

# Islamic Review

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

Vol. XVIII.]

[Nos. 3 & 4.

SHAWWĀL-ZU 'L-QA'DĀ, 1348 A.H.

MARCH-APRIL, 1930 A.C.

Annual Subscription, 10s.

Single Copies, 2s.

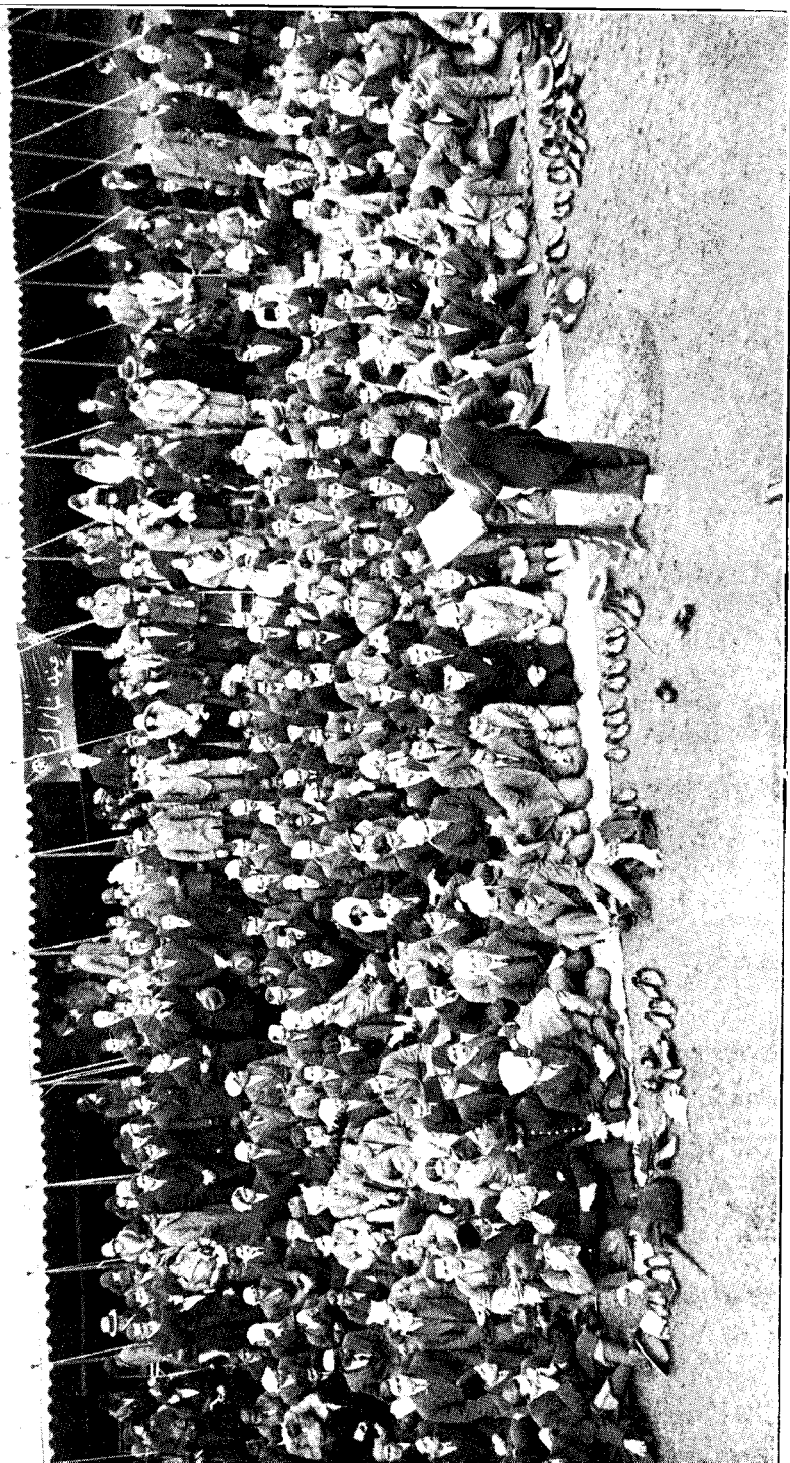
## CONTENTS

The Imām delivering his Eid-ul-fitr (1348 A.H.)	
Address .. .. .	Frontispiece
	PAGE
Hints to the Study of the Qur-ān. By Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din .. .. .	81
After-Effects of the Great War. By Shaikh Mushir Husain Kidāw'i of Gadia, Barrister-at-Law .. .. .	100
Separation of State and Religion in Islam. By Nawāb Sir Zulfiqār 'AlīKhān, C.S.I., M.L.A. .. .. .	108
Muhammad in the New Testament. III. John the Baptist announces a Powerful Prophet. By Professor 'Abdu 'l-Ahad Dāwūd, B.D. .. .. .	114
Reflections on Fear of God. By Hāfiz Ghulām Sarwar, M.A. .. .. .	124
The Result of Ignorance. By A. D. Tyssen, D.C.L., M.A. .. .. .	127
My Adoption of Islam from the Psychological Stand-point. By Khālīd D'Larnger Remraf .. .. .	129
Notes .. .. .	134
The Festival of Eid-ul-fitr (1348 A.H.) at the Woking Mosque—A Plea for Tolerance and Use of Sober Language when Criticizing Sacred Personages—Why Prophet Muhammad is so much Misrepresented—Is a Plurality of Wives reprehensible in the Life of the Prophet?—Was there a Change in the Prophet after the Flight?—The Slander fastened on 'Āyesha, and the Slander on Mary, Mother of Jesus	

## THE HOLY QUR-ĀN

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PUBLISHED AT  
THE MOSQUE, WOKING, ENGLAND



THE IMAM DELIVERING HIS EID-UL-FITR (1348 A.H.) ADDRESS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلُهُ عَلَى رُسُلِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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SHAWWĀL-ZU 'L-QA'DA, 1348 A.H.  
 Vol. XVIII. MARCH-APRIL, 1930 A.C. Nos. 3 & 4

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## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ĀN

By AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

### THE LORD'S PRAYER CONTRADICTING CHURCH THEOLOGY

THE more I think of the Lord's Prayer (especially of its first portion), the more I am convinced of the prophetic insight possessed by its author, such insight as belongs only to a great messenger from God. It shows that Jesus believed in man's possession of the high capabilities that may reveal in him some of God's features. His Kingdom in the universe discloses beauty, sublimity, grandeur, and splendour; they display themselves in a form consistent with solemnity, seriousness, and high-mindedness. They exclude the slightest idea of vanity or lightness of character. The working of the Governing Hand also discloses transcendental knowledge, and power over all things in Nature. Under His rule they bring forth their inherent faculties, when on their way to progress, thus working out the Great Design. There are also accuracy, exactitude, regularity, and punctuality to be observed in every manifestation of Nature, in obedience to the Great Will; all being the outcome of a premeditated plan, which takes necessary

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

precautions also against all such mishaps as may retard the progress of things to perfection. I have mentioned here only some of the salient features of the Divine Work, since the Kingdom of God could not come on earth: unless its ruler—that is to say, man—possess the requisite qualities. And this is no impossibility. If the Qur-án sets God before man as his model, it also selects certain of His qualities for our imitation. Present-day culture has enabled us also to acquire them, though only to a limited extent.

But could these excellent ethics and morals be owned or cultivated by us under those philosophies and theologies which see no good in the human race? Whether such teachings did or did not emanate from these great men who are believed to be their authors—and in my belief they as true reformers and messengers from God could not be responsible for laying down such pernicious principles—they, nevertheless, are passed on under their names. Buddha, they say, observed everywhere trouble and tribulation—the sequel of evil—and saw our liberation from it only in annihilation. His dictum may now be construed by some apologists as meaning Self-Renunciation; but the practice of the religiously advanced Buddhists has always made it synonymous with man's total divorcement from all worldly affairs. The old Brahmans could not see "Reality" in anything. All appeared to them a delusion—*Maya*—with man a self-deluded entity in the universe. They advocated *Tiyag*—separation from mundane things—as the only means for achieving Reality and attaining happiness. A hermit who turned his back on the world, throwing down the burden of all the obligations which society had laid upon him as its member and retiring to the jungle for contemplation, was, according to Hindu theology, the best specimen of humanity.

I do not propose to discuss here the utility or otherwise of these "high-flown philosophies," but they seem to drench, with a cold douche, all the enthusiasm that could possibly actuate man towards achieving civilization in any high form. They may supply us with a good mental food for contemplation, but it is a mental luxury only and baneful in its effects.

## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ĀN

It leads its followers to deprecate all such manly qualities as are necessary for the defence of our rights. It makes them an easy prey to others' aggression. Ancient India indulged in such philosophies, and produced literature that may be fascinating as literature, but no one can deny its harmful influence on the minds of those who took it seriously, seeing that it set them firmly against all the activities necessary in the field of material progress.

The Church in the West went a step farther. It produced a theology, in this respect even worse. It declared that man was born in sin. It asserted that he was an embodiment of evil and by nature incapable of any good. It was in pursuance of such beliefs that every effort to attain material progress was discouraged and looked down upon with contempt in Christian lands in the Middle Ages. "Man was unworthy of the earth, and polluted this sacred footstool of God." So Calvin and other theologians of his class thought of sin under the inspiration which they had received from the Church dogma. Calvin longed for the day when some colossal earthquake would swallow up this loathsome personification of all that was abominable in the eye of the Lord.

Again I say, could such beliefs favour any progress on any line—whether material or spiritual. If sin means disobedience to the Law and is innate in us, we are of course incapable of obeying the Law. Such a condition of mind cannot produce any sort of civilization. It is "Obedience to Law," which the word "Islam" literally means, that carries us to success.

The author of the Lord's Prayer cannot be held responsible for these Church tenets. If the Creator of the universe is also the Source of all goodness, He could not be our "Father in Heaven." A son, as an Arabic proverb says, is the secret of his father. He possesses inherently his father's characteristics, good or bad, though it depends upon environment whether such characteristics be fully displayed or not. The son of a wicked man is prone to reveal all the bad traits he inherits, though he may not do so in the face of public opinion. Healthy surroundings may convert him to a better

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

state of mind. But his nature is that which he received from his father. How could a creature, whose very nature is compounded of sin, come from the loins of the Heavenly Father? It is mere blasphemy even to imagine it, and a gross libel on the memory of him who laid down so broad a principle of goodness for his disciples when he taught them to approach God with this beautiful prayer. Such a sickening and repulsive creature as Church theology makes out man to be could not beseech his Lord for the appearance of the day when the Holy Kingdom, with all the Dignity, Grace, and Beauty thereof, shall come within his reach.

One may pass over these precepts as an accretion to the original teachings of the Great Master, but we fail to find any real purpose served by Divine Revelations if they remain silent on a subject so important in the working out of our civilization. They seem to remain unconcerned, and want us to remain so too, with the inestimable treasures of the universe. Everything in Creation is purposeful,<sup>1</sup> and the purpose lies chiefly in its use to us; but if a religion from God did not open our eyes to this beneficent working of the Creator, His whole work would appear to be aimless. It would be to find fault with His Design if we thought so; therefore it ought to be the chief function of Divine Revelation to make us aware of His Gifts.<sup>2</sup> Some think that religion should not concern our mundane affairs. The "Kingdom of Christ is not of this world." Religion came only to show us how to worship and glorify God and give Him thanks, or to provide ourselves with means for our own salvation. I will speak of salvation subsequently, but the prayer of Jesus contradicts all such assertions. How could we pray for the Heavenly Kingdom to come on earth, if his own Kingdom had nothing to do with the things of that earth? We no doubt possess the worshipping instinct, but it has always found its gratification in directing our devotional feelings to some kind of deity even without any revelation prompting us to do so. From a stone to a son of woman, man has adorned various manifestations of Nature as his god, and he has been none

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xxxviii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., iii. 189.

## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

the worse for it—seeing that he has been able to keep a certain moral order under any system of worship. The worship of idols has, at times, inspired him with noble and lofty feelings, like those which have been observed in the most worthy of the worshippers of God. Prayers addressed to images made by man's own hand have in their beauty, grandeur, and sincerity surpassed even the devotional utterances of the holiest monotheist while adoring the Most High.

Again, the circle of our gratefulness to our Creator would become inexpressibly widened with the increase of our knowledge of His Gifts to us.<sup>1</sup> We cannot thank Him for His creating us a plaything in the hands of sin and evil. Did He create us for an incessant struggle against evil that would carry us day by day to perdition? It would be most ungrateful of us if we thought so. On the other hand, when millions of things come within our knowledge so pregnant with benefit to us, our mind becomes filled with gratitude. Every discovery of these valuable treasures, so essential to our happiness and comfort, intensifies our sense of thanksgiving. And if Divine Revelation really demands thanksgiving from us to the Lord, it has failed in its purpose if it does not prompt us to make discoveries in the universe. We are saddled with various needs, which are ever on the increase. This fact enhances our anxiety and stirs our activities to look for some means of satisfying their needs; but our thanks to the Lord would know no bounds if we found what is needful for us already in existence, created by the Beneficent Lord out of His own goodness, thousands of years before we came to the shores of light.

Similarly our glorification of our Creator would be at its worthiest if we found His Hand working wonders everywhere. Everything in the universe is a wonderful repository of unimaginable potentialities. They all move in the same groove for the completion of our happiness.<sup>2</sup> Would not our knowledge of their service to us enhance our sense of gratitude to the Lord? If glorification were one of the essentials of religion, we should miss a great thing were revelation to remain silent concerning it. It would do an immense service to the

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, lv.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., xiii. 33-34; xvi. 12-13, 18, 64-71.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

sacred cause if it made science a worthy pursuit for humanity.

