

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

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

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CONTENTS

Speakers at the Meeting of the Inter-Religious Fellowship at the American Women's Club, London	<i>Frontispiece</i>
A Declaration	PAGE 321
Religion and World Brotherhood	322
Conception of God and Aspiration for World Brotherhood : by Maulvi Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad	325
The League of Nations : by The Hon'ble Sheikh Mushir Hussain Kidwai, Barrister-at-Law, of Gadia	332
Religion and Social Equality : by Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, C.B.E., M A., LL.M. (Cantab.)	342
Heroic Deeds of Muslim Women : by Syed Sulaiman Nadvi	348
Correspondence	356
What is Islam ?	359

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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A DECLARATION

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

La Ilaha Il-Allah Muhammad-ur-Rasul Allah.

(There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger).

(Sd.) M. FISHER.

RELIGION AND WORLD BROTHERHOOD

On June 9 a well-attended public meeting was organised by the Inter-Religious Fellowship at the American Women's Club, London. Sir Evelyn Wrench was in the chair.

A distinguished and widely representative audience, of different religions, nations and creeds, listened to five short addresses answering the two questions which formed the theme of the meeting :

What is your conception of the Supreme Being ?

How does your religion help to promote World Brotherhood ?

The representative speakers were : Dr. Hari Parshad Shastri (Hindu), Rabbi Dr. Moses Gaster (Jew), Dr. B. E. Fernando (Buddhist), Dr. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's (Christian), Maulvi Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad, Imam of the Woking Mosque (Muslim).

The meeting began with a " silence," the Rev. Leslie J. Belton inviting each member of the audience to pray in his own way. The chairman, in his opening speech, said that unity is the keynote of our age and World Brotherhood the greatest need of our time. He added that we have never yet made full use of those spiritual forces which are to be found in every tongue and in every clime.

The first speaker was Dr. E. B. Fernando (Buddhist), who very briefly replied to the first issue, that there is no God, and the idea does not play any part in their religion, but *Karma* is the only law which governs both men, women and the higher creatures. Referring to the second question, he read the following saying of Buddha : " All men the world over are brothers, sharers of a common destiny, seekers after a common goal, however differently they may name it."

RELIGION AND WORLD BROTHERHOOD

The second speaker, Dr. W. R. Matthews, proclaimed that Christianity is a propagandist religion and, as it is a part of the essential belief of Christianity that all things are to be summed up in Christ, so if there is ever to be a gathering together in fellowship of the human race, it must be in the unity of the fellowship of Christ. Referring to the primitive Christian Church, the speaker declared that its belief was that all other religions but Christianity were the inventions of devils. However, there is in the earliest teaching of Christianity an element which leads one to admit that in all religions there is, or may be, some revelation of God.

Referring to God, the learned Doctor remarked that the New Testament does not argue whether God can be Love or not. The writers of the New Testament found that God *was* Love, because they believed that He had sent his Son into the world.

While discussing the Christian point of view concerning the Brotherhood of the Human Race, he said: "All humanity, every human being, is from the Christian standpoint a son of God. But I think it is also a part of the Christian faith that every human being is not equally a son of God."

The last of the speakers was Maulvi Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad, who started his speech with the following preface: "Lest you should think I am fathering upon my religion the ideas I have imbibed from current liberal thought, I propose to quote from the Holy Qur-án, the Muslim sacred scripture, in support of every statement I make."

The Imam quoted some ten verses from the Holy Qur-án showing the Islamic point of view of Godhead. Passing on to the second question, namely, Islam's contribution to World Brotherhood, the Imam referred to the Sura Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Holy Qur-án, in which God is referred to as "Rabbul-Alamin," that is, the

ISLAMIC REVIEW -

Creator, Sustainer and Evolver of the destinies of the numberless units of human life. The speaker quoted further verses and showed that the diversity of colour, language and creed has been effectively manipulated in Islamic teachings to make for world brotherhood. All the religions and their sacred personalities are believed to have come from the Supreme Being, and consequently are equally respected by Muslims.

At the close of the Imam's lecture the meeting was summed up by the Chairman. In reviewing the speeches, Sir Evelyn said: "The first time I ever realised that the world was not just the kind of organisation that I had been taught to believe was when crossing the Black Sea from Russia to Turkey. I think that was the first time I ever saw members of the religion of our last speaker, Muslims, falling down at stated intervals during the day and saying their prayers. I always thought that prayers were something you said rather hurriedly, if at all, in the morning before you got up or when you went to bed, and it certainly came as a revelation to me that there was one great section of people that did set aside five times a day, certain hours, and wherever they were, in crowded mart or lonely desert, they did turn their faces in a certain direction and think of the Unseen. That was a very great personal experience to me."

At the close of the meeting Sir Abdul Qadir supported a vote of thanks to the speakers, which had been moved by the Rev. L. J. Belton, of the Unitarian Movement, and later, about a hundred of the guests from the audience were entertained to tea.

CONCEPTION OF GOD AND WORLD BROTHERHOOD

CONCEPTION OF GOD AND ASPIRATION FOR WORLD BROTHERHOOD

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

Lest you should think I am assigning to my religion the ideas I may have imbibed from current liberal thought, I propose to quote from the Qur-án, my Scripture, in support of every statement I make. It may be a little boring to you, but it will save you from a great misunderstanding. Such quotations are all the more necessary with regard to the first question; as a book that comes from God must first of all give a satisfactory account of God Himself. The Qur-án has a great deal to say on this question, but keeping in view the shortness of time at my disposal, I can give you only a few extracts from it. It says: "Say, He, God, is One. God is He on Whom *all* depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like Him." (Ch. 112). Again: "God is He besides Whom there is no god. The Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist. Slumber does not overtake Him, nor sleep; whatever is in the Heavens and whatever is in the Earth is His. Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge extends over the Heavens, and the Earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great." (2: 225). Still again: "He is God besides Whom there is no god: the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is God besides Whom there is no god; the King, the Holy, the Author of Peace, the Grantor of Security, Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every Greatness; Glory be to God from what they set up (with Him). He is

ISLAMIC REVIEW

God, the Creator, the Fashioner, His are the most excellent names: whatever is in the Heavens and the Earth declares His Glory, and He is the Mighty, the Wise." (59: 22—24). With regard to His relation with the Creation, it is written—"And whithersoever ye turn, there is God's purpose." Again: "We are nearer to him (man) than his life vein (50: 16). Still again: "And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way." The predominant attributes of God in relation to man as given in the Qur-án relate to His Mercy. It is written—"And My Mercy encompasses all things." (7: 156). This Mercy works in two ways—one is original and immediate, and is termed "Rahmaniyyat," *i.e.*, it comes before we are conscious of it—like our creation with all the faculties of body, mind and spirit and all the external things we need for our physical, mental and spiritual sustenance and growth. The other is called "Rahimiyyat," *i.e.*, the Mercy that comes to man after earnest endeavour on his part. The whole system of Cause and Effect which a man moves and controls in the course of his struggle is thus only a channel of this Mercy of God to us.

Passing on to the second question, Islam's contribution to World Brotherhood is embodied in the very conception of God. He is termed "Rabbul Alamin" in the Fatiha, the Muslim Lord's Prayer. And "Rabbul Alamin" means Creator, Sustainer and Evolver of the Destiny of all the numberless units of human life. According to this conception no single individual or group has any exclusive rights to the fulfilment of human destiny. The effort must come from each and every unit, as every one is equally indispensable in the scheme of Creation.

