

"Muhammad is ... the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets . . ."—Holy Qur-~~an~~<sup>ān</sup>, 33

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

*The*

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## CONTENTS

William George Wajid .. .. .	Frontispiece
	PAGE
A Declaration .. .. .	161
Muhammad: His Life and Mission: by M. Abul Hasnat .. .. .	162
Words are as Breath and Will is All: by Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar, M. A. .. .. .	167
Correspondence .. .. .	188
Notes and Comments .. .. .	190
Book Reviews .. .. .	196

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**William George Wajid.**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مُحَمَّدٍ خَلِيقَةِ النَّبِيِّينَ

## THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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### A DECLARATION

I, (Mr.) William George Wajid, of Warwick 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 and others—and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

*La ilāha ill-Allāh Muhammad-ar-Rasul-Allah*

(There is but One God (Allah) and Muhammad is God's Messenger.)

(Sd.) WILLIAM GEORGE WAJID

**MUHAMMAD : HIS LIFE AND MISSION \***

M. ABUL HASANAT

It gives us great pleasure to be here this evening at this holy function, in the company of our friends, Muslims and non-Muslims. To us Mussalmans, to-day is a great day, commemorating a great occasion—the birth of our Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), whom we consider the greatest of men ever born, and whom we expect our non-Muslim friends will regard, at least, as one of the great men who have attempted the redemption of depraved humanity. It is an occasion voluntarily observed all over the Muslim World. The Prophet, though at one time the temporal and spiritual dictator of the Muslim commonwealth, had never as much as hinted we should observe his birthday as anything like a notable occasion, and herein lies the distinction between the birthdays of kings and monarchs, and those of great thinkers and reformers. No edict or announcement is necessary, no display or demonstration prearranged, but as the particular day draws near, the heart beats faster and the pulse quickens; there is a thrill in mind and body and all prepare themselves to do homage to the great man whose day of Remembrance it is.

In presenting a life-sketch of the Prophet, I may begin by affirming that of all prophets, his life record has the greatest abundance of historical authority and one can judge of the man and his work as they actually were.

We Muslims believe in the significance of certain extraordinary manifestations of Nature that coincide with the birth of the Prophet. The rational historian smiles at our credulity. We let him smile, and concede that they may have been no portents at all, but coincidences pure and simple. We claim that he was no more than man, and his birth, among the Quraish, need not have

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\*A lecture delivered on the life and mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.—Ep.

## MUHAMMAD : HIS LIFE AND MISSION

attracted any more notice than that of any other child. His father was already dead and so, when he opened his eyes on the world, no paternal smile was there to greet him. Abdul Muttalib, his grandfather, took charge of the child, and he was placed in the charge of Halima, a Bedouin woman of the tribe of Banu Saad.

His mother died when he was a boy of six, and he was thus left an orphan. Costly education was not for him ! He had no worldly privilege or advantage for which to be thankful. He was brought up soberly and frugally ; indeed it may be said that Nature nurtured him. The desert was his playground, and the apparently rude and unmeaning phases of the barren tract around reacted on his senses. He grew hardy in body and strong in mind. His character was hewn from Nature and shaped by experience.

Boyhood matured into youth. He had no pretensions ; truthfulness and industry were his assets. He earned the title of *Al-Amin*, The Truthful, very early in his career. His character shone forth unblemished. He was honest and likeable, and people who confided in him had no cause for regret. It was at this stage that he attracted the attention of the good widow Khadija who was engaged in business. She looked upon Muhammad as the man best fitted to manage her affairs, and very soon she had reasons for self-congratulation. She was aware of the greatness in the man and proposed marriage to him. He accepted her hand ; and thus, in the very prime of youth, at the height of passion, when man by nature yearns after virginity and youth in his proposed mate, he took a widow as wife—a widow decidedly past her youth and far senior to him in age.

