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Edited by AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

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MISS J. C. A. PERERA.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَمُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

MUHARRAM, 1346 A.H.

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NOTES

Jesus a Myth.

The theory that Jesus Christ is a myth was first openly mooted in the early part of the nineteenth century. It was in 1835 that a book entitled *Leben Jesu*¹ appeared from the pen of a German writer, David Friedrich Strauss, who maintained that the Gospel stories and accounts of miracles are, in part, a transcription of myths and in part pious fiction. While in no way denying the historical existence of Jesus Christ, he asserted that the early Christians simply transferred to Jesus the miraculous legends of the Old Testament. His merciless thoroughness laid bare the discrepancies between the Gospels and the difficulties presented to the critical understanding by the Biblical narratives. The seeds of doubt cast by him were destined to bear early fruit, for shortly afterwards another vigorous attack was launched by Bruno Bauer in his *Christus und die Caesaren : der Ursprung des Christentums aus dem römischen Griechentum* (1877). Herr Bauer attempted to show that the life of Jesus was a pure invention of the first

¹ Translated into English, entitled *Life of Jesus* (New York, 1892).

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evangelist Mark, and to derive the whole Christian religion from the Stoic and the Alexandrine culture of the second century; ascribing to Seneca, in particular, a material influence upon the development of the Christian point of view. He further demonstrated how the Sermon on the Mount, and the other few sayings alleged to have originated from Jesus Christ were but a replica of, and plagiarisms from, the philosophical treatises of the Romans and the Greeks. In proportion to the advance in the criticism of the Gospel documents, for more than a century past, the voices speaking out against Jesus Christ have grown in number. Soon Biblical Science accepted the truth of the statement that episodes like those of the Virgin Birth, the Conception of the Holy Ghost, the Slaughter of the Innocents, have all been recorded, in slightly different terms of other divinities. It was from this criticism of the Gospel text that there emerged, phoenix-like, the theory that Jesus Christ was a myth. It continued to gain ground until, in our age, it has received fresh impetus from the writings of its principal advocates—Professor Arthur Drews¹ in Germany, Mr. William Benjamin Smith² in America, and Mr. J. M. Robertson³ in England. Mention must be made, too, of Nietzsche, who had contributed much by his writings towards preparing the frame of mind suitable for receiving the myth theory. Writers of other countries—France, Italy, Holland and Poland—followed suit to prove the non-historicalness of Jesus.

To the rank and file of the proponents of this theory there has been a new and a valuable addition in the person of the late Danish Professor, Dr. Georg Brandes, whose book, *Jesus: a Myth*,⁴ maintains that Jesus is a wholly legendary

¹ *Christusmythe* (2 vols., Jena, 1910); the English translation is entitled *The Christ-Myth* (London, 1910); and *The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus* (London, 1912).

² *Pre-Christian Christ* (1905).

³ *Christianity and Mythology* (London).

⁴ The book was written in the Danish, from which it has been translated into English and published by Brentano's, London. The original was published last year in August, under the title of *Sagnet om Jesus*. A German translation also, *Jesus Saga*, has since been issued.

character. The book opens with an introduction citing the analogy of the myth of Wilhelm Tell, immortalized by Schiller in the tragedy of the same name. Although no person of the name and identity of Tell ever breathed, yet he has remained the national hero of Switzerland for six hundred years. This is not an extraordinarily curious phenomenon in popular history, for there are many like illustrations which no critic would dream of accepting as true. The author mentions the remarkable fact that the Swiss people are so convinced of the actual historical existence of Tell that they have gone to the length of erecting three chapels in his memory. "... To such an extent has Tell become identified with the Swiss State, that for a long time his image appeared on the postage of Switzerland. He never existed. But that makes no difference. He is, and will remain, an active ideal, and as a model he still rules the minds of men.

"The same is true of another figure, also belonging to the true world of legend, but one that has exercised a far greater influence on the spiritual life of Europe and America" (*Jesus: a Myth*, p. 17).

The book, as was to be expected, caused a sensation in the Christian world, although the pious Press and the clergy tried to kill the fatal attempt at the outset with ridicule. But let us watch and wait. How long?

The Press and the Clergy on "Jesus: a Myth."

The *Sunday Chronicle* for January 23, 1927, wrote as under:—

Amazing attacks on Christianity, suggesting a sinister movement to smash religion and destroy belief in its tenets, are causing much concern.

From all countries come disturbing signs of the existence of a deliberate war on religion that is being waged with great energy. Anti-Christian demonstrations are being deliberately fomented, religious belief of all description is being violently assailed, and war against what is termed "the autocracy of God" is being openly proclaimed.

Anti-Christian propaganda has now broken out in a new form in the amazing book, just published, called *Jesus: a Myth*, by the famous Danish writer, Dr. Georg Brandes.

In it is made the most powerful intellectual attempt that has been made for years to destroy the historical basis of Christianity.

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According to Dr. Brandes, there never was such a person as Jesus Christ; he is an invention—a legend.

The figure of Christ, he argues, was the pious myth of the writers of the Gospels, who followed the predictions of the ancient Jewish prophets that there should be a Messiah.

But instead of facing the situation squarely, and attempting to fathom the causes leading to the enunciation of such a theory, the *Sunday Chronicle* has thought fit to divert the discussion to Communism, with the obvious aim of discrediting the myth theory. It says:—

It is not suggested that Dr. Brandes has any connection with the other and more sinister aspects of the attack on Christianity, but it is a remarkable fact that his book appears during the height of a world-wide campaign to overthrow the ancient beliefs of the European churches.

A grave menace is to be found in the anti-religious Communist organizations designed to exterminate religion in all its forms. . . .

The Bolsheviks themselves have not disguised the purpose they have in view. To quote their words: "We must carry on our agitation against religion just as systematically as we do against political questions, but with even more determination. . . . Although we have declared war against the denizens of heaven, it is by no means easy to sweep them from the houses of the workmen."

It is to be deeply deplored that the Communist should hold the word "religion" to be synonymous with Christianity, especially as embodied in the Greek Church. In a way he is justified; for he has known no other religion or system of life. To him the word "religion" raises the picture of the priest who has exploited the masses spiritually just as much as the capitalist has the labourer materially. To the Communist, religion is an instrument, more refined and more subtle, for stultifying the human intellect and atrophying the spiritual growth. A mere cursory glance at the Christian European history of three or four centuries back—a period of mental slavery to the Church—would bear out this assertion. The Roman Church has always posed as the monopolist of the spiritual world which was hermetically sealed to the layman. Access to it was via the clergy. Priesthood is another name for spiritual exploitation from which blight Islam is free; for there is no priesthood in Islam.

The following expressions will serve to indicate how weak

Sunday Chronicle for January 23, 1927.

is the position of the clergy, and that it is in the "ostrich" policy that they are trying to seek solace :—

The Rev. W. P. Bickford, the well-known preacher and vicar of St. Clement Danes, London, said :

"It is most terrible that this sort of thing should be published. But Christianity has nothing to fear from such attacks. Religion can never be booted out. We shall always stand up for it, and there will always be found people who will die for it. What has lasted so long can withstand such attacks as this."

The Dean of Manchester, Dr. Hewlett Johnson, said :

"What the Christian religion has to face to-day is not any widespread active and positive opposition, but indifference and ignorance. It often happens that those who attack Christianity have formed a wrong and jaundiced view of its teachings and meaning, and have thus mistaken their friend for an enemy. The trend of scientific thought is more sympathetic to Christianity than it has been for years, and is moving away from what was once a materialistic outlook."

Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, said :

"The theory that Christ was a myth is, of course, derided by all educated people."

The Historical Existence of Jesus Christ.

Now it would be worth our while to go a step farther and study the causes which have led to this fatal blow inflicted on Christianity.

A careful study of the records of the lives of the great Reformers of whom the world rightly feels proud reveals, much to our disappointment and mental discomfiture, the painful fact that they are wrapped away in folk-lore and tradition. The reformers of Persia are made known to us through the pages of the great epic of Firdausí, *The Shah-náma* (A.D. 1000). The prophets of India lose themselves in the labyrinth of myths and fictions that have grown up round their persons. The source of our knowledge of the life of Moses is the Old Testament, which was reduced to writing three hundred years after the death of Moses. And as to Jesus Christ, the originating source of Christianity, he certainly forms no exception to the general rule. His life has nothing to offer save some stray events covering a period of only three years. The paucity of the details of his life is great and appalling. For how else is the myth theory to be explained? Opinion, no doubt, is divided on this point,

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but even those who say that Christianity is more readily explained and understood with a real Jesus as some background of historical fact, admit—and in so doing are at one with the proponents of the myth theory—that the details of the life of Jesus are meagre, fading into the haze of uncertainty. Both groups admit that the Virgin Birth, the Miracles—Baptism, Resurrection, Transfiguration, the Miracle of Cana,¹ the stilling of the storm, the walking on the sea—the conception by the Holy Ghost, are legends pure and simple.

