

“ Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets . . . ”—Holy Qur-án, 33 :

“ There will be no Prophet after me.”—Muhammad.

*The*

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Founded by the Late AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

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The Imam delivering Eid-ul-Azha (1353 A. H.) Sermon at the Mosque, Woking.



## THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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### THE EID-UL-AZHA (1353 A.H.) AT WOKING

The celebration of the annual Muslim festival of Eid-ul-Azha was held at the Shahjehan Mosque on Saturday, the 16th March, when over six hundred Muslims united in prayers and thanksgivings.

Although the whole week was extremely cold, the day of the festival itself was distinctly warmer than any previous day of the week, so much so that the stoves that had been installed in the marquee, in anticipation of a cold day, became unbearable even in the morning.

The visitors began pouring in from 11 o'clock. The congregation stood up for prayers at about 11-45 a.m. They filled the marquee from end to end. All the Muslim Legations and Embassies were represented—Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, Iranian, Iraqi, Afghan and even Turkish. A large number of Muslims, too, came from the East End of London.

The most remarkable feature in the congregation was that the rearmost line was composed of English and Indian ladies.

The prayers were led by Maulvi Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad, the Imam of the Mosque. After the prayers

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

the Imam delivered an instructive sermon dealing with the peculiarities of Muslim festivals, the occasion for the present one, the importance of the Ka'aba, the legitimacy of the Prophet's claim to be a descendant of Abraham, and the lesson of Abraham's sacrifice for the world at large. The sermon lasted for about half an hour. Next Mr. Bashyr-Pickard gave a message to the congregation. Mr. Habibullah Lovegrove also spoke for a few minutes on the need for a more vigorous propaganda for Islam in this country.

The news of the dastardly attempt on the lives of King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, and of his son, the Crown Prince Emir Saud, while they were performing a sacred duty at the Ka'aba on the previous day had sent a thrill of horror throughout the Muslim World. It was very much in the fitness of things, therefore, that the Imam Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad Sahib, voicing the general feeling of Muslims, urged the congregation to join him in returning thanks to God for the providential escape of one of the most beloved figures in the Muslim World, the attempt on whose life, continued the Imam, at such a sacred place, was the most sacrilegious act that could be imagined. Then at his request Lord Headley moved the following resolution :

“That the large gathering of Muslims assembled at Woking Mosque on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Azha expresses its deep sense of horror and indignation at the dastardly attempt on the lives of His Majesty King Ibn Saud and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and wishes to congratulate them on their providential escape.”

The resolution was unanimously passed by the congregation, and duly telegraphed to His Majesty. A copy of it was sent to the Foreign as well as the English Press, and another copy was handed over by the Imam Sahib to the *Chargé d'Affaires* of the Saudi Arabian Legation, who was present at the prayers at the Mosque.

## EID-UL-AZHA (1353 A. H.) AT WOKING

The following message has since been received from the Royal Legation of Saudi Arabia in London :—

“ I am commanded by His Majesty King Abdul Aziz to convey to you personally and through you to all the Muslims who attended the Eid prayers at the Mosque his thanks and appreciation of the noble sentiments which you have shown towards him.”

Yours sincerely,

MAHMOOD R. ZADA.

Since many visitors had come late for the prayers, it was considered necessary to hold a second congregation. All this delayed the programme, and it was not before half past one that the guests could sit for lunch. Owing to lack of accommodation, however, they had to be served in batches.

A few friends who stayed on to spend the day at the Mosque were entertained to dinner, and the last batch of friends departed at about nine o'clock.

The function, in every respect, was a complete success.

K. S. A.

## EID-UL-AZHA AT WOKING

A large and distinguished gathering at Woking Mosque on the occasion of the celebration of Eid-ul-Azha, among whom were the Persian Minister, Sir Hubert Stewart Rankin, Count Groj, H. H. the Nawab of Tonk and their Excellencies the *Chargé d'Affaires* of Iraq and Saudi Arabia, adopted a resolution on the motion of Lord Headley, expressing the deep sense of horror and indignation at the dastardly attempt on the life of King Ibn Saud and the Crown Prince and congratulated them on their providential escape. The resolution was cabled to Mecca.—*The Times*.



MUSLIMS IN POLAND

THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE LITHUANIAN  
TARTARS

By L. BOHDANOVICZ

*(Continued from Vol. XXIII, p. 131).*

CHAPTER III.

LITHUANIAN TARTARS IN RECENT TIMES

It seems that the division of Poland did not bring great changes in the situation of Lithuanian Tartars. Catherine the Great, by the Ukase of the 20th October, 1734, confirmed their rights, while leaving them freedom of worship, and, to a great extent, opened up to them an access to civil and military service. Owing to their small number, there was no disadvantage in giving them preference over the Poles, so as to be able to use them against the latter. In 1797, Paul I formed a cavalry regiment composed solely of Lithuanian Tartars.

There is no reason to think that this policy succeeded, at least not in the beginning. Some of the Tartars, who fought at Kosciuszko, went to serve Prussia, and there formed a cavalry regiment ; others emigrated to Turkey.

After the creation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw in 1807, the Tartars obtained political rights and had seats in Parliament. Many Tartars fought in the armies of the Grand Duchy until Napoleon's abdication. After the recognition of Wilno by the Grande Armee, the Emperor, by the decree of August, 1802, ordered the formation of a squadron of Lithuanian Tartars which was later attached to the Grande Armee and had a uniform recalling that of the Mamelukes.

The attachment of Tartars to the cause of Poland was such that there were numerous Tartars among the insurgents in 1831 and in 1863.

## MUSLIMS IN POLAND

Russia's systematic persecution of anything Polish (after 1863) again caused the emigration of Tartars into Turkey just as in the beginning of the 13th century.

In the beginning of the 20th century there started another emigration current. This time it was towards the United States of America, and it increased to considerable proportions, for reasons yet unknown. There is nowadays in New York a Tartar colony of 500 souls. The attachment of these emigrants for the religion and the traditions of their ancestors is so great that they have built a house of prayer, own a cemetery, and not only are in friendly relations with their Polish brethren, but largely contributed to the expenses of the reparation of the mosques destroyed or damaged in the Great War.

Although the persecutions against the Poles did not specially concern the Tartars, they did not stay aloof from the struggles of the Polish patriots who, under Marshal Piłsudski, struggled for the independence of their country. One of the Marshal's first followers, Alexander Sulkiwiz, a Tartar, played an active part in the party's committee. It was Sulkiwiz who organised the Marshal's flight from St. Petersburg in 1900. During the War he enrolled as a simple soldier in the Marshal's legions, and was killed on the battlefield in 1916.

With time, and until the Great War, the influence of Polish culture declined to some extent in favour of Russian culture, and this for several reasons. First of all, the higher classes had little time for liberal professions, and preferred careers in the administration, or rather in the army. The consequence of this was the dispersion of the representatives of this class through Russia, where they lost the use of their mother-tongue. Moreover, and above all, the Russian Government did not like manifestations of nationalism among the minorities, which made up the old Russian Empire. Nevertheless, until the War, Polish

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

was spoken in the houses of several Tartar families. In St. Petersburg, after the 1905 revolution, on the initiative of M. Leon Kryczynski, who is now the editor of the Tartar Year Book, and M. Szyrkiewicz, the present Mufti, there was formed an association of Tartar young men, which had for its aim the study of the past and friendship with the Muslims of other countries.