His family life was happy. He was no spoilt husband. Of wealth he had now more than enough, but he was simple in his habits and had other concerns than indulgence in luxuries. He observed the state of

society at that time, and regarded the many immodesties and immoralities of his kinsmen with keen disapproval. The tribal clashes and family feuds, then generally prevalent, were galling to him. People looked down upon people, girls as soon as they were born were buried. From the Ka'ba, set up by Abraham and Ishmail, God had been deposed, His place being taken up by as many idols as the people could conceive of. Muhammad himself was untouched by the vices of the age, but deeply concerned to see how they were raging unchecked. Meditative by nature, he thought and thought. The hills were his haunts and Nature his study. He wondered at the vastness of Creation ; at the infinite varieties, and again the underlying uniformity of Nature. His mind reacted. He passed on in his contemplation from creation to the Creator. Can the forces of Nature behave as they do without some one having regulated their movements ? The vastness of Nature alone was enough to tell him how mighty must be that Power behind. He realises. His heart melts in respect and devotion. Great God ! Thou art there as manifest as ever—respected and obeyed by Nature—shunned only by man. He seeks inspiration. God responds, and Muhammad re-establishes the true relationship between man and God.

The later years of his life are eventful. He addresses himself to the arduous task of reforming society. And what a society ? Distracted, degraded, revelling in the height of immodesty, heading for the lowest pit of depravity. Demoralised Arabia needed deliverance, and the world outside to be saved. Muhammad thereupon becomes a man of action. He proceeds to set mankind on a basis of high and noble principles. He seeks for illumination and it comes to him. He sets an outstanding example in his own private life. Thus, when the startled Arabs turn to check his activities and thwart him in his mission, they call him mad, and take

## MUHAMMAD : HIS LIFE AND MISSION

him for a distracted poet ; but not one has the audacity to impeach his character or dispute his title, *Al-Amin*, "The Truthful," which they had themselves given him. His grim determination, the unshaken faith in Divine guidance, carry him onward. He proceeds with all good-will towards erring Humanity, and resolves that whatever wrongs he may receive in return, he will do mankind good, the greatest good, and nothing but good.

He is jeered, taunted, insulted and attacked. He holds on his way undaunted, and stakes his very life for the sake of God and man. His is a struggle—a selfless struggle. He meets with opposition, persecution, exile and all the obstacles mean and wicked that an irresponsible and heartless tribe can conceive. His God does not forsake him ; but he is, nevertheless, put to the severest tests. Thus when after the battle of Uhud, when, covered with blood, he finds his forces shattered, and his dear ones killed, it is suggested to him that he should pray to God for the total extinction of his wicked race ; he is aggrieved : "I never came to exterminate. God ! lead my people aright for they do not know !" How noble an attitude ; what breadth of vision !

Towards the end of his life, he has the satisfaction of achieving a full measure of success. He had a band of followers faithful unto death, and they were quickly growing in number. A vast territory was at his feet and it was daily expanding. But he dies no monarch, leaves no prince to succeed him, no dynasty, no royal palaces of marble ! He claims to have been a man—a mortal man of flesh and blood—a most humble servant of the Most High, and his claims include no special relationship or intimacy with the Supreme.

He leaves behind the Qur-án, the Word of God. It embodies the Divine guidance he has received from time to time. He respects it as we do—he goes by it. It is



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

handed down to us in all its pristine purity. Its beauty, diction and grandeur belie all suggestions of human authorship. It is in the dialect of the people—a people who had already developed a high order of poetic composition and, were it not Divine, it would have been as readily condemned as any composition by an amateur, unschooled and illiterate. It was the miracle of miracles ! A few verses from it convert the mighty Umar whose critical genius would, at any time, challenge the most cunning sophistries.

He leaves behind Islam, the Religion of God—not his own. Mind you, it is not Muhammadanism like Christianity or Buddhism—it is Islam, the Religion of God preached by all the earlier prophets, and the religion that Mankind anywhere, at any period, could profess. It transcends countries, climates and ages. Islam connotes peace and utters subjugation to the Will of God. It consists in a belief in the unity, immortality, power and mercy of the Creator. It professes that man is born sinless, and expects that he should conform to purity and righteousness, and that his conduct be regulated on the basis of a true understanding of the relationship between him and his Creator on the one hand, and the rest of creation on the other. It avows the accountability of human conduct upon the Day of Reckoning.

**"WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"**

**"WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"**

BY HAFIZ GHULAM SARWAR, M.A.

