

Muhammad is... the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets..."—Holy Qur-ān, 33 : 40

" There will be no Prophet after me."—Muhammad.

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MR. FAZL KARIM SAUNDERS.



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DECLARATION FORM

I, Kofi Bedu, son of the late Jacobus Kioeku Bedu, of S-338, Owoo Street, Ushher Town, Accra, Gold Coast, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own will that I adopt Islam as my religion, that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone, that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant, that I respect all Prophets,—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., that I will live a Muslim life by the help of God.

LA ILAHA IL-ALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASUL-ALLAH.

KOFI RAFUR BAHADUR BEDU.

WHY I EMBRACED ISLAM

BY FAZL KARIM SAUNDERS

“ There was a door to which I found no Key :
There was a Veil past which I could not see.
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There seemed—and then no more of THEE and ME . . . ”

Brought up and confirmed in the Church of England, like many other Englishmen, I spent most of my boyhood in an old Cathedral city—a city which, at that time, was “ . . . famous for its large number of churches and public-houses ! ”

I remember being taught the Ten Commandments by teachers and others, learning the Catechism, reading the Bible, and so on, but beyond imbibing a kind of morbid emotionalism, and passing various school examinations in “ religious knowledge,” I am afraid my upbringing was lacking in what one would call real spiritual discipline, which would adequately equip me for the adventure of life.

During 1918-1919 I happened to see some service with the Royal Air Force in Egypt. While here, an English friend and I had the opportunity of attending a midnight observance of Maulud-un-Nabi (Birthday of the Prophet). I remember this impressed us greatly at the time,—the chanting in Arabic, the flag of the Holy Prophet floating in the breeze, the sincerity of the worshippers, and their kindly hospitality. But I must admit that at the time we were there merely as sight-seers.

It was on my return to England, after demobilization, that my enquiries and questionings commenced. What actually first prompted the quest after wisdom was a little book—“ Thoughts are Things ”—by a New Thought writer, Prentice Mulford. This helpful little volume showed in simple language the power of thought : how wrong thoughts attract an environment of wrong, and how, *vice versa*, correct scientific thinking tends to attract what is desirable, and so on.

WHY I EMBRACED ISLAM

This search lasted some four or five years, during which I read and studied widely, and attended various lectures and discussions. Theosophy, Buddhism, *Yoga* philosophy, Spiritualism, Sufi mysticism, Catholicism, New Thought, Pelmanism,—all came in turn under my scrutiny, but though I could see certain eternal truths enshrined in all these philosophies, so far I “came out by the same door as I went.....”

It was not until 1924 that I first became acquainted with the simple teachings of Islam, so eminently reasonable and satisfying. Happening one day to go into a public library in the Midlands, I came upon a current copy of the *Islamic Review* and coming to the pages “What is Islam?” I there and then knew that I had come to the end of my search.

I read a code of laws, which, if faithfully observed, would lead to success, both temporal and eternal, to peace of mind and serenity, and which would also show how the effects of past mistakes could be nullified. I read of a royal philosophy, simple in form, yet profound enough for a lifetime of study, which would enable the individual soul to orientate itself and its activities correctly, and to take its rightful place in the mighty Universe.

Shortly afterwards I formally accepted Islam and was received into the Brotherhood by Imam Khwaja Nazir Ahmad.

Since those days I have always been able to view world affairs from the real standpoint—the standpoint of the Muslim,—instead of having false beliefs and materialistic opinions forced on me by the world, which is the case with thousands who are unable to discern truth from falsehood, or even right from wrong!

Finally, Islam forbids the cardinal sin of selfishness, and teaches that one cannot be happy if one's brother is unhappy. A well-known Eastern thinker once said: “Our vocation is our real lamp in life, whatever our

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occupation may be." After our daily needs are satisfied, and we have made due provisions for our future material welfare, let us, Muslims, all find a vocation. It may be in lightening our brother's burden in a material sense, or it may be spiritual help we can give him. But let us find that vocation, for it will be our only passport to lasting happiness, the only justification for our existence both here and hereafter.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

(Continued from Vol. XXIII, p. 379.)

Next, take the question of our existence.

Christianity would make in it two watertight divisions, the earthly life and the heavenly life—the one called the mundane, and the other the spiritual. In Islam, existence is a continuous process. The spiritual is growing out of our earthly existence every moment of our life. Death is, so to say, a milestone, on our way to eternity. We are carrying our heaven and hell with us in this life. The difference is that our spiritual selves will be more palpable after death than they are in this world. The terms mundane and spiritual are unknown in Islamic philosophy. The words used instead are "Near Existence" and the "Hereafter."

According to Islam, *Nafs*, or consciousness, is one throughout. It only undergoes changes. Thus the elementary animal consciousness is called *Nafs-i-Ammara*, whereas in a higher condition, that is in the moral stage, it is called *Nafs-i-Lawwamah*. And in the perfected condition, that is in the spiritual condition, consciousness is called *Nafs-i-Mutmainna* or consciousness at rest. It is the experience of this last condition that is aimed at by the Islamic regulations of life, and the true Muslim is he who

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has attained this restful condition of mind, since the term "Muslim" signifies one who has made peace with his own nature, who, in order to do this, has completely surrendered himself to the Will of the Creator, and who can say, even as Jesus said:—"Not my will, but Thine be done."

I repeat in the life after death we shall feel our spiritual existence, whether it be progressive or stunted, more palpably than we are doing here. To this fact the Qur-án refers in the following words:

"And We have made every man's actions cling to his neck, and We will bring forth on the Resurrection Day a Book which he will find wide open." "Read your Book. Your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this day." ¹

It is this attitude of Islam towards existence, which has enabled it to produce saintly politicians and saintly business men—phenomena unknown in Christendom.

To pass on to yet another instance of this disruptive tendency of Christianity, we may mention its attitude towards the question of Divine Dispensation. According to Christianity, the advent of Jesus marks a breach between the past and the future, although Jesus himself asserted that he came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Christianity asks us to believe that the law that had been working before for the redemption of Humanity, had proved a failure after a long trial, and that Jesus came to inaugurate a new era of redemption—called Redemption by Grace. So, according to Christianity, the spiritual growth of Humanity is not a gradual continuous unfolding, but an abrupt phenomenon, creating an unbridgable gulf between the past and the future—a theory that can never appeal to a man who has the slightest acquaintance with the history of the growth of the body and the mind.

Islam holds that the spiritual training of man has been a gradual process. Although religious truth is fundamen-

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 13 : 16.

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tally one and the same but its application to the solid facts of life must change from time to time according to the enlargement and expansion of social instincts of man. Thus, from the family to the national life there must be many stages of Divine guidance in the existence of a people. From this point of view every new religious guide comes to lay a new brick, as it were, in the moral structure built by his predecessor. Jesus's own saying, referred to above, was evidently intended to convey this truth to his followers. To a Muslim, Muhammad came only to interpret the religion of all previous prophets, including Jesus, in the light of the dawning international outlook of humanity. Jesus, to the Muslims, like Buddha, was the last of the national prophets of his people. We find him quite emphatically saying :

"I am not come but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

But as a Prophet he could see the vision of the approaching international future for Humanity, and he tried his best to prepare his nation for it. His actions and teachings, for this reason, had a strong tinge of internationalism. Gentiles were not altogether despised or shunned ; the Gospel was to be preached to the world at large ; and it was this foretaste of internationalism in the preachings of Jesus that made it impossible for an exclusive nation like the Jews to appreciate his message. That is why Jesus's call, like that of Buddha, was responded to mostly by outside people, rather than by the sheep of his fold. Jesus was well aware of the difficult nature of his message, and hesitated to give the whole of it as is evident from the following statement :

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."¹

Therefore, Jesus promised to his followers, the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, who will guide them into

¹ John, 16 : 12.

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all the truth. According to the Muslims, the Comforter was Muhammad the Prophet, who boldly preached Internationalism in religion, and presented God as *Rabbul 'Alamin*, or Creator, Sustainer and Evolver of all the nations. But this is not all that Muhammad did. He syntheticized the whole range of the phenomenon of Divine Dispensation by declaring that for all nations Divine Guidance had been equally vouchsafed.

"For every nation there has been a Guide," announced the Qur-án.

And again :

"There has not been a nation that a Warner has not appeared in it."

Nay, a finishing touch was given to the whole theory when it was commanded :

"Say : We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which has been revealed to Abraham and Ismael and Issac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and (in) that which was given to the Prophets from the Lord : we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit." ¹

I now come to the question of non-resistance. Here also the same tendency of unbalanced judgment is betrayed by Christianity. I am not going to discuss here the practice of the Christians, as everyone knows that in their practical life our Christian brothers are greater believers in resistance than are Muslims. All through the centuries, they have fought with non-Christians, by pen, sword and mouth, for religious as well as economic purposes. But I am here to discuss the question of non-resistance as an ideal. "Resist not evil" is the Christian pronouncement on the subject. It ignores the scientific fact that struggle is the very essence of existence. It is by the assimilation of the useful, and the rejection of the injurious, that every

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 2 : 136.

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organiser lives and thrives. Our physical body is doing this every moment of its existence, and the moment it ceases doing so, it dies. There must be some sort of resistance to evil, if the virtuous are to live and prosper, moral, if not material.

The Prophet Muhammad is very clear on this subject. He says that we should check an evil if we see one. And if we have not the power to check it, we should protest against it; and if we have not the power even to protest against it, we should hate it in our minds. I should make it clear here that hating and resisting an evil is not the same thing in Islam, as hating the *person* who does it: The Qur-án says:

Let your weapon of defence be kindness, and lo and behold, he that has been your enemy becomes your bosom friend!

So it is love of the evil-doer that inspires a Muslim to resist an evil.

It may be asked, however, whether in moral resistance resort should also be had to physical resistance. A Muslim's reply will be that although the spirit is, in the last analysis, independent of the body, in its earthly existence it cannot do without the latter. So long as we are living in this world of matter, the body is our indispensable agent. So, if in a spiritual cause, the bodies of its upholders are threatened with destruction, these have to be saved for the sake of that cause. In other words, a defensive fight has to be put up against evil-doers if they attack the virtuous. Thus far does Islam sanction the act of physical resistance, and no further,—and this is quite in keeping with the facts of nature. The Qur-án says:

And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits: Surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.¹

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 2 : 190.

