

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

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

# *The* **Islamic Review**

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

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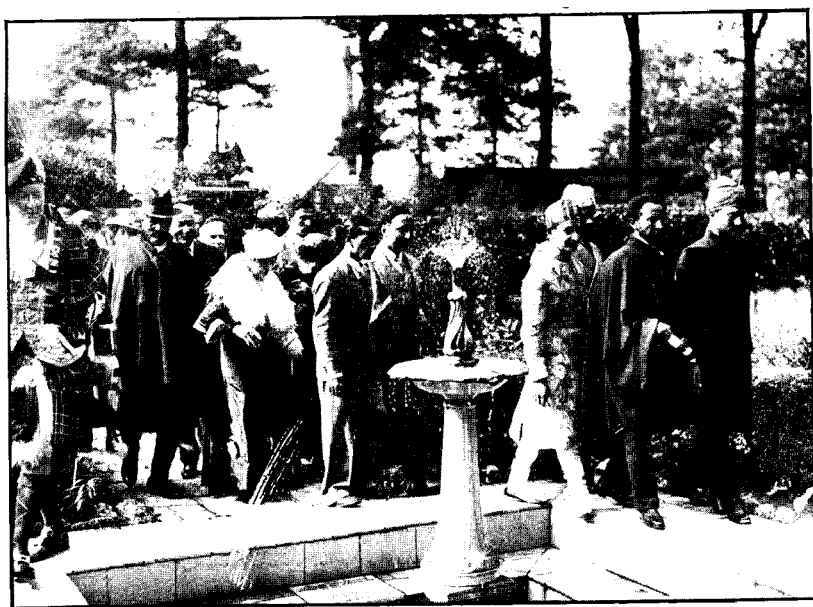
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HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SELASSIE I. EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA



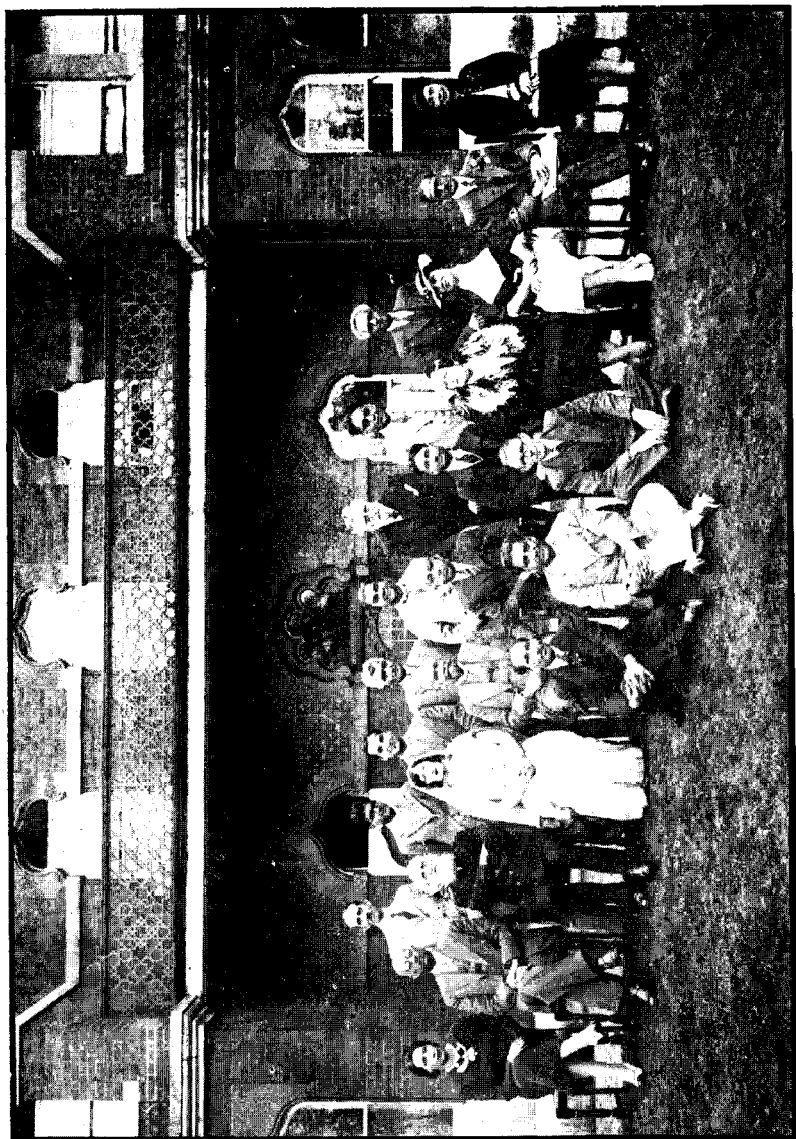
At Tea after the presentation of Address.

*(Photoe by M/s Beiny, London.)*



His Majesty goes to Shah Jehan Mosque where he was presented with a copy of the Holy Quran and "The Ideal Prophet" by the Imam.

*(Photoe by courtesy M/s Sports and General Press Agency, London.)*



Nawab Salar Jung Bahadur at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ  
وَنُصَلِّعَ عَلَى آلِكَ وَنُصَلِّعَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّينَ

## THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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NOV.—DEC., 1936 A.C.

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### A DECLARATION

I, Miss Ivy Wanty of Meadow Lane, Nottingham (England), 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).

*Dated 10th August 1936.* (Sd.) IVY MARYAM WANTY.

**HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SELASSIE I  
EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA AT THE  
SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE, WOKING**

The feeling of affection and gratitude towards the small country of Abyssinia that has subsisted among Muslims down the ages was once again illustrated at this Mosque on the 25th August when the Woking Muslim Mission gave a cordial welcome to that valiant Christian Emperor whose faith and trust in his Maker have come into such prominence under the stress of calamity, Haile Selassie of Abyssinia. *The Reception was on behalf of the Muslim Community of Great Britain.*

Preparations for the function had been in progress for four days, and on the day of the function the wide lawn in front of the Memorial House presented an entirely transformed and artistic appearance. Two large marquees had been erected, one for the main proceedings of the day, and the other for the entertainment to tea and light refreshment. In the remaining part of the lawn seats and tables containing vases with beautiful flowers were artistically arranged.

The guests, who numbered over four hundred, included Muslims from all parts of the world and a fair sprinkling of non-Muslim English men and women. The latter had been specially invited for the occasion. The portion reserved for the public was so crowded that the Secretary had to double it in area.

His Imperial Majesty, piloted by Messrs. K. S. Ahmad and S. A. Ahmad, who were especially deputed by the Imam for the purpose, and accompanied by the Commander-in-Chief, Ras Kassa, and His Excellency Dr. Martin, the Ethiopian Minister to the Court of St. James, arrived at the Mosque at 3-15 p.m. On arrival the Emperor was saluted by the Highland Pipers, who, gorgeously dressed, were wearing Sir Abdullah Archibald's

## HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SELASSIE I

colours. On alighting from his car on the red carpet which extended from the pathway in front of the Memorial House to the main marquee, he was introduced by the Secretary of the Mosque to his Eminence Imam Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad, Lady Headley, Madame Khalida Buchanan-Hamilton, President of the British Society in Great Britain, and to Sir Abdullah Archibald Hamilton, dressed in his Highland robes. Immediately following the presentation of a beautiful bouquet, tied in green ribbon, His Majesty proceeded to the main marquee where he was received by the Hon. Malik Sir Feroz Khan Noon, the High Commissioner for India. After the Reception ceremonies had terminated, and His Majesty shook hands with the distinguished guests, His Majesty and all those present stood up in homage to the Imam Sahib's recital of a verse from the Holy Qur-án.<sup>1</sup> This verse was exceptionally appropriate to the occasion, for it reads : " Say : O followers of the Book ! come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah ; but if they turn back, then say : Bear witness that we are Muslims."

Then the Address of Welcome was read and presented by Sir Abdullah Archibald Hamilton, Bart. The full text of the Address is published elsewhere. His Majesty's reply was in his own language, but it was interpreted *sentence by sentence* by His Excellency Dr. Martin, the Ethiopian Minister to the Court of St. James.

At 3-45 p.m. tea was served in the adjoining marquee. The Royal Party was entertained to tea with the principal guests in the main marquee, a sumptuously laid table being brought in for the purpose.

After tea the Imam led the distinguished guest to the Holy Edifice, the Mosque, where, after a silent prayer,

<sup>1</sup> Verse 63, Chapter 3rd.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

His Majesty was presented with a copy of the Holy Qur-án, together with a copy of the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din's famous book, "The Ideal Prophet."

After this last item in the programme of the Imperial visit the Royal Party left for London amid thundering cheers.

The function in every way was a complete success. It will remain memorable especially in the minds of the non-Muslims present, for it was a striking illustration of the liberal and embracing outlook of Islam. The spectacle of Muslims from different parts of the world fraternizing on absolutely equal terms must also have made a deep and lasting impression on them.

Among those present were : Lady Headley ; Madame Khalida Buchanan-Hamilton ; Sir Archibald and Lady Hamilton ; Lady Blomfield ; Sir William Fry ; Sir Feroz Khan Noon ; Captain Da Gurnell ; Mrs. Cowan, J. P. ; Rev. Dr. J. W. Jones ; Mr. and Mrs. Tirmizey ; Mrs. Marmaduke Pickthall ; Major MacInnes ; Mr. Sirajuddin Piracha ; Dr. and Mrs. Shakir Mohammedi ; Professor Puri ; Dr. Kureshi and Miss C. Wilson.

K. S. MAHMUD.

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### ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SELASSIE I. OF ETHIOPIA

(On the occasion of his visit to the Shah Jehan  
Mosque, Woking, on Tuesday, the 25th  
August, 1936.)

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY,—

In according Your Majesty our heartiest welcome on your visit to this Mosque, we may be permitted to give expression to our feelings of deep admiration for the manner in which Your Majesty has faced the great trial through which your country and people have recently



## ADDRESS OF WELCOME

passed and are still passing. It must, however, be a source of consolation to Your Majesty that the sympathies of the greater part of the world, including those of the great world of Islam, have been with your country and yourself throughout the grim struggle that has just ended in a disaster for Ethiopia.

Among other noble traits of character that have elicited well-deserved praise, the one that has specially appealed to us Muslims is the faith and trust in God which has all along characterised the acts of Your Majesty and your broadminded regard for all religions, which has been demonstrated by Your Majesty's visit to this Mosque to-day.

Standing in Your Majesty's presence, we cannot help recalling how, brutally persecuted at home, the first believers in Islam took refuge, on the Prophet's advice, in the then country of Abyssinia, and how they were hospitably received by the Negus of the time and benevolently protected by him from the evil intentions of their enemies, who had come there to demand their forcible repatriation.

Indeed, so vividly do we recall this thrilling episode of the Muslim history that as we speak we can see in our imagination Ja'far, the leader of the Muslim refugees, pleading with hope and fear the Muslim cause, weak in material resources, before the great Negus, and the monarch shedding tears of spiritual joy at the touching spiritual enthusiasm of the speaker.

By this gesture the country of Abyssinia not only proved itself the foster-mother of the Islamic religion, but also showed its appreciation of the message of that religion for the Ethiopian race. Subsequent history, of Islam and Abyssinia, shows that none of the parties has been unmindful of the significance of this mutual approach.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Bilal, the Abyssinian companion of the Prophet, was given the highest rank among the believers and had the unique privilege of calling the faithful to Prayer. In one of his visions the Prophet saw him entering the Paradise ahead of all the believers. The love between him and the Prophet has given rise to a theme of spiritual romance, the only one of its kind in Muslim literature.

