for the people of Medina to loosen their allegiance to the Holy Prophet, and to create troubles for Islam at its new centre. Yet as a large number of people of Medina had embraced Islam, Abdullah could not comply with the request of the Quraish at once. Nevertheless, the machinations of Quraish had a very bad moral effect upon the people of Medina, and in fact the internal troubles which Islam had to face at Medina with Jews and hypocrites were to a large extent due to the intrigues of Quraish at Mecca, who were always plotting the destruction of Islam. As the demand of Quraish was not complied with promptly, they were exceedingly enraged, and began to make preparations for a great attack on Medina. The Muslims of Medina heard of this with great anxiety, and were expecting the attack at every moment. The Holy Prophet and his companions used to pass restless nights keeping watch from evening to morning. Thus we have in the Sahi Nisai :—

“ When the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) came to Medina he used to keep vigil in the nights.”

Similarly in the Sahi Bukhari we have another authentic report to this effect :—

“ When the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) came to Medina and the Ansar (helpers) gave him shelter, the whole of Arabia turned against the Muslims, and they used to sleep in harness.”

The hostile attitude of Quraish was not only evinced in their threatening epistle and in the terrifying news which came from Mecca, but they had already given a tangible proof of their warlike designs by a raid, which one of their noted chiefs, Kurz-ibn-Jabr, made upon the territory of Medina, ravaging almost up to the walls of the city and taking away a big herd of camels belonging to the Holy Prophet. The Muslims pursued him, but the looter escaped to the boundaries of Mecca with his booty.

Such was the state of affairs when, in the month of Rajjab of the second year of the Hijra (November, A.D. 623) reliable news was received at Medina that the people of Mecca were making preparations on a very large scale, for an assault upon Medina. Guided by the instinct of self-defence, the Muslims were bound to take precautionary measures. Accordingly a reconnoitring expedition was sent immediately, consisting of twelve men under Abdullah-

## THE PROPHET IN WAR-TIME

Ibn-Jahoh. The orders verbally given to him by the Holy Prophet were simply to proceed towards the territory of Mecca, the remaining instructions being contained in a sealed letter, which was not to be opened by him until he was two days on his way. Abdullah proceeded with this sealed despatch, and opened it when the city was left far behind. The epistle contained direction for him to the effect that he should lead his party to Nakhla, midway between Tayaf and Mecca, and there should watch the movements of the enemy carefully with a view to obtain some accurate knowledge of his intentions. In obedience to this order Abdullah went to Nakhla, and while he was lying concealed there, a small caravan happened to pass by. Abdullah was an impulsive soldier, and had inherited the impetuosity of Arabs. He attacked the caravan, killed one man named Khizrami, and made two prisoners, whom he carried to Medina with the spoils. When the report of this action was made to the Holy Prophet he was much grieved. He refused to take the spoils and said to Abdullah: "I did not order you to fight, why did you do this?" The companions of the Holy Prophet also expressed their disapproval of Abdullah's action, and reproached him for acting against the wishes of the Holy Prophet.

The Quraish of Mecca meanwhile continued busily to gather men and money for a decisive attack on Medina. They had already invested an enormous capital in the trade with Syria, in order to obtain the wherewithal to purchase arms and munitions. Their caravans were already on their way home with the riches of Syria, and the chief one under Abu Safyan was soon expected at Mecca with a large supply of war munitions.

### BATTLE OF BADAR.

In the meanwhile a false rumour flew to Mecca that Muslims were going to attack the caravan of Abu Safyan, which, in pre-Islamic Arab warfare, was the natural thing for them to do. The people of Mecca were already prepared to fight, they were afire with rage for the destruction of the Muslims. The rumour furnished a sufficient pretext. They at once set out with a large army to attack Medina, and the lives of all the Muslims were again in danger.

The Holy Prophet was not simply a teacher, but he was also the guardian of the lives and liberties of his people. His destruction meant their destruction, and their destruction the destruction of the eternal truth which he had brought. It was, therefore, his sacred duty to defend the lives of his people, not simply for their sake but for the sake of the truth of which they were the first repositories. Inspired by the instinct of self-preservation in the cause of righteousness, and in conformity with the divine revelation, which per-

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

mitted him to take up the sword in self-defence, the Holy Prophet made up his mind to meet the army of Quraish. He convened a meeting of his companions and put the case before them. Abu Bekr and others delivered fiery speeches and expressed their whole-hearted devotion to the cause of Islam. The Ansar did likewise, promising that they would fight to the right and to the left, in the front and at the back of the Holy Prophet.

It was an hour of severe trial for the followers of the Holy Prophet, and their sincerity to the cause of Islam was put to crucial test. But they proved true. They had unflinching faith in the truth of the Holy Prophet, and the force of his personal character, illumined as it was by inspiration, had wrought such a wonderful change in them, that they at once became ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause of truth. Muir, in his annals of the early Caliphate, remarks of Abu Bekr: "His belief in the Prophet is itself a strong evidence of the sincerity of Mohammed himself. Had Mohammed been from the first a conscious impostor, he never could have won the faith and friendship of a man who was not only sagacious and brave, but simple and sincere." If the belief of Abu Bekr is a strong evidence of the sincerity of the Prophet, I think this evidence can be infinitely strengthened by the strong faith of hundreds of the Muslims, who gladly sacrificed their lives at his behest. A few words about the followers of Jesus Christ (may peace and blessings of God be upon him), would not be out of place by way of comparison. His most devoted disciples turned out to be faithless. One of them betrayed his master for thirty pieces of silver. Others even would not pray for him in that hour when his soul was exceedingly sorrowful, but would go on sleeping, despite of the master's repeated request to them to pray for him in that dark hour.

