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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

RABI' UTI-THANI, 1351 A. H.

VOL. XX.

AUGUST, 1932 A. C.

No. 8.

KHUTBA OF EID-UL-AZHA, A. H. 1350.

BY MAULVI WILLIAM BURCHELL BASHYR-
PICKARD, B.A. (CANTAB).

And he said : Surely I fly to my Lord : He will guide me : My Lord ! grant me of the doers of good deeds : So We gave him the good news of a boy, possessing forbearance.

And when he attained to working with him, he said : O my son ! Surely I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you : consider then what you see. He said : O my father ! do what you are commanded : if Allah please, you will find me of the patient ones.

So when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead, and We called out to him saying, O Abraham ! you have indeed shown the truth of the vision ; surely thus do We reward the doers of good : most surely this is a manifest trial.

And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. And We perpetuated (praise) to him among the latter generations. Peace be on Abraham.

Thus do We reward the doers of good. Surely he was one of our believing servants. And We gave him the good news of Isaac, a prophet among the good ones. And We showered Our blessings on him and Isaac ; and of their offsprings are the doers of good, and (also) those who are clearly unjust to their own sons. [Holy Qur-án XXXVII : 99-113.]

ISLAMIC REVIEW

O men and women, O my brothers and sisters, to-day we celebrate the Muslim Festival Eid-ul-Azha, the festival commemorating the sacrifice of Abraham (may the Peace of God be upon him !), which Abraham made, when he was reprieved from sacrificing his own son. Verily, for Abraham's love towards God, and out of his trust and faith in God (even the ONE God, Who created men, and Who sent His Prophets down the ages unto man), Abraham was prepared, in response to his vision, to sacrifice his own son.

In Abraham and in his son there are outstanding examples of Muslims—those who surrender themselves entirely unto God ; for, if Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son, behold ! his son was ready without demur to lay down his life in obedience to his father and in submission to the Will of God.

Herein is the great surrender that every Muslim must make : complete surrender of himself entirely unto God, neither his person nor his possessions, neither his time nor his efforts are to be withheld—complete and absolute surrender unto God, and of this submission Abraham (may the Peace of God be upon him !) and his son are perpetual reminders.

But God, *Allah*, there is no God but He, the *One*, Lord of the Heavens and the Earth and whatever is between, *Allah* is a Lord of Mercy and of Bounty.

Though He trieth His servants, yet He is the Lord of Complete Possession and of Power and of Forgiveness. When His servant turneth unto Him, then He turneth to His servant with a Face of Mercy. He hath endued upon Himself the attribute of Mercy.

Your life and your death alike are in the hands of *Allah*. Will you not, then, submit to Him, Who holdeth the Supreme Power ? Will you not, then, worship Him,

KHUTBA OF EID-UL-AZHA, A. H. 1350

so that He may guide you into the paths of His Bounties, into the paths of His Peace ?

Everything is His, and He, *Allah*, guideth whom He pleases into the ways of His Knowledge. Unto those that pray, He answereth their prayer. Will ye not, therefore, pray ? While upon those who are negligent, who permit themselves to wander along, keeping no guard against evil, neither seeking guidance from their Lord, upon them falleth His Severe Chastisement.

For this, verily ! is your Lord—a Lord of Mercy and a Lord of Severe Chastisement.

If ye seek Him not, the punishment will fall upon you, from where ye know not, and you will find that the punishment has come upon you from yourselves ; you have not observed the Measure ; you have not understood the good and the bad, bound up together in all things in a fixed Measure by the Hand of God.

O men and women, O my brothers and sisters, it is revealed that your Lord is ONE Lord. *Qul Huwa ' llahu Ahad*. God, there is no God but He, without beginning and without end, ONE in Possession without partner, ONE in Power without division, ONE in absolute completeness, ONE Alone, *not* one in three. Let not His UNITY be obscured ! There is naught beside Him, and He hath no likeness.

Ponder upon the UNITY of God ; for This is the source of harmony ; This is the well-spring of peace ; This is the truth, that maketh clear seeming contradictions, difficulties and doubts of manifest life. This is the light, which lighteneth the darkness of things not understood. *Allah* (praise to His Name !) *Allah* is the LIGHT of the Universe. The Light from His UNITY falleth with knowledge upon the heart, so that the simplicity of the meaning of life becometh manifest thereby.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Now, from the UNITY of God follows the Brotherhood of Man. Those who realise the UNITY of God (praise to His Name, the ONE, the Supreme, Who over-ruleth all things for ever!) those who realise the UNITY of God, and who worship him, become as brothers. They feel a definite affection the one toward the other, founded upon a similarity of outlook upon life, and a deep realisation, that ONE God hath them created, to ONE God do they belong, and to ONE God do they return. *Allahu Akbar ! Allahu Akbar ! La ilaha illa'llah ! wa 'llahu Akbar ! Allahu Akbar ! wa li 'llahi'lhamd !*

But in Islam, the feeling of Brotherhood is yet more extensive. It extends unto all men ; for, whatever religion a man followeth, ONE Creator hath him created, to ONE Possessor he belongeth, and unto ONE Lord of Judgment and of Mercy he returneth.

In Islam, this realisation of Brotherhood is most manifest. It is put into practice in the affairs of everyday life. Race has no barriers for Islam. A Muslim is a Muslim and a Brother, whether he be a Frenchman, a Mexican or a Persian, English or Indian or Chinese. "Say not the Arab excelleth the non-Arab or that the non-Arab excelleth the Arab." All in respect of race are equal. It is the *individual* that excelleth. It is *individual* faith and *individual* works, which are of value, which are the criterion of excellence. The best of you are those, who are most careful of their duty to *Allah*.

The beauty and simplicity and brotherhood of Islam is further manifested by the abolition of injurious class antagonisms. Social distinctions and varying degrees of worldly elevations there must be. Your Lord has placed some of you above others. The social state requires subordination of some to others. Good government, law and order and justice could not exist otherwise ; but Islam (and this I emphasise) Islam has guarded against

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the evils often bound up in class distinctions, hardening into class hatred. In Islam, there is no pride of class against class, no contempt of class for class. In the presence of God, all stand upon an equal footing. In Islam, all stand shoulder to shoulder in prayer before their Lord upon the common basis of their humanity. In Islam, there is no such outrage, no such atrocity, as separate mosques for separate races. Let Europeans carefully ponder over this. Let the white races beware of their besetting sins, which are pride, arrogance and contempt. And pride is this, that one of you should despise another. In this regard, let me recite some of the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may the Peace and the Blessings of God be upon him !). It is a saying of the Holy Prophet, that " the proud will not enter the Blissful Abode "; and again, that " he will not enter Paradise, who has a single grain of pride in him "; and again, a third time, " God is Beauty and delights in the beautiful, and pride is holding man in contempt."

