

# Islamic Review

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

MUHARRAM, 1345 A.H.

VOL. XIV.

JULY, 1926

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## NOTES

### Definition of Muslim.

A Muslim is Israelite in following the ten commandments of God and the law of retribution with its legitimate bounds. He is a follower of Christ doing away with all the ritual of the Pharisees, and denouncing their hypocritical observances. He observes the law of Mercy promulgated on the Mount of Olives, when it leads to reclamation. His object is reformation through mercy or retribution, as the case may be. He is an Arya Hindu in breaking images and a Sanatou Dharmi in paying respect to all the godly men of any nation or creed who have been called Avatars—Incarnation of God. He is Buddhist in preaching Nirvan, i.e. self-effacement as the key of Salvation. He is Unitarian to establish the unity of God. In short, he embraces—through the Qur-án—every beauty in every religion and turns his face from what has been added to the religion of God by man—and this is Islam.—AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

### Church of England and the General Strike.

The moral to be drawn from the recent General Strike which, in accordance with the decision of the General Council

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of the Trades Union Congress, came into effect at midnight on May 3rd, is twofold. First there is the growing strength of the solidarity of the labouring class with which every Government, every class, must count in the future. Over 3,000,000 people came out in response to the dictates of the General Council, with the result that both the industrial and social life of England was unhinged and thrown out of gear. Trams, buses, railway trains, factories, newspapers—all stopped. Though the strike was called off “unconditionally” on May 12th, its after-effects are being felt in every phase of life. Secondly, the present-day constitution of industrial life does not rise to the awakening consciousness of the people who are demanding a greater share of the good things in life which up till now seemed to have been the exclusive lot of the few. These are hard realities, and they must be faced.

We do not propose to discuss here the evils of the system from whose yoke the working classes want to free themselves. One fact, that the present social system has failed miserably, stands out quite prominently, and the crying need of the thing is a system of life which may prevent capitalism from getting out of hand, and ensure at the same time a more equal and fairer distribution of wealth amongst the members of a community.

We are sure we shall not be accused of self-praise if we say that a study of the Islamic social laws would go a long way to cure all the evils from which the present-day society is suffering. The social laws of Islam try to effect and maintain a just balance between extremes of poverty and wealth. Under the Muslim régime the land and its wealth principally belong to the Government, and not to one individual. It adopts measures whereby private property, whose existence it recognizes, is in a certain sense made public property, for it recognizes the existence of a public right over private property also. Islam has succeeded in connecting the social aspect of property with the private life of an individual. The social laws of Islam in the form of compulsory poor-rate—*Zakat*—which if on the one hand make the poor sharers in the riches of the rich, on the other make the rich custodians of

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their wealth for the benefit of the poor, and responsible to society, and in the form of the laws of inheritance destroying all possibilities of the land passing into the hands of the eldest son of the family, and thus affording opportunities for the springing up of great dukedoms, and in the form of an interdict placed on interest deals a death-blow to the chance of wealth becoming amassed in the hands of a few.

That, however, was a side-issue. We are here concerned more with the theme of Christian love, brotherhood and fellowship than with the Islamic social laws. The Church of England receives annually £400,000 as mining royalties. One wonders if the Church, instead of talking platitudes, would give a practical proof of its professed love and "a little practical help" to the working men by forgoing its claim on royalties, and thus help the situation on the solution of which so much depends—the future of the coal industry in England and the welfare of the country. Perhaps our expectations are too far beyond the mark, for the Church is as much a capitalist as any other capitalist. It will cling to its capital as long as it can. And we must not forget that one of the many causes of the Russian upheaval was the Catholic landed clergy.

### Slump in the Churches.

Dr. Ballard, at Sheffield, had a sad tale to unfold in the course of an address, "The Christianity of the Future." Things were, he said, most unsatisfactory. In a London area with a population of 37,000, only 200 were to be found in the churches on Easter Sunday. In Sheffield, out of a population of half a million, only one in ten were associated with the Christian Church. The chief reasons for the people's aversion to religion, he maintained, were the many perversions, such as Ecclesiasticism, Romanism, Sacerdotalism, and the presenting of the Bible as infallible and verbally inspired.<sup>1</sup>

Here is corroboration of his view:—

A writer in the *Christian World* for April 22nd says that during the past few months he has visited in the London

<sup>1</sup> *Free Thinker*, May 2nd.

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area various churches of the Congregationalists, who occupy so prominent a place in the religious life of England. He adds that "most of these have handsome buildings, and ministers well above the average in preaching ability. Yet they are almost all deserted. The last one visited would probably accommodate seven or eight hundred worshippers. But its galleries were closed, and under forty people were scattered in the body of the church. The collections of the previous Sunday were less than two pounds. This was typical of others. Wherein lies the remedy for a state of things depressing alike to ministers and people?"

The answer to the question is that Christianity is played out, and that unless it supplies something intelligible there is no hope for it. But in spite of all this, the Missionary Council has published "calls." Perhaps the Church wants to put into circulation in other countries the false coins rejected in Christendom! And the Church forgets that it has to deal with a material which is conscious of its own self and of the greatness of the Message entrusted to it.

To a scientific student of the mind, the empty churches are a sure sign of the recovery of intelligence from the Christian blight which had fallen on it. But the Church, it seems, is getting neurotic, and in its anxiety to make the Churches popular is introducing methods which in the long run are likely to prove a broken reed. To what absurd lengths these innovations can go is illustrated by the following, reported in the *Daily Express* of May 20, 1926:—

### DANCE GIRLS IN CHURCH.

#### HOW A VICAR FILLED HIS DESERTED BUILDING.

PARIS, Thursday, May 20th.

The Rev. William Norman Guthrie, vicar of St. Mark's, New York, has arrived in Paris.

He caused some sensation in America by introducing into the church plays and sketches which illustrated the principal events of the New Testament, as well as a troupe of dancing girls whose graceful movements before the altar were intended to evoke evangelical ideas.

The vicar declared in an interview that his church, which was formerly deserted, was now continually crowded with worshippers, who applauded the beauty of the æsthetic spectacle.—*Central News*.

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One is left astounded at the very idea of one who can talk with an air of pride of such an achievement !

Methods like the one quoted above proclaim plainly enough that Christianity, in its present form, has lost its grip on mankind. To stave off complete disaster, the Church and its ministers are daily devoting themselves to social problems and protesting against the decision of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners permitting Sunday games. Formerly on Sundays people went to church presumably because they had nothing else to do. But, to the sorrow of the Sabbatarians, freedom of action on Sundays is demanded nowadays, the which is another nail in the coffin of the obsolete doctrines of Christianity.

In this connection the Qur-ânic verse on the Muslim Sabbath—Friday—may perhaps prove illuminating to some :—

O you who believe ! when the call is made for prayer on Friday, then hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off traffic ; this is better for you, if you know.

But when the prayer is ended, then disperse abroad in the land, and seek of Allah's grace, and remember Allah much, that you may be successful (ch. lxii. 9, 10).

### The Parson Famine.

That there is a famine of worshippers in the churches has long been a well-established fact, but the news that such a thing as a parson famine was hanging over the doomed Church has come to us with a sense of relief, for we have always sympathized with those who earned a sorry living by preaching what they pretended to believe. If this famine lasts long enough—and we are pretty certain it will—the world in general and the East in particular will hail it. For it would mean a reduction in the number of those who invite others to share that which they themselves do not believe.