In short, on 12th Ramadan of the second year of the Hijra, the Holy Prophet came out with his handful of men, some of them armed only with sticks. One mile away from the city, the army was paraded and reviewed. Boys under age were ordered to go back. Amir-bin-Abi Qas, who was of tender age, hearing this command burst into tears and implored to be allowed to join the army. In the end his request was granted, and the boy warrior was equipped with a sword. The army was now numbered and it came up to 313 men, of whom sixty were muhajirs (emigrants) and the remainder Ansar (helpers).

In the meanwhile, Abu Sufian and his caravan reached Mecca in safety. He thence despatched a messenger to Abu Jahl, who commanded the forces of Mecca, to inform him that the caravan was out of danger and advise him to return. A party of the Quraish were disposed to listen to this advice, but Abu Jahl, the great enemy of Islam, would



## THE PROPHET IN WAR-TIME

not hear of a retreat until he had destroyed Muhammad and his followers, and thus earned lasting fame. "Let us go forward," said he in the height of his vanity, "to Badr, and there, by the fountain, spend three days eating and drinking. The whole of Arabia will hear of it, and will ever after stand in awe of us."

Thus, sure of his victory, he proceeded to Badr with much pomp at the head of a large army which consisted of one thousand veteran warriors, including one hundred horsemen. The Muslim army had but one horseman. The arrangements for the supply of food rested with the chiefs of Quraish, who turn by turn gave sumptuous feasts to the soldiers at their own expense and slaughtered ten camels every day.

As Quraish arrived upon the battlefield before the Muslims they occupied the best positions, while the Muslim army was obliged to camp at first on sandy slippery soil without a fountain to get water. On this Hubab ibn Munsaz asked the Prophet if the spot was occupied in accordance with some divine revelation, and on receiving a reply in the negative suggested that the Muslim army should go further, should take possession of the fountain and destroy the wells. This proposal won approval and was carried out eventually, but first came the divine assistance, and a shower of rain gave water and made the soil firm. The Muslim soldiers made small pools to keep the water which was used both for bath and ablution. A reference to this divine help is made in these words of the Holy Qur-án :—

"When He sent down the water from the cloud, that He might thereby purify you" (ch. viii).

Although the water was in the possession of the Muslim army, the Holy Prophet was too generous to withhold its use from the enemy, who was given a general permission to take water whenever needed.

In short, both the armies were encamped side by side under the blue star-lit sky. The companions of the Holy Prophet enjoyed a sound sleep, but the Prophet himself spent the whole night praying. In the morning he awakened the people for prayer, after which he delivered a sermon to the army. Quraish, conceited of their power and certain of success, were eager for the fray, though some there were of gentler disposition, who did not like the thought of bloodshed, and advised retreat. But Abu Jahl, who exercised the chief command, refused to listen to them, and so the armies had to fight.

The Holy Prophet went apart from the scene of action under a shelter made of thatch, and began to pray for the victory of his little band. His words are handed down to prosperity, and they clearly show that the Muslims were compelled to take up arms against aggression.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

"O Lord!" the Prophet prayed, "forget not Thy promise of assistance. O Lord! if this little band were to perish there will be none to offer unto Thee pure worship." After the prayer, he was seized with violent trembling. Then suddenly he turned to Abu Bekr, who was beside him, and said, "Be of good cheer, O Abu Bekr, for God's help has come." Then he ran out of the shelter and picked up dust and flung it towards Quraish and said: "May their countenances be confused," and to his followers he said, "Press them hard."<sup>1</sup> While the Prophet was praying in a state of devotional trance the battle had begun; three of the Quraish warriors stepped forward into the open space, according to the Arab fashion, and challenged three champions from the Muslim ranks, Hamza, Ali and Obaidah, who accepted challenge; their individual victories brought on the general attack by the enemy. The Muslim army fought bravely, and Abu Jahl, on whose shoulders rested the whole responsibility of this battle, was killed in action along with his brave general Utba. This created a panic in the Quraish army. It was a strong winter day and a piercing blast swept across the valley. The Quraish could not rally their forces, which were driven back in disorder and chaos. Many of their chiefs were killed, and a large number of war prisoners fell into the hands of the Muslims.

The European writers often wonder how a handful of Muslims, poorly fed and inadequately equipped, could manage to inflict severe defeat upon a comparatively large army, which was lavishly rationed and properly armed. There should be no wonder about it, as many things are wrought by prayer in this world. The prayer of the Holy Prophet at such a critical moment was effective. The divine hand was working for the righteous cause of Islam, and the very elements of nature warred against the cruel enemy who was bent upon the destruction of the helpless Muslims.

### TREATMENT OF WAR PRISONERS.

Of the large number of war prisoners, only two were executed on account of previous crimes against the Muslims. The rest of the prisoners were treated with great kindness. They were distributed among the Muslims, who were responsible for their subsistence. The Holy Prophet gave strict injunctions with regard to their kind treatment, which were carried out faithfully by his companions. Abu Uzair, who was one of the captives, narrating the story of his captivity, says:—"The family to which I was entrusted, treated me very kindly, they gave me bread (the best of the Arab repast) while they contented themselves with dates alone. I felt ashamed and returned the loaf in modesty, but they

<sup>1</sup> Abul Feda.

