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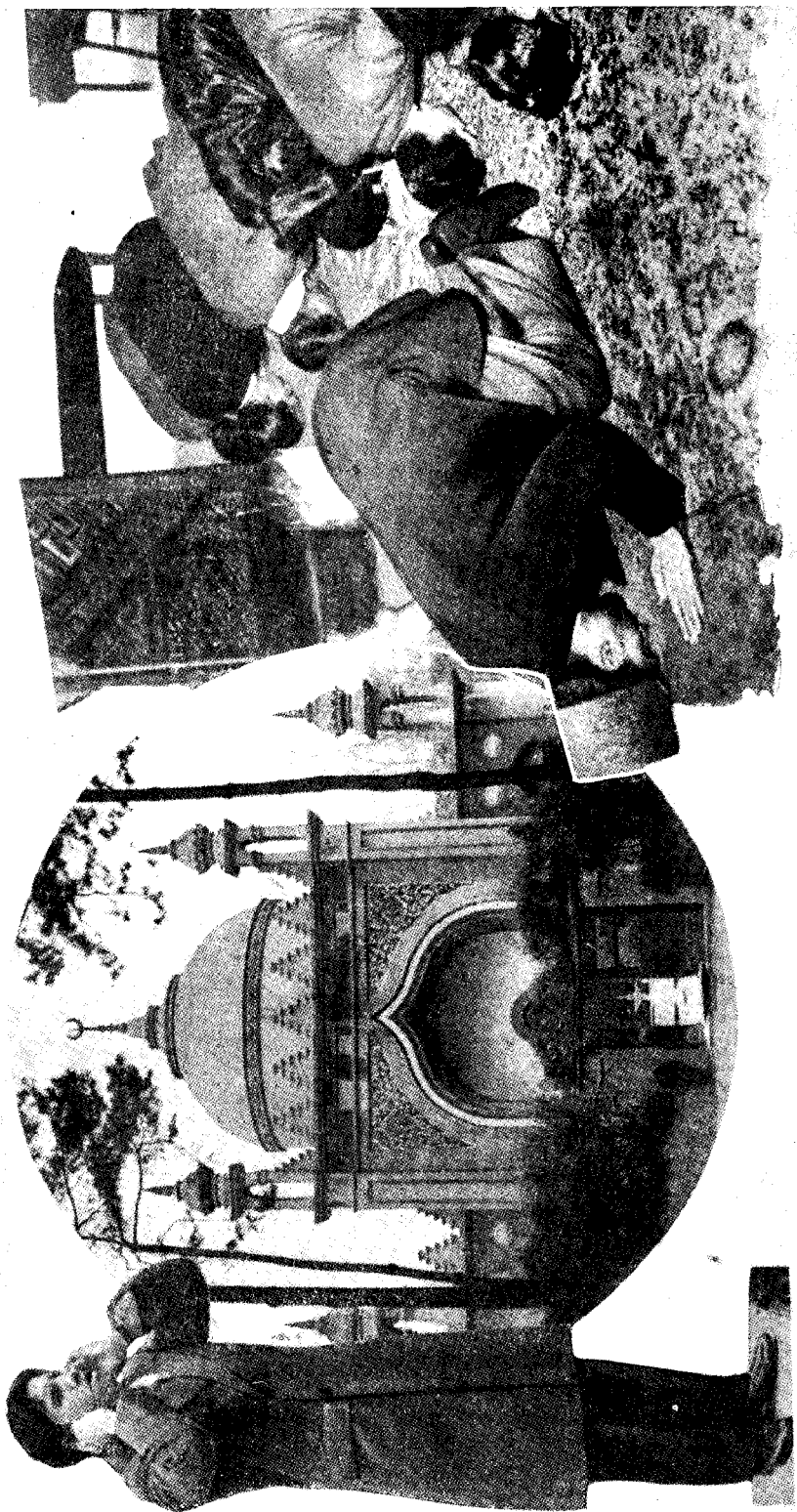
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“ THE MEUZZIN'S CALL TO PRAYER at the weekly service at the Islamic Mosque (*centre*) at Woking. (*Right*) The Deputy Imam Aftab-ud din Ahmad leading the prayers in the mosque, bowing towards Mecca. An English woman Moslem is seen among those who were at the service yesterday.”

A reproduction of a picture of the Friday Prayers at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, from the *Daily Express*, London.

[Photo : Courtesy, *The Daily Express*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
نُحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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MUHARRAM 1351 A. H.

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## MUSLIMS WORSHIP IN AN ENGLISH TOWN.<sup>1</sup>

Allah-u-Akbar ! Allah-u-Akbar ! Allah-u-Akbar !  
Allah-u-Akkbar !

A black-haired youth in a lounge suit stood on the edge of a fountain in a garden at Woking yesterday and, placing his hands against his ears to shut out all communication with the outer world, intoned these words in a loud penetrating voice : “ Allah-u-Akbar !—Allah-u-Akbar ! ”

He was the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer.

“ Allah is the Greatest—Allah is the Greatest ! ”

And then, still in the Arabic : “ I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped but Allah ! ”

As he stood and called to the faithful he was unmindful of the engineering works to his left, of the railway trains screeching behind him. He stood before a beautiful, if diminutive, mosque, with minarets all faced with blue and gold, with an arabesque doorway, and, above all, a gilded dome and the Crescent of Muslim.

<sup>1</sup> The “ Daily Express,” February 27, 1932.

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As the muezzin had no objection to others beside the faithful entering the mosque, I joined the company. The Imam deputising for the day rose without ceremony. He was in correct morning dress, and wore a dark-coloured sheepskin fez. Private prayers had begun. There was deadly quiet. The Imam, with his back to the followers and looking towards Mecca, was deep in contemplation and wordless petition. Now he raised his hands in supplication. Now he sank on his knees and bowed his head on the carpet. One after another the other worshippers joined him. Nobody spoke. There was presently a sermon from a text in the Qur-án. It was to the effect that no dead thing, but only the living, can create interest in the mind of man.

The application to this was (a) that Islam was no dead thing, but alive; (b) that being so, though attempts had been made to crush Islam, the religion still persisted. The Imam traced the attitude of medieval history towards Mohammedanism, and came suddenly to the Bishop James controversy that has recently taken place in the "Evening Standard," especially concerning Mohammedanism. The Imam took strong exception to a statement that had been made to the effect that the position of Mohammedan women was "deplorable." "It was Islam, he cried, that gave a position to women. It was Muhammad who gave women a share in inheritance; it was he who made the defending of women's honour a part of human character." "Chivalry had its birth in Islam, Chivalry was not known in the world till that time."

The sermon was ended. More prayers—this time altogether. The Muslim women joined now. "As-salaamu-alaikum wa rahmatullah-i" (peace be with you and the mercy of Allah). All the worshippers turn their heads to the right, then to the left. The gesture means that the prayer for peace embraces the whole world on either hand.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSLIM FESTIVALS AT WOKING TO NON-MUSLIMS.

BY HORACE LEAF, F.R.G.S.

The student of comparative religion is in grave danger of being misled if he relies solely on the opinions of the so-called experts. Religious prejudice always affects the pen, and it is doubtful if anyone who has written about alien faiths has avoided misrepresenting them. Personal investigation of different religions will reveal this.

Islam has probably suffered more from misrepresentation than any other religion, and I must confess to having been among the misunderstanding. My visit to Woking to take part in the Muslim Festival of Eid-ul-Fitr taught me more about Islam than all my reading had done.

When my old friend, Mr. J. W. Lovegrove (Habeeb-Ullah) became a member of that faith, I felt somewhat shocked and decidedly amused. Up to then I had regarded him as a capable man of business with a decided penchant for religion, of good morals and sound judgment. His glowing description of his new religion I attributed to the enthusiasm of a young convert, who was so enamoured of Islam that he had failed to see its defects. This I fear is nearly always the attitude of the average Westerner towards the members of that faith; nevertheless, I had to admit that his conversion in no way lessened his virtues, whilst they certainly seemed to bring to him a greater satisfaction with life. His repeated: "Come and see for yourself," I rejected with a smile and the excuse that I was too busy. The fact is, I did not want to waste my time.

