

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

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

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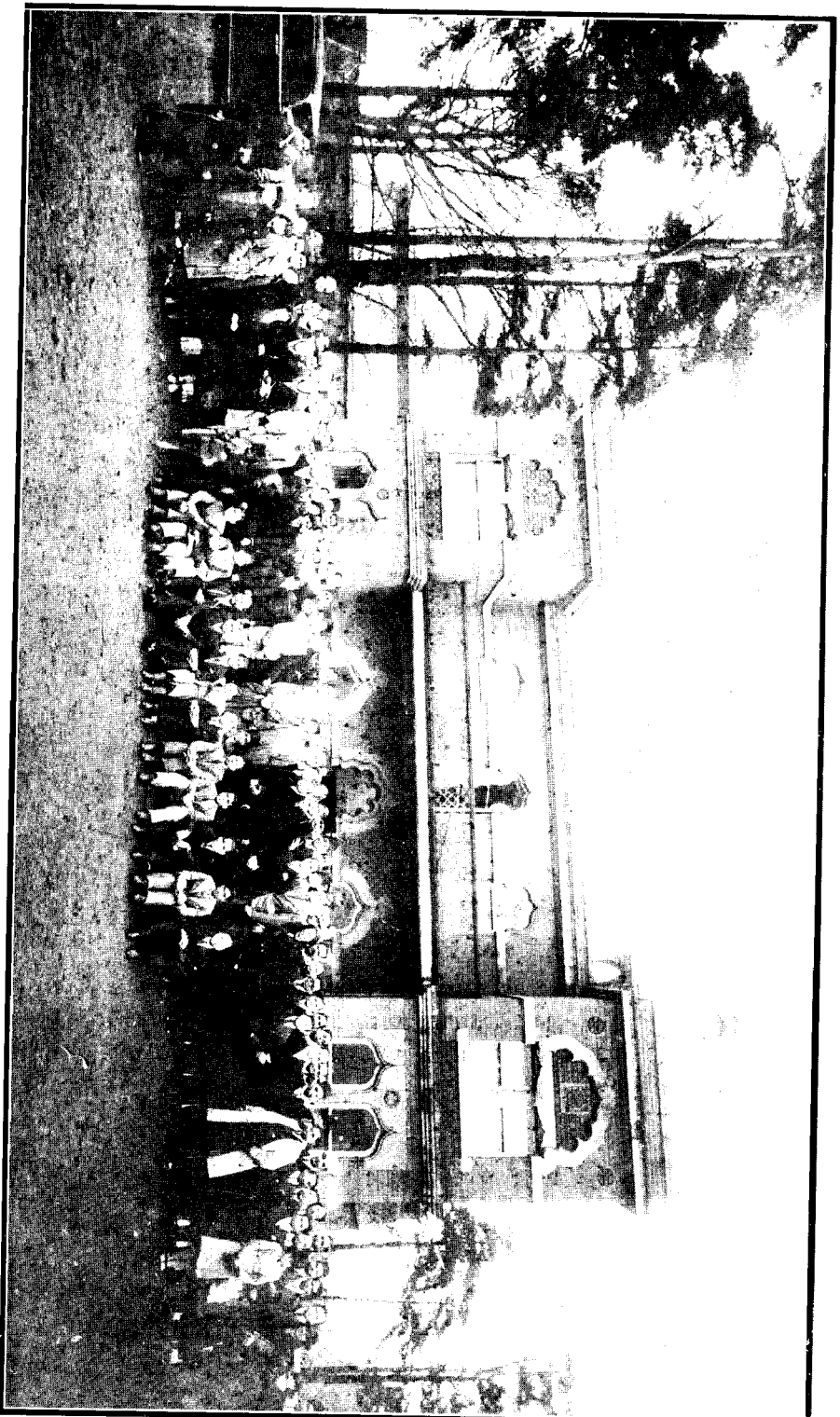
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The Rt. Hon'ble His Highness Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah The Aga Khan who is celebrating his Golden Jubilee on which auspicious occasion the Working Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, respectfully offer their congratulations.

Muslim Congregation after Eid-ul-Fitr (1354 A. H.) in front of Sir Saheb Jang Memorial House.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ وَنُصَلِّىْ عَلَى رَسُوْلِكَ وَنُحَمِّدُكَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ

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FEBRUARY 1936 A.C.

[No. 2.]

A DECLARATION

I, Joseph W. Armah of Accra, 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 Illallah Muhammad-ur-Rasul-Allah.

(Sd.) J. W. ARMAH.

ID-UL-FITR AT THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE, WOKING

BY A. A. BAIG, LONDON

The *Id-ul-Fitr* at the Shah Jehan Mosque took place this year on the 27th December, 1935, so that one of the two great annual Muslim festivals followed two days after the great Christian festival of Christmas. Falling on a Friday, it gave occasion to two distinct religious ceremonies taking place at the same time at this Mosque—the annual *Id-ul-Fitr* ceremony and the *Juma* prayers.

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Although the Prayers and the subsequent Sermon, which after all are the essential parts of these Festivals, can take place under cover, as festivals they are essentially open air affairs. For this reason the state of the weather is always a very important factor as regards the success or otherwise of either of the annual *Ids*. On the present occasion the appearance of the skies, in so far as it prognosticated the prospects for the *Id*, was very distinctly depressing ; in fact there had been a strong gale throughout the previous night, and this had been followed by very disconcerting showers in the early morning. Howbeit, that in no way depressed the spirits of the visitors. The only effect that the weather seems to have had on the Festival was that it compelled the participators in it to wear the sombre European garments. This naturally deprived the Festival of much of its picturesqueness.

In conformity to the time fixed for the *Id* Prayers, that is 11-30 a.m., the main body of the guests arrived at about 11 a.m. Some had arrived so early as 10 a.m.

At the request of the Imam, His Excellency Shaikh Hafiz Wahba, the Saudi Arabian Minister to the Court of St. James, led the *Id* Prayers. His Excellency, moreover, gave a short Sermon immediately after the *Salat*.

Very appropriately the subject of the Sermon was the great *Islamic Institution of Ramadan*, the celebration of the termination of which was the object of the present function.

In the course of the Lecture the less considered side of abstinence from indulgence in physical, not to say carnal, pleasures, was emphasized. It is not necessary to be versed in either science or psychology to acknowledge both the physical and the spiritual benefits accruing from such restraint, and they have been admitted even by hostile critics of Islam. These are the more obvious benefits deriving from sustained abstinence ; but though they are of high value, they cannot be said to have any social

THE ID-UL-FITR AT SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE, WOKING

value, for they are confined to those who are faithful to this Institution, in that they develop powers of self-restraint in the individual himself alone. In short, their function is limited to the sterner virtues of human nature : but the glory of Islam, as it is reflected in the *Institution of Ramadan*, is enhanced when one brings to mind the fact that, by virtue of actual experience of the pangs of hunger, the feeling of pity and sympathy is engendered in the true believer. While dealing with this point, His Excellency gave a number of quotations from the *Hadith* to instance the charitable disposition of the Prophet himself—to take but one example, the usherer of the Final Revelation to, at that time, misdirected Humanity, is at one place represented as saying that the alleviation of the sufferings of a brother Muslim was his greatest pleasure in life.

The psychological atmosphere during the delivery of the Sermon, as also previously during the *Id* Prayers was very befitting to the occasion—neither the frequent passing of the “ fire-carriages,” nor the not too occasional clicks of the camera, made much difference in this respect. The Lecture lasted about twenty minutes. Though it was comparatively short, it was rich in material throughout. The personality of the Lecturer added a picturesque note.

After the *Id* Prayers, at 1-15 p.m., the prayer call for the *Juma* Prayers was sounded by the Imam Sahib, who himself led this Prayer.

The multiplicity of Sects in Christendom has reduced the condition of England, from a religious point of view, to that of Persia at the time of the Muslim invasion. One result of this is that some thinking Englishmen, appreciating the solidarity of Islam, have embraced that religion. Hence the Imam Sahib made an exposure of the recent attempts to find Sects in Islam (the subject of his short lecture), and showed how the Quranic Revelation left no room for difference of opinion in the fundamentals

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of religion, by exhaustively defining the position, the Creed and the Practices of the Islamic Faith ; what have been taken for Sectarian differences have been only differences of opinions on minor points of interpretation.

The latter point was very carefully explained by the Imam Sahib, and in elucidation of his assertion he quoted the following verse from the Holy Qur-án:—"He it is Who has revealed the Book to you ; some of its verses are decisive—they are the basis of the Book and others are allegorical ; then, as for those in whose heart is perversity, they follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it their own interpretation" etc.