## TABLE TALK

would not take it and insisted upon my eating it." This was, of course, due to the fact that the Prophet had bidden them to treat the prisoners politely.

The wealthy were soon ransomed, while the poor were released after promising that they would never again fight against the Muslims. Some of the educated prisoners ransomed themselves by teaching the youths of Medina.

Thus the battle of Badr ended in complete victory for Islam. The fact which should never be lost sight of is that the Holy Prophet never took up arms in offence. The people of Mecca made a decisive attack on Medina in order to exterminate the Muslims and to punish the people of Medina for having dared to harbour them. The Prophet was thus forced to wield the sword in self-defence for the preservation of Islam. The Quraish of Mecca did not want to wrest any temporal power from the Prophet. What they wanted was that the Muslims and the Holy Prophet should be put to death, and Islam extinguished. It was to this wicked object of the enemy that the words of the Holy Prophet referred when he said, praying to the Almighty :—  
" If this little band were to perish there will be none to offer unto Thee pure worship."

In a word, the enemy aimed at the destruction of Islam in the abstract, but a divine messenger like the Holy Prophet Muhammad could not let the truth expire, even though in defence of it he had to draw the sword.

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## TABLE TALK

*Given by KHWAJA KAMALUDDIN to a select gathering of ladies and gentlemen, consisting of Hindus, Christians and Muslims, at the residence of Miss Mrunaline Chatsbadaya, Beach, Madras.*

### Object of Religion.

I have been requested to say something on the object of Religion, a subject which has caused such a diversity of opinion and confusion of ideas. It has created different theologies and diverse codes of morality in different parts of the world. Some say that the object of Religion is fulfilled when we give up all worldly affairs in pursuit of godly life. With them Religion came for renunciation. Others think that the function of Religion consists in reclaiming life in mundane affairs. With some, Religion, in its best form, came to redeem humanity from eternal perdition by showing us ways to appease an angered Deity and to create a sort of reconciliation between the Creator and the creature, as if we had incurred Divine wrath even before our birth without any action on our part. In short, the object of Religion has been formulated in different accents and stresses

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

in various quarters. But the last Book of God, I mean the Qur-án, epitomizes it in one word. It makes "*falah*" as the object for which Religion came to humanity from its Maker. I have purposely given here the original word from the text as I fail to find its proper equivalent in any other language. In ordinary meaning the word "*falah*" in Arabic means "success," but literally it means furrowing out of what is hidden in anything. In fact true success consists in working out qualities latent in anything. You cannot succeed in doing a thing you are not capable of. Where there is a want of capacity there is a want of success. Success, therefore, consists in working out of your latent faculties to your best ability. I am not concerned with what others say on the subject, but I have given you what the Qur-án describes to be the object of Divine Revelation to humanity. Whatever noble and good is hidden in you must come out; whatever is in the form of potentiality in human minds must be converted into actuality. Some think that to please God can be the only valid object of Religion. It is true, but one fails to understand in what consists the pleasure of God. If He created man for a certain purpose, do we not incur His wrath, if through our actions we bring that purpose to nothing? Divine glorification does not mean singing of hymns; it is but a lip-gratitude which cannot please even an average man. What about God? Divine glorification from the Qur-ánic point of view consists in human edification, and in order to please God we cannot do better than to help Him in the accomplishment of that grand object for which man was created. Therefore, to please God is really to work out our own evolution and to bring to realization what our Creator placed in us. In this lies our whole success. The Qur-án says the same elsewhere: "He who purifies himself and through that purification reaches his full-fledgement is successful, but he who has stunted his faculties meets failure." Again the Book says, when it defines man's religion: "Turn your face strictly to the right Faith—Nature, given by God, on which He has created man; there cannot be change in the Make of God, it is the Religion." In these words we have been given our Religion. My religion is my own nature and to live religion is to work it out. Study your own Nature, try to find out what inestimable treasures lie in it; discover means whereby you may bring your Nature to fruition and you have found your religion. Revelation from God, according to the Qur-án, therefore, came to enlighten us as to our own capacities and to provide us with means to work them out to their perfection. To study your own Nature is, therefore, to study your own religion. "One who has known his own self," so says the noble Prophet, "has known his own God." See what wonderful

## TABLE TALK

capabilities you possess, bring them to their full fructification, and you have glorified your own Maker and lived the best religion you can possibly have, and this is Islam.