“ It is often said,” says Mr. James Douglas, in the *Sunday Express*, May 23, 1926, “ that the parson famine is due to economic causes. That is to say, the pay of the parson does not attract young men who wish to serve humanity in the biggest and noblest way. The Bishop of Birmingham denies this theory. He attributes the dearth of ordinands to a profound reluctance among educated people in England

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to assent whole-heartedly to the doctrines of Christianity. He says :—

Humane idealism based on religious enthusiasm is strong, but belief in God as Christ revealed Him in the incarnation and in personal immortality has decayed. The great need is that Christianity should be so presented in the light of fuller knowledge that the bias of educated opinion will swing again to the Christian position. Not till then will there be an adequate supply of ordinands combining ability with earnestness.

Example is better than precept, but experience is better still; and we quote Mr. Douglas's description of the mental agonies, based on his personal experience, through which an ordinand has to pass :—

I agree with Dr. Barnes. I was once an ordinand. My father and mother wanted me to be a parson. They made heavy sacrifices in order to fit me for the job. They were poor, and they taught me not to fear poverty. I was not afraid of being a poor parson. No young man with a flame of fire in his heart is terrified by the prospect of penury. He revels in it.

**What frightened me out of the army of ordinands was the difficulty of pretending to believe in a decaying heap of dead doctrines and dogmas which were obsolete before I was born.**

**A doctor of divinity vainly tried to persuade me to pretend to believe in all the unbelievables. He doped and dosed me with Apologetics, that queer branch of theology which is concerned with the defence of obsolete and obsolescent dogmas.**

**My mind reeled under the strain, and I nearly broke my mother's heart when I fled back to the ranks of the laity.**

Therefore I can sympathize with the young ordinand of the twentieth century who is mentally tormented and tortured by theology as I was tormented and tortured at the end of the nineteenth century. My experience was not singular or exceptional.

It is the experience of everyone who endeavours to solve insolubles and reconcile irreconcilables. The tragedy of dead dogma is that it is an utterly unnecessary excrescence of religion.

*Appropos* of the above, the letter printed below, addressed to the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, will be of interest to our readers not only because it adopts the Muslim point of view, and affords us a peep into the clerical mind, but also because it reveals some very welcome signs of the times—welcome, at least, to Muslims. Truth is ever justifying itself, but it is we who refuse to listen to it. Muslims repudiated and denounced, centuries ago, the Pagan ideas fathered upon Christianity, and that repudiation is being echoed to-day

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by the followers of Christ themselves. The change in the times has compelled them to bow their heads to the teachings of Muhammad, who denied the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, and consequently the Divinity of Christ. To a Muslim this change is not news, nevertheless he welcomes it. For it emphasizes all the more the justification of the existence and the propagation of the Islamic teachings. To him only the expected has come about—though late in time. This letter is but an echo of the teachings of the Qur-án promulgated thirteen centuries ago. Will it be undue optimism to conclude that the current of modern thought is setting instinctively and inadvertently towards Islam?

The letter reads as follows :—

SIR,

There is a widespread opinion that the Church is committed to literal acceptance of all the traditional orthodox formulæ. There is also an idea among many of the laity that no one without such acceptance can honestly take orders in the Church. So long as this suspicion lasts, there can be no cure, either for the drift of many thinking men and women from the Church, or for that shortage of ordinands which the authorities of the Church deplore. We therefore think that the time has come to appeal for a definite change of the official attitude of the Church, in regard to doctrinal formulæ.

The Christian Gospel is too big a thing to be expressed in any set of formulæ. It is a Way, a Creed of Life; it calls all men and women to the service of Christ, Who, by His Life and Death, wills all men to be His Sons, and calls them to Life Immortal. The Creeds are traditional expressions of this Christian Gospel, but we do not think their recitation as such involves literal assent to all their details. In particular we hold that no specific assent should be demanded from clergy or laity to the *Virgin Birth or to a physical interpretation of the Resurrection.*<sup>1</sup>

Many think it to be dishonest for any who hold the above views to be active lay members of the Church or to enter the ministry. For these reasons it seems to us as vital, not only that the Prayer Book Services should be reformed, but that authority should at once make it clear that it is possible honestly and openly to be members of the Church and to serve in the ministry on this basis.

The general position outlined above has been publicly maintained by a number of clergy and representative laity; but we believe that the general public has no idea of the extent to which this is the case. We therefore venture to appeal to like-minded Churchmen to take every opportunity at this time of affirming their convictions.

It is because we ourselves are young men who seek ordination, and who believe that the Life and Teaching of Christ constitute the vital

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<sup>1</sup> Italics are ours.



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Gospel most needed for our age, that we feel impelled to call upon the Church to face this issue in the hope that it may be made easier for the many who we know share our ideals to give their lives to the service of Christ in the ministry of the Church.

We are, etc.,

G. F. ALLEN, University College, Oxford.

M. T. DUNLOP, Hertford College, Oxford.

R. MCKAY, Magdalen College, Oxford.

H. G. R. SELLON, University College, Oxford.

The *Westminster Gazette* comments on the above as follows :—

We have indeed travelled far from the days when the soul-pangs of Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Robert Elsmere* about the divinity of Christ were the subject of fearful debate in Anglican circles. Four young Oxford undergraduates write a calm joint letter to the *Manchester Guardian* to-day saying they would like to become incumbents if they could subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles without specifically assenting to "the Virgin Birth, or to the physical interpretation of the Resurrection." The Unitarian Church might receive them without difficulty, and many of the Free Churches would not make too much trouble, but we should be surprised if such a reserved Credo would pass the Church Assembly. It will be interesting to watch the response of Anglican Churchmen to this appeal for a Christianity without the miraculous.

These remarks give us a fair idea of the extent to which the human hand has been concerned in the shaping of present-day Christianity.

### **The British Estimate of the Bishop of London.**

Our readers scarcely need to be introduced to the Bishop of London. They will, after having read the articles on "Bishop of London and Islam" in these pages, have long since formed their own estimate of his Lordship. Nevertheless, we venture to supplement their estimate by reproducing the following remarks which the *Daily News* makes on the Bishop of London, who has just completed his twenty-five years in his office :—

He has never carried much weight in the House of Lords; his interventions in the deliberations of the Church have always been that of an inspired amateur rather than those of a great theologian upon the burning controversies, ecclesiastical or political, of his generation; he has never delivered himself of judgment worth listening to, or even a phrase that anyone has remembered.

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And in connection with the above the following comment of the *Free Thinker* for May 19, 1926, will make interesting reading :—

Few Bishops of London could have had such a damning tribute paid to them. Bishop Ingram will always stand as the very incarnation of mediocrity, and as a living proof of the intellectual decadence of the Church. But the *Daily News* finds that he has popularized religion, and has always shown sympathy with the forlorn and miserable. All that can be meant by the first phrase is that his religion has been such as was on a level with that of the more ignorant, and the second can only mean that he is not a brute. He is just a very unintelligent person with energy, a certain amount of good nature and friends in high places.

### **The Church and the Betting Tax.**

Gambling is to be legalized in England by the betting tax which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to levy on it. His sole aim is to find money regardless of the effects such a step would have on the social life of the country.

The opinion of the Church on those effects is divided. There are some who think that the energy of the Church should be spent on questions of more vital importance, while others hold that the proposal of the Chancellor should be resisted because of their convictions that such a step as he proposes would be morally detrimental to the youth of the nation, and that it would be putting a premium on the evil of gambling which has already permeated each and every grade of society.