Undoubtedly we do need a moral code, and every religion gives us some rules of morality, but they are of no value to us. Even if we own but few things, it is to protect our earnings against usurpation and misappropriation that we do need some moral code for counteracting avarice and cupidity, and controlling the unbridled demands of passion and desire. These come into play when we see others possessed of things that we need, yet lack the energy to attain. In short, the promulgation of some moral code demands the pre-existence of the things which contribute to our comfort. But if our possessions are few, we do not need any evolved system of morality. A few rules, like those enunciated in the Ten Commandments, are sufficient to maintain order in society. This will necessarily cause all the moral and spiritual forces in us to remain in abeyance, but the Great Designer did not intend such a state of things. If the working of the said forces is necessary to fulfil the object of our creation, how could the required condition be attained if we remained ignorant of the various resources of Nature? A religion without some suggestions to its followers as to how they may bring these gifts of God into human service cannot claim perfection for its teachings.

It may be said that those attainments were man's own business, that Providence became absolved from its duty when it created the things that we needed, and that it was our concern to find out how to use them. But the history of Modern Science contradicts such presumptions. The blessings of God remained unnoticed for thousands of years. Their benefits to us did not come into operation until the Last Word of God—the Qur-án—invited our attention to the task of developing Nature to our benefit.<sup>1</sup> Nay, we adopted a contrary course for want of any true light on the subject. Instead of reducing Nature to our service, we placed many of its manifestations on the throne of Divinity. They continued in their ministry to us in the capacity of servants, but we ascribed it

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xliii. 12-14; xlv. 12-14.



## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

to their divine favour towards us, their abject worshippers—the handmaid became the master of the house, and the master a menial. Man, with all his inherent faculties for the attainment of the required knowledge, could not reverse this unnatural state of things and put them right until Al-Qur-án came and opened our eyes to it. All our gods, it proclaimed, were our ministers and slaves. They were our subjects, and we their rulers. The Book went farther. It declared that nothing in Creation was without its aim,<sup>1</sup> and that the said aim was conducive to our benefit. This Gospel awakened the forces sleeping within us, and in a short time we saw an upheaval of culture not known before. Under the inspiration of the Qur-án, Muslims laid the foundations of the Modern Sciences, which are progressing day by day. Without the knowledge of these sciences the prayed-for Kingdom of the Nazarene cannot grace the earth in its full glory!

Though this knowledge of Nature's secrets is indispensable, it is nevertheless liable to prove perilous to human peace and welfare if it is not controlled strictly by some moral and spiritual regime so evolved as to meet the requirements of an advanced material progress. That this is so is amply illustrated by modern progress in the West. All the blessings of God discovered in these days are employed by some to the destruction of others. The abundance of our riches has weakened our moral sense. Man prowls through life like a savage beast, devastating all the moral harvest as he goes. The Qur-ánic Revelation foresaw this and provided a course. It kept our progress under a strict moral control. Wherever the Book invites us to bring the treasures of Nature to our service, it gives prominence to the cultivation of the moral aspects of our lives and characters as well. There is a very beautiful verse<sup>2</sup> in the Holy Qur-án which has been, and

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xxxviii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! glory be to Thee! save us then from the chastisement of the fire."—Al-Qur-án, iii. 189, 190.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

will ever be, a true key to material progress. A humble recognition of the truth laid down in this verse would, if acted upon, carry us to the height of material civilization. The verse says that those who make researches in the realm of heaven and earth, and find out that there is nothing that is useless for us, and then bring each particular use as they discover it to the service of humanity, are men of true wisdom and understanding. But their wisdom and understanding will not become complete unless they keep God before their eyes in every moment of life—that is to say, unless all their words and deeds are after the mind of God. A person who would enter on the field of scientific researches, as the Qur-án desires that man should with this moral equipment, will really and in the true sense of the words bring the Kingdom of God on earth.

### INDEBTEDNESS OF RELIGION TO SCIENCE

These observations might not succeed in inducing a biased mind to realize that a Revealed Book is defective if it does not draw man's attention to Nature and urge him to explore its provinces, and there cannot be much point in a Revealed Book which fails to do so. The good so often claimed for religion—i.e. that of the maintenance and establishment of moral order in human society—is a thing which man has adopted voluntarily under the pressure of his own social environment. A thinking mind cannot nowadays deny the service that science has rendered to the cause of religion. If belief in the Deity has been universally the *sine qua non* of religion from time immemorial, actual faith itself has been sadly in decay in our days. Science came to its rescue when modern culture was fast banishing it to oblivion. The former provided a real panacea for saving the latter when it was breathing its last in the West. It was on a retreating campaign, driven back before the ever-increasing onslaughts of secularizing agents, that appeared in the forms of scepticism, agnosticism and positivism. (The last, though a truth, was based on wrong scientific data.) Atheism was in full swing

## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÂN

when a sudden discovery checked its course. Biology, a century before, could find no purpose whatsoever in the working of Nature. Its freaks and blunders, as they were then thought to be, had brought the various manifestations of Nature into existence. But scientific research in the universe discovered that there were governing principles which it called Order and Law. The so-called freaks and blunders in the light of new discoveries appeared various ordered phases of an organized system. The preponderance of Law, and obedience to it, was seen in every stage in the progress of every created thing. It was not the dead matter of former biology, with no scheme before it, but something that evinced a character of Law-abidingness, even in its most nebular form. Obedience to Law was taken as its inherent quality. To avoid, therefore, the associations that the word "Matter" created in the human mind under the teachings of the old-fashioned biology, a new name was proposed that might comprehend this significant attribute in the things of the world. The name chosen was "Law substance," meaning something that assumed shape in order to answer the demands of the Law. Its supremacy in Nature became thus established. But it was also found that the said Law was a curious collection of antitheses. Each form of it prescribed a course antagonistic to the requirements of the other. Heterogeneity was everywhere, though it gave way in the long run to homogeneity. Conflicting elements worked in harmony to attain one end; a phenomenon which compelled biologists to believe in the working of "One Hand" that ruled Nature and brought its contrasts into concord. This state of affairs created a new creed that received the name of Monism, and further researches established the fact that all the activities of the Law-substance under Monism also disclosed some Design. Everything was bringing forth some specified object. The various components of the universe stood either in a supplementary or complementary relation to each other; and all this was no mere accident, but in order to fulfil the requirements of a set Design. It also appeared that the accomplishment of the Design was not to be furthered in a haphazard way, for there was evinced intelli-

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

gence, together with the premeasurement and the prearrangement of the requisites so necessary for perfection. All those observations established another great truth. Evolution was the order of the day. Everything, from its initial form up to completion, was pursuing an evolutionary course, and brought forth gradually all the qualities that had been reposed in it at its very creation. Science thus led us step by step to believe in Law, Monism, Design, Intelligence, and Evolution as the chief indications of the Working Hand, Whose owner also appeared to possess complete knowledge of things with absolute power to rule over them and bend them to His Will. Consequently belief in the existence of the Great Mind was confirmed, and the world began to adore the God of Nature, called "Allah" in the Holy Qur-án.

Monism is now an accepted verity in secular opinion, but there is yet a small gulf to be bridged between Monism and Monotheism. Now if we credit this Working Hand, of which we have spoken, with Intelligence and Design, as science compels us to do, we must needs believe in the existence of some mind that works wonders everywhere, since these features belong exclusively to mind. Monism plus belief in Mind's existence will create Monotheism.

Unfortunately Dogmatic Theology gave such attributes to the Creative Agency that it failed to receive any support from the school of Natural Theology; nay, the former was regarded by many as an insult to human intelligence. The revolt was especially directed against the assertiveness of the Formal Church in the West, and disbelief in God was its necessary outcome. Had it referred to the above qualities as the attributes of the Supreme Being, it could have suppressed all atheistic tendencies in humanity. Al-Qur-án, however, adopted the required course. The very first attribute that it gave to Allah—i.e. *Rabb*—includes the seven qualities mentioned below among its various other meanings. Besides, the sacred Book, in many verses, refers to those qualities as salient characteristics of One Who created the universe, thus establishing His existence in a most rational way. It is for this reason that Muslims became more firmly fixed in their

## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

belief in Islamic tenets in consequence of the spread of Liberal Education, while other faiths suffered everywhere from its hands.

Here I give a few of the verses referring to the seven qualities to which I have alluded. The Book teems with such, and they will be discussed later on.

(1) God, the source of all the laws that receive obedience from everything in Nature.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Monism.—“ If there had been in them any gods except Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder; therefore glory be to Allah, the Lord of the dominion, above what they attribute (to Him).”<sup>2</sup> The verse in a very brief form refers to the nature of the laws working in Nature and antagonistic to each other in their requirements. Such were sure to create chaos in the universe, had they not been under the control of one hand.

(3) Design.—“ O men! serve your Lord Who created you and those before you *so that you may guard* (against evil).”<sup>3</sup> “ He it is who created *for you* all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things.”<sup>4</sup> It shows the object of the creation and the things therein. “ And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in *vain*; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire.”<sup>5</sup> The words italicized by me refer to the designs and object of the creation.

(4) Design and intelligence and Monism.—“ And your God is *one God*! there is no god but He; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.” “ Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which *profits men*, and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds, and the clouds made sub-

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, iii. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ii. 21

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., xxi. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., ii. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., xxxviii. 27.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

servient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people *who understand*.”<sup>1</sup> The verses show how various units in the universe, though belonging to various regions and working separately as regards each other in their own sphere, do converge to the same end, i.e. “profit of man.” And the whole system displays an intelligent design.

(5) Evolution.—“Pharaoh said: And who is the one whom you call your Rabb. He said: Our Rabb is He who gave to everything its shape, measure, and quantity of materials to bring it to its perfection and then put it on the right path to reach the goal.” “(Pharaoh) said: And who is your Lord, O Moses? He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal).”<sup>2</sup> The verse refers to all the evolutionary stages.

(6-7) Knowledge of things and power like that of an owner rule over them. “. . . whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend any thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases; His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.”<sup>3</sup>

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

“Thy Kingdom come” is the pith of the prayer popularly known as the Lord’s Prayer. Jesus longed for the establishment of God’s Will on earth, as it was in Heaven; for in this he saw the establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom. His prayer still resounds in every corner of Christendom. Two thousand years have all but passed, and still that prayer has failed to receive any response, according to the Church’s interpretation, which identifies the prayed-for Kingdom with the descent of Jesus from on high. The recent disappointment of the Adventists in this respect, together with the new cos-

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, ii. 163-64.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid., xx. 49-50.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid., ii. 255.

## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÂN

mogony which has lately arisen, tends to discredit the old beliefs. The researches of Science have destroyed the Church's map of the universe. The earth is now believed to be but an insignificant speck in infinite Space. No one now takes the universe for a "three-storied building consisting of heaven, the abode of God, the angels and beatified spirits; our earth; and the infernal regions beneath it." The descent of Christ into Hades and his ascent into Heaven must therefore be taken in an allegorical sense, as is the practice with the most prominent Churchmen.

Astronomical truth, as accepted at present, leaves no room for a geographical Heaven. The new cosmography thus destroys faith in the physical ascent of Jesus, and with it goes the belief in his descent. Church dignitaries are now realizing the futility of such doctrines and see his second coming in the exhibition of Divine Morals by man. The Kingdom of Heaven will come and rule the earth when man, the lord of the earth, shall have decked himself in Divine Garments. Jesus, in fact, prayed for the day when the King of Heaven will reveal His Morals to humanity. Man then will walk humbly with the Lord, and His Will be on earth as it is in Heaven.

Jesus could never have thought that the earth was not included in God's Kingdom. Every thing in the earth and on it, as far as its material growth is concerned, slavishly follows the Laws of God.<sup>1</sup> Man no doubt is a rebel against His Government, and that chiefly where he follows his own discretion, otherwise he cannot afford to go against the Laws of God. Even atheists bow to them, though the atheist calls them the Laws of Nature. The Divine Economy has blessed man with the power of discernment. He errs in its use, and becomes inordinate in his ways. Jesus, a true reformer from God, saw the real uplifting of man in his coming under the Divine Colours. True baptism does not consist of dipping in water. This is just a symbol. It consisted, as the Qur-ân afterwards explained, in dyeing oneself in the colours of God.<sup>2</sup>

The world, with all our concern in it, is a chaos if not subservient to moral order. There is no tranquillity or peace

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-ân, xxx. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ii. 138.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

of mind anywhere in the human world; while both these qualities are clearly to be observed in all other denizens of the universe, be they animate or inanimate, whether they possess intelligence or lack it. Ethics based on true morality can alone finish this ever-increasing struggle between man and man which is disturbing the human mind everywhere. Possession of earthly riches, though essential constituent of our comfort, does not secure for us the treasure of real happiness. This latter lies exclusively in the owning and exhibition of Divine Morals. For these we look in sacred scriptures and in the writings of great men. But our prejudices and passions handicap us here. We very often object to such moral tenets as come from other teachers. Fortunately the true solution of this intricate problem is at last coming within our reach. The Qur-án, in the clearest terms, based its code of morality and ethics on Divine Lines.<sup>1</sup> This truth is now dawning on the Western mind, which has begun to see true morality in the reflection and shadow of the Divine Attributes. The Kingdom of Heaven on earth, as I said before, will become reality when man shall have equipped himself with Divine Morality. If Jesus prayed for its revelation from on high, as well as for knowledge of the way to achieve it, the last of the Prophets has received it from the Source of all goodness. The Qur-án, he claims, has come to grant us the Charter of the Heavenly Kingdom. It gives us an insight into all those Divine Morals which must be the foundation of our moral code. Prejudice and bigotry, doubtless, will not allow many to accept Qur-ánic teachings as the universal truth. But the Holy Book brings Nature to witness to its verities.<sup>2</sup> Islam does not dogmatize in anything. It appeals to Nature and refers to Nature's pages in support of its teachings. If the real happiness and peace of the world lie in subordinating our volition to the Will of the Most High, we ought not to have the message solely from the mouth of a fellow-creature, no matter what his claims may be. Our culture has enabled us

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, vii. 180; the opening chapter of the Qur-án. Muhammad says: "Dye yourself in the colours of Allah."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., iii. 190.



## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

to read the Divine Mind in the pages of His Divine Work, and in it lies the superiority of the Qur-ánic teachings over all other scriptures. All its precepts and principles are illustrated and explained in the universe. Other persuasions may claim to prescribe the Divine Course for our conduct, but the manifestations of Nature are our only safe and true guide in such respect. Its pages, if read with the eye of true observation, disclose mighty and useful lessons that must needs bring us happiness and success. Nature, in fact, reflects the mind of Nature's Creator.