Nothing could have convinced me, I thought, that any religion really believed in the equality of man, although some of them professed that they did. Repeated visits to churches and chapels had shown me that social distinctions are just as pronounced inside of them as out, and I felt sure that it would be similar in a mosque.

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It therefore came as a genuine surprise when I observed what appeared to be a sense of absolute equality prevailing among the Muslims at the Festival of Eid-ul-Fitr. All classes and races intermingled with a freedom that could be adequately described as brotherly. This I had never witnessed at any other religious gathering. Native seamen from Mombasa embraced without diffidence business men from Egypt and politicians from Arabia ! Celebrities of all kinds knelt humbly in prayer in line with whoever chance placed beside them. There was no scrambling for special places simply because there were none. Before Allah all men were equal. He loved them all alike.

It was thoroughly enjoyable to chat with strangers from across the sea without any feeling of restraint of social diffidence, and showed that religion can be a means of breaking down the greatest barriers separating man from man. I shall always remember the friendly embraces that I shared with kindly Muslims, who never even asked whether I was of their faith.

All this paved the way for the enlightened discourse of Mr. Abdul Majid, M.A., Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque. It pleased and surprised me. I expected to hear a fanatical exhortation to the faithful to keep to the faith, an insistence on Islam being the One True Religion, Muhammad the Only True Prophet, the Qur-án the Only Book that God had given to mankind. Instead of which I listened to a well-reasoned, tolerant and sympathetic address in which stress was laid on the fact that all the great prophets were messengers from Allah. The comparison which the Imam drew between Islam and Christianity seemed to be so just that I felt that I had long been unconsciously a member of his faith. It was all delightfully unique.

It brought to my mind a sermon that I had heard preached by a Church of England clergyman on a P. & O.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSLIM FESTIVALS

liner between India and Ceylon : an impudent diatribe against all other religions and prophets except those of the Old Testament and Jesus. His frequent reference to the "heathens" who did not accept his narrow creed, was made within the hearing of several of them. Their only hope of salvation, he assured them, was the abandonment of their ancient faiths for Christianity. Ill-mannered and intolerant as the sermon was, I regarded it as characteristic of all religionists towards those of other faiths.

When the Imam declared that Muslims believed in the divine mission of the founders of other religions, I could hardly believe my ears. This was the second great discovery that I made about Islam. For the first time I realised that it had the elements of a universal appeal.

Christianity has always lacked several essentials. Jesus spoke too often in general terms, too seldom with specific directness. He left unsaid many things which could have helped the Western world in its struggle for progress. His silence led to much misunderstanding. Among these defects were his relative silence on the equality of the sexes, man's duty to lower animals, and on science and the arts.

The Imam's remarks on these points encouraged me to read some of the sayings of Muhammad, and I was surprised to find that he dealt with these and similar questions so specifically, that the believer could not remain in doubt.

I am not a Muslim and may, therefore, be excused for viewing the teachings of Muhammad from a "rational" point of view. His sayings impress one as being eminently sane, and so definite that it is quite understandable that civic codes should be based upon them. This never has been done with the teachings of Jesus.

The Imam dealt in his comparisons with a justness and sympathy which revealed a generosity of mind towards



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Christianity, which Christianity never has shown towards Islam.

When attending religious services I always, as far as possible, participate in the worship out of respect for the worshippers. In this way one may be better able to appreciate the spirit of the devotees. The simple devotion of the Muslims impressed me because of its sincerity and wholeheartedness. The total absence of ritual laid the whole stress of the proceedings upon the worshippers, and enabled each one to enter into them with his heart and mind.

The lines of men and women bowing to the chanting of the Imam, seemed to plunge them right into the centre of true religious worship, and all must have felt spiritually uplifted. A religion of such simplicity must be a religion of great sincerity.

The social side of Islam was charmingly demonstrated by the friendly intercourse between the worshippers before the prayers and at the simple feast afterwards. Islam is obviously a religion of good fellowship and sound commonsense. With this firm conviction I returned to London.

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### THE HOLY QUR-ÁN AND THE BIBLE.

By K. KUDOS.

The question has often been asked as to why the Holy Qur-án refers only to the Jewish scriptures. It is urged that if it was meant as a guidance for the whole world, then it should have also referred to the other revealed books. The answer is very simple and not far to seek. It is furnished by the Holy Qur-án itself.

The Book is neither a treatise on Ritualism, like the Rigveda—the Hindu Sacred Book, nor a tribal record like the Bible. It deals with ceremonial religion, but it

## THE HOLY QUR-AN AND THE BIBLE

minimises<sup>1</sup> its importance, and speaks of it as a means to attain higher ends. It is intended to bring righteousness to the worshipper. It narrates certain historical events, but with a purpose. It refers to the history of the Israelites in its pages. The Jews, in those days, were the only nation in the whole world who possessed a history in black and white. The world had seen many religions and civilizations before Islam, but the authentic writing of history was a thing nearly unknown in pre-Islamic days. Even modern discoveries have failed to find out any recorded history of the ancient people. The Qur-án, therefore, could not refer to the history of any other nation to serve its purposes, which were as follows :—

(a) The Book intended to elucidate some of its tenets by referring to certain points. For instance, it sought to convince those around the Holy Prophet in the days of adversity, that his mission would meet with success, just as all Messengers from God had succeeded in the end to the discomfiture of their adversaries. For this reason the Book repeatedly made reference to Moses and Pharaoh. It also spoke of the success of other prophets<sup>2</sup> in the face of opposition. The Book purposely avoids the account of many ordinary things in their life-story as not possessing any practical moral for a reader. The Qur-án is not a book of stories but a Book of wisdom and morals.

On the other hand, it gives a detailed account of Joseph, but his story has been the subject of infinite moralizing. Joseph had his enemies among his brethren ; he was betrayed by them and had to face many hardships. But he achieved unique success afterwards, when he saw his brethren at his feet. The arch-enemies of the Arabian Prophet were also his near relatives. The chapter dealing with Joseph in the Qur-án was revealed at a time when

<sup>1</sup> 2 : 177.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapters Jonah, Hud, Joseph and Abraham.

those enemies were trying their utmost to make an end of the Prophet. Friends and foes then asked him as to what was to be the final outcome of the situation. The Revelation came therefore to declare that there was a reply<sup>1</sup> to such inquirers in the story of Joseph. Like the other sons of Jacob, the brethren of the Prophet would one day be also at his mercy. The day came and the Prophet found the enemy in terror of a severe retribution from him for their savage oppression of him and his followers, but he informed them that they would receive the same treatment at his hand that Joseph's brethren had from their brother.<sup>2</sup>

(b) The Judaic Scripture, though passing as a Revealed Book, has not remained free from errors and inaccuracies. The Bible contained many inaccurate records, and these the Arabian Revelation came to correct. Reference may here be made to one of such events, *viz.*, that of the drowning of Pharaoh; similarly, we read that Aaron joined with his people in worshipping the calf in spite of Moses, who made them drink the water in which the ashes of the burnt calf had been mixed. All this is a fiction and the Qur-án contradicts it.

(c) The Bible gives a most unworthy account of the various prophets of God. Many of those who came to walk humbly with the Lord as His Messenger and mouthpiece, have been shown as cutting a despicable figure. But this was all a defamation from the hostile pen of writers who either bore malice against some of the patriarchs, like David and Solomon, or sought to vilify the prophet's descendants, as in the case of the Moabites. Even a patriarch like Abraham was not spared, who, they say, was a liar. The same thing is said about Joseph. Then there is Lot under the influence of wine, as the Bible records, misconducting himself with his own

<sup>1</sup> 12: 7.

<sup>2</sup> 12: 92.

## THE HOLY QUR-AN AND THE BIBLE

daughters. Noah, instead of giving thanks unto the Lord, got drunk soon after he was delivered from the Flood. David sacrificed his piety at the altar of an unholy passion. Solomon, as depicted in the Bible, seems to be rather an indulgent poet than a prophet. The Judaic Scriptures contain scurrilous libels on the memory of this righteous class, as the Last Book of God said, and the Book came to clear their sacred names<sup>1</sup> from all the calumnies heaped upon them.