The fact that the turnover of "legal betting," as it is called, amounts to £170,000,000 annually, and the existence of 60,000 street bookmakers, is enough to justify the idea that every phase of life in England is affected with the evil of gambling. Among the victims of this infectious evil are to be reckoned the Schools, Colleges, and the Churches. Camouflaged gambling in the form of raffling at Church bazaars, guessing competitions at Church socials, are a matter of common experience. In the Roman Church lotteries are a recognized means of providing funds for religious purposes, and in support of hospitals and charities.

After these, it requires no stretch of imagination to understand how far-reaching will be the effects of this measure, which, in a way, will remove the stigma of illegality, and lend

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the status of respectability to gambling on the social life of England. "Well-informed investigators state that gambling among all classes of workers reduces the national output at least 20 per cent. per annum. It is the most painful source of crime, and Canon Peter Green asserts that at least 100,000 cases of theft and bankruptcy and suicide are directly attributable to this vice. The misery and suffering caused to women is probably greater from this source than from any other. Betting demoralizes sport, and some assert that it corrupts even the police."<sup>1</sup>

That even the Church is divided on a question wherein issues of grave moral danger are involved affords us another proof of the antiquatedness and the insufficiency of the Bible to meet the social needs of the people. The Bible—the imperfect work of men—maintains a complete silence on gambling. Not a single word is said in it against this baneful evil, although the Church, in part at least, has been forced to lift its voice in protest against this "menace to national well-being." It is a great service in itself; but we have our fears. The Church, if it ever succeeds at all in stemming the onrush of this evil and getting the proposed taxation on betting thrown out, will very soon appropriate to itself all the credit and as time goes on will declare it to be a Christian virtue based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Social amelioration has never been the aim of the Bible, and this fact accounts for its silence on the majority of points which concern our daily life.

And in contrast to the silence of the Bible, how plain and explicit is the Qur-án. It says:—

O you who believe! intoxicants and games of chance are only an uncleanness, the devil's work; shun it, therefore, that you may be successful (ch. v. 90).

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<sup>1</sup> *Methodist Times*, May 20th.

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**Friday Prayer and Sermon.**—At the London Muslim Prayer House—111, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday at 1 p.m. **Sunday Lectures** at 5 p.m. **Qur-án and Arabic Classes**—every Sunday at 3.30 p.m.

**Service, Sermon, and Lectures** every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking, 3.15 p.m. Every Friday at 1 p.m.

## HAREM OR ZENANA LIFE

# HAREM OR ZENANA LIFE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

By LADY ABBAS ALI BAIG

*(An Address delivered at the Venture Club, Bristol)*

I HAVE been asked to sketch in a few words the present political situation in India, especially with reference to the Indian demand for complete self-government; and also to throw some light on the activities and position of women, especially of Muslim women. The two subjects have only a remote connection in their combined bearing on the general advancement of the people of India, and in the short space at my command I can only touch the fringe of each.

The political situation in India is dominated by a rising tide of unrest, which, with a few intervals of comparative calm, has been gradually gathering strength for half a century. What are the causes of this unrest and discontent? In answering this question Indians and Britons range themselves in opposing camps. The Englishman urges that British rule has been beneficent, and has brought in its train incalculable benefits, such as the Courts of Justice, educational institutions, railways, irrigation works, post and telegraph offices, hospitals, waterworks, and so forth, and he lays special emphasis on the efficiency of the public services organized by Englishmen.

The Indians point out that for these benefits and services India alone pays in full measure, and that the British nation, though it is more than equally benefited by the connection of the two countries, throws every conceivable financial burden on India's shoulders. The Indian's contention is that the disadvantages resulting from this unequal partnership outweigh the advantages derived by India. One of the principal grievances is, that no former *régime* has imposed such humiliating and galling political disabilities with a view to securing race ascendancy. India has not forgotten that, though an Act of Parliament was passed in 1833 removing all disabilities based on race, creed or colour, it remained a

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dead letter in practice for over eighty years, covering nearly the whole period of effective British rule, which is the only really foreign rule in the long and chequered history of India in the sense that it is carried on by rulers who have not made India their home and identified themselves with the people, but by a nation whose governing control is exercised from a distance of six thousand miles, and whose agents and officials have no lasting connection with the country or the people, but are bound to them only by the temporary ties of business or work.

The disabilities to which I have referred were so degrading that until quite recent times an Indian was disqualified from being a subaltern in the Indian Army, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, an Assistant Political Agent, or even a pilot in his own fatherland.

Another Indian grievance is that British rule has thrown a wet blanket on some of the vital elements of national strength, so that India may remain in a state of perpetual dependence, as a British "possession" and "heritage." I may mention here only two essentials of national strength which call for effective action.

(1) The people of India have not been given adequate opportunities of equipping themselves for the defence of their own country; they are debarred from service in the Artillery, the Air Force, the Navy, and a few other services, which are vital for effective self-protection.

(2) Though the country has a coast-line of about four thousand miles, nothing has been done to encourage the development of a mercantile marine.

Contrast this inaction with the vigorous measures adopted by the Government of Japan, backed by the driving force of national patriotism, in regard to these fundamentals of national strength, and you will understand why the desire for self-government is general throughout the country, among all sections of its thinking population, who have sunk all racial differences in a common aspiration to attain it, though it should be noted that *swaraj* (or self-rule) need not imply the severance of the British connection, but rather the consolida-

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tion and fusion of Indian and British interests in a mutually beneficial union resting on a willing and equal partnership.

You may, perhaps, be able to take an unbiassed view of the Indian political situation if you imagine what your own attitude would be if the Germans had succeeded in their attempt to dominate Great Britain, and had brought forward all sorts of arguments for the moral justification of German rule as a Divine dispensation for your benefit, and for regarding your country as a German heritage and possession.

I may make a reference here to two grave and recent causes of unrest.

(1) When India, with enthusiastic loyalty, rallied to the side of England in the Great War (which did not directly concern India), and helped England, when the very existence of the British Empire hung in the balance, India expected that the solemn pledges and assurances held out to her of equal partnership and Dominion status would be ungrudgingly fulfilled. These pledges are now being explained away and their fulfilment delayed.

(2) The Punjab, which is described as the spear-head and sword-arm of India, has been rewarded for shedding Indian blood, in preserving British liberties, by the frightful massacre of her unarmed sons who, as Mr. Churchill has frankly admitted in the House of Commons, were not attacking anybody when they were brutally shot down without the slightest warning.

No doubt some of you have read Lord Curzon's book published a short time ago, in which he refers to a letter of Queen Victoria written to him during the last six months of her life, containing the following words: "No people are more alive to kindness or more affectionately attached, if treated with kindness, than the Indians are." I am afraid that sentiment was not appreciated by the British, and now perhaps it is too late.

I shall now turn to the position of women in India, and first refer to Zenana life. In considering the Purdah system, or the seclusion of women, it must be remembered that Islam

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does not ordain it. Do not imagine that the prevalent restrictions have a religious basis. Had that been the case, Purdah would not have been recently abolished in Turkey. In India also it is being gradually relaxed.

In the time of the Prophet, women entered every sphere of national life, whether social, political or educational. Even in warfare they used to follow the armies, taking care of the wounded and nursing the sick. The advent of the Prophet of Islam brought about the emancipation of women, who till then had been condemned to a life of slavery, and had enjoyed no rights of their own. He said: "The rights of women are sacred. See that women are maintained in their rights."