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Again :

And fight with them until there is persecution and religion should be only for Allah : but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.¹

In these injunctions Islam does nothing more than recognise the necessity of the body in the interests of the spirit,—a necessity ignored by Christianity. It is these fundamental differences in the attitude towards things adopted by these two religions that are at the bottom of the one being so successful as a religion, and the other having so hopelessly failed. Had I sufficient time at my disposal, I would have shown you how fundamentally these two religions differ in their conceptions of humanity and its relation to the universe, in their conceptions of human nature, in their conceptions of virtue and vice, in their attitude towards womanhood and towards money—in a word, towards all the different problems of our existence. It is the superficial reader only who finds in the Qur-án nothing but a re-hash of older scriptures. I would have shown to you also how even in detailing the stories of the Bible the Qur-án makes departures, significant and also fundamental. But having regard to the limitation of time, and the patience of my audience, let me stop this comparison here, and drop a helpful hint to those who desire peace among the warring nations of the world. I tell you, economic interests cannot form any bond of unity. The resources of the world are limited and our desires for them boundless. We cannot remain long united on grounds of economic interest. We can unite only if we cultivate the spirit of service and of sacrifice in the place of selfishness, and it is religion alone that affords a ground for such action. It is wrong to say that religion has caused division among people. The last Great War had nothing religious about it, and the apprehended future war is being fostered, not by religious fanaticism, but by economic greed. It is true that the religious emotions of people have been exploited from time

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 2 : 193.

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to time by clever individuals and classes, who had not the slightest love or regard for religion ; but religion is not to blame for this. What good thing is there in the world that has not been abused by interested persons. What real unity exists to-day between man and man is not owing to any economic interest, because unity in material interest invariably results in destructive reaction. Religious instinct alone has been responsible. After the fearful experiences of the last twenty years, let us once more look to religion for a bond of union. It is not religion that stands against progress, as our brothers of the West seem to think, but its corrupted form. Our present miseries have nothing to do with religion. It is the insufficiency of religion that is at the bottom of all the chaos. We must put away from our minds all narrowness and exclusiveness, whether of race or colour, of country or even of tradition, and come out in all earnestness to see if there is a religion that can keep pace with our highly developed faculties. If such a religion can be found, it is that and nothing else in the world that can save us from the impending cataclysm.

Here it will not be out of place to draw your attention to certain remarks of Prof. H. A. R. Gibbs in his very enlightening book "Whither Islam ?" He says :

"But Islam has yet a further service to render to the cause of humanity.....it possesses a magnificent tradition of inter-racial understanding and co-operation. No other Society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity, and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great Societies of the East and the West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition."

Elsewhere the Professor says :

"For the fullest development of its own cultural and economic life Islam cannot do without the co-operation of European Society ; for the further development of its cultural life Europe cannot do without the forces and capacities which lie within Islamic Society."

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And again :

"We must wait upon Islamic Society to restore the balance of Western Civilization upset by the one-sided nature of that progress."

In conclusion, I should like to remind the Muslims present here what the Qur-án expects of them. It says :

"You are the best of the nations raised up for the benefit of men ; you enjoin what is right, and forbid the wrong, and believe in Allah ; and if the followers of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them ; of them some are believers and most of them are transgressors." ¹

And for my Christian brothers present here, I will repeat the message which Muhammad was commanded by God to deliver to them some 1,400 years ago.

"Say : O People of the Scripture ! Come to an agreement between us and you : that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah."

Take it to heart. It is a great message and in it lies the remedy for all the ills wherefrom present humanity continues to suffer.

THE INTERNATIONAL TANGLES AND A POSSIBLE REMEDY

BY M. JAMAL MUHAMMAD

As a result of the Great War and its appalling losses, there were many who thought that National hatreds and greed would become much modified even if they did not disappear altogether. It was also thought that the great advances that science was making in the invention and development of instruments of war, more and more destructive almost every day would have a restraining influence on the nations of the world by creating a healthy fear of the possible consequences of another such or even a smaller war. Then, there was the League of Nations, specially brought into being as an aftermath of the Great

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 3 : 109.

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War on purpose to save the world from the terrible consequences of another such cataclysm. It was intended that all the nations of the world, big and small, should be members of that body and that it should safeguard and protect the interests, independence and integrity of all the nations of the world, or at least those of its members, weak or strong, in a just, impartial and equitable manner.

But events since the Great War, and particularly the happenings in the Far East between China and Japan, and the present Italo-Abyssinian dispute, clearly denote that things are getting worse instead of better.

What is really wrong with the world seems to be the natural question now uppermost in the thought of many a thinking mind. There must certainly be something inherently wrong with it, or rather, to put it more clearly, in the peoples' conception of nationality, to account for this most deplorable change for the worse, when the heavy losses and damage caused by the Great War are still fresh in our minds, and their adverse effects are in various ways, still oppressing us very heavily. Although religious cleavages, rivalries and antagonisms are still to be found in some parts of the world, as in India, where economic development is still in the initial stages, and where a right sense of Nationhood has yet to be perfected, it is not these that now trouble mankind so much as the national greed and hatred resulting from racial pride and prejudices. The example of Japan and China, Italy and Abyssinia clearly proves this. Here we see Buddhism pitched against Buddhism and Christianity against Christianity.

The trouble seems to be that the sense of distinction of National Individualities and Identities has been fostered and forced up rather too far, so that it has now transcended its reasonable and healthy limits. Unless something

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is done to rectify it and restore it to its proper place in the affairs of men all the efforts of great statesmen and of those of the League of Nations will continue to prove fruitless and futile.

National groups are only convenient syndicates of people, designed to protect and promote the interests of a compact and wieldy body of people in healthy competition with other similar groups. It was never meant to dominate and despoil others. It can be compared to different families in a village or in the street of a town. The duty of every family group ought to be, individually and collectively, to protect and promote the interests of its own particular group, and if possible to excel others in healthy and friendly rivalry, also to help others less fortunately placed, if its resources are such that something can be spared to assist others after meeting the needs of its own group; but the duty of that group can never be to despoil any, or as many of the others as possible or to enrich its own group at the expense of the others. This is a generally accepted principle, and is practised and enforced all over the world within an Empire Kingdom, or Republic acknowledging the same sovereignty. Why should this very reasonable and sound principle be restricted to particular jurisdictions alone and not extended to comprehend the whole of the Earth?

After all, what are different nationalities but different cultures, races, or languages, of which every nation is equally and naturally proud, just as any family group is and ought to be proud of its own particular group without in any way looking down upon others.

Though particular nations at particular times are apt to forget it, the fact remains that all human beings, whatever their race, creed, culture or language have the same feelings of self-respect and of pain and joy. That being so, is it fair that one should seek to dominate

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another by sheer force? Nor is there much sense in it either. For, if a stronger nation wishes to take advantage of its weaker neighbour and tries to dominate it, the compliment will be returned in due course, perhaps, with compound interest, when the position of the two are reversed, as has been the case between France and Germany for a long time.

Without benefiting anybody in the long run, it only results in creating a strong desire for revenge at the earliest opportunity, and an uncontrollable restlessness on either side, apart from breeding national hatreds, prejudices and suspicions which are the real causes of all the present-day world troubles.

Even now in the British Empire, to which I have the honour and privilege to belong, there are many diverse races, creeds, cultures and languages such as English, Scotch, Welsh, Indians, Burmans, Chinese, Malays, Arabs, Somalis, Negroes, Maoris, Red-Indians, South African-Dutch, French-Canadians, Maltese-Italians and many others, grouped together with a common binding force, acknowledging the same sovereignty. Any aggrandizement or war between the different sections of the British Empire cannot be tolerated. It is simply unthinkable, and it has become unthinkable for the simple reason that the peoples concerned have become used to a certain idea, and that idea is that, though the British Empire may be composed of different races, creeds and cultures, it is yet in other respects a single unit; the different sections forming but parts of that indivisible whole. As such they have got used to the idea that it would be criminal folly to think of each other, as between the various sections of the Empire, in terms of weaker or stronger nations, or of aggrandizement or war, and they also know that it would never be tolerated. It is because of this ingrained idea that they never think of it, and so

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it has become unthinkable in spite of the marked variations in the fortunes of the different component parts of that Empire, as regards Place, Position, Needs and Resources, which are accidental and to which they have become habituated without loss or detriment to anybody. And since they have become so habituated, all that they now think, as between themselves, is only in terms of healthy rivalry, to excel each other, and not in those of aggrandizement and war.

Cannot this reasonable idea, this sane broad and tolerant spirit be extended to comprise the whole of this Planet, our *Mother Earth*? The variations in the races, cultures and languages, and the difference in Situations and Natural Resources found in the countries of this world, do not, after all, differ so much from those to be found within the British Empire. If the different parts of that Empire have become reconciled in a sporting spirit to the variations in the luck of Place, Position and Resources, which are after all accidental and not man-made, and do pull together, what is there to prevent the different parts of *Mother Earth* from doing likewise?

No doubt there are certain special problems which certain countries have to face. It is true, for example, that there is overcrowding in some of the countries of the world. But there are also thinly populated areas, and if there be goodwill and tolerance all round, there is nothing to prevent the excess populations from migrating to sparsely populated lands, and settling there as citizens thereof, for the benefit of all concerned. If the immigrants show a co-operative spirit and are not the source of disturbing and disruptive factors, and if the countries receiving them have no reasonable cause to fear intrigue and interference from the home-countries of the immigrants, it will not be difficult to arrange.

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After all, the world has not completely lost its human virtues of hospitality and gratitude.

It may be said that such emigration would be a loss to the country of origin. The question of gain and loss can only come in, if the idea is to dominate or crush each other. But if the welfare, happiness and prosperity of the emigrants are alone to be the objectives—as ought to be the case—the question of loss or gain of strength need not arise at all. There is the United States of America as an object-lesson to guide us in this.

As regards shortage of food stuffs and raw materials, taking all in all, we have so far had no real dearth of these in the world, although such shortage are very often anticipated and feared ; on the other hand it is rather the over-abundance of these that is worrying us at the present time. With the transport facilities we have now, and the expected further rapid improvements therein, there need be no real difficulty in the harmonious exchange of foodstuffs, raw materials and manufactured articles between the various countries of the world, provided less of the spirit of selfishness and narrow-minded national exclusiveness is shown. Then there is Nature, which has not yet disclosed all its secrets and resources. From past experience it may be confidently expected, that before any future shortage manifests itself, science will have discovered from Nature new resources to more than fill up the gap. In these circumstances, it would be far better to concentrate our attention on the urgent needs of the present and to leave the future to take care of itself or at least to the future generations.

As regards the cleavage between different nationalities, the chief and the only real difficulty lies in the various languages used ; and this is also more an accident than anything else. However that may be, different languages need not necessarily mean different angles of vision, and

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people speaking different languages can still have a common nationality and a common cause and common aspirations, as is the case with India. Again, there is no distinct or definite demarcation of frontiers as between the various nations of the world. It is all artificial, and there is always much intercourse between the various nationalities of the world. On the other hand our planet the *Earth* is definitely cut off from the other planets and stars in the Universe. Such being the case, is it difficult, is it not better and wiser, to cultivate, so to say, a sense of *Earth Nationality* for the common good of all people living on this planet ?