Reasons for Casting Doubts on the Historical Existence of Jesus.

There are three reasons :—

(a) Dogmatized Christianity is camouflaged Paganism. A study of the Synoptic Gospels in comparison with other religions, such as the cults of Adonis, Attis, Osiris and Mithra, shows that Christianity is a Mystery Religion, in so far as it is practised by the greatest of its officially recognized exponents, Roman Catholicism. There is such a striking resemblance between the religion of the Church of Rome and the Mystery Cults that scholars have been compelled to treat the Jesus cult as of a piece with them. Dogmatized Christianity had drunk deep at the fountain-head of the mysteries which were prevalent all over the Mediterranean basin during the early Christian era, those of Sabazius and the Great Mother from Phrygia, of Isis and Serapis from Egypt, of the Baals from Syria, and of Mithra from Persia. The dates of the most important events in Christianity—the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection—were taken from the pagan dates of similar events connected with the Sun-worship. The Passion story of Baal can decidedly be claimed as the origin of the Christian Passion story. The Crucified Deity is another version of the story of the Angered God. His appeasement through vicarious sacrifice is an old story of the ancient world previous to Christianity. "In this connection they adored many a nailed god. The suffering deity appeared as Redeemer and Mediator between man and

¹ The miracle when he changed water into wine.

God in various parts of the world at different times and in diverse shapes. He was Mithra of the Persians and the Baal of the Babylonians. If in Phrygia he was Attis, he was Adonis in Syria. He was Bacchus in Greece and Isis in Egypt. Apollo was the same to Constantine, who had only to place Christ on the pedestal of divinity recently vacated by Apollo to ensure the successful furtherance of his far-reaching political schemes." ¹ In short, all the gods and goddesses of the Mystery Cults are masquerading under different forms in Christianity.

Dr. Agnus, in his *The Mystery Religions and Christianity* (London, 1924), classifies the chief features of the mysteries under the rites of Preparation: Initiation and Communion, and Blessedness, whereby the parallel forms in Christianity we find in Baptism, *agapé* or the Sacramental Feast, and Salvation. According to Tertullian, in certain mysteries, i.e. those of Isis and Mithra, it is by baptism that members are initiated . . . in the Apollinarian and Eleusinian rites they are baptized and they imagine that the result of this baptism is regeneration, and the remission of the penalties of their sins. In nearly all the mysteries an *agapé* or sacramental meal preceded initiation. In the rites of Mithra, says Justin Martyr, bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the rites of one who is being initiated. . . . In the whole of the pagan world the belief in the blood of the slain Deity was symbolized by baptism and participation in Eucharistic Meals. The eating of the sacred elements represented the blood and flesh of the suffering Deity. Further, all the mysteries offered their adherents blessedness—salvation in Christianity by a belief in the fact that Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sake of humanity, to redeem it from sin.

(b) The second factor is the non-historical compilation of the Gospel narratives. The Christians, until about one hundred years after the death of Jesus Christ, believed in his second advent, and for this reason they never reduced his words to writing. It was in the second century that there

¹ Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, *Open Letters to the Bishops of Salisbury and London*, p. 22 (Woking, 1926).

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arose disputations between the Jews and the Gentiles that led to the formation of sects which compiled various Gospels according to their own needs from the available sources. There were extant some two score of Gospels all written in the Greek which was not the mother-tongue of Jesus Christ. This fact is enough to show that the message of Jesus Christ was never preserved in its original pristine form. Scholars believe that much that is recorded in the Gospels was adapted from the older religions of the various races and countries. It was in the Council of Nicea that only four Gospels were selected along with the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, the Acts, the Epistles of James, Peter and John, Jude, and the Revelation, thus constituting what is called nowadays the New Testament; and in A.D. 492 the Pope Gelasius gave it the canon of authority. The remainder was rejected as apocryphal.

In the years intervening, down to the eighteenth century, the Christians believed in the New Testament as being the word of God literally and substantially. But the flood of light of the researches of the last century gave a rude shock to the adherents of the time-honoured belief. And now we have reached a stage when people deny the authenticity of the Bible records outright. As already remarked, we are not in possession of the original words of Jesus Christ. They must have undergone constant changes by reason of being imperfectly remembered. Consequently the Gospels are of varying historical value, that of John being the least trustworthy both as to the words and actions of Jesus. Christians believed that that of Matthew was the oldest, but later researches established that Matthew and Luke were extracted from Mark and that in them was incorporated the bulk of Mark. We have not the original writings, but merely copies of copies which have been considerably altered and added to. Even these copies of copies do not date beyond the fourth century A.D. The most important MSS. now extant are the *Codex Vaticanus* at Rome, the *Codex Sinaiticus* at Leningrad, believed to have been written during the fourth century, and the *Codex Alexandrinus*, in London, believed to have been written in

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the fifth century, and the *Codex Bezae* in the Cambridge University Library.

Further, it was believed that the Gospels were written soon after the death of Jesus during the first generation of Christians, and by two of the eye-witnesses—the apostles Matthew and John—but the Gospels of John and Matthew have differences of such a fundamental nature as to preclude the possibility of both being right and therefore of both being written by eye-witnesses and apostles. For instance, the supernatural Birth is mentioned only in Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark—the source of Matthew and Luke—nor in John.

Again, there is one more subsidiary factor of which few are aware: more than one discrepant version of the Old and the New Testament is accepted as “orthodox.” The Greek Church does not accept the same Bible as the Catholics. English-speaking Protestants do not have the same Bible as either the Greek or the Roman Catholics, and there are numerous ancient sects which reject all Western variants and cling to their own orthodox Hebrew and Christian versions.

(c) The third cause is the meagreness of the details of the life of the Holy Prophet Jesus Christ. The accepted date is wrong by several years. He was born on 6 or 7 B.C. in a little village five miles south of Jerusalem called Bethlehem. The *Encyclopædia Biblica* sums up the life of Jesus in the following words:—

“Jesus Christ, the author of and object of the Christian faith, a Jew by race, was born in Palestine towards the end of the reign of Herod the Great. The home of his childhood was Nazareth, a town in the lower division of the province of Galilee. The family to which he belonged was of humble estate. In early years he worked at a handicraft. On arriving at mature manhood, he became a public teacher, rapidly gained fame, gathered about him his disciples, offended the ruling class by free criticism of the prevailing religion, and ended a brief but extraordinary career by suffering crucifixion.”

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The Attitude of a Muslim to the Myth Theory.

Now one thing remains to be considered: What is the attitude of a Muslim to the Myth theory? A verse of the Holy Qur-án will give the answer to this question. We read in chapter iii. 83: "Say: We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the Prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit."

Nobody would dare picture what the fate of Jesus Christ would have been if the Muslims too had lent support to the myth theory, the authors of which would, in that case, have gained untold ground. Muslims number more than three hundred millions of people. Islam not only does not subscribe to such a theory but also goes a step farther in the direction of removing all doubts and aspersions cast on Jesus and his mother. For instance, in chapter iv. 156, we read: "And for their unbelief and for their having uttered against Mary a grievous calumny"—the calumny here referred to being that Mary was guilty of fornication!

Would that our Christian friends repaid the debt, if only by acknowledging the greatness of the Arabian Prophet and by abstaining from derogatory and scurrilous literature concerning Islam and its founder!

THE STRENGTH OF ISLAM

By AL-HAJJ LORD HEADLEY

THE power and forcefulness of an idea, and certainly its effectiveness, may often be measured by the time it is brought forward and the opportunities afforded. But to ensure effectiveness the idea must be sound in itself and be able to withstand the severest investigation—otherwise a specious and basically unsound theory may be able to gain credence and support.

In the case of Islam we observe truth, sincerity, toleration

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and simplicity. General Charles Gordon doubtless had this in mind when he said that he did not see the sect of Pharisees amongst the Mussulmans, who never assume, as the Christian Pharisees do, that A and B are doomed to be burned. This saintly man knew the East well, and had mixed with Muslims all his life ; he further said of the Muslims : " You never see the very unamiable features which are shown by our Pharisees."

" Believe or be damned " is the slogan of certain Church parties, but not of Christ's teaching. The Crusaders showed the aggressive sword policy and millions of human beings perished through this insane and cruel method of enforcing religious views.