The Purdah, on the other hand, is a later reactionary institution. It is not, however, without certain redeeming features. Its chief aim, in the opinion of some unprejudiced English women, who have had an inside experience of Zenana life, is to protect women from even the indiscreet glances of the opposite sex. All the restrictions of their private life are intended to keep them safe from the ugly side of the world, and to preserve in them all that is divine in womanhood. In Muslim countries the women who are without a profession, without means, or without influence, can always look to someone who, in a legitimate manner, provides for their needs.

I may allude here to another aspect of Indian Zenana life. There is a common belief that, in the East, a woman in power, in a family, makes a terrible mother-in-law for a girl wife. This is partly true in the case of the illiterate, working and lower classes, from whom the missionaries generally pick up their ideas on family life and customs, seeing that their work usually lies among such people—the higher classes not having much need for them. Personally I have not come across any such cases among my own relations, friends or acquaintances. Reverence for mothers and mothers-in-law is generally a pleasing feature of Zenana life. Even if a daughter-in-law dislikes a mother-in-law's influence over her husband and children, she seldom shows it. I should be

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surprised if a similar feeling does not exist also in this country, though I fancy it is mostly the other way about. Here it is the husband who usually dislikes the influence of the wife's mother, if I am not mistaken.

In our Zenanas we have not the opportunities, to the same extent as you, of doing good outside our family life, by joining various societies for helping the poor and the disabled; or, in connection with hospitals and other charitable institutions, by rendering personal services. Our way of doing such things mostly takes the form of helping and supporting poor relations, and orphans, and giving all we can spare to them, and also giving food and money to the poor and needy. Every Thursday numbers of beggars are seen going from house to house asking for money and food, cooked or uncooked, and these are hardly ever turned away. On our high and holy days grain and meat are distributed. If a death takes place, the members of the family, according to their means, feed the poor on the third, tenth, twentieth and fortieth days, and again on the anniversary. Women with money often build and endow rest-houses and other philanthropic institutions, and also mosques for the use of wayfarers and pilgrims. During the month of fasting, which is called Ramadhan, people send eatables, according to their means, to such places every day for the poor who may be fasting, and who have not the wherewithal to enjoy a hearty meal when the fast is over. Some of you may not know that our fast lasts from early dawn till sunset, without a morsel of food or a drop of water passing our lips. Another idea prevalent in the West is, that because we do not go out and about our lives are dull and uneventful. This is partly true, where our men are selfish and inconsiderate, but there are also good fathers, brothers, husbands and sons. It should not be forgotten that almost everything depends generally on the whims and fancies of our men in the East. Where they are good and cultured, they give us every opportunity, and place every advantage within our reach to enable us to be happy. We have many social gatherings, with music and singing girls to amuse us. We go to theatres and cinemas and other places, such as exhibitions, and so on, where Purdah



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arrangements can be made. I remember going almost every night when I could to theatres with my elder sisters before I married and came to England. What you imagine about the unhappy lives behind the Purdah or in the Harem is not quite the truth, but only a half-truth. There are certainly extremely unhappy cases as well as exceedingly happy ones. The Harem is not such an awful place as the free women of the West imagine.

I may quote here a few lines from a book of an English lady, Miss Grace Ellison, regarding the word Harem. She says: "In Roget's *Thesaurus*, Harem means a house of ill-fame." When she came back from Turkey and announced the fact that she had been staying in a Harem, she said: "Now that I know what *Harem* means, I fear that some people must have had a very curious idea of my morality. A short while ago, when I spoke on 'Harem Life,' the room was full of men, and not one woman had dared to come to hear what I might have to say. For the sake of those who do not know," she adds, "it will be necessary to explain that the word Harem means private or forbidden. It is simply a term used to describe those rooms in a Muslim house exclusively reserved for the use of women. It does not mean a collection of wives, as so many people suppose in the West. No man may cross the threshold of the Harem unless he is a blood relation of the lady of the house. As a matter of fact, the word Harem has the same meaning as the Indian word Purdah or Zenana, which stands for all that is most proper." She adds: "It is a fallacy that a Turk must necessarily have more than one wife. The days of polygamy are past in Turkey, as almost everywhere in the East. When the great Prophet of Islam limited the number of wives to four, he was legislating for a people amongst whom the practice of polygamy had been brought to its most awful aspect. The reform instituted by him marked a very great improvement in the position of women. Also polygamy was an economic necessity amongst communities in which war was increasing the disproportion between the sexes." She continued: "I know amongst my Turkish friends men who would deliberately sacrifice their

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own comfort and feelings to provide for a homeless woman. It would be difficult to find a European who could do this. Therefore, how unjust it is that the followers of so great a reformer as Mahomed, co-citizens of ours in this great Empire, should be judged solely by the circumstance that the law permits them to have more than one wife."

In this connection it must be remembered that Jesus nowhere has said, "Thou shalt marry only one wife," or anything to that effect. What he condemns is divorce, which is now so prevalent in Christendom. He is silent in regard to polygamy. This statement may perhaps surprise you. You will find it to be perfectly true if you closely examine your own Church history.

You may ask: "If Christ did not ordain monogamy, how do you account for it in Christendom?" The answer is that monogamy is the direct outcome of the *civil* code of Justinian, in the preparation of which he was assisted, not by a Christian, but by an atheist. After this code came into operation, even Christian bishops of those early days continued to have more than one wife—in some instances several wives—and it took a long time before this civil law began to be strictly observed. On the other hand, Islam, on which the odium of unrestricted polygamy is cast, is the only religion which expressly restricts the plurality of wives, and lays down such stringent limitations as practically to permit marriage with one woman only. There is nothing in the Qur-án to prevent Muslims from abolishing polygamy by a civil law, as the Turks have recently done. In this connection I am reminded of a retort by a friend of mine. When taunted about the immorality of having more than one wife, he said: "We can, and we don't; you can't, and you do."

Polygamy, of which I very strongly disapprove, has one merit—it reduces the number of illegitimate children, and saves the honour of that unfortunate class of women who are known as "unmarried mothers."

(To be continued.)

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### BISHOP OF LONDON AND ISLAM

#### IV

"Speaking at the consecration of an addition to St. John's Church, Harrow, on Saturday, the Bishop of London said that people must realize that no other faith could be regarded as a rival to Christianity. Those who spoke of some of the religions of the East as alternatives did not know what they were talking about. A certain British peer who had embraced Islam had attempted to discuss the matter with him, but he (the Bishop) had closed the conversation by saying: 'Go and do something to induce your fellow-Mohammedans in the Near East to set free the thirty thousand Christian girls whom they have forced into slavery, and then I will argue with you.'"—*The Times*, November 10, 1925.

My last might have opened the eyes of his Lordship to the fact that Christianity rather aggravated than mitigated the misery of the slave class.

Muhammad (may his memory be ever green) was the first man in the history of the world who felt commiseration for the slave class. He did so in a degree that was not even imagined by his predecessors in history; and Islam, his religion, was the first creed that made the liberation of slaves a matter of great virtue, and preached abolition of slavery. In fact, it changed the whole aspect of the world in this respect. This I say advisedly, and I challenge our opponents to say anything against it.