On the other hand, sheltered and encouraged by Abyssinia, Islam grew into an overwhelming political and cultural force. It sent its invincible armies to all the four corners of the world and conquered most of the countries from the extreme East to the extreme West. But not once during these triumphant marches and conquests did its generals feel like invading Abyssinia.

But, though never conquered by arms, the hold of Islam on the Ethiopian race, so early effected through spiritual appeal, has successfully defied all attempts at slackening through political and economic influences and adverse propaganda from outside. The spiritual march of Islam in Africa, we are proud to recall, has been going on steadily during all these centuries.

But, while turning over these forgotten pages of history, we are painfully aware that nothing now remains of that old order. Islam has been shorn of its political glory, and Abyssinia, that old and powerful Christian kingdom—the oldest in the world—is also lying humiliated. We may say, nevertheless, that the spiritual kinship which has subsisted between the peoples of Ethiopia and the Islamic world is still a living reality.

YOUR MAJESTY,

Islam means submission—submission of the rebellious physical self to the spiritual self in man. It also means “peace,” as peace is the inevitable result of such a submission. As we see it, it has been the religion of all the spiritual leaders of humanity. Muhammad came

## ADDRESS OF WELCOME

not to destroy but to fulfil the mission of all these religious personalities, particularly that of Jesus Christ, of whose religion Your Majesty is a devout follower—to fulfil it in the inter-racial and international relations of humanity. And we are glad to be able to say that though long averse to giving it a patient hearing, the people of the West have already begun to appreciate the Message of Islam—a phenomenon of which this Mosque, standing before you, is an indication.

Indeed, the power of Islam to unite the diverse races and colours of the world in a spiritual confraternity, is now recognized even by those who are the most active in calumniating it.

Through Your Majesty we, on behalf of Islam in this powerful country of Great Britain, reaffirm to the Ethiopian race our old feelings of good-will and sympathy, at this time, when, in spite of the darkness of the political world, we have the pleasant surprise of finding the spiritual horizon of humanity brightening up with a new hope of recovery.

Thanking Your Majesty for the pleasure of your august company this afternoon, and praying for a better and a glorious future of the Ethiopian race.

We remain,

Your Imperial Majesty's humble fellow-believers in the Scriptures, The Muslim Community of Great Britain.

*The 26th August, 1936.*

THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE,  
WOKING, ENGLAND.

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*Speech by His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of  
Ethiopia at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

We are very glad to visit your Mosque to-day and to hear the comforting words which you have just said.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

As the calamity that has come upon my country is well-known to the whole world I need not trouble you by dilating on it. You know how valiantly my soldiers have fought against odds for the ancient independence of their country, but they had to give in before the most cruel methods of warfare. However, at this moment, there remains more than half of Ethiopia which has not yet been occupied by the troops of the invader, while the resistance of my people still continues even in the occupied territories. Hence, with our faith in the justice of our cause and in the mercy of the Almighty, we hope for success in the end.

To the Muslim world it is sufficient to repeat the words of the Prophet: "Ethiopia, a hospitable nation, should remain free and independent. Woe betide him who molests her." I wish the Muslims of the world would come together and think over the words of the Prophet, as the time is ripe to put into practice one of the best recommendations of the Prophet.

I thank you for your invitation and for the opportunity to meet you this afternoon. It is very kind of you to give me such a hearty and friendly reception and to mention the little service that was rendered years and years ago by my people to the persecuted Muslims of that time. The kind and grateful acknowledgment of the Prophet Muhammad was more than sufficient recompense for the little service that was rendered. Since that time Ethiopia has been the home of Muslims and Christians where they have lived in peace and amity. As this calamity that has come on Ethiopia affects the Muslims as well as the Christians we request you to remember us all in your prayers so that our sins may be forgiven and the mercy of the Lord be vouchsafed to us.

## **THE NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR**

### **THE NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR AT THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE, WOKING**

Thursday, the 6th August, was a distinctive and a memorable day in the history of this outpost of the World of Islam—the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking. The Mosque Staff and most of the Muslims, who for years have been intimately associated with the activities of this Mission, gave a warm reception and welcome to the Nawab Salar Jung Bahadur of Hyderabad. As some of our readers know, this Mission is indebted for the Memorial House attached to the Mosque for the use of the Staff to the princely generosity of the Nawab Sahib's illustrious grandfather—the late Nawab Sir Salar Jung Bahadur. The House is the only Oriental styled building in the county of Surrey.

The Nawab Sahib, accompanied by his Secretary, Syed Kadi Ali Sahib, drove down from London to Woking, and was warmly received by his Eminence the Imam and the Staff at the front verandah of the Memorial House. In the House itself there was an imposing and a cosmopolitan gathering of Muslims whom neither the treacherous weather nor any business considerations had deterred from bringing about a befitting reception to their aristocratic Brother-in-Faith.

In a short Table Talk after Lunch, the Nawab Sahib showed very keen interest in the activities of the Mission, and several aspects of the Trust were discussed. A fraternal photograph to commemorate the happy occasion was taken in front of the Memorial House. The activities of the day came to a close at 2 p.m., when the Nawab Sahib left for London.

Among those present were Sir Abdul Qadir ; Madame Khalida Buchanan-Hamilton, President of the Muslim Society in Great Britain ; Dr. Saeed Muhammedi ; Count Gioja and Begum Hamid ; Shamsul Ulema Kamaluddin

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Ahmad ; Mr. M. R. Tirmizey ; Dr. and Mrs. Shakir Muhammedi ; Prof. Abdul Aziz Puri ; Mr. Habibullah Lovegrove ; Mr. S. D. Piracha ; Mr. Ormiston, Miss Howell and Mr. Daud Cowan.

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### FASTING

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

Fasting is a benefit to the individual. Fasting is a benefit to society. Let fasting, therefore, be restored to favour, both individually and in communities. What preventeth fasting being welcomed with open arms ? It is an imagined hardness, a believed rocky path, set in the smooth way of ease. But whither goeth the smooth way of ease ? Whither runneth a river unchecked ? Doth it not either, hurrying along, wear out a stony bed in some deep defile or, oft changing its course, spread itself out sluggishly over the plain, reducing the level fertility into wide stagnant marshes ? Wherefore we see that, for goodly rivers, men place barriers and locks in their course, stemming the unruly waters and conserving them within well set limits, lest the river-bed be worn away and the stream become profitless.

So an annual time of fasting conserveth the goodly stream of a man's life, and keepeth his powers, his faculties, his health, his self-control in a state of bright efficiency, making for the sovereign good of society.

So much for the human side and the relation of the individual to humanity. Now a word or two concerning the divine side, for are there not two sides to human life—even God and the world ? *إياك وحياة الدنيا Iyyaka wa hayat ud dunya* ? And can God be served elsewhere than in the world ? Can the truly righteous sever himself entirely from the world, from the field of service, to be for ever with the Lord, though his heart desire it ?

## FASTING

A word, therefore, concerning the divine side of fasting. If anyone hath loved, verily he knoweth something of the quality of love. He knoweth the longing to be in the presence of the beloved, of the sweetness of allowing his thoughts to dwell upon the beloved, and the peace of meeting the beloved alone.

So, with fasting, an opportunity is given of thrusting aside the clamour of the many voices of the world, with its worries and ambitions and anxieties and aggravations, and of hearing the Voice of the One, the Beloved. By fasting thou purifiest thyself ; and by purification the life of the being that is truly thee liveth more vividly. By fasting prayer taketh on a deeper reality and so a deeper sweetness : and in prayer the soul breathes more freely. Let us now turn to the Qur-án and consider the injunctions therein enjoining fasting upon the faithful thus :<sup>1</sup> “ *O you who believe ! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil). Fast for a certain number of days : and whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then let him fast a like number of other days ; and for those who can manage it, there is an expiation, even the feeding of a poor man : and whoever does good of his own free will, that is all the better for him ; and that the fast is better for you, if ye did but know !*

*The month of Ramadan is the month in which was revealed the Qur-án, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs of that guidance and of that distinction. Therefore, whosoever beholdeth that month, let him fast therein ; but whoever of you is sick or upon a journey, let him fast a like number of other days. Allah desires what is easy for you, and He does not desire what is difficult for you ; and He desires that ye should fulfil the number of days and that ye should exalt the greatness of Allah for His having guided you, and that ye may give thanks.*

<sup>1</sup>Qur-án : II. 183—185, 187.

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*It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fast. Allah is aware that you were unduly severe upon yourselves in this matter ; so He hath turned in mercy toward you and relieved you of this vexation. Now, therefore, go in unto them and seek that which Allah hath ordained for you, and eat and drink, until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread on account of the dawn. Then carry out the fast till nightfall, and go not in unto them, for as much as ye are keeping seclusion in the mosques. These are the limits of Allah. So approach them not. Thus Allah maketh His revelations clear to men, so that they may guard against evil."*

Let us now take these few *suras* from the Holy Qur-án, and consider them in detail with brief commentary.

We notice, firstly, that fasting is not the new injunction of a new religion. Islam, the religion of submission to the Will of the One True God, existed before the coming of Muḥammad, and was practised by Noah, Abraham and Jesus (may peace be upon them !) and by numerous other prophets of old. Verily, Jesus fasted and Muhammad fasted, and those who submit themselves unto the Will of God are commanded to fast to-day.

Next, in these Qur-ánic verses, follows a definite, very plain, unequivocal and unelaborated statement of the object and purpose of fasting, which is, "*so that you may guard against evil.*"

Fasting will enliven and invigorate your spiritual being, and will brush aside from your eyes the cloud and fume of worldliness, of materialism, so that the approach of evil towards you will at once be apparent, and you will be on the alert, ready and prepared in good time to ward it off. Certainly, in steering a course of righteousness, it is easier to avoid an obstacle clearly observed ahead in good time. To realise the approach of an evil is half-way



## FASTING

to overcoming it or to avoiding it, and verily fasting will quicken this faculty of awareness against the arising of evil.

So we come to the injunction, "*Fast a certain number of days,*" from which we gather that fasting is only good, if pursued within certain limits. The injunction is not : "fast often," nor yet, "fast as much as you are able to," for that would imply that fasting in itself was the ideal, and that to eat and to drink and thankfully to enjoy and participate in natural pleasures was inherently bad. Nay, it is not so ; to eat and to drink and to allow the being we have been provided with for this earth-existence to breathe and to develop and to rejoice in the goodness of its Creator (praise to His Name, the High, the Great !) is inherently good ; and it is to preserve this goodness, this sweetness of life, that fasting is ordained upon us, to guard against the evils that may, by prolonged carelessness or engrossment in other affairs, descend insidiously upon us. Should evil disturb the body, the body may then distress the mind, and, if the mind is distressed, how shall the spirit be at peace ? But there is another aspect of this guarding against evil. The members of the body may be complete and healthy, and the faculties may be efficient and alert, but if the higher control over all is lacking, what then ? The soundest ship will shatter on the rocks ; and the finest form fall to disaster.