(d) The Bible gives a most unscientific account of the creation of the heaven and the earth in the Book of Genesis. Let the Fundamentalist say what he will, but science has confirmed the Qur-án in this respect.

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### ISLAM AND SOCIALISM.

BY IBRAHEEM A. HAYES, B.A.

Socialism in the West is the outcome of hatred which took deep roots in the minds of the down-trodden proletariat against the tyrannical Capitalists. The Capitalist being in power, the Church, as usual, sided with them and ignored all supplications of the working classes to help them better their conditions. Gradually to the Socialists Christianity and Capitalism appeared to be convertible terms, and the Socialists became antagonistic to religion. In this attitude they were justified to a great extent for they knew only of the religion of Church—not even of the true religion of Jesus. No religion that they knew of had solved the problem to their satisfaction. Being born in Western countries they could hardly expect any relief from Islam, for little they knew of Islam was through Christian sources. To the Socialists, therefore, the destruction of every religion became part of their creed. Little did they know that Islam taught true Socialism. But the veil is gradually being lifted and they are realising that Islam,

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án; 6:85. 12:46. 19:41.

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and Islam alone, has laid down principles through which real Socialism—not as prevailing in Russia to-day—can save the world. A few examples would be sufficient to prove this assertion.

It was Muhammad who by his judicious laws of inheritance made the existence of territorial magnates or a line of multi-millionaires impossible. Every property of a deceased Musalman is divided into shares, there being no system of primogeniture in Islam. The property does not descend to any single heir either male or female, but to all the relatives of a deceased person. The wife gets a substantial share and in some cases even the parents of the wife. No person can devise more than one-third of his property either to a relation or to an outsider. But endowments to public or charitable purposes of the whole property have been freely allowed and encouraged under the name of *wagf*. The policy of the great Legislator of Arabia was to divide wealth and property in the country as evenly as possible and thus to create equality in social status of all citizens, and to afford to all equal opportunities. With this object in view, Islam also made it legally incumbent upon the rich to give over to the national fund or to the deserving poor at least  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of their annual income. Socialism in Islam has gone even to this extent that when a man leaves his field fallow for some time his neighbour acquires a right to cultivate it as public property. On the principle that all human beings are brothers, and should help one another in need, Islam interdicted usury. This interdiction stimulates the spirit of commerce, industry, labour and thrift, discourages the hoarding of money in banks and makes the existence of Shylocks, which has always been baneful to the happiness of society, an impossibility. It was also a decided set-back to Capitalism when even no private individual was allowed to lend money on interest and become a Capitalist. Money and other things

## ISLAM AND SOCIALISM

also could be lent without interest, and the remission of debts was advocated by the Qur-án in these words :—

Deal not unjustly with others and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly. If there be any (debtor) hard pressed, he should be given time until he gets into easy circumstances ; but if ye remit (the debt) as alms, it will be better for you if ye knew it.

Hoarding of money was also interdicted by the Qur-án thus :—

O believers ! of a truth, many of the teachers and monks do devour men's substance in vanity and turn them from the way of God. But to those who treasure up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God, announce tidings of a grievous torment.

Islam has strictly forbidden its adherents to gamble or indulge in any games of chance, and the underlying idea of this prohibition seems to be to make it impossible for any individual to get rich at the expense of his less fortunate brother. Muhammad made monopoly unlawful in Islam and did not leave even ' corner ' makers without a warning when he said :—

The bringers of grain to the city to sell at cheap rate gain immense advantage from it, and whoso keepeth back grain in order to sell it at a high rate is cursed.

The Christian civilization, had it accepted Islam as its beacon light, would have been surely saved the curse of monopoly which is the negation of the very elementary principles of equality on which the sacred foundations of rights are based. Islam recognized that monopoly was another way of helping in the making of the few magnates at the sacrifice of the interests of the rest of society. Muhammad said : " Whosoever monopolizes is a sinner." European civilization whose wet-nurse is the so-called religion of Christianity, has developed the present worm-eaten top-heavy superstructure, whose magnificence and grandeur rests on its being nurtured continuously on the blood of the weaker nations of the world. Had it accepted Islam as its basis, it would have succeeded in effecting a true balance

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between what a man is and what he ought to be through the institution of *Zakat* about which Gibbon remarks :—

Mohamed, perhaps, is the only law-giver who has defined the precise measure of charity : the standard may vary with the degree and nature of property, as it consists either in money, in corn or cattle, in fruits or merchandise, but the Mussalman does not accomplish the law, unless he bestows a *Tenth* of his revenue in charity.....

To live up to real Socialistic ideas it is necessary that we should be ready to make sacrifice. In this materialistic world we cannot expect any one making a sacrifice without benefitting himself first in one form or another. Charity begins at home. Such is our mentality. But Islam, and Islam alone, provides the incentive which can induce true believers to make sacrifices, to share their wealth with others, for the pleasure of Allah and a reward in the Hereafter.

Let this brief and humble contribution be deeply considered, and perhaps Socialism, which is doomed to be extinguished, may yet revive on a true and solid basis and save the world from the clutches of atheism and anarchy.

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### ISLAM AND LIBRARY MOVEMENT.

BY A. HAMEED HASAN, B.A., LL.B. (ALIG.).

It is to be deeply regretted that the Muslims, who were once foremost in establishing and patronizing public libraries in their dominions and the countries under their rule, have not yet taken a prominent part in popularizing the Library Movement among Muslim masses. Economic distress is mainly responsible for their lack of attention to this. In this short article I propose to give a brief historical sketch of the genesis and growth of the private and public libraries under Islam. The Muslims are renowned for original works and translations, collection and preservation of literary treasures of the world which came into their hands. Literacy made the greatest progress under Muslim Rule, because illiteracy and Islam are antagonistic to one

## ISLAM AND LIBRARY MOVEMENT

another, and can never be reconciled and welded together. It is not perhaps generally known that the innumerable libraries and seminaries that cropped up during the centuries of the heyday of Islamic glory have not yet been surpassed by the surprising growth of the homes of learning under the civilized administrations of the modern world.

When the world was enveloped in darkness and illiteracy, Arabia was a cradle of knowledge. Poetry became a popular and favourite hobby of the Arabs of the desert. With the extension of the Arabian trade, which was carried far and wide, the Arab merchants, coming in contact with the learned peoples of India and China, were imbued with a desire to spread literacy throughout the length and breadth of Arabia. After the advent of the Holy Prophet even Muslim women became literate and learned in the arts and sciences of the day. The Holy Qur-án revolutionized the Arabian mind. The Book was not only committed to memory by hundreds of devout Muslims, but was committed to writing as well. The Hadith also became very popular and thoroughly known to the masses.

During the days of the first Four Caliphs literacy made further progress, and books on various subjects were collected. When Amīr Mu'āwiyah ascended the throne of Damascus, one Christian physician, Ibn 'Asl, entered the service of the Caliph Mu'āwiyah who liked and patronized him very much. Ibn 'Asl translated into Arabic many books on medicine which were the first acquisitions to the Arabic language. Since then translations from Greek, Pehlavi and Sanskrit into Arabic became common.

Although it is not yet known as to who was the first Muslim who brought all these books together in the shape of a library, yet one thing is certain that the reading of books appealed to the learned who sought out books from



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far and wide and collected and kept them as valuable treasures. The great Indian scholar, Shibli, on page 23 of his *Rasā'il* says: "Ibn Abī Asibah has written a sketch of Hakim Masarjūya in *Tabaqāt u'l-Attiba* that 'Umar bin Abdu'l-Azīz found in *Khazan-u'l-Kutab*, a book of Masarjūya translated into Arabic from Hebrew and had several copies made therefrom." Shibli is of opinion that Khālid bin Yazīd bin Mu'āwiyah was the first (Muslim) who established libraries.