No one will deny that a certain class of Christian Missionary has brought discredit on Christianity by persistently vilifying the Muslim Faith and pouring contempt on our Holy Prophet Muhammad, who is constantly misrepresented and alluded to as " the false prophet." These ardent but unscrupulous folk do not hesitate to spread false reports, well knowing them to be false, in order to advance their own views. I suppose they are quite well aware that their parrot-like cry about our worshipping Muhammad, having to have four wives, women having no souls and not being allowed inside the Mosque, are all figments of their own brains, and yet they go on in the cheerful belief that the Muslims, being a long-suffering and peaceful lot, will stand any amount of abuse without even a murmur of remonstrance. Possibly they twist the old " saw," " All's fair in love and war," into " Any lies are fair in hate and religion." However this may be, I am safe in stating that the attitude of the Muslims in their courtesy and forbearance has been most praiseworthy and Christ-like. Indeed, it would seem as though they were emulating the chivalry of the great Saladin, who, hearing that his enemy Richard II had lost his horse in a battle, sent him a present of a beautiful charger so that he might continue the fight suitably mounted. But, though I greatly admire chivalrous conduct in all cases where my Muslim Brethren have politely ignored the most pointed insults, I cannot say

that I feel myself, as a Western Muslim, bound to be equally indulgent to those who are forgetful alike of the ties which bind us to our greatest dependency and those other ties of affection and regard which exist between the branches of the Anglo-Indian Aryan family, and I consider that they should be reminded of the great disservice they do to India by their conduct and, generally, to the Empire to which they belong.

Many quite good Christians assume that their own religious views *must* be the only ones worth considering, quite oblivious of the fact that other people have intelligence, and that 220,000,000 of the human family worship the one and only God and follow the teachings of His Holy Prophets; they also forget that our King, the Emperor of India, rules over more Muslims than Christians. Sacerdotalism is responsible for this most regrettable state of affairs. According to the majority of those who profess and call themselves Christians, and attend the Christian Churches, there can be no salvation without a belief in the "Divinity of Christ," "a certain way of thinking of the Trinity," "the Sacraments," "the Atonement," and "the Immaculate Conception"; that is to say, a disbelief in the *necessity* for such a belief spells a punishment which cannot be exceeded in severity, and which places the earnest inquirer, the honest man, the doubter and the unbeliever, in the same dock with the most hardened and blood-stained criminal. And to call *that* "Religion"! What a travesty; what a reflection on the Almighty and All Merciful and All Wise!

Reason and Science.

There is nothing in Islam which is in any way revolting to our reason or our scientific discoveries, and I have been surprised and pleased in recent years to find so many people in all classes in England who have entirely abandoned a belief in any *necessity* for the dogmas. I have, for example, frequently described our simple Faith, and I have been gratified by the remark: "Why, that is my belief. Is that really Islam? If so, then I must be a Muslim." My reply has been: "You certainly are one, though you may not like to

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openly avow it just at present, out of fear of adverse criticism." I have then usually repeated the unfavourable Christian animadversions which were passed on me at the time of my conversion to Islam.

When I openly avowed the Muslim Faith in 1913, members of my family came to me with expressions of the gravest concern because I had deserted the religion of my fathers, and they assured me most positively that salvation was impossible for me now that I had taken the terrible step. I pointed out that, though I was willing to admit that I might deserve to be damned for the sins which I had committed, I would never believe that the God of Mercy and Justice to whom I had prayed all my life would be so unjust as to pass such a terrible sentence as "everlasting damnation" on me for being an honest man, and telling the truth about my beliefs to Him "to whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid."

Elasticity in Religion.

There must be nothing rigid in a universal Faith except only the *firm belief in the One and Only God and the Revelations made through His Holy Prophets*. God sees into the heart, and those who worship Him in spirit and in truth are not to be cast from the fellowship of the faithful merely on account of some set of conditions peculiar to climates or customs or particulars regarding habits ingrained by long use in certain nationalities.

I have always looked upon Islam as fitted for the *whole of the human race and for all time*, and I have thought that the spirit of the great Faith which we profess with so much delight and happiness soars far above petty conventionalities. Moses and Jesus were for the Jews, but Islam is for Humanity without any distinction as to race or climate, and it is this which, in my humble opinion, will make the reasonable teachings of Muhammad prevail in the end. It is much to be regretted that puritanical teachings have contributed so much towards the retardation of our efforts to spread the ideals of true Islam in the Western world.

The precepts to be found in Leviticus might have been desirable or necessary amongst a lot of savages thousands of years ago, but these teachings are quite out of place and ridiculous in the twentieth century.

In this age of reason it is intolerable to be asked to believe that certain forms and ceremonies are necessary to salvation. What I mean is this: that religion which insists that non-observance of forms or ceremonies is to be visited with the same punishment as the commission of sin, cannot be expected to find any favour with the mass of intelligent people.

For example, if you are going to tell the Esquimaux that he must perform his ablutions with ice or snow, and take off his shoes before going into his Mosque of block-ice, you will make but few converts to Islam in that direction.

If you insist on the Yorkshire, or indeed any British farmer, giving up his dish of bacon and eggs or his glass of beer—a diet which has been found very wholesome for many generations—and tell him that its continuance is going to *jeopardize his chances of salvation*, you will fail to convince him of the breadth and sincerity of Islam.

If you make it a *sine qua non* that the business city man is to say his prayers openly, and with the usual prostrations, five times a day, you will not make many converts. What is very easy for the Arab, with his loose and inexpensive garments and ample sandy desert surroundings, will be impossible for the busy city man clad in expensive clothes. The idea of kneeling down and prostrating in wet and muddy streets is an absurd one. Such a man will have to consider his tailor's bill, and will not think this sort of thing can be necessary for his salvation—the surroundings are unsuitable, and the acquisition of eternal happiness should not depend upon whether a man is born in Mecca or Old Broad Street.

If you take the puritanical line which forbids coffee and tobacco and looks upon all pleasure as sinful, you will find but little favour amongst those who wish to worship the one and only God and thank Him continually for the *use* of His wonderful gifts.

A religion which is hide-bound and bigoted can never

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become world-wide, as we wish Islam to be. There must be great elasticity, so as to bring all the nations of the earth under that one beneficent canopy which I cannot help regarding as the protecting wings of the Almighty.

In advancing our Faith we should, I think, only insist upon the essentials in the first instance, for these constitute the spirit of Islam—firm belief in the One God and surrender to His Almighty will, belief in the messages Divinely sent through His Holy Prophets, and the carrying into effect of the highest order of beneficence to all our fellow-creatures on this earth—and there is to my mind no reason to force any other belief on people if, by doing so, we run the risk of doing harm to our cause, turning them away from Islam. Win first the essentials, and the minor points will follow almost as a matter of course.

West meets East.

It has always seemed strange to me that my very earliest ideas about religion, crude though they doubtless were, and so utterly at variance with the strictly Christian and evangelical surroundings in which my youth was passed, coincided so nearly with the Muslim Faith as it was revealed to me on many occasions in later life. It looks as though a spark of Islamic fire had been permitted to brighten up from the embers of forgotten or dormant truth; and it has sometimes seemed, to my possibly over-fanciful vision, as though a slender ray of light had shot through the rather heavy spiritual atmosphere of the Western world and proclaimed the receptivity of the West for Islamic truths. I am unable to account for the origin of these ideas of my early childhood, because none of my people—parents, uncles and aunts, and others—were in the least degree Eastern or well informed about Eastern affairs. They probably had a sort of rough idea that the Muslims were to be found somewhere amongst the "Jews, Turks, Infidels and Heretics" mentioned in one of the Christian collects; and the truths of the Muslim Faith, with its beautiful precepts of resignation and beneficence as expounded by our Holy Prophet, were unknown to them. I

have never been able to quite understand why the Eastern Faith of Islam should be less acceptable than the Orthodox Greek Church, the Romish, or the Protestant Churches, all of which were equally from the East.

Not long ago the Bishop of London, Dr. Ingram, speaking at the consecration of an addition to St. John's Church, Harrow, 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 that 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.' "

Thus were the Bishop's words reported in *The Times*, November 10, 1925, and I must say they have caused me some astonishment. How does Dr. Ingram know that no other Faith can be regarded as a rival? The fact that our King rules over more Muslims than Christians, and that there are over 220,000,000 Muslims in the world, should surely give him pause before making such an *ex-cathedra* statement? The Bishop is another example of those who are oblivious of the fact that Christianity came from the East, just as did the Jewish and Muslim faiths. I do quite "know what I'm talking about" when I say that Christ was an Eastern man. From the way the Bishop puts it, an ignorant person might be led to believe that Christianity was a Western product, and that it was wrong to go to the wicked East for religious ideas!