Much of the essence of guarding against evil simply lies in self-control, self-control and, for a third time, self-control. Often the evil is not from without, but from within, and may be checked, mastered, eradicated, by an established power of control. And how is control established ? Fast ! and ye have entered upon the way !

To proceed : the month of Ramadan, in which commenced the revelation, by portions of the Holy Qur-án, is, of all times, the most fitting for a month of

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fasting and of remembrance and of gratefulness unto God for having guided mankind and for exalting the greatness of God.

But Allah desires for you ease and not difficulty, wherefore, if anyone is under the disability of sickness, or under the inconveniences of a journey, he is excused fasting, until an occasion more appropriate to his particular case. Further, if anyone, not being under any disabilities, still desireth not to fast, then he is permitted to make a compensatory good action in lieu thereof, even to feed one of the poor. Yet this course, though permitted, is not recommended, because the full benefit and the full number of the blessings of fasting do not accrue in like manner to one who adopts this evasive course : “ *And that the fast is better for you, if ye did but know.*”

Let us now consider the Islamic method of fasting in its essential qualities as compared with other methods of fasting that have been practised. From early dawn until sunset the Islamic fast is kept daily for the period of one month. Between early dawn and sunset no food or drink may be taken and otherwise lawful physical pleasure must be set on one side during that period. During the night of the fast restrictions are removed and what normally is lawful is also lawful during the nights of the month of fasting.

Let me dwell upon this inherent excellence of the Islamic fast, because hereby clearly is it shown that the purpose of fasting is not punishment, nor penance, nor asceticism, nor any argument that lawful physical pleasures are really in essence harmful to the highest virtue or are, as it were, a necessary evil. Nay ! not so ! Islamic fasting is divine in that, proceeding from divinity, it draweth the sincere towards divinity ; and it is human in so far as it hath regard to human weaknesses, human frailties and the variety of human circumstances. The

## FASTING

Islamic mode of fasting is simple and satisfactory and does not burke the issue or beat about the bush. Islam ordains no food or drink, fast completely for a certain time, then relax and resume what is lawful. Can we, strictly speaking, apply the word "fasting" to other methods which may merely consist in the avoidance of certain foods, *e.g.*, meat, without any restriction (except the human factor) as to the quantity or variety of other foods that may be taken in place of the excluded item? Is there even any discipline or occasion for the strengthening of self-control or any greater care of guarding against evil in this latter and un-Islamic method?

If anyone would desire to know which of the two is the more salutary and satisfactory, which more readily achieves the object in view, we venture to suggest that he (or, it may be, she) should make trial of both methods in two successive years.

Simple regulations in such affairs are widely beneficial to that portion of humanity that adopts them.

Now, speaking generally, what is the best manner of observing a limit, of keeping oneself within a certain bound? Is it to press heavily against the restraining barrier, until perhaps the barrier unexpectedly gives way to one's surprise and chagrin, or is it not rather voluntarily to withdraw from the close proximity of that limit? "*These are the limits of Allah; so go not near them.*" Wherefore fast occasionally from what is lawful, and thou wilt not find difficulty at other times in carefully keeping thyself to what is permitted. For, it seems, there are *two methods* of living: *one*, to abide generally by what is lawful and occasionally to break through, whether for relief, change, or necessity of nature, into what is unlawful and to obtain therefrom the fruits of remorse; and there is the *second method*, to abide generally by what is lawful and occasionally to fast, to draw back from things

permitted, thereby obtaining an inward peace and the subsequent sweetening of what is lawful, together with the absence of desire to go beyond into the unlawful.

And which method would one endowed with understanding follow? “*And that ye fast is better for you if ye did but know.*”

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### ISLAM AND WORLD FELLOWSHIP

BY SIR ABDUL QADIR

(Continued from XXIV, p. 374)

The prejudices of race and colour have created another obstacle in the way of world fellowship, and that is the narrow nationalism of to-day. Within proper limits, nationalism has its uses and can be a great help towards the development of a people or a community, and as such Islam does not object to it. In fact there is a saying of the Prophet that “the love of one’s own country (*Watan*) is a part of faith (*Iman*),” but the kind of nationalism that tries to make it not only one of the elements constituting one’s religion but the whole of it, to the exclusion of everything else, and to the extent of embittering the minds of the people of one country against those of other countries, is a magnified form of individual selfishness, which is repugnant to the spirit of Islam.

If you wish to develop the right kind of internationalism, you will find a basis for it in Islam, which has had from its outset the spirit of internationalism in it. In an improved world, nationalism will serve as a training ground for internationalism, just as the tribe of ancient days has been the training school for nationalism, but if it disturbs the friendly relations between nations of the world and destroys the chances of general peace, it is not conducive to the healthy development of mankind.

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According to Islam, it is the ordinance of God that people should be friendly to one another and fight injustice and iniquity. We find in Verse 9, Surah XL, page 534, the following commandment :

“ And if two parties of Believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them. And if one party of them doth wrong to the other, fight ye that which doth wrong till it return unto the ordinance of Allah ; then, if it return, make peace between them justly and act equitably. Lo ! Allah loveth the equitable.”

If we extend the principle enunciated in the verse quoted above from the sphere of the community to that of the nation, or extend it further to the international sphere, we get the idea which underlies the modern conception of the League of Nations and of collective security, of which we have heard so much recently. The ideas underlying this conception have great possibilities, though it has to be admitted that the experiments recently made to carry those ideas into practice have not proved successful.

The plan adopted by Islam to facilitate the practical application of the ideals preached by it, in connection with a world fellowship, is to minimise the chances of friction among people and to remove the causes of ill-will. One of the most frequent causes of friction is furnished by disputes about property. An equitable distribution of property among the relatives of a deceased person is the best means of producing an atmosphere of good-will and co-operation among the members of his family. Islam has an elaborate system of distributing property, which has elicited admiration from disinterested and independent critics. It is not possible to give here the details of the provisions of the Islamic Law on this subject and I would refer those interested in it to the text of the Koran, on which the system is based, and to works of Moslem jurists.

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Among non-Moslem jurists who have written on Moslem laws of inheritance, Mr. McNaughton pays the following well-deserved tribute to this system in his well-known book on Moslem Law :

“ In these provisions we find ample attention paid to the interests of all those whom nature places in the first rank of our affections ; and it is difficult to conceive any system containing rules more strictly, just and equitable.”

Another fruitful source of trouble against which a rigorous attitude has been adopted by Islam is laxity in sexual morality. By insisting on chastity among men and women and by providing severe punishment for delinquents, Islam has minimised the evils resulting from want of chastity. In fact, the permission to have more wives than one in special circumstances, which has been largely misunderstood by Western critics of Islam, is a somewhat natural result of the insistence of Islam on purity in the relations between the sexes. The passage in the Koran dealing with the subject of marriage lays down that the permission to have more wives than one is subject to the very strict condition of equality of treatment. The words of the text are :

“ And if ye fear that ye cannot do justice, then one (only).” Verse 3, Surah IV, page 92.

Under this provision the Moslems are practically as good monogamists as any other people. About the Moslems of India it was once estimated that not more than one in a thousand had a second wife. The provision therefore amounts to only an exception to the ordinary rule, provided in the interests of making the law complete, and avoiding a resort to subterfuges.

Similarly, the permission as to divorce, in cases of disagreement between husband and wife, owing to incompatibility of temper or ill-treatment, is a prudent and

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much-needed emergency exit from the bonds of matrimony in extreme cases. For a long time Islam incurred much odium and was abused by its opponents because its law allowed the termination of marriage in exceptional cases. The critics either forgot the fact, or ignored it, that this permission, though existing in the law, was not utilised recklessly, and was availed of in cases of need, thereby avoiding a lot of scandal and other harmful consequences. A remarkable saying of the Prophet indicates clearly the attitude of Islam on this subject. He is reported to have declared that divorce was, in his eyes, "the most obnoxious of things permissible."

Among the social reforms in which Islam achieved wonderful success is prohibition against intoxicating liquor. The evil consequences of habits of intoxication were pointed out by Islam more than thirteen and a half centuries ago and men were warned against *khamr* (fermented liquor) in the following words :

"They question thee about strong drink and games of chance. Say : In both is great sin, and (of) (me) utility for men, but the sin of them is greater than their usefulness." Verse 219, Surah II, page 52.

This prohibition, couched in a language calculated to appeal to human reason and self-interest, has proved very efficacious, and its result has been that the Moslem world to-day, with the exception of a very small number of transgressing individuals, is practically a world of teetotallers. Those who have made a study of the sources of crime among mankind will admit that the responsibility of wine and gambling in the history of crime is immense, and, by prohibiting these evils, Islam has rendered a great service to humanity, worthy of imitation by followers of other faiths.

Another evil which prevailed very largely in the world when Islam came, and which is still there, is usury, with

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all the troubles springing from it. Islam prohibited it, and it is significant that the need for legislation against usury is being more and more realised by many advanced countries in the modern world, and in Germany very severe methods have been adopted against it by the State.

While legitimate efforts to earn money have been always encouraged by Islam and judicious expenditure of one's wealth has been not only allowed but recommended, it is noteworthy that Islam has deprecated love of money for its own sake, as it leads to greed and to the adoption of underhand means of earning or amassing wealth. Islam recognises that money is useful as a means to an end, but it is not, and should not be, an end in itself. One of the best uses of money commended by Islam is to help those in need. Every well-to-do man is enjoined to give away religiously a portion of his savings every year for the benefit of the poor. He is also enjoined to help first of all his kith and kin, who may stand in need of such help, and then the orphans and also the indigent and the wayfarers.

I have mentioned some of these commandments which help the smooth running of the wheels of society, but it is not possible to exhaust the list of all that Islam enjoins us to do, or wants us to omit, in regulating our conduct in this world, in order to live happily in it and to promote the well-being of others.

Those desirous of a fuller acquaintance with the teachings of Islam must go to the fountain-head of Islam, that is the Holy Koran. There are now many translations of the Koran in English, within easy reach of those wishing to study it. At one time only translations by non-Moslems were available, but they were not quite satisfactory. Now, fortunately, translations by Moslems themselves have been published. To Maulvi Mohammad Ali, of Lahore, belongs the credit of being the first in the field among Moslem translators. The next in order is the



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translation by the late Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall, which I have been using in the references quoted in this paper. The latest and a very attractive translation of the Koran in English is that by my esteemed friend, Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali. It is being printed in parts and about half of the text is in print already. It has been widely appreciated and a complete edition of it in one volume will be very welcome.

It will be seen, from what has been said above, that Islam has valuable contributions to make to the achievement of World Fellowship, but its success in this direction, as also that of any of the other great faiths of the world, depends on one essential condition, to which the world is, unfortunately, growing indifferent under the influence of modern materialism. That essential condition is a belief in the reality of things unseen. It is significant that ~~after~~ the Surah known as the *Fatiha*, or the opening chapter, the first passage in the Koran emphasises this point, in the following verses :

2. " This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off (evil).

3. " *Who believe in the unseen*, and establish worship, and spend all that We have bestowed upon them ;

4. " And who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before thee, and are certain of the hereafter.

5. " These depend on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful." (Verses 2-5, Chapter II, page 24.)

The Koran has rightly emphasised the need of belief in the unseen as the basis of religion and morality.

To my mind, the real difficulty of the world to-day is that it does not realise that the foundations of its belief have been undermined by scepticism and it is suffering from doubts as to the existence of God and a life hereafter. The Koran will serve as the beacon light to guide erring humanity to a living belief in God.