In proportion to their numbers, the part taken by the Tartars in the Great War was considerable. We have already said that they showed a marked preference for military career. It is strange to note—throughout centuries—long survival of this tradition in a tribe which had lost several of its characteristic features. They were at first compelled to military service; later, this service ceased to be compulsory, but the character of the Tartars kept its stamp for ever.

It has not yet been possible to determine the exact number of Lithuanian Tartar officers in the Russian army during the Great War. Suffice it to say that there were 18 generals, a considerable proportion for a people of 15,000 souls. In consequence, the loss the Tartars underwent was considerable, which explains the small part played by the Tartars in the war against the Bolsheviks (1919-1920).

After the War, the Tartars were divided between the three states. The greater part (7,000) remained in Poland, 1,500 are in Lithuania, and 4,000 in U. S. S. R.

Although this division has considerably weakened them, and in spite of the losses which they underwent in the Great War, after the re-establishment of Poland in 1918, and according to the old tradition which commanded them to serve in the Polish army, the Lithuanian Tartars have formed a cavalry regiment which served during the whole of the war against the Bolsheviks.

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On the other hand, as M. Olgierd Krygyuski writes in his article in the Tartar Year Book: "in spite of the fact that after the War the Tartars have been divided between three states, which has considerably weakened their national forces, this same War has brought them such advantages as have compensated them for this loss." For the Polish Government and people have not withheld expressions of sympathy with the Tartars: they enjoy all civil and political rights and have taken an active part in the reorganisation of the re-born State. There are Tartars in almost every branch of activity (perhaps with the exception of commerce) and they often occupy important posts,—there are among them senators, university professors, magistrates, etc.

The Polish Government has made a point of encouraging their cultural and religious aspirations. For example, the creation of the Muftiate upon which the rights of the Autonomous Church were conferred. This has given a strange impulse to the religious life of the Tartars by co-ordinating and strengthening it. For, before the War, the Lithuanian Tartars depended on the Muftiate of Crimea; this link was purely a nominal one and had no effect on religious life, first because of the distance, but chiefly because of the differences in language and customs. Now the Tartars of Poland are divided into 20 parishes, possess 17 mosques and three houses of prayer. At the head of the Muftiate there is M. Jacob Szynekiewicz, Doctor of the Berlin University, and an erudite Orientalist. He concerned himself chiefly with raising the intellectual standard of the Imams who were formerly recruited from among the poorer classes, and whose instruction was rudimentary, being limited to the reading of the Qur-án and the knowledge of rites. The Imams are elected, but their election is submitted to the control of the Muftiate, which permits them to eliminate the unworthy element. On the other hand, thanks to the subsidies of the Polish

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Government, and to the generous donation of H. M. King Fuad of Egypt, who gave 60,000 francs for this purpose as well as to the contribution of Tartar emigrants from America, it has been possible to repair and to rebuild mosques damaged in the War. Thanks to the subsidies of the State, it is possible to provide for the needs of the Imams who are thus saved from the greater part of material cares and are enabled to devote themselves entirely to their work.

As the Lithuanian Tartars live chiefly in the region of Wilno, the Muftiate is established in that town, as well as the head offices of the cultural organisations.

The number of Lithuanian Tartars in Warsaw is relatively small ; but there are many Mussulmans composed of emigrants from Soviet Russia, Tartars of Crimea, of Kazan, and representatives of various tribes of Northern Caucasus, there are also many Mussalmans from beyond Europe : Persians, Turks, etc., who are for the most part tradesmen.

In view of the number of Mussulmans in Warsaw, the need of the construction of a mosque has been felt for a very long time. On the initiative of M. Djabagni, a distinguished journalist, specialising in Oriental matters, there was formed in 1928 a committee for the construction of the Warsaw Mosque. As everywhere else, the activity of the committee has had the warmest welcome from the authorities. The Warsaw town council has presented it with a land of 209,929 metres.

In honour of the future mosque the two streets between which the land lies have been named Mecca street and Medina street. The Government has promised its financial support, and we hope that the Polish Capital will soon have another artistic masterpiece.

In each parish there is a school where the Imam teaches children, several times a week, the Arabic alphabet

## MUSLIMS IN POLAND

and the rites. M. Szynekiewicz has published many manuals of theology and prayers, as well as books containing instructions for the Imams.

Following the Mufti's lead, several young men are studying Oriental languages, and two of them have been sent by the central cultural committee to Cairo, to the University of Al-Azhar.

From the social point of view, the Tartars are mostly farmers and live in the country in villages, which, at the origin, were simply Tartar. There is a certain number of craftsmen, such as gardeners, tanners, etc., but no tradesmen. There are almost no poor but few rich. These latter are landowners, but their position has become worse with the depression. Those in a privileged position are civil servants occupying important posts. As before the War, the cultured class goes in chiefly for administrative careers. There never has been polygamy; in society, Tartar women are in no way distinguishable from Polish women of their class. Of course, according to Muslim rites, they are separated from men in the hour of prayer.

As the land inhabited by the Lithuanian Tartars was part of the Russian Empire, the Russian civil law is still applied there (Polish civil law is not yet unified). At present, by the Russian law, the Tartars have kept their personal statute, *i.e.*, they are governed by their Mussulman Law—*Shari'at*.

Although they have forgotten their tongue, the Lithuanian Tartars are strongly attached to their religion—the only feature which distinguishes them from the Christian population. This is why a Tartar who changes his religion ceases at once to be a part of the Tartar community. It is also for this reason that mixed marriages are looked down upon.

As we have said before, the cultural movement was almost non-existent just before the War. But nowadays

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the Government and the intellectual circles encourage the cultural aspirations of the Tartars. In each parish there is a cultural association, and these associations are grouped into a sort of federation at the head of which is a permanent central committee which directs and co-ordinates the activity of the separate associations. This activity consists chiefly in lectures, diffusion of literature and revision of documents.

The Tartars take part in all attempts to bring nearer together Poland and the Mussulman countries, being, so to speak, a link between the West and the East. The Mufti represents Poland in all Mussulman congresses. In 1930 he was a member of the Polish Legation to Hedjaz. The Tartars are represented in the official ceremonies for the reception of Mussulman dignitaries during their stay in Poland.

In the Faculty of Arts of Wilno some young Tartars are preparing theses on difficult subjects pertaining to their history.

There are a few periodicals of which mention might be made of two; in Warsaw, *The Islamic Review* is published every three months, and, in Wilno, *Tartar Life*, a monthly review: the former concerns itself chiefly with Islam and the relations between Poland and the Muslim countries, whereas the latter with local matters.

But the chief manifestation of the cultural movement is the "Tartar Year Book," also published in Wilno (only one issue has been published so far). Most of its articles deal with their history. If we remember that during the Russian period there was no cultural movement, it is perfectly natural that at the beginning of the re-birth of this intellectual movement they turn themselves first of all towards their past: it is there that they gather the elements which enable them to remember the community of their origin and the peculiarity of their history.

## EID-UL-AZHA (1353 A. H.) SERMON

### EID-UL-AZHA (1353 A.H.) SERMON

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

Allah (God) is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest. Nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah ; and Allah is the Greatest ; Allah is the Greatest, and unto Allah is due all praise.