It is such portions of the Holy Qur-án that are more or less of a mystical nature that have led to divergence of interpretation ; those which deal with the Doctrines and Practices of the religion are decisive, and hence they leave no room for discussion. The divergence of interpretation referred to, by the way, have been serving a good purpose, for it has repeatedly happened that what originally was a protest has in due course become embodied in the general opinion of the Muslim world. The message of the lecture was that Islam should show itself one and indivisible by its devotees having one common basis for all their beliefs, namely, the Text of the Holy Qur-án.

The *Id* passed very happily. As usual, an imposing Marquee was erected at the farther end of the lawn. The catering left nothing to be desired. As on all such occasions, the guests belonged to various nationalities—Persians, Arabs, Syrians and Palestinians, apart from Indian and English Muslims, attended the *Id* Prayers. Some of these lunched at the Mosque ; a good number stayed on for tea ; and the local visitors dined with the Staff.

Representatives of the Egyptian, the Iranian and the

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Iraqian Legations were present at this *Id-ul-Fitr*. In addition there were present: Dr. M. R. Zada; Mrs. Khalida Buchanan-Hamilton; Sir Abdul and Lady Qadir; Sardar and Sardina Ikbāl Ali Shah; Dr. and Mrs. Shakir Mohemedi; Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Latif; Syed Altaf Hussain; The Dewan Sahib of Mangrol; Mr. Siraj-ud-Din Piracha; Professor Abdul Aziz Puri; Syed Sayeedulla; Mrs. Amina le Fleming; Captain A. F. Mohsin Ali; Sheikh Abdul Hamid, the Artist; Rustom Ali Halabi; Mr. A. A. Daoud; Mr. H. S. Faruki; Mr. Karim Bukhsh Lakhesar; Mr. Sardar Bahadur Syed A. Karim; Mr. Kasim Lekhi; Mr. Soliman Pocchi; Sheikh Jalal Quraishi; Mr. S. Z. Shah; Mr. M. A. Rashid; Sheikh Manzoor Qadir; Mr. Omar Flight; Dr. Abdul Hamid.

* * * *

ID-UL-FITR SERMON

BY H. E. SHEIKH HAFIZ WAHBA

“Bismillāhi 'r-Rahmāni 'r-Rahīm—Allāhu Akbar (seven times) Allāhu Akbar, Lā ilāha illallāh, Allāhu Akbar, Wa lillāhi 'l-Hamd, Allāhu Akbar Kabīra, wa 'l-Hamdu lillāhi Kathīra wa subhāna 'llāhi bukratan wa 'asīla. Al-Hamdu lillāhi nahmuduhū wa nasta'inuhū, wa nasta'izu billāhi min shurūri anfusinā wa min sayyi'āti ā'mālinā; faman yahdi 'llāhu falā mudilla lahū wa man yudlil falā hādiya lahū wa ash-hadu an lā ilāha illallāh, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammad'an 'abduhū wa rasūluhū arsalahū bi 'l-Haqqi Bashīran wa Nazīra. Man yut'i 'llāha wa rasūlahū faqad rashada, wa man ya'si-humā—fa'innahū lā yudīru illā nafsahū wa lā yudīrū 'llāha ta'ālahū sha'yan. 'Ammā ba'du fa'inna khayra 'l-Hadīthi Kitābu 'llāh wa Khayra 'l-Hudā Huda Muhammad'in wa sharri 'l-'Umūri Muhdasātihā wa kullu bīd'atun Dalālatun.”

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Allaho Akbar (*God is the Greatest*).

Praise be to Allah. We pray for His help and His forgiveness and seek refuge in Him from our own evil yearnings for he whom Allah has guided no one can mislead; and he whom Allah has not guided no one can

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guide. I bear witness that there is but one God and that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger, whom "He sent with the truth bearing glad tidings as well as warnings." He who obeys Allah and His Messenger acts wisely, and he who disobeys them harms no one but himself, and harms Almighty God in no way whatever. Surely the best spoken word is the word of God as expressed in the Holy Qur-án, and the best teaching is the teaching of Muhammad. On the other hand, of all evil things, un-Islamic additions to Islam are the most evil, and every departure from the straight path of Islam is a sinful folly.

Muslim Brothers! On this happy day, the Feast of Breaking the Fast (*Id-ul-Fitr*), the Prophet of God decreed that the Alms of Breaking the Fast should be given to help the poor and their relatives and relieve the distressed. It was fixed at a measure of dates, barley, or raisins, the staple food of the country, and was due from all Muslims, slaves and freemen, male and female, small and great alike. Later Abū Hanīfa ruled, that an equivalent sum of money might with advantage be substituted as the recipient was the best judge of his or her needs.

Our fasting does not profit God nor does our eating and drinking hurt Him, but when in His wisdom He decreed fasting, He did so not only in order that we may gain health of body and strength of will, but also as a spiritual discipline of the soul and a practical reminder to us of the sufferings of the poor, the pangs of the hungry, and the privations of the destitute.

Would that rich Muslims remember that their religion has imposed on them certain duties towards the poor, and that on this day, when the houses of the well-to-do resound with happiness and joy our poor brethren are in the greatest need for our help, kindness and sympathy. Alas! too many people are so completely engrossed in themselves and in the pursuit of their interests and

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pleasures, that they scarcely ever think of anything or anybody except from their purely selfish point of view. They, as the Qur-án says, "are those whose lives have been lived in vain." There are those, however, who take it upon themselves to help the poor, aid the weak, succour the distressed and alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted. They feel that their happiness cannot be complete unless they manage to introduce a ray of happiness in the houses which have been deprived of it. These are the true Muslims. They are those who loved God and whom God loves. In the Qur-án we read :—

"fala'qtahama 'l-'Aqabah wa mā'adrakā ma 'l-'Aqabah; fakku Raqabah au 'it'āmun fi yaumin zī masghabtīn yatīman zā maqrabah au miskīnan zā matrabah."

Translation

(But he would not attempt the uphill road,
And what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is,
It is the setting free of a slave,
Or the giving of food in a day of hunger to an orphan of kin,
Or to the poor and destitute.)

"'a ra'ayta 'llazī yukuzzibu bi 'd-Dīn fazālika 'llazī yadu' 'l-yatīm wa lā yahuddu 'ālā ta'āmi 'l-Miskīn; fawaylun li 'l-Musallīna 'llazīna 'ān Salātihim Sāhūna 'llazīna hum yurā'ūna wa yamn A'ūna 'l-Ma'ūn."

Translation

(Do you know who it is who calls the judgment a lie? It is he who treats the orphan with harshness and does not feed the poor and urge others to be kind to them. So woe to those who pray and are unmindful of the meaning of their prayers who make a show of worship, and would not help or be kind to their fellow-men.)

It is also stated in Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Omar that the Prophet was asked what was the best part of Islam? To which he replied in these words :—
"To feed the poor and greet kindly those whom you know and those whom you do not know."

Allāhu Akbar (God is the Greatest).

The greatest blessing which God has bestowed in the Prophet after that of the unity of the Godhead is that He

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made Muhammad instrumental to uniting the Arabs into one nation bound together by the ties of spiritual brotherhood after they had been split asunder by disunity, strife and civil war, which rendered them subservient to the surrounding countries. Thus it was as if God had created anew the Arabs and all those nations which accepted the religion of Islam, for they went forth carrying the standard of learning and civilisation and left behind them some of the most wonderful pages of history to testify to their unequalled greatness and imperishable glory. God said :—

“Wa'tasimū bi-habli 'llāhi Jamī'an wa lā tafarraqu wa'zkurū ni'matu 'llāhi 'alaykūm 'izā kuntum A'dā'an fa'allafa bayna Qulūbikum fasbahtum bini'matihi ikhwāna.”

Translation

(“Bind yourselves together by the bond of God and be not disunited, and remember God's blessing on you when you were enemies and He drew your hearts towards each other so that by His grace you have become brothers.”)

And the Prophet said :—“A Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim. He must not either harm or despise him.”

And also :—“A Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue people are safe.”

And again :—“No one among you can really believe until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.”

This is what God and His Prophet say about the unity, solidarity, and brotherhood of the Muslims, but unfortunately many of us are completely oblivious of the strong religious bond which, but for our neglect of it, would make of us a powerful and respected body assured of success. Whenever we think of this unhappy state of affairs we look to our educated young men assembled here to-day to set the example and give the lead and work to bring all Muslims together and lead them to their old greatness.