[In this issue we publish the first Chapter of a book entitled "The Philosophy of the Qur-ân" from the pen of Al-Haj Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar, M.A., retired District Judge, Singapore, and Translator of the Holy Qur-ân. The complete book in manuscript is in our hands and the hard work, the study and scholarship which the author has brought to bear upon his task is such as to command the respect of every scholar. The book is a study pure and simple and, though dealing with a most difficult subject, it is couched in language which every student of English may readily understand. The first Chapter is in the nature of a general introduction, but as the book proceeds, it explains itself. It is, in fact, nothing but a commentary on the first verse of the Holy Qur-ân, *viz.*, "All praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds." The Arabic word *Rab*, which is ordinarily translated as *Lord*, is philosophically interpreted by Mr. Sarwar as the *Vital Principle*. We quote the last sentence of the first Chapter of the book: "God is the Vital Principle of all the worlds of mind and matter. The aim of all this knowledge and all this acknowledgment of the Real is the realization of His values of Goodness, Beauty and Truth, and the cultivation of these values in ourselves."—ED. J. R.]

## CHAPTER I

### What is Philosophy ?

Of all branches of knowledge, philosophy is the most difficult, because it is the most nebulous. We must, therefore, be extremely patient in our search for what belongs to philosophy, and when we have reached the end of our investigations we must still not presume to have exhausted our inquiry. Let us consider a few things that are not supposed to be philosophy. Anything will do—carpentry, for example.

When a carpenter is asked to make a table, a chair, an almirah or any other article, he is provided with materials to be used in the making of the required article. Such materials consist of wood, nails, hinges, screws, gums and paints. All these things are definite.

The instruments which the carpenter uses, such as axes for cutting wood, saws for dividing wood into parts, planes for smoothing surfaces, bores for making holes, chisels for carving and shaping wood, T-squares for testing rectilinear angles, compasses for describing circles and

The instruments  
of a carpenter are  
ready-made.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

arcs of circles, sectors for measuring angles, rulers, pencils and numerous other articles, are ready-made.

The table or chair or any other article which is to be made by a carpenter is also given, The specifications of the article to be made are given. either in the shape of a specimen which he is to copy, or a plan which he is to follow. The carpenter knows beforehand the length, breadth and height of the article he is going to make. He also knows its shape and any ornamentation which he has to carve thereon or attach thereto.

The carpenter is also not a novice to his calling. He generally undergoes years of training in The carpenter is a skilled workman. making himself competent in the use of the tools of his trade and in making the most economical and effective use of his material.

And the product of the carpenter's labour can be judged or valued either by himself or The carpenter's work can be judged or valued. someone else who is an expert carpenter. In fact, all that relates to the art of carpentry is definite. There is no vagueness about either the man, the materials, the object of workmanship or its value.

The same remarks apply to the art of a jeweller. The art of Jewellery. Only the jeweller has to be more skilled than the carpenter, and the instruments he uses are much more delicate than those of the carpenter. Suppose a man is given the making of a royal crown. He will have to spend days and nights in making the designs of the various parts of the crown. He will require extremely accurate scales for weighing his metals. His chisels will be so fine and his skill must be so nearly perfect as to make configurations with his hands correct to a hundredth or a thousandth part of an inch. Like an expert billiard cueist he must not make a single false stroke or the whole of his work might be irretrievably spoilt. But in spite of all its difficulty, the work is

## **"WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"**

predetermined and though there is some risk of its not coming up to the pattern absolutely correct in every detail, it can be accomplished to a very great degree of precision and refinement.

Let us now proceed to the making of something that is more difficult still—say, a bridge over  
The art of Engineering. a deep and broad river. Here again, the engineer or engineers will be occupied for weeks in making, correcting and revising the plans. The total weight of the bridge material must be calculated to a very approximate figure. The foundations to support this weight must be found or artificially constructed. Books of logarithms and mathematical formulæ must be gone through to find out the relative weights, tensions, or pulls, which the various parts of the bridge have to bear. The bridge is like a chain as well as like a building. If the foundations are weak, the whole structure will collapse under the weight that is put on the foundations. And even if the foundations are strong but the plan is defective or the construction and material used are not of the required quality, the chain will break at its weakest point. The task is a hundred times more difficult than that of a jeweller, but with the help of mathematicians, manufacturers, skilled artisans, and the wonderful machines of modern civilization, the engineer is able to bridge some of the widest rivers of the world. Why, or rather, how? Because the men, the materials, the object to be achieved and its value, are all known and measurable.