### Heaven and Hell.

In this connection I think I must give you the Muslim conception of Heaven and Hell. With many, and I should say with almost all adherents of faiths and creeds, to secure entry into heaven and to keep away from the other place has been believed, and in a way legitimately too, to be the main object of Religion. In this connection, I may again draw your attention to the very words which the Qur-án has chosen to convey the idea of Heaven and Hell. "Jannat" is the word used in the Qur-án for heaven. The word is very eloquent to connote the Qur-ánic conception of heaven. On one side it means *something hidden* and concealed from the naked eye; the other meaning of "Jannat" is luxuriant and rank growth. May I draw your attention to every clod of clay you have come across to-day on your way to this place. It is a dark thing and without any attraction for you, but it has got something very beautiful and very variegated in nature in it; furrow it out; bring these clods of clay under some process of cultivation, and this dirty earth is at once transformed into a beautiful garden. This phenomenon you observe in your everyday experience; everything that comes in your way contains something hidden in it, which when evolved makes it valuable. So everything in Nature is heaven and hell. They are in hellish condition as long as their inherent faculties remain hidden and unworked out, but they become heaven when these qualities receive full fructification. Man's mind is a microcosm—a miniature of the whole Universe. It is of goodliest fibre and possesses highest capabilities as the Qur-án says, and can make unlimited progress. Think of various works of human pursuit, and God knows what inexhaustible stores we still possess which remain still to be worked out. One who has attained perfect self-realization has created his own heaven, and one who has stunted his faculties is condemned to that fire of God which will come out of human heart (the Qur-án). Don't you experience some sort of heart-burnings when you see a fellow-man who began his life with you with equal opportunities like yourself and who became successful by working out his faculties while you remain in the "lurch" simply because you did not make proper use of your time and opportunity. This heart-burning of our present life may give you a very hazy idea of one of the several aspects of hell given in the Qur-án. I am not concerned here with what other religions say about heaven and hell. There may be a lake of fire with burning brimstone in it and with gnashing of teeth; similarly something is said of Heaven in Christian

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

theology. Those who care to ride clouds with golden crowns on their heads while singing hymns of God, day and night, may please themselves with such description of heaven ; but I don't care for a stationary life, I must have something to develop, some sort of elevation ; everything around me is on its move to progress ; destruction in Nature is only a name for change of form ; nay, destruction in some cases means a new life, a new course of progress. Man being the best product in Nature and the finest handiwork of God, cannot go otherwise. This seventy or eighty years of life are too short for our full-fledgement. Innumerable faculties in us remain undeveloped in many of us when we die ; if in hundreds they receive their sublimation, in millions they remain dormant when death comes ; and if everything in every atom comes to actuality, what about those things in men which remain hidden in them in this lease of life, which under Islamic teaching is only a life of preparation, while the time of fruition begins on the other side of the grave. If I have put my faculties into working order my death simply means an entrance to a life of further progress and this is " Jannat " (heaven) of the Qur-án.

### Life of Preparation.

You make your heaven and hell yourself. Your heart supplies you with the bed-rock for further construction. Just as you break the earth and till the ground and prepare the land, then a small thing like a seed with the help of water from above, enables the earth to pour its innumerable and inestimable treasures before you—and we have not as yet been able to exhaust its resources—the same earth, in miniature, you have got again in a most evolved form, in the shape of your own heart in your body. It contains every ingredient of the earth in extracted condition. " Verily we have created man as an extract from the earth " (The Qur-án). The earth, with all its ingredients, going through various processes of refinement, has assumed the shape of human heart and retains all its forces on sublimated scale ; and like the earth we have been unable to exhaust its resources as well. As the earth produces beautiful things physical in nature, human heart creates things moral and spiritual. Both do need water from heaven to bring their forces into operation. Matter in the earth needs rain in material form, and it comes from clouds ; but the human heart is the repository of moral and spiritual things : the rain necessary for its fertility could not assume physical shape. It should bear affinity to the matter it has to work upon. Animal heart gives birth to consciousness, which in human frame needs further refinement. It consists of emotions and passions. They are to be converted into morality, ethics and philosophy ; morality again in its turn

## TABLE TALK

is to be evolved into spirituality. This sublimation of animal emotions on the plane of human heart could not be effected by material rain from the clouds. It did need rain in conscious form, something in articulate shape; something which had to do more with mentality than with our physical nature. The rain did come, and it came in the suitable form. It took the form of words revealed from the lips of God. It helped man to dig the mine of his own heart and produced a healthy crop. The Qur-án opens this truth to us in the following words: "Know that Allah gives life to the earth after death; indeed, We have made the communications clear to you that you may understand" (chap. lvii. 17).

Is it now difficult for you to appreciate the teachings of the Qur-án as to the real object of religion and revelation from God? The Book of Islam teaches us that we have been given highest capabilities and that the progress in store for us knows no bounds (chap. xcv). We have to work out our resources and bring them to a certain amount of development in this our sojourn on the earth, and then to be translated to higher regions for further growth; we cannot proceed an inch further in our journey beyond the grave, unless and until we have attained certain amount of perfection to be made in this life. In other words, we have to achieve certain qualifications before we enter into the kingdom of heaven for further progress. If we lack the required qualifications or we have corrupted or stunted our progressive nature given to us at our birth here, this diseased condition of soul at our death will need purification for a fresh start. We have to attain some kind of perfection before leaving this earthly frame; but if we fail to do it when the soul leaves the body we will need some time and place when and where to make up our short-comings and prepare ourselves for heavenly life.

