

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

The *Islamic Review*

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

VOL. XXIV]

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ABDUR RAHMAN STANLEY ANYAN



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A DECLARATION

I, Stanley Anyan, of Bromfield, Adel, Leeds, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and only Allah (God) alone ; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant ; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La Ilaha Il-Allah Muhammad-ur-Rasul Allah. (There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.)

(SD.) STANLEY ANYAN.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

MODERN ISLAM

BACK TO THE QUR-AN

BY JAMES DURDEN COCKBAIN

The word "Islam" possesses a dual implication. It is used to collectively denote those who accept Muhammad as the seal of all the Prophets. And it is used to conjure up the vision of a world at one within itself, of a society founded on the cosmic verities of Freedom, Equality and Solidarity :

Freedom of Expression.

Equality of Opportunity.

Solidarity of Spirit.

This is the great legacy of the Qur-án, and the world is at long last being driven to recognise it. The world foundations of peace were first laid down by the Hebrew Prophets. Peace, they insisted, can only be established in justice, and there can only be justice on the Earth when society is founded on the cosmic verities of Freedom, Equality and Solidarity. This is the great legacy of the Old Testament. That such a society can only be sustained when the spirit of sympathy, service and sacrifice reigns in the hearts of men, is the legacy of the New Testament.

The Jewish world at the time of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth was obsessed by the idea that the Kingdom of God was at hand. "The Kingdom of God is at hand" was the watchword of Judaism. To Zealots this meant the destruction of the Roman Empire, and the establishing of Judaism as a world power. And Galilee, where Jesus grew to manhood, was the heart of the Zealot movement. But Jesus saw how completely his contemporaries had misconceived the vision of "Jerusalem" given to them by the Prophets of Israel. For he saw that only when the spirit of sympathy, service and sacrifice reigned supreme in the hearts of men, could a society as visioned by the Hebrew Prophets become a reality on the Earth ; and

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Jesus saw that his own mission was to plant the seed of that spirit and Jesus of Nazareth became the Christ, the pure instrument of human destiny, the impulse to disinterested sympathy.

Muhammad of Arabia, as a seeker of Truth, saw how Judaism had lost its universal content and had become a purely racial religion ; and how Christianity had become so obsessed with the esoteric as to have completely lost the social implications of the teachings of the Hebrew Prophets. And Muhammad, the trader, knew himself called to be the seal of all the Prophets, to give to humanity the synthesis of the semitic faiths—from Abraham to Jesus of Nazareth. And this we have in the inspired words of the glorious Qur-án.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

1. The Vision of Islam and the Vision of Democracy are one and the same visions.
2. The British Empire is the greatest Islamic Power in history, and in the present world.
3. The Institution of Usury is utterly incompatible with the realization of the Vision of Islam.

THREE FURTHER FACTS

1. The principal and legitimate excuse for War, within the nations of Europe to-day, is the need to extend their territories in the interest of the economic freedom of their peoples.
2. The British Empire includes within it the largest undeveloped portion of the Earth's surface whose resources are such that they could easily support a population as large as exists in all Europe to-day.
3. The peoples of the British Empire are unable to avail themselves of, and to share with others, the rich resources of their lands because they are held in pawn to the London Money Market, in the interest of Usury.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

BRITISH ISLAMIC ACTION

Imperial Initiative.

To win all the peoples of the British Empire to the Faith of Islam ; making the Empire the nucleus of an Islamic Commonwealth of Nations.

Individual Integration.

For body, intellect and spirit to be all equal servants of the Ego : conscious of the futility of allowing any of which manifestations of man's being to set itself as supreme over the other two. (To achieve this state of individual integration demands a re-birth, which means to regain the faith, simplicity and warm impulse of childhood in our attitude towards life.)

A TECHNIQUE OF SELF-INTEGRATION

We know that the human mind is threefold in its function. Every manifestation of mind is, in the main, a Feeling or a Thought, or an act of Will. But there is only one Mind. There are not three minds, or even three distinct and separate compartments of the mind, but one mind variously manifested. Now the mind of rational man manifests itself in the sequence of Feeling, Thought and Will. But since the Renaissance, from the 15th century on, the mind of the finer type of Western man has tended more and more to function in the sequence of Thought, Feeling and Will. This evolution in the mind of man has been brought about with the growing consciousness of the power to shape his own destiny. (All humanity is heir to the European contribution to a world civilization).

TECHNIQUE

There are three words we must keep in mind : Love, Light and Life. *Think on Love.* Take this thought from Nietzsche. " Now the slave is a freeman, now are shattered the rigid hostile barriers which need, whim or insolent fashion has set up between men. Now, hearing the gospel of Universal Harmony each feels himself not

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only united to his neighbour, reconciled, blended, but one. Man is no longer an artist, he has become a Work of Art, all the artistic powers of Nature, to the highest ecstatic satisfaction of the Original Unity reveal themselves here in the thrills of intoxication." Consciously hold yourself in the sustained thought of Love.

When the idea of Love has fully taken possession of our thoughts, we become conscious of Light. We become conscious of an inner, glowing warmth, of a cheery inner brightness, as though our whole being was suffused with sunlight ; and with it an intense feeling for beauty.

With this consciousness of Light, with its feeling of glowing response to beauty, comes the experience of the fulness of life in its eternal essence. Momentous impulses of Will take possession of us, subordinating our life to an ideal which is beyond the span of our life.

The only worthy ideal of this generation being Democracy—a world society founded on the cosmic verities of Freedom, Equality and Solidarity—the Vision of Islam. The consciousness achieved through the technique of " thinking about Love " may be summed up as follows :—

" Serenity is only to be found in Love. " " The Wisdom of the world radiates in the Light. " " Joy is the intoxicating experience of Life. "

A path to true knowledge of the human self is to be found in the technique here described.

The power of thought is liberated. It is as though from a point at the root of the nose—the " two-petalled lotus flower between the brows "—we perceive that the " I, " as ego, is widely extended into space. Only by such a liberation of thought can we become integrated beings. Whilst we see in the ordinary way the Sun there, and there the Moon, there the mountains, we now feel ourselves to be at one with all that we see or hear. Whilst in the ordinary way the human self is something of a burden, we now become conscious of the " I " as a unique medium

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whereby to experience life. And whilst in the ordinary way we look upon the troubles of the world as something that interferes and spoils things for us, we now experience a quickening, all-pervading impulse, inasmuch as we become moved to real sympathy at the sight of care on the face of another.

We must direct this all-pervading impulse of Will towards bringing about a more just, secure and happy state of affairs on the Earth towards the realization of the Vision of Islam.

TABLIGH

BY HON'BLE SHEIKH MUSHIR HUSAIN KIDWAI OF GADIA,
BARRISTER-AT-LAW

To propagate Islam is an integral part of the faith of Islam. The Holy Qur-án enjoins that there should be a party of men and women amongst Muslims that should call attention of the people to the right path. The Qur-án has also instructed that the message of Islam should be delivered through love and amity. "Force and compulsion," says the Qur-án, "should have no place within the framework of Religion."

But I am aware of the fact that notwithstanding the presence of these commandments, there never was in existence any Muslim missionary organisation, similar to that amongst Christians who spend millions every year on evangelism. Their missionaries draw fat emoluments, and their colleges, schools and hospitals require huge sums of money for their maintenance. But let it be said to their credit, that some of their missionaries reach such far-flung places as are not only inaccessible, but also present a great risk to life.