O you who believe, O best-loved brothers (for, though all men are our brothers, ye are nearest to our heart), on this solemn occasion, on this day, when the faith of Abraham (may the Peace of God be upon him !) is renewed in our remembrance, I call upon you, one and all, to stand steadfastly by your Faith, by the Religion of God, by Islam. Ye are assembled now, but soon ye will be scattered, throughout England, throughout the world. Be constant in prayer, for God hath power over all things. Wherever you go in non-Muslim lands, know that you are the messengers of Islam, the emissaries of World-Peace. In non-Muslim lands, a greater opportunity is with you for the spread of Islam, and a greater responsibility is upon you for purity of faith and carefulness of your duty to *Allah* (may His Name be praised !) in guarding against evil.

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O you who believe, I call upon you to awake, to arise, to unite, to act! Shake off this heavy sleep! Arise! Unite! The world needs your action, your united action. The time is now!

Listen to the voices, which call to you. If ye listen, ye will hear a voice saying, "Ye serve ONE God (praise to His Name!), unite! Ye follow One Book, in which is set no crookedness, unite! Ye face One Qiblah from the four corners of the earth, One Qiblah, a constant reminder that ye are One People."

Stand not, staring at the follies of materialism, neither fret at those who go astray blindly, with their reason behooded, shunning the light. Falseness and self-deception shall not prevail. The Truth has come. Surely falsehood is a vanishing thing.

O men and women, O my brothers and sisters, to-day we speak in terms of world-activities, world-peace, world-progress, world-religion. Gone are the days of nation separated from nation, of statesmen thinking in terms of nationality alone. To-day the mechanical mastery of space has made possible world-wide movements, and has brought nation to the door of nation, so that the day of understanding is at hand.

Look around you in every direction! When nation speaketh unto nation, upon what basis shall world-peace be established, but upon the Religion of Peace, even the Religion of Abraham (peace be upon him!), the Religion of Moses (peace be upon him!), the Religion of Jesus, the Holy Prophet of God (peace be upon him and the Blessings of God!), and the Religion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (May the Peace and the Blessings of God abide with him!)? Upon what basis, I repeat, shall world-peace be established, but upon the Religion of Peace, even Islam? Islam is the sure basis of world-peace. Islam is the

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World-Religion to restore concord and understanding, and to establish in practical reality the Brotherhood of Mankind.

O you who believe, time passes, and my words to you draw to a conclusion. I fain would leave in the heart of each one of you, my brothers and sisters, some word which would remain with you and prove a source of continual blessing to you from your Lord, by the Power and Permission of your Lord.

Let me, therefore, tell you the secret of happiness. The Secret of Happiness is the fulfilment of Duty; and this is not to be understood, unless the meaning of the word 'duty' shines in your heart with lively understanding. Let me explain in brief. Your duty is threefold, and in its threefold nature embraces every moment of your existence.

There exists firstly your *duty unto God*. Be careful of your duty to *Allah* (may His Name be praised)!

There exists secondly your *duty towards mankind*. Man is a social creature, and monasticism and monkery form not a part of Islam.

And, thirdly, there exists your *duty towards yourself*. God createth not in vain. Everyman hath faculties, and gifts, and excellencies, requiring development. One must take good care of what God, in His Mercy, hath granted unto each one of us, and one must make good use thereof.

May *Allah* give you His *guidance*, and shower His *blessings* upon you!

ISLAMIC REVIEW

THE EID-UL-AZHA AT WOKING.*

It is raining hard, and brightness pierces through heavy leaden skies, and from the sloping top of a large marquee, pegged out on a sodden field, to-day drip rivulets of water.

And yet inside are over four hundred of the most happy and contented people I have ever seen. Indians, Malayans, Persians, Arabs, Afghans and Moroccans mingle with French and English, their racial differences forgotten in their common faith of Islam.

The marquee is erected near the blue and gold Shah Jehan Mosque, whose whited dome can be seen from the railway line, and has been needed because the Mosque is far too small for the celebration of Eid-ul-Azha. One of the most sacred Muslim festivals, it is held yearly to commemorate God's restraining of Abraham when he attempted to make a sacrifice of his son Ishmael.

Coverings had been spread over the grass under the marquee, and stoves were dotted about to bring a little physical warmth to the damp atmosphere, which had no effect on the good spirits and fellowship of the worshippers.

Before and after the service they laughed and chatted together, often breaking off to give the double heart embrace of their faith. Young students kept darting about, eager to meet and embrace each other, and older members, to whom they showed a respect that was marked by affection but not awe.

The officiating Imam, Aftab-ud-din Ahmad, had issued the invitations, but he smilingly stood aside for an English Muslim, Mr. William B. Bashyr-Pickard, B.A., (Cantab), and who is the librarian of Hertford, to conduct the prayers.

The portion of the Koran relating to Abraham's sacrifice was read, and Mr. Bashyr-Pickard told of the brother-

* *Sunday Times* : 17th April 1932.

THE EID-UL-AZHA AT WOKING

hood of man, without antagonism of race or class, which is the basis of the Muslim religion.

Mr. Bashyr-Pickard (the Arabic prefix means "one who brings good news") is the first English Moslem to conduct the prayers at the festival of Eid-ul-Azha.

Many of the congregations were seated on the ground, and some, feeling that the marquee was a veritable mosque, had removed their shoes. Most of the men wore European clothes, with fezes and turbans. A few Eastern women, wearing *sarís*, sat in chairs at the back, near the many English women.

Lord Headley, who is president of the British Muslim Society, wore a red fez almost as impressive as the white headdress of Sir Umar Hayat Khan, who, in a yellow tunic and white trousers, stood near him.

Lunch was served in the marquee after the service, and a number of young students acted as stewards. There was no "top table" and no place-names.

Among those present were their Excellencies The Egyptian Minister, The Hedjaz Minister and the Chargé d'Affaires of Afghanistan, Colonel Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan, Al-Hajj El-Farooq Lord Headley, Rt. Rev. Bishop James, Prof. Haroun Mustafa Leon, the merchant prince Zainul Ali Raza, Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Mrs. Buchanan Hamilton, Nawabzada F. M. Khan, Sir Bramwell and Miss Thomas, and Mr. Habibullah Lovegrove. The members of the spiritualist community attended the function in a number never witnessed before.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

THE MUSLIM CONCEPTION OF WORSHIP.

BY K. KUDOS.

The Muslim conception of worship must not be confused with what is in vogue among other religions. Allah, the God of the Qur-án, needs no worship, nor does He require any praise or thanksgiving.¹ If we worship Him, we do so for our own good.² This statement may seem to a freethinker a mere dogmatic assertion on the part of the Qur-án ; but he will appreciate its significance if he will apply himself to study human psychology in the case of a person who adores something. Such adoration results in imitation of what appears to the adorer good, beautiful or sublime in the thing adored. If we consider our own moral code and such knowledge as we possess, we will find that we were not born with them,³ but took them from others by a process of imitation. They attracted our fancy and we admired them. Then we came to love them and extol them, and this love reaches its zenith in adoration and worship.

If character is the first requisite for good citizenship, then we need two things to the shaping of it. First, it must be brought home to us that true worship lies in imitating the way of our Deity ; secondly, that the object of our worship, *i.e.*, our Deity must possess attributes which go to make the best form of character.