With regard to the fiction of the slavery of thirty thousand Christian girls languishing in Turkish harems the Bishop has proved himself very inaccurate—to say the least of it—and I deeply regret to have to point to the fact that the misstatements have been copied in the Press of other countries as truths because of the exalted position of their author.

I For a further elucidation of the facts about this thirty-

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thousand-girl story. I may refer my hearers to my recently published little work, *The Affinity between the Original Church of Jesus Christ and Islam*, where the matter is discussed in chapter v. There is a well-merited rebuke contained in a recent number of the *Islamic Review* as follows :

We wish his Lordship could have realized how deeply he was paining the hearts of many Muslims by this inaccurate statement, and also what share he was contributing in laying the axe to the roots of the British Empire. From him we at least had expected a foresight, a fuller grasp of the situation ; for he was the Bishop of the Metropolis of the British Empire, the majority of whose subjects, next to the Hindus, who number about 245,000,000, unfortunately consists of Muslims. If he could not bring about mutual understanding and intelligence, good will and tolerance, between the Muslims and the Christians—the two principal constituents of the Empire—then he ought to have at least refrained from making matters worse. We wish that he could have realized that tactics like these only help to rivet the fetters of prejudice everywhere. . . .” Would that the Bishop of London had realized how many he would be misleading, and how far-reaching the effects of these statements would be !

The rebuke is severe, but not one whit more than it should be. Not very much less indiscreet was Dr. Ingram's eulogy of a particularly offensive and vituperative work directed against Islam by Miss L. H. Sawbridge. In this book the author pours contempt on Islam and vilifies our Holy Prophet, who is always spoken of as “ the false prophet.” Other examples of unworthy detraction are the following : “ Those who worship Allah and those who honour Odin are indeed brothers of the same family. They are alike animated by the same lust of aggression and sensuality, cruelty and lies.” . . . “ The Crescent of the false prophet is lifted over 222,000,000 of the human race, contending for the rule of the nations against the Cross of Christ . . . the faith that appeals to the worldly and sensual, through its impure mixture of religiousness and immorality. The lust of the world contends with the love of God.”

“ Up to the time of Muhammad, the Arabian woman enjoyed a great deal of social freedom, and her relationship with the other sex was healthier and franker than it has ever been since.” Of course this nonsense would not take in anyone at all well informed, and yet we find the Bishop of London

writing the "Foreword," in which he says: "I have only had time to read the first two hundred pages of this beautiful little book, but I must not longer delay to write a 'Foreword' commending it to the Church and Nation." Much of the worst abuse in the book comes well within the first two hundred pages, and therefore must have been read by the Bishop. The thing which astounds me is how this high dignitary of the Church allowed such an un-Christian, un-holy concatenation of vulgarly abusive inexactitudes to be published under his ægis. As I have said elsewhere, Dr. Ingram has a charming personality, and is a good conversationalist, but I think he rather readily accepts what he is told without always making sure as to its accuracy or authenticity.

Conversions, Perversions and Apostasy.

About fourteen years ago my apostasy was freely commented on, and I was subjected to hostile and friendly criticisms, and nearly buried under letters from all parts of the world. A few hundred years ago tortures would have been applied to my vile body, and I should have had to tell lies in order to save my very life. Now that the popularity of thumb-screws, racks and red-hot pincers as means of regeneration has died out in this country, anyone is pretty safe from actual violence, whatever his religious opinions may be. Since my return from South Africa about a year ago I have received a constant succession of letters from a well-meaning but fanatical Christian who will persist in loading me with platitudes, and saying that I have stepped into "heathendom." One difficulty is keeping this gentleman to the point. The following is an excerpt from my last letter to him:—

I have your letter of November 8th, and fear that you have not yet grasped the fundamentals of Islam in which are to be found charity and tolerance often wanting in Church Christianity. You can at present only see one side of the picture, whilst I am anxious to examine and probe into whatever God has revealed through the mouths of His Holy Prophets since the beginning of the world, which goes back to a period far greater than most of us suppose. You do not attempt to answer my statements and queries as to the necessity of the belief in the Christian dogmas, the cruelty of the Christian Deity, and the beautiful idea that it is through the exercise of our

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reason, and the march of science that we are approaching daily nearer and nearer to the Truth which cannot be very far from the Throne of God. To my mind Science is the very greatest ally to true Religion; our intelligence is given us to use, and I cannot help thinking that it should be the means whereby we may be enabled to detect foolish and unnecessary dogmas, and lead us to the selection of a faith or Religion in which the fewest improbabilities and fairy tales appear.

The "virgin birth" and "dying God," for example, are not peculiar to Christianity; they are to be traced backwards to periods thousands of years before the time of Christ. Why, then, make a belief in them the most important foundation-stone in the Christian belief? Why allow such figments of paganism to be held up as "necessary to salvation"? I venture to say that if one could probe into the innermost thoughts of any congregation in any church one would find a very small percentage having faith in the truth of the words uttered by the lips. The parson, being an educated man, would hardly ever be found with a true belief that the Almighty and merciful was daily dispensing injustice with the lavish hand suggested by the words of the Christian Creed. As a man he knows that the words are but a cloak to what is hollow and insincere, but, in his capacity as a priest, he is bound by his vows to pretend that he believes in the fables. You have spoken of my having "stepped into heathendom," and you use the analogy of the difficulty of "making a silk purse out of a sow's ear," and now you suggest that I should turn to Jesus in order to be able to talk about angels and bright shining garments. You have disregarded the fact that we altogether disclaim any pretensions to being "heathens." You have quite mistaken what Islam really is. We are devout and earnest believers in the one and only God, and as such cannot be ranked with the infidels and heretics. Your appellation of "heathen" does not apply to us at all.

Insistency on a blind acceptance of dogmatic teaching *outside Duty to God and Neighbour* is one of the weakest points in Church Christianity. The full use of Reason should be not only allowed, but encouraged, if a faith is to carry weight—there is no surer way of casting doubts than secrecy and forbidding inquiry. A man uses his eyes and brain to avoid falling into pits or over precipices, and no one finds fault with him for so doing, but directly he ventures to make use of his intelligence to detect fallacies and misleading dogmas there is a howl of indignation from all quarters. Depend upon it, there must be something shaky when you find that all inquiry is forbidden: when you *must*, like a naughty child, *believe* when you are told that you are "a child of wrath," and that you were "born in sin," and also accept without a murmur all that sacerdotalism has piled up during the last two thousand years and more. I must be allowed to

ask any questions I may think necessary, otherwise I am distinctly committing a sin of omission in that I am neglecting the chance of obtaining fresh knowledge.

The idea of seeking wisdom from on high is expressed in the following verses :—

When prostrate at Thy feet I fall,
Fresh wisdom to acquire,
All Thy past favours I recall,
Nor do I now desire

To ask from Thee what Thou must know,
In Thy omniscient mind,
Is really best for us below
And infinitely kind.¹

Here we have the injunction to pray for fresh wisdom from the Highest source, tempered by the admission that we cannot presume to ask for *specific benefits*, because God ordains all things, and must be the best judge of what is best for us.

Most of the strength of Islam lies in the knowledge that God is ever near—nearer, as has been said, than our jugular vein ; it is the very spirit of the Faith. Call it madness, call it fanaticism, or what you will, the fact of the real Presence of God is the very essence of the creed of the faithful followers of the Holy Prophets, and it is the chief reason why they have no fear of death or hell, which hold out such terrors to many whose beliefs are of a more complicated and less convincing character. Then there is no need of any outside aid, no introductions, no atonement ; the key to heaven need never be missing, and the Muslim communing with his God at least five times a day is less likely to be engaged in the planning of any serious crime or any outrage on his conscience than one who rarely gives a thought to the real Presence of the Almighty. Statistics show that Muslim communities are singularly free from crime, and especially from crime of a brutal and cruel character, and this is, I think, to a great extent due to the Muslim's conviction that God is always with him, and also to the fact that alcoholic stimulants do

¹ *Thoughts for the Future* (the Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., 1913).

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not find favour, and indeed are expressly forbidden. Most people will admit that something like 90 per cent. of the crime in most civilized countries is directly or indirectly due to the abuse of alcohol. It may be said that where God is there the devil cannot enter, and where the brain is never inflamed by spirits or wines there is a much better chance of a peaceful solution to difficulties and disputes.

Who to whom God's mercy has been often shown can fail to be touched by the truth and beauty of the following lines?—

O Thou whose bounties unto me are more than one, I trow,
Whose favours lavished on my head are countless as the sand,
No blow of all the blows of fate has ever fall'n on me
But I have found Thee ready still to take me by the hand.