Muhammad was neither a man of dreams nor a visionary. He was a man of action, and knew how to work rightly in the world. He would not confine himself to orations and homilies; he would survey the whole situation; he would appreciate all the obstacles in his way; he would then adopt means efficacious enough to bring out the best results. The problem of slavery and its abolition confronted him as the most stupendous task ever coped with by single individual efforts. Slavery was a most popular institution upheld by usage and past civilization everywhere; it supplied a most valuable form of property. It was interwoven with various aspects of the then social life, and its abolition would strike at the very foundation of the social fabric. Besides, the

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institution was in some respects not without redeeming features, and therefore could not be dispensed with totally. Among its various sources, war was perhaps the most prominent. War, as yet, has not left the human race, and the only conceivable check to it would be to award, where possible, some deterrent punishment to the aggressor, when defeated. In olden days the males of the defeated camp were killed and mutilated; later on they were taken as slaves, and this was not a bad substitute for slaughter and mutilation. Indemnity, or captivity, came to be regarded as the natural demand of a conqueror from the vanquished; and modern civilization upholds it as well. But the inhuman treatment awarded to captives everywhere in the pre-Islamic world made war-bondage identical with slavery. War-prisonership was indispensable, but something was needed to better the condition of the captives in order to save them the indignity which the very word "slave" in itself has always conveyed. In other words, if the institution of war-bondage was a necessary appendage to human society, then some step must be taken that might ennoble such bondsmen in the eyes of their captors.

Lord Headley, in his paper on "Islam on Slavery," says the following:—

In the early days of his ministry, Muhammad could not command wealth enough to purchase the freedom of the slaves. He, however, preached the religion of liberating slaves and made their emancipation a virtue of great merit. We read the following in the Qur-án: "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east and the west, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in Allah and the last day, and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him, to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (*emancipation of*) the captives," etc.<sup>1</sup>

"And what will make you comprehend what the uphill

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, ii. 177.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

road is? It is the *setting free of the slaves* or the giving of food in the day of hunger to an orphan," etc.<sup>1</sup>

Again, the Qur-án lays down that a part of the public funds should be spent in purchasing the freedom of the slaves. "Alms are only for the poor and the needy and the officials appointed over them and those whose hearts are made to incline (to Truth) and emancipation of captives and those in debt and in the way of Allah, and the wayfarer." <sup>2</sup>

No other revealed Book says anything on the subject, and no other Prophet, including Jesus, inspired his followers to emancipate those they held in bondage, or mitigate their sufferings. With reference to the unique pronouncements of the Prophet Muhammad as to the freeing of slaves, I may now quote the following from Ameer Ali <sup>3</sup> :—

"The Prophet exhorted his followers repeatedly in the name of God to enfranchise slaves, 'than which there was not an act more acceptable to God.' He ruled that for certain sins of omission the penalty should be the manumission of slaves. He ordered that slaves should be allowed to purchase their liberty by the wages of their services; and that in case the unfortunate beings had no present means of gain, and wanted to earn in some other employment enough for that purpose, they should be allowed to leave their masters on an agreement to that effect. . . . In certain contingencies, it was provided that the slaves should become enfranchised without the interference, and even against the will, of their master. The contract or agreement in which the least doubt was discovered was construed most favourably in the interest of the slave, and the slightest promise on the part of the master was made obligatory for the purposes of enfranchisement. He placed the duty of kindness towards the slave on the same footing with the claims of kindred and neighbours and fellow-travellers and wayfarers; encouraged manumission to the freest extent and therewith the gift of a 'portion of that wealth which God has given you'; and prohibited

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, xc. 11-16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Spirit of Islam*, p. 262.

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sensual uses of a master's power over a slave, with the promise of divine mercy to the wronged. To free a slave is the expiation for ignorantly slaying a believer and for certain forms of untruth. The whole tenor of Muhammad's teaching made 'permanent chattelhood' or caste impossible; and it is simply an 'abuse of words' to apply the word 'slavery,' in the English sense, to any status known to the legislation of Islam."

The Qur-án, to begin with, thus abolished all kinds of slavery, with the sole exception of the bondage that resulted from fighting, provided that fighting was in self-defence. In other words, a Muslim has been forbidden, under the clear teaching of the Qur-án, to make others his slaves; he may make prisoners of others, but only in a self-defensive fight. In order to make distinction between the two—the slave and the war-captive—the Qur-án does not style the latter *abad*, the Arabic equivalent of the word "slave." "Those whom your right hands possess" is the term used by the Qur-án to designate that class. It not only defines the exclusive mode in which a man could be brought under a Muslim's bondage, but it shows also that a Muslim's bondsman is not a slave, but a fallen foe, otherwise his equal, and that he should either be ransomed or set free out of favour; and the latter was the course which was in most cases adopted by the Prophet himself. When the Qur-án and the Prophet use the word *abad*—slave—as regards persons in bondage, it should be remembered that the reference in such case is only to such as were already in bondage under the old custom. As to the liberation of such bondsmen, this presented a difficulty of a very intricate nature. The immediate abolition of slavery was likely to cause many and far-reaching complications. The slave class possessed no wealth. They had neither house nor property, trade nor learning. Their immediate emancipation would have produced a class of penniless vagabonds and indolent beggars, seeing that their lifelong habit of abject dependence on their masters had killed all initiative in them. The task of Islam was not only to secure

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freedom for those already in slavery, but to make them useful members of society. And the Holy Prophet was quite alive to the situation.

Consider the generations of men who worked to abolish slavery in this country alone. Thrice a Bill was introduced into Parliament, and thrice it was rejected. Consider the amount of money that England and other countries had to pay in order to bring the slave-trade to an end. England had to pay three hundred thousand pounds to the Portuguese for giving up the trade in the north of the Equator. She paid Spain an indemnity of four hundred thousand pounds to bring the Spanish trade to an end, and an enormous sum went to pay off the companies and private adventurers, including the Church.

The Holy Prophet was not the owner of gold and silver, but he possessed an inexhaustible treasure of the soul and mind; and he did in this respect that which filthy lucre could not do. The most deep-rooted evils were swept off before his mighty word as a straw before a strong gale. It has already been stated elsewhere that the Qur-án and the Prophet made the liberation of the slave a matter of great virtue. A portion of the public money was set aside for this purpose.<sup>1</sup> It was also declared to be a good atonement for many minor transgressions. But it was chiefly three considerations—(1) the socially elevated position of the slaves, (2) the treatment of equality that could be demanded by the slaves from their masters, and (3) the strict restrictions against harsh treatment—that led to the

<sup>1</sup> The following saying of the Holy Prophet is recorded in Bukhari: "Whoever frees a Muslim slave, God shall protect, every one of his limbs from fire for every limb of the slave set free." Bará, son of 'Azib, reports that a person came to the Holy Prophet (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him) and said to him: "Point out to me a deed which should bring me nearer to paradise and take me farther away from fire." The Holy Prophet said: "Free a slave and ransom a captive." There is also a tradition which says that "the most beloved of all deeds with God is the freeing of a slave." Emancipation of slaves was especially enjoined on particular occasions. "Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, reports," says Bukhari, "that we were enjoined to free slaves whenever there was an eclipse."

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uprooting of the evil and paved the way to its ultimate abolition.

I quote Lord Headley again :—

In the Meccan life of the Prophet no chances of making many slaves presented themselves. His own slaves he released, and his friend and follower, Abu Bekr, freed a large number of his slaves and purchased a number in order to set them free. When the Prophet came to Medina and the conditions of warfare began, the following verse was revealed which totally abolished slavery of the old type and made war-captivity the only kind of slavery—if it may be called such—permissible in Islam: "It is not fit for a prophet that he should take captives unless he has fought and triumphed." <sup>1</sup> The verse lays down the condition under which a person forfeits his liberty at the hand of another. In other words, the verse abolished slavery and allowed Muslims to make war-prisoners, and this only so long as the war lasted, as the following shows: "So when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, then smite their necks, until when you have overcome them, then make them prisoners and then either set them free as a favour or let them ransom (themselves), until the war terminates." <sup>2</sup>

It must always be borne in mind that the Prophet was ever on the defensive in all his battles; he was forced to arms under compulsion and to protect his life, which was sought with ruthless pertinacity by his enemies.