Now, if Christianity *qua* Christianity had any truth or beauty in it, there is no doubt that the incessant labours and huge expenditure of money by Christian

missionaries would have decidedly borne fruit in the form of evangelisation of the whole of the world, when, besides untold sums of money and a great army of missionaries, there was the material prosperity of the Christian world to serve as a lure, and there were guns and bayonets and bombing machines to instil awe.

Even so, it is a matter of common knowledge that well-informed Christians themselves are turning their back on religion. Besides, we are face-to-face with a serious trouble which cannot be viewed without disquietude by men of all other religions. As Christianity suffers from inherent weaknesses, people, as a rule, are developing signs of unconcern with religion itself, as they were told to believe that Christianity was the best possible form of religion. Things have come to such a head, that ignorant Muslim youths who come under the baneful sway of Europe are ready to throw overboard even such a true religion as Islam and are joining hands with atheists. The early propagation of Islam owes its debt not only to the efforts of Muslim saints, but also to Muslim savants and traders. In fact, every Muslim played the rôle of a missionary of his religion both by word and deed. "Do not say things which you yourself do not do" (Al-Qur-án), was their guiding principle.

But things have changed since. Propagation of the faith of Islam in these days of atheism and godlessness is none too easy, especially in such places as are enmeshed in materialistic civilization and mechanistic culture. And because materialistic civilization and its consequential ways of life are finding favour in every country, the preaching of religion has become a problem. The Christian world, being financially very rich, had been pouring money like water in spite of very meagre results. But now in India we find some of the missionary centres are closing down, because the driving force of the prestige of Europe has spent itself, and the number of people

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joining the fold of Christianity is far below that accepting other faiths. In India, where the members of the untouchables used to fall an easy prey to worldly temptations, efforts at evangelisation are proving barren. Because of this radical change in the state of affairs the responsibility devolving on Muslims has increased manifold. They have not only to spread their Faith amongst strangers, but they have also to acquaint their own youth with it, so that they may be saved from the demoralising curse of atheism. Muslims have not only to disseminate the light of Islam, but also to be a bulwark against the menace of irreligiousness and anti-God movements. For this reason, every Muslim who has even a semblance of love for Islam, and has any sympathy for his fellow-beings, should regard it as his bounden duty to strain every nerve of his, in every possible way, to spread Islam as an antidote for the poison of materialism and ungodliness. As no other religion combines spirituality with rationality as Islam does, and no religion advocates and encourages scientific investigations like Islam, so if Muslims fail to acquaint young men with Islam in a fitting manner their humanity will degenerate into animalism, and selfishness, lust, passions and greed will know no bounds.

Outside of Islam there is no religion capable of smashing the *tentacles* of irreligion. Besides Islam there is no religious system which can prevent human intellect from becoming an instrument of destruction and fester. Let it be said unequivocally, that if Muslims did not gird up their loins to propagate Islam at this juncture, then not only would they wrong themselves, but also do a definite disservice to the whole of the world.

As far as numbers go, Muslims are on the increase everywhere. Within a short period new Muslim centres and mosques have sprung up in Paris, Berlin, Geneva, Vienna, and Japan. But let not this blur our vision and make us oblivious of our duty. We should rather take

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notice carefully of the fact that the messages of Islam should be carried to all such places, and amongst such peoples as have come to be regarded as having succumbed to anti-religiousness and are setting a bad example for others.

Everyone, I am sure, will agree with me that irreligiousness has found the most fertile soil in Europe. And also that, with the solitary exception of Japan, it is the European Powers which are daily bringing within the ambit of their influence the rest of the world. Muslims should therefore make Europe and Japan as the centres of their "Tabligh" (missionary activities).

Luckily for us, journals and magazines are so easily carried now from one place to another that, provided we had only a couple of strong centres, the efficacious work of our Tabligh could not only be visualized, but regarded as an immediate certainty.

It is in this connection interesting to note that one journal, I mean the *Islamic Review* of Woking, has succeeded in introducing Islam to most of the European countries, and now even to Japan. In Europe, education is universal. As a rule each town is equipped with an up-to-date public library. If a journal ably edited and containing intellectually superior articles could find its way to them it is sure to be read by tens of thousands of men and women, and what is more, it would be read by such as *would*, in time to come, be in a position to influence the opinions of millions of people.

To my mind the time has come when Muslims should make a collective effort to start two strong centres in two islands, namely, Japan and England.

As to England, fortunately, a centre was established 22 years ago, and let it be said to its credit that it will always hold the world its debtor for its meritorious services in spreading Islamic ideas. Indeed, from a religious point of view, it is easily the most outstanding accomplishment

of the present century. The need of the day is that not only the Muslims of India, but of the world, should co-operate in consolidating that centre, and in organising the propagation of Islam from there *without* loss of time. Afterwards they should gradually open branches in other world-centres as well. But, as all the religions of the world took their birth in Asia, and as Asia has been from time immemorial the cradle of knowledge and culture, it would be but in the fitness of things, that in Asia also there should be a powerful centre for the propagation of Islam which would influence the advancing problems of that continent. The most appropriate place to start such an organisation in Asia is Japan. A wealthy large-hearted Muslim of India has already contributed largely in building a mosque in that remote island at Kobe. But bricks and mortar cannot take us very far. To infuse life in that edifice, and disseminate the refulgent rays of Islam from there, is even more important. But this objective cannot be realized without a vigorous and collective effort on the part of Muslims as a body. Even if one individual were to offer to bear the whole of the burden of the expenses, it would not be fair. Besides being based on insecure foundations it would very likely become sectarian. That will not do as the propagation of Islam should be rigidly conducted on absolutely non-sectarian lines as is being done by the Woking Muslim Mission. All those non-Muslims whom the Woking Mission has been instrumental in bringing within the fold of Islam are above sectarianism. What greater proof of freedom from the bias of sectarianism in the conducting of the Woking Mission could be had than the fact that its Trust is composed of Muslims of all schools of thought ?

I full well remember the document drawn up in my presence by the late founder of the Woking Muslim Mission and given in the keeping of Mr. Hashim Isphani, the well-known business man of London, who is now in

Iran, in which the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din had affirmed his adherence to the Hanafi school of thought, and had further undertaken to keep the Woking Mission, a strictly non-sectarian institution. There never was an issue of the *Islamic Review* in which, in one form or other, the mention of the finality of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was not made. My own articles kept appearing continuously in the *Islamic Review* for more than 6 years, containing the formula of the finality of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in most of them. I myself used to reside in Woking in those days. If I, who has always been a confirmed protagonist of Pan-Islamism, had discerned any traces of sectarianism in the running of the said Mission, I would not have been true to myself had I kept silent over such a glaring defection. I would have never hesitated to inform not only India, but also the whole of the Muslim world, as to the exact state of affairs, and would have denounced it openly if there were any covert sectarianism. I, for one, cannot tolerate those who deny, or quibble with, the finality of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, because I look upon them as those who cause disruption in the ranks of Islam, nay, who strike at the very root of Islam. If Islam as a religion is not perfect, and if the Qur-án which stands uncorrupted is not sufficient for religious guidance for all times, then both must be false to themselves which is utterly impossible.