CONCEPTION OF GOD AND WORLD BROTHERHOOD

We are further told in the Qur-án that the different social units are only for the sake of identification, and that none of these have any intrinsic superiority over others. The actual words are: "O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the most honourable among you with God is the one among you most careful (of his duty): surely God is Knowing, Aware." (49 : 13).

It is further inculcated by the same Book that the diversity of colours and languages is a holy sign of God, inasmuch as the effort we are to put forth in appreciating the beauty of diversity opens up ways to the realisation of that One Divine Purpose which permeates the whole of the Universe. The actual words of the Qur-án are the following :

"And one of His signs is the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours: most surely there are signs in this for the learned." (30 : 22.)

As a matter of fact the Qur-án cuts at the root of all invidious distinctions based on accidental things by declaring that the only ground of honourableness is dutifulness and service.

Some of the effective methods of bringing about friendship between the warring groups of humanity being inter-dining and inter-marriage, the Qur-án has encouraged these. It says—"This day (all) the good things are allowed you, and the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them; and the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the Book before you (are lawful for you) when you have given them their dowries, taking them in marriage." (5 : 5.)

ISLAMIC REVIEW

It is necessary to make it clear here that the followers of the Book include all those communities who believe in a revealed religion, and a woman from *any* of these communities can be taken into marriage by a Muslim without requiring her to give up her religion. Such a woman is given a definite legal status in Islam.

We are also told as a statement of historical truth that the days of prosperity and adversity are given to every nation by turn. According to this theory those who are backward and downtrodden to-day must have had their glorious days in the past and may have them again in the future, whereas those who are prosperous and advanced to-day are sure to come down in course of time. This should act as a warning against all arrogance on the basis of present prosperity in a nation. The Qur-ánic words are—"And We bring these days to men by turns."

Coming to the question of differences arising out of religious beliefs and practices, the Qur-án takes various measures to minimise them, among them being the following:

- (1) It invites all other religions to join hands with Muslims in forming a common platform. The basis of this Unity of religions is suggested as the Unity of Godhead, the highest common factor of all religious beliefs. One may believe in one god, two gods, three gods or innumerable gods, but no one can have any objection to believing in and glorifying the One Supreme God, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. The actual words of the Book are as follows :
" Say : O followers of the Book ! Come to an equitable proposition between us and you, that we shall not serve any but the Supreme God, that we shall not associate aught with Him, and that some of us shall not take other lords besides God." (3 : 63.)

CONCEPTION OF GOD AND WORLD BROTHERHOOD

2. It wants us to believe in the Divine origin of all religions. In this case the Qur-án adopts the method of the lowest common multiple to form the basis of Unity. It wants us to pay homage to the founders of all religions without any distinction. The actual wording is: "Say, We believe in God and in that which has been revealed to us, and in that which has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which has been given to Moses and Jesus and in that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord: We do not make any distinction between any of them, and Him are We resigned." (2:136.)

It makes actual Faith and Good Action the basis of Salvation to the exclusion of creeds and dogmas. It says: "Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews and the Christians and the Sabeans, whoever believes in God and the Last Day and do good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, neither shall they grieve." (3:136.)

This announcement certainly leaves no room for arrogance based on religious dogmatism.

4. It emphasizes the fact that the form of religion is nothing compared to its spirit, and that the former is only a means to the cultivation of the latter. The Book says: "It is no righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is that you should believe in God, and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets and give away wealth out of love

ISLAMIC REVIEW

for Him to the near-of-kin and the orphan and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars, and for the emancipation of the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and the performers of a promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict, these are they who are true to themselves and these are they who guard against evil." (2: 177.) Such an attitude towards religion certainly minimises the spirit of Separatism growing out of Ritualism.

It recognizes the necessity of religious discussion, and requires the Believers to adopt the most peaceful method and make a loving approach in such discussions.

On the question of the Godhead we are asked to say :
" Do you dispute with us concerning God, and He is our Lord and your Lord?"

With regard to general religious discussion, the instructions are as follows: " Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner." (16: 125.)

6. It takes into consideration the fact that the denunciation of anything held in reverence by a religious community is the fruitful source of inter-religious ill-feeling. It forbids the Believers, therefore, to use strong language with regard to any such object, however repugnant it may be to their religious sense. " And do not abuse those whom they call besides God, lest, exceeding the limits, they should abuse God out of ignorance." (6 : 109.)

If the restraint enjoined here is observed by all religious communities, perhaps we shall see in the not

CONCEPTION OF GOD AND WORLD BROTHERHOOD

distant future the end of all violence arising out of religious emotion.

7. Lastly, it asks the Believers to recognize the sanctity of all places of worship and gives them the same status as their own mosque.

The verse that is relevant to it reads as follows: "Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made, because they are oppressed, and most surely God is able to assist them. Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is God. And had there not been God's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which God's name is much remembered and surely God will help him who helps His cause: most Surely God is Strong, Mighty." (22 : 38.)

Apart from all these principles and instructions and exhortations, Islam has certain standing institutions which give a material shape to these aspirations for world-brotherhood. These are the institutions of Congregational Prayers, of Fasting, of Poor-rates, and of the yearly Pilgrimage to Mecca. All these institutions are pregnant with enormous forces for world-fellowship and need an exhaustive discussion for which this is not the occasion.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BY THE HONOURABLE SHEIKH MUSHIR HUSSAIN KIDWAI,
BARRISTER-AT-LAW, OF GADIA

Those who are shedding helplessly crocodile tears to-day over the pathetic failure of the League of Nations in its chief object, would do well to study very deeply the article we give below from our issue of December 1918—*i. e.*, about eighteen years ago, when the League of Nations was only in its embryo. In that article they will find not only a remarkable prophecy of the League's eventual failure, given with marvellous foresight into the mentality of the European Nations, obtained by very long personal experience in Europe, but also very wise directions taken from the life of the greatest and the *ever-living* Teacher, Reformer and Prophet and from the old but uncorrupted "*Book of Wisdom*," the Final Testament, which may guide those who sincerely wish to reform and remodel the League of Nations so as to avoid the past mistakes and to base the League now on firm foundations. The Eastern Nations should read the article with greater care if they do not want to be duped again into destruction as one of them has been very recently.

We warn Turkey, more particularly, that the fortification of the Straits of Dardanelles, nor reliance upon the League or any European Power or Powers can save her. She should take the lead of all the Muslim States, which should be well-equipped with all modern weapons and allied together by offensive and defensive treaties, and must be strengthened by that pan-Islamic spirit which is invincible and all-conquering when it is in its best form.

No narrow Nationalism will be able to serve the purpose and to unite these States into a solid body able to oppose a European combination. Yemen, Smyrna and even Tunis are the obvious danger points at present but earth-grabbers will attack wherever they find weakness.—ED. I. R.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The idea of a League of Nations seems to be spreading in Europe. It is considered to be an idea of great beneficence for humanity because it is expected to stop wars. Man fighting his brother-man like animal is not a cheerful sight. Materialism and scientific inventions have added to the horrors of war, so it has come to the mind of several people to find out means to stop war. But wars cannot be stopped unless some other means is offered which would settle quarrels between nation and nation. During the long long history of man there has never been a time when wars have been stopped. As man has been given the passion of love, so also that of hate ; as man has been given the virtue of self-sacrifice, so also the weakness of selfishness. The idea of stopping war absolutely is nothing short of Utopian. It is but a dream—a very happy dream indeed, but unfortunately one which can never be realized as long as man is man. This does not mean that the idea of a League of Nations is a vain one. It is a very good idea, a very beneficent idea. If it discourages wars and aggressions so as to stop even one war it will be worth being given effect to. An absolute stoppage of the wars is impossible, but it is quite practicable to decrease the number of wars.