The verses quoted are very clear, and hardly require any explanation. It is apparent that from the teachings of the Prophet no Muslim is permitted to bring any person into slavery, and that Islam and the Qur-án give no countenance to anything like the institution of slavery.

It is therefore apparent that a Muslim must fight a hard battle in self-defence before he can be permitted to take prisoners of war, and that as regards such prisoners they are either to be set free or ransomed.

The Prophet adopted the former course in most cases ;

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, viii. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xlvii. 4.



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for instance, in the case of the prisoners of the Bani Mustalik a hundred families were set at liberty, and in the case of Hawazin<sup>1</sup> six thousand prisoners were released out of favour.

Those prisoners taken at Badr had to pay ransom because Islam was very weak at that time and the enemy was determined to crush it out of existence. But many among the Badr prisoners were released when, at the request of the Prophet, they taught reading and writing to his companions. When, after a succession of battles, the Prophet entered Mecca as undisputed victor, his very first act was that of the manumitter and enfranchiser, for he gave free pardon to all his enemies who were completely in his power and were indeed his prisoners of war and legitimate slaves. Not only did he do this, but he at once set about abolishing idolatry—that mental slavery of pagan races—and putting in its place the free, untrammelled worship of the ONE and ONLY GOD. He also abolished infanticide and regulated sex relationship—limiting a man's wives to four—indeed, he brought order out of chaos. His advent to Mecca and the magnificent example he set by pardoning all of his many thousands of enemies stands out like a beacon not only for Arabia but for the whole world and for all time.

<sup>1</sup> In the battle of Hunein six thousand of the tribe Hawazin were made captives, but as the order in which the two alternatives are placed in the above-quoted verse dealing with the emancipation of the war slaves (see above)—either “set them free as a favour or let them ransom themselves”—clearly shows that preference is given to the former course, the Holy Prophet kept waiting for some time for the survivors among the Hawazin to come and ask for the release of their prisoners, but no one turned up for about ten days, and the Prophet distributed the prisoners among the Muslim soldiers. After this, the Hawazins came and requested the Prophet to set their people free. The Prophet could not do so at that stage without the consent of their masters. He, however, ascended the pulpit and addressed the Muslims thus: “After due praise to God, I inform you that your brethren have come to you repentant, and I have come to the conclusion that their captives should be given back to them. Whoever of you, then, loves to do it as an act of kindness, let him do it, and whoever desires that he should be paid the ransom, him will we pay out of what God will give us.” All in one voice obeyed the commandment of the Holy Prophet, and the prisoners were released without paying any ransom.—ED. *The Islamic Review*. (Bukhari.)

## ALLAH'S PROMISE OF A KINGDOM

### ALLAH'S PROMISE OF A KINGDOM TO THE MUSLIMS

By S. AHMAD SHAH, B.A.

IF numerical strength alone were the criterion whereby the civilization and political greatness of a nation can be judged, we should, boldly and without fear of contradiction, declare that the Muslims of to-day are one of the great powers of the civilized world. Again, if any nation has ever in the past, attained to prosperity, social, economic or political, through the religious enthusiasm and devotion which have at the present day fallen to the lot of the Muslims and which they display with such vain flourishes, we can, most surely, on the faith of such undeniable historical evidence, say that there is no need for Muslims to entertain any feeling of apprehension or despair, inasmuch as they appear to possess all those degrees of perfection by means of which, sooner or later, they must necessarily rise high above the abyss of humiliation and degradation in which so unfortunately they find themselves to-day. Eventually, indeed, they must attain to that promised kingdom of which the Qur-án speaks so emphatically: "Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most surely make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange" (xxiv. 55). This promise stands true even to the present day, and is capable of fulfilment at any time. But, in spite of all this spectacular demonstration, a man possessed of keen insight and penetrating intelligence during his scientific analysis of the existing conditions will at last be forced to admit that the form of religion presented by Muslims before the world may be likened to the tusks of an elephant which are admirable to look at, but which do not perform the more important function of eating. Such a remark, therefore, will not only be not out of place, but, on the contrary, exactly in conformity

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with the true state of affairs. The mind can look so stern a truth in the face only when the veil of self-deception is lifted from the eyes and the situation examined objectively in the light of genuine events. Otherwise hidden pitfalls beset the path of empty talk. The endless political storms that threaten the existence of the Islamic world reveal the bold fact that, so far from achieving the promised kingdom, the Believers, to our shame, do not even seem to possess the qualities which will at last enable them to aspire to so noble an ambition. We do not mean to say that there is an absolute lack of good and intelligent minds among them, but we are not concerned here with exceptions. We are considering Muslims as one unit, and it is in this light that we desire to discuss the present subject.

It is an obvious fact that for some time past the Muslim world has fallen a prey to a process of disintegration which has not yet fully exhausted itself, or rather it may be said that such a process has been wilfully forced upon it through the destructive machination of certain non-Muslim powers which, without shame or scruple, are hounding it day and night. Yet not the least astonishing feature of this most sad story, notwithstanding all decadence and disruption, is that there is still a fairly large number of men in the Muslim camp who will not believe, nor even care to listen to those who sincerely wish to convey to them the bare truth about their panic-stricken condition. On the contrary, one, and only one, idea has taken firm root in their minds, from which, to all appearances, they are determined not to depart even for a single moment, and that is, that Islam is never to be obliterated. True, Islam will survive to the very end of this world, as the Qur-án itself bears witness in the following verses: "They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse" (i. 8); "Most surely it is an honoured Qur-án. In a book that is protected" (lvi. 77-80); "Nay, it is a glorious Qur-án. In a guarded tablet" (lxxxv. 21, 22); "Surely We have revealed the reminder, and We will most surely be its guardian" (xv. 9). The last verse, indeed, is one of the

## ALLAH'S PROMISE OF A KINGDOM

most wonderful prophecies that have, historically, stood the test of time and "whose fulfilment shall ever remain a standing testimony to the truth of the Qur-án" in ages to come. Even a hostile writer like Muir is compelled to admit that "there is probably in the world no other book which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text." But from this it does not at all follow that, as "Islam shall for all time be preserved safe from all attacks to destroy it and from every kind of corruption," the present Islamic world shall also undergo no reverses, by reason of the variety of poisonous and irreligious influences that are, by slow degrees, striving to undermine the long-established system. Briefly, the security promised for Islam is not applicable to the followers of Islam unless they adhere to its principles.