Those who wish to bring the Woking Mission into bad odour with the Muslims of the world by minimising the importance of its work, or by imputing to it sectarianism, are doing a great disservice to Islam. They are not the friends of Islam. No article of the *Islamic Review* has ever reflected any sectarian taint. I can hardly over-emphasise the fact that the Islam which the *Islamic Review* offers to the world is free from all sectarian bias.

What the *Islamic Review* has set itself to do is to preach "La Ilaha Il-Allah Muhammad-ur-Rasul Allah." It was the preaching of this *Kalima* that revolutionised the world; it was the creed embodied in this *Kalima* which brought Muslims to the top, and to-day too, it is this creed that would save the world from the impending disaster. It alone can enable man to rise to the fullest stature of manhood and to the highest plane of advancement, and can help materially to turn the mechanistic civilization into a veritable blessing to the world.

In my opinion it is urgent that a syndicate of influential Muslims from all the Islamic centres be constituted so that it may chalk out the ways and means to propagate Islam. The syndicate should begin at organizing centres for the interpretation of the message of Islam in all the important countries. But it would be stupid to do nothing till the syndicate, or its *work*, are fully established. We must not lose time. We should at once strengthen the work of the Woking Mission and enable the *Islamic Review* to secure as wide a circulation as possible. A mission in Japan should also be organised very soon. But for the untimely death of the late Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy, who had blazed the trail for the propagation of Islam in England, a mission for Japan, through the generosity of H. H. the Agha Khan, would have been already started. But it seems the laurels of this distinction are destined for some one else who, dedicating his life to the sacred cause of Islam, would set sail for Japan.

At the time of writing the name of Doctor Behjet Wahby, an Egyptian who was educated in England and lived long in Paris, which is known to and who knows India, and is of ripe years and experience, comes into my head. He is as if to manner born. He is a linguist of repute and fully conversant with Arabic, Turkish, English and French. But the first and foremost task for the materialization of this scheme is the sum of Rs. 500

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per month, for at least a period of 2 years, to keep a missionary, to publish a journal in Japan, and to start a centre in the capital of Japan, as Woking was established near London.

If some devout Muslim like the Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti of Ajmere should reach Japan, and through his spiritual magnetism draw the Emperor of Japan, then much reward would have been made up and a great thing done. For although Japan has a constitutional system of government, yet the people there even to-day literally worship the Emperor and hold him in great veneration. If lead is given by the Emperor, it would serve as a stimulus to tens of thousands of Japanese to follow in his wake.

We want the capable and right sort of men in all the centres so that they may set a good example to others by their conduct, and preach only what they themselves practise. To be possessed of noble qualities is a pre-requisite for a missionary. I am sure if the where-withal be found it will not be difficult to find a few Muslims from among the six hundred and eighty millions, who will devote themselves to the sacred work and bring Japan under the ægis of Islam.

I am convinced that this dream of mine will be realised sooner than many anticipate, and the rays of the Sun of Islam will shed lustre upon the world.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

THE UNITY OF ISLAM

BY HIS HOLINESS MIRZA ABDUL KARIM ZANJANI

[We have always held, to the bewilderment of the preachers of other religions, that there have not been, and cannot be, any sects in Islam. Nevertheless, our adversaries have, now and then, pointed to such small differences in Islam as that between the *Shiahs* and the *Sunnis*. The *Shiah-Sunni* difference is, indeed, the most important in the body-politic of Islam. We, however, have always held the opinion that even this difference does not amount to what can be called a schism and in this view we have the support of *Shiah* scholars and theologians of repute. Of these latter, His Holiness Hujjatul-Islam Allama Aga Mirza Abdul Karim Zanjani, the great *Shiah* Mujtehid of Najaf, is undoubtedly the most outstanding figure. We have great pleasure, therefore, in publishing an article from his able pen, and hope that it will dispel what little confusion may still be lurking in some minds with regard to the differences in the House of Islam.—*Ed. I. R.*]

Islam is the eternal religion of nature, for it is based on the eternal laws of true reasoned knowledge, and aims at Universal Peace and World Unity through Divine Institutions which do perfect justice alike to the individual and the social sides of man's nature. Islam is universal, because it repudiates all distinctions of colour, race and geography, and accepts pure reason and Revelation as the leading light for human action. The principles and laws of Islam alone are the sound and sure basis for securing the peace, unity and progress of mankind.

The greatest enemy of man is his narrow-minded egotism, which prevents him from rising above his surroundings and identifying himself, heart and soul, with the divine ideal of universality and sublimity. Viewed from this angle, political nationalism is the greatest obstacle in the way of world-unity. Thus, Islam alone provides sound social principles which can save mankind from every sort of extreme. Islam is not opposed to material progress. Nay, there is absolutely no conflict between the material and the spiritual, the here and the hereafter, in Islam. The Prophet of Islam (peace be on

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him) came to perfect morals and conquer men's minds, not to establish Imperialism.

TOTALITY OF ISLAM

The most characteristic principle of Islam is its emphasis on the totality of man and the unity of life. The mission of Hazrat Musa (Moses) was largely one of political emancipation and temporal power. The mission of Hazrat Isa (Jesus) was one of purification and monastic renunciation. There is no room for such conflicting dualism in Islam, for the social principles of world-construction propounded therein are also the best principles for moral culture and the growth of individual personality. Islam alone guarantees complete mental progress and the perfect moral growth of man under a unified system or policy, for Islam synthesizes the best teachings of the Prophet Moses and the Prophet Jesus. So it is that Islam takes equally into account, and brings each into its appropriate province, the following various aspects of human life—(1) Articles of Faith (Aqa'id); (2) Morality (*Tahzib-i-akhlaq*); (3) rules for social conduct (*Mu'ámalát*); (4) principles of politics, economics and public finance (*Sayásat-i-Mudan*).

PURDA SYSTEM

There is a world of difference between the customary and national systems of *purda* found respectively in Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and India on the one hand, and the rules of "Hijáb" enjoined by Islam for the observation of both sexes, on the other. There is one *purda* in Iran, one in Iraq, one in Yemen, and one in Afghanistan, but there are one hundred thousand *pardas* in India; and this Indian *purda*, be it noted, is Islamic neither in its origin nor in its former spirit. It is a sort of imprisonment and was never contemplated by the Prophet of Islam (peace be on him).

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"Hijáb," that is, rules for the proper dressing and decent deportment of men and women, and defined checks on the free mixing of the sexes, is certainly an Islamic institution. The thinking minds of Europe, who have seen the ravages of sexual anarchy, are coming to realize the wisdom of the Islamic "Hijáb." But the "Hijáb" of the Qur-án should on no account be confounded with the national system of *purda* found in different forms among different Muslim peoples. The limits defined by Islam for the regulation of sexual and domestic life are the wisest and the most scientific, their sole purpose being to secure the conservation and propagation of the race, and the integrity of family life.

BASIS OF UNITY

The main cause of the downfall of the Muslims has been their want of will, enterprise and inductive thought. People have lost sight of the real spirit of Islam and are worshipping dry skeletons of religion. The second cause is the want of the spirit of unity—I mean that unity of hearts which is the real basis of the unity of national life. The formation of sects and groups in Islam has been the greatest bane to Muslims. To me, the highest of all *Bid'at* (religious sin of "innovation") is sectarianism and factionism; and when I speak of unity, it must be understood that I mean religious, and not political, unity.