### Muslim Conception of Hell.

Hell, as the Qur-án teaches, comes to provide us with the place needed. We do not believe in the eternity of the hell. Muslim hell, more or less, is of purgatorial, and consequently of a temporary, nature. It helps us to cleanse the soul from all the blemishes that disqualify it from soaring higher and higher in regions Divine. If a healthy physique is needed for a perfect growth on this earth, healthy soul is essential for spiritual upliftment in Ethereal Kingdom. If the doors of hospitals and infirmaries have been opened by benevolence of man to treat us physically and remove defects of body, hell, under divine policy, opens its arms to receive every soul leaving the earth in a diseased condition for the necessary cure. It purges it of all its evils and enables it to enter into the land of felicity and health. It is not the

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

wrath but the merciful Providence of God which creates hell. Just like a mother who out of affectionate heart brings her baby under surgical operation in order to relieve him of the diseased organ, you will find the hell not less affectionate in restoring you to your spiritual health which you have lost in this earth through your folly and wickedness. Like a kind mother, hell has also got able surgeons at her disposal in the person of "angels of hell," who will bring your moral ulcers and spiritual gangrenes under their sharp knife; the operation must cause excruciating pains and unbearable agonies with "crying and gnashing of teeth"; you shall have to take bitter and burning purgatives, but this all comes from the affections of the mother—hell—in whose arms you have been given for the restoration of your health. It is to this effect that the Book of God says the following: "Wa ummuhoo haviyah"—and the hell is his mother.

### Transmigration of Soul.

I think I should say a few words on the theory of "Transmigration of soul," which plays a great part in Hindu theology. It is also taking fancy in Europe. One may not accept the theory; but he cannot deprecate its logic. More or less the theory received its genesis from the same causes which brought hell into existence in Muslim theology. If the life on the earth is a life of preparation where we have to attain certain qualifications essential for our entry into regions Divine—"Braham loka" in the words of Krishna; if certain conditions exclusively belonging to the earth are necessary for the said preparation, will it not be necessary, so argues a Hindu divine, to return to earthly life again if we have left it without acquiring necessary perfection. We had to attain certain experiences, not available in the next world, we left this world without doing so, we do need coming back to it again. The logic is not bad and the reasoning is very plausible on its face. But it does not consist with what I find in the course of evolution observable in the universe around. From ethereal specks and electronic collocations up to human form all manifestations and specializations of nature are constantly on their move to progress. They do not retrograde nor retrace steps they have taken once towards progress. Things pass from regions to regions; they receive translations from one order to the other in their course of progress, sometimes in perfect and sometimes in imperfect condition. But they are not allowed to return to the order left by them to make up the deficiency. If a thing passes a stage of growth before it could reach perfection meant to be attained in the said stage, new means are forthcoming in the region it has been translated to, necessary to rectify its defect. A seed may leave the tree in a defective condition. It need not go back into the trunk



## TABLE TALK

of the tree it came from to make up its deficiencies ; you have only to plant it in a land with better climate and to manure it properly and this very defective seed will sprout into a healthy tree far better in fruition than the mother tree. What is true in the vegetable kingdom is true in other kingdoms. A child before his birth has to receive certain amount of growth on embryonic plane, but if he is born with some physical defects, he need not and does not go to mother's womb for the needed perfection. Surgical help comes forward for the cure. These ways of rectifications are no doubt ultra-natural and more painful, but they are the only means for amendment. If the child has never been allowed to retrace his footsteps to the womb for amendment, why a person who has passed his course of earthly life, in any condition whatsoever, should come to this place again? If this order obtains everywhere in nature that things wanting in perfection to be made in one order are passed into next higher order where efficacious means are present for the cure of the defect, and this system is more expedient and economic to accelerate progress, I hardly find any cogent reason to subscribe to the theory of the transmigration of soul. The same phenomenon is observable in all the stages which matter has to pass before it assumed human shape. The food we take every day in the long run takes the shape of genital superma which converts itself one day into the form of a child. The food has to pass through various stages before it reaches that stage. Things not properly cooked are sometimes taken in : they cause pains in the stomach, but the trouble is removed by some treatment. The food is not sent back from stomach to the kitchen to be cooked again. We take some medicine to help digestion, and enable the food to pass through the regions of blood. Sometimes, for some defects whether they occurred in stomach or through the function of a diseased liver, we produce poor blood, we seek remedy in medicine, but no drop of blood is allowed to be sent back to liver or to stomach for the necessary perfection, simply for the reason that the means and the circumstances necessary for the formation of the blood exist only in stomach and liver and not in heart and the arteries of the blood. Poor blood may germinate unhealthy seed, but new means are adopted to restore it to its proper condition. Superma never transmigrates to blood-regions for the necessary growth. If this observation can be a good datum for the basis of our belief in matters I have been speaking of, I am constrained to reject the theory of transmigration of soul and accept the theory of Hell as propounded in the Qur-án.

### Theory of Karma.

Kindred to " Transmigration of Soul " is the doctrine of *Karma* (actions). The two are one and the same theory,

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

representing different aspects of the doctrine; the one is substantive, the other adjective. The doctrine of Karma takes for its genesis the diversity of circumstances in which people find themselves at their birth for causes beyond their control, which comes as an accident of birth. If some are born in affluence, poverty and indigence attend the birth of others. Some come to this world with defective organs, while others are blessed with the best of them. This disparity, which brings in variety of comfort and respectively causes happiness and misery, seems to be a blot on the impartiality of Divine Providence, if we in some way are not responsible for it. The theory of Karma, in Hindu theology, however, comes to explain this seeming incongruity in Divine dispensation. All that we get at our birth, in the form of happiness or misery, and all the differences in our social status at the time, the Karmaist says, are the outcome of our deeds in the life before the present. We take birth after birth, to complete our course on this earth, and what we sow in the one, we must reap in the other.