Nature alone can provide for us a mould in which to cast our morals. The great function that a Book from God should perform would be to remind us of the lessons of Nature.

Scientific research is too slow to bring within our knowledge all that we require for our moral progress on such Divine Lines as are disclosed by Nature, and indeed humanity has passed thousands of years without such knowledge. Divine Revelation therefore came to fill the gap; thus says the Holy Qur-án.<sup>1</sup> It claims to have come to remind us of the laws that are working in the universe—laws that actualize all its capacities and potentialities.

It is for the above reason that the religion of anthropomorphic incarnates together with the belief in vicarious sacrifices for human salvation is at last vanishing. Such beliefs receive no support from Nature, the only index of the Divine Mind, as I have said before. Monotheism must kill all dual or polytheistic creeds. Every working of the Hand behind the Screen is admittedly transcendental and beyond human perception; hence a belief in a "delimited God" is, on the face of it, an absurdity. On the other hand, though the principle of sacrifice is working everywhere in the world, yet it tells us nothing about vicarious atonements. Things belonging to a low order are sacrificed at the altar of the high; for in this lies their uplifting. But members of that high order do not immolate themselves for the salvation of the lower order. Inanimate matter, in the bowels of the earth, effaces

<sup>1</sup> See chapter lxi, which recounts in brief wording the marvellous transformation wrought by Revelation in Arabia.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

even its very name to secure its entry into the vegetable kingdom; vegetables, through sacrifice, achieve locomotion and consciousness when they provide food for the animal kingdom.

Most of the animals, in their turn, when killed and brought to table, become transmuted into humanity. Members of the same order sometimes do sacrifice themselves for others; but the sacrifice of the high in the interest of the low is something altogether unknown in the workings of Nature. Hence the doctrine of the "Epiphany"—God loved man so much that He sent His only son to save him through His blood—can no longer appeal to a student of Nature.

Similarly various other "isms," that the human mind has invented for its consolation from time to time, cannot stand the searchlight of modern culture. Their genesis lay in our efforts to secure pleasure and avoid pain. As our scheme to achieve success often becomes frustrated by causes beyond our control, we ascribed our mishaps to some unseen agencies that were secretly working against our interests. We desired to court their favour, and therefore we deified them and approached them with every form of devotion. They became our gods and received from us worship and adoration. Our own passions sometimes joined themselves to the same category. Human lust and anger, for instance, have contrived to clothe themselves in Divine Garments. This produced pantheism in its various forms, and countries from element-worship to man-worship. Fetishism has swayed human belief in different shapes, but the study of Nature as it advanced showed its futility. It was Nature and its various elements that we worshipped to gain prosperity and avoid adversity, and our ignorance placed them on a Divine Pedestal. The Qur-án has exposed this error. It declares that Nature, with all its resources, was created to subserve our ends.<sup>1</sup> But our own ignorance of its ways and our misapplication of them, in consequence, brought calamity. To-day, scientific research has brought home to us the same truth. The gods of yesterday appear to us either as our equals or as ministers of our needs.

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xlv. 12-14.

## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

All such persuasions therefore as require allegiance to doctrine contrary to this truth are doomed to disappear. Religion as followed by every atom of Nature shall be our creed.<sup>1</sup> We shall no longer worship any man-made god. The God of Nature shall be the object of our adoration. It is for this reason that Islam is destined to be the future religion of the world, for it encourages Science, looking upon it as its help-mate and comrade for the accomplishment of the grand design for which man was created.

If the sole object, therefore, of Science and Revelation is to enlighten us as to what will help us in claiming and possessing our birthright, there cannot be any antagonism between the two. False theology cannot go hand in hand with Science if the latter treads the right path. When folklore like that collected in the Biblical record was accepted as the Word of God, theology based on such writs must necessarily have been opposed to Science. The former, with all its powers, would extinguish the latter. It did so in Europe in the Middle Ages, and would do the same again to-day if modern culture had not widened liberality and created the broadmindedness of the present times. But scientific discoveries are so vigorously and constantly shaking the Church beliefs in the West that the ever-increasing onslaughts have almost overwhelmed the mind of the Churchman, who now sees the protection and maintenance of his faith only in the cessation of scientific progress. The Bishop of Ripon wished to see Science take a holiday for the coming ten years. His Lordship, in fact, needed a breathing-space that might enable the Church to trim its sails to meet the coming storm. Modernization in Church theology till now has provided a workable instrument for achieving the desired end, but now it looks like losing its efficacy in the face of present-day culture. Science has recently disclosed certain truths in so invincible a manner that, detrimental as they may be to Church tenets, they admit of no "modernizing" effort on the part of the Church. They have gained favour with the human mind and are certain to vanquish their adversaries. In this connection the efforts of the present-

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xxx. 20.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

day Modernists in the Church are especially noticeable. They have changed their religion altogether. Their Christianity is quite a different thing from that of the Church. But they try to look to the old faith for countenance. In their attempt to put their house in order and purge it of all that crept into it from Paganism, they are not only clearing off the old furniture, but are refurnishing it with things quite uncongenial to the very atmosphere of the old house. Muslims, however, welcome these efforts, as they see in them the restoration of Faith to its original purity, which is no other than Islam. Islam is not Mohammedanism, though the Holy Prophet preached it some thirteen hundred years ago. He, in fact, restored religion to its pristine beauty, and brought it into conformity with the religion observed by Nature.

We cannot enough admire Jesus when we find that the real object of the Revelation disclosed in his prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven," can be but the one and only object of Revelation. The whole universe obeys the Will of the Lord in its progress and development. The Divine Object in the creation of the world would be accomplished when the Mighty Atom of Nature, i.e. man, should succeed in subjugating his discretionary powers to the Will of the Creative Agency.<sup>1</sup> Happiness will rule the earth when the human race shall have become aware of and observed the ways of the Lord in His governance of the universe.

Science keeps ever the same object before her in her researches, but her progress is too slow to afford us, in our generation, any clear view of what the end is to be. The Great Designer did not delay by looking to the day when Science shall have succeeded in its efforts. Man must know His Will for his guidance on the earth, whether the knowledge comes to him through Science or Revelation. It was God's pleasure, nevertheless, to set us on the right path in this respect. He sent His messages to this end from time to time.<sup>2</sup> Thus the world saw great Teachers of Religion in every time and every place.<sup>3</sup> The door of Revelation, therefore, could not be closed until the required knowledge should have become

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xx. 30.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid., ii. 38; vii. 38.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid., xiii. 8.

## HINTS TO THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

complete. This was the purpose of the Qur-án, which in itself brings the fulfilment of the Nazarene prayer.

All Revelations have unanimously preached one truth. They have proclaimed that man was created after the image of his Creator. But the Qur-án was more explicit in this respect. It defined the position of man in the clearest language. It declared him to be the vicegerent of God on earth.<sup>1</sup> Science arrives at the same conclusion. It calls man the Lord of the Universe. If this is the object of his coming into the world, he cannot be true to his position unless he rules the earth on Divine Lines. Revelation must therefore come to give him hints in the performance of his duty. The Arabic words *Ilhām* and *Wahy* for inspiration convey the same idea. They mean hints from Above to aid man in the accomplishment of the Great Design. He, as God's viceroy, must exhibit Divine Morals. He cannot do so unless and until he knows what they are. If this were not the object of Revelation, there would have been no need of it. Devotion and Glorification by prayers and offerings which are, no doubt, the chief themes in every religion are not mere formalities. True worship lies in implicit loyalty and obedience to God's ways.<sup>2</sup> The recitation of a few sacred words accompanied by prescribed gesticulations are of no avail if their purport is not worked out in our daily lives. Singing hymns at the top of our voices is quite useless if our conduct does not bear testimony to what we profess in those hymns and prayers. A Revelation from Above could not claim finality,<sup>3</sup> as the Qur-án does, unless it inspires us with the true conception of Godhood.<sup>4</sup> We have to fight under the flag of God, and we must know His colours. It is by our knowledge of those colours that the dead image of the Lord would become reanimated. It would then establish the Heavenly Kingdom on earth; man would no longer pray for it, but praise Him and give thanks to Him for His Revelation as the opening chapter of the Qur-án teaches.

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, ii. 35; vi. 166; xxvii. 62; xliii. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., vi. 116.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., xxix. 45, 49.

# ISLAMIC REVIEW

## AFTER-EFFECTS OF THE GREAT WAR

By SHAIKH MUSHĪR HUSAIN KIDĀW'Ī OF GADIA,  
Barrister-at-Law

(Continued from February (1930), "Islamic Review," p. 62.)

### 5. ISLAM WAS THE REAL BASIS OF THE MODERN SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

All the present-day progress, prosperity, and power of Europe depends upon its scientific knowledge. All this scientific knowledge is due to the exertions of man to make nature subservient to it. Man has failed to originate anything. He cannot create even a fly. His progress depends upon *discovering* different properties and qualities hidden in natural things. Thirteen centuries ago the Holy Qur-ān put him on the path to the present-day discoveries and progress by such plain and explicit intimations: "Alam tarā anna 'llāh sakhkhara lakum mā fi 's-Samāwāti wa mā fi 'l-Ardi wa Asbaga 'alaikum ni'amahū zāhirtan wa bātinitan?"—"Do you not see that Allah has made what is in the heavens and what is in the earth subservient to you, and made complete to you His gifts outwardly and inwardly?" (Qur-ān, xxxi. 20).

Again and again man's attention has been drawn to the fact that the Merciful and Foreseeing God has provided man tens and tens of thousands of natural things which he can harness to his advantage. He can rule over the elements. He can take out the things hidden hundreds of feet deep in the bosom of the earth. He can utilize the current of electricity in the atmosphere. He can go up to the stars as a Muslim saint, Muhammad-bin-'Arabī, is said to have done. He can send his voice across many and many miles without any wire, as 'Omar the Second Khalifa did when warning one of his generals against an army of the enemies concealed from him in his rear.

Of other modern scientists and learned men, Ernst Haeckel, the Monist, has earned my greatest admiration and respect. I have read and re-read almost all his books, and I was pro-

## AFTER-EFFECTS OF THE GREAT WAR

foundly struck by the following paragraph from one of his works, in which he makes "Confession of his Faith." He writes:

"The school of the twentieth century, flourishing anew on this firm ground [of Monism], shall have to unfold to the rising youth not only the wonderful truths of the Cosmos, but also the inexhaustible treasures of beauty lying everywhere hidden therein. Whether we marvel at the lofty mountains or the magic world of the sea, whether with the telescope we explore the infinitely great wonders of the starry heavens, or with the microscope the yet more surprising wonders of a life infinitely small, everywhere does divine nature open up to us an inexhaustible fountain of aesthetic enjoyment. Blind and insensible have the great majority of mankind hitherto wandered through this wonderland of a world, a sickly and unnatural theology has made it repulsive as a 'vale of tears.'"

When Muhammad came, the telescope had not been invented. It was invented later on the principles found out by one of his followers. The microscope had not been invented. Man did not know, nor could know, the secrets of nature. Neither "the majesty of the lofty mountains" struck him, nor the secrets of "the magic world of the sea." "The inexhaustible treasures of beauty lying everywhere hidden therein" were a closed book to man indeed. "The Divine Nature" could not appeal to him. He was in truth "blind and insensible" and found this "glorious wonderland" to be nothing but a "vale of tears."

Haeckel is quite right in saying that theology was "sickly and unnatural." To the Hindus the world was a place for punishment. It was all an illusion (*Maya*). Brahmins in India destroyed even the medical science developed by Charakha and others. To the Buddhists this world was a place of misery, and all pleasures and comforts therein had to be avoided with a view to attaining Nirvana. There was no incentive to inventions or discoveries. The Christian theology had failed to improve the "repulsive" notions of this "wonderland." Man, the masterpiece, himself was believed to be a miserable wretch born in sin, incapable of working out even his own salvation.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

A deliberate murder in cold blood had to be committed to save mankind which was taught to spend an ascetic life of celibacy in cloisters to be fit for the Kingdom of God in Heaven—not on Earth. Under Christian theology, woman was supposed to be an "evil," a "poison," "the devil's own gateway." Woman was an evil to be scrupulously avoided because it was thought that through her even the "Saviour" of the world had had to suffer. There was no literature worth the name for century after century during the age of the Christian Faith. Learned men were persecuted. It was a crime to believe in the roundness of the earth. "The same evil instinct," says Draper, "which tore Hypatia piecemeal in the church of Alexandria brought Galileo into the custody of the familiars of the Holy Office at Rome. . . . There had been a rapid descent to the last degree of more than African abasement in bleeding statues and winking pictures. In Europe there have been incorporated old forms of worship and old festivals with Christian ones; the local gods and goddesses had been replaced by saints; for deification, canonization had been substituted. There had been produced a civilization, the character of which was its extraordinary intolerance. A man could not be suspected of doubting the popular belief without risk to his gods, his body, or his life. As a necessary consequence there could be no great lawgivers, no philosophers, no poets."

Professor Lake, Fellow of the London Meteorological Society, says: "But Islam has had its revenge on seventh council Christianity by its introduction of freedom of thought and the cultivation of learning into Europe. Science was in a dormant state, the little known being confined mostly to priesthood, who used it into promoting superstitions by which they profited and ruled. Thus Science was fossilized and checked, and the same during the Middle Ages."

Up to this day Christian religious men denounce the flying hobby of the British Prime Minister on the ground that if God had meant man to fly he would have given him wings.

While Muslims experimented on flying-machines centuries ago, up to this day the extreme and deplorable "intolerance"



## AFTER-EFFECTS OF THE GREAT WAR

of "Christian" Europe continues, though Europe has become irreligious and "unchristian" enough to encourage science and material progress.

In short, before Muhammad, man's thoughts were en-chained, his freedom was limited, his belief was superimposed. He had God-given eyes, but was not allowed by his priests to see. He had ears, but was not allowed to hear. His intellect was not allowed to have full play. He could not discover the hidden secrets of this "wonderland." Haeckel proudly claims: "But now, at last, it is given to the mightily advancing human mind to have its eyes open; it is given to it to show that a true knowledge of Nature affords full satisfaction and inexhaustible nourishment not only for its searching understanding but also for its yearning spirit." Haeckel ends his "Confession of Faith," as a true Muslim would, with these words: "May God, the Spirit of Good, the Beautiful, and the True, be with us!"