My submission to you, both *Shiahs* and *Sunnis*, is that our Great Prophet (peace be on him) was the Prophet of Unity. He came to abolish all kinds of religious and racial differences in the world, for the sole object of his universal mission was the establishment of the Unity of Allah, the unity of man, and the unity of the world—that spirit of religious unity—by dint of which the small band of thirty thousand Muslims of the early era of Islam were successful in smashing and conquering the Persian Empires of Cyris and Xerxes.

THE UNITY OF ISLAM

BROTHERS-IN-ISLAM

While there is hardly one matter of real difference between *Shiahs* and *Sunnis*, there are many important and fundamental principles which are common to all sects of Islam. The chronic disease of the body-politic of Islam is commonly held to be the great "schism" of the *Shiah* and the *Sunni*. Yet if we consider with a scientific and objective mind the essentials of the two schools, we are bound to reach the conclusion that there is only one important political difference of opinion, namely, that which concerns the theory of the Imamate or Caliphate. *At best, it is but a political difference.* The *Sunnis* believe in one political theory, and the *Shiahs* subscribe to another. But on the side of agreement we have all the fundamentals of religion and *Shariat*, here and hereafter, sociology and the ideals of social economy.

To confine ourselves to religious principles alone, it is enough to enumerate the *Seven Islamic Articles of Faith*. All *Shiahs* and *Sunnis* have unshaken faith in (1) God, (2) the Angels, (3) the Books, (4) the Prophet, (5) the Day of Judgment, (6) *Taqdeer* (Measurement of good and evil in the knowledge of the Omniscient), and (7) the Hereafter, or Life after Death. Besides these fundamentals of Faith, the *Shiahs* and the *Sunnis* have the five pillars of Islam as the common basis of their religious nationality in the practical world. These are (1) The *Kalima* of Unity : there is no god but Allah, (2) *Salat*, the prayer, (3) *Sayam*, fasting, (4) *Zakat*, the poor rate, (5) *Haj* of Ka'aba at Mecca (pilgrimage).

Practically speaking, the congregational prayers, the communal fasting for a month, the *Juma*, the universal *Id-ul-Fitr* and *Id-ul-Azha*, and the common Qibla of Mecca, the point to which all Muslims turn their faces five times a day for offering their prayers, the living Qur-án, and the most vitalizing personality of the final and ideal Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), are the

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eternal principles of the unity and universality of Islam. In comparison to these fundamentals of Faith, the political differences concerning the theory of *Khilafat*, found between the *Shiahs* and the *Sunnis*, is immaterial.

I wish to conclude with a sincere appeal to the *Shiahs* and the *Sunnis* for unity. I beg to ask you all to cultivate the spirit of "forget and forgive." You must be catholic in your sympathies, broad in your vision, and tolerant and temperate in your social behaviour towards each other. Please give decent burial to all talk of discussion and dissension. You have been fighting on the question of the *Imamate* for the last 13 centuries, but you have not gained anything thereby, rather you seem to have abandoned everything: religion, freedom, country, power, sovereignty, in short both "Deen" and "Dunya."

I never say that *Shiahs* should become *Sunnis*, or *Sunnis Shiahs*. I admit there must be some scope for difference of opinion. I only appeal to you to keep small differences within the limits of the fundamental principles of Islam. In matters relating to the principles of Islam and the defence and the welfare of your country and Faith, you should all be united as one body. That is my advice, and I give it in absolute good faith.

First let me speak to the *Shiahs*. Brethren, you have exceeded the limits of propriety, for you have far exceeded the example set by your Imam Hazrat Ali (peace of Allah be upon him). Hazrat Ali was a claimant to the *Khilafat*, but we have his most definite and unequivocal pronouncement on the supreme need of keeping the unity of Islam intact. All the differences should be for, and not against, Islam. In "Nehajul Balaghat," the sovereign Lord of Souls, Hazrat Imam Ali says, "I co-operated with sincere faith and perfect unity of heart with Abu Bakr, Omar and Usman, the three early Caliphs, in the transaction of high matters of state and religion; so much so, that when they sat, I sat, when they

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stood up, I stood up, and when they marched forward I marched forward. Whenever they sought my help, I offered my services. I never grudged to give them my counsel. Nay, I often worked as their Vicegerent in the capital of Medina in their absence."

This is the ideal of unity and co-operation which every true lover and follower of Hazrat Imam should treasure in his heart and mind, and practise in his social life.

To my *Sunni* brethren-in-Faith, I would like to say— You boast of building the organizations and empires of Islam. How, then, is it possible that you are now engaged in controversies which should be far from the minds of broad-visioned and high-souled statesmen? As elder brothers, yours is the major responsibility for maintaining and perfecting the unity of Islam.

Schism and religious factionism has been the curse of Muslims. It is nothing short of waging war with Allah and the Prophet of Allah. It is the fatal disease of your body-politic. You must either tear it out root and branch, or be prepared to become the victims of the anti-Islamic onslaughts coming from the West and from Russia.

THE REASONS FOR MY CHANGE OF FAITH

BY STANLEY ANYAN

It is in the belief that in it I have at last found the true Religion which brings peace and contentment, that I have turned to Islam.

As a child I was brought up in the Church of England until the age of ten, when I was sent to a Methodist School. On leaving there I went back to the Church, where I was confirmed. After a time, however, on thinking matters over, I realized that there was something lacking, and that I was not getting the contentment and the peace of mind that I desired. So I thought the best thing was to break away and seek elsewhere.

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I then tried various other forms of worship including Christian Science, Spiritualism, etc., but I could not anywhere find that for which I sought.

I then began to visit the religious section in the Public Library, in the hope that I might find the object of my search in some other religion not represented in my town. I read books on almost every kind of Faith until I came to Islam, and the more I read of Islam, the more certain I became that I had found something which was more convincing to me in the nature of what I was looking for, than any I had tried before.

Having then decided that Islam was indeed what I wanted, I realized that I must find someone to whom I could appeal for help and advice; but, being at that time unaware of the existence of the Muslim Mission in England, I was rather puzzled as to the best thing to do. Then happened, what seemed to me, rather a strange thing. I was passing a book-shop when I noticed, in the rack outside, a paper which I had not read for some time : so, for no particular reason I bought it. Later on, while casually glancing through it at home, I was very greatly surprised to see in the answers to the Correspondents column, the word "Mohammedanism," and on reading further I realized that it was telling someone else the very thing I was looking for. It gave the address of the Mosque at Woking. It was very strange that I found what I wanted in the last place I expected to find it. It almost seemed to me as if some unseen influence had guided me to it. I wrote to the advertiser and then to the Mosque, and received, by return, helpful literature and guidance for which I am most grateful. It now remains for me to do my utmost to become a true and good follower of Islam.

MUHAMMAD, THE GREATEST SOCIAL REFORMER

MUHAMMAD, THE GREATEST SOCIAL REFORMER

BY MAULVI ABDUL KARIM, M.L.C.

(Continued from Vol. XXIV, p. 118.)