## RELIGION AND WORLD PEACE

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

The gruesome tragedy of the last European War brought into prominence the question of International Peace in the world. The inauguration of the League of Nations was the first attempt—a political one—towards its solution. But the history of the League for the past eighteen years can inspire anything but hope. Leaving aside the fact that the national emotion with which it has to deal is an extremely shifty thing, and also that very few of the sections of humanity to whom the word “nation” is applicable have the requisite freedom to join the world federation for which the League stands, the very motive which prompted its formation was insufficient for the world peace desired through it. It had the negative object of maintaining the exclusive and sectional spirits in the different nations only in a way that they did not collide one with another in a dangerous manner. It never intended, nor does it intend even now, to train the minds of the nations composing it so as to accustom them to think in terms international, in other words, in the way of considering humanity as a single community. Naturally it failed to achieve anything in the way of peace even between the nations to safeguard whose mutual interests it was primarily formed. And the absolute futility of its existence, though obvious to keen observers long ago, was admitted in so many words by no less an authority than the President of the League Council at Geneva a few days ago.

Apart from this political attempt at World Peace, there is the economic attempt as inaugurated by Soviet Russia, under the inspiration of Karl Marx. This considers the inequality of economic conditions obtaining in the world as the root cause of strife and dissension among individuals and groups. If it joins the race for

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armaments with other nations it is because the rest of the world wants to crush, by armed interference, its well-meaning attempts at World Peace. The most remarkable feature of this Movement is that it has carried into logical conclusions the attitude of the other Movement towards religion. League politicians, or for that matter all politicians of the old order, deemed it a great achievement of European sociological thought to have brought about the separation of the State from the Church. Neither are they much to blame for this, as the religion which was thus stopped from influencing the political affairs of Europe was the religion of which morality was no essential part. It may be a surprise to many of our times, but it is withal a fact that general immorality has never been regarded as being inconsistent with religiosity in the Christian religion. The linking up of such a religion or a Church with the political affairs of a nation would be productive, therefore, of anything but good. But although the Church or the organized religion was thus made separate from political affairs, yet it was implicitly understood that the broad and universally recognised religious principles of social life would be the guiding factors in all political deliberations, and that the supreme authority of all laws and political understandings would be no less a person than God Himself, Who is the Author of all existence—physical and moral. The relationship, nevertheless, between statecraft and religious principles was not well defined. For all practical purposes the latter began to hold an increasingly marked subordinate position, although at all critical times an allegiance was reaffirmed to them. Communistic philosophy struck a clearer and bolder note in this connection. In its very essence it is a denial of religion.

In spite of all the well-meaning zeal of the bulk of Communists, who also belong to the Christian Church,

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the fundamental principle of Communism is the denial of all religion. This principle lays it down that the solution of our social problems should not be sought through the assumption of supernatural forces, as religions have hitherto been doing—in that the root cause of all social misunderstandings and disruptions lies in the lack of a grasp of the economic problems of humanity, and that once these are solved humanity will be as happy and prosperous and self-unfolding as it wishes to be without any reference to the religious emotion, which it has outgrown. It is clear that such an outlook is purely materialistic and is based on social Atheism. But, as I have already remarked, it is only a logical culmination of the attitude taken up by the old school of politicians towards matters religious and moral.

Whatever it is, the wave of this new emotion has been sweeping through the whole world, and challenging religion in all forms. But as the darkest hour of the night fosters the sun of the dawn, this storm of Atheism has already created a sympathy for religion in the minds of advanced thinkers. This inclination towards religion and spirituality is growing in strength and volume, as the Russian Movement tends to be understood in its cold historical and psychological bearing.

We Muslims are always sympathetic towards all oppressed communities and all Movements that tend to do away with injustice. As such we were pleased when the new system of government was established in Russia in place of the old one. Every progressive nation adopts a system of government and administration which suits its conditions best. If, politically, Dictatorship is tolerated under certain circumstances and martial law in matters administrative there is no reason why economically the abolition of all private property at certain times should not be tolerated. But, unfortunately, the

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principles of assertion and expression are so emphasised in the West that anything new achieved anywhere in any direction is acclaimed by the inventors as the final solution of world problems. And the arrogance of the people here is so great that the slightest discovery of knowledge in any affair makes them feel that they can control and guide the destiny of humanity for all times to come. The very proposal of the abandonment of all religious conceptions in relation to life speaks volumes in this connection. Unlike other religious communities, we Muslims have never been dogmatic in our beliefs; we have always kept an open mind for all arguments that may come from unbelieving quarters. This is an age of intellectual freedom and tolerance, in which a fair chance is given to all the different points of view in a given question. We are prepared to listen and have in fact been listening to all that our enthusiasts of the Russian Movement have to say on the question of social organisation and World Peace. But we are equally entitled to a patient and appreciative hearing from them. Our arguments are manifold, but can be summarised as follows.

There can be no real peace and amity in any society on the basis of the material requirements of its individual members. The reason is simple. Man's desires are endless in variety and intensity, whereas the materials for their satisfaction in the world are very limited. To say that uniformity of status will do away with the feeling of greed in man is to misunderstand human nature. Man's desire or greed is not always awakened by concrete things. More often than not imagination comes in to do this awakening. The Holy Qur-án hints at this fact when it says: "I seek refuge to the Lord of men . . . from the evil of the whisperings of the slinking (devil), who whispers into the hearts of men, from among the Jinn (or hidden unseen forces, as that is the meaning of the term) and the men."

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In other words the evil inclinations in us are prompted by the evil expressions of our fellow beings as well as by the invisible influences creating tempting situations before our minds' eyes with the help of our imagination. And no serious student of human psychology and of its bearing on motives for actions can deny this fact. So, even if the grades of economic status are brought down to one dead level, and no one is allowed to excite vice and greed in another through the superior resplendence of economic comfort, one cannot shut the imagination of man from picturing to oneself easier conditions of life, and striving therefor by unfair means. It is too much to assert that the evil propensity in man comes from external circumstances alone, and cannot come through imagination. Like all other faculties, the creative faculty of man has its wrong as well as its right use. Unfortunately, whereas the Christian religion held to the belief in the unredeemed viciousness of human nature, this economic atheism has come to assume and believe in the absolute goodness of the same. As a matter of fact, it is Islam which, in opposition to the Christian doctrine of innate viciousness of human nature, has been upholding all these centuries the theory of his innate goodness. But just as the Christian doctrine was holding to the one extreme, our friends of the Communistic Movement have gone to the other extreme. Islam strikes a note of happy medium. It recognises that potentially man is all goodness, but it also recognises the unpleasant fact that he is usually inclined to iniquity and vice and that it needs a special effort on his part to suppress the evil inclinations in his nature and to develop the good ones. All that a religion proposes to do in human life is to help man in this struggle and nothing more. No doubt, Islam believes in the helpfulness of material surroundings side by side with the mental effort in achieving the desired social peace and

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prosperity. It believes in removing as many sources of temptations from the way of man as possible, but it knows full well that even the best of surroundings does not prevent the imaginative mind from conceiving dirty things. Hence its elaborate arrangements for mental and devotional culture. We may be told here that religion has been guilty of much strife and jealousy and bloodshed and exploitation in the world. We may begin the reply by pointing out that all the moral and social feelings in humanity are traceable to religious culture. I am aware of the contention of our adversaries to the effect that religion was the mere concomitant of these feelings, and was not casually connected. But this is a mere assertion without proof. Historically speaking, all moral and social virtues are associated with religious personalities and movements. The sanctity which moral movements even now receive is from their reference to religious feelings. Even to-day the highest morals of an unbelieving man stand no comparison with the average morals of a really religious man. Unfortunately, the Westerners do not witness such religious personalities in their midst. So we can safely conclude that mankind would know no social and moral feelings but for the religious personalities, and would relapse into brutality if it follows its unbelieving moralists and politicians. That the latter possibility is not a distant one is shown by the political and social affairs of Europe to-day. Conventionalism is the only thing that is delaying the collapse of social life here. It is as true of Capitalist society as of Communistic—the only difference being of a new zeal arising out of a fresh emancipation to be found in Russia. It will not take long for the new enthusiasm talking of world emancipation to settle down as a purely national sentiment intent on its own aggrandizement. The principle of Communism will be left to create any position for itself

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in any country as best it can. At the long last it will linger only as an appeal to the moral sense of man as fostered by the religious feelings, and will look upon some world-wide socio-religious movement to make its dreams a reality—and who knows but this Movement will be the revived religious Movement of Islam.

To resume the argument that religion, with all the charges against it, has been lying at the bottom of all our energies for corporate life and progress, I may assert here that the scientific-mindedness of the modern man, which has opened to him all these enormous secrets of physical nature, is a distinct production of the religious emotion. It was the religious movement of Islam that made man for the first time scientifically minded. It was the Qur-án that made its readers and followers think scientifically. The first expression of this new attitude towards experiences was shown in preserving records of what had already passed. The future being always built on the impressions and lessons of the past, the anxiety of the Muslim Arabs to scientifically preserve the records of the past was quite wise, natural and scientific. The elaborate efforts at preserving the sayings of the Prophet and his acts in a scientific way, and the vast science of history and record-keeping which resulted from them are still unapproachable in their intellectual dignity. The sub-conscious reasoning for this effort at scientific history writing seems to be something like this—unless you develop the habit of scientifically analysing and preserving what has already passed you cannot scientifically analyse what you are experiencing at present nor can you build any scientific hypothesis on their basis to make any new discovery in future. It was thus that when the Arab Muslim genius had thoroughly trained the human mind in reading past events scientifically that it turned its attention towards scientific investigations in physical nature, and it is known



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to us all how it lay the foundations of the chemical and physical sciences, which were later taken up by the Christian nations of the West. Thus the rock bottom of our highly intellectual and scientific age is to be found in a religious Movement. It will not do to say that the Arab genius was only a step in the gradual evolution of the human mind. History tells us that the Arab mind was the least expected to take up the thread of the cultural evolution of humanity. For ages it had been coming in contact with various civilizations of the world, but it was impervious to any influence from any quarter, and the Prophet Muhammad's time was the most hopeless of all times in the history of the Arab nation. No, it is nothing short of audacity to try to discover the thread of evolution in the cultural rise of the Muslim nation. We could as well mark out Abyssinia to take the next step in the evolution of human culture. So, whatever the future may hold in store, at least the present generation of humanity and its cultured section can by no means say that it has outgrown the tutelage of religion, or that its life and progress could as well have been possible even if there were no religion at all.