I know that Haeckel was not absolutely ignorant of the teachings of Muhammad. I know that he has written admiringly of Islam. But alas! he is dead and I cannot tell him that it is *not* "Now, at last," but *it was over fourteen centuries ago* that an untutored Arabian was the very first to open the eyes of "the mightily advancing human mind." But the eyes of "the mightily advancing human mind" have *not yet been opened* to that foreseeing extent to which Muhammad (Peace be upon Him!) tried to open them. Read the Holy Qur-án (the Divine Message given to humanity through Muhammad) and you will find that there is verse upon verse in the same strain as the paragraph quoted from Haeckel in regard to this "wonderland." I give a translation by an Englishman (which could not do full justice to the original) of only a few of these miraculous verses delivered to us about fourteen centuries ago on the subject dealt with by Haeckel in the preceding quotation.

"He created the heavens and the earth with the truth, high exalted be He above what they associate (with Him). He created man from a small life-germ, and lo! he is an open

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

contender. And *He created the cattle* for you; you have in them warm clothing and (many) advantages, and of them do you eat. And *they are pleasing* to you when you drive them back (to home). And they carry your heavy loads to regions which you could not reach but with distress of the souls; most surely your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful. And (He made) horses and mules and asses that you might ride upon them and as an ornament; and He creates what you do not know. And upon Allah it rests to show the right way, and there are some deviating (ways); and if He please He would certainly guide you all right. He it is who sends down water from the cloud for you; *it gives* drink, and by it (grow) the trees upon which you pasture. He causes to grow for you thereby herbage, and the olives, and the palm-tree, and the grapes, and of all the fruits; most surely there is a sign in this for people who reflect. And He had made subservient to you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His commandment; most most surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder; and what He has created in the earth of varied hues; most most surely there is a sign in this for a people who are mindful. And He it is who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh flesh from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and *you see* the ships cleaving through it, and that you might seek of His bounty and that you may give thanks. And He has cast great mountains in the earth *lest it might be convulsed with you*, and rivers and roads that you may go aright, and landmarks; and by the stars they find the right way. Is He then who creates like him who does not create? Do you not then mind? Do you not then mind? And if you would count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them; most surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The eyes of "the mightily advancing human mind" in Europe have been "now opened" no doubt. There has been tremendous scientific progress. There have been wonderful discoveries of Nature's secrets. But the more we know or discover, the more we find that Nature's treasures are really

## AFTER-EFFECTS OF THE GREAT WAR

*inexhaustible.* We are far and far and yet far, perhaps hundreds, thousands, millions of miles far from making, as the Qur-án expects us to do, subservient to us all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. The moon and the sun are not yet quite subservient to us. We have succeeded in producing improved cattle and fruits and grains. We have succeeded in multiplying the colours and hues of flowers. But we have not yet succeeded in finding out all the botanical mysteries of the colour and beauty of hundreds of thousands of plants, etc. We have not yet been able to produce a blue or violet rose. The microscope has now revealed to us the truth anticipated by Muhammad about fourteen centuries ago that man is the product of "a small life-germ." We have fathomed most of the component parts of that life-germ. But we have not succeeded in either manufacturing that life-germ or preventing its death. Neither the mountains nor the seas have yet been made to divulge all their treasures, all their secrets. So Muhammad's limit of scientific progress has not yet been reached. We have still much to learn from this line.

### 6. ISLAM IS NECESSARY FOR SETTLING THE SOCIAL CHAOS LEFT BEHIND BY THE GREAT WAR

We read Muhammad also in matters social and political. Rousseau (another admirer of Muhammad's work) has no doubt elaborated the "social contract" and the "Rights of Man," but in our daily life and in practical politics even the most advanced nations have not yet reached Muhammad's ideals or the stage Muhammad had reached. Nay, we have treaded in certain respects on wrong lines while trying to reach the stage at which Muhammad had arrived. Take the case of "the emancipation" of women. Nobody who knows the past human history and its social phases can deny that the idea of emancipation of women *originated* with Muhammad. In the ethical conception, in the ascetic and aesthetic purification of the soul, Muhammad, as he himself announced, came to remind mankind of those forgotten lessons which it had already been taught by preceding prophets and reformers.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

It was not very easy, indeed, to make any new discoveries in ethics after Buddha. The Buddhistic ideal way of the purification of the soul was grand. Christ followed it. Muhammad himself tried it in the early stages of his life. Muhammad never claimed to have originated any new religion. As an honest and truthful man he could not claim that. The first promulgation of the Islamic principles also he generously attributed to others. He proclaimed that Abraham was the first Muslim. In the matter of ethics, etc., Muhammad's mission was to recover the original purity. But there cannot be the least doubt in the mind of any learned man that Muhammad was the very first Reformer to conceive the idea of the emancipation of women, also of "slaves" or "workers." Muhammad was no dreamer. He was an idealist no doubt, but such an idealist—in fact the only idealist—as to make his idealism a matter of practice in the daily life of himself and his followers. He has not only laid down very beneficial laws for the elevation of women from the degraded position which had been assigned to her till Muhammad's time *throughout the whole world* without a single excepted place or people, but he also actually made woman a co-sharer of man in all human rights and privileges. Nay, he went a step farther. He laid the most coveted object of the yearnings of the very human soul under the feet of woman—MOTHER. Yet in spite of this complete and till then quite novel emancipation of woman, he has miraculously saved human domestic and social life from such filthy and destructive aspects as the statistics given elsewhere reveal in modern civilization. He saved woman from degenerating into a harlot.

Surely the emancipated, honourable woman as a mother, who not only gives birth to the future generation, but by her own unselfish love also ennoble its character so as to make it a means of promoting peace, good will, and love among all the human beings without any distinction of race, colour, country, class, or sex, is much different from a woman having the license of prompting all mankind into an indulgence of unrestrained carnal passions so as to bring down human life to that of animal life in its sexual enjoyments. Christianity,

## AFTER-EFFECTS OF THE GREAT WAR

because of its asceticism and monasticism, has no place for a "mother," i.e. for the noblest phase of womanhood.

Jesus himself is said to have exclaimed irritably to his noble mother, "Woman, what have I got to do with thee?" Christianity has no place for a mother, but it is a matter of surprise that it has very inconsistently got a place for a wife—an object of passion, a "tempter to man." It has a commandment also which forbids divorce. But all such commandments of Christianity have now become a dead letter. Divorce and adultery both are tremendously increasing all over Christendom. Islam does not disallow divorce, but divorce in Muslim countries is decreasing. Christianity forbids divorce, but divorce is increasing in Christian countries. What an irony! The fact is that human passions cannot be controlled by simple words of mouth of another man, even if he be the only son of God. Man wants an Exemplar—a man who practises himself what he preaches. Man wants such regulations as are wise enough not to ignore or defy human nature, yet to control it and to guide it on the right course. As a Muslim I am bound to have the greatest respect for Jesus—in fact, for all the prophets of every race and country. But according to the Rev. Holmes's assertions Jesus himself and all his pious and religious followers committed "the monstrous sin" of "repressing the sex-instinct" to the extent of full celibacy, so that they neither set themselves as an example for married life nor did they do anything to regulate the social intercourse of the sexes. Except a couple of dogmas forbidding divorce and adultery there is nothing in Christianity or in the Gospels to conduct the social dealings of man and woman. That probably was left for "Caesar."

What wonder, then, that without any moral or religious guidance and example a girl in the so-called Christian Europe, instead of becoming a faithful wife to rise to the celestial level of a mother, is likely to degenerate into a harlot, either openly or secretly. What wonder, then, that woman in those countries, instead of trying to be a companion and helpmate of the harder sex in making the family life happy and contented, comes down into the arena to compete with him in every walk

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

of life as a rival? Unfortunately woman tries nowadays to excel man in his vices more than in his virtues, with the result that the present-day social life in Europe has become the darkest spot in its civilization.

Like the *Signs of the Times* of America quoted above, I warned, in my book *Woman*, published in Europe years ago, that the cause of the downfall of Europe will be its social system. Europe will fall as Rome fell if it did not go to Muhammad to be rescued in time from the impending catastrophe.

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### SEPARATION OF STATE AND RELIGION IN ISLAM

By NAWĀB SIR ZULFIQĀR 'ALĪ KHĀN, C.S.I., M.L.A.

CEASELESS effort is a condition precedent to success in life. If the early Muslims had confined themselves to Arabia, hoping that fate would bring all good things to them, they would never have established a world empire unparalleled in history for the might of its sword and the elegance and splendour of its civilization. The potent influence which Islam has exercised on the mentality of the people is most mysterious to those who have known the extent of the sacrifice which its followers have and will make in its behalf. It is an unrealizable power to whose laws the very gods and men are subject, and beneath its wondrous hand the impossible eventually becomes possible. When military efficiency is united with the spirit of Islam, a force is already created, which is not only a very great force, but it is also incalculable. It is capable of being mobilized at a moment's notice, for the rapidity of its mental contagion is incomprehensible, and when it is mobilized it is extremely efficacious. The student of history knows that no barriers can withstand the momentum of united wills stimulated by religious fervour. In a word, the Muslims have to keep their arms strong and their hearts pure by keeping alive the spirit of Islam. Germany collapsed into shame and desolation because she was a stranger to this spirit, and that moral force which we call by the name of hope was absent

## SEPARATION OF STATE AND RELIGION

in her. She is like one of those great Empires which disappeared after filling the world with the legend of their fame. It is true that nothing can now be created before first destroying what is obsolete and unworkable; but the night of inertia may prevent a nation from taking into consideration those evils which are responsible for its decadence. There is much which the Muslims have to destroy to separate the alloy from pure gold. The nations of the world take delight in declaring that Muslims are unprogressive and stagnant; one would go further and say that Muslims have receded while some other nations have advanced with astonishing speed. The study of causes of this sterility of Muslim life will take me far away from my subject, but even a casual student will see that in the beginning of the eighteenth century a halt was mysteriously called to the development of Muslim civilization. Muslims everywhere sank into strange torpor and became apathetic to the strong movements of the day. It was the opening of a new world of science and research which remained a *terra incognita* to the very people who raised high the torch of learning to illumine the thick gloom which had settled on the intellect of Europe.

Despite all the cavilling of detractors, the keen observers know that in Islam is involved some secret and mysterious energizing principle which prevents the severance of the vital thread. The Muslims in these days have been suddenly shaken out of their profound slumber. That they will now remain awake is certain. In this phenomenon, more plainly than in any other incident, can be perceived the very pulse of Muslim history. The Turks are the first among the Muslims to find salvation through creative activity, thus furnishing an emblem of inward enfranchisement and illumination. This has come as true inspiration to other nations of the Islamic world, leading to the goal of common weal.

### WHERE THE TURK FAILS TO UNDERSTAND ISLAM

In the process of removing the rust of centuries it is feared that we may lose some of the precious substance; for the zeal

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

of the Turks is becoming associated with obscure and dangerous energies, such as the separation of State from religion, the closing of theological schools, and many other innovations. This shows that the evil influence of European materialism is corroding their minds. As ill luck would have it, the most outstanding product of Islam—the reconciliation of liberty with piety—seems to be beyond their understanding, and they simply cannot grasp how a strong spirit can think along religious lines. During the thirteen hundred years that have elapsed since the birth of Islam, no Muslim ruler, however great, has ventured to separate the State from religion; for Islam moulds our thought and action, and our daily life is governed by its beneficent influence. It is a radiant fact of history that it is alone the spirit of Islam that has saved us from extinction. The present leaders in Turkey have introduced a highly dangerous precedent, the consequence of which may be subversive of the integrity of Islam. It is incomprehensible to me that men like Mustafâ Kamâl Pasha and others should have acted in this imprudent manner. If these rulers of Turkey think that they can easily dispense with the fraternal regard of other Muslims, they will soon see that Europe will take advantage of Turkey's isolation and carry out her ruthless designs against her independent existence. It is the fraternal regard of other Muslim nations which will secure immunity for them from Europe's ambitious designs and not their slavish imitation of Christian nations. The past history of Muslim civilization in Spain, Egypt, and Baghdad records a brilliant chapter in the annals of a great civilization. The Muslims in those glorious days were able to achieve a wonderful success without resorting to the disrupting process of alienating religion from State.

### THE POTENTIALITIES OF ISLAM

The strength of the Muslim lies in the serenity of spirit in the presence of death and in his scrupulous regard for right and justice, and in the love of learning and liberty. These superior virtues have all been fostered by Islam, and the



## SEPARATION OF STATE AND RELIGION

psychology of Muslims is traceable to them. The secret of Turkish successes lay in "the superiority of the Ottoman tribe over all contemporary nations in religious convictions and in moral and military conduct," says Finlay, and Gibbon assigns the same causes for the exalted station of the Turkish Empire.

For the student of psychology the vital influence which Islam exercises over the lives and actions of all men is most important from the point of view of the development of human civilization. He sees that Islam seizes upon all that is noblest in the human character and raises it to such sublime dignity as can scarcely be found elsewhere.

The heroes of Islam all felt ecstatic pleasure in performing the duties enjoined upon by it. Speaking of the great Sultān Salāhu 'd-Dīn, Lane Poole says: "His own faith was as rigidly orthodox as it was simple, strong and sincere. Islam in its essence, and as professed by such a man as Salāhu 'd-Dīn, is a religion of noble simplicity and austere self-sacrifice." Gibbon, equally frank and impartial, admits with obvious enthusiasm the superior merit of Islam, "More pure than the system of Zoroaster, more liberal than the law of Moses, the religion of Muhammad might seem less inconsistent with reason than the creed of mystery and superstition which, in the seventh century, disgraced the simplicity of the Gospel."