The Prophet of Islam seems to have forestalled the germ theory, long before it was propounded by medical science. Muslims were enjoined to grow a moustache, perhaps with a view to obstruct the passage of the germs into the body through the nostrils. They were further required to clip the moustache short, so that in drinking it would not be dipped into the water and thereby facilitate the passage of the germs collected in the moustache into the stomach.

Such is the risk which a beardless and a moustacheless man has to run. Yet it is to be regretted that the mania for shaving is fast spreading, not only among non-Muslims, but even among Muslims, in spite of social custom, family tradition and religious exhortations. Would it be too much to expect that what Dr. Macdonald has written would set them thinking?

The injunction concerning circumcision also has special significance, and in this connection the following remarks on circumcision, made by Dr. M. Exner, M.D., in "The Rational Sex Life for Man" are well worth quoting—

"The frequent cause of persistent nocturnal emissions in a long tight foreskin, causing irritating secretions to gather underneath, which the anatomical condition makes it difficult or impossible to remove..... serve to keep the sensitive parts unduly irritative, a condition which alone is responsible for undermining the health. Under these circumstances circumcision gives prompt relief. With reference to cleanliness and for other important reasons, circumcision of all boys in infancy is desirable.

The Muslims were the pioneers of personal hygiene in Europe. Sir Thomas Oliver, the well-known physician, has truly observed: 'Allowing for climatic conditions the most civilised nations are the most washed.' This view is opposed to that of the Christian divines. In the rule of the Order of the Temple, St. Bernard laid down that 'Knights should be seldom washed and never combed'."

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Dr. John William Draper writes : “ To the Saracens we are indebted for many of our personal comforts. Religiously clean, it was not possible for them to clothe themselves according to the fashion of the natives of Europe, in garment unchanged till it dropped to pieces of itself, a loathsome mass of vermin, stench and rags... They taught us the use of often changing, and often washed undergarments of linen and cotton.”

Gustav Diercks says : “ As the Muslims came from warm climates, they felt a greater necessity for baths and cleanliness in general ; more than the customs of the Christians of Europe can show. Consequently the habits of the Muslims were taken up by the Christians and baths are frequently used.” So the cleanliness of the present-day Westerners is entirely due to their association with the Saracens of Spain.

ORGANISED CHARITY AND CAPITALISM

One of the religious ordinances for the Muslims is *Zakat*, or charity. Other religions have also enjoined charity ; but none of them prescribed its form or extent thereof. Neither the Bible nor any other Scripture has laid it down definitely, as did the Qur-án. It has been commanded in the Qur-án that every Muslim must pay annually $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of his possessions in cash or gold, and a proportionate share of other possessions, as *Zakat* for the benefit of the needy—the poor, who cannot maintain themselves ; debtors, who have not the means to repay ; slaves, so that they can buy their own freedom, travellers and strangers, who have no passage money. Besides *Zakat*, every head of a family has to pay at the *I'd*, on the expiry of the fasting month of Ramadan, a certain fixed sum known as the *Fitra* towards charity for himself and for every one of his dependants.

Islam does not favour Capitalism—the amassing of wealth in the hands of individuals—and it has done much

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to equalise worldly conditions. Besides the institutions of *Zakat* and *Fitra*, it adopted other means for the equitable distribution of wealth. There is no law of Primogeniture in Islam. The Islamic law of inheritance distributes a deceased person's estate proportionately among his widow and his sons and daughters, the sons getting double of the share of the daughters, without any preference to any particular one of them by reason of priority or age.

Usury is strictly forbidden by Islam. The debtor must return only the principal to the creditor, and any exploitation of any one's personal need for another's profit is very severely condemned. Thus of all religions, Islam alone adopted means to minimise the evils of Capitalism.

The Prophet of Islam impressed on his followers, both by personal example and by precept, the dignity of labour. When a mosque was being built in Medina, he worked like an ordinary labourer, carrying bricks on his head. On one occasion when a respectable person, who could not find any employment, enquired of him what he was to do for the support of his family, he advised him to go to the neighbouring forest with an axe and to cut wood to sell as fuel. Thus there is no honest work, however "low" in the estimation of society, that a Muslim should shun, if called upon to do it. In fact on several occasions, when beggars came to the door of the Prophet of Islam, and he had no cash or food to offer them, he asked them to wait, while he himself went out to some neighbour who was well off (often a Jew or Christian), did some manual work for him, and came and divided the wages of the same between the beggar and his own family.

PUNCTUALITY AND DISCIPLINE

The debauched and drunken Arabs had hardly any idea of the value of time and the necessary discipline for a

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well-ordered society. Early in life the Prophet of Islam realised that if the Arabs were to be organised into a compact nation they must be under proper control and should know when to act. In promulgating Islam, he did not ordain injunctions which would promote punctuality and discipline among the Muslims. He prescribed fixed times for the performance of religious duties, particularly the five daily prayers. This was done with a view to impress upon the Muslims the importance of punctuality. Not that prayers said a few minutes earlier or later than the appointed time would be unacceptable to God, but the insistence on exact time was intended to remind the Muslims five times a day that they should do their work punctually, according to a settled routine ; otherwise it might not be properly done or done at all. What can be more regrettable than the fact that in spite of this insistence on punctuality, present-day Muslims should have so far forgotten the true significance of the Islamic injunction, that their unpunctuality in every-day life seems to be passing into a proverb ?

The Prophet of Islam greatly stressed the importance of discipline, which is so essential for all human affairs, both in peace and war. A congregation for prayer demonstrates most effectively, though imperceptibly, how order and discipline should be maintained in an assemblage and how commands given by the leader should be promptly obeyed. He insisted upon implicit obedience to the command of the person elected as the leader. A highly placed European, who had occasion to be present at one such congregation of prayers, remarked that thousands of people standing in silence and going down on their knees and then to the ground all together at one word of the man at the head, was the most amazing sight he had ever seen in any country.

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MATRIMONY

Monasticism favoured by the Christian church had proved an evil rather than a blessing to humanity. Impressed by the blessings of a wedded life, Prophet Muhammad was convinced that matrimony was essential for the welfare of mankind. He, therefore, made marriage and family the basis of social organisation, and put a ban on the renunciation of the world. Maintenance of the family and the rearing of children were regarded as imperative duties of man; to be an obedient son, a dutiful husband, and affectionate parent were the essential traits of virtue. Living a piously worldly life and serving God's creatures was declared to be the highest duty of man, no less than simple adoration of the Lord. Islam thus sanctified every detail of mundane life, and this is one of its most distinctive features.

These are some of the important social reforms initiated by the Prophet Muhammad, and it would be superfluous to dilate upon the immense good they have done to humanity. Islam brought about the equality of man, the elevation of the status of woman, the manumission of slaves, suppression of profligacy and drunkenness, advocacy of organised charity, forbidding of usury, condemnation of the exploitation of the poor, commendation of the dignity of labour, insistence on punctuality and discipline, exaltation of matrimony and discountenancing of celibacy. But for these reforms, preached and practised since the promulgation of Islam, the progress of human society would have been very much retarded and the condition of mankind altogether different from what it is today. For all this, an immense debt of the world's gratitude is due to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who may rightly be styled the greatest social reformer the world has ever produced.

(To be continued.)

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CORRESPONDENCE

BECKENHAM,
KENT.