What about painting? A painter, like a carpenter,  
The art of Painting. a jeweller, or an engineer, has to go through a difficult course of training. The materials with which he works, such as paints, brushes and canvas, are also given. He also has a model which he is going to paint, or some landscape or the glow of a sunset which he has experienced. But here the analogy with the previously described arts comes to an end. There

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

is no tape measure or mathematical formula to guide the painter in achieving the desired end. If he is merely copying another artist he may go, to a certain extent, by rule of thumb, but let us suppose that he is making an original picture. Apparently, his task is

The indeterminacy of the art of Painting.

quite different from that of a jeweller or an engineer. There is less definiteness or determinateness about this art. Not until he has actually completed the picture can he, or any one else, say whether it is good or bad, and even then opinions will differ. Here is an element of vagueness or nebulosity introduced into the artist's achievement. Why? Because the value of the achievement is not known and cannot be foretold, in contrast with the work of a jeweller or an engineer. The painting of a picture does not depend on physical measurements only. True, the artist must know the quality of his paints and brushes and the effect they are going to produce on his canvas. But art does not consist merely of putting paints on canvas. Art consists in expressing the artist's own experience of the beautiful in nature or man, or both. There are no rules by which he can measure his experience or its value, nor are there any rules which inform him how to communicate that experience to a mind other than his own. The painting is, or ought to be, as near a creation of the artist's own mind as one can imagine. Hence the uncertainty about the result. It may exceed the painter's expectations or it may be disappointed. Its value also is not to be measured by the strength and usefulness of the article produced like the table of the

The value of a Painting is solely æsthetic.

carpenter, the crown of the jeweller, or the bridge of an engineer. The value of a painting is entirely an æsthetic one.

And the value can hardly be appreciated by any two men in exactly the same way. It may be of no value at all to a carrier of water or a hewer of wood; whilst its value

## **"WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"**

to a lover of beauty may be beyond all his worldly means. To the artist, it may amount to the crowning glory of his life, and its value to him may be as much as his life or even more. Men have been known to sacrifice their lives in the accomplishment or safeguarding of their artistic achievements. What does it matter if the man's body die? His mind or soul lives on in his art, and not only lives but creates other artists. All true art is not only a creation but a creation that recreates.

The painter's creation is a kind of condensation of his experience of the beautiful in a single event, or a series of combined events which may be expressed as happening at a certain point in the space-time continuum. It is like the climax of a tragedy. The poet goes a step further. He chooses words as the medium of the expression of his experience of the beautiful. Like the painter, he also suggests a great deal more than he expresses. But he does it by means of melodious sounds in measured feet and recurring rhymes. Sounds are far more powerful in stirring human passion and human feelings than is the sensation of sight. The poet, moreover, is not confined to a single moment of time, but is at liberty to communicate the evolution of his experience in his own mind. Whilst a picture is a single image, a poem is a series of images; and being expressed in language, these images have the advantage over a painting of being more familiar and more expressive to mankind than the sensation of sight only. Men are more accustomed to communication made by the ear than by the eye, though there are some to whom the appeal through the eye is quite as effective as the appeal through the ear. In fact, the cultivation of one faculty more than the other is at the bottom of the difference. Language has the advantage over pictures; though, perhaps, a combination of the two is the most reasonable way of developing the mind; for the æsthetic appeal

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

through the eye is one of man's most wonderful achievements.

But this is a digression. The point is that the achievement of the production of a poet and its value are even more indeterminate than those of a painter. Not till the whole poem is composed can the poet or his audience say whether it is good or bad, or what its worth is. There

The value of  
a poem is also  
aesthetic.

are no rules which will enable a poet to measure his own experience of the beautiful which he is going to communicate to the world. And opinions will differ. No two men will appreciate a poem in the same way. Some will be carried away by its music; to some the actual words used will be of value, only in so far as they suggest something transcendental, which no words can express. The poetical appeal is an appeal from one beautiful soul to another. Words are a means to an end. The aim of poetry is the creation of beautiful images. The poet lives in the mind of his audience much more than does the painter. A poet is born not made. He is a revelation.