THE DEPRESSED CLASSES AND HINDUISM

God said :—

“A’ūzu billāhi mina sh-Shaytāni ’r-Rajīm. Bismillāhi ’r-Rahmāni ’r-Rahīm; Wa’ada ’llāhu ’llazīna ,an’ama minkum wa ‘amilu ’s-sālihāt layastākhlifannahum fi’l-Ard Kama ’stakhlafa ’llazīnā min qablihim wa layumakkinanna lahum dīnahumu ’l-Lazī ’rtadā lahum wa layubaddilannahum min ba’di khaufihim ’amna.”

Translation

(God has promised those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers of the earth as He made those before them, and that He will establish the religion which He has chosen for them and give them in place of their fear a sense of security.)

“Bāraka ’llāhu li wa lakum fi ’l-Qur’āni ’l-‘Azīm wa nafa’anī wa ’iyyākum bimā fihī minā ’l-Āyāti wa ’z-zikri ’l-Hakīm. Aqūlu Qaulī hāzā wa āstaghfiru ’llāha li walakum wa li-sā’iri ’-Muslimīn fastaghfirūhu, innahu huwa ’l-Ghafūru ’r-Rahīm.”

Translation

(How Gracious God has been to us by giving us the Holy Qur-ān. May He guide us so that we may follow its wise teaching.)

Having spoken thus, I pray God to forgive you and me and all Muslims and call on you to pray for His forgiveness for He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

THE DEPRESSED CLASSES AND HINDUISM

BY THE HONOURABLE MR. MUSHIR HOSAIN KIDWAI
OF GADIA

I have been making a comparative study of religions for a long time and am not unaware of the value of the original Vedic philosophy and mysticism. Taking an impartial view of the quarrel between the Sanatanists and the depressed classes which has reached a crisis, I think, when nobody can deny that it is the Sanatanists who represent Hinduism, the depressed classes are justified in saying that Hinduism itself has discarded them since thousands of years and has done nothing for their spiritual well-being or social uplift nor is it prepared to do so now in spite of the political urge of the age. It

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is determined to stick to its principles notwithstanding temptations. But now that the depressed classes have become self-respecting and self-conscious they should not be blamed if they refuse to associate themselves with such a religion as has for them no value either spiritual or social. There is no force in the argument of my old friend Mr. Gandhi that the depressed class of people should cling to their ancestral religion simply because it is ancestral although it has ceased to satisfy, if it ever did before satisfy, either their spiritual or mundane needs.

Thirteen centuries ago the Qur-án anticipated such lame excuse and rejected it thus :

And when it is said to them “ Follow what God has revealed, they say Nay ! We follow what we found our fathers upon. What ! and though their ancestors had no understanding, nor did they follow the right path ” (II. 170). “ They have hearts with which they do not understand and they have eyes with which they do not see and they have ears with which they do not hear ; they are as cattle.” (VII. 179.)

I know that it has been found impossible even by eminent scholars to define Hinduism, but if the depressed classes did belong to Hinduism, then Hinduism stands self-condemned for having left millions of its adherents for such a long long time in the dirt, spiritually and socially both. I do not know why Mr. Gandhi has overlooked the spiritual side of the question. Will Hinduism allow an educated cultured man like Dr. Ambedkar a spiritual status equal to that of an uneducated Brahman even if the latter be the wickedest villain going ? Obviously Hinduism is not concerned with the merits or qualifications of any person in this incarnation and believes that even with the best efforts it cannot uplift him, as his present condition of life is the result of his past *Karma*, both spiritually and physically. So Mr. Gandhi, or even the whole Hindu community, cannot

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offer any high spiritual status to Dr. Ambedkar even if he forces himself up in the social ladder or even if, for political reasons, he is grouped as a Hindu. Caste is not only a social institution, it is with the Hinduism a religious necessity. It was for reasons as these that the best and noblest and wisest son of India had to leave off Hinduism and to find a new faith. And such was the attachment of Hinduism to its cardinal principles of castes, that it turned out Buddhism from India rather than accept any flexibility in its principles, although Buddha had not changed much of the philosophy of Hinduism for his new religion. So the alternatives for not only Dr. Ambedkar but for every man whom Hinduism with its inherent caste system does not satisfy, even for Mr. Gandhi himself, are either to form a new religion as Buddha or Nanak did, or accept another faith which brings the whole of humanity on one common, not only social but also spiritual, platform, if provided with the passport of good deeds, disregarding completely in theory as well as in practice all the barriers of country, colour, race, caste and even creed. As to the political aspect of the case, if there is an *en masse* conversion of depressed classes into a Religion that can absorb them on equal terms, then there will remain no need of their separate representation and the proportion of members of the Religion which they accept will automatically increase. But if the depressed classes of people would still want, for political reasons only, to keep their politically recognised identity, then the schedule register will have to be kept up as originally proposed by the British Premier. In fact the present crisis is a warning not to Hinduism alone, but to all religions, that no religion can survive in our age, and should not survive, which has not a *Rational* foundation, which cannot mould the character of individuals and make them fit members of a universal international BROTHERHOOD.

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I am not among those who think that man has outgrown the need of a religion. In my opinion the more mankind advances in intellect the more necessary it will be to have the check of an understandable, practical and spiritual religion over such phases of human intellect as make man self-centred, cunning, conceited and coveting beyond bounds. The intellect that invents poison gas and liquid fire for the destruction of human beings is disruptive and dangerous and should be kept under the proper check.

I may add that it may be possible to found a socialistic or communistic state or society, but it will be impossible to infuse the spirit of universal brotherhood without the assistance of a highly spiritual and moral universal religion founded on rational and scientific principles, not on myths and superstitions. Anti-God communism will not do.

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR RASULALLAH

BY THE HON. M. T. AKBAR, K. C.

As a first requisite a Muslim has to believe implicitly in, and make a declaration of, the above Islamic formula of faith. It consists of two halves, the first dealing with *Allah*, and the second with the *Prophet*. The first half is again sub-divided into two, the first sub-portion being a negation—there is no god (worthy of worship by man); and the second a positive assertion—but *Allah*. The negation is to emphasize the fact that God's attributes, or any of them, cannot be ascribed to, or possessed by anyone; and the second sub-portion contains the assertion that those attributes belong exclusively to *Allah*. When one ponders on this article of faith, one is struck by the deep significance and range of its meaning, containing as it does the whole faith of Islam.

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASULALLAH

Its meaning opens up, on meditation, long unending vistas which dimly lose themselves in infinity and eternity. The discoveries of modern science leave no room for doubt in the minds of sane and reasonable people that this universe is so marvellous and variegated in its structure that the human reason is baffled when it attempts to find an explanation for its existence. The mind of man reels helplessly when it gropes to find and pierce the inner secrets of nature and further research has only succeeded in enhancing the mystery. Did not the Holy Qur-án say over one thousand three hundred years ago that there is no semblance even to a likeness of *Allah* and that human vision cannot reach Him at all though His grasp is over all human vision (VI—104)? At the same time in every phenomenon that occurs in nature whether in an infinitesimal electron or proton, or in a giant nebula, we see the reign of law, laws so delicate and elaborate which dimly point to a great purpose or root-cause beyond all this exhibition of might, power and force. If the scientist can, after much labour, observe such fine delicate laws in each occurrence in nature, there can be no question but that when all nature is lumped together it cannot be subject to mere blind chance. There must be some reign of law behind all nature in the lump, and what looks like chaos in nature to mortals can only mean that the scientist has failed to reach the fundamental eternal laws and to read their meaning. As scientists themselves have admitted, the whole universe seems to have been created by a master mathematician but the methods adopted by science have failed to reveal his identity. That is because science is concerned with the outside material world, for the purpose of testing, measuring and weighing it, and it stands to reason that God who is described in the Qur-án as “The First, the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden,” cannot be reached by the methods of science. One of the

products of nature is man, an inhabitant of a tiny speck whirling round an insignificant sun in unending space with its infinite number of suns and groups of suns. And what a pathetic bundle of powers, ideals, emotions and helplessness man is composed of, to be sure ! The two salient points that emerge, are the infinite power and character of God on the one hand and the utter, abject weakness, helplessness and limitation of man, on the other. The Islamic formula of faith calls attention to these two dominant features. Man cannot understand God through the means adopted by science, as science is based on man's five senses. The Islamic article of creed indicates that if insignificant man is to understand God and hold communion with the infinite God, it can only be as an act of grace from the Omnipotent God, and even then it can only be done if man is content to follow the way indicated by God Himself, for how can the finite comprehend the infinite ? All this is implied in the juxtaposition of the two halves of the Islamic formula of faith without a break between the two halves. It is an indication by *Allah* that if man wants to comprehend the meaning of *La Ilaha Ilallah*, the only way is to understand the meaning of *Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah*. It is further implied in the use of the word *Rasulullah*, i.e., the Apostle sent by *Allah*. As man cannot understand God through the five senses, the Islamic formula of faith asserts that God, as an act of grace or infinite mercy, has sent the Prophet to indicate to man that he can reach God and understand Him and hold communion with Him, if man will only try to understand who the Prophet Muhammad was and what his mission was. Man cannot understand the Prophet unless he has understood his life history and his mission ; that is to say, unless he has studied the Holy Qur-án and the Hadith. And even that is not enough ; man must follow the rules laid down by *Allah* for his guidance and also the Prophet's example. The Holy Qur-án says that if a Muslim