DEAR BROTHER-IN-ISLAM,

I trust you will forgive me for writing to you thus, but I should be so grateful if one of your Muslim friends who is much blessed with this world's goods could possibly find it in his heart to provide me with a copy of the Holy Qur-án which I am much too poor to buy, owing to various causes including employment (I am a professional musician), as I hope eventually to be able to read the Holy Qur-án in the Arabic text. A copy with both Arabic and English texts would be doubly acceptable, but I should be delighted, of course, with an English translation only.

At present I do not know much of Islam and its tenets, but already it seems to me in my humility before God I have solved a great problem and to fulfil a great want, not only from the Eastern point of view, but from the Western view-point as well. I may perhaps state that I first reached Islam through absently picking up *The Islamic Review* in a public library. Now I will say farewell. Do please forgive me making my little appeal. It was the only course I could take. May the blessings of God and His infinite peace always remain with you.

Your Brother-in-Islam,
(Sd.) J. N. R.

8, NEWTON ROAD,
SOUTH TOTTENHAM, N. 15.

DEAR IMAM,

I have just received a book called "THE IDEAL PROPHET" by Mr. Kamal-ud-Din, in which he always says that the Apostle Paul was prejudiced against women, and regarded them as slaves with no rights. Obviously Mr. Kamal-ud-Din cannot have read the New Testament, or he would not have written so. Throughout the Testament Jesus and his Apostles speak of women as equal in moral obligations and personal rights to men.

Thus children are told to honour their parents (not merely their fathers), and men are commanded to cherish their wives as their own bodies. Muhammad, on the other hand, allows a man to have four wives, while a woman who took more than one husband would be guilty of adultery. This is most unequal and unjust, and it stigmatises the woman as a mere chattel who must observe a strict moral code, while men are under no such obligations towards their wives.

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As to Muhammad's claim to be the Apostle of God, the promised anointed one is distinctly foretold by the Hebrew Prophets as being a son of David—"a rod of the stem of Jesse." Also, it is distinctly prophesied that he is the son of God, as it says : "A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son," and also, "Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee." Muhammad was not descended from Jesus, and, so far from being the son of God, he denies that God ever had a son, saying, "Allah begetteth not ; neither is He begotten."

Now, how can you possibly fit in these together ?

Yours very sincerely,

(Sd.) R. LINGWOOD.

To

R. LINGWOOD, Esq.,
8, NEWTON ROAD,
SOUTH TOTTENHAM, N. 15.

DEAR SIR,

Your very kind letter to hand. As perhaps you are aware, when we criticise the Jesus of the Gospels, we do not criticise Jesus as such. We hold that neither the Gospels nor the Epistles portray the true character of Jesus. The real Jesus was as noble and great as the Prophet Muhammad, or any other Prophet. As a matter of fact, we are forbidden by the Holy Qur-án to set up any comparisons between the prophets of God. We, ordinary human beings, with our minds stuck up in the filth of the fleshy desires, are absolutely unfit to judge and compare those high souls that have been directly purified by God Himself. Nevertheless, we regard the New Testament as the writing of persons who were more unfit than ourselves to judge and report the true character of Jesus. It is thus, to prove the ridiculous position of the so-called Scriptures of the present-day Christianity, that we criticise its portrayal of Jesus. Leaving aside the Epistles of St. Paul, even in the Gospels we find a very bad reference to the attitude of Jesus towards Womanhood, when, according to these supposed sacred books, he accosted his mother with these words :

"What have I to do with thee, woman?"

Nevertheless, the Holy Qur-án says that Jesus was very respectful to his mother. No one can be more pleased than ourselves, if it be proved that Jesus had actually preached respect and obedience to Motherhood in the same way as Muhammad did when he said :

"Paradise lies at the feet of the Mother."

We shall be very pleased indeed if you could give us such reference from the New Testament.

Your reference to Polygamy in Islam is based on certain misunderstandings and misconceptions. You seem to think that Christianity is responsible for the Law of Monogamy prevalent

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in the Christian countries to-day, whereas the fact is that Christianity is as much, or as little, responsible for this Law of Monogamy as it is for the astounding amount of sexual immorality practised in Europe. As a point of information, I should like to tell you that the conception of a Monogamous life emerged for the first time in the history of religions through the Laws of Muhammad. Christianity had no idea of it till the sixth century of its own era, and *even up to the time of the Reformation it remained a debatable question*. Martin Luther himself was of the opinion that Polygamy was quite consistent with a Christian life. As you yourself are doubtless aware, all the four Gospels are absolutely silent on this question, in spite of the fact that *Polygamy was an established Institution in Judaism*. As a progeny of David, Jesus certainly inherited the sins of the numerous polygamous lives led by his ancestors—male and female.

As for the status of Woman in Islam, I make bold to say that all throughout the ages it has been far superior to any status given to her by any other religion or society. Her position in Islam is that of a dignified human being. I am sending you, enclosed herewith, a book which will make you understand what I mean. The Islamic Law, although it permits Polygamy under certain very restricted conditions, contains such wise safeguards for her position, as co-partner of man in the enjoyment of human rights and privileges, that it makes her position enviable in the eyes of the freest woman living under Christian Laws. I have lived long enough in England not to be deceived by the so-called freedom enjoyed by Womanhood here. I cannot imagine a cleverer and a crueller exploitation of Womanhood by Man. It is not possible to go into the details of the matter in the course of a letter. We could discuss this matter at some length if you would care to see me personally.

Coming to the question of Muhammad's claim to Prophethood, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that, at the time of the appearance of Jesus, the Jews were expecting two promised persons. The one would be called the *Messiah*, and the other the *Prophet*. The one would be the infuser of a new spirit into the dead Dogmas and Rituals of Judaism, while the other would be a regular Prophet—a Law-giver like Moses. Thus do we reconcile our allegiance to Jesus and Muhammad both.

This question also, like the one discussed above, requires a detailed discussion, which can only be done if we sit face to face.

In conclusion, I must express my appreciation of the spirit shown in your letter. It is only such an attitude that can bring real peace to a world distracted by religious quarrels.

Always at your service in the understanding of mutual view-points, and in the cause of Truth,

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD,
Imam.

CORRESPONDENCE

ANIBAL ALGECIRAS, SPAIN.

TO THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.
SIR,

Mrs. Helen Sterling, a resident of Tangiers and a personal friend of mine, has afforded me much information about the Muhammedan Religion, in which I profess a deep interest.

She has advised me that you have some booklets which you distribute on the subject, and I am therefore taking the liberty of writing to request you to send me same, as I cannot read Arabic. If you would care to include a copy of the *Islamic Review*, I should be greatly obliged.

I have been given to understand that these booklets are free, but if there is any expense connected with same, kindly advise me accordingly. I am enclosing some English stamps to help to defray the postage expense.

Thanking you in advance for your kind attention to the matter.

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) B. E. HOLTSMARK.

3, GABRIEL STREET,
HONOR OAK PARK,
LONDON, S. E. 23.

TO THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.
DEAR SIR,

I am the son of an ex-British Consul at Bagdad, and I have lived most of my life in the Near East. I have been taking a great interest in the Muslim Faith. For the past few years I have read and studied the Qur-án and I hope that in the near future I shall be able to embrace the Muslim Faith.