It should not be forgotten that anything that merely pleases our senses cannot edify or induce real morality. Asthetic tastes may commend such things, but they do not make up a character. It is the mind and not the body which needs that elevation which can only be attained through meditation. Therefore, anything that hinders us from true contemplation must be excluded from our worship. For this purpose all Muslim mosques are bare

¹ 17 : 15. 31 : 12.

² 17 : 7.

³ 16 : 78.

THE MUSLIM CONCEPTION OF WORSHIP

of decorations. They are erected after the model of the House of God at Mecca—four homely walls of earth¹ with an unhewn piece of rock as its corner stone.² For the same reason Muslim worship is never accompanied by singing or other forms of music or the burning of incense. These doubtless create a sort of rapture in the mind, but they also tend to intoxicate the spirit. Besides, we experience the same feelings when we attend any place where music is performed or look on any cheerful scene. These things may to some extent assist our meditations in our worship, but they mislead us as well. We must listen rather to the music of our own minds and create in ourselves a sort of mental happiness which may in its inception no doubt resemble that given by the aforesaid ceremonial adjuncts. But we have to soar higher than this. In order to free us from any deception, our adoration should be stripped of all the “paraphernalia” of worship loved by other religions. It should consist purely of meditation. We need recital and gesticulations to a certain extent, the latter to relieve monotony, the former to furnish subjects for contemplation. Besides, different postures for meditation suit different persons. But the movements in prayer should indicate reverence and submission to the Lord, while our recitals should refer to those Divine Characters with which we must imbue ourselves. We have only to contemplate the beauties of the objects of our adoration to obtain inspiration for our deeds.

But God is transcendental and stands beyond the perception of our senses.³ It would be absurd to say that He is ‘knowable,’ yet it cannot be denied that we feel His presence by reason of certain manifestations of Himself. Most Buddhists of the present day evince atheistic tendencies, but they should not forget that the Lord Buddha believed in the existence of Intellect, Compassion

¹ Exodus 20 : 24.

² Exodus 20 : 26.

³ 6 : 104.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

and Liberty in the working of Nature. How then could we disbelieve in the existence of the Great Mind, if these were the conditions of mentality? We must have some conception of God for our meditation. We need not bother about dogmatized theology, for Nature itself, and in itself, is the best revealer of its Maker. If the Universe presents the highest type of civilization and is the work of the Mind that seems to possess the best qualities, we must discover the object of our adoration by the aid of Natural Theology. This is a very difficult task, and wrong data may easily lead us to erroneous conclusions. How gracious, then, was the Revealer of the Qur-án, Who saved us the incalculable labour of this research work in the pages of Nature? If the Universe refers to certain qualities of its Maker, they are no other than the Attributes of Allah given in the Qur-án. The Holy Book does not claim to furnish us with an exhaustive list of the Divine Attributes. It speaks only of such Excellent Names as can come within our comprehension and the scope of our imitation. It shows us how to inspire ourselves with all that they require. If the Holy Prophet summarized all our religion in one word when he said, 'Imbue yourself with the Divine character,' the Qur-án expounded that dictum. The Qur-án gives us one hundred Attributes of God, and it is our contemplation of these Names in order to clothe our character with them which has been called *worship* in the Qur-án. If we,¹ therefore, glorify God, when the God of the Qur-án clearly says that He needs no worship,² we are, in fact, glorifying the coming man who has to be evolved from our inner selves, equipped as above stated. In reciting certain Holy Names in our prayer we keep before us, as it were, a sacred cast in which we have to mould our character. Why should we look for a Christ, when each one of us possesses the Kristos in ourselves.

¹ 7 : 180.

² 31 : 12.

THE MUSLIM CONCEPTION OF WORSHIP.

All of us are Christs, Krishnas and Ramchandras potentially. It is ours to seek to actualize those high capacities. They may come to the surface in the course of our earthly career or in the Hereafter. Our Holy Prophet assures us of this when he says that through implicit obedience to our Lord, He becomes our "limbs and joints."

I wonder why secularized minds take exception to such a religion as this? We do not ask them to worship a *fetish*, but to deify themselves by worship. By deification I mean attaining to the highest morals, which they will find when they study these Hundred Holy Names set forth in the Qur-án. In the words of the Qur-án I could ask them--"And what (harm) would it have done them, if they had believed in Allah or the Last Day and spent (benevolently) of what Allah had given them," if worship in the Qur-án means to fulfil the requirements of those Names. We, as good citizens, must behave ourselves in seemly fashion. We must observe certain rules of good conduct in life, and it is impossible to think of a better system of morals than that carved out on the lines of the said Names. All religionists, doubtless, believe in the same one God, but we differ from each other in our conception of Him, and especially as to the Attributes ascribed to him. This, in fact, is what divides the world of religion into different cults and creeds, and which has, as the Prophet says, been the cause of much trouble and discord. In our formula¹ we refer to that particular conception of God which has reached us through Muhammad. The message came in the form of the Qur-án which is really a commentary on these Names. The Book may thus be divided into seven parts:—

- (1) Allah standing as a central figure in the Qur-án.
- (2) His Hundred Attributes.

¹ The formula has been summed up in one sentence:—*La I laha-il Allah Muhammad-ur-Rusul-ul-lah*: there is no other deity worthy of adoration but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.

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(3) Virtues and Sins. The former are the shadows of these Names, cast by our activities : while the latter are sins engendered when we violate their sanctity.

(4) Qur-ánic laws that are meant to develop the said virtues, or, in other words, to enable us to translate these Names into our actions.

(5) Heaven or Hell. Heaven is the abode of those who clothe themselves with the Divine Attributes, while Hell will be inhabited by those who act contrary to these Names.

(6) Reference to certain phenomena of Nature in order to elucidate some of these Names, as we read of *Rahman* and *Rahim* in Qur-án (2 : 163-164).

(7) The Book refers to certain righteous persons, and also speaks of certain wicked ones. This classification also is due to the Attributes.

Allah, as I said, is the Proper Name of the Deity. But proper names are meaningless, as a grammarian would say. They do, however, indicate certain characteristics of the person so named. Similarly these Hundred Attributes give us various features of God. They have been called in the Holy Qur-án the Excellent Names.¹

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE IMAM,

The Mosque, Woking.

COLOMBO.

DEAR SIR,

The *Islamic Review* is a real light to the benighted portion of the world. We had all but forgotten our faith, but the Review has given us a new conception of religion, imbuing that, which had become insipid, with a fresh and vital interest. Nay, it even seems profitable from a worldly point of view to be religionist, *i.e.*, to practice religion sincerely.

¹ 7 : 18 ; 17 : 110 ; 20 : 8.

CORRESPONDENCE

If religion also consists in doing worldly things on the Divine lines, which seems to be at work everywhere in Nature, here is a creed to which no one could take exception. Every worldly wise person should be eager to be of its adherents. We have been told that a life of indigence and penury was a matter for pride in the religion of Christ, but we would be walking humbly with the Lord, according to Islam, if we have sufficient for our needs, and something more to enable us to help others. I find such a condition of affluence considered as a part of Divine morality in the Qur-án. I have studied all the holy names collected by Mr. Kidwai in one of his articles which have appeared in these pages, and if it be our religion to follow these Names, the result should be the highest form of civilization, for they contain all that is desirable on any plane of activity. Religion, in short, as defined in these pages, will be the best recipe for a successful life, especially if our devotion to the Lord consists in our imbuing ourselves with His Divine Characteristics.