Many individual physical fights have given place to arbitration by courts. Among civilized people it is very rarely now that one man comes to blows with another. To reach that stage internationally is very difficult, yet there is no harm in trying. Let us consult the greatest benefactor of humanity in the matter. Let us see what was the attitude of the greatest man known to humanity on the subject. Let us go to Muhammad, the final and most universal inspired Teacher of mankind. For him there was no question of nations. For him there could be no question of more than one nation. He was too great a man to think of humanity being divided up

ISLAMIC REVIEW

into parts. For him there was no frontier between country and country. For him there was no distinction between race and race. He was far and far above all colour and class prejudices. His ambition was to see the whole of humanity as ONE nation. He preached that there was one and only God above and that all the human beings formed one brotherhood. The distinctions of race, country, colour, etc., were only superficial. They must not be encouraged. Every man should consider himself as a citizen of the world. His patriotism should not be limited. Every man can change his domicile. An Englishman can become a Chinaman. But no man can cease to be a man. God made us men before we made ourselves citizens of this country or that country. On this planet this universalism was first taught by the Prophet Muhammad over thirteen centuries ago in a country where the people were divided in innumerable clans, where each clan had its own traditions and scruples of honour, and where generally one clan was in a state of perpetual and hereditary war against the other. Arabia at the time of Muhammad represented in a miniature form the present-day national differences of the world. Each clan had its own characteristics then, as each nation has its own characteristics to-day. If one clan was conceited, the other was ruthless. If one loved money, the other debauchery, and so forth. Each of them made every effort to keep its demarcation intact. Each one looked down on the other with a sort of contempt. It was not less difficult to bring all these divergent people under one League of Nations than that of bringing all the different nations under one League to-day. It would have been a grand and noble work if Muhammad had devoted all his life to achieve that object alone. But Muhammad was a superman. His ideals were highest and noblest. To his mind the idea of binding different clans under one League was not elevated enough. He aimed

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

at obliterating the very boundaries that separated one clan from the other. It was an impossible feat, yet Muhammad performed the miracle. What he did in Arabia he aimed to do the same for the whole world. Muhammad's own personality was miraculous. There have been many people who had very high ideals. The world has known many philosophers, many dreamers. Jesus Christ had most charming dreams of the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet the higher, the more exalted a dream is, the more difficult it is to realize it. The dreams of Jesus proved far too high for him. On the other hand, the miracle of Muhammad's personality consisted in the fact that while he entertained the highest, the grandest ideals which ever any human being cherished, he at the same time actualized them, or at least brought them within the range of practicability. Thus the moment Muhammad entertained the highest and noblest conception of removing all those differences and distinctions which divided man from man, he took steps to make his idea an established fact, and he performed the most wonderful miracle by producing a model. He did more than produce a model. He made it comparatively easy for others to enlarge and multiply that model. He showed them the way to produce it. He laid down exact rules and regulations how to produce it. It was the first time under the sun that Muhammad produced a nation which was not divided by any sort of distinctions—of race, colour, country, class, language, creed. The same Arabs, who were divided in hundreds of clans—who were so proud of heredity that they not only kept the chronological trees of each clan from its first founder, from Adam himself, but also that of their horses; to whom every non-Arab was an Ajami, an inferior person altogether—were changed by the miracle of Muhammad into one worldwide brotherhood comprising men and women of every class, race, country, colour—all of them became one

nation, bowing to one God, regulating their life by one Law, following one Prophet, studying their religion in one language, imbued with one object. As far as Musalmans were concerned there was no question of using the word "nation" in the plural at all. Only one nation existed all over the world, with common rights and privileges, without any kind of distinction or difference. A Chinese, a Persian, an Indian, an Egyptian, a Spaniard, a Turk, a Kurd was as much a member of that nation as an Arab himself. The kingdom of Islam was as much the heritage of a Persian as of an Arabian. Patriotism of each was not confined to the boundaries of his own country, but it was world-wide. Wherever a Muslim lived, he reckoned that as much his own country as that of any other of his brethren living thousands of miles away. It was the aspiration of Muhammad to universalize all humanity as he universalized one portion of it. With these aspirations he could not come down to think of a League of Nations. Yet the principle upon which a League of Nations should be founded was not far from Muhammad's God-inspired mind.

It is in the Chapter xlix, verses 9 and 10 of the Holy Qur-án that we find these words :—

Va in táifatáne minalmominina qatalu fa aslihi bainahumá fa in baghat ehdahuma alal ukhra faqatibullati tabghi hatta tafiya ilu amrillahi fa in faatu fa aslahu bainahumá biladle va aqsitu. In Allaha yuhibil muqsitin.

Innamal muminuna ikhvatun fa aslelu baina akhavaikum vattaqullaha laallakum turhamun.

"And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them ; but if one acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it return to Allah's command ; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably ; surely Allah loves those who act equitably.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

“Verily the believers are brothers of one another, therefore make peace between your brothers and be careful of your duty to Allah, so that mercy be shown to you.”

The above verses give the idea of Muhammad as regards a universal league to settle quarrels between one party of men with another. The ambitions or aspirations of those people who aim at founding a League of Nations to-day are comparatively low, but even these cannot succeed unless the principles expressed in the above verses are adopted. The first principle should be that all the nations, whether strong or weak, small or large, should receive the same treatment as two Muslims receive at the hands of a Muslim judge. An American idea has been expressed that all the strong Powers should have two representatives each in the League, but all the small Powers only one each. If such a League of Nations is formed it will be a triumph of militarism. It will add to the power of the strong. It will increase the weakness of the weak. It is not a sound idea. Some people have begun to limit the membership of the League to “free” nations only. This notion is also wrong. If carried into effect it will perpetuate the subjection of those nations who have already succumbed to the militarism of strong Powers and have lost their “freedom.” Freedom is the birthright of every man, of every nation. Those nations who have lost their freedom deserve greater sympathy, *not* less. It is they who have to be protected from oppression, from exploitation, from aggrandizement. It is they who should be given a greater voice in the League to have those wrongs which were done to them redressed. In short, all the people of the earth should receive equal treatment. By the League of Nations humanity should be treated as a whole.

Then the chief object of the League should be to keep the equilibrium—the peace. Every effort should be made

to keep the peace between the people and people without taking recourse to fighting, but if the wrongdoer and oppressor or aggressor would persist in his wrong, then the League should help the oppressed and fight against the culprit. This fight should not be actuated by any but humanitarian and selfless motives, and the moment the wrongdoer returned to Allah's command, *i.e.*, to his rightful course, he should be given peace. The settlement should not be effected with any spirit of revenge or malice, but with justice and equity. The arbitrating States should not look to their own interests. They should not take the opportunity of taking advantage of one State being brought to its knees to advance their own individual interests. It very often happens that States interfere with the best of motives in a quarrel, but at the end fail to withstand the temptation of advancing their own interests at the expense of the vanquished. The above verses of the Holy Writ forbid this. The settlement should always be with justice and equity. The League of Nations should not behave as a monkey did, who was asked to settle the quarrel of two cats over two unequal pieces of cheese. On the pretence of equalizing the shares, he cut off a portion from one and put it in his own mouth and then from the other, with the result that he finished *all* the cheese himself, and thus left nothing for the cats to quarrel about.