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loves the Prophet he should obey the Prophet's injunctions, and if he does this, God Almighty, the Infinite, the Omnipotent will love him, the finite (*See the Qur-án Sura III —26*). This passage in the Qur-án shows that it is mere lip service to speak of the love of God. When man cannot understand God how can he love him? When ostensibly there is nothing in common between the finite and the infinite how can man hold communion with God, unless the way has been indicated by God Himself and unless it be an act of pure grace from *Allah* Himself. That is why the passage promises love from the great *Allah* to the believer if he will only love the Holy Prophet and follow the Prophet's injunction. In Chapter V, verse 54, there is a dire warning to Muslims—

“ Oh ye who believe !
If any from among you
Turn back from his Faith
Soon will God produce
A people whom He will love
As they will love Him—
Lowly with the Believers,
Mighty against the Rejecters
Fighting in the way of God
And never afraid
Of the reproaches
Of such as find fault.”

(*Yusuf Ali's Translation.*)

It will be noted here that love from God is first mentioned, as a condition of true faith. The steps seem to be as follows :—

- (1) An intensive study of the Prophet's life, the Qur-án and the Hadith so as to create a love for the Prophet,
- (2) A diligent adherence to the rules of the religion,
- (3) Then *Allah* as an act of grace will love the Believer,
- (4) And the Believer will develop a sixth sense, the *fuad*, referred to in the *Surathul Mulk* which

will bring him closer to God and the Kingdom of God the Absolute will be revealed to him in a mystic form. (See the Qur-án 53—II).

There is a mystic significance in the way that the Muslim formula of faith is worded, beginning as it does with a negation. It calls attention to the fact that there is the absolute world and the relative world and that in the absolute where nothing exists—"the dawn of nothing" in the words of *Omar Khayyam*—the only reality is *Allah*. The second part of the formula refers to the Holy Prophet as having been sent by *Allah*. Sent from where? There can be no doubt the Prophet was sent to the life on this earth and he was called and was known as Muhammad in this world. Where could the Prophet have been sent from by *Allah* except from the absolute whose only reality is *Allah*. As I have already said the first portion of the formula relating to *Allah* declares that the qualities of God cannot be possessed by or ascribed to any created being and the second portion referring to *Allah* asserts that they only belong to *Allah*. The formula therefore beginning with a negation emphasizes the fact that in all this welter of nature there is no reality at all and that what is real is *Allah* and *Allah* alone. It rivets attention to this one essential fact, namely, that everything that exists in this universe derives its force, its value, its substance and its very existence from *Allah*. This is the whole creed of Islam or submission to the Will of God; and all the obligatory rules relating to prayers, fasting, the pilgrimage, etc., have been sent by *Allah* through His Prophet to enable man to absorb the truth embodied in the formula into his very soul, so that the formula will be something deeper than a mere prayer on his lips. Man's accountability for his actions depends on his intention according to our Prophet and it is significant that the obligatory prayer, fast, pilgrimage, charity, is declared to be *Lillahi*, i.e., "for God."

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The Qur-án states that *Allah* is self-sufficient (Chap. VI—133). He is independent of the whole universe, and it does not matter to Him whether a Muslim is diligent in his religion or not. But yet we are asked to pray, to fast etc., *Lillahi*. That is to make it clear that the prayer or fast was meant to drive the truth embodied in the Muslim formula of faith into the inner conscience or soul of the person. The first prayer uttered by a Muslim in the obligatory prayers is the prayer of Abraham (Chap. VI—80).

“ I have set my face towards Him, Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to God. Truly my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and death are all for God, the Cherisher of the worlds: No partner has He. This I am taught. And I am one of those who bow to His Will.”

Why is this insistence in two places that the Muslim who is praying will not associate any partners with God? It is to train the Muslim to put his entire trust in *Allah* in every matter in this life and not to put his trust in anything else, *e.g.*, his wealth, favours of others, his reputation, his learning, etc. For if the Muslim were to do this he will be a polytheist and a worshipper of idols. Mr. Yusuf Ali's magnificent translation of the Holy Qur-án is making this point quite clear, namely, that the ideal to be aimed at by a Muslim is such a complete and absolute trust in God that he will be ready to sacrifice even his life for God.

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DEAN INGE'S HOMAGE TO MUHAMMAD

BY HAMID RAZA, B.A.

Islam has given humanity a perfect code of guidance in all the higher as well as lower avenues of life and thought. The Qur-án, which constantly refers to the natural phenomena working in the material universe as a test of its truth, does not ignore the realm of the spirit. Its message is for the man in the street as well as for the philosopher in his study, and is comprehensive enough to satisfy all the higher yearnings of all humanity. Herein, to my mind, lies the supreme test of the divine origin of the Book which the Arabian Apostle ever claimed to be his living miracle—and miracle it ever was even as it is to-day! History bears witness to the fact that it was the Qur-án that raised the most debased and backward nation of the world to the highest pinnacle of moral and material progress. Even today it has the same magic touch that can diagnose the disease and then heal it. Even Mr. H. G. Wells, that malicious critic of Islam, is constrained to admit that “it (the Qur-án) is much more free from sacramentalism, from vestiges of the ancient blood sacrifice than Christianity. The religion that will presently sway mankind can be reached more easily from that starting point than from the confused mysteries of Trinitarian Theology.” (*God—the Invisible King*).

It is, however, fortunate to find that “the religion that will presently sway mankind” has found its great exponent in Dean Inge. He has recently retired after serving as Dean of St. Paul’s and is today recognised as one of the most learned dignitaries of the Church of England. Having long been in the limelight, he is a thorough-going Modernist and, like his great co-worker, Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, wants to purge the Church Creed of all those pagan elements that are foreign

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to the teachings of the great Teacher of Nazareth. In "God And The Astronomers" (The Warburton Lectures, 1931—1933) published by Longmans Green and Co., 1933, Dean Inge is led by the new Cosmography to disbelieve in the Christian map of the Universe, and Jettison the geographical Heaven and Hell as obsolete lumber. He says: "Heaven is not a geographical expression. Astronomy has disposed of that notion for good and all. We cannot picture the eternal world to ourselves without a free use of symbols taken from space and time, which are necessary forms of our thought, and I do not think we need try to banish these pictures, without which our thoughts of "Heaven,"—the spiritual world, which is the supreme reality—inevitably become nebulous and unsubstantial. *But symbols* they are of a state of existence *which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.*"*

This passage from Dean Inge's book is nothing short of a miracle and requires some elucidation. It is entirely a subconscious reproduction of Muhammad's own teaching on Heaven and Hell. To be more explicit, the italicised sentence is *verbatim et literatim* the Prophet's own comment on Heaven. Let us, therefore, welcome the Dean's interpretation as "a kindly light amidst the encircling gloom." At a time when the geocentric theory had deeply affected the religious systems of the world, and especially of Christianity, the Prophet of Islam

*The above italicised words are to be found in Isaiah LXIV. 4, and St. Paul quotes them in substance from Isaiah. Being absolutely unacquainted with the Old Testament as Bosworth Smith and Rev. C. G. Pfander rightly say, it was impossible for Muhammad to have access to these words. The similarity between two expressions or ideas does not necessarily suggest that they are borrowed. There is a striking similarity between Buddhism and Christianity but it is wrong to say that the latter freely borrowed from the former. Thus it was with an inspired tongue that the Prophet of Islam spoke the words "what the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" in explaining Heaven. The contest of these words, both in Isaiah and St. Paul, shows the glory and power of God. Unlike Isaiah and St. Paul, the Arabian Prophet used this laconic expression in interpreting Heaven, and Dean Inge unconsciously imitates him by doing the same. "The East and West are the alternate beats of the same heart" but the credit must go to the "Unlettered" Prophet who applied this method of interpretation first of all. Our thanks are due for the critical acumen displayed by the Dean in adopting that method.