There is, however, something in the matter that needs further explanation. We have been told that the Qur-án instilled in Man a strong sense of Monotheism, would it not affect our belief in His Unity, if we sought similarity with Him in this respect ?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID MORRISON.

MATEKKA PALACE,
MATEKKA, STAMBOUL.

DEAR EL HADJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN,

I am a great admirer of your wonderful idealistic spirit, your unique knowledge, and your erudition in Islam in particular and everything in general, and I was deeply grieved to hear of your illness. May Allah grant you health for your splendid achievements, and for your enlightenment and help.

* * * * *

While at College I oftentimes thought of Islam, and mourned in silence at the terrible dogmatic state which has befallen Islam, which is only Truth, Light and Beauty and which can only bring happiness to mankind if thoroughly understood, and I often dreamed of someone, with a highly Western culture and versed in the knowledge of the Qur-án as well, coming forward to help and enlighten not only Westerners but also Easterners : that man, who only lived in my imagination, really lived, and it was you.

* * * * *

Very sincerely,
Your Sister in Islam,
(PRINCESS) ESMA.

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MANILA, PHILLIPINE.

DEAR KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN,

As Salamo Alaikum,—High was my spirit when I first studied Islam (The Religion of Truth), but higher it is in writing to you that I heartily embraced the faith, which, I confess, has elevated me to my present state of happiness. I could not imagine what heavenly impulse led me to study this simple religion of Truth and Peace, for, had it been otherwise, I would for ever have dwelt in perfect darkness and ignorance. I acknowledge the superiority of Islam over all other existing religions, all of which are nothing but dogmatic.

I am a student from Cebu City, and came to Manila in pursuit of my art studies at the State University. Very fortunately, I came across a copy of the Qu-rán in English and some copies of the *Islamic Review*, which is distributed to University students. I studied them conscientiously, and I have never enjoyed such decent inspiring reading.

When a Catholic I was very sceptical about religious matters. In truth, I was never religious, and was even an atheist at times. Islam came like a light from above, to dispel my gloom. I can even now feel the vivid impression of what that light imparted to my life.

Though still devoid of a full knowledge of Islam, I am constantly preaching it to my friends here and at home. It is not surprising to note that I am bitterly opposed every time I challenge these Church-ridden souls with the word of Truth. Yet I know they are only asleep, and shall soon awake. They simply need a missionary. Islam is not known in the Island. Due to the very misleading and biassed writings of the author of our Second Year history in the High School, Islam is generally known by the students as a religion of the fire and the sword, but it takes me only a few minutes to prove to them its falsity. When I lent my friends my copies of the *Islamic Review* they became broad-minded, and this proves that the Fillipinos only need an agency to free them from fetters of the ignorance that the Spaniards have brought to our land.

The Fillipinos are generally Catholics, and are still swayed by the antiquated doctrines of Catholicism. I believe that through the educational forces of our era, it will not be long before they realize their position under present Christianity. Protestantism, brought by the Americans, who have invaded our land, has charmed thousands of the inhabitants. Though much more reformed than Catholicism, not unlike the latter, Dogma is its brand also.

I am heart and soul for Islam. I shall study it more to enable me to extend the rays of truth and light to my comrades. I believe it is the only religion that can bind conflicting nations into a solid

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brotherhood. I have never before felt the sweet and almost tangible feeling of Peace and Love, never before realized by my real duties to God and fellowmen.

I am looking ahead to that happy time when light will shine over the whole world with love overflowing in Humanity.

I am, Your Brother,
HABIB-UL-RAHMAN JUMALON.

PORTSMOUTH.

THE IMAM,

The Mosque, Woking.

DEAR SIR,

A friend of mine who has just returned to England after residing abroad for the past two years has informed me that he has embraced the Muhammadan faith. He is so enthusiastic about it that I, too, would like very much to know more than what he has already told me.

Will you please help me in this matter by sending me some literature dealing with the Muslim religion, and oblige?

Yours faithfully,
ERNEST J. BROMLEY.

WHY I AM A MUSLIM ?

BY HARRY E. HEINKEL.

In writing this statement it is not my intention to enter into a lengthy discourse of comparative religion, nor is it my desire to write a critique of the Islamic faith. Instead, I shall try to give a comprehensive explanatory statement as to why I am a Muslim.

My early religious training was in the Christian faith. This, however, was a matter of birth, not of choice—our early religious training is generally in the faith of our parents. Later in life our religion is usually accepted as a matter of fact. We, however, question and examine everything except our religious faith, particularly if it is Christianity.

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The Christian Bible, being the text-book of Christianity, is a book which I have read many a times. I doubt if there is a person who does not shudder while reading its pages, filled as they are with blood-curdling slaughter, rapine and destruction, along with its tales of incest, rape and other vile obscenity. Indeed, after reading the Bible one cannot help but wonder as to the nature of this God of the Christians.

Almost every Christian home contains the Bible, but it is generally used as a mantle-piece decoration. If it were the custom of the printer to deliver this book with its edges uncut, it would no doubt remain so for many years. Charles Francis Potter, D.D., in his book *The Story of Religion* wrote: "The Christian Bible may be 'the book nobody knows' in America, but the Koran is the book everybody reads in Islam." Yes, indeed, and it is an advantage to Christianity that the Bible is "the book nobody knows." The Bible was the first cause in leading me away from Christianity.

Having lost all interest in Christianity, I began a study of other world religions, as well as various "ologies" and "isms." All this was followed by agnosticism and atheism. However, there is, I believe, in mankind an innate certainty deeply rooted which persists in proclaiming the fact that there is a God, a Divine Creator, Master of the Universe. But not the God who glories in bloodshed, atrocities and sensuousness. It was this "innate certainty" which caused me to return to a further study of religion. I was particularly attracted to the Islamic faith because it is rational, devoid of obscenity, and it does not tax one's credulity.

I found that Islam appeals to one's reason; it does not contain the pessimism of Buddhism; it is not void of Divinity like Shintoism or Confucianism, nor is it a

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money-made religion. I found that it invites and encourages the pursuit of knowledge. The pages of history are filled with facts citing the hindrances which Christianity placed in the pathway of progress and civilization. It was a traditional saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad of Blessed Memory that "whoso pursueth the road of knowledge, Allah will direct him to the road of Paradise; verily the angels spread their arms to receive him who seeketh after knowledge; verily the superiority of a learned man over a mere worshipper is like that of the full moon over the stars." Joseph McCabe (an agnostic) in his book "Religious Controversy" wrote: "There is hardly a science which is not greatly indebted to the Mohammedans."

I do not hesitate to state that were Islam better known in the Western World, it would astound the civilized world by its gain in adherents. The reason why it is not better known is that it is with difficulty that one can obtain authorized or even unbiased literature pertaining to the Islamic faith. However, I am sure, time will rectify this condition.