I do not think that I have the strong faith that all Muslims should feel. I am writing this letter for guidance. Also I shall be obliged if you would kindly let me know what literature I should read and study, etc.

Yours fraternally,
(Sd.) A. R. COOPER.

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LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASUL- ALLAH

BY THE HON'BLE MR. M. T. AKBAR, K. C.

(Continued from Vol. XXIV, p. 107.)

Many years ago, about the end of the Victorian era, I remember reading in the pages of the defunct *Nation* and *Athenæum* a symposium of the views of leading British men and women on the subject of Prayers and Response from God. The answers were all pessimistic and the writers deplored that they could get no response to any of their prayers. They were all in the same strain as Pascal's fright at the eternal stillness and silence of space. I believe these ladies and gentlemen were probably anticipating something on the lines of a modern wireless set or long distance telephony, which 'one could turn on or ring up, after a sumptuous banquet followed by an opera at Covent Garden, and so get into touch with Berlin, Moscow, Tokio, or San Francisco. One cannot, of course, get a response to one's prayers when one is full to repletion of the remains of a *recherché* meal or dulled to satiation by exquisite music. Like many other accomplishments, to get a response to one's prayers, one has to master the technique of the art, and undergo an intensive training, not only of the body and mind, but also what is more elusive and difficult of the emotions and the soul. The symposium, of course, appeared at an age when the universe was regarded as a giant machine, and scientists elaborately explained its workings on the theory of mechanics and applied mathematics. It was an age when there was no necessity for a God and when God was regarded as an encumbrance. Then came Einstein with his space-time continuum and his theory of point events, which was strangely anticipated by Mohyuddin Al-Arabi, who stated long ago that the universe was created, destroyed and re-created at every

instant of time. In the present age, a great majority of scientists believe, more or less (subject to reservations)—that there may be a God or Master Mathematician behind the universe, with whom they hope to make a nodding acquaintance in the course of further research. But they do not want Him and can do very well without Him. In the “Expanding Universe,” by Sir Arthur Eddington, the author gives the photograph of a spiral nebula which he estimates to be distant only a matter of 1,300,000 light years. As light travels roughly at 186,000 miles per second, my readers will be able to calculate the distance. Moreover, he was of opinion that the universe was expanding at an enormous rate. Einstein explained the mystery of the velocity of light; it will be remembered that in the chapter “Al Noor” in the Qur-án, Allah is said to be light upon light, and the light of the heavens and the earth. According to Einstein, to a person travelling at the velocity of light, there will be no time and no space. The universe to him is in four dimensions, unbounded but finite, and matter is due to a puckering of space. If there is no matter the universe will shrink to a point, and so on. It almost looks as if the great master-mathematician was demonstrating the utter futility of the puny explanations of these scientists! Whatever may be my readers’ views on this point, one thing is clear. The discoveries of modern science are slowly and gradually revealing to man that God is more stupendous and mysterious than he can ever hope to conceive in his wildest flights of imagination or fancy, including those of Mr. Wells (*see* 16—74 and 42—11). Is it surprising, therefore, that the ladies and gentlemen who wrote to the paper I have alluded to, could get no response from such a deity? If they did get a response, their bodies, minds and souls would have been shattered at the first contact, and they would not have lived to communicate their experience.¹

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 17 : 143.

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Allah says in the Qur-án :¹

“Or do you think that you shall enter the Garden (of Bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you ? They encountered suffering and adversity and were so shaken in spirit that even the Apostle and those of faith who were with him cried : ‘ When (will come) the help of God ? ’ Ah ! Verily, the help of God is (always) near ! ”

In Chapter 7, verse 40, God says : “ Surely (as for) those who reject Our communications and turn away from them haughtily, the doors of heaven shall not be opened for them, nor shall they enter the garden until a camel pass through the eye of a needle ; and thus do We reward the guilty.” In verses 124—128, of Chapter 20, Allah refers to the guilty who neglected the *Ayats* or communications which Allah sent to them, and the consequences of such neglect (*see also* 23—66 ; 18—105 ; 16—104 ; 25—27). God is always whispering in the ears of every man and woman, and not only in the ears of musicians and artists as Abt Vogler seemed to think. So, it was not necessary to pray to God and wait for a response, because Allah is always first in the field (*see* 2—186). It is because man takes this world for a sport, as the Qur-án says (*see* 57—20 and 21—16), and is incessantly engaged in worldly occupations, namely, of money-making and pleasure-seeking, that he cannot hear these signals. If he once hearkens to them and turns his face towards Allah, the Qur-án says Allah will put him to the test at every stage of his spiritual progress. Chapter 2, verses 153 and 155, are as follows—“ Oh ! you who believe ! Seek assistance through patience and prayer ; surely Allah is with the patient And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and life and fruits ; but give good news to the patient.”

In this spiritual path, the dross and filth in man must be burnt out in the fiery furnace of trials and

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 2 : 214.

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tribulations before he can be clean enough to appear before the August Presence of Him who is Holy and Pure. The furnace will be hotter and more fiery after death if man has neglected his opportunities in this life. That is why the Qur-án refers to the fire of hell as man's mother (Chapter 101, verses 8—11).

Speaking of this life, the Qur-án says : " Whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of the soul, these are the people who will be successful—Your possessions and your children are only a trial, and Allah it is with Whom is a great reward."¹ The heart-rending memorable lines of Francis Thompson occur to one's mind.

Ah ! Thy love indeed

A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,

Suffering no flowers except its own to mount ?

Ah ! must—

Designer infinite !

Ah ! Must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it ?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust :

And now my heart is as a broken fount,

Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever

From the dank thoughts that shiver

Upon the sighful branches of my mind

Such is ; what is to be ?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind ?

" Whether man's heart or life it be which yields

The harvest, must Thy harvest fields

Be dunged with rotten death ? "

Man cannot reach the Presence of God except through suffering and tribulation, and that is why Muhy-ud-din Al-Arabi said that a man can never progress spiritually until he has completely realised that calamities and misfortunes are really blessings from God to turn him towards Him. Let me quote here a passage from Sir Muhammad Iqbal, which is sheer literature of the highest kind. Those who have had the good fortune to hear Tagore, Radakrishnan or Sarojini Naidu, or have read the Hibbert Lectures of the two former, will know how successful some of India's

¹The Holy Qur-án, 64 : 15—19, 59 : 9.

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great men and women have been in manipulating the beauties of English prose, and how much their diction and eloquence have surprised and delighted English men and women.

“Such being the nature and promise of the universe, what is the nature of man whom it confronts on all sides? Endowed with a most suitable mutual adjustment of faculties, he discovers himself down below in the scale of life, surrounded on all sides by the forces of obstruction :

“That of goodliest fabric We created man, then brought him down to the lowest of the low.” (95 : 4.)

“And how do we find him in this environment? A “restless” being engrossed in his ideals to the point of forgetting everything else, capable of inflicting pain on himself in his ceaseless quest after fresh scopes for self-expression.

“With all his failings he is superior to nature, inasmuch as he carries within him a great trust which, in the words of the Qur-án, the Heavens and the earth and the mountains refused to carry :

“Verily We proposed to the Heavens and to the earth and to the mountains to receive the trust (of personality) but they refused the burden and they feared to receive it.” Man alone undertook to bear it, but hath proved unjust, senseless ! (33 : 72.)