There will be ample scope for the spare energies of the more advanced and stronger nations, in the uplift of those less advanced and weaker, in a friendly and helping spirit. There is much real pleasure, credit and lasting good in that.

There is such a thing as the difference between Right and Wrong, and as long as the criterion of right and wrong does not take the place of aggressive nationalism, we shall continue to have all the anxieties and troubles we are having now.

This idea of right and wrong is nothing strange. It is the dominant one with us all in our private lives, as well as with peoples living under the same sovereignty and jurisdiction, but this has to be extended to comprehend the whole Earth. Nor is the idea a new one. All the great founders of religion have continually been emphasising it in their teachings, in order that the Kingdom of God may come to this Earth the sooner, and the brotherhood of man may become a reality. Indeed the Arabian Prophet well puts it when he says :

He is not of us who sides with his tribe in aggression and he is not of us who calls others to help him in tyranny, and he is not of us who dies while assisting his tribe in injustice.

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For real peace to be established, we must have good-will. Only when there is good-will all round will there be real peace, and then the much sought peace will come to us and remain with us.

THE PREACHING OF ISLAM

BY HAFIZ GHULAM SARWAR, M.A.

There is a great deal of propaganda work going on in Muslim countries about popularising Islam amongst non-Muslims. There is a vague but a very general feeling amongst Muslims of all classes that time is ripe when some great country like England, Japan, Germany or Russia will declare itself to be a new Muslim Power in the world and lead the older and less powerful countries of Islam. *La taqnatu min-rahmatillah*, "Never despair of God's mercy (or benevolence)," says the Qur-án and every Muslim believes that when the clouds of adversity are thickest and heaviest on the sky of the Muslim world, God's help is always near. There is only one condition attached to this realization of God's help, viz., Muslims must pray to God for it and work as hard as they can to deserve God's help.

Distress befell them, and affliction. And they were shaken till the Messenger and those who had believed with him said :

When will come the help of God ? Is it not (a fact) that the help of God is nigh ?

But even more direct than this is the prophecy of the Qur-án :

O ye who believe : Should anyone amongst you renounce his Faith, God will then, later on, bring forth a people whom He loves, And they love Him : Humble towards the Believers, Mighty against the unbelievers, striving in God's path, And fearing not the fault-finding of the fault-finders, This is a grace from God, He gives it whom He pleases, And God is Vast, Knowing.

The majority of commentators of the Holy Qur-án think that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Turks

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took the lead in Islam from enfeebled dynasties of Arabs. Men like Salahuddin (Saladin) the Great literally fulfilled all that is indicated above. But God's prophecies are not confined to one era. They are general like all His Laws. Now that the Turks have given up the Caliphate and renounced all intention of a religious lead in Islam we may rightly expect another nation to rise up and fill the vacancy. We do not know whether the time is ripe or not but we cannot disbelieve the word of God. Then, again, the last verse of Chapter 47 says :

For God is All-Independent, and you are all dependants ; and if you should turn back He will replace you by another people and then they will not be like you.

Muslims all over the world have become slack in their Faith and in its observance. God is not dependent on them. He will raise up another people stronger and better than they and who will take their place and be not slack and weak as they are.

It is a terrible thing to know that those who call themselves Muslims are going to be replaced by others but God's ways are unique. He can do away with the whole of mankind and bring a new one :

O ye mankind ! You are all in need of God ; But He, God, is All-Independent, All-Praised. If He please He may carry you off and bring a new creation. And there is no hardship in this to God.

And once again :

And We cause these periods to alternate amongst mankind, that God may distinguish those who believe, And that He may select witnesses from amongst you.

Reading in between the lines one of two things must happen. The first is that if amongst the present-day Muslims there is a race who is willing to fight God's fights and offer their lives and their wealth—their all-in-all—then God will surely help them and redeem His promises. Be they Indians, Chinese, Persians, Arabs, Turks or any other race of Muslims, howsoever unlikely

¹ The Holy Qur-án : 31, 15—17.

² The Holy Qur-án, 3 : 139.

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it may appear, God will certainly, surely and decidedly come to their help and make them victorious :

And yet another thing which you love—Help from God and a near victory, And give those glad tidings to the Faithful.

But the fact is that we present-day believers in Islam are merely *Muslims* and have yet to rise to the rank of the *Faithful* in the truest sense of the word. The qualifications of the Faithful in the grandest and the deepest sense of that word are contained in the following verse :

Surely God has purchased from the Faithful their lives and their belongings in exchange for the Garden that is for them.

They fight in God's way :

Then they kill and are killed : A promise made binding upon Him in the Torah, and the Evangel and the Qur-án—

And who is more faithful in fulfilling his covenant than God ?—then be ye happy on account of the bargain you have bargained with Him.

And it is this which is the great triumph.

The covenant in the verses just quoted applies equally to Muslims, Jews and Christians. It is a mistake on the part of Jews and Christians to imagine that Islam is anti-Jewish or anti-Christian. Our Holy Prophet came to purify and amalgamate the followers of these two religions under the banner of Islam—the religion of Abraham, Noah, Moses and Jesus.

And this is the whole point of this article. Muslim preachers in Europe, America and Asia must concentrate their efforts on this unifying of Christians, Jews and the Faithful amongst ourselves. The clarion call of God in the Qur-án is as good to-day as it was 1,354 years ago and as it shall remain to the end of human existence on this earth :

O ye People of the Book !

Come to a saying,

The same for us and for you :

That we serve none but God,

And that we join naught with Him,

And that some of us take not others for lords besides God.

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 61 : 13.

² The Holy Qur-án, 9 : 111.

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There is no need to enter into controversies on minor points. If we Muslims are willing to sacrifice our lives and our wealth for this ideal then, as I said, one of two things must happen : either we will again become the leaders of religious thought in the world or we will convert some other nation who will do so. "*La-ilaha il-Allah Muham-madur-Rasul-ul-Allah*" most powerfully describes the Faith of Islam to the whole world. The rest are doctrines and theology. Let us preach the simple Faith to start with and combine, or try to combine, the whole mankind under the banner of the Unity of Godhead. The rest follows as clearly as light follows the sun. Let us get rid of quarrels and disputes and fix our souls on the central and unifying force of Islam—the FAITH in the ONENESS OF GOD and success will be ours. Let Wahabis, Shias, Sunnis and all the other so-called sects of Islam take the oath of allegiance to Islam :

We will not join aught with God ; And we will not steal,
And we will not commit adultery, And we will not bring a
calumny for giving it before our hands and our feet, And we will
not disobey the Prophet in what is good.¹

Let us who are or claim to be preachers of Islam make this pledge and carry the message of Islam to the civilised world and success is assured to us. In a succeeding article, I will give in detail the commandments of Islam. May God help all true Muslims. Amen.

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BY SYED M. H. ZAIDI

In vain shall we search the world for a religion which has not laid stress on fasting, with, of course, various modifications due to climate, race, civilization and other circumstances. A historical survey will show that all the nations of antiquity have had periods of annual fast. The Celt, the Roman and the Greek realized the importance

¹ The Holy Qur-ān, 3 : 63.

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of fasting, as did the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians, the Babylonians and Assyrians. The philosophers of the various schools—Cynic, Stoic, Pythagorean, Neo-Platonist counselled fasting. Hinduism, Jainism, and the higher Taoism of China impose severe fasting and abstinence, while primitive Buddhism recommends fasting in moderation. The followers of Confucius as well as of Zoroaster have this practice while Judaism observes an annual fast, on the Day of Atonement, in commemoration of the descent of Moses from Sinai. The history of all the Prophets of Israel, Moses, Elias, Ezra, and John the Baptist furnishes a large number of examples in which fasting is commended and Jesus also fasted for forty days in the desert¹ and commanded that fasting should have a place in the practice of his followers² for which reason fasting is supported by ecclesiastical authority throughout the greater part of Christendom, although in modern times its use has fallen into disrespect as a religious obligation.

Some obey the fasting instinct to show the genuineness of their repentance; some to placate the wrath of offended deities; some to anticipate and avoid the merited chastisement because of their sins; some to avert misfortune; some as a method through which to appeal to the benevolence of their gods for the fulfilment of their hearts' desire; and some for the maintenance of self-control amidst circumstances of temptation, while in recent times, like an older application, "fasting has been used as a means of protesting against the alleged injustice of the law of the land, and even of defeating the law, the hunger-strike being practised with such persistency that it has led either to the release of the protesting prisoner or to his death."

The Philosopher-Prophet of Arabia, like every Prophet, a medical man himself, realised the underlying psychology

¹ Matt., 4 : 2; Luke, 4 : 2.

² Matt., 4 : 16; Mark, 2 : 19.

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and scientific value of fasting, and commanded thus :

O Believers ! a fast is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may fear God for a certain number of days. But he who is sick, or upon a journey, shall fast a number of other days ; and as for those who are able to keep it and yet break it, the expiation of this shall be the maintenance of a poor man. God wisheth you ease, but wisheth not your discomfort, and that you may fulfil the number of days, and that you glorify God for His guidance and that you be thankful.

In obedience to these injunctions every Muslim must fast during the Holy month of Ramadhan which is the holiest of all the months, since in it was revealed the first instalment of the Sacred Book of Islam.

The fasting month of the Muslims begins at the sight of the new moon and lasts until the appearance of the next new moon.

The fast begins when the first streak of light shows on the Eastern horizon, and continues until the end of the day. During this time is observed complete abstinence from food and drink, and even from smoking so that no slightest particle of food or drop of water or other liquid is permitted to pass the lips. But abstinence from food and drink is not the only essential for an absolute observance of this religious obligation. Indulgence in sexual intercourse or other physical delights of this world is forbidden and any sign of temper under the strain of hunger is sternly prohibited as are impatience and fretfulness.

“ All dissensions must be forgotten, all vicious pursuits abandoned to render the services of a fast an acceptable offering to God.” The Muslim has to perform his fast with a cool, calm and patient dignity.

Fasting, when observed sincerely, apart from its beneficial effects on the physical and moral state, improves the spiritual prospect of a man's life. It engenders the virtue and moral stamina necessary to curb and conquer

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the passions, and resist the temptations of worldly pleasures and forbidden things. It furthers the virtues of truth and sincerity, patience, contentment and moderation. It inspires a man to nobler aims and ideals, and to higher conceptions of morality; and, in addition to purifying the blood and sharpening the intellect, it ennobles both mind and soul. It not only teaches man to feel for the poor and needy and to be appreciative of and thankful for the gifts that Allah has given him, but also prepares him to face boldly the vicissitudes of misfortune and for a life of hardship and want.