In bringing this article to an end, I wish to state that I am very happy to add my voice to the millions who proclaim to the world *La ilaha il-Allah, Muhammad ur Rasul-Allah*—there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger.

THE BATTLE OF OHOD.

BY NAWAB WAHEED AHMAD KHAN.

The battle of Ohod was fought in the third year of the Hijra. It was a memorable battle, not from the point of view of its military operations, nor on account of its result, but because it brought into prominence one of those characteristics of the Prophet of Islam which his malignant critics

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have so cleverly tried to suppress, *viz.*, the kindness of his heart and his innate and intensive love for mankind.

The years preceding the Hijrat presented a very dark spectacle. A decade earlier darkness had been reigning supreme in the whole Universe—the clouds had been dense and the darkness intense. It had been well-nigh impossible for a wayfarer to steer his way clear off the scene. All the former Dispensations had either been forgotten or so altered as to have lost all their prestine beauty. There had remained nothing to lead mankind to its destined goal. Ignorance had throttled out all decent feelings in man. Degradation in all its forms and in all the spheres of human activity had been rife. Spiritual teachings had become extinct, moral precepts forgotten and social customs were maintained only to satisfy the desires of the brute in man.

Such had been the condition of the world when a voice from the desert of Arabia was raised to awaken the world from its long stupor. But instead of welcoming the invigorating sound, all kinds of obstacles were raised and efforts were made to suppress it. It was at first mocked at as the voice of a lunatic as if it were a cry in the wastnesses of a bleak and desolate wilderness. But, when it had braved all the mockery, ridicule and jeerings of a tenaciously ignorant people, the Arab idolators resolved upon shattering and destroying the very organism which was responsible for this healthy and refreshing vibration.

The incredibly small fraternity of reformers was subjected to those heart-rending and horrifying persecutions which this old world had never dreamt of. The messengers of peace were forcibly driven from their homes in a state of decrepitude, their goods were confiscated and their wives and children were either slain or left only to die of starvation. The Seekers of Truth were made to lie on the burning sand of the tropical Arabia, heavy

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and burning stones were placed on their backs :—but they faced all these barbarous tortures and beastly atrocities with courage and fortitude. This patience spurred the ferocity of the persecutors, lash after lash was administered on their bare and naked backs which had already been burnt by the red-hot stones, till blood gushed forth in streams and besmeared their clothes. How many poor but noble souls succumbed to these unheard of and unparalleled cruelties “is known only to Him Who keeps up the record until the ‘day when the Sea shall give up her dead’.”

But all these atrocious barbarities failed to crush a small band of sincere devotees to the new Call. Nay, their number steadily increased and, although driven from their homes, they made fresh converts at their place of refuge, *viz.*, the hospitable Medina.

How could then, the implacable enemies of Truth and Light sit quietly and watch the success of a cause which they had tried their best to nip in the bud ? Therefore, their wrath increased with a redoubled fury and made them resolute to extinguish, once and for all, the light then flickering, as it were, in the holy city of Medina. They had only a year and a half before been defeated at the hands of these very Muslims, whom they had scoffed, sneered and derided. The infidels, therefore, accumulated a great strength and marched to exterminate those whose only fault was to hold views different from their own. The peaceful Reformers preferring an honourable death on the field of battle to their being butchered like sheep and goats in their homes, had also come out in self-defence to meet the army of heretics against extraordinary odds.¹

It was a terrible day ! The armies of ignorance and the forces of darkness had conspired to put out the glimmer which was till then only a bright line amidst

¹ It is stated that the enemies were more than double the number of Muslims.

dense clouds. The worshippers of stones and trees had taken a vow to wipe out every vestige of the small monotheistic cult ; the barbarians who had formerly taken delight in perpetrating atrocities on the defenceless and poor Muslims of Mecca, now emboldened by the numerical strength of their forces, were eager to strike a final and decisive blow to the new creed of peace and kindness.

The battle began, and all the fury and wrath of the followers of heresy was concentrated towards one object and one alone, namely, the personality of the Holy Prophet (May peace of Allah be upon him), the taking of whose life was the primary, if not the exclusive, aim of their campaign. He was made the target of showers of arrows, thousands of lances were hurled at him, hundreds of swords flashed round his holy body and numerous stones were thrown at him. The result was that he was wounded, one of his teeth was broken and he fell down senseless. But when he recovered his consciousness he found the fire of war still raging with unabated fury, his devout followers standing by his side to save the life of one whom they held dearer than their own lives.

With many gushing wounds on his body, with blood flowing profusely from his mouth on account of the loss of his tooth, with the atrocities of the enemies fresh in his memory, with the profound sadness of a loving heart at the loss of his virtuous followers, with the corpses of many of his near relatives floating in blood lying before him, he lifted up his hands towards heavens and opened his trembling lips. And what he would say, every one could easily divine. Would he not invoke Divine wrath upon his implacable enemies—enemies, who had tried and were still trying to kill him, to assassinate him, to murder him or to shoot him ; enemies, who had killed his relatives and his devout comrades and were still killing those who

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had remained on the field of battle ; enemies, who had left no stone unturned in devising all possible means to exterminate his small party of truth-seekers ? But the words which escaped his sacred lips at that moment of natural fury, anger and sorrow shall ever shine forth as gems of unparalleled beauty and lustre, and shall always remain as landmarks in the history of mankind :—

“ O ! Lord—Guide my countrymen to the right path. They do not know Thy apostle. ”

The prayer is too eloquent to need any comment. It is pleading the cause of the enemies themselves. Can there possibly exist, within this frail body of man, a kinder heart ? He realised that the atrocities perpetrated by his enemies had reached a climax and that the Divine Law of vengeance was working against them, but he feared lest any of his words, coming as it would be from a sour and affected heart, might accelerate the operation of that law, which would mean their instantaneous annihilation. But this his gentle, kind and sympathetic heart could not allow. He tried as if to keep off Divine punishment by pleading that his enemies be spared for a time and excused because they did not know His apostle.

Consider the circumstances of the moment, the field of battle, the excesses of his enemies, the corpses of his devoted friends and relations, his own wounds, his bleeding mouth, etc., and then ponder over the above prayer. Can it come out from any other lips than those of one inspired ? Can the world point out to a kinder, a nobler and a gentler soul ?

And this is not the only instance of the manifestation of his kind and gentle nature. Examples can be multiplied in hundreds and thousands. But I would confine myself with mentioning only one such example. This was the occasion of the Conquest of Mecca. Everyone

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knows the deep-rooted enmity of the infidels towards the Holy Prophet and his creed. They had all along been thirsting for his blood. They had devised all means within their power to bring about the total annihilation of the new faith, they had severely persecuted him and his followers, they had hatched dangerous plots, they had made vicious alliances, they had led strong campaigns, they had fought bloody battles, they had hired people to assassinate him and had actually administered poison to him. But when those very enemies at the Conquest of Mecca were brought before him and were awaiting their well-deserved sentence, the treatment which was meted out to them is without any parallel in the history of all nations and all countries. Instead of taking any sort of vengeance the Holy Prophet proclaimed general amnesty, even to such enemies as had actually killed his own uncle Hamza.