The Qur-án warns the people that Allah loves equity. The settlement should be effected with this idea before the mind, that God, Who keeps watch, does not love inequity. Men as well as nations may deceive others. They may deceive themselves. But they cannot deceive God. He will judge all by their inmost motives. The League of Nations should realize fully its responsibility to God. It should in no case misuse its own powers. If the League of Nations did misuse its powers, it will be

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

worse than if a single State or even a small group of States abused its powers.

The last verse gives in a few words what should be the basic and real object of the arbitration. It says that peace should be established between two brothers. There should be nothing but mutual affection between two brothers. It lays down the general principle that all Muslims of whatever country, race, colour, class they may be, are brothers to one another, and that two brothers must always be in peace. If they cannot manage to keep peace between themselves, it is the duty of other brothers to intervene and to secure peace between the two quarrelling ones. They should treat both the belligerents as brothers. They should judge both with absolute impartiality and should take sides with him, and him only, who is in the right, and with one single object of inducing the wrongdoer to return to the right course.

The verses of the Qur-án elevate the standard of the Court of Arbitration of the League of Nations to its highest point. The question comes to every mind whether it is possible to-day to form a League of Nations of that high standard or not. Without that high standard the League of Nations will be an instrument of greater mischief than of good. It is doubtful indeed that those nations who have deep-seated in them the prejudices of colour, creed, class, race, etc., can possibly reach the standard laid down by Muhammad under the inspiration of God; so it is doubtful indeed whether for all non-European races and nations a League of Nations will not prove a greater curse by perpetuating the domination of Europe over them and by perpetuating the ruthless exploitation by the natives of Europe of their countries. The idea of the League of Nations cannot be welcomed by oppressed nations until a resettlement of the whole world is arranged according to equity and justice with every people as masters of their own country and destiny.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

In this connection we must not forget that even Muhammad—a superman though he was, an inspired Messenger from God Himself though he was—could not succeed in spite of all his unequalled miraculous powers to *permanently* alter human nature.

For the time being he, no doubt, changed the very nature of all those persons who came under his influence. The demoralized, disunited, spiteful, deceitful, blood-thirsty, unscrupulous Arabs were changed by his miraculous powers into the best type of men and women. But alas ! that revolution proved not everlasting. The Arabs themselves reverted to their old characteristics. The Muslim people quarrelled between themselves. The League of Musalmans vanished. Musalman States failed to help each other, until to-day we see what we see and shudder to think of what may still be in store for Musalmans.

It is impossible to expect success of any other where Muhammad failed. It is impossible to expect a permanent change of the nature of man, so it is vain to expect that there will be wars no more. The League of Nations might succeed for the time being in stopping wars between the European nations. It might succeed in prolonging the domination of Europe over Asiatic and African people. But it can never be a permanent success, and considering the state of mind of those who want to establish it, would to Heaven that it may not come into existence at all, as it is sure to do harm to the larger portion of humanity which the projectors intend to keep out of it by one excuse or another. Those nations to whom an injustice is done by the League or whose existing grievances remain unredressed will have every right to set the League at naught whenever opportunity arose.

Unless the League of Nations is established on the principles laid down by Muhammad under God's own

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

inspiration in the above-quoted verses of the Holy Qur-án, it will be an instrument more of harm than of good to humanity at large. If the world is keen on a League of Nations of universal beneficence it must bow itself before Muhammad first. It must get rid of all those prejudices which divide nation from nation and people from people, even if it cannot remove, as Muhammad did, those differences which divide man from man. Those nations who are keen on a League of Nations should revert to Muhammad's model. If they follow the rules and regulations laid down for that model they will find that, though difficult, it is not impossible to reproduce one like it. All the reformers must go to the Great Teacher who lived over thirteen centuries ago in the deserts of Arabia, and who still lives as a citizen of the whole world, ready to teach all who care to be taught. In the green sepulchre of Medina rests the ever-living man—the Universal Teacher. We need not rouse him up from his happy slumber. The Book through which he worked unprecedented miracles, through which he gave lessons on all possible subjects of beneficence to humanity, is available to us all. Muhammad lives through that Book. Muhammad teaches through that Book. We should go to that Book for the guidance on all those matters which make human life successful, prosperous, happy—and blessed in this world and in the world to come.

RELIGION AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

BY ALLAMA ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI, C.B.E., M.A., LL.M.
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Religion is not only concerned with Philosophy or belief but also with all the different spheres of life, individual and social.

In this respect Islam has the great advantage, among the great world religions, of having its teacher and founder as a great historical personality whose every action in life was well known to all people, whether they believed in his mission or not.

In the early days of the Prophet's ministry, the humble and the lowly, the slaves and the dependants, the women, the orphans and those who were kept down in society, gathered round his lovable personality. Born of the bluest blood in Arabia, he was poor and he loved the poor. The proud Quraish leaders made this a matter of reproach against the Holy Prophet. They started persecuting him and those who followed him. They could see nothing against his character, because he was known to be truthful and universally acknowledged to be kind and considerate to all men. The only thing they could say was that he was a visionary. They tried to alienate from him those who had faith in him, by pointing out how poor and helpless he was from a worldly point of view. They persecuted him and put him into all sorts of difficulties.

They knew that he was prepared for personal sacrifices of all kinds. So they started persecuting those who believed in him. They thought, that as they were the humble and the lowly, the poor and the unprivileged, they could easily detach them from his Message by making their lot still more uncomfortable. They tortured the slaves. They restricted the liberty of the women.

RELIGION AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

They stopped such doles as the poor used to receive. But all this made the early Muslims stronger in their faith, because they saw that the man whom they followed was a just and righteous man, and was prepared to suffer himself all those injuries, and more than those injuries, which were inflicted on his followers.

He suffered more than his followers suffered, because he took their sufferings on himself in addition to the pain which he suffered. He continued to face all dangers in the city of Mecca, but he encouraged some of his little band of devoted followers to go to foreign countries with his blessings and remain there until the danger in Arabia was past. A certain number of them went to Abyssinia, which was a Christian country. They carried with them their faith and their attachment to their leader. When they went up before the King of Abyssinia they spoke enthusiastically about the simplicity, the justice, and the kindness and generosity of the new Message which he had brought. The King of Abyssinia, although he was a Christian, and although the enemies of Islam sought to poison his mind, listened to the story of these emigrants and was much impressed. He gave them an asylum. That is one historical reason why, after the lapse of more than thirteen centuries and a half, Muslim feeling is still entirely with Abyssinia in the unequal war which it is waging against a strong and well-armed power, which seeks to enslave it in all its pride of race and military equipment.

While these humble followers were thus sent off for a time out of harm's way, the noble Prophet stood his ground firmly and doggedly, taking upon himself and his immediate circle, who refused to leave him, the brunt of the persecution. He continued to deliver the Message which he had received from God, without fear and without favour. The Quraish chiefs were even willing to give

him power and worldly advantages if he would cease to speak against their gods of selfishness, injustice, and oppression, but he refused. Some of them came secretly to him and said that they would be willing to admit him into their privileged ranks if he would throw off the mass of poor people and slaves who had gathered round his personality. He indignantly refused to do so. He continued to preach, and to look after the poor and the unprivileged, and they gave him unquestioned fidelity. Indeed, their faith began to increase from day to day when they saw his firmness, his kindness, and his absolute adherence to their cause.