Literally, philosophy means the *love of wisdom*.

Philosophy is  
indispensable to  
all arts.

Can a carpenter, a jeweller, an engineer, a painter or a poet succeed without being a *lover of wisdom*? Wisdom means the possession of experience and knowledge, together with the power of applying them critically or practically. Without the *love of wisdom* and, in fact, the possession of wisdom, no artist can succeed in his art. He must have the requisite experience and knowledge together with the power of applying them critically or practically. The carpenter, the jeweller and the engineer must make their plans; they must have the knowledge and experience in using the plans to do what is required of them; they must possess the critical power of adapting means to ends. They must be able to put a value on their work—a value not in money which is only a nominal value, but a value in

## "WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"

the truthfulness of the article made, in its goodness and, finally, in its appearance or beauty. No art can dispense with these ultimate values—the goodness, truth and beauty—of philosophy.

When we come to the art of a painter or a poet, we realize that the value of beauty dominates the other two values. Truth of form and goodness of material are present in painting as well as in poetry, but it is beauty of which the poet and the painter are in pursuit, rather than goodness and truth.

Now goodness, truth and beauty are the acknowledged ultimate values of philosophy. And, fortunately, there is little or no conflict on this point. Some philosophers add Adoration or Religiousness as a fourth value, but it is hardly necessary to do so.

The ultimate values of philosophy underlie all knowledge and experience.

From this point of view, *philosophy, instead of being an alien to all other branches of knowledge, underlies them all and is in a sense the necessary first element in the achievement of all practical and theoretical accomplishments.*

As a matter of fact, for centuries, science and philosophy were united together. In the course of time, knowledge became so vast that it was impossible to lump it together into one whole. Philosophy became differentiated from science, and science was divided into many sciences. Even philosophy became divided up into many philosophical studies. Differentiations, divisions and subdivisions and sidelines of knowledge have now become so numerous that we have such things as Philosophy of Law, Philosophy of History and Philosophy of Religion. It, therefore, becomes very

Science and philosophy used to be considered as one.

necessary to define, even at the risk of being somewhat diffuse, what we mean by philosophy in this book and philosophy generally at the present day.



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Philosophy, we have said, is difficult because it is nebulous. Physics knows its own function because it deals with matter in space or a space-time continuum; Mathematics understands its rôle because it deals with

The field of philosophical study is vast. abstractions of space and numbers, and so with the other sciences—Biology, Chemistry, Astronomy, etc. But philosophy, with which we are dealing in this book, does not yet realize its exact boundaries. It is chasing all the other branches of knowledge in the hope of getting at the bottom of them all, but it has not found, and perhaps never can find, its own bottom. Therein lies its difficulty and its nebosity. But it is not a will-o'-the-wisp. It is the most important of all branches of knowledge and the progress of mankind, as well as of all sciences which are bound up with the progress of philosophy. Just as a man's desires dominate all his actions, so does the philosophy of a civilization dominate all its course. And a civilization without the guidance of a workable philosophy is like a ship without a compass. The compass has nothing to do with the machinery which causes the ship to move in water, or an aeroplane in air, but without the guidance of a compass, or its equivalent, the ship or the aeroplane can never go right except by chance, and no chance can last for long. Similarly, the ship of science must be guided by workable philosophy, or else all labour of navigating human knowledge must end in shipwreck. What, then, is philosophy? What is its object? What is its function? What is the material it deals with? What are its methods? These are all pertinent questions, and though the answers be somewhat difficult, we must give the subject a cursory review before we can begin to deal with it in detail, so that both ourselves and the

What, then, is philosophy? reader may have an idea of the inquiry upon which we are engaged. The definitions given below are not our own, but giving

## **"WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"**

reference to each author and quoting chapter and verse is a tedious business, and there is so much in common that it would be misleading to identify any particular author with any particular definition or description of philosophy. The primary purpose of philosophical inquiry is to ascertain the ultimate character of Reality. And though Reality is existence which underlies all appearance, nevertheless, Reality is actually an indefinable quality. It is Being or Existence. If we could define Reality there would be no need of philosophy. Philosophy is the systematic study of the ultimate nature of Reality. "I am unable to distinguish between philosophy and religion," says Dean Inge. "Philosophy is the attempt at a rational interpretation of Reality as a whole," is the opinion of L. T. Hobhouse.