The Holy Prophet of Islam set a striking example of the solemn observance of fasting during this Holy month, and at other periods also. There were few among his contemporaries who carried out the commandments of the Almighty Allah in the same sober, rigid and literal way as he. He observed the fast thoroughly, fulfilling this obligation even when he had also to perform the various duties which his Divine position required of him. He held meetings of his executives, discussed questions of religious and political importance, dictated notes to his scribes, and he did all this and other work without the least sign of fatigue or irritation.

The Holy month of Ramadhan is concluded in a festival generally known as "Eid;" on which day the great message of the Arabian Prophet which is the very essence of concord and peace, that every Muslim is a brother unto another, is demonstrated. Go to any mosque where the Faithful offer their prayers and you will find the spirit of Islamic fraternity brought into play with the vivid fascination of reality. Be the Believer prince or peasant, a nabob from Upper India or a merchant-prince from Bombay or Calcutta, a sugar-king from far off Java or a beggar from the streets of Baghdad, a brisk coffee-seller from Persia, a fez-dealer from Turkey or a wandering

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“heeng” seller from Trans-Frontier, an Effendi from Cairo or Constantinople or an active young man from Europe, a dark-skinned Negro from Abyssinia or an anæmic replica of nordic colourless from the West, be an Arab chief or a dancing dervish, an impressive Sheikh or an oppressed Syed,—all present the sighting spectacle of the grandeur of equality within the pale of Islam. Neither the one is superior nor the other inferior. One is as good as the other. In the eyes of Allah all are equal. Thus is the real message of Islam put into practice.

The philosophy of fasting is seldom rightly understood. It is obvious that food, bad in quality and excessive in quantity, when mal-assimilated and unduly retained, not only floods the system but also overworks the eliminating machines and thus gives rise to numerous diseases. Under such exigencies fasting—as opposed to starvation—is the simplest, quickest and most effective method of curing diseases caused by faecal matters, and excess and mal-assimilation of food materials. So the spirit of the Prophet’s advocacy of fast cannot be other than that of a therapeutic measure intended to cure such diseases and to prevent his followers from digging their graves with their teeth, as was the case with the Americans, who only of late have become conscious of the physical necessity and curative effects of fasting. Dr. Dewey has very wisely said: “Take the food away from a sick man’s stomach, and you have begun to starve not the sick man, but the disease.”

And yet, notwithstanding its numerous advantages, fasting shall appear to be regarded by the average form as incompatible with modern ways of living and thinking.

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A VILE ATTACK ON THE PROPHET

BY SYED ARIF SHAH, M.A.

Speak the Prophet's words of wisdom,
If but to one darkened mind ;
There are many blindly seeking
For such simple truths to find.—WELCH.

In his great work with the pretentious title of "An Outline of the History of the World" Mr. H. G. Wells shows his teeth, as it were, and snarls at Islam in the deadliest manner. But he is not to blame, for the West as a whole, from the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet up to the present day, has been on terms of hostilities with the Islamic World. Before Gibbon and Carlyle, Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) was considered a neurotic idiot, a poor poet, a sorcerer, a second rate man, addicted to poetry and the black art, but to say with Carlyle :

Our current hypothesis about Muhammad, that he was a scheming impostor, a falsehood incarnate ; that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really now to be untenable. The lies which well-meaning zeal heaped round this man, are disgraceful to ourselves only. The word he spoke has been the life-guidance of many millions for all these twelve centuries. A greater number of God's creatures believe in Muhammad's words (well has he understood the universal breath of Islam) than in any other words whatever.

Thus Muhammad, then, we will in no way consider as an inanity and theatricality, a poor conscious ambitious schemer ; we cannot conceive him so. He had no school learning. Life in the desert with its experiences was all his education. This deep-hearted son of the wilderness, with his beaming black eyes and open social soul had other thoughts in him than ambition. A *silent* great soul, he was one of those who cannot but be earnest. As a true hero, he looked through the soul into matter, withal I like Muhammad for his total freedom from cant. He is a rough, self-helping son of the wilderness ; does not pretend what he is not. There is no ostentatious pride in him. Traits of that kind show us the genuine man, the brother of us all, brought visible through centuries—the veritable Son of our Mother.

There was a time when the very name of Islam was anathema in the Western World and especially in England.

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Islam has been maligned by fanatic priests blinded with jealousy. The majority of people, even to-day, do not know its real worth, and those who think they know it only in a garbled and distorted form. "For ages," says Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal, "Islam has laboured under misrepresentation in the West." We naturally feel indignant when irresponsible scribbles heap abuse on the personality of the Prophet of Islam, but our resentment has still greater justification when we hear some responsible statesman showing culpable ignorance of and criminal indifference to the sentiments and susceptibilities of 400,000,000 souls, who hold the honour of their Prophet and their religion more precious than anything else in the world.

In this age of absolute freedom of thought, no man is precluded from holding the opinion that please him, yet it is scarcely wise to permit free rein to be given to tongue and pen with regard to matters religious for, once let loose, they work havoc. Idle persons who have nothing better to do than attack Prophets and denounce creeds, instead of bridging it, only widen the gulf of differences, and create permanent misunderstanding and malice. Dayanand, Rajpal and Nathuram in India, and Mr. H. G. Wells and Dr. Margoliouth in England, have impudently attacked the fair name of the Prophet and denounced his creed. But as the Persian proverb runs: "Cows do not die by the curses of the crows," Islam and its Founder would hardly be affected were all the people of the world to unite in running them down. They stand far above, on an unapproachable height. The chief motive underlying such profane writing is to check the everflowing tide of Islam—Islam, which is readily acceptable to all in theory, and is actually being accepted by multitudes both in the East and the West. To repeat Carlyle, "the lies" (here signifying profane literature and scurrilous language) "which well-meaning zeal has heaped around this man are disgraceful

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to themselves only," and such writers should realize that all their unholy and sacrilegious outpourings will only recoil against their own fault or lack of faith.

Prejudiced as he is, Mr. Wells has, from beginning to end, lavished cruel, even dirty, epithets on the Holy Prophet, epithets which can only be worthy of the writer himself. Muhammad has been held by friend and foe alike to be the Saviour and Emancipator of Humanity. On page 570 of his portentous work, Mr. Wells, writing on the birth of the Prophet, says: "He was born in considerable poverty." Now, ignorance, which is the lowest depth of poverty, has deceived Mr. Wells, for the family in which Muhammad was born was well-known for its wealth and generosity. Hashimites, as the members of the family were called, were, for generations, the custodians of the sacred shrine of Ka'aba. To quote Gibbon:

He could produce many generations of pure and genuine nobility; he sprang from the tribe of Quraish and the family of Hashim, the most illustrious of the Arabs, the princes of Mecca, and the hereditary guardians of Ka'aba.

Abdul Muttalib, the Prophet's grandfather, was a wealthy prince of his time, famed far and wide for his generosity and hospitality. His door was open to all, and food for birds and beasts used to be placed by him on the peaks of the surrounding mountains. Such qualities were transmitted to Muhammad by heredity. But still the same note of broad-mindedness and magnanimity continues in the creed he founded. The Qur-án, too, abounds in injunctions relating to kindness to animals, and love for children and women, orphans, the needy, the way-farer and the destitute.

Muhammad was the favourite of his grandfather, who loved him even as Jacob loved Joseph. Once, when yet a child, he was lost and Abdul Muttalib mourned greatly over that loss, and such was his joy when the wanderer was found that he ordered a thousand camels to be

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slaughtered, and the flesh distributed to the poor, to say nothing of fifty pounds of gold to be given in charity. "The fact is," says Mrs. Amina Saxby, "that the Prophet enjoyed a good social position, and could have lived in luxury, ease and pleasure had he so desired, but being a true and noble patriot he gave his whole to the world." History bears eloquent testimony to all that I have said on this point and yet Mr. Wells describes him one "born in considerable poverty." Judge, also, of the absurdity of the statement that "Omar was his (Muhammad's) brother-in-law" and continuing he says: "He named his son Abd-Minaf." Equipped with such knowledge of his subject, Mr. Wells has determined to pronounce judgment on the character and faith of the greatest man of all times. The Caliph Umar was the Prophet's father-in-law, being the father of Hazrat Hafsa, his wife, while Abdul Minaf was the name of his great-great-grandfather. The Prophet had only two sons,—Qasim and Ibrahim.

"Until he was forty he did *indeed* live a *particularly undistinguished* life in Mecca as the husband of a prosperous wife. To any one visiting Mecca about A.D. 600 he would probably have seemed something of a *loafer*, a rather shy, good-looking individual, sitting about and listening to talk, a *poor* poet, and *altogether second-rate man* Until the Hegeira, the character of the Prophet of Islam is a matter of speculation and dispute." Unholy indeed is the pen that could bring itself to write thus on the untainted reputation of the Prophet of Islam. Either Mr. Wells has deliberately forged lies, or has, once again, displayed his absolute ignorance of the history of the time. As admitted by all, even by his bitterest enemies,—Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan and Abu Ubaidah,—The Holy Prophet, before the Call, was much given to philosophical meditations, and bore, moreover, a character transcendently high, as was befitting in a man who was destined to become the chosen one of God. He was renowned for his scrupulous honesty,

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for his sincerity and integrity, so much as that he was called *Al-Amin*, "The Trustworthy," a title never before nor since conferred upon any individual in the whole history of mankind. His personality made itself felt and he was everywhere discussed. He came to the world as a *perfect man*. "To any one less intimately acquainted with the inside of the individual, it is the personality, the outward manifestation of his inner self which impresses." His was a wonderful personality, inspiring love and admiration. Born of honourable parents, the Prophet-to-be was already the idol of his associates and relations because of three qualities I have mentioned, whereas the conditions of society in which he was born and brought up are matters of record. It was his innate sense of honesty that stood him in good stead alike in matters worldly and divine. Hazrat Khadija Siddiqah, the rich heiress, offered herself to him because of his transparently sterling character. Such that his enemies brought matters of dispute for him to decide, and he decided them so wisely that every one went away satisfied. His word was law yet Mr. Wells dares speak of him as one who lived in utter obscurity. And Mr. Wells claims to be a historian!