The trend of the world's opinion, influenced by materialistic ambitions of the people, betokens that the day of dogmatized religion is over. Convention and sanctimonious attendance at service in the Christian Church is the result of mere habit; and mockery of religion is considered the index of a highly cultured mind. Christianity is observed more in the breach of its teachings than in the pursuit of its unpracticable ideals. Zoroastrianism does not exist any longer. Hinduism is rapidly relaxing its rigidity of superstition; in fact, its very foundations are being undermined by the strong currents of subversive influences which are ceaselessly beating against it. Hinduism could preserve its orthodoxy only as long as India remained an air-tight compartment, but the new breezes of freer and more liberal ideals blew away the cobwebs of its

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

centuries-old superstitions directly they found access into it. On the contrary, Islam has held undisputed sway in the realms of intellect for many centuries. It has fought successfully against the might of a whole world, and amid the uproar round its frontiers it has stood firm like a rock amid raging seas. After every trial it has emerged stronger than before. It is unrivalled in its vitality, the fascination of its teachings, and the freedom of its outlook on life.

"Islam," says Mr. Vambéry, "is still the most democratic religion in the world, a religion favouring both liberty and equality. If there was a constitutional government, it was that of the first Caliphs."

While other great religions have become effete, Islam, the youngest world religion, is full of vigour. The energy of new life-forces is manifesting itself in the zeal with which its followers are throwing themselves into the full current of a new progress. Islam stands for enlightenment, equality, and justice, and with its simplicity and austerity, conforming to the demands of a transformed world, Islam is pre-eminently the religion of the future. The disintegrated religious life of Russia affords a great scope for its proselytizing activities which, without apparent effort, are insensibly making great inroads into the darkened spirituality of those peoples. The only danger in the way of Islam, however, is the rashness shown by the Turks in pursuing the idea of secularizing the State. It is not only impolitic, but is also calculated to give rise to a disruptive schism. If the Turks persist in this policy they will cut themselves away from the main body of the Muslims at a time when harmony of political and religious views among the Muslim States is nearer realization than ever before. Such perilous activities may prove disastrous to the tranquillity of Islam. But it is possible that the whole truth has not filtered down, and the core of the Turkish nation being sound, the few strong men at the helm of affairs may pause and consider the evil consequences of rash innovations calculated to uproot the basic principles of Islam. In their struggle for their existence the Turks will need wealth, talent, and intellect, which will come to them when the whole mass

## SEPARATION OF STATE AND RELIGION

of population is leavened with progressive spirit. The Turks, as indeed all other Muslims, should so mould the character of their children as would produce patriots devoted to the highest interests of their countries. The children are the trustees of posterity. With the best of training they can become akin to the gods. This supreme ideal can be attained by the union between spiritual activities and practical aims, which would prepare the youth to receive the highest revelation of life. In short, the object should be to produce grandeur of character of the mind and of the soul. Noble characters will appear when this education is imparted to them and home influences become purified. Muslim women must share in the toil of uplifting their countries, and in order that their faculties may find expression the veil, as practised in India and elsewhere, must be abolished, for it is un-Islamic. No country whose women remain apathetic to its destiny can be great.

It is pleasing to see that Turkish women realize their duties and share the labours of their men for national reconstruction; but their assiduity should be confined to healthy activities and must not embrace dancing and other demoralizing frivolities, which they must leave to non-Muslims.

How truly the remark made by Le Bon depicts the results which Islam, by influencing the daily life of the faithful, intends to bring about!

“Psychological forces,” he says, “in which moral activities are included do not control the fate of battles merely. They rule over all departments of national life and determine the destinies of the people.”

The Muslim nations have great constructive work to do before they can calmly face new dangers; but the policy of European States has consistently been directed towards crippling their efforts for internal development conducive to national strength, and so long as foreign intrigues continue to paralyse Muslim activities for internal reform their efforts must remain in a state of hopeless chaos. In order, therefore, to enjoy the privilege of common opportunities of life which have hitherto been denied to them, the value of foreign alliances must claim the serious attention of Muslim peoples.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

An immense revolutionary process has been opened up in Islam which is so pregnant with possibilities; and while rejecting the fallacies and wild theories of subversive minds we must accept the claims of a progressive spirit inherent in Islam. The call for purifying Islam is insistent and urgent, and those who deny Islam the right to expand to meet the requirements of a transformed world are strangers to its great purpose and mission. Islam's capacity for adaptation to modern political science is borne out even by European scholars, e.g. Goldziher, who says: "The principle of equality contains in the germ the faculty for Islam to move and evolve freely." It is not my intention to write a dissertation on this subject, but I would invite the independent Muslim nations to restore Islam to its ancient purity and simplicity and to introduce through the machinery of the State such essential changes in the practice of Islam as are necessary for a modern society.

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### MUHAMMAD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By PROFESSOR 'ABDU 'L-AHAD DĀWŪD, B.D.

#### III

#### JOHN THE BAPTIST ANNOUNCES A POWERFUL PROPHET

John the Baptist, according to the narratives of the four Evangelists, was a cousin and contemporary of Jesus, being only about six months older than the latter. The Qur-án does not mention anything about the life and work of this Prophet except that God, through the angels, announced to his father Zachariah that he would have a son named Yahyā, who would bear witness to the word of Allah; and that he would be an honourable person, chaste, and one of the righteous prophets (Qur-án, iii. —). Nothing is known about his infancy, except that he was a Nazarite living in the wilderness, eating locusts and wild honey, covering his body with a cloth made of camel's hair, tied with a leather girdle. He is believed to have

## MUHAMMAD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

belonged to a Jewish religious sect called the "Essenes," from whom issued the early Christian "Ibionites" whose principal characteristic was to abstain from worldly pleasures. In fact, the Qur-ānic descriptive term of this hermit Prophet—"ḥaṣūra," which means "chaste" in every sense of the word—shows that he led a celibate life of chastity, poverty, and piety. He was not seen from his early youth until he was a man of thirty or more, when he began his mission of preaching repentance and baptizing the penitent sinners with water. Great multitudes were drawn to the wilderness of Judea to hear the fiery sermons of the new Prophet; and the penitent Jews were baptized by him in the water of the River Jordan. He reprimanded the educated but fanatical Pharisees and the Priests, and threatened the learned but rationalistic Saduquees (Sadducees) with the coming vengeance. He declared that he was baptizing them with water only as a sign of purification of the heart by penance. He promulgated that there was coming after him another Prophet who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire; who would gather together his wheat into his granaries and burn the chaff with an inextinguishable fire. He further declared that he who was coming afterwards was to such an extent superior to himself in power and dignity that the Baptist confessed to be unfit or unworthy to bow down to untie and loose the laces of his shoes.

It was on one of these great baptismal performances of Hazrat Yaḥyā (St. John the Baptist) that Jesus of Nazareth also entered into the water of the Jordan and was baptized by the Prophet like everybody else. Mark (i. 9) and Luke (iii. 21), who report this baptism of Jesus by John, are unaware of the remarks of John on this point as mentioned in Matthew (iii), where it is stated that the Baptist said to Jesus: "I need to be baptized by thee, and didst thou come to me?" To which the latter is reported to have replied: "Let us fulfil the righteousness"; and then he baptized him. The Synoptics state that the spirit of prophecy came down to Jesus in the shape of a dove as he went out from the water, and a voice was heard saying: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

The Fourth Gospel knows nothing about Jesus being baptized by John; but tells us that the Baptist, when he saw Jesus, exclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God," etc. (John i). This Gospel pretends that Andrew was a disciple of the Baptist, and having abandoned his master brought his brother Simon to Jesus (John i)—a story flagrantly contradicting the statements of the other Evangelists (Matt. iv. 18-19, Mark i. 16-18). In St. Luke the story is altogether different: here Jesus knows Simon Peter before he is made a disciple (Luke iv. 38, 39); and the circumstance which led the Master to enlist the sons of Jonah and of Zebedee in the list of his disciples is totally strange to the other Evangelists (Luke v. 1-11). The four Gospels of the Trinitarian Churches contain many contradictory statements about the intercourse between the two cousin prophets. In the Fourth Gospel we read that the Baptist did not know who Jesus was until after his baptism, when a Spirit like a pigeon came down and dwelt in him (John i); whereas St. Luke tells us that the Baptist, while a foetus in the womb of his mother, knew and worshipped Jesus, who was also a younger foetus in the womb of Mary (Luke i. 44). Then, again, we are told that the Baptist while in prison, where he was beheaded (Matt. xi. xiv), did not know the real nature of the mission of Jesus! ✓

There is a mysterious indication hidden in the questions put to the Prophet Yaḥyā by the Priests and the Levites. They ask the Baptist: "Art thou Messiah? art thou Elijah?" And when he answers "No!" they say: "If thou art neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, and nor *that Prophet*, why then dost thou baptize?" (John i). It will therefore be noticed that, according to the Fourth Gospel, John the Baptist was neither the Messiah nor Elijah, nor *that Prophet*! And I venture to ask the Christian Churches, who believe that the inspirer of all these contradictory statements is the Holy Ghost—i.e. the third of the three gods—*whom* did those Jewish Priests and the Levites mean by "*and that Prophet*"? And if you pretend not to know whom the Hebrew clergy meant, do your popes and patriarchs know who "*and that Prophet*" is? If not, then what is the earthly use of these spurious and

## MUHAMMAD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

interpolated Gospels? If, on the contrary, you *do* know who *that Prophet* is, then why do you keep silent?

In the above quotation (John i) it is expressly stated that the Baptist said he *was not* a Prophet; whereas Jesus is reported to have said that "no men born of women were ever greater than John" (Matt. xi). Did Jesus really make such a declaration? Was John the Baptist greater than Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus himself? And in what did his superiority and greatness consist? If this testimony of Jesus about the son of Zachariah be authentic and true, then the greatness of the "Eater of the Locusts in the wilderness" can only consist in his absolute abnegation, self-denial, and refraining from the world with all its luxuries and pleasures; his ardent wish to invite the people to penance; and his good tidings about "*that Prophet*."

Or did his greatness consist—as the Churches will have it—in being a cousin, contemporary and witness of Jesus? The value and greatness of a man, as well as of a Prophet, can be determined and appreciated by his work. We are absolutely ignorant of the number of persons converted through the sermons and purified by the baptism of John. Nor are we informed with regard to the effect of that conversion upon the attitude of the penitent Jews towards the "Lamb of God!"

Christ is said to have declared that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of the Prophet Elijah (Matt. xi. 14, xvii. 12; Luke i. 17), whereas John expressly told the Jewish deputation that he was *not* Elijah, nor Christ, nor that Prophet (John i).

Now can one, from these Gospels full of statements opposing and denying each other, form a correct conclusion? Or can one try to find out the truth? The charge is exceedingly grave and serious, because the persons concerned are not ordinary mortals like ourselves, but two Prophets who were both created in the womb by the Spirit and born miraculously—one had no father, while the parents of the other were sterile and an impotent nonagenarian couple. The gravity of the charge is even more serious when we come to consider the nature of the documents in which these contradictory statements are written. The narrators are the Evangelists, persons alleged to be inspired

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

by the Holy Spirit, and the record believed to be a revelation! Yet there is a lie, a false statement, or a forgery somewhere. Elijah (or Elias) is said to come before "*that Prophet*" (Mal. iv. 5, 6); Jesus says, "John is Elijah"; John says, "I am *not* Elijah"; and it is the sacred Scripture of the Christians which makes both these affirmative and negative statements!

It is absolutely impossible to get at the truth, the true religion, from these Gospels, unless they are read and examined from an Islamic and Unitarian point of view. It is only *then* that the truth can be extracted from the false, and the authentic distinguished from the spurious. It is the spirit and the faith of Islam that can alone sift the Bible and cast away the chaff and error from its pages. Before proceeding farther to show that the Prophet foretold by the Baptist could be none other than Muhammad, I must draw the serious attention of my readers to one or two other important points.

It may, in the first place, be remarked that the Muslims have the highest reverence and veneration for all the Prophets, particularly for those whose names are mentioned in the Qur-án, like John ("Yaḥyā") and Jesus ("ʿIsa"); and believe that the Apostles or Disciples of Jesus were holy men and inspired by Allah. But as we do not possess their genuine and unadulterated writings we consequently cannot for a moment imagine the possibility that either of these two great Servants of Allah could have contradicted each other.

Another important matter to be noted is the very significant silence of the Gospel of Barnabas about John the Baptist. This Gospel, which never mentions the name of Yaḥyā, puts his prophecy about the "more powerful Prophet" into the mouth of Jesus Christ. Therein Christ, while speaking of the Spirit of Muhammad as having been created before that of other Prophets, says that it was so glorious that when he comes Jesus would consider himself unworthy to kneel and undo the laces of his shoes. ✓

The great "Crier" in the wilderness, in the course of his sermons to the multitudes, used to cry aloud and say: "I baptize you with water unto repentance and the forgiveness of sins. But there is one that comes after me who is stronger



## MUHAMMAD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

than I, the laces of whose shoes I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Spirit and with fire." These words are differently reported by the Evangelists, but all show the same sense of the highest respect and consideration in regard to the imposing personality and the majestic dignity of the Powerful Prophet herein foretold. These words of the Baptist are very descriptive of the Oriental manner of hospitality and honour accorded to a dignified visitor. The moment the visitor steps in, either the host or one of the members of the family rushes to take off his shoes, and escorts him to a couch or cushion. When the guest leaves, the same respectful performance is repeated; he is helped to put on his shoes, the host on his knees tying the laces.

What John the Baptist means to say is that if he were to meet that dignified Prophet he would certainly consider himself unworthy of the honour of bowing to untie the laces of his shoes. From this homage paid beforehand by the Baptist one thing is certain: that the foretold Prophet was known to all the Prophets as their Adon, Lord, and Sultan; otherwise such an honourable person, chaste and sinless Messenger of Allah as Seyidna Yahyā, would not have made such a humble confession.

Now remains the task of determining the identity of "*that Prophet*." This article, therefore, must be divided into two parts, namely:

- A. The foretold Prophet was not Jesus Christ; and
- B. The foretold Prophet was Muhammad.

Everybody knows that the Christian Churches have always regarded John the Baptist as a subordinate of Jesus, and his herald. All the Christian commentators show Jesus as the object of John's witness and prophecy.