Allāma Ibn Nadīm speaks of Khālid bin Yazīd as Hakim (learned scholar). Khālid was an enlightened scholar, and patronized learning very liberally. He gathered round him Greek philosophers who were scattered all over Egypt and could speak Arabic fluently. He directed them to translate into Arabic all Greek and Coptic works on art and industries (*Rasā'il*, page 24). Ibn Nadīm says elsewhere that "Khālid got translated into Arabic several works on medicine, astronomy and chemistry."

On this basis Shibli makes bold to say on page 25 of his *Rasā'il* that "Royal Libraries had already been founded under the Muslim Rule long before Umar bin 'Abdu'l-Azīz. Khālid bin Yazīd was the first Umayyad sovereign who searched for old works and publications. The conjecture rather tends to give place to a certainty that the first person who founded a real library was Khālid bin Yazīd."

Khalifa Mansūr was another famous patron of learning who encouraged translations into Arabic. Khalifa Hārūn-u'r-Rashid of the Arabian Nights' fame established a remarkable university called *Bait-u'l-Hikmat*. It was divided in two parts—the one comprised solely of the library and the other was devoted to the work of translations from foreign languages. Yahya bin Khālid Bar-

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maki, the Prime Minister and the right hand man of Hārūn, invited several Hindu physicians and pandits from India. The Arabs made the Hindu learning available to the West. The Persian language now came into greater prominence as Yahya, who was Persian by birth, encouraged its development and progress most liberally. Shibli on page 25 of his *Rasā'il* says:—

“In the magnificent library, called Bait-u'l-Hikmat, besides the books in Arabic, there were countless books of Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Coptic and Chaldean.....It was due to Yahya Barmaki that Hārūn-ur-Rashid displayed an admirable toleration and nobility in collecting and storing books of all countries, languages and religions. The officers of his library were all Persians. What better proof can we have of the Caliph's toleration than that Alan Shu'ubi, in charge of Translations Section, was ever engaged in vilifying the Arabs and wrote several books on the weak points of several Arab clans?

(*To be continued.*)

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## NOTES.

### The Existence of God.

Elsewhere we print a letter from Mr. Reynolds who makes a very reasonable demand. He doubts the Existence of God and requires logical proofs in its support. Fortunately, our Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din has dealt with this very subject in his Introduction to the Holy Qur-án, which is being published in this issue. It is true that all Pre-Islamic Books of Revelation do not contain any logical statements in support of the verities they teach. All of them are assertive in their tenets. Perhaps at the time of their Revelation reasoning could not be appreciated. The Qur-án, however, is different in this respect. It does not enunciate even a single principle without giving some logical reasons in its support. For the same reason it does not tolerate any coercion to be used in matters of belief.<sup>1</sup> A person who is not amenable to reason need not be compelled to believe in anything.

<sup>1</sup> 2 : 256

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Atheism declares that Matter is the source of all life, but mind is regarded as our originator and maker. Man possesses mind, and, therefore, it is not difficult for him to believe in the existence of another Mind. A Mind may not be within our sensuous perceptions, but we accept his existence if there are certain signs of it. For example a work of art or skill indicates the existence of same mind. How can we deny its existence when we find specimens of highly worked out skill in Nature? <sup>1</sup> The Book for instance refers to our own physical creation. Our frame is evolved from a clot, which has rightly been described as the final growth of matter, though it is only the work of some nine months. It is performed in the darkest recesses of the body. The Book also speaks of the several stages which this clot passes through before the creation of conscious in our body. <sup>2</sup> There must be some Mind whose skill in the matter baffles human ingenuity even to understand its working.

We look for a Mind where we see even an ordinary piece of skilled labour. Is it impossible to conceive the same in the face of such a wonderful workmanship? It is worth while for an enquiring mind to ponder and see if he cannot detect in the working of Nature a great Design. He will, at any rate, hardly fail to observe two things which exist palpably in the universe. First, human needs with our capacity to meet them, and, secondly, the abundance of material in Nature to supply our requirements. These two things have been pre-arranged. No invention has ever been made but from the material already existing in Nature. Similarly, we have never suffered from any ailment, however complicated and new its form may be, for which the medicine to counteract is not available. This fact is an incontrovertible proof of a pre-ordained Design. It is no accident, but an ordinance of the Mind that existed before all.

<sup>1</sup> 3 : 5. 22 : 5

<sup>2</sup> 23 : 12—14.

## NOTES

### The Conception of God Outside the Church.

In our April issue we referred to the series of articles which appeared in *The Daily Herald* dealing with the idea of God as conceived by two writers—Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Miss Wilkinson. The third writer on the subject was Mr. Paul Robeson, the famous Negro singer and musician of America. His statements are quite understandable, with the exception of one to the effect that “Muhammadanism is African.” We think that he must be referring to the refuge given by the Abyssinian King to the early Muslim fugitives from Arab oppression. To him it appeared as if the present civilization of Europe is doomed, and has scarcely anything to leave behind for a future world in the making. He reasons as follows :—

This is supposed to be a Christian civilization, and it is run entirely on non-Christian principles. It is ruled by those who desire power, who desire money, who believe in force. The ideas that are implicit in every action of the Great Powers is a continual offence to the compassionate face of God.

Mr. Robeson, himself professing Christianity, is right in regretting the condition of things obtaining in Christian lands. But has he ever considered that the Kingdom of God, for which Jesus prayed, was actually established on this Earth, not by those calling themselves Christians, and blaspheming God by attributing to Him human relations with Jesus, but by the followers of the man who is, unfortunately and quite erroneously, regarded as the greatest enemy of Jesus and Christianity? Yes, it was Muhammad, and to-day if the God of Love is flouted by the Civilized World, which passes under the name of Christianity. He is actually worshipped in spirit by all those followers of Muhammad, who have managed still to remain outside the influence of Christian materialism—the greatest scourge under which humanity has suffered. Mr. Robeson does not seem to have studied the *Qur-án*, or he would not have spoken as if Jesus was the only

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

person who pointed the loving aspect of God. With all the necessary disciplinary measures which the Qur-án has adopted for the formation of the human character, it presents God Whose fundamental Attributes are beneficence and mercifulness. Historically viewed, it was Muhammad, and not Jesus, who personified the love of God for Man. It was destined for Muhammad to prove that this world of ours is actually controlled by the Omnipotent and Living God, before whose Providence the forces of Evil and Darkness are bound to recede. It was he who saved humanity from an abominable state of corruption and savagery, which had not only submerged the sacred name and fold of the Nazarene Shepherd—the last vestiges of the spiritual struggle of Man on this Earth—but had also been using them as its own vehicle. He it was who brought Cosmos out of Chaos. It was under his inspiration that the dying germs of Civilization and Culture, lying scattered all the world over, and condemned by Christianity, were sedulously collected, protected, and nourished with the tenderest care. Is he not, therefore, rightly called a “Mercy for the Nations?” Is not his life the best and most reliable guide to the Omnipotence and love of the Almighty that we can have in these days of ours? Let Christendom pause and think.

### God in the Native Light of the Mind.

Miss Marie Tempest is an actress of renown. In Europe to-day it is the actors and actresses who guide the minds of the people, next in influence, perhaps, to that of their financial masters. So it is worth while to examine the mind of an actress on the question of the God-idea. With regard to her relation with the religion of the Church, she observes :

Of formal religion I had enough . . . . . when I was a child. It was rammed down my throat while I was physically and spiritually incapable of making the response.

## NOTES

Disappointed by the Church and the God it upheld, Miss Tempest fell back upon the study of the Book of Nature with the help of the little spiritual light she had in her heart. She narrates the workings of her mind in the following words :—

I remember thrilling over the first daffodil of the year. How could it have happened by chance ? Why should that golden trumpet give me such ecstasy ? Why was it made like that ? What, in the course of Evolution, made it necessary for me to be so moved ?

Again, what about the little kindnesses one gets from strangers ; the helping of lame dogs ; the thousand tokens of Love and Friendship one sees on all sides ?—gestures from people who can hope for no rewards, or even recognition.

Is God the sense of proportion which is the foundation of the beauty in all the beautiful of life—from the parthenon to the angle of the feather in milady's hat ?