I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Apostle. Now I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Devil and begin in the name of Allah, the Beneficent and Merciful.

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 later generations.<sup>1</sup>

We are gathered here to-day for the festival of Eid-ul-Azha, or the Feast of Sacrifice.

As you know, ours is, in fact, a replica of the great Festival of the Muslim world which is being celebrated about this time in the Holy City of Mecca on the occasion of the Hajj, the one institution in the whole world which has successfully levelled all distinctions, and has demonstrated in the midst of our worldly life that we are really and perfectly equal in the eyes of God. If you had witnessed that unique spiritual gathering, you would have found how within the precincts of that sacred territory all distinctions of creed and nationality, colour and class, evaporate like water thrown in the fire. The last vestige of distinction, namely that of clothes, is discarded and all, dressed in the same white unsewn pieces of linen, gather in and around the Sacred House of Ka'aba, and moved by an intense spiritual frenzy, exclaim with one voice—

“ Here I am at Thy service, my Lord ! ”

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-ān, 37 : 101-108.



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Praise be to the Lord, Who has given us such an institution, the like of which has not been produced by community, religious or secular.

Now, the Sacred House of Ka'aba, in and around which Muslims gather from all parts of the world in annual pilgrimage and towards which they turn in all their prayers wherever they may happen to pray is of more historical consequence than is generally realised. According to the Qur-án, it is the first House ever built for Monotheistic prayer. Even George Sale admits—

“The temple of Mecca was a place of worship, and was held in singular veneration by the Arabs from the remotest antiquity.”

The spiritual influence of the Ka'aba may be guessed from the fact that even at the dark and bloody period of Arab history in which the Prophet Muhammad appeared, it afforded an island of safety in the midst of a raging sea of passion and lust. Here was no slight token of the antiquity of the Ka'aba, and its spiritual achievements, before the advent of Muhammad. In the hands of Muhammad, it served as the spiritual headquarters of a mighty nation that revived the dying germs of civilization in Greece and in Rome, in Egypt and in Persia, in India and in China, and safely steered the course of human culture through the storms of the middle ages, when Christianity, in the words of Johnson, was but the Queen of the Night. And even now, at the present moment, when the temporal leadership of the world has passed over to non-Muslim nations—I will not call them Christian, as it is in no way from Christian influences that they have become what they are—the Ka'aba is the power-house of an active. monotheistic movement, presenting from year to year a tangible proof of the Unity of the Godhead together with that of the human race. Praise be to the Lord! May our hearts respond to-day to the call of that House for Unity, Brotherhood and Purity of Heart!

## EID-UL-AZHA (1353 A.H.) SERMON

This festival, as you know, is in commemoration of the Sacrifice of Abraham. It is remarkable that we Muslims have no official festival connected with the life of our Founder, the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The Eid-ul-Fitr, which this year was celebrated in January, is only the thanksgiving at the termination of the Month of Fasting, and has nothing to do with any historical event. But this festival which we are celebrating to-day is, of course, connected with the life-history of a person, though that person is not our leader and master, Muhammad, but Abraham, the common ancestor of the Muslims, the Jews and the Christians. This is, indeed, one of the many instances where Muhammad has sacrificed his own personality for the sake of the unity of the different religions and races ; and also one of the many ways whereby he has saved his followers from the extremism in hero-worship that has been responsible for the deification of many religious heroes in the past, Jesus being one of them. This fixing of occasions for festivals in Islam shows a foresight that can scarcely be expected from an ordinary human mind.

Coming to the question of Abraham I should like to recall that the Prophet Muhammad claimed to be the spiritual descendant of Abraham, through his son Ishmael. So when we Muslims refer our religion to Abraham, we do it also by way of an argument of tradition. With all their clever logic, our Jewish and Christian brothers have failed to prove that the spiritual heritage of Abraham did not descend to the Ishmaelites. With all the interpolations in the Bible, wilful or otherwise, it still contains this verse :—

“And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee ; behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly.”

It will not do to say that this referred only to the temporal glory to which the Ishmaelites were to attain, seeing that the Ishmaelites were clearly included in the

Covenant which God made with Abraham regarding the spiritual as well as the temporal glory of his descendants, whereof sign is thus described in Genesis<sup>1</sup> :—

“He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with money, must needs be circumcised ; and My Covenant shall be in your *flesh* for an everlasting Covenant.”

The fact that both the Jews and the Arabs have been maintaining this practice of circumcision in their respective communities, shows clearly that the Covenant of Abraham embraced the Ishmaelites as much as the Israelites. Then, as is known to you, the question of Abraham's sacrifice has itself been a subject of controversy between the Muslims on the one hand and the Christians and Jews on the other. We Muslims hold that it was Ishmael who was to be sacrificed by Abraham at the command of God ; but our brethren of the Israelite tradition maintain that it was Isaac, and not Ishmael. One who is inclined to the verdict of truth can decide the question for himself on facts. Firstly, we find it recorded in the Bible that God refers to the person to be sacrificed as “Thine only son.” Ishmael being the elder of the two children, such reference would be meaningless in the case of Isaac, whose birth brought a second son to Abraham. Evidently, the command of God came to Abraham before Isaac was born, when he had but the one son, namely Ishmael. The very purport of the trial demands that it should have happened when Abraham had only one child born to him. It will avail our opponents nothing to hold that Ishmael was not counted as a child of Abraham, for read the following clear statement in the Book of Genesis with regard to the status of Ishmael, from the mouth of Sara, the mother of the Israelites :—

“Go in, I pray thee, unto my handmaid. It may be that I may obtain children by her.”

So Hagar's child was clearly meant to be the child of Abraham and Sara by the joint agreement of both.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 17 : 13.

## EID-UL-AZHA (1353 A. H.) SERMON

Unfortunately, our Christian brethren have exceeded all limits in their opposition to Muhammad. In order to disprove the claim of Muhammad they have suggested, as in Murray's Bible Dictionary, that Hagar was never the wife of Abraham, but merely a concubine. In their spite against Muhammad they would even disregard their own sacred book, the Bible, since according to this book Hagar was a lawful wife of Abraham as the following passage of Genesis will show :—

“And Sara, Abraham's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, and gave her to Abraham, her husband, *to be his wife.*”

So Sara, the first wife, gave Hagar *in marriage* to Abraham, so that she might bring forth a child that would be a rightful descendant of Abraham. There could be no clearer statement and it must be remembered in this connection that polygamy was a recognised institution in the Jewish Law, hence a second wife could not be regarded as unlawful simply because she was the second wife nor should the fact of Hagar's being a handmaid to Sara raise any sneer in critical circles. We have it in the traditions of the Jews,—whose religious interests are more vitally bound up in this question than those of any other religious community, that Hagar's position as a handmaid was the result of an accident and that otherwise she was of noble descent. According to this tradition she was an Egyptian princess, reduced to that humiliating position by war captivity. \* (Consult “Jewish Encyclopædia.”) It should be remembered too, that such changes of status were of very common occurrence in those days. Whole tribes of Jews were, on more than one occasion, carried off into captivity, and kept in bondage by foreign kings and nations, so the sneer on this score is as absurd as it is groundless. Therefore, taking everything into consideration, the descent of the Prophet Muhammad from Abraham, is as proud and honourable

as that of Jesus and of all the Israelitish Prophets that preceded him.