Although the language of the Evangelists has been distorted by interpolators to that direction, yet the fraud or error cannot for ever escape the searching eye of a critic and an impartial examiner. Jesus could not be the object of John's witness because:

- (1) The very preposition "after" clearly excludes Jesus

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

from being the foretold Prophet. They were both contemporaries and born in one and the same year. "He that is coming after me," says John, "is stronger than I." This "after" indicates the future to be at some indefinite distance; and in the prophetic language it expresses one or more cycles of time. It is well known to the Sufees and those who lead a spiritual life and one of contemplation that at every cycle, which is considered to be equivalent of five or six centuries, there appears one great Luminary Soul surrounded by several satellites who appear in different parts of the world, and introduce great religious and social movements which last for several generations until another shining Prophet, accompanied by many disciples and companions, appears with prodigious reforms and enlightenment. The history of the true religion, from Abraham to Muhammad, is thus decorated with such epoch-making events under Abraham, Moses, David, Zorobabel, Jesus, and Muhammad. Each of these epochs is marked with special characteristic features. Each one makes a progress and then begins to fade away and decay until another luminary appears on the scene, and so on down to the advent of John, Jesus, and the satellite Apostles. ✓

John found his nation already toiling under the iron yoke of Rome, with its wicked Herods and their pagan legions. He beheld the ignorant Jewish people misled by a corrupt and arrogant clergy, the Scriptures corrupted and replaced by a superstitious ancestral literature. He found that that people had lost all hope of salvation, except that Abraham, who was their father, would save them. He told them that Abraham did not want them for his children because they were unworthy of such father, but that "Allah could raise children for Abraham from the stones" (Matt. iii). Then they had a faint hope in a Messiah, a descendant from the family of David, whom they expected then, as they do to-day, to come and restore the kingdom of that monarch in Jerusalem.

Now when the Jewish deputation from Jerusalem asked, "Art thou the Messiah?" he indignantly replied in the negative to this as well as to their subsequent questions. God alone knows what rebukes and reprimands they did hear from those

## MUHAMMAD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

fiery utterings of the Holy Prophet of the Wilderness which the Church or the Synagogue have been careful not to let appear in writing.

Leaving aside the exaggerations, which have been evidently added to the Gospels, we fully believe that the Baptist introduced Jesus as the true Messiah, and advised the multitudes to obey him and follow his injunctions and his gospel. But he clearly told his people that there was another, and the last, great Luminary, who was so glorious and dignified in the presence of Allah that he (John) was not fit to undo the laces of his shoes.

(2) It was not Jesus Christ who could be intended by John, because if such were the case he would have followed Jesus and submitted to him like a disciple and a subordinate. But such was not the case. On the contrary, we find him preaching, baptizing, receiving initiates and disciples, chastizing King Herod, scolding the Jewish hierarchy, and foretelling the coming of another Prophet "more powerful" than himself, without taking the least notice of the presence of his cousin in Judea or Galilee.

(3) Although the Christian Churches have made of Jesus Christ a god or son of a god, the fact that he was circumcised like every Israelite, and baptized by St. John like an ordinary Jew, proves the case to be just the reverse. The words interchanged between the Baptist and the baptized in the River Jordan appear to be an interpolation or a commentary, for they are contradictory and of a deceptive character. If Jesus were in reality the person whom the Baptist foretold as "more powerful" than himself, so much so that he was "not worthy to kneel and unloose his shoes," and that "he would baptize with the Spirit and fire," there would be no necessity nor any sense in his being baptized by his inferior in the river like an ordinary penitent Jew! The expression of Jesus, "It behoves us to fulfil all the justice," is incomprehensible. Why and *how* "all the justice" would be accomplished by them if Jesus were baptized? This expression is utterly unintelligible. It is either an interpolation or a clause deliberately mutilated. Here is another instance which presents itself to be solved

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

and interpreted by the Islamic spirit. From a Muslim point of view the only sense in this expression of Jesus would be that John, through the eye of a Seer or "Sophi,"<sup>1</sup> perceived the prophetic character of the Nazarene, and thought him for a moment to be the Last Great Apostle of Allah, and consequently shrank from baptizing him; and that it was only when Jesus confessed his own identity that he consented to baptize him.

(4) The fact that John while in prison sent his disciples to Jesus, asking him: "Art thou *that* Prophet who is to come, or shall we expect another one?" clearly shows that the Baptist *did not know* the gift of prophecy in Jesus until he heard—*while in the prison*—of his miracles. This testimony of St. Matthew (xi. 3) contradicts and invalidates that of the Fourth Gospel (John i), where it is stated that the Baptist, on seeing Jesus, exclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away [or bears] the sin of the world!" The fourth Evangelist knows nothing of the cruel martyrdom of John (Matt. xiv; Mark vi. 14-29).

From Muslim unitarian point of belief, it is a moral impossibility that a Prophet like the Baptist, whom the Holy Qur-án describes, "*Sayyidan, wa Hasūran wa Nabiyyan mina 's-Sālihīna,*" should use such a paganish expression about Jesus Christ. The very nature and essence of John's mission was to *preach penance*—that is to say, every man is responsible for his sin and must *bear it*, or *take it away himself by repentance*. The baptism was only an outward ablution or washing as a sign of the remission of sins, but it is the contribution, the confession (to God, and to him who is injured by that sin—if absolutely necessary) and the promise not to repeat it, that can *take it away*. If Jesus were the "Lamb of God," to take away the sin of the world, then John's preaching would be—God forbid!—ridiculous and meaningless! Besides, John better than anyone else knew that such words from his lips would have caused—as has been the case—an irreparable error which would entirely disfigure and deform the Church of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> C.f. Discussion on this word in *Islamic Review* for August, 1928, page 275 *et seq.*

## MUHAMMAD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The root of the error which has soiled the religion of the Churches is to be sought and found out in this silly "vicarious sacrifice" business! Has the "Lamb of God" taken away the sin of the world? The dark pages of the "Ecclesiastical History" of any of the numerous hostile and "heretical" Churches will answer with a big No! The "lambs" in the confessional-boxes can tell you by their groanings under the tremendous weight of the multi-coloured sins loaded upon their shoulders that the Christians, notwithstanding their science and civilization, commit more horrible sins, murders, thefts, intemperances, adulteries, wars, oppressions, robberies, and insatiable greed for conquest and money than all the rest of mankind put together. ✓

(5) John the Baptist could not be the precursor of Jesus Christ in the sense in which the Churches interpret his mission. He is presented to us by the Gospels as a "voice crying aloud in the wilderness," as the fulfilment of a passage in Isaiah (xl. 3), and as a herald of Jesus Christ on the authority of the Prophet Malakhi (Mal. iii. 1). To assert that the mission or duty of the Baptist was to prepare the way for Jesus—the former in the capacity of a precursor and the latter in that of a triumphant Conqueror coming "suddenly to his temple," and there to establish his religion of "Shalom" and make Jerusalem with its temple more glorious than before (Hag. ii. 8)—is to confess the absolute failure of the whole enterprise.

Nevertheless one thing is as true as two and two make four—that the whole project, according to the extravagant view of the Christians, proves a total failure. For, from whatever point of view we examine the interpretations of the Churches, the failure appears to be obvious. Instead of receiving his prince in Jerusalem at the Gate of the Temple clad in diadem and purple, amidst the frantic acclamations of the Jews, the precursor receives him, naked like himself, in the middle of the River Jordan; and then to introduce him, after immersing or plunging his master into the water, to the crowds as "behold, this is the Messiah!" or "this is the Son of God!" or elsewhere "behold the Lamb of God!"

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

would either be tantamount to simply insulting the people of Israel or to blaspheming; or to purely mocking Jesus as well as making himself ridiculous.

The true nature of the austere ascetic's mission, and the true sense of his preaching, is altogether misunderstood by the Churches, but *understood* by the Jewish priests and casuists who obstinately rejected it. I shall deal with this in my next article, and show that the nature of John's mission as well as the object of Christ's message to the Jews was quite different to what the Churches pretend to believe.

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### REFLECTIONS ON FEAR OF GOD

By HĀFIZ GHULĀM SARWAR, M.A.

*(Translator of the Holy Qur-ān)*<sup>1</sup>

I do most sincerely hold that fear of God is the root of all wisdom. Yet from my childhood till now I have also held that God should not be made a bugbear to frighten mankind, as many preachers do. He is all-Compassionate (Ar-Rahmān). He is the most-Merciful (Ar-Rahīm). He is Al-Wadūd (the most-Loving), Al-Ghaffār (the most-Forgiving), At-Tawwāb (the oft-Returning), and so forth. Why should He be made the cause of fear to mankind? We fear something on account of the feeling of harm it may do to us. Does God do us any harm? If not, why should we fear Him? Here then is a real paradox. How are we to explain it?

I remember very well that once when I was young and was bathing in a Lahore tank I got into deep water and was nearly drowned if it had not been for my father who was close by and pulled me out of it. But in 1897 my father, who accompanied me to China, taught me how to swim, and since then getting into the sea and swimming therein has been one of my most cherished pleasures. But that does not mean that I would venture to swim the Pacific or the Atlantic Ocean. The fear of being drowned in deep water has been overcome to a certain

<sup>1</sup> The Translation was published last year.

## REFLECTIONS ON FEAR OF GOD

extent. It is, however, quite apparent that the cause of the fear of being drowned does not lie in deep water, but in our inability to get through it except to a limited extent. Fish are not afraid of deep water. Take another example: I know that if I go with my head exposed to the uncovered heat of a tropical sun I soon get into trouble, but I may walk therein for a considerable time if I am well protected by means of clothes and an umbrella. The same may be said of the feeling of cold. For a person to attempt to get out of doors in a Siberian winter without the body being properly protected by means of warm clothes means death within a short period; but provided one is well covered and in good health, and the period of exposure is not too long, cold does not kill one. The cause, then, of the fear of getting a sunstroke or being frozen does not lie in the weather, but in our own inability to stand it unless we are properly covered. Amongst animals, man alone wears artificial clothing. But even amongst mankind there are savages who have no clothing on their persons—or very little of it. They are not afraid of cold or heat to the same extent as civilized people are. Examples may be multiplied almost *ad infinitum*. My eyes are afraid of looking at the sun, but my hands and feet are not afraid of exposure to the sun—or at least not to the same extent as my eyes. The cause of the fear of looking at the sun lies in the inability of my eyes to stand the light of the sun without harm coming to them, and not in the sun itself.

I am afraid of falling even from the height of a few feet, and yet I have seen people land safely from a height of several thousand feet from balloons with the help of a parachute. The cause of the fear of harm coming to me by the act of falling does not lie in the fall, but in my inability to counter its action unless I am provided with the proper means to save myself from the consequences of that action.

The fears I have mentioned above are physical fears, but the principle I have been trying to enunciate applies to our mental and spiritual faculties as well. A mathematician and an astronomer solve the riddles of space and time which a mere layman can never even dream of. An expert surgeon daily carries out successful operations which in the hands of an

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

ignorant person must mean death to the patient. A spiritualist of the calibre of Jesus or Muhammad (Peace be upon both of them!) sees God's wonders with the spiritual eye as we see common things on this earth. It would be spiritual annihilation to any one of us to attempt to see these wonders without being properly disciplined. There is nothing to which God may be likened. He is Infinite and we are finite in all respects. In the infinite ocean of His knowledge some cannot swim at all. They get drowned as soon as they put their heads into this ocean. They are the spiritually ignorant ones. Some can swim a few yards and some can go a few miles—all according to their respective abilities. The fear of annihilation lies not in the ocean of God's Wisdom, but in the lack of our training to go through it. A person who is accustomed to lying and deceiving other people is plunging into deep water with his head forward and without knowing how to swim. He is committing moral suicide. He deceives none except himself. God does not annihilate his Spirit, he does it himself. "They would feign deceive God and those who believe, but they deceive none except themselves. In their hearts is a disease, then God increases their disease and for them is a painful agony on account of what they lied" (the Holy Qur-án, ii. 9 and 10). Fear of God alone will protect us from the consequences of lying and deceiving. Even though a man may be caught for lying and deceiving and receive temporal punishment at the hands of the authorities, the harm done to the spiritual part of his being is not mitigated unless there is true repentance through fear of God. The cause of this annihilation of the Spirit lies not in the Godhead, but in our own wrong-doing.

"Certainly God does not do injustice to the weight of an atom, and if it be a good action He multiplies it and gives a great reward from Himself" (The Qur-án, iv. 40). And so it is with all sins and all virtues. God multiplies virtuous actions and rewards us with a plentiful reward, and we suffer the consequences of our own wrongs partly here, but mostly hereafter. Fear of God is then the root of all wisdom because it is an acknowledgment of our limitations and a desire to know the truth and not to fall into the abyss of falsehood.



# THE RESULT OF IGNORANCE

## THE RESULT OF IGNORANCE

By A. D. TYSSEN, D.C.L., M.A.

[We regret to record the death of Dr. Tyssen, who was a regular reader and contributor to the pages of the *Islamic Review*. He was one of the few Europeans who could understand and appreciate the teachings of the Qur-án. Educated at Winchester College, and being Postmaster of Merton College, Oxford, where he took first classes in mathematical moderations and in the final schools of Lit. Hum. and mathematics, he took his degree of Doctor of Civil Law in London and was called to the Bar and practised for many years mainly as a conveyancer. He was the author of *Tyssen's Law of Charitable Bequests*, *The Real Representative Law*, *Elementary Law*, *Sermons* (vols. i and ii), and many other books. He had become interested in the Unitarian Chapel at Banbury, and as a lay preacher conducted services there.—ED. I.R.]

WE find it laid down more than once in the Qur-án, not only of Muslims, but also of Jews, Christians, and Sabeans, that whoever believes in God and the Last Day, and doth that which is right, there shall come no fear on them, neither shall they be grieved (Rodwell's Qur-án, xci. 59; cxiv. 73; Muhammad 'Ali's Qur-án, ii. 62; v. 69). The Prophet Muhammad thus laid down that the love of God was conferred not only on men who accepted his teaching, but also on men who never heard of it, if they did their best according to their lights. The same cannot be said of all Christian teachers. We find a speech attributed to Jesus containing the words: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The result has been that many Christian teachers have laid down that all persons who do not believe the Christian gospel are consigned to perdition, whether they have ever heard of it or not.