After enumerating these three sources of spiritual pleasure Miss Tempest sums up :—

Yes, I think, I can agree that there is a rhythm in the Universe, and feel that we must keep in harmony with it.

### **Religion should help the Inward Light in us.**

The mental process which leads Miss Tempest to this conclusion is very typical of a thinking mind. Religion, if mankind has anything to do with it, should undertake to help this process of thinking and guide it to its destination. To this aspect of the function of religion, the Holy Qur-án refers in the following words :—

Then set your face upright for religion, in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men.<sup>1</sup>

Religion is thus to be an exponent of the fundamental currents of the human soul and to be also their friendly director. One will read the pages of the New Testament in vain to find anything that in any way ministers to the feelings and guides the thought-process expressed in the quotations given above. But one has not to turn over many pages of the Holy Qur-án to find references to these

<sup>1</sup> 30 : 30

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

feelings and thoughts of the human mind. There is a whole chapter in it entitled "The Beneficent," which contains a most powerful appeal to this native sense of man for the mercy of God, taking the form of the cosmos in which we live and move and have our existence.

The principal items of the invaluable blessings of God which provide for our physical needs and comforts are enumerated one by one, and every now and then the topic is interspersed by the rousing words :—"Which, then, of the bounties of your Lord will ye reject?" A more eloquent appeal to the nature of man can scarcely be imagined !

### The Rhythm in the Universe.

Most remarkably Miss Tempest strikes upon a point which is the essence of Islam. The very word 'Islam' means 'making peace,' *i.e.*, joining by thought, word and deed—in fact with one's whole consciousness—in the universal harmony of the cosmos. In the very beginning of the chapter referred to, our attention is drawn to this rhythm and harmony of creation. We are enjoined to maintain that harmony in our own sphere of activities. Says the Qur-án :—

The sun and the moon follow the reckoning.

And the herbs and the trees do adore (Him).

And the heaven, He raised it high, and He made the measure,  
That you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure.

And keep up the balance with equity and do not make the measure deficient.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, it is to help man to keep this measure in the midst of his struggle for existence that Divine Dispensation is vouchsafed to him. Thus, a religion, which fails to indicate the measure to be maintained in the various walks of life, is no religion at all, whatever brand of cheap salvation it may hold out to the public.

<sup>1</sup> 55 : 5—9.

## NOTES

### God in Everything and yet not the Thing itself.

Miss Tempest concludes her remarks with a sentimental observation :—

Music, art, the very joy of living, the pleasure of doing anything, the mere sensuous satisfaction in the achievement of any kind, the exercise of one's bodily functions, beauty, the thrill of giving, of helping, of being given, of being helped. Yes, yes! God is everything.

Now, we as Muslims can go with her part of the way, but not all. The Qur-án also refers to all these experiences and joys of life, as administering to our spiritual needs, nay, it regards them as essential for the development of the God-consciousness in us. But it takes the necessary precautions against man's stumbling at a critical spot in this way of thinking. According to the Holy Qur-án these things do not exhaust our search after God, which is the goal of human life. These numerous blessings and bounties of God and our relations with them, which make life, with all its troubles, so attractive and tempting, are but *signs* of Allah, Who, although He is the source and soul of all of them, is still beyond and above everything. Thus while maintaining that "Allah is He on whom all depend"<sup>1</sup> that "Whither you turn, thither is Allah's purpose"<sup>2</sup> and that "We are nearer to you than your life-vein," the Qur-án sounds a note of warning when it says: "There is nothing like a likeness of Him,"<sup>3</sup> and, "Vision comprehends Him not."<sup>4</sup> But apart from this emphasis on the transcendental view of God, the Qur-án describes definitely the inexhaustible nature of the creation of God. It says :—

You see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God: then look again, can you see any disorder. Then turn back the eye again; your look shall come back to you confused while it is fatigued.<sup>5</sup> Again :—

Say if the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though we were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 112 : 2

<sup>2</sup> 2 : 115

<sup>3</sup> 42 : 11

<sup>4</sup> 6 : 104

<sup>5</sup> 67 : 3-4

<sup>6</sup> 18 : 109



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Had, therefore, even the realization of the scattered bounties of the Lord been the realization of God Himself, we could not stop at the experience which comes to us in the ordinary course of things. It is too vast to stop anywhere. But, as a matter of fact, the changing universe, at best, gives only a very faint indication of the eternal splendour of the Creator, and is more like a veil over a beautiful face. To have a sight of the face itself one needs to develop some senses other than those which record the perceptions which come to us through the doors of our physical body, stir us for a time and then vanish invariably, leaving behind reactionary forces in our hearts, which tend to darken the pathway of life as soon as we are face to face with its hard realities. Only on the development of such senses and a higher insight can one be in tune with the harmonious movement of the cosmos, and enjoy the eternal bliss of peace, which fails not even in the moments of greatest disappointment. True it is that the creation and the mercy manifested in it have a message from the eternal regions, but we have to look through and beyond them to seek out the Eternal One, not confining our sight to the tokens of that message. It is for this reason, that, while a Muslim sees the hand of God in every thing, he never commits the mistake of identifying Him with the universe—a folly repeated so very frequently by the leaders of human thought.

## CORRESPONDENCE

THE EDITOR,  
THE ISLAMIC REVIEW,  
WOKING (Surrey).

LONDON. S. W. 1.

DEAR SIR,

I have been studying your *Review* with interest and admiration since long, and I can safely say that it has entirely changed my views about Religion. Unfortunately, I am quite in dark as to what Qur-án says about it, but I do appreciate the way your Journal puts it. At the same time I cannot make out that if religion is really 'a code of life' as you describe it, why it should not appeal to us as well? Your ethics and conception of Religion are very sound and appealing especially those that I read in one of your articles: "What is Islam." But they lose all admiration and their acceptability when I find you ascribing them to some of the several Attributes of your God—in whose existence I doubt.

We are human and our brain and minds are always out for reasoning. What and why is the banner of our advancement? So if God is the maker of our Nature, as religion asks us to believe, he must know the height of the intellect we possess. And if it is he who gives us this gift of reasoning then he should himself first satisfy us as to his existence. Leaving aside the Qur-án, of which I know very little, I can safely challenge all the other so-called books of God, to show me a single verse or line in which their God may have tried to prove his own existence. And if your Qur-án also stands with them in this respect, then I wonder how your mission can claim any success in the lands of reason and logic.

I wish your principles and ethics were free from Theism, as otherwise they are the soundest and most appealing.

Yours faithfully,

G. L. REYNOLDS.

[We would draw Mr. Reynolds attention to the article of Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din appearing in this issue—Ed. *I. R.*]

LOS ANGELES,  
CALIFORNIA:

January 20th, 1932.

THE IMAM,  
The Mosque, Woking.  
DEAR BROTHER,

Thank you for your kind letter of November 24th, 1931. I have read and re-read the literature which you so kindly have sent to me and have also spent considerable time in the study of 'The Glorious Qur-án' by Marmaduke Pickthall, and in doing so have found a great deal of consolation and content of heart. My trend of religious thought had been slipping into agnosticism and atheism when, by chance, I found and read a copy of the *Islamic Review* in the local public library.

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While born and reared a Christian, very early in life I found myself unable to adhere to, and believe in, the teachings of the Bible. The unbelievable fables tax one's credibility and its obscenity fills one with extreme disgust.

May I ask, and I shall sincerely appreciate your answer: What shall I do to adopt the Islamic Faith? I want to follow the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. I believe in the Articles of Faith in Islam and in the Five Pillars of Islam.

May the peace of Allah abide with you.

Your brother,  
HARRY E. HEINKEL.

[This letter of Mr. Heinkel supports our assestion that free circulation of *Islamic Review* is the best means of propagating Islam. Christianity is dying, the very idea of the godhead of Christ is repugnant. Would our brethren join us in this noble work of conveying the message of Islam to millions of Christians who are such in name only.—Ed. *I. R.*]

LONDON, N. W. 3.

DEAR MR. MUHAMMED ALLUM,

As-salaam-u-alaikum.

Ever since reading the little book on Islam which you have been generous enough to distribute, I have wanted to write a note of appreciation.