Now coming again to the question of Abraham's Sacrifice, there are two facts that decide it in favour of Ishmael, and, for the matter of that, in favour of Muhammad, and these facts, being historical, are the most decisive of all. The first is that the sacrifice was not commemorated by the Israelites in any of their festivals, whereas the Arabs have been celebrating it throughout the ages. It is for this reason, and not by way of any compromise with Pagan rites, as is suggested by some hostile critics, that Muhammad did not abolish this annual festival at the Ka'aba. May Allah save us from the harm intended by these insinulators !

The second fact is that God's command to Abraham for sacrifice was never fulfilled in the life of Isaac.

Let me make this argument a little clearer. All are agreed that this command of God to Abraham was to test his faith and obedience ; but, as we know, trials and tests are not objects in themselves, but only precursors of some coming achievement. God has certain purposes to fulfil through His obedient servants ; certainly He does not hold mock trials of the faithful. If he ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son, He must have had some purpose for it—He must have meant it. But the fact that just in the nick of time God prevented Abraham from actually slaughtering his son, shows that He wanted the sacrifice in some other way—a way that would prove of some real good to the world. As a matter of fact, the Qur-ânic version of the story helps us very much in understanding the situation more clearly. While, from the Biblical version, it appears as if the order for sacrifice was a direct and a positive one, the Qur-ânic version of the story is that Abraham proceeded to sacrifice his son in that way on the basis of a dream. “ O my son ! Surely I have seen

## EID-UL-AZHA (1353 A.H.) SERMON

in a dream that I should sacrifice you ” are the words ascribed to him; and, as is well known, dreams are as often as not fraught with ambiguity. So, according to the Qur-án, Abraham’s attempt to sacrifice his son by means of a knife was on the basis of his own interpretation of a Divine Commandment, as given through a dream. God’s interposition to prevent this act showed only that Abraham’s interpretation was wrong. The Commandment, nevertheless, stood there for fulfilment. In the case of Isaac, we do not find that this order ever found fulfilment in any incident of his life; in that of Ishmael, however, an incident actually took place which called forth a similar spirit of sacrifice on the part of Abraham, when he had to exile this son for life, together with his mother, ostensibly to save them from the anger of Sara who had grown jealous of them, but really for the fulfilment of a great Divine purpose which was beyond the comprehension of the human mind at that time. The Qur-án hints at this when it says :

“ And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.”

Surely aram could not be considered a great sacrifice ! Evidently it was the exile of Ishmael that is hinted at here ; and no such occasion for Abraham’s sacrifice of filial affection is known to have arisen in the case of Isaac. So this seems to provide a most conclusive proof that it was Ishmael, and not Isaac, who was offered as a sacrifice to the Divine pleasure.

And here you may ask what purpose was served by having Ishmael exiled in that way ? What good did it bring ? I have almost answered this question already, when describing the importance of the Ka’aba. Yes, if the rise of Muhammad saved human culture and human morality at a very critical point of its history, and if, again, the religion of Muhammad promises this present one-sided civilization of ours a haven of safety from the

storms of lust, passion and jealousy, as it is undoubtedly doing at present, then the migration of Ishmael to the wilderness of Arabia was most certainly of huge consequence for the welfare of humanity. As for the question whether the separation of the Ishmaelite branch from the main community was necessary for this purpose that too has an apposite reply, but this is neither the time nor the occasion for its detailed discussion, since it pertains rather to the domain of sociology. Yet a word or two may not be out of place. An old and unbroken tradition tends to make a nation arrogant and proud. The Jews were given the oldest tradition, and hence their arrogance accumulated beyond all measure, and had become so hard and ingrained that a master mind like Jesus, who tried to soften it with humility and charity, had to pay the price of his adventure with his blood. On the other hand, civilization is, in certain of its aspects, a disease that saps the vitality of a nation, and the Jews were the oldest civilized nation in the world. Divine wisdom had it, therefore, that the Ishmaelitish branch of Abraham's descendants should be cut off, for a length of time, from the principal tradition of that race and should be allowed to lapse into a state of semi-barbarism, so as to render them fit to receive the final and universal message of God to Humanity.

But apart from the theological, traditional and even historical values of this incident in Abraham's life, which is being celebrated to-day all over the Muslim world, has it any lesson for us in the present state of affairs? That is the question we should next discuss, and the answer is "Yes." Abraham's sacrifice has a message—a great message—first for the whole civilized world, secondly for those of us who are born Muslims, and thirdly for all who have newly embraced this faith, as a matter not of national culture, as is the case mostly with us born Muslims, but of conviction and realisation.

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To the world at large its message is that virtue never goes unrewarded, that real virtue consists of sacrifice, that it is the sacrifice of the present and the near that can assure all future and ultimate felicity and success. If you analyse the nature of the present world crisis, its causes will reduce themselves to two, namely, that far more emphasis is being laid on the assertion of rights than on the need for sacrifice, and secondly that too much devotion is given to the near and the present, at the cost of the distant and the future. I am not a politician, and so refrain from a discussion of prevailing political and economic conditions, but I venture to say that these two mental diseases do undoubtedly furnish the psychological causes for the present cataclysm.

To the born Muslims its message is—Do not love the physical life of your sons too much. Your sons must be brought up, if you are Muslims, in such a manner that they be of service to God and humanity. I am afraid this has not been the case for a long time past. Our children are being trained mainly with a view to worldly prosperity. The best brains of the Muslim world are being exploited in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, of London and Edinburgh, of Paris and Berlin. Do we care to employ any of these brains for the proper understanding and the preaching of Islam? Do we even think of making some of their possessors saintly characters, like Abdul Qadir Jilani, or spiritual like Ibn-ul-Arabi, or scholars like Ghazzali? Yet do we not feel the need amongst us of dozens and scores of Khwaja Kamal-ud-Dins and Sulaiman Nadvis, Amir Alis and Iqbals, Shaikh Abduhus and Shakib Arsalans, Rashid Razas and Said Valés, while there are hundreds of Sales and Rodwells, Muirs and Margoliouths, Zwemers and Stanley Joneses, to the fore and in most unwelcome evidence?

Listen to the voice of Abraham! Clearly enough it comes to us across the ages! It denounces our conduct



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in the face of the dangers with which Islam is surrounded. It demands of us that we should sacrifice the best of our sons at the altar of Divine Service, and not altogether at the altar of Mammon.

To our new brethren in the fold, the message of Abraham is this that the physical connection with one's children should be sublimated into a spiritual connection. The father loves the son, and the son loves the father, but this love is transient as it is based on physical connection. One can, however, turn this love into an eternal one, by sublimating it into a spiritual love. In so doing, one has to give to the son the message of Truth, of Service, and of Sacrifice, and if this is given in the right spirit and with a spiritual boldness, it is most likely to receive a response from the son; and when that response comes the bond of the flesh is supplemented by the bond of the spirit,—which is imperishable. I know that it is altogether unusual and unfashionable in "Modern Circles" to admonish children on matters religious, but the demands of truth are no respecters of either fashions or customs. If you truly love your children, give them the best that you have,—and what is dearer to you than the Truth that you have found—the Truth that has revealed to you the Life Eternal?