Again, Mr. Wells calls him a "loafer" and "an altogether second-rate man." We Muslims are taught tolerance and forbearance. We respect all the Prophets from Adam to Muhammad. We respect the feelings of others, and protect the places of worship even of those who are not of us. We are only sorry to see others injuring their own faiths by maligning our Prophet, who has done them no wrong. Let such read the views of one who himself being a Christian, wrote what he felt:

No impartial student surveying the career and character of Muhammad can fail to acknowledge his loftiness of purpose, his moral courage, his sincerity, his simplicity and his kindness. To these qualities must be added unsparing energy and a genius for diplomacy. It is certain that he never lost the love and admiration of men of the highest character, such as Abu Bakr and Umar, and

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to the end he retained his simplicity, his kindliness, and his courtesy to rich and poor alike. Moreover, he continues throughout his career to proclaim himself a simple prophet and a "warner," though he might easily have made higher claims.

Somewhere else the same writer says :

If, as I believe, religion is made for man and not man for religion, it is impossible to withhold approval and admiration from a man whose achievements have been so great.

Muhammad is again represented as a "shy, good-looking individual." I cannot understand how Mr. Wells came to write this, for it is a just opinion, and a fact. The Prophet was goodness incarnate ; hence his shyness. I cannot help quoting the following beautiful passage by Mr. Stanley Lane-poole on the personal excellence of the Prophet :

Muhammad was of the middle height, rather thin, broad of shoulders, wide of chest, strong of bone and muscle. His head was massive, strongly developed. Dark hair, slightly curled, flowed in a dense mass almost to his shoulders ; even in advanced age it was sprinkled with only twenty grey hairs, produced by the agonies of his "Revelations." His face was oval-shaped, slightly tawny of colour. Fine, long, arched eyebrows were divided by a vein, which throbbed visibly in moments of passion. Great, black, restless eyes shone out from under long, heavy eyelashes. His nose was large, slightly aquiline. His teeth, upon which he bestowed great care, were well set, dazzling white. A full beard framed his manly face. His skin was clear and soft, his complexion "red and white." His hands were as "silk and satin" even as those of a woman. His step was quick and elastic yet firm as that of one who "steps from a high to low place." In turning his face he would also turn his whole body. His whole gait and presence were dignified and imposing. His countenance was mild and pensive. His laugh was rarely more than a smile.

That the Prophet, before the Call, was wont to retire to the outskirts of the city, is a fact that none can deny. For years storms of spiritual stress strew within his bosom, and he passed many a night and day in deep meditation in the desert. But Mr. Wells says : "There is no evidence of any such desert trips." And Mr. Wells styles himself a historian !

Every Prophet who comes to ameliorate the conditions of the people amongst whom he is sent is, according to

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Carlyle, "first-hand and original;" he brings to us something fresh, something new, something that the world desires, and Muhammad was the most original of all. The very code and culture he gave to the world was original. The Faith, as law, though old, was represented in a fresh form. The world was crumbling beneath its load of sins, and Muhammad pulled it out of danger. Even the form of prayer is original. All the five articles of Faith bespeak his originality. Still Mr. Wells writes: "Except for his claim to be a new Prophet, there does not seem to have been anything fresh about these doctrines."

Again, our author likens the Prophet to Mani, the well-known impostor, who appeared in the reign of Hormoz, the Sasanian. The man believed in duality. He tried his best to convert the kings, but all his cards were mercilessly trumped, and he himself persecuted so that he fled for his life to Turkistan, where he secretly carried into a cave provisions for a year, and remained therein for that period. He was a skilful painter and painted beautiful pictures on smooth pebbles and, when he emerged from his cave, he declared himself to be God-inspired, with his "Picture Album" as a Divine Revelation. Hoping to win over Bahram I to his faith, Mani returned to Ctesiphon, where he was flayed alive, and his head hung on the Palace Gate as a warning to others. Intellect must have slumbered a while when Mr. Wells thus likens light to darkness, heaven to hell, virtue to vice, good to evil and above all the saviour to the sinner. "One may hear Manichæan doctrines from many Christian Churches" as Mr. Wells himself declares, but they have no place in Islam.

I cannot trace his sources of information for the statement concerning Muhammad that "after his insistence upon the Oneness of God he wavered. He came into the courtyard of the Ka'aba, and declared that the gods and goddesses of Mecca might after all be real." Never has

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it been recorded that the Prophet did anything of the kind. To quote a well-known authority: "Baffled, he never wavers, beaten, he never despairs." He was confident of his triumph. He never hesitated in the propagation of his mission. It was through this force of courage that, though abused, insulted and beaten, he remained steadfast in his mission and adamant in his determination. He was the man, the real man, the man of men, who, notwithstanding all the impediments in his path, could fearlessly carry on the torch of righteousness entrusted to him by God. A great noble soul!

The Prophet was a perfect exemplar. Every phase of life found a true manifestation in his doings. Muhammad, the Prophet, the King, the Ruler, was also an able General and a skilful Warrior. Many a time he himself led his men to victory, but never stooped to assassination as Mr. Wells in his ignorance alleges in the words thus expressed: "After the battle of Badr, Muhammad returned in triumph to Medina, and was inspired by Allah and this success to order the assassination of a number of his opponents." Whereas the fact is that he forgave them.

Again Mr. Wells says:

Throughout the concluding eleven (it should be thirteen) years of his life after the Hegira, there is little to distinguish the general conduct of Muhammad from that of any other welder of people into a monarchy. The chief difference is his use of *religion of his own creation* as his cement. He was diplomatic, treacherous, ruthless or compromising as the occasion required, and as any Arab king might have been in his place, and there was, *singularly*, no *spirituality in his kingship*. Nor was his domestic life, during his time of power and freedom, one of exceptional edification. Until the death of Khadija, he *seems* to have been the honest husband of one wife, but, *as many men do in their declining years* (this may perhaps be the outcome of this author's personal experience) *he developed* a disagreeable strong interest in women; and subsequently a number of other women, wives and concubines, were added to his establishment. Because he founded a great religion there are those who write of *this evidently lustful and shifty leader as though he were a man to be put beside Jesus of Nazareth, or Gotama or Mani*. But it is surely manifest that he was a *being*

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of a commoner clay (indeed, he himself used to say, 'I am a man like you. I am only a warner'); *he was vain, egotistical, tyrannous and a self-deceiver*; can a man who has no good qualities hold a friend?

Sir William Muir himself would shudder at the words with neck of blood. How can one satisfy a man of Mr. Wells's type who is impervious to every argument, who has no sense of proportion or of honour and who is, in fact, jealousy personified? It would be labour lost, and time and energy wasted. Yet not perhaps wasted for I must clear away the doubts and suspicions which he has created with regard to the personality of the Prophet.

Yes, as Muhammad brought the Kingdom of Heaven to earth, he had to maintain it as well. That he did in his own lifetime, or the whole structure might have crumbled to pieces. He set it on a firm basis. He was neither diplomatic nor treacherous, but open-minded, and one who kept his word even to his own detriment. He was true, and as such, spoke truth even if bitter.

Islam is not a religion of Muhammad's own creation. It was the religion of Adam and Noah, Moses and Aaron, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, Moses and Jesus. Islam has been and shall for ever remain the religion of the world.

He calls Muhammad ruthless. History cannot supply even a single instance to corroborate such a statement. He was kind, merciful, even soft-hearted. The capture and release of Hatim's daughter along with her companions, the young ones of a dove, and of his own assassin amply vindicate his sincerity.

His was a kingship altogether spiritual. He cared little either for the world or for its belongings for, as he was wont to say: "The world is hell for the Faithful and paradise for the infidel." He called it the sowing ground for the world Hereafter, for a Muslim cares not itself for all the comforts that this world may afford him. He has

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implicit faith in the Providence of God and in the Prophet who will intercede with God for him, provided he acts aright.

The Prophet was content with one wife till the advanced age of fifty when all carnal desires are at their lowest ebb, and thereafter, if he married it was because he had to give a roof and food to the widows of the soldiers who fell fighting for the cause of his Faith. He was anything but "lustful and shifty." Had he been lustful, he would not have married a widow 15 years older than himself and, as for polygamy, it is nothing but necessity under certain circumstances. I think Mr. Wells, for reasons known to himself, will not differ on this point.

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BY MUHAMMAD YAQUB SUFI

"A flower is not a flower alone, a thousand thoughts invest it."

Running a rapid glance over the period ranging from the close of the 17th to the 18th century we come across various accounts of the life of the Prophet of Arabia (the peace of God be upon him) from European pens. With but few exceptions each writer would appear to be working in dread of speaking the truth, in an atmosphere which seems as it were in some way poisoned.

Maracci and Prideau, as true Christians, were forced to take up their pens to stem the tide of enquiry anxious to "know the truth" about Islam. The "Fathers of the Church" thought it beneath their dignity to introduce Islam in their private conversations.

But there was bound to be a change. Reland succeeded the two writers above mentioned, and in spite of ecclesiastical endeavours to stifle his views published his *De Religione-Mohammedica* in the beginning of the 18th

century, prefacing it with the question, addressed to his contemporaries: "Is it reasonably admissible that a religion so absurd, as our Christian writers represent it to be, could secure millions of adherents?" "No religion," he continues to his brother, "has been so much calumniated as Islam....and the numerous conversions of the Jews to this Faith is a standing challenge to the learning of these Christian writers." Later on, in 1730, Count Boulainvilliers brought out his *Vie de Mahomet*, after waiting for years for a change in the popular view of Islam, was compelled to publish his work, and in which he, in the words of Herr Enouk Hurgronje, says; "Le fondateur de l' Islam est glorifié comme une sage, et sa religion placé a beaucoup d'égards au dessus du Christianisme vulgaire."¹

It was, properly speaking, a reaction against such erudites as Maracci and Prideau.

Gagnier came next, but he had to explain his position before publishing his work. Then we come to Caussin de Percival and Sprenger, both of whom, the latter particularly, succumbed woefully to the prejudices of their times, to which Gagnier had partially yielded, so did also Noeldeke with his *Geschichte des Qur-an's* and Weil with his *Lebens des Mohammed*. They were followed by Muir and others of our own time.

Though they acknowledge the value of Islam and its Founder as a veritable factor in human progress, yet they lack the moral courage to confess it openly, and face the disapproval of their fellow-countrymen. In the words of Wellhausen: "In Germany they have robbed the word of the Prophet of all its importance and have affirmed (*behauptet*) that he was a Prophet," and this may be said of all Christian Europe.

In the circumstances, we are obliged to look more at home if we are to obtain a true idea of the Prophet and his mission from his very childhood.

¹The Founder of Islam is glorified unto a sage and his religion placed far beyond the vulgar Christianity.

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Before we touch upon this point, we need some criterion by which to gauge genius—whether it takes the form of a prophet (the highest form), of a reformer (the middle form) or of a leader (the lowest form).