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distinctly taught that Heaven and Hell were no localities bounded by space and time, but two conditions of life after death. The Qur-án makes the point clear: "Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and to a garden the extensiveness of which is as the "extensiveness of Heaven and the earth." (LVIII. 21.) The garden or the Paradise is here represented to be as wide as the heavens and the earth, which implies that the Qur-ánic conception of the Heaven does not limit it to one particular place, but is as wide as the heavens and the earth. It is further reported on reliable grounds that a messenger of Heraclius asked the Prophet, "If Paradise were as extensive as earth, where would Hell be?" He replied, "Glory be to Allah, where is the night when the day comes?" The above verse, and the incident recorded, show that Heaven and Hell are not the names of two places, but really two conditions, because if Paradise were the name of a particular place, Hell could not exist, since Paradise would then extend over the whole of space. This gives a rational basis of Heaven and Hell, and is fully confirmed by the trend of modern thought, which rejects the conception of the "Geographical Heaven" as primitive and irrational. Is Modernism not indebted to the Qur-án?

The nature of the Qur-ánic Paradise, however, has been widely misunderstood. It has often been depicted as sensual; but, in fact, there *can be no Paradise imagined which is not sensual, because man can entertain no idea except through the medium of his senses.* The human mind is, therefore, forced to interpret spiritual phenomena in the ultimate terms of concrete, material objects. Hence the necessity for the "Free use of symbols taken from space and time" for a description in human language of life on a non-material plane is quite obvious. Such is at least the verdict of Psychology. The Qur-án anticipates all these limitations of the human mind, and describes all spiritual phenomena with a picturesque

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imagery peculiar to itself. Professor A. A. Bevan, the leading English Orientalist, fully endorses this view and brings home the truth *that no interpretation, except the figurative one, of all blessings of the Qur-ánic Heaven is valid, and that to put a literal interpretation upon them, with full perversion of the truth.* It should be borne in mind that Professor Bevan is no modest apologist driven to the pure excuse of allegories, but an eminent Arabic scholar with a scientific streak underlying his studies in Islam. Even Ibn-Taymiya, one of the ultra-literalists in the ranks of Muslim theologians, honestly shared this view. Thus the description of Paradise in such terms as *a delightful garden full of running streams of transparent water* appeals as much to a desert Arab as to a cultured Westerner and is merely symbolic. In fact, the true nature of these blessings cannot be conceived by the physical senses of man, simply because life after death will be on a totally different plane. So if there are gardens, trees, rivers, milk, honey, fruits, houris and the like spoken of as being met with in Paradise, it must be kept in mind that they are not of this earthly life. They merely have the names and *not the nature of things found* on the material plane. They are spiritual experiences described in terms of this world, and are "the symbols taken from space and time" wherewith to picture the eternal world to ourselves. In spite of their concrete names, *the rewards of the Qur-ánic Paradise are not corporeal.* This is evident beyond any shadow of a doubt from an authentic saying of the Prophet which Dean Inge has in part quoted above. Allah says, "I have prepared for My righteous servants *what the eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.*"

It will thus be seen that the Dean's quotation of the italicised portion is, as it were, but the torso of the Prophet's many-membered aphorism which has existed

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complete to this day, in the Book of Traditions, compiled by Bukhari.

It would not be out of place to find the original source of the familiar passage "*What the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.*" The Illiterate Prophet of Arabia was the first to utter these significant words in the sixth century A.D., but we hear their constant re-echoing down the "corridors of time." They have been used continually to depict a certain state of perfection by a host of English writers from John Bunyan to Mr. H. G. Wells, so that by now they have obtained a wide currency in English language and literature. The maxim probably crept into European literature from Muslim Spain, which was the torch-bearer of Muslim culture in the Middle Ages, when Europe was sunk deep in the darkness of ignorance and superstition.

Thus the great Prophet interpreted Heaven 1350 years ago, and to-day, to our amazement, Dean Inge, with his deep and laborious researches in the fields of Science and Religion, pays his homage to Muhammad by repeating *verbatim* the Prophet's own comment on Heaven. The Qur-án also speaks of the Blessings of Paradise in a similar strain: "So no soul knoweth what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes: a reward for what they did." (XXXII. 17.) This the Qur-án teaches plainly enough that whatever blessings are spoken of as existing in Heaven, are hidden from the physical eye of man, and, therefore, their description in a language which conveys to the mind an idea of the blessings of this world is simply metaphorical. As Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal so aptly puts it, "The Qur-án has no liking for abstract universals. It always fixes its gaze on the concrete which the theory of Relativity has only recently taught modern philosophy to see." Hence the Qur-án, with its great insight into human

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nature, offered the correct solution of Heaven, and in the words of Dean Inge, employed the "Free use of symbols taken from space and time, which are necessary forms of our thought, and I do not think we need try to banish these pictures, without which our thoughts of "Heaven"—the spiritual world, which is the supreme reality, inevitably become nebulous and unsubstantial." All the higher systems of philosophy are indebted to Muhammad for providing a rational explanation of "Heaven" which is so amazingly modernistic. "The mind of this remarkable Teacher," says the late Mr. Syed Ameer Ali, "was, in its intellectualism and progressive ideals, essentially modern. The principles he laid down have been proved for more than thirteen centuries ever capable of new application. Problems which could not have been successfully tackled by more constructive minds have been solved by reference to the principles of the great Arabian Teacher. His rules have an infinite capacity for unfolding themselves; each new discovery only vindicates their wisdom."

Here we may pause for a moment. Belief in Heaven and Hell, in the Qur-ánic sense of the words, is a logical sequence to our belief in the Principle of Evolution. "If soul life were not preserved, evolution would be impossible." (Dr. Paul Carus in "The Religion of Science.") Hence life after death is no illusion but a scientific truth. These considerations will enable us to assign to Muhammad his proper place in the ranks of teachers of mankind. He was the greatest of all the pioneer prophets, who emancipated religion from the exclusive narrowness of a tribal God, the God of a chosen people, and offered a universal conception of the Deity. He made the long-cherished ideal of the universal brotherhood of mankind a practical reality and championed the rights of woman as no reformer or legislator had done before. Muhammad has a distinct message for the modern world which

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can be healed by him alone as Mr. George Bernard Shaw rightly anticipates. He rejects "asceticism" as a scheme of life, and replaces it by eternal "striving" which is a necessity of human existence: "Man shall have naught but what he has striven for." The Qur-án gives us counsels of perfection, and is a priceless asset to the moral and material progress of humanity. In the words of Omar—"The first critical and independent mind in Islam"—"the Book of God is sufficient for us." Dean Inge, the great scientist, scholar, and modernist, has set a shining example by following the Prophet's own rational view on Heaven, and, for this, he deserves our most cordial thanks.

HAZRAT MUHAMMAD, THE GREATEST SOCIAL REFORMER—I

BY MAULAVI ABDUL KARIM, M.L.C.

Hazrat Muhammad even if he had not been a Prophet would undoubtedly have found a permanent and prominent place in the world history as a social reformer. It is one thing to promulgate a new faith which mainly concerns individuals and, though professed by them, may or may not actually be practised; but it is quite another thing to attack and upset a whole social fabric and that in face of the bitterest opposition from an entire nation. Before Hazrat Muhammad's advent, Arabia, nay the whole of the then known world, was steeped in vice, superstition and barbarism. The Arabs were wild barbarians; social inequality, a downtrodden and degraded womanhood, slavery, polygamy, drunkenness, debauchery, gambling, rapacity of all kinds, blood-thirstiness and such other heinous vices were rampant among them. No prophet before Hazrat Muhammad seems to have thought of tackling these horrible evils. He ruthlessly attacked them one after another, and totally crushed them in an incredibly short space of time to the

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immense relief of humanity, transforming the barbarous and impious Arabs into a civilised and religious society.

Equality of Man

Of all the social reforms initiated by Hazrat Muhammad, the removal of inequality among human beings was the most beneficial and far-reaching in its consequences. He found no reason for any distinction between man and man on account of the mere accident of birth in a particular family, profession, or country ; so he scrupulously broke down all the artificial barriers which society had set up to fortify the privileges of wealth or work, colour or country. All human beings, he declared, were equal, and the highest rank was his who was the most obedient to God and the most useful to mankind. Hazrat Muhammad thus established a universal brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God which welded high and low, rich and poor, white and black, into one fraternity. As soon as the lowest of the low, say a sweeper, or the blackest of the black, say a Negro, embraced Islam he was entitled to drink from the same cup and eat from the same dish as a Muslim of the highest rank.

The object Hazrat Muhammad had in view was to bring the whole of humanity on to one common platform as one class, one community, one nation ; having the same ideals and sharing the same privileges, so that there might be no question of superiority and inferiority, of birth and family, of rank and race. This absolute equality impelled all Muslims irrespective of their position in life, to exert themselves to the utmost in all spheres of human activity. No one before Hazrat Muhammad had ever conceived such an idea of a practical world-wide brotherhood.