No one would question the logic that human society works on the Law of Actions. That actions must bear their fruit is the basic principle of every other religion, excepting Paulinism. Difference in social grade, in many cases undoubtedly, arises from our actions. We are the creators of our comfort and misery. But if inferiority in social scale, in which every person finds himself at his birth in relation to the other, must find its cause in something wrong in one bygone life, evil will become essential for the working of human society, according to this doctrine. Differences of occupation and variety of engagement move the social machinery. We must serve each other, in different capacities, in order to contribute to our respective comforts. Progress means differentiation, and generates out of diversity. But if the said difference takes its birth from some past wrongs, comfort and progress must demand the existence of evil. Let members of one generation commit wrong in order to be reborn in another in the lower strata of society to contribute to the happiness of the upper one.

Superiority of *A* means inferiority of *B*, and happiness of one person does demand sacrifice from the other. And if these are essential for the proper working of society, evil and wrong which are supposed to be the cause of it under the said theory, become also essential for human progress. A doctrine which makes evil a necessary item in the Providence, is a gross insult to a Muslim's conception of God. And if difference in this life arises from past actions, how to explain the necessary difference which must exist even at the very beginning of our species. Its procreation must demand difference of sex. You may ascribe your present

## TABLE TALK

difference to some causes in previous life, but where were the actions which caused difference of sex in the first pair, when our species got its emanation? Difference in sonship and fatherhood is another diversity which must exist even at the beginning of life. How to explain these differences, when there was no previous life and consequently no action?

### **Happiness a Beneficence and not Fruit of Action.**

If all the means of our happiness are given to us as a reward for past actions, how to explain the happiness which comes to us providentially? Almost all our happiness is due to various manifestations of nature: the sun, the moon, the earth, etc. A little amount of happiness which we get through our actions depends also upon our working out the sources of nature which did exist long before man came on the earth. How can all this be the reward of our past actions? We cannot live without the pre-existence of millions of things in the universe; they all add to our happiness; and this all as a beneficence of God, and not in reward of actions. Divine Providence as exhibited in Nature makes Divine blessing, which is the main store of our happiness, a pre-existing thing; while the theory of Karma makes our actions to pre-exist Divine blessings, which is absurd on the very face of it. If all our happiness had to arise from our actions, our felicity would have been next to nothing. What comes out of our actions in the shape of happiness sinks into insignificance when compared with what we get as Divine Blessings. The Qur-án lays special stress on this point, as well as the difference of sex, which it says is to be found in everything coming out of the earth, when dealing with the theory of transmigration of the soul, in the following words:

“And a sign to them is the dead earth: We give life to it and bring forth from it grain, so they eat of it. And we make therein gardens of palms and grape-vines, and We make springs to flow forth in it, that they may eat of the fruit thereof, and their hands did not make it; will they not then be grateful? Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know.”

### **The Theory Weakens Sense of Responsibility.**

If our actions receive their birth and mould from our beliefs, we should not entertain any tenet or doctrine which ruins our sense of responsibility, and creates in us moral or mental imbecility. Fatalism, in the received sense of the word, was condemned by Islam for this very reason. Atonement is another condemnable belief. If another has to bear my burden, incentive for action is lost. Similarly, we exert to alleviate our misery, because we believe in its

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

remedy ; but all our zeal becomes damped when our trouble is found to be irremediable. Our misery, under the theory of Karma, has come to us as a fruit of some past actions. It cannot be undone and all our efforts to do so will be in vain. I committed some wrong in a previous life, I must suffer its consequences in the present life, and all my efforts to be free from it are simply to give the lie to the said theory. If *A* is down with cholera, which he got on account of some past wrong, it hardly befits him to seek medical help if he subscribes to the principle of Karma. The theory thus makes man a fatalist, and impedes human progress.

Pain in this life, they say, is penalty of past actions. If persecution and want of comfort may come within the category of pain, no progress in human society has, till now, been achieved without them. The world saw its best benefactors in the persons of prophets, reformers, and philosophers, but unfortunately they are the persons who have always been subjected to every kind of persecution. Similarly all scientific discoveries, to which we owe so much of our comfort and happiness, are fruits of pain and hardship. Should we believe that all these great teachers and inventors were wicked and sinners of the first dye in the past life, because they have been mostly persecuted people, and led the most painful lives? No one gets happiness without some pain, and pain is the penalty of sin. Evil becomes essential for enjoying happiness in subsequent life.

The theory in question cannot give birth to high character in many ways. If *A* receives some injury from *B*, it is, as a Hindu would say, in compensation of some injury received by *B* from *A*. Thus, offence becomes a justification in the eye of a culprit if he believes in Karma. I need not be thankful to my benefactors because I receive back from them in this life what I gave to them in charity in the life past. The more I think upon the subject, keeping in view all the sequences which such beliefs must logically lead to, the more I become firm in my belief that the theory in dispute is a belief most unfavourable to our moral growth.

The explanation given by our Holy Qur-án of the misery and difference we have been discussing is more appealing to me, as it strengthens my sense of responsibility.