This position is well illustrated by the story of one Radbod, who was king of the Frisians, or Netherlanders, about A.D. 700. He had listened to the exhortations of a Christian missionary and expressed himself satisfied; but at the moment when he put his foot in the water for the ceremony of baptism he suddenly asked the priest where all his old Frisian companions in arms had gone after their death. "To

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

hell," answered the priest. "Well, then," replied Radbod, drawing back his foot from the water, "I would rather go to hell with them, than to Paradise with you and your fellow-foreigners." And he refused to receive the rite of baptism and remained a pagan.

The Articles of the Church of England do not expressly inculcate this doctrine, but it is difficult to resist the conclusion that they cover it. They say (Art. VIII) that the three Creeds ought to be received and believed, that (Art. IX) there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, that (Art. XIII) works done by men before they receive the grace of Christ have the nature of sin; and the XVIIIth Article negatives the Muslim view very clearly in the following words: "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby man must be saved."

The Muslim view is so much more reasonable than the Christian view that naturally many Christians prefer it, although the Christian theory has been impressed upon them in the course of their education. Some of them do more than abandon the Christian theory: indeed, they proceed to denounce it in earnest language. The poet Cowper is one of these. He wrote a poem on Truth about the year 1780, in which we find the following touching passage:

Is virtue then, unless of Christian growth,  
Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both?  
Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,  
For ignorance of what they could not know?  
That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue:  
Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.  
Truly, not I—the partial light men have,  
My creed persuades me, well employed, may save;  
While he that scorns the noonday beam, perverse,  
Shall find the blessing unimproved a curse.

## MY ADOPTION OF ISLAM

Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind  
Left sensuality and dross behind,  
Possess for me their undisputed lot,  
And take unenvied the reward they sought.  
But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,  
Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.  
Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame  
Celestial, tho' they knew not whence it came.  
Derived from the same source of light and grace,  
That guides the Christian in his swifter race;  
Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law.  
That rule pursued with reverence and awe  
Led them however faltering, faint, and slow,  
From what they knew to what they wished to know.

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## MY ADOPTION OF ISLAM FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STANDPOINT<sup>1</sup>

By KHĀLID D'LARNGER REMRAF

PSYCHOLOGY teaches us that there is a reason, however abstruse the meaning may be to us at the time, for everything we do, say, or think; which being the case, and seeing that psychology plays so important a part in our everyday life, it is justifiable to maintain that when an individual takes a step which is going to change his general mode of living and his outlook on life there must be some definite reason to account for it: and it behoves him to discover that reason, and the causes, direct or indirect, which brought it into operation. Hence the title of this lecture. Since adopting Islam as my Faith I feel that I have come to a turning-point in my life, and to account for this, to give you some idea as to why I have become a Muslim, I have subjected myself to what I might call a self-psychological analysis.

For many years I had felt that there was something lacking in my life, something that was not quite definite or tangible at the time—there was a yearning of my inner self after a

<sup>1</sup> Being the text of a lecture delivered before the British Muslim Society, London, on August 12, 1929.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

desire and its gratification. This yearning carried with it a feeling of profound dissatisfaction. The knowledge that there was something I needed but could not fathom at the time was an all-pervading factor in my mind. As remarked, I became dissatisfied; I could find no solace in my religion; I was constantly hankering after one thing and another; I was, so to say, groping in darkness. I did not find any enlightenment, still less peace of mind. It was obvious that I could not allow this disturbed, dissatisfied state of mind to go on indefinitely. I settled myself down to reason things out.

There are times when we can get outside ourselves and review ourselves from a different angle, the spiritual angle, when this body—which is not man, but a composition graduating from the lower animal forms and beautified and refined only by the spirit that is indeed man—can be set aside and looked upon as an object, a thing which the subjective mind can dissect and pull to pieces; and it is by this sudden assertion of will in this momentary association of subjugating power that we can understand God and what He desires of us—more than by all the arguments of all the sublimest theologians and metaphysicians.

It was during such a phase as this that I came to realize what was lacking in my life—it was Spiritual Diet. I was being starved, and my soul cried out for nourishment. To my way of thinking the soul is always struggling to burst its bonds, striving to reach the pinnacle of perfection. There is during life a constant war of the soul against matter, until it gains the ascendancy, and then—perfect in itself and incapable of intrinsic defilement, purged of its terrestrial associations and free of all its debts to the earth—reunites itself to its Essence, God—enfranchised from all hamperings of mortality. So I came to grasp the fact that my spiritual self required a general rebuilding and tuning up.

I asked myself: Why was this necessary? How was I to begin? Why had not my religion given the required stimulus to my spirit? I found that there was an element of doubt undermining the Faith I professed—certain dogmas and ritual my reason would not accept. I questioned myself: Did I

## MY ADOPTION OF ISLAM

honestly believe that? Could I accept this as being the inspired word of God? So many of the dogmas of Christianity I could not believe, my inborn logic would not countenance their acceptance—not even in a modified form; try as I might, I could not put any other construction on their meaning to alter the fact that unless I accepted them unreservedly I was a heretic and doomed to everlasting damnation.

I should mention here that formerly I belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, and according to the teaching of that Church all her decrees are infallible: man-made laws that must be followed blindly without any question of Yea! or Nay!—a sheer domination of the priesthood.

Since I could not faithfully accept the teachings of the Church and be bound by the laws and dogmas those teachings enforced, it necessarily followed that if I continued outwardly to profess to be a member of the Church, I was wrapping myself in a cloak of hypocrisy which was detrimental to my soul, and that the only alternative left me was to break away and live my life as best I could, according to my beliefs and ideals.

This was well enough, but I soon discovered that I must have some foundation whereon to build my faith. I asked myself: *What were my beliefs and ideals? What did I actually and faithfully believe?*

*I believed in the Unity of God*—a God Who is Master of All and Whose Love and Power are manifested to us in creation—in the seen and unseen. The doctrine of the plurality of God has always perplexed me, because in my opinion it destroys His sublimity and power.

*I believed in direct Prayer to God*—the need of a mediator or of intercession on my behalf I condemned as unnecessary. God was All-powerful and knew whether or not the prayer came from a contrite heart; and would answer according to the need, without having the prayer directed through another channel. The salvation of my soul is incumbent on myself and can only be brought about by my own efforts. Whatever my life has been, whether good or bad, I alone shall have to account for it on the Day of Judgment.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

*I believe in a Life after Death*—for a question I have often asked myself is this: If there is no hereafter, why are we existing at the present time and to what end? The conclusion I came to was, that death was but a discontinuation of a material existence and the ascension to a spiritual existence—a time when that which is hidden from us now will be revealed, when the soul will undergo a process of final purification.

*I believed in the Brotherhood of Man*—the fraternity of the whole human race. We are all God's children, and in His eyes we are all equal—rank, colour, race, or creed take no precedence. We are on earth to run an allotted space according to the Divine Plan, and if we believe that God loves us all, we too must love one another—that is, if we take Him as our prototype.

*I believed in the Prophets*—that throughout the ages God had revealed His Divine Will to certain members of the human race whom He had singled out to bear His Divine Message to mankind.

This is but a rough outline, but it embodies the principal points of my belief. It will no doubt be clear to you that what I needed was a rational and practical religion, free and unfettered, not bound by ceremonial, dogmatic, or canonical law, which I could not accept without being unjust to myself. This I found in Islam!

During my travels in the East, Islam had always attracted me both by its simplicity and by the devotion of its followers. Having been brought up in a religious atmosphere—my father was a disciplinarian, at times almost puritanical in his severity so far as religion was concerned—I was taught to regard all religions other than Christianity as blasphemous and their adherents as heathens. Reflect, then, what an impression must have been made upon my mind when the time came for me to see for myself, and come in contact with these very people whom I had been taught to regard as heathens and idolators. Chief amongst them, on comparison, I found the Faith of the followers of the Prophet Muhammad—a religion that was not taken out of the cupboard and carefully dusted

## MY ADOPTION OF ISLAM

on Sunday morning and put back again with due reverence on Sunday night, but one that was put into practice every day with devotion and sincerity, part and parcel of their very existence. This left an indelible impression on my mind which has changed the whole aspect of my life. In Islam I find all that I need for my social, moral, and spiritual guidance—it has taught me to look at life from a new angle, to be more tolerant. It has developed in me a keener feeling of sympathy for my fellow creatures. It has brought me into closer communication with God, and has given me a greater incentive for the developing of my spirit towards the gradual effacement of self. I have reasoned in this manner, that if a certain religion gives me peace of mind, gives me an ideal, an aim in life, and imbues me with a desire to serve God in a manner nobler, more direct, and better than that afforded by another Faith, then that is the religion for me to practice, and that religion I have found to be Islam.

I think that in this age we are bound down by the material and actual; it permeates every phase of our life and thought—we seem to be only trading for the present, and consequently we are hedged about by the present. But if we have an ideal it keeps us in trim and ever aspiring to reach upwards to attain a greater purity of thought and action.

Islam has given me a very practical method of breaking down the barrier of materialism in one of the Five Pillars of Faith, namely Prayer. The Muslim Prayer keeps me constantly aware of my duty to God, to my soul, and to my fellow creatures. Since becoming a Muslim I have done my best to observe the obligatory times of prayer, if only to offer up a prayer mentally during the humdrum of the business day, and I have found how infinitely nearer God is to me than I have felt heretofore.

As I have before mentioned, this is but a brief outline of my belief; and the psychological importance of what I believe is this: that the principles I believe in are those upon which I must base my thought and actions, my belief is the attitude of my mind toward religion which makes it acceptable as a basis for my spiritual and general guidance. The fundamental

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

key to my creed, then, is: "*There is no God, but God, and there is nothing but God.*"

I may not have generalized sufficiently upon these principles of what I believe; it is no easy task for me to summarize my thoughts, and I am perfectly aware of the ease with which I can mystify myself on matters religious. From my own reasoning I feel that by adopting Islam as my Faith I am not hoodwinking myself, but rather have raised myself a step nearer to Truth and the Divine Wisdom of God.

God moves in a mysterious way within us, and I am sure He would not have let me unwittingly blind myself upon a matter that is so important to my soul.

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### NOTES

#### **The Festival of Eid-ul-fitr (1348 A.H.) at the Woking Mosque.**

This year the bleak English winter weather—always a serious menace to Eid gatherings at Woking—did not, judging by the friends who participated in the last Eid, succeed in deterring them from travelling long distances. Although the daybreak did not betoken any signs of sunshine, yet throughout the day it kept fine. The temperature, too, was exceptionally mild for the beginning of the month of March. Over 400 members of the Muslim community gathered together from far and near, presenting a most picturesque spectacle to the casual onlooker and at the same time conveying a far deeper significance to all serious observers who realize the transcendental power of assimilation inherent in Islam—a power which incidentally gives a sure solution to the racial and social problems of the present-day world.

More than a dozen nationalities were represented from all parts of the British Isles, and indeed of the world, at the festival of Eid-ul-fitr, which marks the end of Ramazān, and was celebrated on Sunday, the 2nd of March, 1930. There were Indians, Egyptians, Arabs, Persians, Syrians, Malays, Iraqis, Muslims of Western origin, and Russian Muslims.

Prayers were offered at 11.30 and were followed by an



## NOTES

address by Moulvie 'Abdu 'l-Majid, M.A., Imām of the Mosque, who in his short but pithy lecture spoke regretting the attitude of his Christian friends, especially that of those living under the British flag, towards Islam. He could not understand why the British people displayed such an abysmal ignorance of the tenets and the teachings of a religion dear to one-fifth of the human race, especially since it was as obvious as it well can be that the fate of the British Empire was indissolubly connected with the 100 million Muslims living as equal members in the British commonwealth of nations. It was a pity, he added, that responsible men, journalists, and statesmen who, as a rule, influenced the opinion of the populace did not as yet realize their bearings in the present-day world. In passing he referred to the ribald and scurrilous article which appeared in the January number of the *Britannia and Eve* (London). He then addressed a word to his Christian friends, saying that the Muslims wanted nothing else from their Christian friends but that they should try to get a true perspective of the greatness of the great Arabian preacher, the Holy Prophet Muhammad. "Would that our Christian friends, in deed as well as in speech, showed the same respect to Muhammad as we both have and show to the revered founder of their own religion. A *Muslim* has no cause of quarrel with a Christian." He concluded by exhorting the Muslims that they should all be conscious of their glorious past, which was a sure preparation for the working out of a perhaps yet more brilliant future. He supported his remarks by the recital of some verses from Iqbāl's *Rumūz-i-Bekhudī*.

Among those present were their Excellencies the Afghan Minister, the Egyptian Minister, and the Iraq Minister, Lord and Lady Headley, General Muhkam Beg (representative of Bokhara Republic), Dr. 'Abdu 'l-Majid, Mr. Bashyr Pickard, B.A., Professor and Madame Léon, and Habeebu 'llah Lovegrove and Mr. M. Yosrī.

Their Highnesses the Aga Khan and Lady Aga Khan, who have always munificently patronized the Woking Organization, were unable to grace the occasion on account of their absence from this country.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

A talking picture of Eid festival was made which, including as it does a message from the Imām dealing with some of the most widespread misconceptions regarding the religion of Islam, should go a long way to give a rude shaking to them.

Tea and light refreshments were served under the spacious marquee erected for the purpose.

We take this opportunity to thank all our friends who enabled us to make the occasion a success by helping us financially as well as morally.

### **A Plea for Tolerance and Use of Sober Language when Criticizing Sacred Personages.**

In the January number of the *Britannia and Eve* (London) an article entitled "Famous Women of History : Ayesha," by Mr. Norman Hill, appeared which, had it not been for the indignation it aroused in the various parts of the Muslim world, so much so that the Government of India had to proscribe the issue containing it, does not deserve serious criticism. For you cannot argue with a person who has no standard of literary decency and is given to misconstruing plain facts of history.