The philosophy of history tells us that a genius, if born to raise up an existing nation or community, should ever bear in mind that it is not for him to expound or prove theories, but to act for and on behalf of a community which he finds at hand, and does not need to create. He comes into a society which needs the highest virtues and greatest abilities. Do these exist, one may ask, in the multitude? That firmness which is a most necessary adjunct of genius is entirely wanting in the mob. To prove himself of any worth, the genius should possess a single will “brought out from the fusion of various wills,” and while inspiring the community with a purpose should infuse his own spirit into it. He should understand the race in which he works,—be at once in it and of it, if he is to make it a lever wherewith to lift other nations.

Such is the verdict of the philosophy of history, and we may fairly claim that all these conditions are fulfilled in the personality of the Prophet of Islam. From birth to death there is nothing to obscure his character or make it mysterious; everything is clear as the noonday sun. The mighty Oak which was to overshadow the whole world at some future time is found at work in the very seed.

Before the Prophet of God (the peace of God be upon him) could lisp “father,” that father had been removed from him, and his place taken by Abdul Muttalib, his grandfather; and the first part of his childhood was passed among the Asadites, under the motherly care of his nurse, Halima.

The starlit sky overhead, the vast plain bounded in the far distance by black mountains, and the howling, shifting desert of sand were the objects which engaged his

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attention the most. All these were, to his budding soul, eloquent of the intermingling of human life with eternity.

The story of the two angels visiting him here and purging his *mind* of all worldly evil is interpreted by Ibn Arabi, as the refulgence of Divine light that filled his precocious mind. His companions from whom he often secluded himself grew apprehensive, and he was reported to his foster-mother as having communications with the spirits of the other world. Fearing that something untoward might befall her charge she hastened to bring him to his mother. In a suppressed voice the nurse related all that she had heard; upon which, Amina, his mother, on whose grave the Prophet shed many a bitter tear at a later stage of his life, broke forth: "Fear not, Halima, nothing will injure him, the protected of God," and so saying she drew the child to her breast. Alas! about a little while, and she was to be no more! Amina, while on her way back from Medina after a short sojourn there, was taken ill and died at Abwa, half-way between Mecca and Medina, and the orphan was brought to his grandfather by Um Aiman, the attendant girl.

Already pensive and meditative by nature the death of his mother made him more so. It proved to be a practical lesson taught to the orphan Prophet as to how to regard an orphan in after-life. Many times in his career did the Prophet of God shed tears at the sight of an orphan. That which consoled him of the loss of his mother was later turned into public instruction, for says the Qur-án: "Did (He) not find thee an orphan and furnish thee with a refuge?"¹ thus proving at the same time he was from his very birth under the care of the Almighty.

The child was now in sole charge of Abdul Muttalib; but his guardianship was short-lived, for only two years after his mother's death the indulgent grandfather also breathed his last, making the child over to the care of Abu

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 92.

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Talb, his son. This loss left an indelible mark on the mind of the Prophet.

Tender in years, but strong in mind, each event added to his experience of this world and made him more and more reliant on his Creator.

The perfect equanimity which characterised him on these occasions is later expressed thus in the Qur-án : “*Verily we belong to God and to Him shall we return.*”

Ibn Hisham, following Ibn Ishaq, speaking of his tenderness of heart at this stage, says :

He was the last to extend his hand to the dish from which the starving mouths at Abu Talib's house had had their fill. Others rose in the morning with their faces dry and pale, but the Prophet rose with his face shining like the moon, with the satisfaction that he had helped his brothers to full meal.

The credit of the house of Hashim waned in proportion as that of Omeyya rose, and Abu Talib who had taken charge of his nephew, being too poor, transferred the honour of being the guardian of the Ka'aba to his younger brother Al-Abbas, but this did not abate his dignity among the Qureish, rather did it give him the chance of protecting his charge devotedly.

Time passed with little or no change in Abu Talib's pecuniary circumstances, which were a matter of great concern to the Prophet—till the time came when a caravan was made ready to start for Syria.

The Prophet's power was once more to be put to the test—Abu Talib was to head the caravan and the “orphan” to stay behind. “To relinquish the sacred charge of my father, that I cannot do,” soliloquised Abu Talib, with the result that the “orphan” was to accompany him to Syria.

The silence—broken only by the monotonous thud of the camels' feet—observed by the caravans in their distant journeys is proverbial. It was as though death had spread his black veil over the valleys through which

they treaded their way and the whole procession wore a solemn aspect. But it was otherwise with the Prophet. Everything seemed to converse with him. Petra, Jevash, Amman, etc., at times cities of great mercantile grandeur, had each their own doleful tale to tell. The heavy stone walls embracing each other in their ruin appealed directly to the open heart of the orphan Prophet. He was inwardly studying what was to be revealed to him later on by his Lord "and how many ungodly cities have we destroyed which are now fallen on their roofs; and wells abandoned (with) lofty castles."² The instability of earthly greatness he saw writ large on every stone; and in these ruins he felt the Divine truth dimly glimmering through human pride.

The caravan glided on. And now he could read the book of nature which lay open before all. The twinkling stars and the bright constellations "gliding through the dark blue sky silently along," bore a message to him.

A halt was now called near a Jewish hermit's cell, as was the custom with caravans in their travels through Syria and Hedjaz.

Here follows the story of Sergius or Nestorius, the monk who recognized in the "young lad" the signs of a Prophet to be. To deny or affirm it hardly concerns Islam for the tree is verily known by its fruit.

After the usual exchange of commodities the caravan turned homeward, the journey having proved comparatively successful.

The fame of the "Youthful Prophet" for honesty, truthfulness, probity and grace had preceded him to Mecca and he was the talk of the city.

Here, says Muir, "follow some uneventful years of the Prophet's life." To Muir and others of his type applies the saying that "they are not blind of their eyes, but blind of their hearts within their breasts." These years, as the contrary, were most eventful ones: it is only prejudice

² The Holy Qur-án, 5: 1.

ANIMUS PROPHETIS

which has led these commentators to forget the historical truth that beside material and visible acts there are those moral and hidden acts which are no less real than battles and Acts of Parliament. The growth of the budding spirit, the gathering up of strength for the coming struggle while weighing in the Divine balance the so-called truths preached by the votaries of other religions, were tasks which the Prophet set himself or were Divinely imposed upon him, before preaching Islam openly.

The Harb-ul-Fijjar (sacrilegious war) in which his own family, the Qureish, were deeply involved, proved another trial for the Prophet's prudence.

It originated at the annual festival of Okaz, and set the rival tribes of Hawazin and Kinana ablaze. The elders of all the tribes assembled and composed the differences, and bloodshed was avoided. The Prophet, who was fast attaining his manhood, was heard to say: "My hands never drew an arrow against my own people," while the saying was but the prelude to what was actually to follow later when Mecca was conquered, and the Prophet proclaimed to the fallen foe, *La tasreeba alaikumul-yaum* (there is no grudge against you henceforth) and set free even those who had drawn their swords against him, just because they were his people.

Can such nobility of conduct find a parallel anywhere in any history of any Prophet since the world began?

Now another event awaited him. Khadija, a rich, cultivated widow, engaged in business had heard much of the *Amin* (the Trustworthy)—a title given to him by his own people. "Try him," she said to herself, and made ready a caravan to be in sole charge of the Prophet, with Maisra, her trusted servant, to attend him. The journey was undertaken with due solemnity, and successfully finished. We need not enter into the details of the accounts which Maisra gave of his "Lord" to Khadija, for the result was that they were united as husband and

wife, in the presence of the chiefs of both their tribes, at the respective ages of 25 and 40—a worthy man to a worthy woman.

An epoch in the Prophet's life was reached. An orphan, forsaken by Nature, but nurtured by the hand of Nature's Lord, was now looked up to and revered as an *Amin* by his own people, a living, undeniable miracle. His prophetic virtue was marvellously preserved from all the vices of his people and time which had been the ruin of so many a youth in Arabia.

The Prophet had now reached the age of five-and-thirty. His noble genius and commanding intellect which had appealed to Khadija—a woman of no common merit—further embellished by a graceful urbanity, were fully realized by his contemporaries. His words became more pregnant and he appeared to be practising the virtue which later descended upon him in *Sura Lukman*.

At this stage another crisis arose. One of those violent floods which at times “sweep down the valley” had shattered the Holy House, and the people feared lest the walls should fall or the ominous rents in them entice robbers to plunder the sacred building of its precious relics. The wreck of a Greek ship providing the Meccans with the requisite timber, the walls were re-erected under the supervision of the intrepid Al-Walid. Now the sacred black stone had to be lifted to its receptacle in the centre and to the privilege of this office, each of the Qureish advanced a claim. The contention becoming hot, it was feared that bloodshed would ensue. Three or four days passed without any result, and once more the Qureish assembled to decide the problem amicably, if so it might be, when the oldest among them rose and said, “Hearken O Qureish! let us undo the knot. Let the man who first enters the sacred precincts by the gate yonder (the north-western side) be chosen either to decide the point or himself to leave the stone to its receptacle.” The proposal

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was accepted with acclamation, and "they awaited the issue."

We have it on the authority of Ibn Ishaq, followed by Ibn Hisham, that the first man to enter the Ka'aba was Muhammad (the blessings of God be upon him) at sight of whom they all exclaimed: "Here comes *Al-Amin*." All consented to abide by his decision, as calm and self-possessed as ever he received the commission, and, Divinely led, struck upon a novel expedient which conciliated them all. He spread his own mantle upon the ground and, placing the stone thereon, spoke in a firm voice: "Now let one from each of your four divisions come forward and raise a corner of this mantle." The four corners of the mantle were raised by the representatives of the four chief tribes, and when the required position was reached, the Prophet placed it into its place. Thus the difficulty was solved and the threatened bloodshed avoided. How much this single act of wisdom raised the Prophet in the estimation of his people may be better imagined than described. But it may be asked, was not the quarrel of the tribes an evil out of which some good was intended to come by the Divine Will--the singling out of His chosen one from the elders of the tribes to perform the act of replacing the stone of which he was to be himself the guardian in years to come?

Years rolled by and the example set by the Prophet for truth and honesty had stirred many a dormant soul, and gradually a little band of Hunafa came into existence, who denounced idolatry, and were on the "tiptoe of expectation for a guide," who could lead them out of darkness into the Divine light.

Always pensive, the Prophet became not only more thoughtful if anything, but more retiring than before. Like Moses in the case of the Israelites, the degradation of his people weighed heavily on him. The solitary valleys and rocks were henceforth to be his common

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resort, and most remarkable of all his faithful wife, Khadija, would follow him thither, and see for herself how mightily the silence of the bleak and rugged mountains contributed to magnify the solemn realities agitating his soul with sterner shapes. "The external nature and the troubled world within were being harmonized here," and found expression in the following rhapsody:

By the declining day I swear
Verily man is in the way of ruin
Excepting such as possess faith
And do the things that are right
And stir up one another unto truth and steadfastness.