The average Englishman and Englishwoman, living in this part of the world, is usually taken up so much with worldly affairs that he or she has no time to think—or to bother about spiritual things, but to a seeker after the Truth, as I am, your book comes as a great blessing, because not only does it give us an insight into one of the greatest and most beautiful religions in the world, but it puts it all in such a simple yet clear and concise form, that even a child could grasp it all.

It seems to me that the old adage that those who seek the Truth, shall find it, is indeed true, and I was, therefore, more than delighted when I visited Woking to have your book presented to me. It was just what I was looking for, and I am sure many others have thought the same thing, and have blessed the generous donor for thus serving the great cause of humanity.

I am, moreover, certain that those who once realise and fully understand the work-a-day truth and beauty of Islam, as I do, will never want any other religion, but will turn to it, as surely as the sun sets in the West, at all times and in joy as well as in sorrow.

In conclusion, may I just express my fervent prayer that your life will be peaceful and happy always, and that the spirit of Allah will be with you, now and evermore—*Amen*.

Fraternally yours,  
I. MORISON.

[This letter from an English lady was addressed to Mr. Allum, of Australia, who out of his love for Islam has printed for free distribution our booklet: "Islam and Muslim Prayer."—Ed. *I. R.*]

# THE HOLY QUR-ÁN

## AND ITS COMMENTARY

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### INTRODUCTION.

BY KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

(Continued from Vol. XX, page 140.)

### CHAPTER IV.

*Logic.*—The Word of God makes another departure in the Qur-án from the rest of the revealed Books when giving its message to the world. It is neither dogmatic nor assertive. If it inculcates any principle or contradicts any doctrine obtaining elsewhere, it puts forth logical reasons to substantiate its assertions. The other Books do not do so. The Qur-án sets forth its tenets in a way that appeal most readily to our intelligence: “Reason”<sup>1</sup> being one of the names which the Qur-án takes to itself. We may be assertive in imparting wisdom and knowledge to the younger generation, but when they reach the age of discretion nothing except logic and reason would be acceptable to them. Compulsion is of no avail when logic begins to rule the world. The Qur-án, therefore, says the same when it lays down a golden principle in the matter of preaching religion. It says:—“There is no compulsion in religion, truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error.”<sup>2</sup> If the way has been clearly reasoned out and found to be the correct one, there would be no point in resorting to compulsion for its acceptance. The Book repeatedly lays stress upon this principle. We often read verses like the following: “The truth is from your *Rabb*, and so let him who pleases believe and let him who pleases disbelieve.” The logic of the principle lies in the word *Rabb*. *Ar-Rabb* is He who sus-

<sup>1</sup> 4 : 175.

<sup>2</sup> 2 : 256.

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tains and brings all our capabilities to perfection. He lays down rules for their perfection. Every one of us, therefore, must be interested in His ways ; we must look to them as they come from our Nourisher and Evolver. Why, then, should a person be compelled to accept them if they are not such ? He should be left to his own judgment. The verses speak of the true test by which every teaching should be tried. We have to see if a Book that claims to possess guidance for us contains anything that will nourish our faculties and bring them to their full growth. The Qur-án must also be put to the same test before it is accepted.

*Logic for every doctrine.*—There are many doctrines commonly taught by every faith, but no other revealed Book proves their validity on grounds of logic and reason, while the Qur-án frankly appeals to our reason before it asks us to accept them. For example, all sacred scriptures speak of God, Angels, Revelation, Messenger-ship, the Hereafter and the Resurrection. They ask us to accept these as truths, but modern education in our days has given rise to scepticism because of the lack of any intelligent proof in pre-Islamic scriptures. The Muslims have escaped this pitfall. If education has prompted our reason to fight against our faith, the Qur-án has made use of the same weapon against unbelief. I have in these pages<sup>1</sup> given some of the Qur-ánic reasons proving the existence of God. I have also enumerated some of the grounds on which the Qur-án speaks of the necessity of some guidance from the Lord. I summarise here few more from the same Book :—

(A). Everything has been shown its way to perfection. All its properties come out when it follows the course chalked out for it by its Creator. This rule applies

<sup>1</sup> Islamic Review, Vol. XX, pp. 78—80.

## INTRODUCTION TO HOLY QUR-ÂN

everywhere in the physical world ; and it could hardly be otherwise in matters of consciousness. But we bring no knowledge from the mother's womb wherewith to cultivate our minds. Knowledge must come to us from Above.<sup>1</sup>

(B). All things are surrounded by materials which are beneficial or deleterious to their growth, but there is something that urges them to assimilate the former and reject the latter. Physically, our body does the same, but mentally we have no such guiding knowledge. It must come from without, and it did come in the shape of Divine Revelation and brought us out of darkness to light.<sup>2</sup>

(C). The Holy Book often refers to birds that remain constrained in air. They receive their nourishment from something that exists in the atmosphere.<sup>3</sup> It shows that the Providence has looked to the nourishment of every creature according to its environments ; and as human mind had to live upon knowledge, which must come from the Universal Providence, hence the necessity for revelation.

*Resurrection.*—Perhaps the child in man had passed its infancy and reached the age of discretion some 1,350 years ago, as the trend of Revealed Literature had become changed. Only two thousand years back when the Nazarene philosopher was asked for proof of the life after death<sup>4</sup> by the Sadducees, Jesus replied that they often spoke of Abraham and Jacob as their ancestors : the patriarchs must be living, otherwise they could not be alluded to. The reply might have satisfied his inquirers, but the modern Sadducees would not see any logic in it.

No religion can live if its followers do not believe in the life to come. In fact, it is the function of religion to inform us concerning our future existence and warn us

<sup>1</sup> 16 : 78—81.

<sup>2</sup> 14 : 1.

<sup>3</sup> 16 : 79.

<sup>4</sup> Mark 12 : 16.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

against anything which may mar our happiness therein ; for the future is but a shadow of the present (17 : 72). Nevertheless, inasmuch as it belongs to the unseen world, no sooner does credulity give way to reason than our belief in religion generally becomes weakened, if that particular one to which we belong does not give us some logical grounds for it. We belong to an intellectual order. We cannot believe in anything which does not come within the scope of our perception or experience or is unable to stand the test of logic. A religion, therefore, should give us good reasons for our belief in the life after death. if it demands of us that we should lead a good life. Unfortunately, the Formal Church could not show any intelligent reason in support of its tenets. It was wont, instead, to harp continually on the dogma of Faith, thereby naturally losing its hold on the Western mind as liberal education became more prevalent. Religion, in general, also began to decay at the same time, but Spiritualism stepped in to save the situation. It revived Occidental faith in the life beyond the grave, but the cult is not without grave drawbacks. On the one hand, it believes in our accountability for our present actions in a future life, but, on the other, it does not give us any good code of life, like that in the Qur-án, whereby we may make our future a brilliant one. Besides, Spiritualists are now taken up with what may be termed Spiritism. They are more concerned with receiving messages from departed spirits than in discovering means for securing happiness in the world to come. Curiosity has got the better of utility, and to be a medium has now become a business, and swindlers have discredited their mission. Moreover, the trivial nature of these messages, as recently admitted by Sir Oliver Lodge in his address to the Modernist Churchmen at the Cambridge Conference, is detracting much from the impression originally created by the cult. The

## INTRODUCTION TO HOLY QUR-ÁN

return of departed spirits is a truth not unknown to Muslim divines, but they neither make a living out of it nor trumpet it abroad.