In all the beautiful religions of the world there are the evidences of that strong desire of the created to return to and be at one with the Creator, and a compassionate regard for the welfare and happiness of others is a characteristic feature of the Buddhist, Christian and Islamic Faiths, and the last named, being the simplest and most free from dogmatic encumbrances, is most likely to be the universal religion of the world. There is, as far as one can see, no class in Islam which bids for temporal power. The grandeur of the religion is uninfluenced by any such sordid considerations. Every true Muslim looks to a reward which is as far above mere mundane advantages and riches as the light of the sun is above that of the *ignis fatuus*. I do not myself think that Islam has anything to fear from outside attacks, or even from the unworthy misrepresentations of which I have so frequently complained, for these will fade away as the Truth becomes evident. What may cause obstruction and delay is the attempt to establish fresh sects *within* the great fraternity of Islam. It has always been my great delight to point to the Muslim Faith as being so free from sectarian trouble which honeycombs modern Christianity. The Sunnis and the Shiahs and the Wahabis have all very decided views, and may almost be looked upon as "sects," and in very recent years the Ahmadis, followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, proclaim the advent of their leader, whom they regard as the "promised

Messiah." These latest reformers insist that all those who refuse to acknowledge Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Messiah shall be "deprived of the light of faith" and, further, that the rejection of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad "means the rejection of the Holy Prophet Muhammad himself." It strikes a blow at the solidarity of Islam which is greatly to be deplored. One cannot find fault with the Ahmadis (*Qādiānīs*) for thinking anything they like (it is a free country), but one may reasonably object to being excluded from the ranks of the Faithful at the behest of a small number of zealous adherents of a certain idea.

I do not propose to go into the question of the Messiahship of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, but I may be permitted to point out that the high-handed line now being followed by the Ahmadis (*Qādiānīs*) is hardly in accord with the true spirit of Islam, which places toleration very high amongst the virtues to be encouraged.

As must be admitted by any fair-minded person, the innovation is entirely from the Ahmadis, who can hardly complain because certain questions are asked concerning the new rules. According to these rules I am led to understand that all Muslims who fail to recognize the claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad are to be placed outside the pale, and can no longer be regarded as true Muslims.

I look upon this as a very serious matter, for it seems like an attempt to bind the consciences of the whole Muslim world to the views of one particular sect; indeed, it reminds one of a slogan used elsewhere: "No salvation outside the Church."

As I have said elsewhere, the Ahmadi declarations appear to my simple and, I hope, unbiased mind far too dictatorial. It must be evident even to the most cursory observer that such *ex-cathedra* declarations must prove distasteful to a large proportion of the great Muslim community. Not very long ago I informed my friend the Imam of the Southfield Mosque that I could not subscribe to the views he promulgated because they savoured too much of the intolerance we complain of in another Faith, and might almost be inspired by the spirit of the Athanasian Creed which most of us unite in condemning.

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WÁQIDÍ AGAIN

By MAULÁNÁ SAYYID SULAIMÁN NADWÍ

(Continued from No. 6, p. 223)

IN the defence of Wáqidí three pleas have been advanced :—

(1) Even within one generation of Wáqidí's death the style of Wáqidí—that is, entire omission of the chain of guarantors or the giving of a confused list of guarantors—was not looked upon as objectionable.

(2) Imám Zuhrí and Ibn Isháq have done the same thing. Why, then, are both of them on a higher level than Wáqidí?

(3) People have impugned the authority of Imám Bukhári also. Then how is it that he is not regarded as unreliable? And moreover, after this, what right has he (Imám Bukhári) to object to the authority of Wáqidí?

Although I have dealt with these questions above indirectly, I think I ought to say something on them directly as well.

(1) To say that Wáqidí's method of writing, without citing all the authorities, was not objected to until a generation after his death, is to make a statement that is not based on facts. Those who have impugned the authority of Wáqidí on the basis of his way of writing were *his* contemporaries, which shows clearly that even in the days of Wáqidí his method of writing was not in favour. And to argue on the ground that Zuhrí and Ibn Isháq did the same is not correct, as has already been pointed out.

(2) Throughout the range of his traditions it is in five or ten places only that Zuhrí has cited without giving his authorities. Ibn Isháq has done so even oftener than Imám Zuhrí. But Wáqidí has written his whole book on this method; therefore, if the few traditions of Zuhrí and Ibn Isháq, which they have quoted without citing authority, are objectionable,

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then the whole of the book by Wáqidí must be held to be objectionable. Wáqidí, whenever he has given any authority at all, has never made the slightest attempt to link it up with the first eye-witness ; so much so that he has done the same with the narratives of Zuhri.

Notwithstanding the fact that Zuhri is *Imám'ul-A'imma* (head of the authorities) and a recognized authority by the *Muhadiththín*, the authenticity and place occupied by his *Marfú'*¹ and *Muttasal*² traditions cannot be accorded to those of his *Marásíl*³ and *Balághát*—false statements. They are just as unauthentic as the traditions of others which are *ghair Marfú'* (not Marfú') and *ghair Muttasal* (not Muttasal), the difference being that Zuhri is a truthful person and reliable, while Wáqidí is a liar, a fabricator and a forger. For this reason the unauthenticated traditions of Zuhri will be given a higher place than the unauthenticated traditions of Wáqidí ; which is just the difference which the whole world observes between a truthful historian and one who writes at random.

(3) It is true that Dárqatní and others have cast doubts on some of the traditions of Imám Bukhári. But these pronouncements ought rather to be taken as a display of scholastic precision ; and, as a matter of fact, they are concerned with verbal, technical and terminological differences. For this reason their strictures did not gain favour with the learned ; and Ibn Hajar has confuted them all, one by one. Moreover, no one has ventured to brand Bukhári as a liar, as has been the case with Wáqidí, the farthest extent of the objections, in his case, being to cast aspersions on the reliability of a few of his narrators. But it only amounts to this : that traditions whose chain of guarantors has been impunged will be held to be open to objection, which by no means implies that the six thousand traditions of Bukhári will at once suffer in authority and repute. On the other

¹ Traditions which can be traced direct to a companion of the Prophet.

² A tradition with an uninterrupted chain of guarantors.

³ A Hadith without a complete chain of guarantors.

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hand, all the unverified and unauthenticated narratives of Wáqidí—which is tantamount to saying all the narratives of Wáqidí—have been discarded as being below the standard of reliability.

Further to impugn the authenticity of Bukhárí, the Professor says: "When one remembers . . . that one of al-Bukhárí's props is Abú Huraira, who tells of the splitting of the moon, one cannot help feeling that there is no cogent reason for rejecting Wáqidí on Bukhárí's judgment." This, surely, is not the right line of argument. Or else the whole fabric of the traditions of various religions will totter. It does not, it must be clearly understood, affect our argument in the least whether that particular tradition speaks of the "rising of the star of Prophethood" or relates of the "darkness that enveloped the world for three days on the occasion of the death of a great personage." Besides, there are records of a hundred and one other such miracles. For instance, "the rending asunder of the moon," or "the walking of a person on the surface of water," or "the sufficing of a few pieces of fish or a loaf of bread to satisfy hundreds of persons at one time"—all these raise considerations as to whether or not, in the light of human understanding, they are within the range of possibility. But this is not the proper place for their consideration. I have dealt with this question in my *Strat'un-Nabí*, vol. iii, and my views on miracles coincide with those of Hume, who is of opinion that they are a possibility and can be accepted as such, provided they can be verified and proved to have occurred through conclusive evidence. But, once again, this is not the right place to enter upon a discussion of subjects of this nature. However, I think Professor Guillaume will agree with me when I say that the criterion for establishing the authenticity or otherwise of a narrator does not lie in his having related or not related a certain miracle on the happening and non-happening—the possibility and impossibility—of which our views conflict.

But I go farther, and assert that Abú Huraira has not mentioned the tradition of the splitting of the moon, nor

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is this related in the Collection of Bukhárí. Those who narrate this tradition are 'Abd 'Ullah bin Mas'úd, 'Abd 'Ullah bin 'Abbás, 'Abd 'Ullah bin 'Umar, Anas bin Málík, Jubair bin Mut'im 'Alí bin Abí Tálíb and Hudhaifa bin Yamán—all being the companions of the Prophet. It was about eight years after the occurrence of this event that Abú Huraira accepted Islam, and came to Medina from his country of Yemen. Concerning the splitting of the moon there is no tradition from Abú Huraira in Bukhárí, nor have I come across any such from him in any other book.