Now then, is it true that the Muslims scattered about over this globe of ours also desire to achieve, like other civilized nations, an all-round civilization of their own? Do they cheerfully and longingly look forward to the time when they too will see their ships both in the air and on the sea? Have they any desire to harness the forces of Nature, so that they too may reap the benefit of her hidden wealth? And, finally, have they decided once for all to break open the iron-rings of slavery that encircle their necks and hereafter to live, if at all, honourably? If the answer is in the affirmative, as most surely it will be, then they have to choose between two things: (1) either they should, to the exclusion of everything else, adopt, and then faithfully and energetically abide by, the soundest and most perfect principles of progress which Allah has laid down for them, or (2) they should have nothing whatever to do with God, but strive on their own initiative to do whatever they can in the way of advancement and civilization as other nations of the world are doing. In any case, they have got to give up, if they are at all anxious to better their condition, either the present state of lethargy and uncertainty which has so far resulted in nothing but misery and degeneration, or the very notion of progress; for harmony between the two is impossible, and there is no third course open. To be content with the present state of

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affairs is synonymous with destruction. If the latter alternative is decided upon as the only possible way for keeping pace with the march of modern civilization, I am sure that a number of men would readily adopt this suggestion through utter ignorance of the most progressive principles of Islam. Unfortunately, there exists a class of people who, whenever religion is the subject of conversation, scornfully, but none the less very foolishly, remark that because Islam is an old religion its principles do not apply to the altered conditions of modern times, thus wilfully forgetting that it is the non-application of the Qur-ânic principles to the practical side of life that is responsible for all the present stagnation of their society. Such men must sever all connection with Islam, must throw off even the mere spectacular cloak of formalism that so ignominiously veils its hidden beauties; and the result will be to enable them, at length, to enjoy the same facilities and favours which are so lavishly bestowed upon the declared and determined enemies of the faith, for their singleness of purpose—though that, of course, would be now of a different nature, i.e. sharing the lot of the unbelievers.

(*To be continued.*)

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## CROSS AND CRESCENT

[We print below the letters addressed by the Rt. Honble Al-Haj Lord Headley (El-Farooq) to the Editor of the *Natal Advertiser*, during his recent sojourn in South Africa.—ED. I. R.]

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Natal Advertiser*.

SIR,—In Mr. William Mountford's letter of yesterday's date I fail to find anything to substantiate his allegations against Islam. He makes incorrect statements and hardly refers to any Muslim teaching, and when he refers to the Qur-ân he either distorts or misquotes. Among others he deals with the following points :—

(1) Use of sword in Islam not in defence but in furtherance of religion.

## CROSS AND CRESCENT

(2) Civilization and culture came through Christianity, while Islam is devoid of civilizing influences.

(3) Fatalism in Islam.

(4) Christian dogmas are not without justification in moulding human character.

(5) Why should we believe in the Qur-án if we do not believe in the Bible ?

(6) Powerlessness of Islam to satisfy religious faculties.

In dealing with these points I shall endeavour to make dispassionate statements of facts as briefly as possible.

### USE OF THE SWORD.

In my last letter I said that "no compulsion in religion" is a universal law of Islam, and in referring to the use of the sword I quoted verses (2, 19-193) that clearly show that Islamic wars were entirely defensive in the Prophet's time. I showed that Mr. Hibbert Ware distorted the quotation. Neither Mr. Ware nor Mr. Mountford has ventured to question the accuracy of my statements. Mr. Mountford, however, says that the verses refer to the time when Muhammad was in Mecca, and not when he was in power in Medina. The verses occur in the second chapter of the Qur-án, and were revealed in Medina. This falsifies Mr. Mountford's contention. Now he refers to Suras 9 and 47 to show that war was waged against Jews and Christians. Here he is wrong again. Sura 9 in the very beginning refers to the repeated treaty violations by the pagans, which led to hostilities. But there are two exceptions, one in the case of those tribes which remained true to their obligations and secondly in the case of idolaters who sought protection from the Muslims. These exceptions show that hostilities were not taken for the sake of propagating the faith.

Verse 4 of Sura 47 speaks of the conduct of war during the hostilities as follows: "So when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, then smite their necks until when you have overcome them." . . . "But if they desist, then there should be no hostility." (2, 193.) What better conduct could be desired in time of war ?

# ISLAMIC REVIEW

## CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE.

Let past history decide whether Christianity or Islam has the greater claim. It is an admitted fact that the advent of Islam produced a tremendous upheaval of science in Muslim lands in days when Christianity was submerged in ignorances and superstition. Muslims were the pioneers of the modern sciences, and they wrote voluminous works on many branches of science, while there has been no landmark in the history of European civilization which did not arouse the greatest opposition from the Church—Europe, in fact, began to make progress when freed from the thralldom of sacerdotalism. The Renaissance owes its birth to Islam (see Draper's *Conflict between Science and Religion*).

The following may be classed amongst the chief principles that contributed to our progress: (1) The principle of evolution; (2) belief in the highest capabilities of man; (3) democracy; (4) subservience of nature to human needs; (5) education and scientific researches; (6) freedom of thought and action.

Can Mr. Mountford refer to any teaching in the Bible that lays down the above-mentioned principles? On the other hand, many Biblical verses are mainly responsible for the Church opposition to culture and science. The Qur-án is the first revealed book in the world to teach these verities in the clearest possible language (Suras 1.3.14, 42.67.95). The present backward condition of Muslim countries is due more to economic pressure from the outside than anything else.

## FATALISM.

Islam condemns fatalism in the accepted sense of the word, since the Qur-án saddles man with responsibility (2.226, 99.7.8); while Christianity, absolving man from accountability of his actions through his belief in the atonement, turns him into a fatalist. Is not predestination a belief very generally held by Christians? In this respect Mr. Mountford not only misquotes but misinterprets when he ascribes the following to the Qur-án: "Every man's fate

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is bound round his neck." The words of the Qur-án are as follows: "And We have made every man's action to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book (of his deeds) which he will find wide open." The verse is entirely against fatalism, and makes man responsible for his actions.

My next will deal with the fourth, fifth and sixth headings. I much regret that pressure of business prevents my finishing the letter now.

DURBAN, *March 27, 1926.*

HEADLEY.

SIR,—In continuation of my letter of the 27th :—

### CHRISTIAN DOGMAS.

The world was not without her Christs in Pagan times, and all that we find in the form of current Christian dogmas can be traced to Pagan cults—Divine Sonship ; Immaculate Conception ; Redemption of Humanity through the dying God ; Resurrection after being two days in tomb ; Baptism ; Trinity ; Sacraments. If these dogmas failed to mould human character, as Pagan history shows, how can they be expected to do better in the name of Jesus, who did not himself teach these things? They crept into his religion through the agency of those who desired to popularize religion in the heathen world. The doctrine of Atonement weakens the sense of responsibility and cannot contribute towards the advancement of morality ; and this is fully borne out by Mediæval Christianity, which discloses about the blackest pages of history.

The present-day virtues in the Western world do not owe their origin to these dogmas, but to modern culture, which arose when the Western mind became emancipated from the thralldom of canonical government. Our own Parliament also came to our rescue in this respect.

WHY SHOULD WE BELIEVE IN THE QUR-ÁN IF WE DO NOT  
BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE ?

Jesus laid special stress on the observance of the Law. He taught us in his Sermon on the Mount to seek entry into



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the Kingdom of God through the observance and teaching of the Law.

The Books of God came to give us the Law, but they suffered in their purity through human hands and what has been called "pious frauds"; even the Church does not believe in the genuineness of the whole Bible. In these circumstances we are compelled to look to some other Revealed Book for our guidance. The Qur-án, which is the last Book of God, has been admitted by friend and foe to have kept and preserved its purity; hence our acceptance of the Qur-án in preference to the Bible. It has not been altered like the Bible, and has withstood adverse criticism, literary and otherwise. Mr. Mountford seems to know very little about the subject. Most of the teachings of Jesus—his parables and sermons—can be easily traced to Buddha, who lived five hundred years before his time, and to Hebrew literature. Could we say that Jesus took all his teachings from previous records? No. He drank from the same Fountain as his predecessors. In the same way, if the Qur-án speaks of some of the truths taught by other Prophets before Muhammad, the Book cannot be accused of plagiarism.