Once, when the forces of hatred were gathering strong against him, he left the city of Mecca to go to the little city of Taif, about three days' journey from Mecca. Taif is a beautiful little oasis and is well watered. It produces grapes, pomegranates, dates, figs, and all the delicious fruits that it is possible to grow in Arabia. Being on high ground its climate is comparatively cool and healthy. Many of the leaders of Mecca had estates or orchards there, and maintained numerous bodies of slaves to work for them. He carried his Message to this place, in order to show them that God's Message was for all His creatures, and that, before God, rich and poor, noble and lowly, slave and free, all have their rights. He was assaulted by the arrogant aristocrats, and beaten and tortured. The slaves who followed him were also beaten and tortured. He did all he could to look after them, and to help them, and he drew on himself still further the indignation of the rich sybarites of Taif. They sought to kill him and left him nearly dead. But in all his sufferings his one thought was to serve God and to serve his fellow-men, to whatever rank or degree they belonged. He prayed to God to forgive the ignorant and the arrogant, and to improve the lot of those who were suffering and in distress.

RELIGION AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

In that time of stress and difficulty, not one of his followers ever retracted his faith. They knew that his personality was absolutely true and self-sacrificing, and they gave him the same self-forgetful love which he showered upon those around them. Their devotion to him was not like the devotion of ordinary men to their leaders. It stood the test of every temptation and trial. It formed the nucleus of that cement which made the new Muslim society an unconquerable force in Arabia and in the world.

A few years passed, and things became more and more impossible for him in his native city of Mecca. He sent off the weaker and more helpless of his followers to the city of Medina. People had come to him from Medina to tell him that they believed in him and in his mission, and to offer him an asylum from the persecutions of the ruthless clique that held sway in Mecca. He remained to the last in Mecca along with those most closely connected with his mission, such as Hadhrat Ali and Hadhrat Abu Bakr. But, having sent off the majority of his followers safely to Medina, he performed his famous journey in company with a single companion, namely, Abu Bakr. That fateful journey became the starting point of a new era in history, called the Hijri Era.

When he arrived in Medina, the chief inhabitants of the city welcomed him with enthusiasm. But his advent was most welcome for two classes of people. Those who had been oppressed by mutual feuds, welcomed him as a deliverer. Those who had been poor and neglected, found in him a man who looked into their affairs and gave them the self-respect which comes from being associated with great leaders. For each of his Meccan followers he established a bond with a similar Helper in Medina. In establishing these bonds of friendship and assistance, the test was not that of wealth and influence: it was

purely a test of personal need, and zeal for the cause. Rich and poor, high-born and plebeian, learned and ignorant, were all linked together in one common brotherhood. The effect on the life of Medina was marvellous. Tribes and groups of people who had been at war with each other were now united in a noble cause. Their private life was purified. Their civic life was raised to dignity. Their religious life was cleared of superstitions, altogether we have a picture of a community that lived in Medina, united and able to withstand and beat off the attacks of their enemies.

Thus did Islam start its social and collective life. Its message is addressed to rich and poor alike. It speaks with particular tenderness and solicitude to the down-trodden and those who are unfortunate in life. The Holy Qur-án (Sura 90) speaks of the steep and difficult path of righteousness, and mentions four searching tests :

Are you prepared to give freedom to slaves ?

Will you provide food for those suffering from hunger ?

Will you care for helpless orphans and kindred ?

Will you lend a helping hand to any one down in the dust ?

It further commends the following virtues :

Faith ;

Mutual encouragement in virtue and well-doing ;

Mutual compassion for all.

Let us consider for a moment what this means. Who is a slave ? In the old world the lot of the slave was a hard one. He was the absolute property of his master. He was ill-treated and starved. The Teacher of Islam said : " Free the slaves wherever possible, but in any case feed them with the same food which you eat, and clothe them with the same clothing which you wear." No wonder that many of the emancipated slaves preferred to live in freedom under the flag of Islam, rather than fly to other conditions where men's minds and souls were in bondage.

In later times the Christian nations of Europe brought the institution of slavery to a fine art. They caught and

RELIGION AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

enslaved thousands of men and women in Africa, shipped them under horrible conditions across the seas to America, and made them work in plantations like beasts under the lash, and without any regard to human relationships, such as arose in domestic slavery. So far did their inhumanity go that at length awakened the conscience of the better minds among themselves. A strong anti-slavery campaign was started, and the slave-trade came to an end by law. Later, slavery itself was abolished. But even to-day, in the United States of America, the emancipated negro finds himself in an economic and social slavery, worse than the old domestic slavery against which so much has been written. He is segregated from the white population. He is not allowed to travel in the same carriages or compartments in trains or trams. He is taught in separate schools. He is even asked to worship in a separate church.

Even where these conditions do not exist, are we clear of the spirit of slavery anywhere except in Islam? In the most advanced countries of Europe there has been, for the greater part of the 19th century, a kind of economic slavery against which the collective conscience of mankind is now in revolt. There are new movements all over the world. They are demanding that the classes which have hitherto been kept down shall be treated on terms of social and economic equality. Their demands have not yet been completely met, but every year sees this movement breaking fresh ground. The women demand and are obtaining their rights in law, in property, and in public life. The children—and especially the orphans—are recognised as having their rights. Even the criminals are recognised as having claims on Society. The depressed and disfranchised classes and communities are becoming conscious of their rightful place. Nothing can resist this movement, founded as it is on the laws of justice and common sense. Islam has recognised these claims from the very beginning. In Islam they will have their complete fulfilment.

HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

BY SYED SULAIMAN NADVI

[*Continued from page 306, Vol. XXIV*]

These two victories owed much to the vigilance and prowess as well as to the fiery eloquence of Muslim women. In Moharram, 14 A. H., the fighting forces of the Mussalmans and the Persians met at Kadessiya. The Persians numbered one lakh and the Mussalmans thirty thousand only. In this battle many thousands of Mussalmans were killed and wounded. Women and children dug graves and carried away the wounded from the battle-ground and nursed them.

The intensity of enthusiasm on the part of women at the Battle of Kadessiya may be judged by the following remonstrances, which an old lady of the tribe of Nakha'a made to her sons, when sending them off to the battle.

"Dear sons! You adopted Islam, and did not turn against it. You made Hijrat, but you were not reproached. Your motherland was not unsuitable to you, nor had famine befallen you. Now you have lost your old mother before the Persians. By God, you are the sons of one father, just as you are of one mother. I have never been dishonest to your father nor unfair to your maternal uncle. Depart and fight heroically to the last."¹

The sons attacked the enemy together and fought gallantly. When they disappeared out of her sight the old mother raised her hands in prayer and implored God to save her sons. At the end of the battle the brave sons came back safe, and laid down the booty of war before their mother.

The famous poetess of Arabic, Khansa, was also present at the Battle of Kadessiya. She had her four sons with her. In the early part of the night when the

¹ *Tabri*, vol. ? p. 2307.

HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

soldiers were anticipating the dreadful scene of the morrow, the poetess was encouraging her sons in the following words :

“ Dear sons ! You chose Islam of your own accord, and also performed Hijrat. By the Unity of God, the companionless, you are the sons of one father, just as you are born of one mother. I have never been dishonest to your father, nor insulted your maternal uncle, nor disparaged your genealogy. Full well you know the glories attributed by God to one fighting against the infidels for the Muhammadans. Let me fully acquaint you that the everlasting world is better than this mortal one. The Holy God says : ‘ O Mussalman, take patience, persevere, and fear God, so that you may be successful.’ When you rise the following morn, go and fight enemies with all your experiences, begging God for His help. And when you see that the battle is raging furiously and the terrible flame surrounds you on all sides, plunge yourselves into the very furnace of the battle. And lo ! When you see forces reddened with the fire of excitement, rush forward to the commander-in-chief of the hostile army. May God give you booty from the war in this world ; and honour in heaven.¹

The following morning the battle commenced, and the four sons dashed forward to fight the enemy and in the end fell, fighting gloriously. When Khansa learnt of their death she thanked God for having honoured her with the martyrdom of her sons. Omar gave her 800 dinars, the salaries of her sons, as long as she lived.

¹ This speech and the speech quoted just above are similar in so far as the number of children and actual words are concerned, but there are differences. The first lady is of the tribe of Nakha'a, but Khansa belongs to the Muslim tribe. The speech of the former is concise and simple, while that of the latter is long, eloquent, and spirited, worthy of Khansa. Tabri writes that the sons of the former lady came back safe with the booty of the war. Ibn Athir says that the sons of the latter were martyred, and the Caliph Omar gave her the salaries of her sons as long as she lived. For the above speech, see Ibn Athir's *Asad-ul-Ghaba*, vol. v., p. 442.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

After the Battle of Jessore, in which the Muslims were overpowered, another frightful battle took place at Buwaib, which was preliminary to Kadessiya. The Muslims had chanced to capture a very large amount of supplies from the Persians. They had left their women far behind the battle-ground in the place where they cooked for their soldiers. Mothana, the Commander-in-Chief, accordingly sent the provisions to these women under a small escort. As this contingent galloped towards the women, they (the women) thought that the enemy had continued to make an onslaught on them. They had no arms and ammunition wherewith to resist, but they put their children in the rear and themselves prepared to oppose the coming army with stones and tent-poles. Omar bin Abdul Masih, who was the Commander of the contingent, shouted that the women of the Islamic forces were expected to be bold and then announced the tide of the Muslim victory and gave them the provisions he had brought.¹

The women exhibited still more wonderful tactics in the Battle of Misan. The Mussalmans encountered the inhabitants of Misan on the banks of the Tigris. Mughira, who was the Commander of the Muslim army, had left the women far behind. The two contesting armies were fighting frantically, when Ardah, the daughter of Hareth and the grand-daughter of the physician of Arabia, Kaldah, planned with her comrades to help the Mussalmans at this juncture. She made a long banner of her apron, and the rest of the women made similar banners of theirs. The two forces were fighting desperately, when these women marched towards the Muslim army with their banners afloat in the breeze. The enemy thought it to be a fresh reinforcement of the Mussalmans. They were discouraged and made an abrupt retreat.²

(¹) *Tabri*, vol. v, p. 2197.

(²) *Tabri*, vol. vi, p. 1234.

HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

During the days of Abu Bakr, the Mussalmans made the first raid on Damascus in 13 A.H. The people of Damascus shut themselves up in a fortress which the Mussalmans lay besieging, when they heard that ninety thousand Rumis had gathered together in Ajnadain. The Mussalman forces were scattered all over Syria. Obeida and Khalid bin Walid, who had returned to Damascus after conquering Iraq, judiciously thought of concentrating all the Islamic forces on one place. These forces numbered twenty-four thousand men. The officers in charge of the individual forces hastened to Ajnadain.

Obeida and Khalid raised the siege of Damascus and moved to Ajnadain. Khalid heralded the army and went ahead. Obeida remained behind and marched in heavy order with women, children and baggage. The people of Damascus thought it a good opportunity to feed their revenge by attacking the marching army in the rear, which they did. Simultaneously, a contingent arrived from the Emperor of Rum, which he had sent in aid of the people of Damascus. It checkmated the front rank. The Mussalmans were completely surprised. It was a death-trap for them, but they showed coolness and courage and held the foe in check on both sides. But while they were thus engaged with the army in front, the people of Damascus captured the Mussalman women, and intended to hasten to the fortress with them.

The women looked at one another, when Khola, the daughter of Azder, spoke passionately : " Sisters ! Do you agree to surrender to the infidels of Damascus ? Will you disgrace the dignified skirts of the Arabian chivalry and glory ? Let us die rather than submit to this disgrace." These few sentences set the senses and pride of the Arabian women ablaze, and they rose to stand firm, taking tent-poles in their hands. To live honourably

or to die was the question. Khola, the daughter of Azder, stood in the forefront, and behind her filed Afira, the daughter of Afar; Um-e-Abban, the daughter of Atba; Salmah, the daughter of Noaman. The men of Damascus looked on amazed, and the Muslim women in the meantime slew thirty persons. The former made desperate assaults in return, but they failed to hold their ground. The Mussalmans had by this time routed the army in front and came to the help of their women. The Army of Damascus could not stand against the Muslims and fled to the fortress, and the Islamic forces proceeded on to Ajnadain.

Gibbon has mentioned this event in his history, and after praising the heroism, valour, high sense of virtue and morality of the Muslim women, writes that they enlisted in holy wars, wielded the bow and the lance, and in a moment of captivity defended, against the uncircumcised ravishers, their chastity and religion.¹

The Battle of Yarmuk was the first organised battle of the Mussalmans. They numbered only forty thousand, but all were the seasoned and scarred veterans of Arabia. The Rumis were more than two lakhs in number and they gushed forth like a torrent as though they would sweep off the Islamic forces in a single stroke. The Christians outnumbered the Mussalmans by four to one, and the madness of their enthusiasm ran high when thirty thousand Rumis had chained together their feet to make retreat impossible.

The cyclone of the Rumi forces burst forth in fury upon the Mussalmans, who were badly shaken. The right wing of the Islamic forces fled pell-mell to the women's camp. The tribes of Lakhon and Jezam had long remained under the tutelage of these Christians, but had now embraced Islam. The left wing was mostly recruited

¹ *Vide* Gibbon's "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chapter II, pp. 42-43.

HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

from these people. The Rumis turned towards them, who, overawed and panic-stricken, took to flight. The Rumis pursued them and reached the camp. The fury of the women knew no limit. They stepped out of the camp and offered a solid resistance to the flood of the Rumi onslaught. The Rumis were repulsed and the women hastened to the front lines and strove to hearten the Mussalman army by their stirring eloquence. In this they were successful and the despairing Mussalmans composed themselves once more to conquer or die. The women of the Quraish flung forward with flashing swords in their hands and rushed into the thick of the battle till they were ahead of their men.¹ Juwaira, the sister of Muawiyah, led a band of female forces and was wounded in the melee.² Khola, the sister of Zarar the son of Azder, put the Mussalmans to shame by reading aloud the following line : ³

يا هارباً عن نسوة تقيات رميت بالسهم والمنيات

(Oh you ! the deserter of chaste women ; become the targets of arrow and death.)