Abraham thought that the cause of truth demanded the slaying of his only son with his own hands, and straight-way he set himself to perform this the hardest of all tasks. Later, he was required to exile the same son for life,—and this also he did without hesitation or murmur. And we all know how this spirit of sacrifice was rewarded by God. It was rewarded with the rise, from the progeny of Ishmael of the great world religion called Islam. Let our brothers-in-Faith show a similar spirit of sacrifice with regard to their children, and we shall see, as surely as the day follows the night, the rebirth of Islam from this cold bleak island

## **“ REPEL (EVIL) WITH WHAT IS BEST ”**

country of Great Britain in a no distant future. And what is more when leaving the body of this flesh, at the time of what is called death, our brothers will have the glorious satisfaction of knowing that they are leaving behind in the world a heritage which is not only of the flesh, but also of the spirit, and that their accidental connection with their children by blood is going to be an acquired connection of the soul, that will abide for ever.

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him and seek His guidance and protection. We betake ourselves to Allah against the evils of our minds, and against the bad things of our actions. And whosoever receives the guidance of Allah, cannot be led away by anyone, and whomsoever He leaves to err (as a result of his actions) there is no one to lead him aright.

O Allah ! exalt Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad, as Thou didst exalt Abraham and the followers of Abraham, for surely Thou art Praised and Magnified. O Allah ! Bless Muhammad, and the followers of Muhammad, as Thou didst bless Abraham and the followers of Abraham, for surely Thou art Praised and Magnified.

Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and charity and the giving to the kindred, and He disallows indecency and evil and aggression. He admonishes that you may be mindful.

O, servants of Allah, remember Allah. He will raise you. Call on Him. He will answer your call. And verily remembrance of Allah is greater than everything.

Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest. Nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah ; and Allah is the Greatest ; Allah is the Greatest, and unto Allah is due all praise.

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## **“ REPEL (EVIL) WITH WHAT IS BEST ”**

BY W. B. BASHYR-PICKARD, B.A. (CANTAB.)

And who speaks better than he who calls to Allah while he himself does good, and says : I am surely of those who submit ?

And not alike are the good *and* the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo ! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend.<sup>1</sup>

In the verse quoted above from the Chapter *Ha Mim* occurs the injunction “ Repel (evil) with what is best,” and I should like to dwell upon this command for a

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, 41 : 33-34.

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moment or two. Evil is not to be disregarded. The whole trend of the Qur-án and all Islamic teaching is quite otherwise. Evil is something which must definitely and actively be guarded against. How often in the Holy Qur-án are the Faithful warned to be on their guard against evil, to be watchful and to be careful, to take precautions against evil: and wherefore? The reason is that, in everything your Lord hath created, two qualities are hidden, the good and the bad. In everything thou shalt find good, and in everything be on your guard against the possibilities of evil. Trust in God, but neglect not thine own precautions.

Repel evil with good. Where you find evil hath arisen, drive it out with what is best, and surely good is better than evil. Oppose evil with good, and, in more cases than many people imagine, the result will be good. Evil will vanish before good, as the darkness before the light. Should you meet evil with evil, do you not see that you add strife to strife? In the majority of cases the result is a hardening of hearts and a beclouding of the serenity of one's own being. When a heart giveth out evil, doth it not become evil? Beware, then, at any time of giving out evil.

But now again we must observe the result of our conduct; we must remember the object in view, that evil must be repelled. If, in some cases, goodness and kindness and mildness serve only to embolden and aggravate existing evil, then recourse must be to punishment, to chastisement. Is not this but a reflection of the Attributes of your Lord? Says the Qur-án:

Surely your Lord is the Lord of Forgiveness and the Lord of painful Retribution.<sup>1</sup>

Yet again there is another resource available to the Faithful, when evil is thrust upon them. Let them have recourse to their Lord, Who is ever present, Who hath

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, 41 : 43.

## “ REPEL (EVIL) WITH WHAT IS BEST ”

power over all things. Let them seek refuge in the Mighty, the Hearing, the Knowing. The arrangement of the whole affair is easy to your Lord. Call upon Him. He is the Guide, the Answerer, the Helper.

O my brothers in the Faith! regard not the mass of unbelief, of indifference, of aversion, amongst which in this land we spend our daily lives. Think rather how important a privilege is laid upon each one of you as representatives of the true religion, the religion of Allah, the religion of the One only God (*Alhamdu lillah il Ahad!*) perfected in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may the Peace and the Blessings of God abide with him!) even Islam. The fewer your numbers in this land the more important each one of you becomes as helpers of the Truth. Stand fast: live the Faith, being careful of your duty to God, to mankind and to yourselves, and trust absolutely in God, in Allah, knowing that success is in His hands—and upon Allah should the believers rely.

Passing now to the latter portion of the same chapter I should like to dwell upon the reference made to the Holy Qur-án and to emphasise the importance of the Holy Qur-án as being the unbreakable bond of unity of the believers, the source of success and understanding between the Faithful, of whatever clime, race or class. Mark the words carefully, while I repeat them once more:

Most surely it is a Mighty Book: falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it: a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One.<sup>1</sup>

What is it that separates friends and destroyeth the amity of relatives? Is it not falsehood and misunderstandings and mistrust? Would not an enemy, desiring to stir up strife amongst brethren deal in falsehood and seek by cunning to interpolate and corrupt and efface the clear bond of unity and understanding between them? But, if you hold fast to the Qur-án, who can separate you?

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-an, 41: 41-2.

who can sow enmity amongst you ? who can withstand the invincible bond of Truth that binds you to one faith, one brotherhood, even the Holy Qur-án. " Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it : a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One." Hold fast thereto.

Now, concerning the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Peace and the Blessings of God !), what clearer mark of truth can we have than that given in some of the verses of this chapter ? Let me quote :

Naught is said to you but what was said indeed to the apostles before you ; surely your Lord is the Lord of Forgiveness and the Lord of painful Retribution.<sup>1</sup>

Mark this carefully ; the Prophet Muhammad does not claim to bring any *new* religion. He does not say that the former prophets were all wrong and that he alone is right. Nay, the very thing that Muhammad urges is belief in what the apostles before him brought. He seeks to revive the Truth, to awaken men from their slumber of forgetfulness, to recall them from their lapses and wanderings back once more to the right path, the true religion, the one way that the prophets before him have proclaimed, even to worship the ONE ONLY GOD and to do good, to fulfil one's duties both to God and also to man.

Mark, too, the human humility of the Holy Prophet. His claim is but to be *one* of the prophets of God (Whose Name be praised !), not the only prophet, not even the chief of prophets, for as it is said in the Qur-án, " We make no difference between any of His apostles."

And yet, when we think deeply, when we examine the case carefully, how could Truth be otherwise ? Truth being eternal, immutable, how could any true prophet proclaim anything but the one true way, the perfect path, which leadeth to blessedness in God, the First and the Last, the Controller of all things, the Eternal, the Wise, the Knower of the hearts, the Possessor of all,

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, 41 : 43.