I am told in the Qur-án that I am not only the engineer of my own life, but I am also responsible for the happiness and misery of my own descendants. Our interest in our children in most cases is stronger than our interest in our own selves. The welfare of the family in many cases keeps its members away from such misdeeds as are sometimes unscrupulously committed by those who lead single lives. Let the consequences of every action I do be shared by my

## TABLE TALK

own children. I will make my actions more steady and righteous. But if I alone have to reap what I sow, despair or temptation may, sometimes, lead me to extremes. Belief that children born with defective organs owe their misery to paternity which sometimes may come to them from three or four generations removed, will decidedly prove a more efficacious check to intemperate actions than the belief that the children were themselves responsible for their physical deficiencies. A person may not care much for the evil consequences of his actions if they are to be confined to him ; but his care to see his family happy may reform him.

Here are the two explanations of our present misery, one given by the theory of Karma and the other advanced by the Qur-án. No one can vouchsafe the truth of either on the strength of personal experience. We come out of oblivion and go to the same. No one with a sensible head on his shoulders can refer to what he had been doing in the previous life, though one is constrained to give audience to certain silly stories out of courtesy to certain "blue-stockings," whose fancy has been claimed by the theory I have been speaking of. No doubt, one cannot say with certainty on the subject ; but out of the two theories the one expounded by the Qur-án seems to me more salubrious in its effect on human character. The Hindu theory creates fatalism and weakens sense of responsibility, and the most hideous part of it is that it makes sin an essential for happiness and civilization.

### Revelation of the Qur-án a Necessity.

If Word from God came from time to time for human guidance in olden days, Divine providence for our spiritual growth would be wanting in consistency and universality if the same reached us in adulterated condition. That almost all the books, passed as revealed, excepting the Qur-án, are not free from human interpolation is a truth admitted even by the adherents of the said books. The books of Old and New Testaments have now been declared to be unauthentic in many places, even under ecclesiastical verdict. Solomon did never write books known after his name, nor was Moses the author of the Pentateuch. Same is the condition, more or less, of every other book in the Bible. But it is said that these holy books are partially genuine. How to sift right from wrong is another difficulty. We possess no efficacious means to do it ; all ingenuity and labour till now has been a mere waste. We believe the Bible a partial fabrication, yet millions of people accept it as word of God, in its entirety.

How inconsistent the human mind has occurred in its various ways. We prefer to have things in their natural

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

form, as far as other eatables and drinks are concerned. We will not quench our thirst with the water taken of a jar in which some one has put his hand by mistake. Articles of food prepared under a process, dispensing with touch of human hands, always commands a market. We are so scrupulous in physical diet, but we lack the same prudence in matters affecting our spiritual sustenance. If a document partially admitted to be forged is not acceptable in evidence in any court of justice, why should the Bible command our respect as word from God, if considerable part of it is unauthenticated?

Again, Divine providence becomes also defective if God close the door of revelation to humanity after a certain period in human history. If Divine economy deemed revelation necessary for human elevation, the need has not come to an end. We are the same people as our ancestors were, with the same deficiencies and limitations. Our forefathers had no superior claims on His providential dispensation. We are as much His children as those who lived in ages gone by. If the revelation of His Will was a necessity to mould spiritual fabric in ancient days, the need is the same in our days. A just and impartial God should only do one of two things: either He should preserve His word in its entirety and bring it in its original purity to our hands, or He should replace it with a new Revelation in case the former became polluted by human hand. Do we not observe the same phenomenon in the whole nature around us, as far as His physical dispensation is concerned? There are certain things in nature which are above all human interference, and therefore free from pollution. The sun, the moon, and other members of the solar system, and very many other things in space which, being free from human possession, have always remained in their required shape and need no substitution in their service to humanity. But things that lose their purity and become impaired in their utility are replaced from time to time by a fresh supply. We cannot live without water, if fresh water means life to us. It loses its utility when spoiled with earthly matter. We cannot use sea-water for irrigation purposes. Fresh stock of water comes every year from heavens to vivify the whole earth. Thus argues the Qur-án, when it shows the necessity of its revelation to this world: "And we have sent this Book to you in order to remove the differences into which these people have fallen, and it is a blessing and guidance for those who believe; and Allah sends down rains from heavens and gives life by it to the dead earth" (The Qur-án, chapter "The Bee"). Want of rain even for one year kills all vital forces from the earth. Drought means death. Any amount of water in the ocean or in lakes becomes of little use to us if water does not come from heavens. If water is the vivifying principle

## TABLE TALK

for the physical nature, revelation is decidedly life to our soul. If Providence never fails to send water from heaven when its former supply becomes vitiated, how can He afford to sit silent when the word that came from Him in days by-gone becomes corrupt—logic so clear to average mind, but not appreciable to the luminaries of the Church in the West, who on one hand are conscientious enough to admit the unauthenticated nature of the Bible but, on the other hand, do not see their way to accept the necessity of any other revelation subsequent to the ministry of Jesus. However, they find their satisfaction in the theory of new dispensation—the grace of “the blood.” It has relieved them of the necessity of Divine guidance. They do need guidance of conduct in every line of human activity, but in matters religious and spiritual they believe in some sort of miraculous transformation which they think is worked out by our very belief in the Blood of Jesus. Man was given the law, so is argued by the Church in the footsteps of Saint Paul, but he could not obey it, the law thus became curse to humanity; the Old Covenant of “law and obedience” did not work well, so argues the Church, God failed in the trial, and then after some four thousand years He was pleased to grant us a new Dispensation which got its revelation at the Cross, and man was relieved from his obligation to observe the law—a principle so absurd and ridiculous at the very face of it, especially in the light of daily experience.