Besides, there is no foundation for the statement that "Zuhri himself admitted that he had forged Hadíth under compulsion." And I really can hardly summon up sufficient courage even so much as to suggest that a Professor of Arabic at a famous English University has designedly misunderstood so simple a passage of the Arabic or that it is an oversight on his part. Luckily for us, Professor Guillaume has cited the original Arabic sentence of the text which has been misunderstood by him to mean that Zuhri himself has admitted that he "forged Hadíth under the compulsion" of the rulers of his own days. The wording of the original text read as follows:—

Akraháná 'alaihi há'ulá'i 'l-Umará.

(TRANSLATION: "The rulers compelled us to it.")

Now the question which presents itself is what it was which they were forced to do. The antecedent to which the pronoun "it" has reference is wanting in the cited quotation. Let us, therefore, complete the excerpt from which the above-sentence has been taken:—

'An 'Abd 'ur-Razzáq 'an'Ma'mar 'an'iz-Zuhri qála kunná nakrahu Kitáb. 'al-'Ilmi, hattá akraháná 'alaihi há'ulá'i 'l-Umará; fara'ainá an'lá yamna 'u-hú Ahadun min'al-Muslimín.

(TRANSLATION: "'Abd 'ur-Razzáq says that Ma'mar quoted to him the authority of Zuhri, who said: 'We used to hold in disfavour the idea of reducing the knowledge (Hadíth)

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to writing till the rulers (Omayyid Caliphs) compelled us to commit them to writing. Now we are of opinion that no Muslim should forbid it.")—(Ibn Sa'd, Part 2, *Qism* II, p. 135.)

The same text is to be found in 'Abd 'ul-Barr, *Mukhtasar Jāmi' Bayān 'ul-'Ilm*, p. 36, Cairo edition, Ibn Jauzī, *Taqyid 'ul-'Ilm* and *Tahzīb 'ut-Tahzīb*. Now what the text refers to is that some of the learned of Hadīth used to forbid the writing down of Hadīth and themselves were punctilious observers of this consideration. But the pressure which the Omayyid Caliphs brought to bear upon them left them no other course but to commit those traditions to paper and to arrange their written collections.

At last the necessity of such a procedure was borne in upon Imām Zuhri as well. He acquiesced in the wish of the Caliphs, and we know that the collections arranged by him were recovered from the treasury of Caliph Walid after his assassination (Ibn Sa'd, Part 2, *Qism* II, p. 136). This is in reality how the matter stands. But what a world of divergence between the confession of Zuhri in the words as interpreted by the learned Professor: "Zuhri himself admitted that he had forged Hadīth under compulsion," and the fact that "the Omayyid Caliphs compelled them to commit the traditions to writing."

Then there is another important point raised by the Professor when he says "that the authorities who formed a high opinion of al-Wāqidī are on the whole a generation earlier than those who condemned him." Such an assertion is not based on facts. And on closer research it will be found that it has its roots in an uncritical reliance reposed in Wāqidī. The list of those who condemn him and those who support him includes both his contemporaries and those who belong to a subsequent period. For a further elucidation of this point I append a list giving the dates of birth and death of both of his champions and assailants, but inasmuch as the supporters of Wāqidī are men of minor importance, when put against his opponents, I have been unable in many cases to ascertain the dates of birth.

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Name.	Born.	Died.
Muhammad bin Omar al-Wáqidí .	130 A.H.	207 A.H.

DEFENDERS OF WÁQIDÍ

(1) 'Abd 'ul-'Azíz bin Muhammad Dárawardí	—	186 A.H.
(2) Yazíd bin Hárún	117 A.H. (circa)	206 A.H.
(3) Abú 'Ubaid Qásim bin Salám	177 A.H. (circa)	224 A.H.
(4) Mus'ib bin 'Abd 'Ullah 'az-Zubairi	156 A.H. (circa)	236 A.H.
(5) Muhammad bin 'Abd 'Ullah bin Numair	—	234 A.H.
(6) Muhammad bin Isháq Musayyibí	—	236 A.H.
(7) 'Abbás 'Anbarí	—	246 A.H.
(8) Ya 'qúb bin Shaiba	—	264 A.H.
(9) Muhammad bin Isháq 'as-Saghání	—	270 A.H.
(10) Ibráhím al-Harbí	—	280 A.H.

CONDEMNERS OF WÁQIDÍ.

(1) Imám Sháfi'í	150 A.H.	204 A.H.
(2) Yahyá bin Mu'in	158 A.H.	233 A.H.
(3) Ahmad bin Hanbal	160 A.H.	241 A.H.
(4) 'Alí bin al-Madíní	161 A.H.	241 A.H.
(5) Isháq bin Ráhwaih	161 A.H.	238 A.H.
(6) Muhammad bin Bashshár Bandár	167 A.H.	252 A.H.
(7) Abú Hátim Rází	195 A.H.	277 A.H.
(8) Imám Bukhárí	194 A.H.	256 A.H.
(9) Jauzjáni (Ibráhím bin Ya'qúb)	—	256 A.H.
(10) Abú Zar'a Rází	200 A.H.	264 A.H.
(11) Abú Dáwood Sajistání	202 A.H.	275 A.H.
(12) Imám Nasa'í	215 A.H.	303 A.H.
(13) Abú Bishr Dúlábí	224 A.H.	310 A.H.
(14) Ibn 'Udaiy	277 A.H.	365 A.H.
(15) Dárgatní	306 A.H.	385 A.H.

The fact that Wáqidí "died fifty years before the pious and saintly al-Bukhárí was laid to rest" cannot be launched as an argument for their not having been contemporaries of one another; for their contemporaneousness ought to be computed by the marching of the lives of both of them more or less parallel to each other. It is certainly not reckoned by the dates of their deaths. Wáqidí died in 207 A.H., and Imám Bukhárí was born in 194 A.H., which means that at Wáqidí's death Imám Bukhárí was a student of fourteen years of age. There were at that time present in all learned circles and academies personal friends and acquaintances of Wáqidí, and

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this explains Imám Bukhárí's words "*Tarakúhu*"—They have discarded him—in his *Tárikh 'us-Saghír* on Wáqidí (p. 228, Allahabad). It is evident that the word "they" cannot mean anything else but Bukhárí's predecessors and contemporaries. In the case of the predecessors, those who discarded Wáqidí could have been Wáqidí's contemporaries alone, while the contemporaries would have been partly Wáqidí's contemporaries and partly those who had heard about Wáqidí from his contemporaries. All of which goes to prove that "Wáqidí's death, fifty years before the pious and saintly al-Bukhárí was laid to rest," cannot be an argument against the fact that Bukhárí was not unacquainted with Wáqidí, more especially so when we recall that Bukhárí from his earliest childhood had devoted himself to learning, and that within two years of the death of Wáqidí, Bukhárí had already reached 'Iráq on his way to Arabia.

However, as the dates of the births of Wáqidí's defenders are for the most part wrapped in obscurity, we are not in a position to map out the accounts of the lives of Wáqidí's contemporaries with any certainty. Nevertheless, with the dates of the birth of his opponents before us, we can safely assume that all those who died by the 250th A.H. were contemporaries of Wáqidí, and this would show that in the list of the defenders of Wáqidí all, except the last three, were contemporaries of Wáqidí.

Among those who condemn him are Imám Sháfi'í, born 150 A.H. ; Yahyá bin Mu'ín, born 158 A.H. ; Ahmad bin Hanbal, born 160 A.H. ; 'Alí bin al-Madíní, born 161 A.H. ; Isháq bin Ráhwaih, born 161 A.H. ; Bandár, born 167 A.H. These are not only the six most eminent authorities on the subject of narration, but had also been contemporaries of Wáqidí and had lived during his lifetime for periods ranging from forty to fifty-seven years. At the death of Wáqidí, as has already been remarked above, Imám Bukhárí was fourteen years old, while Abú Hátim Rází and Abú Zar'a Rází were thirteen and eight respectively ; and it is not unreasonable to conclude that at this period, Wáqidí must have been the talk of such academical circles as they attended. As regards most of those who discard Wáqidí,

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it is enough to say that their opinions are not the fruits of their individual experiences with Wáqidí, but are based on the works by Wáqidí and on the dicta of those *Shuyúkh*s who had themselves seen Wáqidí or had met persons who had done so. As to the opinions of Abú Bishr Dúlábí, Ibn 'Udaiy and Dárqatní, these are based on the judgments of the learned contemporaneous with Wáqidí, and on the final verdicts of great authorities of a subsequent age. Hence the principle "when a man's contemporaries accept him as a high authority, it is hardly fair to brand him as a liar in deference to the unreasonable opinions of theologians of the next generation," does not in the case of Wáqidí hold water.