We need some solid arguments to substantiate our belief in the Last Day. Though all religions speak of it, they do not go beyond making mere assertions with little or no explanations. The Qur-án, however, is an exception. As with all its verities, so with this, it applies the soundest of logic to prove both the Resurrection and all that it entails. The Holy Book throws such a vivid light on the subject as to make it a reality beheld by mortal eye. It starts with the principle of evolution, and makes resurrection a necessary link of progress in our journey. It gives other reasons too. It refers to the same phenomenon of resurrection which takes place every year in the vegetable world. Autumn comes to strip the trees of their raiment, foliage, fruits and flowers, which may soon become rotten and reduced to their elements. They in turn become scattered and diffused in the atmosphere. But the coming spring brings them back and gathers them again into the same organism which they left in the preceding autumn. The Qur-án gives a vivid description of this process and then concludes most emphatically: "Thus is the rising."<sup>1</sup>

The composition of elements and their decomposition followed by re-composition is a daily phenomenon and a decisive proof of resurrection. But the mind of the sceptic fails to see in it any proof of the return of an individuality. Our body may be resolved into its disintegrated elements and composed into a new shape, but it does not show that our personality has also been restored. The contention, so me, seems hardly tenable. It evinces ignorance of the fact that all different species in the vegetable kingdom are from the same substance and yet their original elements become individually specialized into



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various plants, trees, etc. As the man, the dog and the bird come from the same material—Nature giving personal individuality to each species—so trees and plants bearing different kinds of fruits and flowers, though they be of the same material and receive the same water for sustenance (13 : 4), yet each fruit differs from the other in taste, form and species. The Holy Book refers to this very operation of Nature and then says : “ And if you would wonder, then wondrous is their saying, what ! when we are dust, shall we certainly be a new creation ? ” (13 : 5). It is not, in fact, the substance but the difference in “ magnitude and measure ” (13 : 8) observed by Nature in combining the elements that creates variety of fruit and grain, while keeping their identity. The Qur-án gives another illustration of Resurrection which is even more direct in its bearing. It refers to the phenomenon of fire when it burns (36 : 79, 80). Fire is the same sunshine which was stored up in trees when they first sprang up from the earth. For this reason they have been called “ bottled sunshine ” in scientific phraseology. The sun sends down its heat and light in the form of sunshine which penetrates into the earth. There it becomes mixed with other materials and gives rise to the vegetable kingdom. But sunshine is like a spirit in the tree, the rest of the ingredients of which act as its clothing. The trees give us logs of wood for heating purposes. But what we call burning of fire is only the separation of the sunshine from the other constituents—carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and the like. All these come out of wood in the same proportions in which they combine to make a tree. Sunshine likewise retains its former proportions, but it emerges from the log in a form nearer to its original source. The sun when seen at dawn, say, on a winter morning in the mountains, is of the same colour as fire. But the

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sunshine in its transit, from the big luminary, loses much of its heat and colour by the time it reaches the earth. It, however, restores them in their original condition when it forsakes its vegetable body. But all flames do not act in the same way. Some logs when burnt give out much smoke but aflame very little. Their flame is a mere flicker with practically no heat. On the other hand, there are certain logs of wood which exude very little smoke but flames of all shapes, giving intense heat. The Divine Spirit was breathed into us when we all were in the womb, and ought to display its full brilliance on leaving the body. But most of us give out only smoke and must dwell in the regions of smoke till the Divine Flame is fully ablaze (56 : 43). Thus on its resurrection will the spirit resume its identity.

The Holy Book gives another reason when proving the transference of the particular consciousness from the deceased body into the new one with the same measure and quality which it possessed at the time of the separation of the soul from its last body. But if a most insignificant thing, like sperma and ovum, can impart to their offspring many of the traits of parental consciousness, they may follow the same course in the new form. Something may invisibly proceed from us at our death and remain in an embryonic condition in the womb of nature and give birth to the new child in the life after death. So the Book says :—“ Says he : who will give life to bones when they are rotten ? Say : He will give life to them Who brought them into existence first and He is cognizant of all creation.”<sup>1</sup>

In the last line of the above quotation the Book gives another reason for Divine ability to do so. It needed knowledge of the whereabouts of things to be collected

<sup>1</sup> 36 : 78-79.

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again. So the verse ends with a Divine Attribute referring to His knowledge of everything.

*Life after Death.*—The question no doubt is an intricate one, but the Holy Book makes a practical suggestion when appealing to our reason for the required belief. It makes observation of things around us in the long evolutionary journey which the ethereal world had to undergo before it attained the human consciousness under the wise consideration of the Originator and Designer. It clearly shows that the human frame in its material form cannot be the last stage. The Qur-án speaks of it in a most illuminating manner; it carries us to the very first beginning of the universe. It speaks of the first formation of the heavens and the earth within seven periods<sup>1</sup> of gradation, which was to serve some ulterior object. What we call space was then full of vapours<sup>2</sup> and gases, when another gaseous matter, hot like fire,<sup>3</sup> that floated in space, assumed the form of the earth in its nascent condition. The heavens and the earth were at that time a closed thing with various contents in a confused and mixed mass. Water then came to open the closed<sup>4</sup> casket, and in so doing brought life<sup>5</sup> to the earth. The earth, as the Book says, was constantly quaking in the beginning; and the mountains and the rocks were created to steady it.<sup>6</sup> Earth-spaces got wide ways to enable their coming denizens to follow the right course. The heaven-space was decorated with shining lamps to guide them<sup>7</sup> in the darkness. The water came from the clouds in sufficient measure<sup>8</sup> to move the dead matter.<sup>9</sup> It settled in the earth and brought forth verdure<sup>10</sup> and vegetation. It made gardens<sup>11</sup> of fruits and flowers with varieties of corn for our subsistence.<sup>12</sup> It was for this purpose that days and nights

<sup>1</sup> 2 : 29.

<sup>4</sup> 21 : 30.

<sup>7</sup> 78 : 13 : 15 : 16.

<sup>10</sup> 92 : 25.

<sup>2</sup> 23 : 17 : 78 : 12.

<sup>5</sup> 21 : 30—31.

<sup>8</sup> 23 : 18.

<sup>11</sup> 23 : 19 : 14 : 32.

<sup>3</sup> 15 : 27.

<sup>6</sup> 21 : 30.

<sup>9</sup> 22 : 25.

<sup>12</sup> 78 : 15 : 2 : 22.

## INTRODUCTION TO HOLY QUR-ÂN

were made, with alternations in their duration which moved the winds and brought forth clouds.<sup>1</sup> The winds also floated ships and boats that enriched us with the treasures<sup>1</sup> of the sea. The day<sup>2</sup> came that we might engage ourselves in the various occupations of life; night<sup>2</sup> was made for our rest, to refresh us for the coming day. The Book also refers to our own creation; and tells how various products of the earth became combined under various specializations to evolve the genital seed as her essence.<sup>3</sup> It became located in woman's womb, where it passed through other seven stages of evolution and gave rise to a new creation.<sup>4</sup> The earth also brought forth cattle<sup>5</sup> of many kinds for our use and food. The Book speaks very strongly of the subservience<sup>6</sup> of the whole universe to our needs, and of various other gifts to us, innumerable and baffling even to imagination.<sup>7</sup> In short, whatever we may need has already been provided for. The Designer of the whole scheme, which took Him millions of years to accomplish, must have some true purpose<sup>8</sup> before Him. It cannot be all in vain.<sup>9</sup> It was all made as if it were to receive and accommodate some person of dignity on the earth;<sup>10</sup> and that person was no other than man himself—God's own vicegerent. The Book came to raise him and exalt him to that state of honour.<sup>11</sup> If we had to live on the earth for but sixty or seventy years and then to be no more at all, would not creation become a mere sport on the part of our Lord? <sup>12</sup> Could all this labour have been in vain? <sup>13</sup> It must be purposeful, as every other thing in His creation shows, and the purpose cannot materialize unless there be continuity of our life, when we shall make still further progress in realms beyond the grave. The Qur-ân speaks repeatedly of the life after death. It makes it an article of faith for us.

<sup>1</sup> 2 : 164, 14 : 5—12.

<sup>4</sup> 23 : 14—13.

<sup>7</sup> 14 : 34.

<sup>10</sup> 17 : 70.

<sup>13</sup> 16 : 3.

<sup>2</sup> 78 : 10—11.

<sup>5</sup> 40 : 70, 45 : 4.

<sup>8</sup> 45 : 3.

<sup>11</sup> 94 : 3.

<sup>3</sup> 23 : 12.

<sup>6</sup> 14 : 32—33.

<sup>9</sup> 16 : 3.