The unique spectacle to be seen to-day in places of congregational prayer (it need not be only in a mosque but anywhere under heaven's canopy where the faithful

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are gathered together), is unknown and unimaginable elsewhere on the globe. At the time of prayers we can see, sitting side by side, or standing shoulder to shoulder, the prince and the peasant, the potentate and the pauper, without any precedence whatever. If the latter happens to have a seat in the front row (this is not unusual) the head of the former may touch the feet of the latter when prostrate in prayer. No Muslim, however low his position, is debarred from entrance into a mosque or denied a seat in the first row. In a mosque there are no rented pews nor special reserved seats as is the case in many churches.

The Hajj (or Islamic pilgrimage to Holy Mecca) is the one unique spiritual gathering in the world, which most effectively demonstrates how we are all equal in the eyes of God. Even clothes, the last vestige of distinction, are discarded, and all, dressed in the same two white unsewn pieces of linen, gather in and around the Sacred House, the Ka'aba, and exclaim with one voice while encompassing it, "Here I am at thy service, my Lord !"

Slavery

The manumission of slaves was a natural consequence of the declaration of equality among men. Slavery had been in favour with all the nations of antiquity. Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians, all had slaves whom they treated often most inhumanly, and over whom they possessed the power of life and death. Marriage between slaves was not legal and between the slaves and the free marriage was prohibited under ferocious penalties. If a free woman married a slave, she was to be put to death and the slave burnt alive. Thus the slaves were condemned to a life of unmitigated drudgery in the service of their pitiless masters, until Hazrat Muhammad came to their rescue.

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Christianity had adopted slavery as “a constitution of nature,” and had attempted nothing to mitigate its baneful character or to improve the status of the slave. In fact during the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth centuries, even pious Puritan Englishmen possessed large slave plantations and Christian Divines racked their brains to devise apologies and invent religious justification for slave-driving. After the massacre of Drogheda by Cromwell and the suppression of the insurrection in Ireland, English Protestants sold Irish men and women wholesale to the colonists in Virginia, Pennsylvania and other places, and the like was done after Monmouth’s rebellion.

Islam, far from consecrating slavery as has been maliciously affirmed by unjust critics, provided in every feasible way for its abolition and extinction, by circumscribing the means of possession. It strongly condemned slavery and strictly forbade the enslavement of a Muslim. Hazrat Muhammad did all that was possible to raise the status of the slaves. He emphatically declared that there was no act more acceptable to God than the enfranchisement of slaves. He himself would purchase slaves only to set them free, and he repeatedly exhorted his followers, in the name of God, to treat their slaves with kindness and justice. “And as to your slaves, see that ye feed them as ye feed yourselves and clothe them as ye clothe yourselves.” Once a follower enquired of him what thing was most acceptable in God’s sight and he promptly replied. “setting free of slaves.” In fact for many social and religious derelictions the freeing of slaves was the only penance prescribed by Islam.

Among Muslims a slave today may be a king to-morrow. He may become the head of a most reputable family by marrying his master’s daughter after loyal and devoted service to his master for a period of time. Muslim slaves have ruled kingdoms

and founded royal dynasties. Subuktegin, the founder of the Ghuznavi dynasty, Kutbuddin, the first Muslim King of Delhi, Balban, who ruled India efficiently for about half a century, were all slaves. Is there any instance of such treatment of slaves in any other part of the world's history?

The Status of Woman in Islam

Another most beneficial social reform effected by Hazrat Muhammad was the amelioration of the condition of the female sex. The improvement that he brought about in the position of woman was unparalleled in the history of mankind. He gave her a status hitherto unknown and unthought of, and unsurpassed even to this day, after the lapse of fourteen hundred years. In pre-Islamic days woman was no better than a chattel, intended for the gratification of man. In all ancient countries—Greece, Rome, Egypt, Persia, India and China—man's estimation of woman was so low as to be beyond conception in the twentieth century. She was looked down upon on account of her supposed intellectual inferiority, and her only functions were the management of the household and the procreation of children. Nowhere in the world did she receive the treatment to which she was entitled as man's partner in life. Even among the Athenians, the most cultured and civilised of all the nations of antiquity, the wife was the slave of every caprice and whim of her husband; she was a mere chattel, marketable and transferable to others at the sweet will of the head of the family. She had no personal rights; and was precluded from all share in the property of her father as well as of her husband.

No religion before Islam did anything to better woman's position. No prophet before Hazrat Muhammad was moved by the miseries and disabilities of half the human race. Neither Judaism nor Christianity nor any other religion before Islam had espoused the cause of

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woman, rather they had contributed to her debasement, perpetuating by their sanction the disabilities imposed upon her by the selfishness of man. She was regarded by the followers of some of these religions as "the gate of the devil;" "the road to iniquity;" "the poison of the asp;" "the instrument which the devil uses to gain possession of our soul." The Biblical injunction to the wife was "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." The legal position of women even today, in the most advanced countries of Christendom compares most unfavourably with that of Muslim women. Until very recently in England a married woman, although called by courtesy "the better half," possessed no rights at all independently of her husband. It is only recently that, by certain legislative enactments, the legal position of woman in England has been very greatly improved.

It was Islam which, for the first time, vindicated woman's rights and raised her to the level which she was entitled to occupy as mother, sister and partner of man. According to the Qur-án, she has as much capacity for intellectual and spiritual progress as man. In her honour one complete chapter of the Qur-án has been revealed under her name. Its first verse strikes the key-note: "O people: fear your Lord, Who hath created you from one soul, and of his kind created his wife and from these hath spread abroad many men and women. And fear ye God in Whose name ye ask mutual favour, and reverence the womb that bore you. Verily God is watching you."

This gives the lie direct to the monstrous allegation made by some non-Muslim writers, that Islam recognises no soul in woman.

The Prophet of Islam enforced respect for woman as one of the essential teachings of his creed. Symbolically, he placed paradise at the feet of the mother. He raised her to a footing of equality with man. "And if you (men)

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have certain rights on them (women) they have similar rights on you in all fairness." "Your wives are a garment for you as you are a garment for them." "Woman is sovereign in the house of her husband." "Among my followers the best of men are they who are best and kindest to their women."

Hazrat Muhammad secured to woman such rights and privileges as she had never enjoyed before. In the exercise of all legal powers and functions he placed her on a footing of perfect equality with man. In the matter of inheritance and individual right to property, the position of a Muslim woman is far better than that of women professing any other religion. "Men ought to have a part of what their parents and kindred leave," says the Qur-án "and women a part of what their parents and kindred leave; let them have a stated share." Thus, thirteen centuries ago, Islam gave woman the right to property. But she did not receive that right in England until 1875, and she has not got it in France even yet.

A Muslim woman has the full right of enjoying and disposing of her property. She can do business on her own account and enter into any contract, and her husband has no right of interference. She retains her distinct individuality and need not even assume her husband's name. Thus, she is an independent co-sharer and a true partner of man. As regards marriage, she has been given full liberty in the choice of a husband. No contract is valid without the consent of the woman. She first declares her consent; the man only accepts her offer. No guardian can marry his senior female ward who is of age without first obtaining her consent. If married by the guardian in her minority, she can repudiate the marriage on attaining her majority. Moreover, no marriage contract is complete without the settlement of a dowry on the wife; and her claim to it, on the death of her husband, has preference over all creditors and heirs to

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the property of the deceased. As regards divorce, the woman has as much right to divorce the man as the man had right to divorce the woman.

Such is the exalted position to which Islam raised womankind. The Muslims regard woman as a safeguard against sin, and not "the road to iniquity," as a strong fortress against the inroads of Satan, and not "the gate of the devil," as a lighthouse of virtue that saves man from shipwreck when tossed by the raging waves of passion, and not "the instrument which the devil uses to gain possession of our souls." To a Muslim it is the pure love of a virtuous woman that transforms the brute in man into angel.

Thus the position of women in Muslim countries is infinitely better than that of her sisters elsewhere. If in some places Muslim women are backward in education and enlightenment and do not occupy their proper place in society, it is due to lack of culture in the community and not to any flaw in the Islamic laws or tenets.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE

YORKSHIRE.

TO THE HEAD OF THE WOKING MOSQUE.

DEAR SIR,

I suppose you will find and think this the most unusual letter you have ever received. But still I know you will understand my reasons, when you have read this letter.