In such ecstatic moments comfort was always at hand—Khadija's consolation, for she had already come to believe in the Divine mission of her husband from what she had heard from her uncle's son, Warqa Ibn Naufal, a learned man in the Jewish lore.

A crisis was approaching in the Prophet's life which it is a little difficult perhaps for European writers to understand, such being ever ready to detect the mote in the other's eye while disregarding the beam in their own.

In the words of Imam Ghazzali, in his *Mishkat-ul-Anwar*, "the Prophet had now reached a spiritual stage where it was difficult to smother the light Divine (*Nur*) within and still more difficult to impart it to those groping in the darkness of sensualities." The Qur-án thus touches upon the point, having in view the prevailing popular ignorance in things spiritual. "They ask thee of the spirit, say the spirit pertains to my *Lord's command*, and ye have not been communicated knowledge (of it) save a little." The word used in the Arabic is *solitum* having a collective sense, which means that if all the people of the earth were to combine together—with their sensualism still about them—they would not be able to understand it. Imam Mohy-ud-Din Ibn Arabi, in his *Fusus-ul-Hukam*, discussing this point says: "To require an adept (one

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informed of the Divine knowledge) to explain this stage, is like requiring the sky to become earth and the earth sky."

Imam Ghazzali in his *Munqidh min-Adlal* stresses the same point of the "spirit rising to the highest to be at one with Him." But according to Mr. Macdonald, explanations of "things material are not applicable to things spiritual."

The die was cast, and the Truth to which the Prophet had been led from childhood step by step for forty years was now to be proclaimed to the world.

Passing over the momentous events in which *Iqra-bisme Rabbik*, and *Yaay-Yuhal Mudasir* play a great part, we come face to face with the Prophet who throwing aside the veil of fear, and trampling under foot the idolatrous rites of his people which had debased them to the lowest patch, with a courage which puts an Alexander, a Caesar or a Napoleon in the shade, announces to the Arabs, and through them to the whole world that "there is no God but He alone to Whom all worship is due, and Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

In this simple sentence he defined his own position, leaving no opening to his followers for his subsequent deification.

Mr. Lyall has sung it thus in his *Light of Asia* :

Behold, I show you truth ;
Before beginning and without an end—
As space eternal and as surety sure—
Is fixed a power Divine which moves to good.

The further history of the Prophet's career is not to be read merely as a record of particular or personal events ; for the philosophy of history requires that a genius is to be weighed, not in the balance of these events, but in that of its collective effect produced upon the total experience of humanity,—an effect which is liable to differ from generation to generation, but is in essentials permanent and cannot be denied.

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Rightly to understand the end of a career it is essential to know the truth of its beginning, which I have endeavoured to show.

CORRESPONDENCE

TANGIER.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I wish to thank you for your very kind letter. I have had no reply from Mr. Pickthall as yet. I wrote to him in the hope that he might care to advise me from time to time on questions which I felt were bound to arise, inasmuch as I have adopted the Muslim religion so recently. I know only one or two Muslims here who speak English, and, unfortunately, they are not very serious. Also, although I am acquainted with the Cadi's family, it seems very difficult, even with an interpreter, to secure the information I feel I need.

It is my sincere desire to become as pure a Muslim as possible, and, in view of the difficulties I am having in securing proper instructions and friendly advice, I am wondering whether I may ask you to help me through correspondence.

To outline my position briefly, I am an American, thirty-nine years old. I have been living alone for three years in Tangier. All my life I have studied the different religions. In all humility I think God has endowed me with a high sense of cosmic consciousness, not usual in American people.

Therefore I came into Islam with the conviction that I have finally discovered the right path along which to eventually attain wisdom. I know I cannot attain wisdom all in a minute, but I am now in the right position to attain it. I know God is guiding me, and is patient with my deficiencies. What is really perplexing to me is the impatience of people, and the criticisms I am receiving.

I have brought a sincere and an "aware" heart to Islam, but I have also brought a life-time of American habits, a worldly and cultural education and Western ideas of liberty. They do not seem to fit in with Islam, and I do not know how to get rid of them. I am sure God will smooth everything out for me in time, but, at present, I am very perplexed and conscience-stricken. I have given up liquor and pork. I make five prayers

CORRESPONDENCE

every day. I give money to the poor. But I am maligned and ridiculed.

Without going further and trying your patience too much, I am sure, from whatever I have said, you will understand my difficulties. I thank God for these obstacles, because I am sure He is testing me, and giving me an opportunity to grow in grace and wisdom. To leave Tangier would, I feel, only be refusing the gifts.

Can you give me some counsel that will show me how to meet this criticism and suspicion, perhaps hatred, that is springing up around me? But I am so desirous of growing in spirituality, that I have come to you for aid. I am sure you will help me.

I do not know if I am worthy of going to Mecca or if going to Mecca would give me what I lack.

Yours sincerely,
HANEM SALEM.

LEAVINGTON, ST. JOHN PARK,
RYDE, I. W.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

I shall be glad if you would send me any publication or pamphlet on the subject of "What is Islam?"

I have recently read an English translation of the *Qurán*, and would like to know more of the Islam in the world of to-day.

Yours faithfully,
A. M. McDERMOTH.

NEVERO SQUARE,
LONDON, S. W.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

I am preparing a course of lessons for sixth form girls (aged about 18), on "Non-Christian Religions at the present-day." As presumably Mohammedanism holds the chief place among these, I am particularly anxious to present it fairly. I thought perhaps you could give me some help. I have, of course, been able to procure scholarly works dealing with the tenets of Mohammedanism, though many of these are unfortunately

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written by Christians—but it seems to me that these probably have no closer resemblance to the thought and practice of the average true Mohammedan than the writings of subtle theologians do to the ideas of the average Churchman and as religion, unlike philosophy, claims even the humblest and the least intellectual as its exponents, it does seem to me very important to try to find out the actual creeds of the various systems. I should, therefore, be extremely grateful if you can send me any literature dealing with the subject, in a simple way, more or less on the lines of your summary at the end of the *Islamic Review*. Can you also tell whether Sale's "Translation of the Qurán" is regarded as reliable by Mohammedans?

I ought perhaps to make it clear that our purpose in studying the religions is to compare these with Christianity and that I cannot urge the claims of Mohammedanism. At the same time, I can assure you, that I should try, in speaking of other religions, to show them the reverence which is due to all those who, under whatever name they invoke Him, seek after the True God.

Yours faithfully,
LAUREL JEWILL HILL.

GODALMING.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

Thanks very much for your kindness to me in forwarding to me what has been a very valuable revelation. Islam seems to heal many of the sore points of my passed Christian belief and I feel relieved to know of the existence of a spiritual common sense. May Allah preserve it from complexity for surely its simplicity will be its increasing strength. It would be a great pleasure to visit the Mosque, but I do not see any mention of the most suitable day or time. I am herewith enclosing payment for the two Reviews you sent and 10/- as an annual subscription for the same. Perhaps you would be kind enough to add what little remains to the Mosque Fund.

Thanking you for your kindness,

Yours sincerely,
H. H. O.

CORRESPONDENCE

CHESTER.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

I am thinking of becoming a Muslim. I shall be glad if you will kindly send me all the necessary Prayers to learn in English, also the *Islamic Review*, so that I will be able to have a glance at everything in general, and make myself acquainted with all I have to do. I shall also be glad to have your kind advice in the matter.

I have quite a lot of Muslim friends, from one of whom I have borrowed the Holy Qur-án, and there is hidden voice within me to become a Muslim. I shall be glad to hear from you soon and obliged.

Very faithfully yours,
(Capt.) J. E. BELLETTY.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

From a recent copy of the *Islamic Review*, which I found in the local library, I observe that Maulvi Muhammad Ali's edition of the Holy Qur-án can be examined in prospectus and sample pages. Might "Polygamy," by Shaikh M. H. Kidwai, also be sent to me?

Recovering, as I am at the moment, from a bad period of unemployment, I cannot hope to buy even the thirty shilling edition of the Qur-án this year, but I trust to be able soon to set at least a shilling a week aside with that object in view.

It might interest you to know that in an article on English as a universal language, the *Quarterly Review* for January considers that "Islam.....is a lost cause."

Yours fraternally,
IAN MACPHERSON.

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MORALITY IN ISLAM AND IN CHRISTIANITY¹

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

We must recognise, at the outset, that there is a fundamental affinity between these two religions in the first principle of morality, that is submission to the Will of the Creator. Both agree that the highest fulfilment of the purpose of human life lies in recognising that there is a Will above our individual, narrow and disruptive Will—a Will that absorbs all the impurities of our selfish individual wills and gives those wills life and permanence by linking them up with itself. Carlyle is right when he says that such is the highest morality known to humanity. “Not my will but Thine,” are words well-known in Christian theology, and Abraham, the type of the Quranic man, is thus referred to in the Qur-án : “When his Lord said to him, submit, he said I submit myself to the Rabb (Lord) of the worlds.”—(2:131).

But the parting of the ways is reached as soon as we proceed from the question of the act of submission to that of the character of the Being to whom we are to submit, since it is not the name “God” that matters, but the feelings with which that name is associated. If you read the above quotations carefully, you will find that even in them this difference is obvious. Whereas “Thy Will” is an indefinite thing in the Christian dictum, in Abraham’s utterance, as given in the Qur-án, it is definite—Rabbul Alamin, One Who is responsible for the gradual march of the Universe towards perfection. Even the ascription of Fatherhood to God by Christianity does not help matters. After all, according to the Christian conception, God is a fond, indulgent but perplexed Father. He made man after His own image, and yet knew not how to control this disobedient son, and remained perplexed through the

¹ A lecture delivered at the weekly meeting of the Muslim Society in Great Britain held on the 25th of May 1935.—*Ed., I. R.*

MORALITY IN ISLAM AND IN CHRISTIANITY

ages, until another son of His, namely Jesus, helped Him out of the difficulty by a magical and dramatic performance of an ambiguous nature.

The Islamic God, on the other hand, is a "Rabb" Who is fully aware of what He is about—a responsible and determined Creator. He is quite sure that His every step is towards the welfare of Humanity. He has a set programme. He has given Humanity every kind of freedom for the growth of the moral sense in it, but not to the extent of frustrating His benignant purposes. He is **رب** or Master of the situation, but not a Despot or a Tyrant, as is usually suggested by our Christian friends; for His Mastery is saturated with anxious love and care for Humanity. He is 'Rahman' and 'Rahim'—Beneficial and Merciful.