Coming to the charge that religion has been on different occasions an obstacle in the way of our cultural progress, I have only to submit that if a worn-out religion has actually suppressed scientific speculation and intellectual freedom, it was a timely religion again that had created a zest in the human mind for such speculation and freedom, and had even fostered them to a stage when they were strong enough to survive the rudest shocks of a putrefied religion. Yes, although religion at its worst took the shape of the Medieval Roman Catholicism that persecuted science and freethought, religion at its best took the form of Islam, which gave birth to the scientific outlook on life, and reared it

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to a strength that defied all suppression. Unfortunately people harp too much on the disservice of a worn-out religious outlook, against which religion itself comes to warn people and from which it alone really saves humanity. But the perversity of the human mind is such that it will either stick too fast to a dead religion to open itself to the influences of a fresh and living religion or hurl anathemas . . . on all religions indiscriminately. In no case does it seem inclined to follow religion with any semblance of wisdom. But no amount of perversity will avail it against the formidable necessity of religion in the social and cultural consciousness of humanity. And if we Muslims have been sticking to this position, as a matter of principle, backed by a thorough intellectual understanding of the human mind and its cultural laws, modern humanity has also started realising its reasonableness, now that they are baffled in their attempts to regularize the social relations of man in other directions. Above the storm of intellectual speculations and arrogant opinions, certainly stands the intuitive feeling of the human mind, which, forced by some formidable facts of the present, perceives the danger of a social collapse of humanity. It perceives, too, the much-neglected but solid fact that it is, after all, religion that lies at the bottom of what little understanding exists to-day between man and man. It sees quite clearly, also, how in the absolutely earth-bound mind of man questions of sacrifice, service, forgiveness and the like, without which the social life of humanity cannot continue for a moment, have no legal and philosophical right to exist. To make a necessity of these qualities for social purposes is like attempting to keep the river water always within its banks. The emotions of man are but too ready to overflow and the actions and counter-actions of their overflow, even within the single space of

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history, are enough to bring about the collapse of any society. There must be an enormous margin in the average mind above the considerations of material gains and losses, to absorb the tremendous outflow of emotions in the individual and group mind. As soon as we come to consider this we discard the ground of economics as indescribably insufficient for the solution of social problems, and enter the field of religion. It is important to remember here a fact which is neglected both by the friends and the enemies of religion. It is that the founders of religion are led to the religious aspect of human life from considerations of its social life. The thoughts of these personages invariably take their start in the unsatisfactory social relations of their respective peoples, and economic relation being a very important factor in the social relationship, it has, invariably, been quite strongly stressed by them.

This can be quite definitely said about the Prophet Muhammad, who has not ignored any aspect of the question in his laws. It is, therefore, a great mistake to suppose that the social and economic problems were not so thoroughly grasped by the religious leaders as they are to-day. Of course, unlike our temporal leaders of to-day, these spiritual leaders did not stake the whole solution of our social problems on the mere question of economics, but instead made this question only a part, an important part, though, of a big programme. In doing so, they recognised, what our temporal leaders should do well to recognise, that the mind and the feelings that arise in it are far more important in any social problem than matter, which apparently creates these problems.

*(To be continued)*

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## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### ISLAM IN AMERICA

BY NUR MUHAMMAD MALIK, B.Sc., M.D., DETROIT. (U.S.A.)

With Mullahs left to represent Islam and our Intellectual section indifferent to the call of the times and ignorant, it is no wonder that its foes have succeeded to a considerable extent in misrepresenting it to the uninformed and the innocent. They have so distorted the facts about the Faith that its fair name has become almost unrecognizable. For instance, Americans know very little about Islam. Their conception of it is of some terrible cult. To confess to be a Muslim in a gathering is to drop a bomb in their midst. The average American pictures the Moslems as fanatics and fatalists, who practise strange secret religious rites, including human sacrifices to appease the wrath of Allah, carry daggers concealed in their voluminous cloaks, keep harems, and take a delight in murdering unoffending Christians, especially women and children, for the promised reward of the houris from their "false" prophet in his paradise!

I have heard an American tell people that the "Mohammadans" used powdered red pepper to cure sore eyes! A Catholic primer teaches innocent little babes that the Moslems are their enemies! It calls the religion "Ezrum" and the Moslems "Mahometans." One of these primers had a picture of Muhammad—God knows from where they got it—with an unnecessarily long beard, breezing along atop of a fine and prancing Arab steed, carrying a noble Toledo blade at a dangerously curved angle! The poor children cannot help but hate him as they grow up, and be afraid of him as a murderous old man.

The face beneath the Fez, in Webster's illustrated dictionary, is anything but lovable. Philip Gibbs begins a narrative, "When I read in the newspapers that the Turks had entered Smyrna and had celebrated their

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victory by burning the Christian quarters and menacing men, women and children, ACCORDING TO THE WAY OF ISLAM, I thought of certain people, whom I had met there the year before, and wondered what agony they had suffered before death, or what chance of escape had been theirs."

This passage has already become a literary gem and is being copied by all and sundry. And we wonder if he has also wondered about the Turks themselves, or the Egyptians, the Indians or the more recently ruined poor Ethiopians !

Recently, I was guest-speaker at a girls' club. Listed on the same programme with me was a well-known Christian Minister from a nearby town. He was to speak on the great religions of mankind. The ladies requested me to stay over and hear him speak. As the topic sounded alluring I consented to stay. As he was late in arriving, we were not introduced before his talk. He did not know that I was a Muslim. He was a tall and well-built man who spoke with self-righteous assurance. He must have studied the various faiths in an encyclopædia. Seemingly a most erudite preacher, the oratory flowed from his leathery pinched face like water from a gargoyle after a heavy downpour. He began by discussing Hinduism, and praised, at length, the " Vedas." In turn, the religions of the Jews, Parsees, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and Bahais received comments. Christianity, of course, received the lion's share. He closed his long-winded lecture by describing Islam, " . . . and now the last but not the least is Mahmatenism. There is not very much to say about it. It was founded by a man from Mookka, in Arabia, by the name of Mahmat. He was an epileptic, who, whenever in trance, gibbered things in Arabic, which were picked up by his followers and written down on palm leaves and such material. He

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stole the Christian doctrines from unsuspecting monks and made them into his bible, which he called the Koran. His followers are called Mazlams. They are an ignorant and a superstitious people, who indulge in orgies of drink, murder and rapine. Praised be the Lord, we do not see them in our great land. Mahmat ordered his followers to marry more than one wife. Imagine where you will be if you had to marry these Mahmatens. They worship Allah . . . .” As he raved on I began to believe that the man must have lost his mind. I was blushing with shame, tingling all over my body and perspiring profusely at this demonstration of a colossal stupidity.

When he had done with his venomous outpourings, I made myself known to him and took him to task for his false and unjust accusations. I asked him from where he had gathered his information about Islam, and whether a man apparently as learned as he was believed in all the nonsense he said. He felt nervous and offered apologies for his gross and wilful misrepresentations. I pointed out to the audience his sinful proclivities and pleaded with them if men of his standing were busy creating false impressions among our race, where was the hope for God’s Kingdom coming on earth and for the long awaited “Peace on earth and good-will among men.”

In fairness to the American public it must be said that they are open to conviction. Hosts of pretended Swamis and Yogis flourish on their credulity. The educated Christians are afraid of us Muslims because of their memories of the Crusades and of the Moors in Spain. They keep preparing their people against any such return of the day. But that is no reason why we Muslims should hide our own Faith. Many Indian Muslims in America allow themselves to be called Hindus! Was the founder of our Faith a Hindu? Or are their parents Hindus? If

## THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON THE INDIAN WOMEN

an Indian Hindu does not call himself a Muslim, then I, an Indian Muslim, am not a Hindu.

I, therefore, fervently appeal to the Muslim world in general and the Indian Muslims in particular, to rise to the height of the occasion and sacrifice some of their best sons to the cause of preaching Islam in America.

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## THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON THE INDIAN WOMEN

BY MRS. ANWAR-UD-DIN

Islam had its birth in Arabia a little over thirteen centuries ago and within a century it had reached Sind, the western province of India; but it was not till the 10th century A.D. that it was able to exert any appreciable influence upon life in India. After that it spread rapidly, and before long was a dominating factor in political and social life throughout the whole of the country. Islamic civilization has been acting upon Aryan civilization for the last ten centuries, and has, in its turn, been acted upon by the latter, and some interesting ceremonies are the result of this intercourse. The followers of Islam number about eighty millions in India, but the influence of Islamic civilization on the people of India is more widespread than these numbers imply.

An important and unique feature of Islam is to be found in the fact that the Companions of the Prophet Mohammad were at the greatest pains to preserve and hand down his sayings and doings, which are known as *Hadis*—Traditions. In the collection of Traditions, we have before us the life of the Prophet as actually led by him an example of life as it should be led by every Muslim. Every aspect of man's life is depicted in that of Mohammad. but to discuss them all would take too long. What principally pertains to my subject is that he also led the

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life of a husband and father. Hence Islam supplies an elaborate code of laws relating to woman.

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

The greatest service that Islam has rendered to woman is that of her emancipation, whereby her status was immensurably raised. Islam recognises no distinction between man and woman excepting that fixed by nature to fit them for the performance of their respective duties in life. Intellectually, morally and spiritually they are equal, and this equality has been proclaimed by the Holy Qur-án and the Traditions of the Prophet. Chapter 33, Verse 35 of the Qur-án says :

“ Verily, the Muslim men and women, and the faithful men and women, and the devout men and women, and the truthful men and women, and the humble men and women and the fasting men and women, and the men and women who remember God much—God has prepared for them pardon and a great reward.”

This verse clearly places man and woman on an equal footing both morally and spiritually, but in the intellectual sphere too, there is no distinction. A Tradition of the Prophet says, “ It is incumbent upon all men and upon all women to acquire knowledge.”

In life their spheres of activity are different. Man's lot is the harder, for he has to fight the battle of life and earn a living not only for himself, but also for his family. He may even be called upon to sacrifice his own life in the cause of his community ; and for these two reasons he may be said to enjoy a certain superiority over woman. Woman must, by nature, be tender in order to nurse and bring up children, and this same tenderness disqualifies



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her for the harsher duties of life—a truth borne out in Chapter 2, Verse 228, which says:—

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

“ Men stand above women, for that God has graced the one of them above the other and for that they spend of their substance (for them).”

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

That man's conduct may not be overbearing it has been ordained in the Qur-án, “ And do not boast of the precedence which God has given to one of you over the other ! The men shall have a portion of what they earn and the women also a portion of what they earn, and ask God of His grace : verily God knows about all things.” (Chapter 4, Verse 32.)

The superiority of man over woman is not a thing to boast of, much less one of which advantage should be taken. The weakness of woman has, however, been recognised, and many provisions have been made so that men may not presume on it. Mohammad was so considerate to woman that in his last sermon at Mecca which is called the “ Farewell Address ” he said, “ Fear God in respect to the rights of woman.”

The particular conditions in which the interests of man and woman mostly clash are those of marriages. In Islam, marriage is a sacred institution, but the marriage contract is a matter of civil procedure, based on the free consent of man and woman. A full-grown woman has as much right to choose her husband as a full-grown

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man his wife. No marriage contract is valid without the consent of the woman. If she is present herself, well and good ; if not, she must be represented by her proxy. Precedence is given to woman, as a matter of course, for it is the woman who first declares her consent ; man only accepts her offer. To prevent clandestine marriages, the presence of at least two witnesses is absolutely necessary. Again the publication of the marriage is enjoined upon both the parties, the actual ceremony being performed by a *Qadi*, a civil official, who registers the contract. It is an injunction of the Prophet that all contracts be reduced to writing.