How true are the words of Professor Ebrahim Khan (which I quote with slight variations) when he so correctly remarks : Thirteen centuries have passed but the example set by the unlettered Prophet of Islam still remains an ideal yet to be realised by the world !

PRECIOUS GEMS

Doing Justice between two men is Charity; and assisting a man upon his beast, and lifting his baggage, is Charity; and pure words in which he rewards and answers a questioner with mildness is Charity; and removing that which is inconvenient to man, such as thorns and stone, is Charity.

The planting of a tree or sowing a field from which men, birds and beasts eat, is a Charity.

Every good act is a Charity, and it is a good act to meet your brother with an open countenance, and to pour water from your own bag into his.

MUHAMMAD.

THE HOLY QUR-AN

AND ITS COMMENTARY

INTRODUCTION.

BY KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

(Continued from Vol. XX, page 204.)

CHAPTER V.

OUR EVOLUTIONARY JOURNEY.

Origin of Man.—In the first three verses of Chapter LXXXVI the Holy Qur-án traces our origin to the region of the stars which in the hours of darkness shed light which pierces its way through to the earth. The Book goes on to speak of Man's uprising from the sperma, but in Chapter XXIII (Sec. 1) it tells of the seven ways through which the said light comes to make the Earth pregnant with its contents. Water also comes from the clouds and penetrates the earth, helping to produce and nurture trees and cattle, which in their turn supply us with food containing all the constituents of protoplasm. Thus the sperma is created which when located in the womb of a woman enters into the embryonic world, where it receives flesh and blood as its equipment for what lies before it. On their completion, after some four months, something new is born which in the Qur-án is called *NAFS*.

Combination.—If combination is the chief process at work in everything in nature, from Emanation to Perfection, it follows that the ingredients of all things in every stage of their growth must differ from each other in their qualities, inasmuch as no one thing will mix with another to produce a new thing under the law of chemical combination, unless all these exhibit variety in properties. The Holy Book refers to this more explicitly when it says that everything in nature has its mate for the work of

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procreation. All are male or female.¹ This establishes to some degree the difference in their natures. The Book speaks of another wonderful phenomenon when it tells us that heaven and earth stand towards each other in the relation of male and female. The heavens, with everything in them have been evolved with activity,² while the earth, on the other hand, had been made receptive of their effects. How could matter, in the shape of the heavens, differ in its nature from the other form, that is to say, the Earth, unless it works in obedience to some will? Things otherwise permissible become forbidden if earned by unlawful means.

Sexual Instincts.—Their control is as essential as that of the stomach. When beyond control, sexual passions know no bounds. Men, women and animals—all are victimised indiscriminately. Even inanimate things are used to satisfy them; and this is more dangerous to health than any other unnatural practice; since it not only injures the sexual faculties but harms the powers of sight and of the brain.

We read of Sodom in ancient history and the curse under which it lay, but its sins are unfortunately repeated even now in our days in some centres of modern civilization. Some men of culture would not regard the practice as unnatural, for they maintain that there is a third species in our race, where man's love goes after man, and legislation should not, therefore, obstruct such love. The Qur-án refutes this fallacious logic in one word when it says:—"Women are your tilth." Besides condemning the practice the Book explains the object for which the instinct in dispute was given. It is not pleasure but some higher purpose, which brought our various instincts into existence, though pleasure indeed be the prime mover in the generality of cases. And such an alleviation of the

¹ 51 : 49, 13 : 3.

² 86 : 11-12.

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incidence of our various duties speaks eloquently of the Designer's wisdom. The procreation of species was the primary object of sexual instincts. If no ploughman would dream of sowing his seed in a land not meant for cultivation, no one should stoop to a practice that does not help towards bringing forth children ; and here woman is man's only partner. But the interests of the coming generation and their proper upbringing demand that the sexes should stand in matrimonial relations with each other, before they come together, and the fact of their marriage should be known : hence all concealed marriages are disallowed. But any and every female should not be brought into connubial relation. There are various things to be considered before a man marries a woman. For instance, it is incestuous to bring mothers, daughters and sisters into matrimonial connection, and the Holy Book puts ten other classes of women on the prohibition list.¹ All women married to others are forbidden for connubial purposes. Prostitution, temporary marriage, concubinage and paramours have been condemned. Though war-captivity terminates all former matrimonial relations existing between persons of hostile nations, yet a new master cannot share his bed with a female captive unless she be first made free, and then married according to the usage of the conquering race. Not only is fornication declared to be an indecency and evil, but even going nigh to it is forbidden. For the same reason women are asked to conceal their ornaments and their hair from the eye of strangers. In short, anything that might possibly excite the passions should be concealed. The use of the veil, as practiced in the East is not a religious ordinance. Local causes have commended the practice and sanctified it into a custom. The Book looks with disfavour on the promiscuous mingling of the two sexes which is often to

¹ 4 ; 23-25.

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be observed in the West. Staring at one of another sex is forbidden, and we have been clearly ordered to "guard all our holes." It is the beauty of the Book that though it deals on occasions with delicate subjects, yet it never violates the sense of decency in its choice of words. The last injunction though very euphemistic and concise is wide enough to bring the evil use of eyes, ears and mouth (tongue) also within its scope.

(To be continued.)

THE MESSAGE OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD TO EUROPE.

BY DR. H. MARCUS, PH. D.

(Continued from Vol. XX, page 239).

"Let us now look at the Muslim State and its organization during the leadership of the Holy Prophet (peace be with him!), and during that time in which the leaders acted strictly in accordance with the law of the Holy Prophet.

"In the early days of Islam there existed neither groups nor parties; on the contrary the State was the common organization of all Muslims, and everyone stood up for everyone else. It was only just for the individual Muslim to suffer if all Muslims were suffering. If the individual Muslim lived in good circumstances, he could be sure that all Muslims were in the same position, for the State saw to a just arrangement. This was made particularly obvious by a certain tax, which Muhammad introduced, the so-called "Zakat" or poor-rate. To pay this was one of the most binding religious obligations. In this way the "Zakat-rate" was a religious one, and it was at the same time a public and social system, for from this source of income the State of Muhammad derived the means by which the poor could get the organized, not the arbitrary or casual,

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help which Islam materialized for the first time in the history of mankind. The 'Zakat-rate' which the propertied classes paid for the benefit of those who were suffering shows that there was no preference in favour of separate circles and groups, but general social adjustment, and that this is the mark of distinction of the Moslem organization, which herewith proved to be a healthy and not a parasitic and egoistic organization.