Next to the idea of Godhead, it is the personality of its Founder which determines the moral outlook of a religious community. Here also we come across the same difference between these two religions. As a matter of fact, the presentation of the God's ideal depends ultimately upon the realising capacity of the person who presents it. So these two are vitally inter-connected. Submission to the Will of God is the watchword both of Jesus and Muhammad; but the ways in which respectively they exhibit this submission differ greatly. Let us take two critical moments in the lives of these two Prophets, as it is the critical moments that bring to light the inner strength and weakness of a person. Jesus approaches the hour of trial—the impending Crucifixion. Matthew's account was this:—

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful, and very heavy. Then saith he unto them: My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying O My Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray

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that ye enter not into temptation : The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak. He went again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this Cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, Thy Will be done.

I have quoted thus at length, just to give you a clear idea of the workings of the mind of Jesus at the moment. It is noteworthy that he wants others to be with him, that he is not quite so bold as to face the tragedy alone ;— he exhibits a certain amount of weakness, which he ascribes to the “ flesh,” and that while thus face to face with this danger to his physical safety, he clearly forgets all about his Mission. Bearing these points in mind, let us examine a similar critical moment in Muhammad’s life. For twelve long years the Prophet and his devoted band of followers had suffered every sort of humiliation, oppression and repression, and the horizon looked darker at this moment than ever before now that his uncle and his wife, who had been his principal bulwarks against the forces of persecution, were dead. Despairing of Mecca, he turns towards the neighbouring city of Taif. For about ten days he stayed there, delivering his Message to many— but all to no purpose. At last he was requested to leave but no sooner was he clear of the town than the dregs of society, at the instigation of their elders, followed him. They lined the route on both sides to a great distance and, as he passed along between them, he was pelted with stones. When dripping with blood and, unable to walk further, he would seat himself, a wretch would pull him up by the hand. “ Walk on,” he would shout : “ This is no place for you to rest at.” This went on for three long miles. At this point of sore distress, disappointment and pain a prayer goes forth from the Prophet that gives a clear picture of his inner character. This is how he addressed God : “ O My God ! To Thee do I complain of the feebleness of my strength, of my lack of resourcefulness, and of my insignificance in the eyes of the people.

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Thou art the most Merciful of all the Merciful. Thou art the Lord of the weak, to whom art thou to entrust me?—to an unsympathetic foe who would sullenly frown at me, or to a close friend, to whom Thou hast given control over my affairs? Not in the least do I care for anything except that I may have Thy protection. In the light of Thy face do I seek shelter,—the light which illumines the Heaven, and dispels every sort of darkness, and which controls all affairs in this world as well as the hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Thy wrath, or that Thou shouldst be angry with me. There is no strength or power, but through Thee.”

Three things are to be noted—he has perfect faith in the Mercifulness of God—he cares for nothing but the Spiritual protection and pleasure of God, and he appeals to a God who has control of the affairs of this world. Certainly this character differs widely from that exhibited by Jesus the night before the Crucifixion.

But of all the factors that go to mould the character of a religious community, the way in which the Ministry of its founder terminates, is the most powerful, far surpassing in its potency even character and personality. It should be borne in mind that the rise of a religious personality is called for only on one ground and that is to clear the issue of good and evil. Every man tries to be more or less virtuous in the subconscious belief that Good ultimately prevails over Evil. But when one begins to study statistics, the issue never seems clear; and yet clear demonstration of this same issue is expected to take place only at the hands of religious personalities—prophets or reformers. The moral impetus coming to a nation from a religious Movement depends on the clearness of this demonstration. Let us examine, in this light, the ends, respectively, of the Founders of Islam and of Christianity. As you all know, the Ministry of Jesus ended pathetically on the Cross. But even *before* this

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tragic event, the Nazarene hero had realised that "the Son of Man was betrayed into the hands of sinners." And, at the actual moment of trial, he was sorely perplexed with regard to the ways of God, crying out in bewilderment—"Eli, Eli, lama Sabacthani?"—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Thus at the end of his Ministry Jesus left the issue of Good and Evil, of God and Devil, as ambiguous as ever. And this fact was bound to create a corresponding impression on the national mind of Christendom.

Now let us turn our attention to the end of Muhammad's Mission. His triumphant entry into Mecca to receive allegiance of the same people who for 22 years had inflicted the most ruthless persecution on the followers of the new Faith, is a historical fact of outstanding importance. But his feeling of triumph had to await another opportunity for its expression. This was on the occasion of his last pilgrimage. Some 124,000 followers of the new Faith had assembled on that occasion to listen to his last great sermon. It was a sermon full of pathos and yet dignified, full of inspiration together with spirituality, and, above all, full of confidence and hope for the moral sense of man. In the course of it he said: "O People! This day Satan has despaired of re-establishing his worship in this land of yours"—an utterance unique in the history of religion. But the feature that has made it unapproachable in its spiritual dignity is the question put by the Prophet at the end of the sermon, and its reply from the audience. "O Lord! have I conveyed Thy Message?" the Prophet asked of the Invisible God, Who was to him the only Reality. We are not told whether the Invisible God, the Revealer of the Qur-án, replied to this query of Muhammad's in revealed words. We may take it that He did. But what we are sure of is that the vast

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multitude assembled there, once the sworn enemies of Muhammad and His God replied in one voice: "By the Lord, surely you have." Yes, the Message was conveyed, not only to the ears of the people, which was always the case before the advent of Muhammad, but to their very hearts whence moral actions proceed. Thus terminated Muhammad's Ministry—a termination that, once and for all, demonstrated the acknowledged prevalence of Good over Evil, of God over Devil. This colossal fact could not but produce a correspondingly colossal effect on the moral outlook of the nation that had received inspiration from the Prophet.

It is quite natural, therefore, that the moral outlook of the followers of Muhammad and even their conception of morality, must vary from that of Christians. But before we proceed to discuss this question, which is, in a way, the central point of our subject, I must make a few, I hope, relevant observations on the moral growth of the human mind. Stated briefly, there are three stages in this growth. The first is the stage of brutish indifference and irresponsibility, when the principle of life is to eat, drink and be merry at all costs. A man is happy at this stage as an animal is happy.

The second stage is that of struggle for the realisation of the moral self. It is a long and sustained experience, having numerous sub-stages in it. It is a stage full of pathos, heart-bleeding, tragedy, despair and bitterness. The bitterness is the result of the other experiences, and very often leads to unbelief. A preacher at this stage cannot help being excitable, intolerant and cynical because of his inward struggles and, inasmuch as the conquest of the evil in his mind is not complete, he cannot be perfectly clear about the final issue. The records of the preachings of Jesus, as handed down to us by the writers of the Synoptic Gospels, show clear signs of this stage in man's moral struggle. There is undeniably in them a strong

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trend of uncertainty, of disgust and even fury. But there is a higher stage than this in the moral evolution of the mind and that is the final stage. This is the stage wherein the flesh is no longer opposed to the spirit, but has become absorbed in it, with all its weaknesses removed by the inspiration of the soul; the stage where the darkness of evil completely melts away before the light of Truth, and the mind of man is convinced, once and for all, that falsehood is indeed a transitory thing.

Here the experience is of confidence, of certainty, of calmness and of joy. A preacher in this stage is tolerant and full of love for Humanity.

Just as in the previous stage hatred for the world and disgust at the conduct of human affairs is the chief feature in the outlook of the reformer, a love of humanity is the distinguishing mark of this last stage. But this love for humanity is a deep spiritual love, bent upon its ordering and upliftment. Even a cursory study of Muhammad's life will show that, while preaching, he was in this final stage of moral evolution. There is an optimism and a serenity about his words and deeds which cannot be missed by the student.

Jesus has nothing but renunciation of the world to offer to humanity, since with his struggling soul he could, at best, resist the evil of the world; he could not conquer and subjugate it. Muhammad, on the other hand, succeeded in subordinating the materialism of the human mind to its spiritual aspirations; hence he proposes not a separation, but an amalgamation; not only a destruction, but also a construction.

And now we come to the question of the different systems of morality that grew up around these two personalities. In contradiction to the Christian doctrine of Evil as an entity eternally opposed to Good, Muhammad had the boldness to proclaim that whatever is created in

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the Heavens and the Earth is for man's good, and that there is no absolute evil, or perennial source of evil, anywhere existent, for the Great Good God has the fullest control over His Creation. And as for the highest product of that Creation, the human mind, the Qur-án declares it to be pregnant with the highest and best potentialities with the same emphasis as Christianity declares it to be inherently weak and vicious. "Certainly we created man in the best make" says the Holy Qur-án. No doubt it has a corresponding downward tendency—

"Then We have rendered him the lowest of the low,"—but only to open the way to the wonderful and privileged experience known as moral experience, through the knowledge of God and its realisation in material surroundings, in other words through faith and good actions resulting in a reward never to be cut off, *i.e.*, a paradise which can never be lost being born of knowledge.

Indeed, the conception of human nature in Christianity, as opposed to that in Islam, not only discourages to all ideas of progress, but also is disproved by the most commonplace facts of our experience. Christianity regards Law as a curse to humanity, since, according to its teaching, human nature is constitutionally unfit to follow the Law. The more, therefore, it attempts to follow the Law, the greater the punishment for transgression that it brings upon itself. But what we find in actual experience is that even the most violent criminal keeps far more laws than he breaks. Rather more often than not we see the greatest offenders against public law possessing remarkably redeeming features in their character. Even the most unruly and unsocial tribes have their system; nay, even robbers have a system and a code of fidelity and morality. Christian Europe is justly proud of its organisation and orderliness, but it scarcely realises that these achievements refute one of its most fundamental

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beliefs ; that this orderliness belies their religious theory that man is incapable of following the Law.

Too much emphasis is laid by Christianity on the prevalence of sin in the world, and the irresistible forces of the sinful propensity in man. Christian theologians are baffled at the existence of evil, and accuse Islam of having adopted an attitude of indifference towards this serious problem. Islam, however, has taken sufficient note of the situation. One of the earlier sections of the Qur-án has the following : “ And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the Earth one who shall rule in it, they said : ‘ What ! Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it, and shed blood, and we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness ? ’ ” He said : “ Surely I know what you do not know.”

So the problem of evil appeared to Muhammad in all its ghastliness, when the Qur-án was being revealed to him. But the solution of the problem came as clearly as its presentation :— “ And we gave Adam knowledge of all things.” In other words, the possibility of transgression and sin was left there to give man the privileged sense of morality which is the only way to the knowledge of the realities of things. It is the moral sense in man that takes stock of experiences and understands the proprieties of things and feelings. The amount of transgression may be shocking to a timid mind just opening its eyes to the moral situation of the world, but to a ripe and veteran mind it is not too high a price to pay for the great experience called moral knowledge.

(To be continued.)

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

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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.—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.

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