We cannot afford to dispense with the observance of law in any phase of our life. Our very existence depends upon the working of certain laws. But for the law, our very life and property cannot be safe from danger. The very existence of the whole universe depends upon law being strictly observed by every component of the universe. Propriety of conduct means consistence with the law, and misbehaviour means its disrespect. Disease is only a corollary to some breach of hygienic laws, and immorality a violation of the laws of society. In short, regard for law is the lever on which machinery of all civilization and progress is working. One fails to appreciate that psychology of mind in certain people which bows down to the law in everything excepting religion.

The theory of New Dispensation of Blood is, again, an unjustifiable stigma on the universality of Divine Providence. If belief in the blood was the efficacious means of human salvation, why the foregone generations before Jesus were not given the benefit of this blessing? If the religion of law and obedience was only a curse to humanity, as Saint Paul says, why was the ancestry of Jesus, and with it the whole world, saddled with that evil? Again, a larger part of the world remained ignorant of this new epiphany for centuries. It was only in the last century when most of

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

the world came to know of the Gospel which has wrongly been fathered on Jesus. The New Dispensation ought to have been universal, if it came from the universal Father. Again, one fails to understand the reason of choosing some particular time in the history of man for this revelation. To say that God wanted to give a trial to the Old Covenant is only a gross insult to His omniscience. He must know from the very beginning that His machinery of the law for human betterment would be a failure, and if the pious Carpenter from Galilee had to make and bear the cross for the salvation of humanity, the event of crucifixion should take place either immediately after the commission of sin by our first parents, or on the last Day of Judgment. That God created man under certain covenant which the latter violated, whereupon God repented and saw the solution in atonement, are theories meant for children in the nurseries, but to present them to cultured minds is simply an insult to intelligence.

The book of Islam, in justification of its revelation, comes with a logic so simple and so true. It refers to the universal laws of Providence which have been working since the creation of the Universe. Whatever is needed for the existence of man, and the creation of which is not within his reach, comes directly from God; and if the old stock becomes extinct, or is rendered unworthy of use through corruption, fresh supply comes from above to meet the need. Divine Revelation came to guide humanity in every time and clime, and if man lost it or polluted it, Providence came to supply it with the new. We Moslems do believe that every nation was blessed with the message of guidance from God, every class of human race had its prophet and every country its guide; they left words of God with their followers, who through various causes could not keep their sacred books in their original purity, and so God was pleased to send the revelation of the Qur-án, the genuineness of which has universally been admitted on all hands. Friends and foes accept the Qur-ánic text as pure as it came from the sacred lips of the Prophet Muhammad. Almost all other revelations have lost their genuineness. The Qur-án came at a time when all those natural or artificial barriers became removed, which separated one nation from the other some two thousand years before. Besides, efficient means of communication have made the whole world as one nation for intellectual and spiritual culture. The necessity of giving a separate revelation to each nation is not existing. One Book may act as a light to the whole world.

Few words are needed to say something as to the Vedas—the sacred Book in India. Under the teaching of the Qur-án, a Muslim cannot afford to disbelieve in its Divine origin. “Every nation was given a Prophet,” and “There is no race



## TABLE TALK

which had not its Warner from God"—this is the teaching of the Qur-án. And a Muslim must believe that India had its own prophets in the person of Vedic Rishis; Rama Chandra, Buddha and Krishna belonging to the same category. But the question is as to the genuineness and universal utility of the holy writs that came from these sages in India. Very little has been said against the genuineness of the Vedas, excepting what Valmiki is supposed to have said, that the book is not complete and is missing in many "sutras." The remark seems to be correct. Keeping all human needs in view, the Vedas in their present form are not a sufficient guide, and even what we have in our hands is not of much importance as far as its utility to humanity in general goes. It possibly contains inestimable treasures, but they are sealed to man. The book is written in a language which has ceased to be our popular tongue from thousands of years. People differ in its interpretation. Various schools of thought, absolutely contrary in their tenets and doctrine, claim to receive their inspiration from the same book. They cherish beliefs poles apart from each other, and yet they can manage to fortify these contradictions by verses from the Vedas. How it is possible is simply a mystery. The only possible explanation lies in the difficulty which stands in our way to appreciate the true meanings of the Vedas—a difficulty which is unsurmounted; no help of grammar or lexicon is efficacious. The water that came from heavens thousands of years ago on the Himalayan plains for the fertility of human mind possibly remained unpolluted from earthly matter, but went into the recesses of the Himalayas too deep for human reach. Should the descendants of the Rishis spend their ingenuity and time in removing mountains after mountains to avail of that elixir, or should they believe in the divine universal Providence and accept the water of life in the shape of the Qur-án, which was given to humanity at a time when past revelations had become either corrupt or of little use, like the Vedas, for the purpose they have been sent for? The Qur-án does not claim to bring new religion. It gives the same pristine religion of law and obedience, revealed to every nation from above. It contains all those truths which were given in olden books. "Scriptures purified containing mighty truths." In this pithy sentence, Qur-án claims to contain all the truths given in former days but adulterated through human hands. The last book of God came to restore them to their original position, and in some cases to explain Divine truths which became unintelligible through the antiquity of the language, as in the case of the Vedas.