Last summer, at a second-hand book stall in the Public Market, I stopped to buy a book or two of fiction. There were two young men laughing and joking over one of the books. You can imagine my amazement when I heard one of them reading a passage from the Qur-án. I was not what you would, or could, call a religious woman, but my father had lived in the East and had one or two friends at El-Azhar. I believe that is the name of the College or whatever it is called. However, my father had a Qur-án, and also a Rosary and he valued them very highly. I remember him once telling me how the Mohammedans loved it, how they washed and purified themselves before they

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even touched the Book. So, for the sake of my father's memory, I asked them to give it to me. They refused. I went to the stall-holder and asked him to let me have the book in question. He at once doubled the price. So the young men went away grumbling, and I, for 2s. became the owner of the Qur-án. To be perfectly candid, I did not want it at all. There are no followers of Islam that I have seen in Bradford, or at the time I would have given it to them. Shortly after I became ill (heart trouble), and had to give up my work. Insomnia followed, and then, to get through the long night hours, I began to read the Qur-án. My first reading was not of a great interest to me, in a religious light. I may be hurting your feelings, but, to be truthful to myself and to you, I feel it is best to tell it as exactly as possible.

The history was of interest, and also the Old Biblical tales I had heard as a child first took my interest. The warnings of the fate of the unbelievers rather amused me. The second place the Prophet gave to women I did not like. The easy Divorcement I appalled. But later I could see and know that the women of the East are vastly different from us of the West. We take a vital interest in all things happening in the world to-day, apart from our homes and children.

Later, I read it through steadily, taking interest in every word, till I saw clearly the truth of the Book and of its teachings, and where we Christians have erred. You see the Christians say we are all God's children, His sons and daughters. It is a literary term not meaning that God was our Father in particular, or present at the conception, but that having made the world and all that it contains, He is the Father of us all. When He sent Jesus upon the earth, He used the literal term of "My Father which art in Heaven." It has now become the biggest error in this world, for part of the Christians, the Roman Catholics, worship him as the Son of God. The Protestants, though in a slightly milder form, do the same. I, as I said, was never religious, and did not trouble myself with any particular sect or branch of the Christian faith, or any other for that matter. How grateful I now feel that the only faith I believe in is the faith of Islam. The only prayer I know is the prayer to be said at dawn. That is the first chapter of the Qur-án. I know there are others. One is said at noon, one at evening, and the last one at night. I know from reading the Qur-án I must wash before prayers. I do that. That I must give alms to the best of my ability. That I have always done. I have never taken, touched or eaten pork, not because it is not eaten here, it is used every day in England—but because, as a child, my father taught me it was unclean. He told me of Jesus casting out devils in men, and that they entered a herd of swine. I do not think that would have stopped me as I grew older in my parents' home. One

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day, shortly before I was married, I went to my husband's home. They kept a big farm in Canada, close to ours. After seeing the cattle and horses we went to see his pigs. He had ten. The stench was terrible, and they were practically wallowing in the food they were eating. That finished any fancy I may have had to eat pork. Wines I have drunk but only in moderation. Since believing in the Qur-án I have not taken any. Only, to keep to the truth, when I had a bad attack I have had a little brandy and water, as it was ordered by the doctor. I have honestly tried to keep to the letter what the Qur-án teaches us to do.

I have had no help from any outside source to tell me the ways of the true believer, because I do not know of anyone of the true faith here in this city. Hence my reason for writing to you, I come as a suppliant, as one seeking the truth and the light. I know there must be many things I must know and do before I shall be fit to enter under the *Banner of Islam* and fight with it side by side for the defence of the faith, the Unity and Glory of the One and Only God.

I wish to learn the other prayers and their exact times. I know it is not exactly at the dawning or yet the last setting of the sun, but either just before or just after. I know a few of their attributes of God by heart from hearing my father repeat them so often. The 59th was "O Giver of Life, O Giver of Death; O Living One; O Enduring; O Source of Discovery; O Worthy of all Honour; O Thou only One." I was with him as he was dying. He broke off his Rosary here and said: "Allah! Allah! There is no strength or power but in God. To God we belong, to God we must return." I thought he must be rambling in his mind. He was lying so peacefully before that last prayer. He tried to sit up. I laid him back, and he died. I buried his Qur-án and beads with him because he loved them so. For years I grieved. I thought my father had renounced his right to enter heaven by practising and believing so staunchly an unknown Eastern faith. You see I did not know that I was wrong. At school and in the Church we were taught that the Christian religion is the only true faith. All others are infidels. It was not until I read and understood my own Qur-án that I rejoiced to know my father was saved the horrors that are to come to the unfaithful, and that we shall meet side by side on the Day of Resurrection. I do earnestly ask you to help me towards that end. Also, I wish to ask you a question. The Qur-án I have is an English version, translated by Sale. Explanations in some of the places I believe to be wrong. I think in a lot of them he has twisted the meanings of them to the detriment of the word. I do not believe them, nor can they, with all their insinuations, juggle the truth from the Book. (Am I correct, or am I wrong?)

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I earnestly ask your help, in my attempt to become a true believer. I have no one to prevent me 'from carrying out to the letter, as far as is possible in England to do so, the One True and Only Faith which I know that of Islam to be.

Yours very sincerely,

(Sd.) E. A. M.

YORKSHIRE.

TO MR. AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD.

DEAR SIR AND FATHER,

I thank you very much for your kind and generous letter, which I received yesterday noon.

You have my permission to use the letter in any way you wish. I had a photograph of my father, but none of my own. So yesterday, while shopping, I called and had these snapped. They are of the type taken and developed while you wait. Though not very flattering, still it is myself. You ask for something about my father's life. He was born in Devon 81 years ago. As a boy of 5 years his father took him to China, where he had some kind of billet. I don't quite know what, but I believe it was to do with jade. They lived in a typical Chinese house, and used to eat their food. There were very few white people in those days in Soochow. His boyhood was a very happy one, and he often told me of the lives of the people there. He always spoke of it as beautiful too. As he became a young man, he went to India in the Civil Service. There he married my mother, and the older end of the family grew up there. For when his time was up, he tried tea-growing. India was not then as it is now, and as the family continued to increase they came to England. We went to live at a little sea-side village called Redcar. There I was born. When the last of the family had arrived, father thought he would like to try his hand at farming in Canada. He had six sons and three daughters living there. He only stayed there two years. He met in New York some gentlemen who were going to Egypt to work in the tombs of the Kings. The farm was sold and my brothers all scattered about. One joined an Anglo-American Oil Company. One joined the North West Mounted Police. The other, Teddy, went to Montania to study cattle-raising. Leo went off with a French Canadian. I think they were going prospecting for gold or minerals of some kind. I got married to a boy who lived close by. I was 18 and he was 20. My dear sister had run away from home previous to this, and had gone on the stage. She is now married and living in New York. My younger sister, aged 12, took a chill while on the boat, and died on reaching England. The two younger boys went home with mother. Father was in Egypt about four or five months, when the Government sent for

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him. He returned to England, and was sent on some sort of work for them. He arrived back in England the day before war was declared. Then from all the corners of the globe my brothers arrived to go to war. My husband went, too. My son was just four months old. Within six months two of our family died out there. John, the eldest, was drowned in the sinking of the *Aboukir*. Poor 19 year old golden headed Teddy was shot by a sniper, his first day in the first line. Leo and Joseph lie side by side in Belge. In Ypres my husband lies. Then came the next. My 18½ year old brother joined the navy, and he was drowned in May 1916. Then the youngest and only son left—James—joined the Fiskard to learn to be an artificer. The grief killed my mother, whose photo I am sending you. My father was now alone in England, and I a widow of 20 in Canada. So I sold up my house and came back to him.

How he grieved for our boys! He used to say it was the sins of the world that had caused this war. In November of 1916 he died. So I sold up the house, placed my child in good hands and went to France. I had already done two years of hospital work, so I was accepted eagerly. There, in the midst of that shamble, I worked. I could not describe to anyone the horror of it all. Then was the time I said there could not be any God, who would allow all those poor innocent lives to be wrecked, wounded, maimed, blinded, choked with gas, others driven mad. I think, my soul lay dead with the brave men of all nations lying there.

It was not until I had read and re-read the Qur-án, that I received it back. Who could help it? Both intellectually and spiritually I mean to grasp and hold on to the regeneration that I have received from the words of the Qur-án. For, I think, the ethics and excellence of the Prophet are extraordinarily far-reaching and comprehensive. In his simple and undivided worship of the Creator, he, the Prophet, makes religion not a burden but a pleasure. It is so restful and yet so convincing that of the Christians always left me restless and questioning.

So I do not know how to thank you for the kindness and encouragement you gave me. All I can say is "Thank you." I shall try very hard to be a credit to the Faith I have embraced and to help to perfect that same Faith to the best of my ability.