There are two more deciding factors which will assist us in our efforts to determine the party in whose favour the scale of preference inclines. One is their learning and accomplishments, the reverence and authority which they hold, and the fame and repute which they enjoy in the eyes of their contemporaries. With this as his criterion, Professor Guillaume can readily decide with which he himself as a "serious student of Islam" is more acquainted, and which group wields more respect and weight in the Islamic literature—the group comprising Imám Sháfi'í, Imám Bukhárí, 'Alí bin al-Madíní, Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Mu'in, Ibn Ráhwaihi, or the group consisting of Dárawardí, Zubairí, Musayyibí, Yazíd bin Hárún and 'Anbarí?

The other point is the fact that though Wáqidí passed his early days at Medina, yet the greater part of his life was spent at Baghdad, and it was here that he made his mark. Hence the opinions of those authorities who either lived in 'Iráq or Baghdad or had frequented these places have a greater and a prior claim to preference. Keeping this in view, we find that Dárawardí lived at Medina and died there in 186 A.H., which means that he remained in ignorance of the change which had made itself apparent in Wáqidí after he had moved to Baghdad, and of all that Wáqidí did during the twenty-two years after his (Dárawardí's) death. Consequently the opinions of Dárawardí are confined to the Medina period of Wáqidí's life. As to the rest, Zubairí alone lived in Baghdad, Ibn Numair in Kúfá, and Yazíd bin Hárún in Wásit. But let us

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take a glance at the residences of his opponents. We find, broadly speaking, that the majority of them lived at Baghdad or had lived for a considerable time both at Baghdad and Medina. For instance, Ahmad bin Hanbal and Yahyá bin Mu'ín belonged to Baghdad; 'Alí bin al-Madíní and Bandar lived both at Baghdad and Basra, Isháq bin Ráhwaih passed his days in 'Iráq, and Imám Sháfi'í in Medina, but used to visit Baghdad as well. The conclusion is self-evident.

ZAKÁT—A GREAT PRINCIPLE OF ISLAM¹

By C. A. SOORMA

LIKE all other great religions of the world, Islam emphasizes the importance of charity and kindness. But where other faiths are merely content to exhort men to be kind, Islam, being the most practicable of all religions, lays down definite rules as to how, when, and on whom such charity is to be bestowed, and on whom it is *obligatory* to do so. Therefore we find in Islam that great principle of *Zakát*, which some jurists, for the sake of a better name, call the *Poor-rate*. That form of charity which is obligatory on some classes of persons possessing a certain quality and quantity of wealth is called *Zakát*. That type of charity which is not peculiar to any class of person, but is general to all, is known as *Sadaqa*. *Sadaqa* is more universal than *zakát*.

The principle of *zakát* is based on several Qur-ánic verses, the most notable of which is: "Perform your prayers and go on giving *zakát*." In another equally clear passage, the Qur-án says:—

"God has decreed that charity is to be bestowed on the poor and the needy, on those who collect the poor-rate, on those who are desirous of performing religious obligations, on the poor travellers, and for the sake of liberating slaves, and for assisting debtors, and encouraging learning, and on those

¹ A lecture delivered at a meeting of the British Muslim Society.

who are in His service and in the path of God. These are the rights made obligatory upon you, and surely God is Wise and Knowing."

Among the traditions of the Prophet, we shall find similar exhortations, but the two most notable are :—

1. "None among you can be a true Muslim who does not give to his own brother that which he regards as most precious, namely, wealth."
2. "All creatures are God's, and he is dearest to God who is most energetic in their service."

From the above, it is quite clear that service in the path of God is a clear Islamic injunction. Islam, that great religion of humanity, was born in a fiercely intolerant age. It was born amongst a people who took pride in their barbarism, cruelty and ignorance. Suffering and pain were inflicted by the Arabs in the most revolting manner, the only parallel to which is the martyrdom of the early Christians by the Romans. To the Arabs, the teachings of the Prophet were far from welcome. They denounced him and his charity. They said that, being a dreamer, he was beating the air with empty hands, as it was impossible for him—or for anyone else—to create a great Social Trust. And yet, if you turn to the pages of history, you will find it recorded there that within his own lifetime the Prophet had laid the foundations of a *Bait'ul-Mâl*, or a Common Fund. Every penny that one could give either as *zakât* or *sadaqa* was collected here, and paid out to those who were entitled to it. It was an obligation undertaken by a primitive State for the common weal. It was not socialism as we understand it to-day, but it was social service and uplift of the noblest kind. Nowhere has the Prophet said that there is no right to private ownership of property, nowhere has he said that what belongs to Zaid belongs to all Muslims. Far from it. He expressly asked his followers to respect individual ownership, which he called *Haqq'un-Nafs*, or the "right of self." But, at the same time, he clearly laid it down that if you attain a certain

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position in life, and if your wealth be such that you can give freely, then another type of obligation is fastened upon you which is *Haqq'un-Nás*, or "the right of humanity." Let us be quite clear on this point, as it is of some importance. Again, it has been alleged that by the introduction of the principle of *zakát*, Islam has made begging a profession, that it has tended to increase hypocrisy, and that it has lessened the value of honest labour. Let us examine these allegations, and see how far they bear the stamp of truth upon them.

The Qur-án says :—

1. "Do not give *zakát* to the able-bodied, and the well-to-do."
2. "There is nothing here for you except what you earn by your own labour."

Now add to this the sayings of the Prophet, and you will see that these allegations are false. Let me quote to you what he once said to his followers :—

Qabísa bin Makháriq asked of the Prophet : "Who are they, O Prophet of God, entitled to beg?"

The reply was : "There are three classes of people who are entitled to *claim* alms. Firstly, those in need of money to perform a religious obligation. Secondly, the absolutely needy and the sick. Thirdly, those out of work and on the verge of starvation whom three sane persons would pronounce as being in need of charity."

In all other cases it is forbidden.

Abú Hureira relates that once the Prophet said : "He who begs in order to increase his wealth takes in his hands the burning coals of the fires of hell."

Once an inhabitant of Medina came before the Prophet and claimed alms. The Prophet asked him what his worldly possessions were.

The beggar replied : "I have simply an old rug and a cup."

"Bring them to me," said the Prophet. When these articles were produced, the Prophet, turning to his followers,

asked : " Is there anyone among you here who is willing to buy these articles ? "

One of them offered one *Diram* ; another offered two. The Prophet accepted the two *Dirams*, and giving them to the beggar said : " Buy yourself some food for one *Diram*, and with the other buy an axe, and bring it to me."

The beggar duly bought the axe and brought it to him. The Prophet fixed the handle with his own hands, and returned it to the man and said : " Go to the wood and cut yourself some fuel and sell it in the market, and come and see me after a fortnight."

After a fortnight the woodcutter, as ordered, appeared before him and told him that he had been able to save ten *Dirams*. The Prophet was, thereupon, highly pleased and encouraged him in his work.

Just pause for a moment and see what we learn from this episode. We learn six things :—

- Firstly, not to give alms to an able-bodied person ;
- Secondly, to dissuade him from begging ;
- Thirdly, to encourage him to make an honest living ;
- Fourthly, to render him personal help when he needs it ;
- Fifthly, to encourage him to have faith in God, by having faith in himself ; and
- Sixthly, to induce everyone to strive in honest toil.

Can anyone, after this, justly accuse Islam of having encouraged idleness and begging ? The mere fact that so many men beg is no reason why you should blame a faith which has, in the clearest language, denounced begging. Islam deserves our respect and honour ; and not our abuse.

Let me now show you on whom *zakât* is obligatory. There are three conditions which must be satisfied :—

- Firstly, the giver must be sane ;
- Secondly, he must be above the age of puberty, or, in other words, must be a *major* ; and
- Thirdly, he must be possessed of a certain amount of wealth.

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How much and of what kind we shall examine a little later. From the above, we conclude that it is not obligatory on an insane person, nor on a minor, nor on the poor.

To whom is this *zakât* or poor-rate payable? Who are entitled to claim it?

It is payable to the following *eight* classes of persons:—

(1) A beggar. (2) A destitute. (3) One who, though learned, is yet needy. (4) A new convert to Islam. (5) For liberating a slave. (6) A debtor, when he is unable to meet his just liabilities lawfully incurred, and so much as will enable him to make a fresh start. (7) The traveller who is in need of help. (8) In the path of God, generally, as in the erection of a Mosque, a school, an orphanage, a *caravanserai*, or the digging of a well or a canal.

Having enumerated the class of persons entitled to claim *zakât*, I must add that the following are *not* entitled to it:—

Firstly, a sane and sound person;

Secondly, a descendant of the Prophet;

Thirdly, one who has 50 *Dirams*, or equal value; and

Fourthly, religious teachers.