"Philosophies," says William Temple, "perpetually trace out a new route from the finite to the infinite, from the apparent to the real, from the world to God: but then they stop: they do not return to tell us how their vision of God leads them to regard this world." The chief object of this book is to inform the reader how our vision of God leads us to regard this world, and therein lies the novelty of this book if there is, or can be, anything new under the sun which we doubt. "Philosophy," says another author, "at all times, like science, has had its roots in man's practical needs." "Behind all philosophy lies human nature, and in every philosophy there lurks a man," says F. C. S. Schiller. Philosophy, according to Aristotle, is the thought of thoughts; and Fichte says, "The kind of philosophy a man chooses depends on the kind of man he is."

The difficulty of discussing philosophical subjects now becomes apparent. We have to deal with the universe as a whole, and try to investigate the nature of the Being or Existence underlying it everywhere and at all times,

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

and under all circumstances. The subject is too vast for any one man, or for even a combination of men to explore adequately. And when we look into the history of the development of philosophy, we find that each philosopher has treated the subject in his own peculiar way and one could hardly expect him to do otherwise.

Both science and philosophy study the nature of *Reality*, but whilst science confines itself to the study of the *nature* of Reality, philosophy occupies itself with the ultimate *nature* of Reality. A few illustrations will explain what is meant by this differentiation between science and philosophy.

Difference between Science and Philosophy is the difference between the study of "nature" and "ultimate nature" of Reality.

Mathematics is one of the exact sciences and inquires into abstractions of space and number. Whether the Mathematics be Euclidean or otherwise, all that is necessary is to postulate certain ideas or concepts and adopt a language of symbols and figures to represent our concepts. Having done this, we follow the logical consequences or deductions of our concepts and establish a system of ready-made measurements concerning numbers and spatial figures which are extremely useful to us in the conduct of our life, and the investigation of all departments of science. We become aware of the nature of the reality of space and numbers as we could not possibly have done otherwise. We establish such well-cut systems of calculation that the results obtained are little short of miracles. All this is possible because we have in Mathematics invoked symbols and signs to our aid and we condense logical reasoning to an extent which is almost a miracle, and which is impossible in other sciences. Equations of curves contain in them the innumerable properties which pertain to these curves. Mathematics is a science of visible symbols, and as near a mysticism as any science could be. But

## "WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"

the whole of Mathematics is contained in the axioms,

Mathematics is a deductive science with given hypothesis. postulates and other truths (or supposed truths) which we have postulated beforehand. The study of Mathematics reveals

to us the nature of the reality of truth underlying space or numbers, in accordance with the ideas or concepts of space and numbers *we have already taken for granted*. If these ideas or concepts happen not to be real, but only apparently real, all our deductions are equally apparently real. *Mathematics is a sort of intellectual jugglery by means of which the Mathematician performs or seems to perform miracles of intellectual feats*. But he does not, and cannot, reveal the ultimate nature of the reality of

his ideas or concepts. An Euclidean straight line is supposed to be capable of being produced to an infinite length, and according to Euclid two straight lines cannot enclose a space. But in reality, we know of no such straight lines. We are living on a spherical or nearly spherical body called the earth, and any line drawn anywhere on the surface of this earth is bound to be the arc of a circle. The universe itself appears to be spherical, and it becomes difficult to imagine straight lines in such a universe which are able to conform to Euclid's ideas of a straight line.

Euclid's Geometry only approximately true.

But Euclidean Geometry is not thereby incorrect. Subject to its own hypothesis it is absolutely correct, but when we come to apply it to phenomena where Euclidean definitions do not apply, we find an element of error—an extremely minute element of error—creeping into our calculations. Fortunately, it is so small that for all practical purposes it may be neglected. In Mathematics we get such quantities as the square root of minus one, or  $-1$ , a quantity which has no existence except as a most useful symbol. This and similar other numbers which

cannot be conceived as being real are called "imaginary."