"Now what about the leader of the State, the Holy Prophet himself (peace be on the messenger of God)? Just as the Muslim State is the reverse of a group of interests, Muhammad is the direct reverse of a party-politician in a typical frame. I should here like to dispel any existing prejudice. It is a mistake to think that religion and politics have nothing to do with each other, or that religion is only a tool in the hand of the politician whereby he may influence the masses. On the contrary, politics, as a German saying goes, easily corrupts the character of a human being, and therefore religion is used again and again as a means to put right the character of the politician and to prevent him from getting spoiled by politics. Religion reminds him constantly of the eternal aim of politics, which is not a low one, directed toward selfish advantage, but the loftiest imaginable,—the welfare of the whole community. That politician only, of whom it is known for a verity that he really serves the whole community, that is to say, the religious politician, can acquire such a well-founded authority that his adherents follow him even if he has, at times, to take unpopular measures. This is the supreme proof of the value of a politically trained human being; his followers forsake a party politician, the moment he makes unpopular demands upon them, while they remain true to the religious politician in spite of such demands.

"Muhammad (peace be with him!) is himself the best proof of the correctness of these assertions. His followers,

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at the beginning, only a few dozen in number, but destined to increase so as comprise a whole nation, would not have selected this holy man as their leader for him to bow to the will of the ignorant masses, but rather that he should lead them, lead them on to the 'right road,' the road to God. What did God command? God commanded him to act in such a way as would benefit the whole nation, nay, the whole of humanity, and last, but not least, each individual creature. Such action sometimes demanded burdensome sacrifices, not only from the messenger of God himself, but also from each individual follower of his. Muhammad, indeed, had often to demand burdensome sacrifices from his companions. One only needs to remember the battles of Badr and Uhah. How joyfully did his companions obey his commands. Muhammad often had to act in a manner very different from that which his adherents would have preferred at the moment, but they gladly yielded to his demands, for they knew that the Holy Prophet (peace be with him!) never lost sight of the welfare of the whole, the welfare of the State, the welfare of humanity, and his authority was such that his adherents willingly accepted and carried through even his unpopular measures, as, for example, that amicable agreement he concluded at the end of his career, with the Quraish, which at the moment looked like a defeat of Islam and yet turned out to be its most beautiful victory.

"Muhammad (peace be with him !) is, therefore, the symbol of the religious politician, the politician as he should be in contrast to the party-politician, who at present holds sway in Europe. The party-politician cares for the selfish interests of his group and always looks back to that group for approval. The religious politician looked to the interest of the whole nation, the whole of humanity, and he follows God's supreme law, the law of love towards all creatures. The party-politician obeys those who have

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chosen him and allows himself to be led by them. The religious politician leads those who have elected him, and by his authority obtains their obedience. There are in the Europe of to-day in all leading positions party-politicians. Perhaps they have got their position by the help of a group to which they are, therefore, indebted ; perhaps, they are mentally too closely connected with their nearest sphere of interests, and cannot look beyond its limits because their horizon is not wide enough. If the large banks of the gold centres constantly lent money to the nations, which were weakened by the war, and if the banks of the weakened nations took much more money on loan than they ought to have taken in the interests of a thrifty world-economy, then these directors of the banks only thought of the advantages which the banks would derive from their credits during an otherwise stagnant time of business. That was quite comprehensible, but, nevertheless, a case of thinking too narrowly and only of individual benefits. If they, on the other hand, had taken into consideration the well-being of the whole of humanity, and had thought far ahead, they would have kept these credits within their necessary limits and Europe would not now be going through this terrible crisis of credit, which has also hit the guilty banks themselves. What, on the other hand, did Abu Bekr—a very reserved but in the highest sense honourable man—say about 1,300 years ago, when he was selected to be the successor of the Holy Prophet? He said : ‘My good people, support me if I do what is right, but put me on the right track when I err. Obey me, if I obey the Allah and the Prophet, but do not obey me if I am disobedient.’ Putting it plainly it means : you shall obey me if I act as a religious politician and take into consideration the well-being of the whole nation, nay, of the whole of humanity according to the command of God and the instructions of the Prophet ; but refuse to follow me if I turn away from this

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road and lapse into the narrow route of party-politics. If Europe had had more religious politicians of the type of the Holy Prophet (peace be with him !), according to the ideal of Abu Bekr, instead of its party-politicians, it could speedily have removed the terrible crisis of the present-day."

The *Guest* : " I cannot but admit that you are right, and I shall very carefully consider your words, which do not only represent your personal opinion but the mighty thousand-year-old voice of Islam itself. But let me speak from the bottom of my heart. As far as I can see there are other centres of crisis in Europe over and above those mentioned ; they exist with regard to a number of special questions of culture. There is, for instance, the completely antiquated position of marriage in Europe, there is also much that is quite out of date in public opinion, in racial prejudices, in criminal law and in education. These, however, are all spheres which were, to a great extent, under the influence of the Church and which are not yet completely free from that influence. I, therefore, ask myself—Is it not perhaps a tragedy of all religions that their great teachers proclaim laws, which at first assist the world's progress immensely ; but during the centuries following their death the conditions change so completely that the same laws, which formerly helped humanity to advance, now hinder and cripple progress. These laws then lead to the fossilizing of culture. Such fossilized laws still influence Europe to a great extent ; they hinder its progress by the ballast of a millennium and do so in fatal contrast to the rapid development of life's conditions. You will see by my confession that we Europeans do not as yet lack the courage of self-criticism. Is it not quite reasonable that such a severe crisis should make us critical of ourselves ? I, however, ask myself now : " Does Islam stand more solidly in this respect ? "

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The *Muslim*: "I can assure you, my friend, Islam, the youngest and last of the great world religions, will never become fossilized, for the Holy Prophet (peace be with him !) had already thought of such a change and had taken a very decided step to prevent it, which will surprise you. One of his most beautiful sayings shows how he proceeded with regard to this question with: 'The wrangle of opinions is the grace of God,' for is it not this difference of opinion which prevents any fossilization, any formation of unchangeable dogmas and opens out a way for progress? We learn to use our common sense in these differences of opinion, and so new aspects of the truth come to light. Differences of opinions make clear what is right and unassailable among our spiritual possessions, and what is assailable and fragile. This is the reason why progress lives by the differences of opinions. In the former religions, however, one opinion only is tolerated, which hardens into dogmatic fossilization, and differences of opinion are absolutely forbidden. Herein lies the fundamental difference between the Prophet of the scientific age, Muhammad, and the former religious systems. I have characterized with pleasure the Holy Prophet (peace be with him !) as the knight among the messengers of God. This view is confirmed again by the above. The Holy Prophet is also a knight of the spirit, he does not fear the spiritual fight, and he does not need to tremble for its truths; for they can only establish themselves more securely by this wrestling.

"You can see incidentally from the words of the Prophet quoted above, what is equal to a revolution in religious life. How many results, fraught with blessings, can radiate from a single quotation. Does not the sentence about differences of opinions also sanction freedom of opinion, and is not freedom of opinion the same thing as tolerance? It is the same tolerance, which speaks to us

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in the following words of the Qur-án: "In religion let there be known no compulsion." Does not tolerance, on the other hand, mean peace and friendship, so that one can dwell comfortably and at ease in the tent of Islam? And is not the fact that every one may freely express the opinion of the heart a democratic feature of Islam—again a modern characteristic?