I draw your attention to two of the above, namely, a descendant of the Prophet, and a religious teacher. Why were these people forbidden to claim *zakât*? For very good and sound reasons. The Prophet did not want others to understand that *zakât* was merely a cloak for his own benefit, or for the benefit of his descendants. He did not want men to say that it was introduced, not because he wished to alleviate the pain and the misery of the world, but because he desired wealth. The Prophet, needless to say, never accepted *zakât*, nor even *sadaqa*. Whenever anything was offered to him, he would ask if it was given as *zakât*, *sadaqa*, or a mere present. In the first two cases he would not take it, but would give it to one of those entitled to it. A mere present he would accept—as, for example, many a time his followers would send him some food. He would accept it and thank them. May I remind you, my friends, that the greatest man

that ever lived was always hungry, always poor—sometimes actually starving? But he scrupulously avoided both *zakāt* and *sadaqa*. As regards the religious teachers, perhaps you know that there is no priesthood in Islam, and therefore Islam discouraged men to teach religion for gain. It did not want men to professionalize—if I may use the term—religion. To teach religion is a duty—which every Muslim is required to do—without reward or gain. Personal considerations in Islam are discounted where religion or religious teaching is concerned.

Keeping in view two fundamental principles, namely, not to make this rate of *zakāt* prohibitive, in which case people may refuse to pay it, and not to make the periods of payment either too short, when it would prove burdensome, or too long, when it would be futile, Islam has laid down the conditions as regards all these, which I now propose to enumerate.

Wealth is classified as follows :—

Firstly, hard cash, such as gold and silver. The quantity of gold to be taxable must be at least 20 *Dinars*, and of silver 200 *Dirams*. Such wealth must have been in actual possession for *one whole year*, and the tax is levied at the end of such year. If the sums be less than those stated above, then they are not taxable. Speaking roughly, 1 *Dinar* is equal to Rs. 7/8 or 11 shillings.

Secondly, *zakāt* is levied on camels, sheep and cattle. It is not to be levied on asses or donkeys. The value is reckoned in terms of money at the end of the year.

Thirdly, *zakāt* is payable on cultivation if it be of fruits and grain, but not if it be merely of vegetables. The reason is that fruits and grain are marketable once a year; and as it is paid merely at the end of the year, vegetables are thus excluded, as they may grow at all times of the year.

Fourthly, on jewellery, according to the better opinion of the jurists, *zakāt* is payable, the reason being that it is easy enough to assess their value at a given time.

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Fifthly, on merchandise, according to the better opinion, *zakât* is not payable, as such wealth is of a fluctuating character. But many merchants pay it, much to their credit.

Now as regards the *rate*. It is the *fortieth* part of the wealth, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the net value. As I have stated above, *zakât* is payable at the end of the year. Therefore neither the rate nor the period is unreasonable.

You will find in almost all great Islamic countries huge *Waqfs* or Trusts, founded on *zakât*. In India, although, technically, not an Islamic country, there are to be found immense funds which owe their origin and maintenance to *zakât*. A proper use of these funds would go a long way towards fulfilling those social duties which are the crying need of the moment. Unfortunately for us, there is neither the machinery present for the collection of such poor-rate nor a body powerful enough to distribute it in the ways laid down by Islam. That conception of a *Bait'ul-Mâl*, or a great Social Trust, which the Prophet so earnestly advocated and founded in the infancy of Islam, proved, as nothing else can prove, that, as regards the claims of humanity, of lightening the burden under which so many of us are daily groaning, and of realizing that in helping others we directly and indirectly help ourselves, Islam stands high above all other faiths in making us Trustees of this Social Trust. By its practical teachings and by its reasonableness, mankind is shown what to expect, and where and when to expect it.

I should like to say just a few words as regards *sadaqa*. Whereas *zakât* is obligatory on certain people, *sadaqa* is not. The poorest of the poor can give *sadaqa* in Islam. For instance, he may do a good deed, or speak a kind word. *Sadaqa*, in other words, means charity in its widest sense. On almost every page of the Qur-ân there is something said as regards *sadaqa*. Again, we find that Islam has also clearly stated that "Charity begins at home." In giving *zakât* and *sadaqa*, Muslims are enjoined to help those nearest to them first. Islam does not, however, distinguish between Muslims and

non-Muslims as regards charity. As I stated at the beginning, the Prophet has said that "All creatures are God's, and he is dearest to God who is most energetic in their service."

Muhammad lived and died among the Arabs. His message was for mankind—for all time. He gave us a practicable faith. He taught us many things—beautiful things, noble things. But one of the noblest things which he has taught is self-denial. How far he denied himself is for you to find out. Let it suffice that in introducing the great principle of *zakât*, he has added to the sum-total of human happiness; he has shown the world how mankind can best be served; how pain and suffering can best be reduced. In his vision he foresaw where the path was to lead, where the clash between capital and labour was to take place. It was no cheap socialism which he preached. It was merely a recognition by us of the very elements of a fair distribution of wealth. That adjustment of social rights which is now wrecking the industrial bases of many of the great Western nations, a poor, illiterate Arab foresaw some fourteen centuries ago. He did not leave it to some political agitator to say how these rights are to be adjusted; but in the clearest language, and with great fairness, he set out to do so himself. Can you deny that he has succeeded? "There is nothing here for you except what you earn by your own labour," saith the Qur-án. Both to capital and to labour Islam has given due recognition. With rights, duties are imposed; with wealth, charity is bestowed.

NOTICES OF BOOKS

Memoirs of Halidé Edib. (John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, W. 1. Pp. 472. 21s. net.)

This autobiography of a Turkish woman of literary fame and family is the first of its kind, and makes remarkably interesting reading. The author, who has been impelled to pen a short sketch of the period of political reform in Turkey, and who has experienced continued mental torture in wit-

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nessing the heartrending scenes which were rife when her country was seething in political ferment, in murder and rapine, as it struggled for existence, commands our warmest appreciation and sympathy.

She tells the story of her life from early childhood, when she used, as a child, to feed pigeons in the courtyard of a Mosque at Stamboul, and relates how, at a riper age, she was called to the responsible duty of fostering the orphans in Syria, where the panic-stricken populace escaped the barbarities of the notorious massacres perpetrated by the two neighbour communities, with unheard-of atrocities on each other; and more especially when a minority of Armenians—subjects of the Turk—were made a tool in the more unscrupulous hands of European diplomacy for the purpose of exciting from behind the scenes incidents sufficiently horrible to overthrow the already corroded Turkish regime.

Page 67 of the volume records a picturesque market-scene, in one of the suburbs of Stamboul, her favourite city, where the Arabs used to decorate their shops with kohl and henna, and it is strongly asserted that according to a Muslim tradition it was pleasing to Muhammad for women to dye their eyes with kohl and fingers with henna, a statement quite innocently but wrongly attributed to the Prophet. We then pass on to a vivid explanation as to how the humanitarian institution of polygamy, that meant only something to serve as a remedy in certain unavoidable circumstances—from the physiological as well as the progenitive point of view—had lately been abused by ignorant and self-indulgent persons; and how the Sultans and potentates conceived within their hot heads a wrong notion of their superiority, which placed personal pomp and glory to the fore at the expense of the national good, and which, a few years previously, kept the vitality of the Ottoman Empire at its lowest ebb, and crushed the spirit of democracy breathed by Islam.

Revolution and Evolution are the two paths leading to national consciousness, but the former, though the speedier of the two, may yet involve more danger and require a longer time for setting up a better state in a place which sudden

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upheavals have ravaged. The latter, on the other hand, is a slow process of growth from within, and nourishment from without, of which the writer is a sincere upholder.

Arabic Literature. By H. A. R. GIBBS, M.A. (Oxford University Press, London. Pp. 128. Price, 2s. 6d.)

This small manual, one of the series of the "World's Manuals," dealing as it does with the literary landmarks of its subject, gives a fair idea of the vastness of the Arabic literature, and of the right significance of this nomenclature. The book is not overloaded with names, and serves as an admirable introduction for such as intend entering upon a more scholarly and advanced study, the which special need the author has been careful not to ignore. He has, for this purpose, appended a list of all such works as can be consulted with advantage on any particular aspect of the subject, so that even those who are already acquainted with Arabic literature can now and then draw upon this little work with advantage.

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MESSAGE OF ISLAM

BY

AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

A Lecture given to the European Community in various places in South Africa (1926). Pp. 43, 23, viii. Price 1s., postage 2d.

HAVA, ARABIC ENGLISH DICTIONARY. 14s., postage 1s. 3d.

THATCHER, ARABIC GRAMMAR (with key). 10s. 6d., postage 9d.