The historian Tabri makes a special reference to Um-e-Hakim, the daughter of Harith, in this battle. Ibn Athir says that Asma, the daughter of Yqzid, by herself killed nine Rumis.⁴ Waqidi gives the names of the following women, who fought valiantly in the Battle of Yarmuk : Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr ; Alibada, the wife of the son of Samat ; Khola, the daughter of Soalba ; Kaole, the daughter of Malik ; Salmah, the daughter of Hashim ; Naam, the daughter of Qanas ; and Afira, the daughter of Afara.

After the Battle of Yarmuk, the Islamic army was once again prepared to fight the Rumis. It halted one day at Marj-us-Safa, near Damascus. Khalid bin Saeed

(¹) *Tabri*, vol. vi, p. 2347.

(²) *Tabri*, vol. v, p. 32101.

(³) *Biladhuri*, p. 185, Leyden Edition.

(⁴) *Uoud-ul-Ghabe*, vol. v, p. 398.

had just married Um-e-Hakim, the daughter of Harith, and here he invited the Mussalmans to a dinner. The camp of Um-e-Hakim was pitched near a bridge which is still called the Bridge of Um-e-Hakim. Dinner was not yet finished when the Rumi forces made their sudden appearance. The Mussalmans hastily prepared for the fight, and the Rumis were desperately assailed and retreated in disaster. Um-e-Hakim herself also fought heroically and killed seven Rumi soldiers.¹

In the Battle of Camel, Ayesha (may God be pleased with her), doubtless made a serious mistake in fighting against Ali; still, however, it helps us to realise the courageous and chivalrous part a Mussalman woman can play on occasions.

If we accept the authority of Waqidi, we shall have to admit the noble part played by women in the conquest of Syria—more especially by Um-e-Hakim, Hind, Um-e-Kasir, Asmah, Um-e-Aban, Um-e-Amarah, Khola, Lubna and Afira, who rendered such meritorious services in battle as could not be acquitted even by men. Atba, the son of Ghazwan, was an Amir appointed by Omar, and Azdah, the daughter of Harith, and grand-daughter of Kaldah, the physician of Arabia, was his wife. Atba was once facing the tenacious opposition of the people of Medina-tul-Farat, when his wife encouraged the combatants by her speeches.²

During the invasion of Damascus, when Aban bin Saeed was martyred by Tuma, the Governor of Damascus, his wife, Um-e-Aban, the daughter of Atba, set out with all the weapons of her murdered husband to take revenge. She fought with the enemy heroically. The people of Damascus lay besieged in the fortress, yet they retaliated on the Mussalmans from the ramparts of the fortress. At the head of them a holy man was

(1) *Usud-ul-Ghaba*, p. 577.

(2) *Fatuh-ul-Buldan*, p. 343, Leyden.

HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

praying for victory to the Trinity with the Golden Cross in his hand. Um-e-Aban, being an expert in archery, aimed accurately at the Cross which she knocked out of the man's hand beyond the ramparts of the fortress. The Mussalmans got possession of the Cross. Now, the Christians could not tolerate any insult to the Cross and Tuma, with eyes aflame and lips frothing rushed out of the fortress, and the battle began in all violence and impetuosity. The Rumis fought indomitably to recover the Cross, but it was of little avail. He who turned towards it was a victim to Aban's fatal arrows. Majo was however adamant when Um-e-Aban's arrow plunged direct into his eyes and he retired posthaste, Um-e-Aban was reading the following lines :

ام ابان فاطمی بشارک
صوبی علیہم مولدہ المتدارک
قد صبح جمع القوم من نبالک

(Um-e-Aban ! you take your revenge, and make an incessant invasion upon them ; the Rumis have been agonised by your arrows.)

The most dreadful battle was fought in Yom-ut-Ta'awir (يوم التعوير) and here the Mussalman women exhibited a wonderful example of Arabian chivalry. The Mussalmans would have been badly beaten, had not the women drawn swords and stood face to face against the Rumis. Hind, Khola, Um-e-Hakim, and the other women of Quraish steeled themselves against the panic and fought valiantly. Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr, always remained with her husband on horseback and fought side by side with him¹.

In the Battle of Siffin, a large number of the Mussalman women accompanied Ali to the battlefield. They fought and cheered the tired soldiers by their spirited speeches. Zarqa, Akrasha and Um-ul-Khair made such thrilling speeches as kindled a fire of fervour and enthusiasm amongst each and every section of the army.²

(To be continued.)

(¹) There are many other similar instances recorded in *Fatuh-ush-Sham* on Waqidi's authority, but as they are mentioned in *Fatuh-ush-Sham Azdi*, so we gloss them over.

(²) Aqd-ul-Farid, vol. i, pp. 121—124.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

CORRESPONDENCE

THE IMAM,
WOKING MOSQUE.

BRIGHTON,
April 30th, 1936.

DEAR REVEREND SIR,

I thank you for your interesting and enlightening letter of the 22nd. Of course, before I could embrace the Faith, I should desire a thorough grounding, a perfect understanding. I desire to visit Woking some time in the future. Possibly you may come to Brighton on a mission some day, and perhaps I may have the pleasure of conversing with you.

Really, I have not embraced any religion seriously because I have not found one that conformed to my ideals. I believed in the Prophets, the mission of Jesus, and went to any church as the Temple of God.

I always face the East when I pray,—towards the Garden of Allah and His Prophets. I believe in kindness to all living things. Man is vain and egoistic to imagine he is most important to God. In regard to marriage, etc., man and woman are equals. They must grow old together in love and share all. That which is made before God must end before God if it fails, meanings to apply to divorce, etc., in His Temple. The worst sin is to hurt another brother's feelings, I believe.

I may say, if I become a Muslim, I shall lose my best friend, who is a power in the Anglo-Catholic Faith, and others who have been of assistance to me. But if God wills it so, I shall. My friendships are not just careless acquaintances. There is always a real bond of love. You can understand what such a break will cost me. I vowed that until I was sure God did desire me in the religious life, I would keep pure, humble and free, resigned to His Mercy.

Yours very sincerely,
(Sd.) J. H. B.

KEMP TOWN, BRIGHTON,
April 12th, 1936.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your letter and for the very interesting literature enclosed. I thank, also, the Secretary of the Society for forwarding my letter to you. Peace, as Islam understands it, and which I so desired, can be found in the basic principles of the Christian Faith. "As I have loved you, love ye also one another,"

CORRESPONDENCE

Jesus said. This also does Islam teach. I believe there is no god but God, and Him only should I serve.

A good point in favour of the Faith is that it is catholic in vein, namely, embracing the teachings of the chosen of all other races—Buddha, etc. Those of your Faith say that the Holy Bible is not true in certain chapters owing to threats and promised punishments to evil-doers.

One can and must believe the sayings of the Prophets, even if details and incidents leading up to events are not accurate. If Jesus, as the most beautiful character in history, is not to be given first place, why Muhammad? If Jesus was not the Promised One who would defeat Death, and rise again, as was promised by the Prophets, which message John the Baptist was sent by God as a forerunner to proclaim, where should we look? The teachings of Jesus are based on those of Jesus and the Prophets of old.

Not until I came to the crossings did I know or understand the depths of my love for Jesus of Nazareth, he whom I vowed to be faithful to unto death. Devotion to that most sacred heart of his is a real force in my life. It is not for a man to be the saviour of men. I have said in prayer, "If, O Lord, thou gavest him form, I accept him." *Gloria in Excelsis*.