## **“ REPEL (EVIL) WITH WHAT IS BEST ”**

the Most Merciful Lord of all nations, of all creatures, of all things, of all worlds, both seen and unseen ? “ Praise to His Name, the Ever-Living ! ”

In this world there are multitude of the indifferent, the disaffected, the ignorant, the prejudiced, the adverse, from amongst people who seem overwhelmed by, and engrossed in, things material, so that they are oblivious to, if not scornful of, the spiritual, but, believe me, our cause is one for patience, for endurance and for effort and for complete reliance upon God (and upon Allah should the believers rely).

Surely aforetime He, the Mighty, raised up by His Truth a small band in Arabia amongst the adverse and the scornful, and shall He not now by His Grace and by His Aid raise up in this Western land the splendour of His Truth, while falsehood vanisheth, vanisheth by degrees ? Trust and fear not. Your Lord hath power over all things. Praise to His Name, the Merciful ! Surely we are His servants and to Him we do submit.

One thing is necessary, that you stand by your Faith, by Islam, and that you stand by one another. To stand by your Faith you cannot fail to stand by one another, for the Muslims are as brothers one to another. Your faith makes you brothers, and, in living your faith, you put into practice the best brotherhood of humanity.

For you there are no barriers of race. You behold a Muslim and you behold a brother, dearer, perhaps, than many who are nearer to you in point of race. So should it be : so must it be, till the races melt in unison into world-brotherhood, and the Tree of Peace cast her refreshing shade over the happiness of humanity.

Wherefore help your brothers, whether they be German, French, English, European, Asiatic, American, African or from the isolations of the South Seas.

YOUR LORD IS ONE LORD (Praise to His Name !  
*Alhamdu lillah il Ahad !*) AND YE ARE ONE BROTHERHOOD.

## TWENTY YEARS AGO <sup>1</sup>

### THE ENGLISH MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

Several people joined Islam formally this month. All of them are characterized by remarkable enthusiasm for the Faith. A young Londoner, who has been given Abdul Aziz as his Islamic name, bids fair to develop into a zealous and earnest worker. Madam Bloch of Brighton, also deserves particular mention for the affection and devotion that she displayed for her co-religionists and newly-adopted Faith.

The brotherhood is gaining in strength by the members often coming to the Mosque at Woking and thus benefiting one another by actual contact and intercourse. The democratic spirit that prevails at the Mosque and at the residence of the Imam is considered as a unique feature of Islam in this land by the Britishers themselves.

The Right Hon. Lord Headley, who repeats his visits to the Mosque, is very conspicuous in setting an example in that direction. His lordship's unassuming courtesy and brotherly affection towards all his co-religionists, his genial and noble treatment of all of them, are greatly admired and appreciated.

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### CHRISTIAN FORGERIES

We have proof in the Bible that apart from the lying which constituted false witness and was to the injury of a neighbour there was among the Hebrews, but little reprobation of lying. . . . "History forces upon us," writes Bishop Ellicott, "the recognition of pious fraud, as a principle, which was by no means inoperative in the earliest ages of Christianity." The early Christians cultivated the practice of "lying for the glory of God." Eusebius, the saint, who invented Constantine's vision of the Cross, boasted that "he had written what redounded to the glory and suppressed whatever tended to the disgrace of religion."

Open, if you please, your New Testament, and read the seventh verse of the fifth chapter of the first Epistle of St. John—"for these are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, the Holy Ghost: and these three are one"—then look for the same verse in the Revised Version and you will not be able to find it there. After being accepted as the Word of God for two thousand years, it has been finally expurgated. To-day, according to the Bible (the King James' Version), this passage is inspired; according to another (the Revised Version) "it is an imposture." . . . Reflect upon this! After using every means, even the most cruel, to force this Trinitarian text upon the world, the Revised Version vomits the imposture, unable to retain it any longer.

<sup>1</sup> *Islamic Review*, May 1915.

## POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM

It would be unnecessary to multiply illustrations. But consult the words in the margin of the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark, in the Revised Bible. Eleven entire verses (9—20) of this chapter, among which is the following: "Go ye unto all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation . . . He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," are quietly dismissed from the Word of God with the remark:

"The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel." . . . How did the revisers decide which ending of the Gospel was the Word of God? And why did they wait two thousand years before they gave out this information?

M. M. MANGASARIAN.

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## POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM <sup>1</sup>

BY N. H. BERLAS

Islam took its birth in Arabia more than thirteen centuries ago. Within the first century of its birth it had spread from India on the east to Spain on the west, and its followers now exceed 300,000,000 scattered all over the world.

A characteristic feature of Islam is that the companions of the Prophet Muhammad took the greatest pains in preserving and handing down his sayings and doings, called Traditions. In the collection of Traditions we have the life of the Prophet as led by him, and as it should be led by every Muslim. All the spheres of life of a man are covered by Muhammad's life, but it would take a long time to discuss all of them. What pertains to my subject is that he also led the life of a husband and father. Hence Islam supplies an elaborate code of laws relating to woman.

Of the four sources of Islamic Law and social doctrines the first two are,—(1) the Holy Qur-án and (2) the Traditions of the Prophet. I shall base my arguments upon these sources, and shall furnish quotations in support of my statements, wherever necessary.

<sup>1</sup> *The Japan Times and Mail.*



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

The greatest service that Islam has rendered to woman is that it has emancipated her and raised her status immensely. Her position under the Greek, Indian and Chinese civilizations has been that of a serving maid and a tool for the enjoyment of man. She has been no better in Christian countries. The Christian Church has been regarding her as a necessary evil, and her possessing a soul has been a point of controversy among the churchmen. Even in the 20th century, most Christian countries have not yet given her the rights which Islam conferred on her more than thirteen centuries ago.

Islam does not make any distinction between man and woman excepting that which is based on the very nature of their constitutions. Their constitutions have been fixed by nature because they have to perform different duties in life. Intellectually, morally, and spiritually they are equal, and this equality has been proclaimed by the Holy Qur-án and the Traditions of the Prophet. The Qur-án says :

Verily, the Muslim men and women, and the faithful men and women, and the devout men and women, and the fasting men and women, and the men and women who remember God much,—God has prepared for them pardon and a great reward.<sup>1</sup>

The verse is quite clear, and it places man and woman on an equal footing morally and spiritually. In the intellectual sphere too, there is no distinction. A Tradition of the Prophet says :

It is incumbent upon all men and upon all women to acquire knowledge.

In life their spheres of activity are different. Man's lot is the harder. He has to fight the battle of life and earn a living not only for himself, but also for his family. He has even to sacrifice his life in the cause of his community. For these two reasons he has a certain superiority over woman. Woman must, by nature, be tender in

<sup>1</sup> The Qur-án, 33 : 35

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order to nurse and bring up children, and this same tenderness disables her for the harder duties of life. This truth is borne out in the following verses of the Qur-án<sup>1</sup> :—

And women have a right like as men have a right against them in all fairness (*i.e.*, to them is due what is due from them), but men have been given a rank above them.

Again, the Qur-án says :

Men stand above women, for that God has graced the one of them above the other and for that they spend of their substance (for them)<sup>2</sup>.

This superiority does not militate against the rights of women. There are gradations of rank in every society. The principles laid down by the Qur-án are the foundations on which the fabric of any society can be built, and the Muslim society is built on these principles.