The marriage contract is incomplete without the settlement of a dowry on the wife. The man has to contract to pay a certain sum of money or property to his wife, called " Mahr " which *Mahr*, or dowry, becomes the wife's property, and has nothing to do with her parents. The dowry is of two kinds, " prompt " and " deferred." It is open to the parties concerned to agree to either kind of dowry, or to a portion of each kind. The " prompt " dowry is to be paid on demand by the wife, and may be demanded by her at any time—to the extent of half—even before the consummation of marriage. She may refuse to live with the husband if the " prompt " dowry is not paid at her demand. The " deferred " dowry is payable at the husband's convenience, but it must be paid at the time of separation if the pair agree to separate. If the husband dies before the payment of dowry, it becomes a first charge on his property, the wife's claim to it having preference over all the creditors of, and heirs to, the estate of the deceased ; if even the man makes a will he cannot debar his wife from her dowry.

Thus it will be seen that the dowry system is a very wise provision for the weakness of woman. In India, however, the position of woman has become less secure

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on account of the strictness of the purdah system, that is to say, the seclusion typified by the veil. But Muslim society has endeavoured to make compensation by raising the amount of the dowry; which has as a consequence risen inordinately in India, so much so indeed, that it is sometimes impossible for the man to pay the amount even with all the savings of a lifetime. Here the balance is too much in favour of the woman, but in such cases the woman's too kindlier feelings prevail and she cancels her right to the whole or part of the dowry.

In India it is usual to settle half the dowry as "prompt," and the other half as "deferred," and it can readily be imagined how great an influence the Muslim woman may wield over her husband by timely pressure in claiming payment of the "prompt" dowry. It is to be noted too, that no presents are counted towards payment of the dowry. Indeed, nothing may be included beyond what has been expressly declared, and women are clever enough to avoid the mention of the word. If the man injudiciously happens to mention it, his wife flatly refuses to accept the present, and the matter is at an end, the man bowing to the whims and fancies of his wife, the debt of dowry for ever hanging round his neck.

After marriage the maintenance of the wife devolves upon the husband, and that is why the man enjoys a superiority over the woman. This maintenance should be according to the husband's position in society. But if the wife has been used to a better style of living with her parents, then the husband remains a debtor in respect of such deficiency, and must make it up when able to do so.

Men are commanded to be kind to women, as the Qur-án says: "And associate kindly with them, for if ye be averse to them, it may be that ye are averse to a thing wherein God has placed much good" (Chapter 4,

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Verse 19), and a tradition of the Prophet says, "The most perfect among the faithful in point of faith is he who is best among them in point of disposition, and who is most kind among them towards his wife." The natural relations of husband and wife are, according to the Qur-án, complementary. "Women are a garment to you and you are a garment to them." (Chapter 2, Verse 187).

In case of disagreement the course adopted for arbitration gives equality to husband and wife, according to the Qur-án. "And if ye fear a breach between the two (man and wife) then send for a judge from his people and a judge from her people : if they desire a reconciliation, God will arrange between them ; verily God is knowing, informed." (Chapter 4, Verse 35.)

In order to ensure good treatment on the part of the husband, the wife is allowed certain remedies. Should he (1) commit a crime, (2) treat her improperly or with severity, (3) threaten to deal with her harshly, and (4) neglect to fulfil his duties ; or if the wife has reason to fear that her health or life will be endangered, she is entitled to live apart from him, and to draw maintenance from him. In such cases she cannot be sued for the restitution of conjugal rights and, under some circumstances, she can even demand separation. Unless she has been divorced she will continue to be his wife, and will have a share in his inheritance.

Islam introduced divorce into India with a deterrent injunction. The Prophet has said, "The most hateful of lawful things in the sight of God is divorce." Divorce is the last remedy for disagreement. But disagreement may be temporary, or due to some passing (ebullition) of feelings. If these crises can be got over, life may be smooth again thereafter. Hence the procedure of divorce is so arranged that man may repent of his rashness.

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Divorce, like the marriage contract, is entirely a civil matter. There is no need to go to court and file defamation suits. A declaration of divorce is sufficient to make it effective.

Man and wife can both divorce each other. The man on divorcing his wife must pay her dowry ; but when the woman divorces her husband, she must forego a portion or the whole of it. One of the deterring forces against divorce in India is this same dowry system. It is only when two persons have exhausted every possibility of living together that they have recourse to it.

Divorce may be of several kinds. Roughly speaking, it can be classed under two headings—(1) Divorce that leaves a way open to the couple to remarry, and (2) Divorce that bars remarriage, as when a man accuses his wife of infidelity. Divorce will be established if the woman claims it, and they can never remarry. An instance of the first class occurs when a man divorces his wife in simple terms. In this case they may remarry, and if the couple resume marital relations within three months, they may even dispense with the renewal of the marriage contract. There are other kinds of divorce in which marital relations may be resumed within the prescribed period, if the husband undergoes a penance.

Man is not allowed to play with the word divorce. If he divorces his wife three times (in simple terms) the process is complete, and they cannot resume marital relations. The Qur-án says, “ Divorce may be (pronounced) twice ; then keep (them) in good fellowship or let (them) go with kindness ; . . . . (Chapter 2, Verse 229).

In spite of the simple procedure of divorce it is rare in India, the reasons being religious as well as economical.

The usefulness of divorce to woman cannot be denied, as it alleviates her suffering by releasing her from a life

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of bondage. With the awakening of woman in India, other communities have begun to realize the importance of legalising divorce, and there is a movement to get a legalising bill passed through the Legislature.

In Islam, man's responsibility towards his wife does not cease at divorce. He must maintain her for a period of three to four months even after that. When all doubt of her being with child is removed she can marry again, but if she is with child the former husband is bound to maintain her until the birth of the child ; and even after such birth, for a period of two years, if he desire that the mother suckle the baby. The Qur-án says, "And mothers shall give suck to their children two full years for him who desires to complete the suckling; and on him to whom it is born devolves their sustenance, and their clothing, according to what is just; no being shall be tasked but according to its capacity.....But if they desire to wean, by consent and counsel among themselves, then it shall be no crime in them, and if ye desire to have a nurse for your children, then it shall be no crime in you, when ye fully pay what you offer her, in all fairness. And fear God, and know that God sees what you do." (Chapter 3, Verse 233.)

In legalising "polygyny" Islam has imposed strict conditions—so strict indeed, that it might almost be thought that its aim was to abolish that custom under normal circumstances. Islam forbids polyandry, hence I am using the term polygyny instead of the more usual polygamy. In considering polygyny, however, it should be borne in mind that Islam lays great stress on the legality of intercourse between the two sexes. The penalty for illicit intercourse is corporal punishment, that punishment being doubled in the case of a married person. It was indeed so strictly enforced that a person in the time of Caliph Umar was, on being convicted of it, awarded corporal

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punishment by the Caliph. The result was that the man died of the shock.

Now, abnormal circumstances must need crop up every now and then. For example, a woman may be barren, and marriage being a social device for the fulfilment of nature's duty imposed upon every living being of propagating one's species, man fails in his duty if he does not find reasonable means to propagate his species. In such cases he may marry another wife. In India, other communities, besides resorting to polygyny, may have recourse to adoption. But, though the adoption of a child may solve the difficulty of finding an heir to the property, it is not a means of propagating one's species.

An absolute necessity arises in the case of war, when thousands and thousands of men lose their lives, resulting in an abnormal increase in the proportion of women to men. If polygyny does not come to the rescue of society, in such an eventuality a large number of women will be forced to lead an unnatural life of maidenhood, or bastardy will increase with its harvest of social evils. Firstly, the unfortunate women will lose their self-respect; secondly, selfish men will become irresponsible members of society; and thirdly, the child will not only lose its self-respect, but will also forfeit a share in the father's earnings and lose its inheritance in the father's property.

To guard against such evils, Islam has legalised polygyny with a rigid restriction of the number of wives a man may have, and a strict injunction to be just to all of them. The verses of the Qur-án are so worded as to contain a veiled prohibition. Chapter 4, Verse 3, says, "Then marry what seems good to you of other women, by twos, and threes, and fours; but if ye fear that ye shall not act equitably, then one only; it is a safer plan of abstaining from injustice." And Verse 129 of the same Chapter says, "And ye can never act equitably between women (wives), although you covet it."

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It should be noted that a woman has a perfect right to refuse to live with a man who marries a second wife ; but this right should be enforced at the time of the marriage contract. If it has been made a condition of the contract that the man should not marry another woman, her position is safe, and if after this he married another woman, then the contract is dissolved and the man has to pay the dowry.

In India there is an overwhelming majority of men in Muslim society who do not indulge in polygyny. Cases of men having two wives are rare, and if the ruling princes be excepted, it will be difficult to find any instances of men with three wives, or four.

Islam restricts the indiscriminate intermingling of men and women, but does not prevent woman from taking part in the normal activities of life. In this respect two principles are laid down by the Qur-án. First, there is an injunction to woman to hide her places of adornment. Secondly, there is an injunction to both men and women to cast their glances down on meeting one another. There are many traditions of the Prophet concerning his wives and other women, which show that they enjoyed full liberty. They joined in congregational prayers with the men ; they took part in public debates, went out shopping, accompanied men in war to perform what are now called " Red Cross " services, and even commanded troops. In short, they took part in every sort of healthy activity.

The prevalent purdah system or the veil in India is an aftergrowth and, like other evil customs, a social peril. Muslim women in India are now discarding the veil in large numbers ; but in the eyes of Islam the liberty enjoyed, or rather abused, by the Western woman is a social evil yet worst.

Islam has introduced a great reform in the matter of the possession of property by woman. The Muslim



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woman is the mistress of her property. Whether married or unmarried she manages her estate herself, and can dispose of it as she pleases. The husband cannot interfere in any way.

With regard to inheritance, Islam has rendered a very great service to the Indian woman. I have already said that her dowry is the first charge on the husband's property, but besides this, she is entitled to a share in the inheritance. If the husband leaves offspring she receives one-eighth of the property, and if he leave none she gets one-fourth. The law of inheritance is plainly laid down in the Qur-án. Chapter 4, Verse 12, says, "And ye shall have half of what your wives leave, if they have no issue ; but if they have issue, then ye shall have the fourth of what they leave, after the legacies which they shall have bequeathed and debts. And they shall have the fourth of what ye leave, if ye have no issue; but if ye have issue, then they shall have the eighth of what ye leave, after the legacies which ye shall have bequeathed and debts. An injunction from God ; and God is knowing, mild."

Again, as daughter and as mother, she has a share in the inheritance. The Qur-án says, "God enjoins you concerning your children : a male shall have the like of the share of two females ; but if there be females above two, then they shall have two-thirds of what he has left ; and if there be but one, then she shall have the half ; and his parents shall have, each one of them, a sixth of what he has left, if he has a child ; but if he has no child, and his parents be his heirs, then his mother shall have the third ; and if he has brethren, then his mother shall have the sixth, after the legacies which he shall have bequeathed, and debts. Your fathers and your children, ye know not which of them is nearest to you in usefulness ; an ordinance from God : verily God is knowing, wise." (Chapter 4, Verse 11.)

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### ISLAM AT THE CROSS-ROADS

BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL R. B. D. BLAKENEY, C.M.G.,  
D.S.O.

Recent developments in the Near and Middle East, the tremendous change that has taken place in Turkey, hitherto the great centre of control of Islam, the very serious upheaval in Palestine (not so serious from a physical point of view as it is an indication of a deeper cause at work in the great world of Islam), all these must inevitably bring to the forefront a consideration of the mighty forces operating behind and above the followers of the Great Apostle.