I have received the books. They are just what I required. To-day is Sunday and the Post Office is closed, but I will send on a Postal order by a later post to pay for the same. May God bestow upon you His Blessings for what you have done for me.

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

(Sd.) E. A. M.

MUSLIM INVASION OF ASSAM

BY SAIYIED M. A. SATTAR (PLEADER)

The first session of the All-India Modern History Congress was held at Poona under the presidency of Dr. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, on June 8, 9 and 10, 1935. The object of the Congress is to co-ordinate researches into the history of India, from the commencement of the Muhammadan invasion to the establishment of the British power in the land. Though the first Bulletin, issued in September 1934, stated "Such an organisation will make for accuracy, dispel ignorance and remove misunderstandings" still Professor S. E. Bhuyan of Gauhati, who attended the Congress, gave such a mistaken and inaccurate information to the audience regarding the Muslim conquest of Assam, that we cannot but protest.

From the *Times of Assam* of the 6th July 1935, we learn that Professor Bhuyan read an essay on Lachit Barphukan, the so-called hero of Assam. We read in the Paper, "The audience listened with interest to the story of Lachit Barphukan as it was indirectly connected with the career of the Maharatta leader Shivaji Maharaj. They had both and at the same time thwarted the progress of Moghal Imperialism, Shivaji in the Deccan and Lachit in Eastern India." Prof. Bhuyan, in another lecture on "Assam's place in India, a Historical Survey" said, "The Assamese successfully opposed the repeated advances of foreign invaders; King Rudra Singh proposed to invade Delhi, in which enterprise he was promised the support of other Rulers of India." I do not know whence Professor Bhuyan got these revelations. It is known that Assam produces opium in abundance, and, in the old days, when there was no restriction imposed under pressure from the League of Nations, some of its peoples used to produce some queer things under the fanciful

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influence[•] of the soporific drugs. We are afraid the assertions made by Prof. Bhuyan may be borrowed from no better sources.

Historians know how treacherously Shivaji killed Afzal Khan, the General of the Bijapur Sultan; how he was fleeing from the Moghal army from place to place hopelessly, and after his death how his son Shumbuji paid the penalty for the disloyalty of his father and himself with his head at the hands of the Emperor Aurangzeb, and how "Shahu," the grandson of Shivaji, lived in the royal prison at Delhi as long as the Emperor Aurangzeb was alive; so I need not narrate all things in detail. But the career of Lachit Barphukan, the so-called hero of Saraighat, may be compared with the career of the traitor Mir Jaffar of the battle of Plassey. Of course, by the treachery of Mir Jaffar, the life of one Nawab only was ruined, but for the satisfaction of his greediness this Barphukan killed two Ahom Kings (Gobar 1675, Sudaipha 1677). Ultimately this traitor was assassinated by Ahoms (History of Assam, page 154, by Mr. Gait, Moghal N. S. E. Policy, page 382).

Now as regards the statement, "The Assamese successfully opposed the repeated advances of foreign invaders," we know that in 1205-06 the Rai of Kamrup made his submission to Malek Ekhtiaruddin, the son of Bukhtiar Khilji, who went to conquer Tibet by the western frontier of Kamrup. Then Sultan Alaudin Hussain Shah conquered Kamrup in 1493, and Raja Nilambar was deported and taken prisoner (Gait's History of Assam, page 43). Behar was conquered by Suleman Koroni in 1568. Koch, King's brother and General Chilarai were taken prisoner at Gaur (see page 53). Mukarram Khan conquered Koch Rajal, *i.e.*, Goulpara, Khanup and Darrang in 1612. Its ruler, Parikshat, tried to save his country by giving a large War Indemnity and his two sisters. But his offers were not accepted and Parikshat

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was arrested and taken prisoner at Dacca (Moghal N.E.F. Policy, page 141, by S. N. Bhattacharyya). The Muslim was compelled to attack the Ahom Kingdom in 1637 owing to the murder of a Muslim merchant within Moghal territory by Ahoms. After many engagements, on 31st October, Mir Zainuddin killed numerous Ahoms at Saraighat. The Ahom King, Protap Singh, fled to the jungle from his capital Ghargaon (Gait's History of Assam, page 115). Mir Jumla the Great, the Viceroy of Bengal, invaded Assam in 1661 A.C. Pran Narayan, ruler of Kooch-Bihar, fled to the Bhutan hills, and the Ahom King, Jeydhaj Singh, fled to the Namrup jungle. Muslim Cavalry overran Assam from west to east, and the Assamese recognised that it was impossible to resist the Muslim Army (History of Aurangzeb, Part III, page 123, by Mr. J. N. Sarkar). The Muslim Cavalry drove the Assamese before them like sheep before a wolf (Moghal N. E. F. Policy, page 344) and the Assamese failed miserably to stem the tide of Muslim success (page 356).

Though the Muslim Army suffered many privations in the rainy season in Assam, they were not once defeated by the Assamese. Their losses were not from the enemy's sword but from the stroke of pestilence which the General could not have foreseen or averted (History of Aurangzeb, Part III, page 204). We know also that the Assamese had such a horror of the Muslim Cavalry that on seeing a single Muslim trooper, a hundred well armed Assamese soldiers used to run like jackals (Moghal N. E. F. Policy, page 357). We also know that the Assamese Raja Jeydhaj Singh was forced to conclude a humiliating treaty with Nawab Mir Jumla, by giving his daughter for the Moghul harem together with a large war indemnity and a large cession of territory, and he had to promise for the payment of a further indemnity and regular payment of a yearly tribute (J. A. B. 1872,

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pages 94-95). We also know that the Assamese Raja had by way of penalty to pay the balance of the War Indemnity up to the last farthing (History of Aurangzeb, Part III, page 209). From these examples, and from many others, we can safely say that the Assamese were quite unsuccessful in opposing the advances of the Muslim invaders in Assam.

After some years Ahom King Chakradhaj Singh refused to pay the yearly tribute and Raja Ram Singh was sent by the Emperor to punish him. Raja Ram Singh had a fight with Lachit Barphukan, the Assamese General, at Sessa, in which the latter was totally defeated (Gait's History of Assam, page 149). There were afterwards several engagements and in the one at Saraighat Raja Ram Singh was defeated by Lachit Barphukan. This is the battle of Saraighat of the winning of which the Assamese are so proud, and about which Prof. S. K. Bhuyan recently delivered a long lecture at Poona. But what was the reason for the defeat of Raja Ram Singh? We see that when Raja Ram Singh reached Assam, Rashid Khan was then the Faujdar of Gauhati. This Khan was a famous General in Assam. He had taken an important part in the war with the Ahoms in the time of Nawab Mir Jumla's invasion of Assam, and in the eyes of the Assamese his position was very high. So he could not brook having to take his orders from Raja Ram Singh, and he was much displeased with him. He was even suspected, probably with truth, of being in secret correspondence with the enemy; at all events they found a friend in him (History of Aurangzeb, Part III, page 214). Therefore if we presume that the winning of the battle of Saraighat was due not to the bravery of Lachit, but to the treachery of Rashid, we perhaps may not be far out. Moreover, even Prof. Bhuyan admitted that Raja Ram Singh was sent to Assam as punishment for his connivance at the escape of Shivaji from Agra. So

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it was quite probable that Raja Ram Singh* was not willing to fight against Ahom, his co-religionist.

As for King Rudra Singh, who, according to Prof. Bhuyan, proceeded to invade Delhi, we know that he could not even conquer Jaintiapur. He had to return from there, having been quite unsuccessful in his expedition leaving 2,366 Ahom soldiers and 12 generals dead on the battlefield (Gait's History of Assam, page 173). Of course, Rudra Singh made preparations for war against the Muslims taking water from the Ganges, and he got help also from certain hill tribes, such as Kachari and Jaintiapuri, whom Prof. Bhuyan described somewhat bombastically as "other Rulers of India." But Rudra Singh never ventured to come forward and say that he wanted to invade any Muslim territory, to say nothing of Delhi. Prof. Bhuyan can say whatever he likes, because he knows that the Muslims are now grasping the pen with a weak hand, but Rudra Singh had to be careful in his sayings because he knew that the Moghals were wielding the sword with a mighty hand.

It is true that some ceded districts in Assam were lost after the death of Nawab Mir Jumla, but for this it cannot be said that the Assamese were in any way successful in opposing the Muslim success in Assam. No race can maintain an empire unless its sons are willing to garrison their conquests. No Muslim soldier was willing to go to Assam unless he was compelled, and no Muslim officer was willing to accept the post of even Governor or Faujdar of Assam unless reprimanded. The Muslims were sick of this land of flood and earthquake, pestilence and witchcraft.

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