“His career no doubt has a beginning, but he is destined, perhaps, to become a permanent element in the constitution of being :

“Thinketh man that he shall be thrown away as an object of no use? Was he not a mere embryo? Then he became thick blood of which God formed him and fashioned him, and made him twain, male and female. Is not He powerful enough to quicken the dead?” (75 : 36—40.)

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“ When attracted by the forces around him, man has the power to shape and direct them ; when thwarted by them, he has the capacity to build a much vaster world in the depths of his own inner being, wherein he discovers sources of infinite joy and inspiration. Hard his lot and frail his being like a rose-leaf, yet no form of reality is so powerful, so inspiring and so beautiful as the spirit of man! Thus, in his inmost being, man, as conceived by the Qur-án, is a creative activity, an ascending spirit who, in his onward march, rises from one state of being to another :

“ It needs not that I swear by the sunset redness, and by the night and its gatherings, and by the moon when at her full, that from state to state shall ye be surely carried onward.” (84 : 17—20.)

“ It is the lot of man to share in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and to shape his own destiny as well as that of the universe, now by adjusting himself to its forces, now by putting the whole of his energy to mould its forces to his own ends and purposes. And in this process of progressive change God becomes a co-worker with him, provided man takes the initiative :

“ Verily God will not change the condition of men, till they change what is in themselves.” (13 : 12.)

“ If he does not take the initiative, if he does not evolve the inner richness of his being, if he ceases to feel the inward push of advancing life, then the spirit within him hardens into stone and he is reduced to the level of dead matter. But his life and the onward march of his spirit depend on the establishment of connections with the reality that confronts him.”

The compulsory ordinances of ablution, prayers, fasting, etc., in Islam, have been designed (as I shall endeavour to prove in these articles) to teach Muslims the full meaning of the Islamic formula of Faith, *i.e.*, the *Tawheed* of the *Sufis* and to train them to live the full meaning of it throughout their lives. *Tawheed* means the

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conviction that in reality only Allah the Transcendent, the Immanent, exists and nothing else, and that man can acquire personality only by submission to Him. (See Nicholson's *Lectures on Personality in Sufism* and the *Doctrine of the Sufis* by his pupil Arberry, which will be discussed by me later.) The five obligatory Islamic prayers have to be observed at stated times of the day and night. Each prayer or *salat* is brief and concise, and does not last more than 5 to 10 minutes and includes movements of the body depicting the Arabic equivalent of the word *Ahmed*, i.e., the praiseworthy. Though brief, it requires concentration of the highest degree. No true Muslim rises from his prayers without a dismal feeling of profound dissatisfaction and disappointment that he has been unable to offer the prayer that is appropriate to the Majesty, the Power and Glory of Allah. God is infinite, and the journey to Him is infinite ; that is why heaven is said in the Qur-án to last for ever. If a man can reach Him and be absorbed in Him and become one with Him, as some religions seem to imply, man will become infinite himself and he will attain full satisfaction. His heaven will then come to an end. I wish to prove that this is not the conception of Allah and man in the Holy Qur-án, and that it is rank *shirk* or *polytheism* for a Muslim to hold this belief, which Allah says in the Qur-án is the only sin that He will never forgive. Our Holy Prophet's greatest aim in life was to be a slave of God and not to be merged in Him so as to become one with Him. Allah has an infinite number of attributes and the number of Allah's attributes, *vis-a-vis* and confronting man in this earthly life, is only a small fractional part of Allah's infinite number of attributes. Any other view will limit the unbounded powers, attributes and potentialities of Allah, and will be derogatory to Him (see in this connection Qur-án 66—8). I really believe it is our Holy Prophet alone of all created men who ever reached

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the highest level in these prayers, for he said his eyes (*i.e.*, his inner consciousness) were refreshed by the coolness of his prayers. Our Holy Prophet's first utterance when he stood up for prayers, after the *Takbeer* with hands folded, was not the one to which I alluded in my first article, but the following—"Oh Allah! Separate me and my shortcomings as you have separated the East from the West. Oh Allah! Wash me clean from my defects as you wash a cloth white and free from stains. Oh Allah! Rinse me clean from all my failings as you rinse a cloth clean with water, with ice, and with coldness." This was the prayer of the first and purest of mankind, not because he was defective as a man, but because he realised that no prayer of man was equal to the Majesty and Glory of God (22—74 ; 39—67).

To a man, in modern times, engaged in the ordinary toil of this work-a-day world, it requires grit of a superlative degree and a will of steel to switch his mind off from the world and to concentrate it on Him for these brief ten minutes. And the wonder to me is the varying states and shades of mind and feeling a man finds himself in at the different times of these prayers. An hour and a half before sunrise, when the mind is refreshed by sleep, the mid-day prayer in the midst of one's toils, the afternoon prayer when the work of the day is nearing its end ; the sunset prayer in the bosom of one's family, and, lastly, the night prayers before sleep. It is in the persistent, tenacious, repetition of these set prayers, once uttered by our Prophet, in sickness and health, in storm and sunshine, in bitterly cold regions and in hot arid climates, on the sea and on land, in times of peace and war, that the spiritual good lies. Even in the case of illiterate non-Arabian Muslims, who barely know the meaning of the Arabic words they utter, their religious fervour is red, hot and glowing. After all it is the will and faith that count, and I have found most of the truest and sincerest

Muslims among the poor, the humble and the uneducated. Those who are familiar with the mysterious working of the inner intuition and the elements of mysticism, know that the subconscious mind works at a terrific pace only after a considerable effort has been made by the conscious mind (*see Joad's Counter Attack from the East*). That is why our Holy Prophet said, that what was most acceptable to Allah was that religious practice, however brief and trivial it may seem, which was persisted in unceasingly (*see Qur-án 21—94 ; 17—19*). And that was why Caliph Omar passed a law that the Muslim who did not observe the compulsory prayers was not a true Muslim.

Sir Muhammad Iqbal gives the same explanation, but in more metaphysical language, for this rigid timing of the Islamic prayers :

“Indeed Islam recognises a very important fact of human psychology, *i.e.*, the rise and fall of the power to act freely, and is anxious to retain the power to act freely as a constant and undiminished factor in the life of the ego. The timing of the daily prayer, which, according to the Qur-án, restores ‘self-possession’ to the ego by bringing it into closer touch with the ultimate source of life and freedom, is intended to save the ego from the mechanising effects of sleep and business. Prayer in Islam is the ego’s escape from mechanism to freedom.”

I have thus far insisted, so much, on the importance of the Islamic *Salat*, because I am at one with Caliph Omar in thinking that no Muslim is a true Muslim unless he observes this practice of Faith. Consequently, the speeches and writings on Islam by Muslims, who are habitually careless as regards their prayers, and by some non-Muslims, are mere words coined by the intellect and not by the heart ; often by an intellect set crooked and awry by a blind and senseless hatred, or by a desire for ostentation or gain. They are as the froth and spume cast up by the waves of the sea when compared with the sea itself, and such exponents are, to use the words of the Holy Qur-án, like asses carrying the precious burden of books of wisdom (62—5). Again, in the words of the Holy Book, they barter the words of God for a miserable price (3—76).

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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