### POWERLESSNESS OF ISLAM TO SATISFY RELIGIOUS FACULTIES.

Man is a religious animal: and he looks to God for His Mercy and Protection. Islam does not speak of an "angry God" whose wrath can only be appeased by the shedding of blood or cruel sacrifices. The Qur-án lays down that flesh and blood does not reach God, but that true righteousness alone appeals to Him (Luke—The Pilgrimage). Islam speaks of God Who is the Creator and Sustainer of the worlds, whose compassion supplies us with all we need; Who rewards one good action a hundredfold; Who chastises us only for our betterment whenever necessary; Who is nearer to each one of us than our jugular vein; Who needs no intermediary between Himself and His creatures, and is ever ready to forgive our sins without demanding a penalty,

## CROSS AND CRESCENT

and to respond to a humble and prayerful heart. Our religious faculties must indeed be insatiable if they cannot be satisfied by the loving care of such a God.

Jesus spoke of the same Islamic God in the Lord's Prayer when he said, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us." Remission of sins with atonement cannot be fairly termed forgiveness.

Speaking personally, I can only say that until I cast aside all pretence of the dogmas being necessary to my salvation, I never felt comfort or peace, but when I finally took the step, the lines

Dear Father, Thou art very near;  
I feel Thy presence everywhere,  
In darkest night, in brightest day,  
To show the path—direct the way,

became reality and I was happier than I had ever been before.

Before concluding I should like to make a few observations as to polygamy, which Mr. Mountford and other critics have advanced against Islam. Polygamy in Islam is not the Law, but a remedy to mitigate social evils and meet certain contingencies in the absence of which the institution can be dispensed with without affecting any tenet in our religion. If the male ranks become thinned down in any country—say, through war—and women greatly outnumber men, the said institution may be resorted to to save humanity from social evils which prevail in the West.

Trusting that your readers will understand that I have had to somewhat curtail my remarks, though I hope I have not omitted any important points,

I remain,

Faithfully yours,

PIETERMARITZBURG.

March 28, 1926.

HEADLEY.

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483, CURRIE ROAD, DURBAN,

March 28, 1926.

THE EDITOR, *Natal Advertiser*.

SIR,—In reply to Dr. Causton's letter, which appeared in your issue of the 27th inst., I wish to inform him that

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

there have been very many Christ's in the Pagan world, and his story, as believed by the Christianity of to-day, is only a replica of the others.

All of them were accepted as beloved sons of God, raised to save humanity through their blood; all of them born on or about the 25th December, of virgin birth; died on the Friday before Easter Sunday; remained two days in the tomb and rose again from it on Easter Sunday.

People were initiated into their religions through baptism and had the sacraments in commemoration of their death.

Will Dr. Causton care to differentiate between the main story of Mithra, Adonis, Attis, Horus, Bacchus, Apollo, Quetzalcoatl, the Christs of the Pagan world, and the Lord of the Church religion in the West? As to his letter of the 10th, in which he demands discussion—no one misunderstood it, and he is welcome to have his discussion, on the conditions proposed by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. He should not shirk the responsibility of his proposition.

I remain,

Yours sincerely, "

HEADLEY.

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## LESSONS FROM THE QUR-ÂN

By SYED MAQBOOL AHMAD.

*(Continued from p. 57, No. 2, Vol. XIV.)*

EVIL-DOERS DIRECTLY ADMONISHED IN THE FOLLOWING  
VERSES.

1. "They are lost indeed who kill their children foolishly, without knowledge, and forbid what Allah has given to them, forging lie against Allah; they have indeed gone astray, and they are not the followers of the right course."  
(Al-Anaam, 141.)

2. "Surely those who love the scandal to circulate respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement

## LESSONS FROM THE QUR-ÂN

in the world and hereafter; and Allah knows while you do not know." (An-Nur, 19.)

3. "Surely those who accuse chaste believing women, unaware of the evil, are cursed in this world and the hereafter, and they shall have a grievous chastisement. On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they did—on that day Allah will pay back to them in full their just reward, and they shall know that Allah is the evident truth." (An-Nur, 23-25.)

4. "Surely as for those who speak evil things of Allah and His Apostle, Allah has cursed them in this world and the hereafter, and He has prepared for them a chastisement bringing disgrace." (Al-Ahzab, 58.)

5. "And those who speak evil things of the believing men and the believing women without their having earned it, they are guilty indeed of a false accusation and a manifest sin." (Al-Ahzab, 56.)

6. "And yield not to any mean swearer, defamer, going about with slander, forbidding of good, outstepping the limit, sinful, ignoble, beside all that, base-born; because he possesses wealth and sons." (Al-Qalam, 10-13.)

7. "Woe to every slanderer, defamer, who amasses wealth, and considers it a provision against mishap. He thinks his wealth will make him abide. Nay! he shall be hurled certainly into the crushing disaster." (Al-Humaza, 1-4.)

8. "Have you considered him who called a judgment a lie? that is one who treats the orphans with harshness, and does not urge the other to feed the poor, so woe to praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers, who do good to be seen, and withhold alms." (Al-Maoun.)

9. "O you who believe! say not like those who speak evil things of Moses, but Allah cleansed him of what they said, and he was worthy of regard with Allah. O you who believe! be careful of your duty to Allah and speak the right word. He will put your deeds into a right state of you, and forgive your faults; and whoever obeys Allah and His Apostle he indeed achieves a mighty success." (Al-Ahzab, 69-71.)

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### SOME EATABLES AND DRINKS PROHIBITED ON HYGIENIC PRINCIPLES.

1. "O you who believe! intoxicants and games of chance and sacrificing to stones set up and dividing by arrows, are only an uncleanness, the devil's work; shun it therefore, that you may be successful. The devil only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer: will you then desist." (Al-Maida, 90-91.)

2. "Say, I do not find in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden for an eater to eat of except that it be what has died of itself, or blood poured forth, or flesh of swine—for that surely is unclean—or that which is a transgression other than the name of Allah having been invoked on it; but whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring, not exceeding the limit, then surely your Lord is Forgiving, Merciful." (Al-Anaam, 146.)

3. "Say: Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions? Say: These are for the believers in the life of this world, thus we make the communication clear for a people who know." (Al-Araf, 32.)

4. "There is no blame on the blind man, nor is there blame on the lame, nor is there blame on the sick, nor on yourselves, that you eat from your houses, or your father's houses, or your mother's houses, or your maternal uncle's houses, or your maternal aunt's houses, or what you possess the keys of, or your friend's house. It is no sin in you that you eat together or separately. So when you enter houses, greet your people with a salutation from Allah, blessed and goodly; thus does Allah make clear to you the communications, that you may understand." (An-Nur, 61.)

5. "O you who believe! do not forbid yourselves the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, and do not exceed the limits; surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits. And eat of the lawful and good things that Allah

## CIRCULATION OF MUSLIM LITERATURE

has given you, and be careful of your duty to Allah, in whom you believe." (Al-Maida, 87-88.)

6. "O men, eat the lawful and good things out of what is in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the devil; surely he is your open enemy. He only enjoins you evil and indecency, and that you may speak against Allah what you do not know." (Al-Baqar, 168-169.)

7. "O you who believe! eat of the good things that we have provided you with, and give thanks to Allah if Him it is that you serve. He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked; but whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limits, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (Al-Baqar, 172-173.)

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