No one can contemplate the alteration that has taken place in world outlook or opinion since the commencement of this so-called 20th century without realizing that we have entered upon an entirely new order of things. Before that, the possession of material force was the paramount consideration. Given this, nations and races could be dominated and forced to the conqueror's will. Now, however, new forces are beginning to operate. There is such a thing as world opinion, and although it is transiently possible for an utterly unscrupulous and irresponsible ruler to crush and dominate weaker powers by the force of his possession and control of physical means of conquest, we have not yet experienced the inevitable consequences which he will have to pay when the *deeper* forces involved slowly but surely present their bill for outrage. In the meantime, the great whirlpool of iniquity tends over to grow in velocity and extension. To take the most glaring and recent instance, we see the attack by Italy on a fellow-member of the League of Nations not only successful—nay, unexpectedly successful—but tending to involve other lands beyond its immediate perimeter—Ethiopia.

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Speaking generally, these lands are mainly Muslim, and, hitherto, extraordinarily static. The very word Islam is a reproach to revolt against lawfully constituted leaders, as history most certainly shows. The amazing story of the success of the champions of the Revelation of the Great Prophet at the commencement of the Dark Ages, was due not so much to a desire for plunder or conquest (although those followed in its train, when lesser souls had charge of the destinies of Islam), but to the conviction that a Divine Revelation had been conferred upon mankind as a counterblast to the inevitable degradation of the ideals of his predecessor, the Great Founder of Christianity. In consequence, and for some centuries, the followers of the Prophet alone stood for human liberty, especially for the greatest of all attributes, liberty of the mind, during the black night of superstition which supervened the fall of the Roman Empire.

Things have now changed. That wave has spent its force. We have passed through the trough and now greet the rising wave of something the full meaning of which we have not yet formulated, though it is upon us threatening to swamp much of our current machinery, whether of government or of thought. Certain great events in the world of Islam stand out, all of them products of what is called in current parlance the 20th century. As to what is meant by the 20th century, and in view of the fact that there is considerable doubt as to the date of inception of what is known as the Christian Era, we must, nevertheless, conclude that there was something behind the date of change, something far more scientific than the blind beliefs of orthodox Christians. In this connection it is not untimely to point out that the tremendous science of Ancient Egypt, starting a new dispensation from Rice Oxley's year 2155 B.C., proved that an entirely different aspect of thought was to be anticipated in the early years of the present century.

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The great events abovementioned are patent to everybody. They centre round the heretofore focus of Islamic world power—Constantinople; but, included within their radius, are countries not Islamic but, nevertheless, what is usually termed Oriental. Just about the end of the previous century the Empire of China received a staggering blow and loss of prestige at the hands of certain Powers. The counterblast came with an Eastern Power, Japan, administering a still more staggering blow to a nominally Western, though actually border-land Power between East and West—Russia. The pendulum was moving very swiftly. The next blow struck hard at the Caliphate. A revolution took place in Turkey, and the Sultan was deprived of his autocratic powers. Events moved rapidly. An apparently unprovoked aggression made by Italy upon the Turkish Empire led to the invasion and capture of Tripoli. The colossus revealed his ineffectiveness, and the ensuing Balkan wars shook it still further, until its foundations rocked. Then ensued the Great War, at the end of which the former Turkish Empire was dismembered. With all its faults, it had kept Islam cohesive as a World Power. Now it was shattered, and the foolish materialists of the West thought that the only remaining thing to do was to share out the spoils, with many a snarl and growl amongst the brethren. And here they came up against the entirely unexpected and immensely potent force of a human conviction (so difficult to give it the title “spiritual” in view of its repudiation of much of its previous religious belief), namely, belief in the revival of Turkey. Although usually considered to be a nationalist and political movement, there were deeper forces underlying it, and its emancipation of women marked a mighty change in the world of Islam. Twenty years ago, veiled women were customary. Now they are rare, and, with their entry into the political

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arena, an entirely new phase of thought and an intensive enthusiasm—nay, a spiritual impetus—have been brought on to the stage of world politics. In the meantime, the old forces are still blindly operating, and, because of the static nature of Islam, appear to be winning all down the line. In Palestine, the Arab Revolt has broken out and must inevitably be suppressed and driven underground. But it cannot be ignored, because it is founded upon an outraged sense of justice. Sooner or later, the Muslim people of Palestine, aided no doubt—and wholeheartedly—by Christian Arabs, will make things extraordinarily uncomfortable for the Jews. There can be no real co-operation between Arab and Jew, unless the Arab frankly abandons the creed of the Great Apostle. Jews are the lords of Usury, and control of the usurious finance of the modern Western world. The followers of the Prophet, so long as they remain faithful to their creed, must oppose what they believe to be a practice condemned by Divine Law. Here the lists are set.

In India a still more formidable phase must inevitably push its way to the forefront. Bengal will be the focus of the trouble. Here the Kali worshippers, idolaters and such like, led by their priests, will endeavour (and, at the outset, successfully) to obtain political domination over the Muslims; but the two creeds are mutually incompatible. Kali worship, which is the creed of the vast majority of the Hindus in Bengal, is based on fear and propitiation. The creed of the Great Apostle is based on fearlessness and a belief in the success of the Divine Plan of the All-Wise, All-Mighty. Which of these two ideals is to win is the problem.

Further North we may say that for some time the authorities in Bolshevik Russia were less active against Islam than they were against Christianity. There supervened a period of hostility against Islam as well as against Christianity. This was to be anticipated. Bolshevism

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was under the control (and still mainly is) of the Jewish organisation which aims at world domination and the crushing of all opposition thereto. Now, however, something has happened. If newspaper reports are to be believed (and the word "if" must be spelt in capital letters and then underlined several times) there is a distinct movement to take the pressure off the safety valve, and to be a little more reasonable in its government. The Russians are by nature a mystical people. Some form of belief in a future existence—indeed, a subconscious conviction in the same benign plan as inspired the immediate followers of the Prophet, will emerge from the Russian spiritual chaos. And inexorably this will manifest itself as a revolt against atheistic Judaism.

We see, therefore, in Central Asia and the Near East, a fresh alignment of forces, and this may quite likely be joined by the great mass of 80 millions of Indian Muslims as they become enlightened as to the real meaning of modern finance, which is based on usury. Suppose these three forces combine—Near East, Palestine, Central Asia, and the Indian Muslims; suppose they are joined by two reviving and progressive nations, Young Egypt and Young Turkey, and get the backing of other African peoples who object to domination and wish for self-expression; is there not here the commencement of a mighty Movement? As to its success, that will entirely depend upon how far the followers of the Great Apostle will look back and search into the basic meaning of his Teaching. They believe, and rightly believe, that it was divinely inspired, and the further they go back to what he really thought and taught, and the less they are tramelled by the restrictions of very limited mediæval schoolmen, the greater the inspiration they will get from his Teaching, and the greater chance they will have in a world which, in future, is to be governed by spiritual rather than by grossly material considerations.

## CORRESPONDENCE

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#### THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK *VERSUS* THE CHURCH

The conflict between the unsophisticated common sense of the European peoples and the arrogance and bigotry of the Church propped up by mystical claims has been painfully long drawn. All material and intellectual advancement has to be made by them at a heavy price to the Church for their boldness in exercising their common sense in solving the various problems of physical existence. A stage was bound to come in this process of freedom from, and suspicion of, the Church when the religious narrow-mindedness and bigotry that have been imposed upon the popular mind by the Church would also be detected. This stage, we are pleased to find, has already been reached. We are, indeed, very much reassured in our hopes for the future of England, particularly by the fact that organs of public opinion in this country have started giving us an appreciative hearing and a fair publicity. An evidence of this was furnished by the "Woking News and Mail," a local weekly. It sent its own representative to the Rotary Club, Woking, on learning that the Imam was to speak there on Monday, the 20th July 1936, and published a very fair report of the Imam's speech. As was to be expected this brought a necessary reaction in Missionary Circles, who sent the Editor a challenging criticism.

The learned Editor of the paper, in order to be fair to both the parties, not only published the criticism, but also the reply from the Imam. We thank the Editor for this journalistic fairness and hope that his example will inspire the whole circle of British Journalism with the courage so necessary for the reorientation of the religious outlook in Great Britain.

We reproduce below the Imam's reply which was sent to the said paper—[Ed.]

To

THE EDITOR,

THE "WOKING NEWS AND MAIL."

SIR,

I read with great interest and amusement the criticism by the Rev. E. J. Long of my speech at the Woking Rotary Club, published in your issue of the 7th August.

I was amused because, at a time when it should be the aim of all real lovers of religion to stress the points of similarity and unity between the different religions in order to effectively fight our common enemies of materialism and atheism that are carrying everything before them everywhere in the world, our esteemed friend should not only emphasize the points of difference but even imagine and create some where there are none.

Neither I nor the respected Rotarian who proposed the vote of thanks for the speaker of that evening had any intention of asserting that there was no difference between the two religions as they are expounded at the present moment. All I intended to show was that with everything that affects our moral and spiritual welfare in this life both the religions are equally concerned, and that the aspirations of both are the same.

And this view of mine was so buttressed with solid facts and cogent reasonings that I could have spoken it with a challenge had I not known that such an attitude of speaking and writing is considered unseemly in all decent circles.

The Rev. Gentleman seems unaware of the fact that I have lived long enough in England to know that Christianity in the plain commonsense life of the British people is a thing quite

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different from the Christianity of that fanatical section of clergymen and missionaries whose sole pleasure lies in mystifying things for the sake of their vested interests, and in accentuating the differences in religious ideas in order to maintain their hold on the people.

Although I have never spoken, nor have a mind to speak, anything with a challenge for reasons already referred to, I feel it my duty to accept the one thrown by our esteemed friend, the Rev. Long.

Rev. Long suggests, though he has not the courage to assert it, that the North African Church has been wiped out by the Sword of Islam. The fact, however, is that in spite of centuries of Muslim rule in Egypt, the Coptic Christian Church exists there and Coptic Christians are more patriotic than even the Muslim Egyptians, and this would have been impossible had not these Christians always enjoyed a freedom and a decent status at the hands of their Muslim rulers all throughout the centuries. But why go to Africa? Take the case of Syria and Palestine. Christians living there are the descendants of those that lived at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. And mark their patriotism. Of the four persons who came to protest against the Jewish immigration in Palestine, three were Christians. From this it is obvious that the Christians there love their Muslim Palestinian compatriots because they have enjoyed a freedom and a consideration at the hands of their Muslim rulers which they do not hope to get at the hands of any outside Christian Government. Let me assert here that there is no instance in history of any people being converted to Islam at the point of the sword or any people being exterminated on their refusal to embrace Islam. But a similar assertion, I am afraid, cannot be made on behalf of Christianity. People know too well the facts of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons by Charlemagne and of the extermination of the Spanish Moors, although we are quite aware that this is neither the fault of Jesus nor of his religion.

I am glad, however, to notice the spirit of justice which prompts the Rev. Long to denounce the paganistic ways of modern European Christians. If our missionary friends and clergy had exhibited more of this spirit and preached less of fury and hatred towards the followers of other religions this world of ours would have been a veritable abode of Peace. To claim, however, that Christianity, as preached by the Church, has raised "womanhood to a position of unique dignity" is a balderdash which no sensible and educated man of the present time will take seriously. One knows too well the implication of the assertion:—

"Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression:—"  
—and its effect upon the Church's attitude towards womanhood in particular and sex in general up to the time of the Reformation.