Space forbids us to call attention to all the misstatements and errors of fact with which Mr. Norman Hill's article bristles. We must therefore confine ourselves to dealing with four of the most glaring instances which are also among the fallacies most widely diffused in the Western world.

A study of the article shows that it is not so much the Lady 'Āyesha who incurs Mr. Norman Hill's ridicule as the Holy Prophet Muhammad; and it is this which has outraged the feelings and sentiments of Muslims all over the world.

We are nowadays sorely in need of harmonious relations between one community and another; but articles, like that under discussion, which try wittingly or otherwise to throw ridicule upon founders of religions tend to widen immeasurably the gulf of estrangement. The Holy Qur-ān thirteen centuries ago laid down the golden rule—which our European brethren, although living in the much-vaunted civilization of

## NOTES

the twentieth century, may with advantage learn if they are at all anxious to promote the peace of the world—when it enjoined its followers not to use derogatory words in connection with objects held sacred by other people (vi. 108). Much of the ill-feeling existing between nation and nation would disappear if we took this golden principle to heart.

### **Why Prophet Muhammad is so much Misrepresented.**

The life of the Prophet gains enormously in importance on account of its unparalleled richness in detail. The doings of his life have been preserved and handed down to us in the fullest manner, and its record is as nearly complete as is humanly possible.

All people will naturally sing the praises of the founders of their own religions; but if the question be something to this effect: Who is that founder, the record of whose life has been preserved and reduced to writing in such a way that on the one hand there may be such care, precision, and exactness bestowed on it as has never before been devoted even to the revealed religious books of the world, and on the other hand that as far as comprehensiveness and richness of detail go even his mode of walking, talking, or of eating or sleeping, his treatment of foe or friend, of his social relations as head of a state and of a family and, in short, of the likes and dislikes that arise in every possible phase of life, have been minutely recorded? then there can be only one answer, and that would be: The Prophet Muhammad.

Of all the great religious figures—Moses, Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, and the rest—it is only the Holy Prophet Muhammad who is consistently misrepresented in the West. The reason is not far to seek. It is as easy to malign the character of a person and to misrepresent the events of his life—more especially when every detail of that life is known to us—as it is to eulogize a personality whose human existence has been either shrouded in myth and fiction or is but little known to us and deduced from a few stray platitudes, shibboleths, and idealistic sermons.

It is for this reason—this unique characteristic of the life

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

of the Holy Prophet—that Mr. Hill, in common with the Prophet's European biographers, has floundered in the quagmire of patristic hatred of Islam, which is Europe's inheritance, so that even the undoubtedly good qualities of the great Arabian Teacher as portrayed in his ribald and frivolously facile method seem quaint and ludicrous to the average reader.

Our chief surprise at this article is that the writer should seem so totally ignorant of his bearings in the present-day world. There are more than 350 millions of the followers of the Holy Prophet spread all over the globe. There must, after all, be something extraordinarily great and attractive in him that even to-day commands their allegiance to an extent that is ever increasing. We cannot comprehend how the writer could bring himself to reconcile this vast and imposing following with the ribald style he has seen fit to employ. Is there any record, we ask him, of anyone, before the Prophet or after, living the life depicted in his article and yet able to accomplish such a world transformation as fell to the lot of Muhammad, who not only succeeded in redeeming and uplifting his utterly depraved fellow-countrymen for whom no public evil or social vice was taboo, who were given to infanticide, internecine warfare, gambling and drinking, but also exists even to-day (although he died nearly fourteen hundred years ago) as an unparalleled influence on the thoughts and conduct of millions of people?

We are writing of a man who made Islam "bone-dry" some thirteen centuries ago, before the wine-drinking Columbus discovered the land of enforced Prohibition on which more than £33,000,000 have been spent since the inception of the Volstead Act, and with no apparent success in prospect. How could a man who is depicted as both irresponsible and unscrupulous have solved in, figuratively speaking, the twinkling of an eye that which is, and is likely to remain, a standing riddle to the Western social reformer? A fact like this should in itself have been sufficient to call a halt to such unseemly expressions as have been made use of by Mr. Hill in his most lamentable article. Moreover, even to-day the Muslim world boasts of numerous religious men saintly and devout simply

## NOTES

because they follow humbly in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad. How could the Muhammad of Mr. Hill's article produce such disciples? Should not this consideration alone cause a man to think twice before committing irresponsible thoughts to paper?

### **Is a Plurality of Wives reprehensible in the Life of the Prophet?**

Plurality of wives is frequently encountered in the lives of great religious personages. Abraham, who enjoys the reverence of more than half the human race, had more wives than one; and in like case were Jacob, Moses, and David. Solomon is reported to have carried the number to hundreds. Thus it is obvious that the institution of polygamy is without intrinsic evil, and the mere fact that the Prophet had a number of wives is by no means in itself objectionable; it was the custom of the patriarchs of old.

The life of the Prophet in its domestic aspect may be divided into four periods. Up to twenty-five he led a celibate life; from twenty-five to fifty-four he was the husband of one wife; from fifty-four to sixty he contracted several marriages; and lastly from sixty till his death he did not contract any new marriages. The most important period for determining whether or not he was a slave to his passions is the period of celibacy. If he had not been complete master of his passions, he could not have led the exceptionally chaste and pure life which authentic history proves he did. His worst enemies could not point to a single blot on his character when challenged to do so later.

Now youth is the time when the passions are apt to run riot, and the man who is able to control them in his youth and during celibacy can hardly be conceived of as falling a prey to lust in his old age. Thus the first period of his life (his celibacy up to twenty-five) is proof enough that he could never fall a prey to his passions. It should be noted in this connection that in Arab society at the time there was no moral stigma attaching to an immoral life, so that it could not be said that he was deterred from evil courses by the

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

moral force of society. No; profligacy was the order of the day; and it was among people who prided themselves on loose sexual relations that the Holy Prophet Muhammad led a life of transcendent purity.

Now let us take the next period, that of monogamy. At the age of twenty-five he married a widow, Khadijah, fifteen years his senior, and led a life of utmost devotion with her till she died.

Polygamy was the rule in Arabia at the time; and the wife had no cause of complaint, nor did she ever grumble, if the husband brought in a second or a third wife. Marriage with Khadijah had enriched him, though polygamy in Arabia was not limited to the rich. The Prophet belonged to the noblest family of the Quraish, and if he had chosen to marry another wife, it would have been quite easy for him. But he led a monogamous life of complete faithfulness during all this time. When Khadijah died, he married a very elderly lady named Saudah, whose only recommendation was that she was the widow of a faithful companion of his who had fled to Abyssinia from the persecutions of the Quraish.

Then comes the third period. Of all his wives 'Āyesha was the only one whom he married as a virgin. Her father, Abū Bakr, the closest friend of the Holy Prophet, had offered her to him when he suffered the great bereavement of losing both his wife, Khadijah, and his uncle, Abū Tālib. The girl possessed exceptional qualities, and both Abū Bakr and the Prophet saw in her the great woman of the future, peculiarly suited to perform the duties of the wife of a teacher. In the second year of the Flight began the series of battles with the Quraish and the other Arab tribes, which appreciably reduced the number of males, the bread-winners of the family. These battles continued up to the eighth year of the Flight, and it was during this time that the Holy Prophet contracted all the marriages which appear objectionable to the modern European, but which neither friend nor foe looked on with disapproval at the time. And how could they do so, since they saw it was an act of compassion, and was not due to any indulgence of the passions. Even a Christian writer

## NOTES

admits this when he says: "It should be remembered, however, that most of Muhammad's marriages may be explained, at least, as much by his pity for the forlorn persons concerned as by other motives. They were almost all of them widows, who were not remarkable either for their beauty or their wealth, but quite the reverse." And what other motive could there be? Let us face the facts. The Prophet had now a young and beautiful wife, 'Āyesha, in his house. None of the other wives whom he married later compared with her either in beauty or youth. Surely, then, it was not susceptibility to beauty that led to these marriages, for we have already seen that from his youth till his old age the Prophet remained complete master of his passions. The man who could live to twenty-five in celibacy and still have the reputation of a spotless character, who up to fifty-four lived with a single wife, and this notwithstanding the fact that polygamy was more the rule than the exception at the time, and that a polygamous connection was not in the least objectionable—such a man could not be said to have changed all of a sudden after fifty-five, when old age generally soothes the passions even of those who cannot control them in youth. No other motive than consideration for the ladies who were given this honour can be attached to these marriages. If there had been any less honourable motive, his choice would have fallen on others than widows; and under the Arab custom a man in his position could have had plenty of youthful virgins.

### **Was there a Change in the Prophet after the Flight?**

From the above it would become clear that a change for the worse could hardly come over a man who had led an undoubtedly spotless life until he reached fifty-four. If the beauty of woman could not excite his passions in youth and lead him away from the path of rectitude, how could it beguile him in old age? And what were the circumstances at Medina during those years? It was not a life of ease and luxury that he was leading at the time; it was a life of hardship, because it was at this very time that he had to carry on a life and death struggle with the enemies of Islam. Huge armies came

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

to crush him and his followers at Medina. The whole of Arabia was aflame against him. He was not secure for a minute. Battles had to be fought in quick succession. Expeditions had to be arranged and sent. The Jews and the Christians were his enemies, as well as the Idolaters. His best friends were falling sometimes in battle and sometimes by treachery. Is it possible for a man to lead a life of ease and luxury under such circumstances? Even if he had a mind to lead a life of self-indulgence, which the Prophet, according to all accounts, had not, this was no time for it. Under such circumstances of warfare, with enemies within Medina and enemies all around it, with the number of the Muslims insignificantly small in comparison with the enemy, with news of assaults in overwhelming force on all four sides, even a profligate's life might well have been changed, but a man of avowed purity of character, which no temptation could shake, would scarcely be turned into a profligate.

It is true that shortly after their arrival in Medina the condition of the Muslims improved. Business brought them prosperity, and the booty that fell into their hands, together with the ransom money for the prisoners, put them in comparative luxury. So there was some change in the mode of their lives; but the household of the Holy Prophet was absolutely unaffected by that change. Quite a human desire, however, crept into the hearts of the Prophet's wives, that, like other Muslim families, they, too, should avail themselves of their share of the world's good things. Accordingly they approached Muhammad to prevail upon him to allow them their fair portion of luxury. Thereupon came the Divine injunction directing him to tell his wives that they could not remain his wives, if they allowed themselves to cherish such sordid cravings. So they must choose between these two alternatives. They might either have their worldly finery, or remain in the Prophet's household. Should they decide for the former, they would have plenty of that which they desired, but forfeit forthwith the honour of being the Prophet's wives, for worldly comfort cannot go hand in hand with the Prophet's household. Is this the reply of a sensualist? Could anyone who is a slave to his passions disregard the wishes of



## NOTES

his wives in such a manner? The foremost concern of such a fellow is to satisfy the slightest whim of the objects of his affection. There is no doubt that the Prophet had a great love and regard for his wives. "The best of you," he is reported to have said, "is the one who treats his wife best." This should surely illustrate his attitude towards woman in general.

This shows beyond the shadow of a doubt how free was the Prophet's heart from all base and sensual thoughts. He is prepared to lose all his wives rather than yield to a request which he regards as unworthy of them, viz. to be allowed to participate in worldly pleasures. Does this not conclusively show that the object of his many marriages was anything but self-indulgence?

It is helpful, too, to observe that all kinds of sordid cravings and passions, such as are characteristic of human nature, had been thoroughly quenched in the case of the Holy Prophet, as is abundantly proved by the exceeding simplicity of his mode of life. Though he lived in the world, he had little use for its lures and attractions. From the cradle to the grave he passes through a diversity of circumstances—from sheer powerlessness to kingship. He, a friendless orphan, scales the summit of royal glory; but his change of circumstances entails not the slightest change in his way of living. He eats exactly the same kind of humble fare, wears the same simple dress, and in all particulars lives as he did when he was a poor orphan. It is hard to give up a kingly throne and lead the life of a hermit, but it is far harder to hold a royal sceptre and at the same time lead a hermit's life, especially more so when one is exposed to the world's most seductive temptations, yet never for one moment succumbs to them.

When the Holy Prophet had attained to absolute power over Medina and its suburbs, the furniture of his house consisted of an ordinary bed with a matting of palm leaves, and an earthen jug of water. Some nights he would go without food altogether. For days no fire would be lighted in his house for cooking purposes, the whole family living simply on dates. There was no lack of means for furnishing for a life of ease and comfort, not to speak of luxury. The public

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

treasury was at his disposal. The well-to-do among his followers, who did not shrink from sacrificing their lives for his sake, would have been only too glad to provide him with every comfort of life had he chosen. But worldly things carried little weight with him. No mundane craving could ever prevail over him, whether in times of indigence or of plenty. Just as he spurned worldly advantages, such as power, wealth, and beauty, which the Quraish offered him when he was yet without a shadow of power, so did he remain indifferent to them ever after God, of His own grace, had granted him all these things.

### **The Slander fastened on 'Āyesha, and the Slander on Mary, Mother of Jesus.**

It was on his return journey to Medina after an expedition that a baseless accusation was brought against the Lady 'Āyesha's chastity. There is nothing very peculiar in this. The righteous have always suffered at the hands of their traducers. A similar charge was laid long before at the door of Mary, the mother of the Prophet Jesus, which the Holy Qur-án refutes by its mention of it as "a glaringly false accusation against Mary."

The charge of which the European writers on Muhammad have made so much was levelled at an equally righteous woman by certain of the hypocrites, whose names are mentioned in the traditions of the Prophet. 'Ābdullah bin Ubayy was one of them. This charge, too, as in the case of Mary, turned out to be mere malice on the part of those who were always thinking of ways and means for injuring the cause of Islam.

There is even less ground for insinuating, as Mr. Hill has done, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad had himself become doubtful as to the character of his wife, the Lady 'Āyesha. Such an idea is arrant balderdash, ladled out by European writers who have never taken the trouble to consult original Arabic authorities and the Qur-án dealing with this allegation. Besides, that he, who could purify the depraved people of Mecca and bring them to the highest pinnacle of morality, should be regarded as unable to work a transformation in his own household is unthinkable.

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