That man's conduct may not be overbearing, it has been ordained in the Qur-án<sup>3</sup> :

And do not boast of the precedence which God has given to one of you over the other, the men shall have a portion of what they earn and the women also a portion of what they earn, and ask God of His Grace, verily God knows about all things.

The superiority of man over woman is not a thing to boast of, much less a thing to take advantage of. But the weakness of woman has been recognized, and many provisions have been made so that men may not take undue advantage of it. Muhammad was so considerate to woman that in his last sermon at Mecca which is called the "Farewell Address" he says :

Fear God in respect to the rights of women.

The particular state in which the interests of man and woman mostly clash is the marriage state. In Islam the marriage state is a sacred institution, but the marriage contract is a civil procedure. It is based on the free

<sup>1</sup> The Qur-án, 2 : 228.

<sup>2</sup> The Qur-án, 4 : 34.

<sup>3</sup> The Qur-án, 4 : 32.

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consent of man and woman. A full-grown woman has as much right to choose the husband as a full-grown man has. No marriage contract is valid without the consent of woman. If she is present herself, well and good ; if not, she must be represented by her proxy. As a matter of course, precedence is given to woman. It is the woman who first declares her consent ; man only accepts her offer. To prevent clandestine marriages, the presence of at least two witnesses is absolutely necessary. Again publicity is enjoined upon the parties. The marriage ceremony is performed by a Qazi, a civil official, who registers the contract. It is an injunction of the Prophet that all contracts be reduced to writing.

The marriage is incomplete without the settlement of a dowry for the wife. The man has to contract to pay a certain sum of money or property to his wife, called *Mahr*. This *Mahr* or dowry becomes the wife's property, and it has nothing to do with her parents. The dowry is of two kinds, namely, prompt and deferred. It is open to the parties concerned to agree to any kind or to a portion of each kind. The prompt dowry is to be paid on demand by the wife, and she may demand it any time. She may demand half the amount even before the consummation of marriage. She may refuse to live with the husband if the prompt dowry is not paid at her demand. The deferred dowry may be paid at the husband's convenience. But it must be paid at the time of separation if it takes place at all. If the husband dies before payment of dowry, it is the first charge on his property. The wife's claim to it has preference over all the creditors and heirs to the property of the deceased. If the man makes a will he cannot deprive his wife of her dowry.

The dowry system is a very wise provision for the weakness of woman. Wherever the position of woman has weakened on account of strictness of the *purdah*

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system, *i.e.*, the seclusion, the Muslim society has made up the deficiency by raising the quantity of dowry. It is usual to settle half the dowry as prompt and the other half as deferred. It can be imagined what a great influence the Muslim woman commands over her husband by a timely pressure of claiming payment of the prompt dowry. It is to be noted that no presents are counted as payment of dowry. Nothing is counted towards payment of dowry unless it is expressly declared, and women are clever enough to avoid mention of the word. If the husband injudiciously happens to mention it, his wife flatly refuses to accept the present, and he has to withdraw his remark. He has to carry out all the whims and fancies of his wife, the debt of dowry always hanging round his neck.

After marriage the maintenance of the wife devolves upon the husband, and it is for this reason that man enjoys a superiority over woman. The maintenance should be according to the position of the husband in society.

Men are enjoined to be kind to women, as the Qur-án says :

And associate kindly with them, for if ye be averse to women, it may be that ye are averse to a thing wherein God has placed much good.<sup>1</sup>

A Tradition of the Prophet says :

The most perfect among the faithful in point of faith is he who is best among them in point of disposition, and who is most kind among them towards his wife.

The natural relations of husband and wife are complementary according to the Qur-án :

Women are a garment to you and you are a garment to them.<sup>2</sup>

In case of disagreement the course adopted for arbitration gives equality to husband and wife, according to the Qur-án :

And if ye fear a breach among the two (man and wife) then send for a judge from among his people and a judge from her people ; if they desire a reconciliation, God will arrange between them : verify God is knowing, informed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Qur-án, 4 : 19.

<sup>2</sup> The Qur-án, 2 : 187.

<sup>3</sup> The Qur-án, 4 : 35.

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In order to insure good treatment on the part of the husband, the wife is allowed certain remedies. If he (1) commits a crime, (2) treats her improperly or with severity, (3) threatens to deal with her harshly, and (4) neglects to fulfil his duties ; or if the wife has reasons to fear that her health or life would be endangered, she is entitled to live apart from him and draw maintenance from him. She cannot be sued for the restitution of conjugal rights in such cases. Under some of these circumstances she can even demand separation. Unless she has been divorced she will continue to be his wife and will have a share in the property of her husband.

Islam has introduced divorce with a deterrent injunction. The Prophet has said :

The most hateful of lawful things in the sight of God is divorce.

Divorce is the last remedy for disagreement. But disagreement may be temporary or due to some excitement. If these crises be passed over, life may be smooth thereafter. Hence the procedure of divorce is so arranged that man may recover from his rashness.

Divorce, like the marriage contract, is entirely civil. There is no need of going to the court and filing defamation suits. Declaration of divorce is sufficient to make it effective.

Man and wife can both divorce each other. The man on divorcing his wife has to pay her dowry. When the woman divorce her husband she has to forego a portion or the whole of her dowry. One of the deterring forces in Islam is this dowry system. It is under circumstances of absolute inability of each other to live together that they have recourse to it.

Divorce may be of several kinds. Roughly speaking, divorce may be classed under two headings—(1) Divorce leaving a way open to the couple to remarry, (2) Divorce

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barring remarriage. An instance of the second class occurs when a man accuses his wife of infidelity. Divorce will be established if the woman claims it and they can never remarry. An instance of the first case occurs when a man divorces his wife in simple terms. In this case they may remarry. There is another convenience allowed : if the couple resume marital relations within three months, they may do away with the renewal of marriage contract. There are other kinds of divorce in which marital relations may be resumed within the prescribed period, if the husband undergoes a penance.

Man is not allowed to play with the word divorce. If he divorces his wife three times (in simple terms), the divorce is complete, and they cannot resume marital relations. The Qur-án says :

Divorce may happen twice ; then either keep them with humanity, or dismiss them with kindness.<sup>1</sup>

Man is prohibited from making three declarations of divorce at one sitting. But if he makes them the divorce is complete, though he has committed a great sin. It is related of the Prophet that a man divorced his wife by making three declarations at one sitting altogether. He stood up in anger and said, " What ! the Great God's Book is made a sport of while I am still to be seen among you ? " He grew so very indignant over it that a companion actually thought that the Prophet would order the instant death of the man ; and so he stood up and said, " O Prophet of God ! shall I slay him ? "

In spite of the simple procedure divorce is scarce in Muslim society. The reason is not only economical but also moral and religious.

The usefulness of divorce to women cannot be denied, as it alleviates her suffering by releasing her from a bond of misery.

<sup>1</sup> The Qur-án, 2-229.