## CORRESPONDENCE

What untold miseries had not womanhood to suffer during all those centuries. One has only to recall that it was only a 19th century law that gave the poor English woman an independent legal status, a status given to her by Muhammad 1200 years previous to that.

Equally bold is the statement that "the love laden atmosphere of the Christian home has no parallel in the Moslem world." Any impartial layman, who has lived long enough in a Muslim country, will say the reverse. There is, fortunately, nothing so far in the East like the busy divorce courts of the Western countries. As a Muslim, however, it would only please me if the Christian Society of the West had attained to that high pitch of moral elevation which the Rev. Gentleman claims for it, as I believe equally in the Missions of both Muhammad and Jesus.

Rev. Long further tries to create a misunderstanding on my statement that Islam differs from Christianity in its conception of after-life. What I meant is that in Islam we do not treat spirituality as a thing which will concern us only when we are dead. In other words, we must have a foretaste of the life in heaven in the midst of our worldly life—in the calm serenity of our mind, in the love and compassion which we should feel in our hearts for our fellow beings, in the all-absorbing passion for virtuous deeds, and in the absolute reliance on God. Otherwise religion ought to be preached in the cemeteries and not in living human quarters. Apart from this, there seems to be no difference between the Muslim and Christian conceptions of life after death. My friend's attempt to quote from the Qur-án to show that the Muslim Paradise is a place of sensual pleasures where men will be provided with beautiful damsels, only exposes his rank ignorance of that Holy Book that has been a life-guidance to a major religious community of the world, having a great historical past of moral, cultural and spiritual achievements. The word which he translates as "beauteous damsels" is, unfortunately, in the common gender, and only means *white-eyed*, or *pure ones*. As the look of a person is an indication of his or her inward character, this phrase signifies the pure and unsullied natures of the beings or entities that will serve as companions to the virtuous servants of God. By no stretch of interpretation can it be made to yield the exclusive meaning of a female or any suggestion of sensual pleasures. On the other hand there are many clear verses in the Qur-án to show that the pleasures of heaven are strictly spiritual. Let me quote just a few :

"They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, but only "Peace." (19 : 62.)

"And God invites to the abode of Peace." (10 : 25.)

"Their cry in it shall be : 'Glory to Thee, O God,' and their greeting in it shall be : 'Peace' and the last of their cry shall be : 'Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds.'" (10 : 9.)

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Not content, however, with the exhibition of this ignorance of the Qur-án, the Rev. Gentleman takes the very rash step of challenging me to show "a specific statement assuring to Muslim women in the hereafter a happiness which she certainly never finds in this world."

The fact is that the Qur-án is the only Code of Law that declares in unmistakable terms the intrinsic equality of the two sexes. Even in the most advanced of our Law Books, the word "he" includes "she." But the Qur-án takes particular care to refer to woman specifically, not only in framing its social laws, but also in promising spiritual blessings in the hereafter. There is a whole section dealing with the spiritual rewards of men and women. It reads: "Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who remember God much, and the women who remember God much—God has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward." (33 : 35.) God's preparing for the virtuous men and women forgiveness and a mighty reward is evidently with reference to the life in heaven. I wonder if my esteemed friend has any idea of the existence of this passage in the Qur-án, and whether as a conscientious man he will admit his ignorance after he has read this article.

The Rev. Gentleman would never have raised the question of polygamy if he had attended the meeting in which I made the speech. I had exhaustively described the conditions under which the Prophet and his companions had to take a number of wives. It was a martial measure, so to say, adopted to provide the widows and orphans of those slain in the vindication of their religious freedom. The Prophet and his Companions were not living in a twentieth-century England to be able to enjoy a plurality of marriages. For days they had to go without any food. Luxury and sensual pleasure had no room in their married life. Nothing but a strict sense of charity would drive any of them to have an additional wife. That these women were legally wedded to the persons who took care of them shows the moral foresightedness of the Prophet which at once places him at the head of all social Reformers. But for this courageous step the Arab people would have relapsed to that same condition of sexual laxity from which it was his mission to reclaim them. Not content with the raising of the question of polygamy, our learned friend, quite characteristic of his profession, attacks the personal character of the Prophet. Unfortunately, we Muslims are at a handicap in this matter. We cannot discuss in any critical spirit the life and character of the hero of Christianity, as he is our hero, too. But our learned friend can find enough in the Jewish

## CORRESPONDENCE

literature to make him realise that there has not been any religious personality in the world, not even the much-worshipped Christ, whose character has not been held up in a bad light by the creatures of darkness. But to reply to the specific charge made against the married life of the Prophet, I have to tell my friend that Lady Ayesha, the Prophet's wife, was not a child of ten, but a grown up woman of fifteen, as Eastern girls are at that age, when she was married to the Prophet. To talk of the disparity of age is to talk nonsense. Islamic marriage is nothing like the giving of girls away in Europe in Feudal times. The woman is as free a party in the Islamic marriage contract as the man, and no law, religious or civil, has, in my opinion, any right to interfere, where a man and a woman freely agree to enter into such a contract. The Prophet, when he was 25 years of age, married a widow of forty, living an ideal monogamous life for 25 years, till her death, and there was nothing wrong in it. Similarly, Ayesha, a woman of fifteen, offered her hand to the Prophet when he was 50 and there can be nothing wrong in it. She was the only virgin wife of the Prophet, and but for her a very important part of the Prophet's conduct would have been lost to the world. This lady was only 25 when the Prophet died, but so impressed was she with the spirituality of the Prophet that all the rest of her life, till the 80th year of her age when she died, her one passion was to preach the high moral qualities of the Prophet together with the sublime teaching of the Qur-án.

It does not in the least disturb me to be told that in the Muslim Society "it is a common-place missionary experience that disparity of age is overlooked to-day, that divorce is easy, and that there is nothing to prevent a man from divorcing his first wife, and then a series of successors"—as missionary experiences, as is well known, are concerned chiefly with things of this kind. These things no doubt always take place away from the knowledge of sensible normal laymen in Muslim countries in the same way as they do here. Unfortunately I, who, by the grace of God, have lived in most of the provinces of India and have freely come in contact with the affairs of the Muslims of all classes, have not come across one case of divorce amongst those whom I knew. I must, therefore, thank my Reverend friend for his giving me a piece of information about my own community which I have been ignorant up to this moment.

In conclusion, I must assure our friend, the Rev. Mr. Long, that in spite of his efforts to the contrary and those of his associates and comrades, the followers of Jesus and Muhammad have already begun to realize the great affinity that subsists between the two religions. They not only recognize their common origin and tradition, but also their common aspirations and common conception of life. Rotarian S. R. Bawtree was certainly right when he said that the two religions are running on parallel lines. What else can they do? Founders of both of

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

them came from the same God and had the same mission and message for humanity. Their divergence at the present moment is more to the interference and exploitation of organized priestcraft than to anything else. The moment, therefore, this priestcraft is removed they meet again in their eternal aspirations and efforts for the redemption of humanity.

Your faithfully,  
AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD,  
*Imam.*

---

KENT.

SIR,

I am a signalman of the Royal Navy, with eighteen years' service, most of which has been spent in the East, and for several years I have been an earnest student of the religions of my fellowmen. The result of my enquiries is an earnest desire to learn more about the Moslem Faith.

As far back as the year 1920, I read a translation of Al-Qur-án, as translated by a Church of England cleric, but it seemed to be very unfairly translated and, now that I am older, I think that to get at the truth one should read a translation by a true believer.

From personal observations, Moslems are the most honest folk in the world regarding their Faith and, from what little I have been able to learn of the facts of the Moslem Faith, it seems to me to be free from the falsity and flummery that are such integral parts of most faiths, and I have, for some years, felt that I should learn more, if I possibly could, about the Moslem Faith.

I was brought up in the Christian Faith, but have been unable to convince myself of the truth of all that Christians are taught, and the attitude towards their faith of the majority of Christians has turned me still further away.

I have lived ashore in Constantinople and Egypt, and what I learned of the Moslem Faith, together with what I saw of the Moslems themselves, and what I have been reading of the Moslem Faith has led me to believe that I, too, may be able to find my own faith in Islam.

It is not easy to compose a sensible coherent letter, Sir, about this matter, for I am so afraid that I may cause you to form an erroneous opinion regarding myself, which I do not wish to do, for it is only after much consideration that I have decided to ask you for advice and help in this matter.

I am married and have two children, and my wife and I have discussed our beliefs, and are both of the same opinion, and we feel that I am doing the right thing in writing to you.

It is simply an inward unrest that compels me to turn to you for assistance in this spiritual matter.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Hoping you will understand my plea, and thanking you in anticipation for anything you do for me, I will close, remaining,

Yours sincerely,  
F. W. B.

MANSTON, NEAR RAMSGATE,  
KENT.

THE MANAGER,  
THE ISLAMIC REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,

For some time now I have been reading your journal, the "Islamic Review." I must say that I am greatly impressed by its clear and understandable articles.

I spent 5 years in Palestine and made a short study of the Arab and his religion of Islam. I have the translation of the Koran, and read it regularly.

As I intend to further my studies in this way, I shall be glad if you could help me. Instructions upon religious questions I would appreciate.

I hope in the near future to understand Islam thoroughly and become a convert.

Wishing you every success in your mission.

I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
W. B.  
*Captain, R. A. F.*

---

KOTE,  
CEYLON.

DEAR IMAM,

Would you be kind enough to send me some literature dealing with Islam?

I have noticed that you are willing to send such to those who ask.

Thanking you in anticipation of an early reply.

Yours sincerely,  
V. F. GUNASEKERA.

*Dated 2nd September 1936.*

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

ST. JOHN'S WOOD, N. W. 8.

*13th September 1936.*

MADAME KHALIDA BUCHANAN-HAMILTON,  
PRESIDENT, MUSLIM SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

DEAR MADAME,

I am a Scotswoman and I want to know more about Islam. I understand you are the British Woman Leader. Would you care to write to me ?

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
(Mrs.) E. M. L.

---

MILWAUKEE,  
WISCONSIN, U. S. A.

DEAR SIR,

I would be highly pleased if the information concerning Islam, which is so generously offered by the Moslem Mission and Literary Trust, Woking, be sent to me.

Sincerely yours,  
F. S.

*Dated 1st September 1936.*

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THE IMAM,  
THE MOSQUE,  
WOKING,  
LONDON (ENGLAND).

HONOURABLE SIR.

The University of Minnesota Library is desirous of securing all available material which you may have for free distribution on the Islamic movement.

Mr. Kenneth Collings, sometime of Addis Ababa, suggested to our chief librarian, Mr. Frank K. Walter, the possibility of our securing material relating to the Islamic Movement if we applied directly to you.

We feel certain that any material that you may find it possible to send to us will be of intense interest to certain of our professorial staff and students.

Very truly yours,  
THOMAS P. FLEMING,  
*Head of Order Department.*

## 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

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

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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3. It being the only Headquarters of all Muslims in Great Britain, letters may be addressed c/o the Mosque. Such letters will be kept safe for the addressees, or forwarded to them, as desired.

4. On your arrival in London, you will be met by a representative of the Mosque, and rendered all possible assistance, provided we are informed beforehand of the time of your arrival.

5. Arrangements for lodging, etc., can also be made by us provided it is notified in good time.

6. The Imam Sahib is available to all on Friday afternoons at the London Muslim Prayer House, and on Sundays at Woking.

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