<sup>12</sup> 21 : 16, 45 : 38.

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*Why a particular Revelation for guidance.*—It is said that we need not look to any new Revelation, nor need we stick to it in its particular form. There is material enough to guide us in the old Revelations and other books of wisdom. Truth, it is said, may be sifted out of them to meet our requirements. Some of the new-fangled churches in our days have adopted this attitude. But here again, it is human judgment that is guiding our selection from the confused mass of past revelations. It was man that caused corruption, and it is the same man who is now out for reform. If the beautiful of yesterday has become the ugly of to-day, our choice of to-day is not likely to meet the approbation of to-morrow. Moreover, if the All-knowing God has been gracious enough to provide us of His own accord with necessary knowledge in the days of old, we need not usurp His functions in trying to do it for ourselves. The Qur-án has anticipated the modern mind and argued out the case 1,300 years before. It declares any such attempt on our part to be puerile. It refers to the processes of Nature in supplying things to minister to our physical nourishment. Things of vital importance to us become vitiated and rotten. They become reduced to their elements after they are used once. But no manual labour has devised a system for bringing them to their original form. This is surely the Hand of God and to Him we look for our fresh supplies. In illustration of this universal principle, the Qur-án devotes full<sup>1</sup> two sections in Chapter called the Bee, which deal with the subject of revelation in all its phases. The section speaks first of the revelations before the Qur-án ; it admits their Divine origin ; but goes on to say that they are not the same as when they were originally given. A new revelation is needed. In this connection it speaks of various things in the physical world essential for our life,

<sup>1</sup> Section 8, 9.

## INTRODUCTION TO HOLY QUR-ÁN

such as water, milk, fruit and corn.<sup>1</sup> The Book mentions honey, also, in this respect. If the other things have been cited as different forms of food, honey<sup>2</sup> comes under the category of a medicine. No one can deny the indispensable nature of such gifts of God. They become rotten and lose their utility when once used, though their ingredients remain existing in the universe ; but we look to Divine Providence for new provision which takes place by re-composition of the said elements. The Book first refers to water to illustrate the principle. There is limitless water in the sea, but it has lost its vivifying elements, as having become corrupt by mixing with other earthy substances. We cannot afford to have recourse to any condenser for a full supply of fresh water to meet the universal need. Rain, and rain only, comes from Above in full measure to re-animate Nature. Milk is next in importance to water for human life. It consists of liquid, grease and sugar, these are the three, out of the seven, things that are the necessary constituents of nourishing food. Milk exists in grass and corn on which cattle subsist, so we cannot separate it from these things. They are inseparably mixed then with blood and faecal matter, as the Qur-án says, and reach their final development in the stomach of the cattle which supplies us with fresh milk. Fruit and corn come next to milk in food value. They disappear at the end of every crop, but their component parts are not destroyed. They exist, mixed with other things in the atmosphere, but God sends out the spring breezes to sift out what is necessary from the confused mass. Whatever is necessary for the same form of fruit or corn automatically becomes separated and goes to the place where it is needed. There is no confusion in the new distribution. Then the Book speaks of honey. As we need food, so we need medicine. Food and medicine alike are from

<sup>1</sup> 16 : 65--67.

<sup>2</sup> 16 : 68, 69.

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the Hand of God and are used by us to cope with various ailments. The Qur-án has chosen honey to illustrate this point for various reasons. Honey comes from the essence of innumerable fruits and flowers that are scattered far apart from each other. Honey is the result of their mixture, but the medicinal value of honey cannot come from human hands. The bee has been created to do the work of the druggist, and travels hundreds of miles to collect the sweet essences, as the Book says. She never loses her way and always comes back with material for dispensing the useful drug. Time will corrupt all other mixtures, but it cannot affect honey. The Qur-án is the spiritual honey. The Word of God nourishes our soul. It is as necessary to us as physical food. If the Divine Hand sends these blessings to us anew when they have become spoilt and corrupted, He will do the same in the matter of Revelation.

*Angles.*—The Qur-án speaks of Angels as sentient beings that move the forces of Nature in creating new things. We cannot deny the existence of some such agencies working in the universe. But to return, for the moment, to the question of our means of nourishment. All these are derived from elements and atoms which automatically unite and re-unite to help the process of creation. They are punctual and regular, they follow a prescribed path, they combine with each other in given proportions, to create new things. The whole process shows that knowledge is possessed by them, though they themselves belong to the dumb world which has no consciousness. Their work exhibits mathematical precision and exactitude; which means that the processes are carried out under the direction of some mind, but they themselves are without mind. God is, without doubt, the First Intelligent Cause, but He seems to work through various agencies. He is

## CHANGE TOWARDS ISLAM

All-powerful, but it pleases Him to work thus. Angels work in the universe such as mind and soul work in the human body. They follow implicitly the injunction<sup>1</sup> of the Lord. We should become angels, too, if we obeyed, as they do the Lord, nay, we might even rule the angelic world.<sup>2</sup> The Qur-án speaks of three functions of angels. I have referred to the first, that of moving the powers of Nature to perform their respective tasks. The other two have to do with their ministry to man. They inspire us to do good ; and if certain unseen agencies incite us to evil, it must not be forgotten that we in like manner receive urges to do good in an imperceptible way, and such "urges" come from the angels. All this lies within the experience of any average man. If we listen to the angelic voice, they become our guardians during life and protect us from evil ways ; and in the end they become subservient to us, if we understand the secrets of Nature and proper use thereof. Science has to a great extent brought the angels of the elements under our rule. They may be termed Laws of Nature. But Law in itself is lifeless and unconscious. It needs a mind behind it. It is Allah of the Qur-án, who has appointed angels as functionaries of His Law.

### THE CHANGE OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS ISLAM.

The attitude of the British Press towards Islam is undergoing a subtle change, and the time is coming when the Press will, consciously or otherwise, propagate the doctrines and tenets of Islam, by making known its attitude towards questions of popular interest. The hold of Christianity is very much less than it has ever been. Present tendencies are agnostic rather than atheistic, and the need for a logical faith, like Islam, is being increasingly felt. A sympathetic view of Islamic things has begun to be

<sup>1</sup> 16 : 50

<sup>2</sup> 2 : 34



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taken. The *Sajdah* was recently described as "foreheads meekly on the ground," and the Qur-*anic* recitations as "appealing" to heart. The writer of this report also referred to this change of attitude and said :

It is pleasant to reflect that while the Mohamedan was once the Paynim, the Saracen, the Blackamoor and the Red Rag in general to the Crusaders and bad barons, he is now tolerably regarded, and no one sees why we should get hot and bothered when he walks down the street.

From a burning hatred to a tolerant regard is a decidedly historical change. It is comparatively but a short step from this kind of tolerance to a loving admiration, whereof signs are already visible.

The English people are scoring a victory over the Eastern Muslims on the physical plane, but, on the spiritual plane, the angel of fate is actually recording the defeat of Christianity at the hands of Islam. The seedling of homage in the English mind to the supreme spiritual force of Islam, in a congenial age like the present, is developing fast into foliage. Who can say, a century hence, whether England will not be repeating the history of the sons of Changez and Halaku. The signs of the time show that the sufferings of Muslims at the hand of Christians have already begun to bear this strange fruit which is not altogether unprecedented in Islamic history. Indeed, the destiny of England seems to be bound up with Islam. Mr. Bernard Shaw in his book : *Getting Married* addresses a Christian Missionary thus :—

I find you merely ridiculous as a preacher, because you keep referring me to places and documents and alleged occurrences in which, as a matter of fact, I do not believe . . . Your fishes and catechisms and all the rest of it make a charming poem which you call your faith. It fits you to perfection, but it doesn't fit me. I happen, like Napoleon, to prefer Mahometanism . . . . . I believe the whole British Empire will adopt a reformed Mahometanism before the end of the century. The character of Mahomet is congenial to me. I admire him and share his views on life to a considerable extent.

SULEIMAN THOMPSON.

## 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 PROPHETS 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, but, 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) fasting ; (4) almsgiving ; (5) pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of all the

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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.**—Men and women 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 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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