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In Islam man's responsibility towards his wife does not cease at divorce. He must maintain her for a period of three to four months after that. When all doubt of her being with child is removed she can marry another person. But if she is with child, the former husband must maintain her till the birth of the child. Even after birth if the man wants the mother to suckle the baby he must maintain her and the baby for two years. The Qur-án says :

And mothers shall give suck to their children two full years for him who desires to complete the suckling ; and on him to whom it is born devolves their sustenance, and their clothing, according to what is just ; no being shall be tasked but according to its capacity. . . . . But if they desire to wean by consent and counsel among themselves, then it shall be no crime in them, and if ye desire to have a nurse for your children, then it shall be no crime in you, when ye fully pay what ye offer her, in all fairness. And fear God, and know that God sees what you do.<sup>1</sup>

In legalizing polygyny Islam has put very strict restrictions,—so strict that it may be thought that Islam was aiming at abolishing it under normal circumstances. Islam forbids polyandry, hence the use of the term polygyny to avoid misunderstanding. In considering polygyny it should be borne in mind that Islam lays great stress on legality of intercourse between the two sexes. The penalty for illicit intercourse is corporal punishment, it being double in the case of a married person. It was so strictly enforced that a son of the second Caliph Umar on being convicted of it was awarded corporal punishment by the father as Caliph. The result was that the son died of the shock.

Now abnormal circumstances make their appearance every now and then. In the first place, a woman may be barren. Marriage being a social device for fulfilling nature's duty imposed upon every living being of propagating one's species, man fails in his duty if he does not find

<sup>1</sup> The Qur-án, 3 : 233.

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reasonable means to propagate his own species. In such cases a man may marry another wife.

An absolute need arises in case of war, when thousands and thousands of men lose their lives, resulting in an abnormal increase in the number of women. If polygyny does not come to the rescue of society, a large number of women will be forced to lead an unnatural life of maidenhood; or bastardy will increase, producing many social evils. Firstly, the unfortunate women will lose their self-respect. Secondly, selfish men will become irresponsible members of society. Thirdly, the offspring will not only lose his self-respect, but will also forfeit his share in the father's earnings and also lose his share in the inheritance of his father.

To provide against such evils Islam has legalized polygyny with a strict restriction of the number of wives, and a strict injunction to be just to all of them. The verses of the Qur-án are so worded that there is a veiled prohibition therein :

Then marry what seems good to you of other women, by twos, and threes, and fours; but if ye fear that ye shall not act equitably, then one only; it is a safer plan of abstaining from injustice.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that woman has every right to refuse to live with a man who marries a second wife. But this right should be enforced at the time of the marriage contract. If it has been made a condition of the contract that the man will not marry another woman, her position is safe. If after such a contract he marries another woman the first contract dissolves, and the man has to pay the dowry.

There is an overwhelming majority of men in Muslim society who do not indulge in polygyny. Cases of men

<sup>1</sup> The Qur-án, 4 : 3. Verse 129 of the same Chapter says: "And ye can never act equitably between women (wives), although you covet it."



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having two wives are rare, and if the ruling princes are excepted there may be no instances of three or four wives.

Islam restricts indiscriminate intermingling of men and women, but does not stop women from taking part in the activities of life. In this respect two principles are laid down by the Qur-án. First, there is an injunction both to men and women to cast down their glances on meeting each other. Secondly, there is an injunction to women to hide their places of adornment. There are many Traditions of the Prophet concerning his wives and other women, showing that they enjoyed full liberty. They joined congregational prayers with men, took part in public debates, accompanied men in war to perform the so-called Red Cross activities, and even commanded troops. In short, they took part in all healthy activities.

The prevailing *purdah* system or the seclusion in Muslim society is an aftergrowth and like other evil customs is a social evil. Women in Muslim society are now discarding the veil in large numbers. But in the sight of Islam the liberty enjoyed, or rather abused, by the Western woman is a social evil.

Islam has introduced a great reform regarding the possession of property by woman. The Muslim woman has been the mistress of her property for the last fourteen centuries. This privilege is denied to woman in Christian countries with the exception of one or two, and even here it was conferred on her in the latter part of the last century. Whether married or unmarried the Muslim woman manages her own property, and can dispose of it as she pleases. The husband cannot interfere in this disposal.

In regard to inheritance Islam has rendered a great service to woman. It has already been mentioned that her dowry is the first charge on the husband's property. Besides this she is entitled to a share in the inheritance. If the husband leaves an offspring she gets one-eighth of the

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property, and if he leaves no offspring she gets one-fourth. The law of inheritance is plainly laid down in the Qur-án :—

And ye shall have half of what your wives leave, if they have no issue ; but if they have issue, ye shall have the fourth of what they leave, after the legacies which they shall have bequeathed and debts. And they shall have the fourth of what ye leave, if ye have no issue ; but if ye have issue, then they shall have the eighth of what ye leave, after the legacies which ye shall have bequeathed and debts. . . . . An injunction from God ; and God is Knowing, Mild.<sup>1</sup>

Again as daughter and as mother she has a share in the inheritance. The Qur-án says :

God enjoins you concerning your children : a male shall have the like of the share of two females : but if there be females above two, then they shall have two-thirds of what he has left : and if there be but one, then she shall have the half : and his parents shall have, each one of them, a sixth of what he has left, if he has a child ; but if he has no child, and his parents be his heirs, then his mother shall have the third, and if he has brethren, then his mother shall have the sixth, after the legacies which he shall have bequeathed, and debts. Your fathers and your children, ye know not which of them is nearest to you in usefulness ;—an ordinance from God : verily God is Knowing, Wise.<sup>1</sup>

It is a principle that a woman gets half as much as a man if they bear the same relation to the deceased. It should be noted that no person can disinherit his heirs of the property. The utmost he can do is that he may bequeath one-third of his property to others, the remaining two-thirds must be distributed among his heirs. An adopted child has no share in the inheritance.

Islam inculcates deference and kindness to parents. Indeed such a great stress is laid on one's attitude to parents that goodness to them is inculcated along with the worship of God in the Qur-án :

And serve God, and join not any thing with Him, and be good to parents, and to those who are of kin, and to orphans, and the poor, and the neighbour who is of kin, and the neighbour who is a stranger, and the companion (who stands) by your side, and the wayfarer, and what your right hands have possessed (*i.e.*, dependents). Verily God loves not him who is an arrogant boaster.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Qur-án, 4 : 12.

<sup>2</sup> The Qur-án,

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At another place the Qur-án says :

And thy Lord has ordained that ye serve none but Him : and goodness to parents show ye, whether the one of them or both of them attain old age with thee, and say not to them even eh, nor reproach them, but speak to them generous words.<sup>1</sup>

The mother deserves more than the father. Here is a Tradition of the Prophet. "A man came to the Holy Prophet, and said, 'O Prophet of God ! I have committed a great sin. Will my repentance avail me ?' The Prophet said, 'Is thy mother alive ?' He said, 'No.' The Prophet said, 'Is the sister of thy mother alive ?' He said, 'Yes.' 'Then do good to her,' said the Prophet."

Another Tradition says, "Abu Hurairah (a Companion of the Prophet) reports that a man said, 'O Prophet of God ! who is most worthy to do good to ?' The Prophet said, 'Thy mother.' He said, 'And after her ?' The Prophet said, 'Thy mother.' He said, 'Then after her ?' The Prophet said, 'Thy mother.' The man said, 'Then again after her ?' The Prophet said, 'Thy father.'"

<sup>1</sup> The Qur-án, 17-24.

## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. 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-ÁN.**—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. 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-án, 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

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 attainments. 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.