I believe the sorrow, suffering and tragedy of the flesh is sufficient without the threat of a hell for sinners. One is punished in this life for sins if the sinner is so conscious, but to those who are not, there must be a means of bringing repentance. Therefore, I believe not in hell or devil. Jesus was tempted by no devil, but this thought: If I ask my Father He will end this world and the suffering of the flesh for me, but by His will the world and man must endure until God's Plan for us all is perfected.

In regard to the after-life, Jesus said, "My Father's House is a House of many Mansions." This is the answer to spiritualism. Those who in their life are not conscious of their faults or sins, go to the lower spheres, or mansions, as Jesus said. Once the spirit is free of the material brain, and those brain impressions, how happy and exalted the individual must be, remembering also the affliction of the flesh. I do not believe in angels. Dispel the myth of Eden. God could have no use for a perfect man; follow the evolution of man from the first stages of the earth's creation to the present-day, his great fight against almost impossible odds, his great burden I have felt like a cross. If God loves us, as I know He does, would He send us from hell to hell? We are told angels are pure spirits created by God to serve Him. I believe that those same angels are the excellent and perfected spirits of the departed, who, through the course of time, have worked their redemption in the House of many Mansions. However good a man is on earth, he is not fit even in spirit to go straight before God. I hold naught against any man. We are not cast from the same "mould." The good and evil influences

we are to suffer in life is God's way of creating character, each different to the other, each a separate soul.

If Jesus had gone to the educated men of his time and said, "Follow me," they, the educated ones, would have laughed. No, he chose the simple folk who in his last days quarrelled among themselves over who would be the greater, denied the title of "Son of God" and with a suspicious mind went over those last days. On occasions he said, "Take this cup from me." "Thou hast forsaken me," etc., which would, to some minds, have placed him only as a man, but for the Prophets.

I hope you will be patient with this discourse and help me. In my own circumstances of life, I have been denied much, knowing poverty all the time, yet I believe in fasting to exalt the mind. I seek the Truth. If I find it in Islam, I shall be a Muslim. All things are with God, even I, his servant, John, a blessed name, meaning, I believe, "The Grace of God." I may have Jewish blood in me, for my thoughts dwell in the East. I pray three times a day. Before I do so, I remove my shoes, remembering that in prayer God's spirit comes down to one, therefore the ground whereon I stand becomes holy. Even on entering a Church, I feel I should do the same. I believe in circumcision. I do not eat the flesh of the scavengers of the land or sea.

One more thing to be mentioned. Jesus said little about women and status, but he always treated them as equals. One remembers the story of the wanton. If you can by God's Grace help me in my quest, please do. I shall be eternally grateful.

Yours very sincerely,
(Sd.) J. B.

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.

DEAR BRETHREN-IN-ISLAM,

Assalam-o-alaikum.

In these few lines we should like to draw the attention of our Muslim leaders to a point which is of the utmost importance for the welfare of Islam and the Muslims. The institution of Zakat, which is one of the fundamental principles of Islam, was established by the Holy Qur-ân not only as an act of individual charity, but also as a matter of national concern. The Zakat or the legal fortieth of all the personal amassings was collected by the Holy Prophet and his successors as a part of the national treasury and applied to various purposes specified by the Holy Qur-ân and best suited to the national welfare of the Muslim Community.

To our great misfortune, this prime source of our national wealth and strength has now almost gone dry by its misuse and, instead of this great volume of permanent income being used, as originally intended, to make the whole community flourish, we have only a few individual acts which 'lose themselves in the sand'. This highly organised system of Islam has so degenerated that before Rajab comes, thousands of professional beggars, who can easily earn their living by the sweat of their brow, get out of their houses and spread from one corner of the country to the other to beg for Zakat, thus cheating the Muslim Public under a cloak of piety,—a state of things never contemplated by Islam. The principle of Zakat was meant really to uplift the Community of Islam and not to turn it into a nation of beggars.

The Zakat is generally calculated and distributed by the Muslims in the sacred month of Rajab. If the Zakat may properly be collected and used, it would meet our various needs. Great stress has been laid by the Holy Qur-ân and the Prophet (May the peace of Allah be upon his soul) upon the institution of Zakat, and the Book lays down some eight objects to which Zakat should be applied. The sacred words are:—

"Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives and those in debt and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer: an ordinance from Allah; and Allah is Knowing, Wise."—(Holy Qur-ân, 9 : 60.)

Among the eight items of expenditure of Zakat explicitly mentioned in the Holy Book, one item is the wages of "the officials appointed over them" which clearly indicates that the Holy Qur-ân requires the Zakat to be collected in the Bait-ul-Mal. The Holy Words show that 3/8th of the Zakat *i. e.*, 3rd, 4th, and 7th items should go towards the propagation of Islam and its defence against enemies, and to this we should like to invite your attention particularly. Propagation of Islam is the greatest national need of the Muslims all over the world. It is much to be deplored that one finds over and over again instances of missionaries and other Christian teachers wilfully misrepresenting our Faith to the World. The Holy Prophet of Islam is being

deformed before our eyes. Under the circumstances it would be quite in the fitness of things that a greater portion of the Zakat should be spent on this object, *i.e.*, to put the correct version of Islam before the World. There are good many restless souls in the world who are eager to accept Islam. We can do wonders within a short time if we have enough of money to distribute Islamic literature broadcast. The whole world is thirsting for Islam, if the Muslims were only to make up their minds to convey the blissful message of peace and amity to the farthest ends of the world. This can be easily done if our Muslim Brethren should realize the importance of the institution and obey the injunctions of the Holy Qur-ān with regard to the payment of Zakat for strengthening the funds for the propagation of Islam.

Need we say that our Missionary activities at Woking, England, have proved to be most successful of all the other movements that we (the Muslim) have undertaken within the last quarter of a century to serve Islam, while our political activities have been baffled by others. The best way to preach Islam in Europe is dissemination of Muslim literature, and in this respect our efforts so far have met entire success.

Hence, we are encouraged to place before you the claims of the Woking Muslim Mission, England, on your Zakat. We can say, without fear of contradiction, that this Mission is carrying on the work of the propagation of Islam on the largest scale in the world. The Mission has turned out the most useful and most convincing literature. It has been sending the *Islamic Review* to thousands of libraries in England, America, Africa, Australia, China and Japan, free of charge. It has been publishing thousands of tracts and pamphlets for the furtherance of the cause of Islam and for defending the honour of the Prophet. It has been establishing good many distributing centres for the Islamic Literature all over the world. Its Missionaries have regularly been working in England. We would, therefore, request you to kindly see that when carrying out the commandments of the Holy Qur-ān as to the payment of Zakat, a portion is set apart by yourself, your friends and relatives for the Woking Muslim Trust, to be sent to uphold the noble cause of Islam. In case our appeal, based on the accepted principles of Islam, meets with your approval, the money (Zakat) may be remitted to the Financial Secretary, the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, Azeez Manzil, Brandreth Road, Lahore (Punjab, India).

AZEEZ MANZIL,
BRANDRETH ROAD,
Lahore (Punjab, India).

Yours fraternally,
KHWAJA ABDUL GHANI,
SECRETARY,

*The Woking Muslim Mission and
Literary Trust (Registered).*

[All remittances to be made payable to the Financial Secretary, The Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, Azeez Manzil, Brandreth Road, Lahore (Punjab, India), or to the Imam, The Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

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