"But let us get to the main thing: The Holy Prophet (peace be with him!) proclaims emphatically, that each century will produce a reformer, who will harmonize the eternal truths of the Divine Revelation with the conditions existing in his time. He will lead mankind back to pure morality, if they have departed from it, and he will show how the new questions and problems, which arise at all times, can be solved according to the eternal word of God; for is it not the eternal truth which is outstripped in time by the thinking humanity, but only that chaos of interpretations and prejudice, which gradually accumulates in every religion. To remove these the Holy Prophet proclaims an indefinite series of future reformers. Praise and glory be to Muhammad, who looked so far ahead. For if we speak of world-religion we think, as a rule, only of its spatial expanse across the whole length and breadth of the globe, not of the changing times and their needs. Islam, as the religion of eternal self-renewal, is not only valid for all space but for all time.

"Discussing progress in Islam we must not forget that Islam already carries within itself the conception of development which Europe only discovered fully a thousand years later, and which is almost identical with the idea of progress. Development is an inner progress, the thought of development is, however, contained in the words of the Qur-án, that the human being already prepares by its own deeds its paradise and hell in this life. For whatever the human being does, arises out of that which it produces

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from its instinct and the gifts with which nature has provided it and the manner in which these are developed. This again is an example of how Islam leads us on the "right way," the middle course, which is equally distinct from the extremes. An extreme is exemplified in the unbridled state of sensuality and spiritual drift which we find among the uncivilized nations, and also among the decadent populace of the cities of Europe, which cannot deny itself any pleasure. Christianity also demands an extreme, which, on the contrary, seeks to exterminate human nature and its sensual passions. Islam stands in the midst. It does not permit the natural passions to grow rankly, nor does it allow them to wither away. Islam bids us to develop our passions and gifts and, at the same time, to curb them and keep them in check, so that they may be beneficial to ourselves and to others. In the curbed self-expansion of our nature and in the blessings which results therefrom for us personally lies the true self-complacency, of which Islam approves. This self-complacency, however, does not stand in contrast to, but in harmony with, charity, for our completely developed and yet controlled gifts are also of use to others. But the solution which Islam offers by demanding that we must think of ourselves and at the same time of others, and that we must develop our passions and at the same time curb them, is not so simple as the thesis 'one must think only of one-self,' and the counter-thesis 'one must think only of other people.' How nearly, however, does it with this highly intellectual contemplation approach to the demands of real life? For have we not to consider our own interests, and the interests of others, in all conditions of life, and are not strong and yet curbed passions necessary everywhere? Think of the connection between human beings which occurs to us most readily, the marriage-tie. The foundation of every good marriage is this, that both parties show the greatest love to

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each other and yet keep a constant self-restraint towards each other. This is the only way in which a harmonious and, for the husband as well as the wife, equally happy companionship in life is possible."

The *Guest*: "In this way we arrive automatically at the most important problems which form a part of the European crisis. Of these the problem of marriage is the most pressing. You know that Christianity really does not even recognize marriage, but demands of the human being complete abstemiousness and monastic renunciation."

The *Muslim*: "Surely, surely. But demands which are too high often cause the contrary of what is intended, for they discourage the human being, who then, in his despondency, allows himself to drift. Remember, in this connection, that the ascetics especially are open to the greatest temptations, and many of them sin secretly. That, however, is not the desire of the Holy Prophet (peace be with him !), for complete asceticism is to him an ideal which lies far away and secluded from the world. He on his part considers that the human being needs love and not too little of it, as otherwise its soul withers away or surrenders secretly to vices ; but also not too much of it, for the soul becomes dull and at the same time sensual through an excess of love. For this reason the Holy Prophet admits at the outset that marriage is the true centre between the too little and too much, which he is seeking everywhere, because it is the best for humanity on this earth."

The *Christian*: "Marriage has in the end also found recognition from Christianity, but with an unrelentingly stern, nay, an extreme feature, which takes the form of a lifelong indissoluble tying-down from which there is no escape. By this ideal sternness it becomes again, like asceticism, the source of immorality, for even if the

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feeling of love is quite extinct, it yet compels the husband and wife to continue a union which has become unnatural, and the Christian, that is to say, the European human being is led astray and looks elsewhere for compensation for all love has refused to him in married life. Here you have again a centre of a crisis, which we call in Europe a marriage or sexual crisis."

The *Muslim* : "The Holy Prophet also steers a middle course on the marriage question, a course which leads close to life instead of being, as it were, suspended above humanity like a brazen sign—a relentless warning. The Prophet (peace be with him !) shows the way in which all possible eventualities of the daily life are taken into consideration. Human beings should really be able to act according to his teachings, and need not talk in one way while they act in another. For this reason the Holy Prophet tries first to cure an unhappy marriage. How ? As a mature person—a legislator should not be an enthusiastic youth—he knows that even a marriage can be heavily burdened by the imperfections of those by whom it is contracted. More than that, he pictures to himself, that the human being inclines to see among his possessions only that which is not as he would like it to be. Therefore, husband and wife often only discover each other's faults, and the result is an interminable dispute, or the disappointed husband or wife drops the objects of his or her former love altogether and looks for another person, more likely to come up to his or her expectations. He or she will, however, never find such a person, seeing that such a person does not exist. All beings have their good and bad points ; and we blindly take the good ones, which enrich our life, as a matter of course, and only see the faults. The Holy Prophet opens our eyes to the reverse view of the world with the following words : "If you do not like a certain characteristic of your wife, then look instead on another characteristic you like."

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Forget what is wanting by looking to the excellent point. By this single instruction, I think, a great many unhappy marriages can be cured. Europe should, therefore, give heed to these words also with regard to its marriage crisis. For him who follows this advice, his companion suddenly appears beautiful, although she has just provoked him, nay, the whole of life becomes more beautiful if we look at its bright side and thereby forget the dark side. It is worth our while to follow the words of the Prophet, for thereby we gain paradise on earth."

The *Christian* : " But what will happen if the marriage is so unhappy that there is no remedy ?"

The *Muslim* : " The Holy Prophet, in such a case, orders at first a short separation, and if this step does not bring husband and wife back to each other, he does not forbid a divorce. What does the Holy Prophet (peace be with him !), however, say, about the divorce ? ' Verily, of all permitted things divorce is the most detestable one.' Where can one find such a beautifully balanced sentence in any of the other religions ? Christianity decrees either " yes or no " and with regard to divorce " no." Christianity vouchsafes no limited permission, nor does it take exceptions into consideration. Muhammad (peace be with him !) is the first Prophet who does take exceptions into consideration, and thereby comes into close contact with life. One can really live, if one acts according to these words of the Qur-án, for, to be sure, husband and wife should live together as long as it is possible. Matrimony is holy to the Muslim also, and he avoids a divorce as far as possible. Yet, at the same time, if it must come to a divorce, then it is one of the extreme cases in which permission is granted. Is this regulation not well-thought out, wise and valid for all times ?"

(*To be continued.*)

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teaching. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, i.e., the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-ÂN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-ân. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-ân, the last book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) angels; (3) books from God; (4) messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fas'ing; (4) Almsgiving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of all the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual, and moral attainment. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches, and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

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