These imaginaries are so useful that without them the science of engineering, and investigations into the working of electrical currents, would be well-nigh impossible. But they do not correspond to any reality that we can posit, or any numbers that we can count. By well agreed algebraical convention, the square of any number, whether positive or negative, is always positive.

For example :

$$(+5) \times (+5) = +25$$

$$(-5) \times (-5) = +25$$

The square root of 25 (or 25) may be +5 or -5, but we cannot imagine any number, whether positive or negative, which, when multiplied by itself, would give a negative result. Therefore,  $\sqrt{-1}$ , or the square root of minus one, is not and cannot be any real number. It must be a fiction. And yet this fiction becomes extremely useful in factorization and other calculations, where the nature of forces is not amenable to the ordinary methods of calculation. We know by experience that :

$a^2 - b^2$  can be resolved into factors, which are  $a+b$  and  $a-b$ , so that—

$$a^2 - b^2 = (a+b) \times (a-b)$$

But what about  $a^2 + b^2$ ? Can we resolve this quantity into factors not involving the product of  $a$  and  $b$ ? By the use of real symbols we cannot. But by the use of "imaginaries" we can. Thus :

$$a^2 + b^2 = a - (-b^2) \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

$$\text{Put } \times^2 = -b^2$$

$$\therefore \times = b \sqrt{-1} = ib \text{ where } i = \sqrt{-1}$$

$$\therefore a^2 + b^2 = a^2 - \times^2 = (a+x)(a-x) \dots\dots(2).$$

Substitute the value of  $x$  in (2) and we get :

$$\therefore a^2 + b^2 = a^2 - \times^2 = (a+b\sqrt{-1})(a-b\sqrt{-1}),$$

or representing  $\sqrt{-1}$  by  $i$ , we get  $a^2 - b^2 = (a+ib)(a-ib)$  which is quite simple to look at and absolutely easy to work. It is in fact another form of

$$a^2 - b^2 = (a+b)(a-b).$$

## "WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"

But the point is that neither Algebra nor Geometry do or can tell us anything about the *ultimate nature* of numbers or space. The investigation of the ultimate nature of reality belongs to philosophy.

Let us take another science and compare its investigations with those of philosophy. Biology, in the narrower <sup>Biology compared with philosophy.</sup> and stricter sense of the term, means the generalized science of the nature, continuance and evolution of organisms. Like mathematics, biology is one of the most useful sciences. Biology has been directly helpful in increasing and improving the food supply of mankind. Within living memory it has improved the breeding of livestock, such as cows, sheep and horses. It has also been of help in increasing and improving the supply of such foodstuffs as wheat, potatoes and cabbages. It has so marvellously changed the quality and quantity of such fruits as oranges and apples, that it may be said to be the science that has been most useful to man and that has studied the nature of life in a way and to an extent which was undreamed of before. Its investigations are leading to practical ways of securing health and preventing disease by the help of Nature herself, and not merely by the use of drugs. It is most certainly going to prolong human life, and, other things being equal, life in the future would be much happier than it has been in the past. In fact, life is already much happier on the whole in the twentieth century than it was ever before and this progress, in spite of all setbacks, is bound to continue. Biology may, therefore, justly and with pride claim to have investigated the nature of life as no other science has done or can do.

Philosophy itself is indebted to biology, as it is to most other sciences, for its recent progress. The mechanistic theory of the universe has received a check from biological discoveries of organisms transcending determinism, and asserting their own autonomy in

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

recreating parts of their organisms or organs which had been lost by accident. In each organism there is the presence of the child of the past and the parent of the future. This subject will be taken up again in later chapters, but, suffice it to say here, that although the ultimate results of biological and philosophical investigations coalesce in parts, philosophy has a much wider field of inquiry than biology. Biology inquires into the nature of the reality of organisms only: philosophy has to search for the ultimate nature of reality underlying everything, whether organic or inorganic. Moreover, biology can hardly extend itself to heavenly bodies. It is confined to life on this earth. Philosophy tries to embrace the whole universe telluric and supra telluric.

Philosophy being concerned with the nature of the universe as a whole, must necessarily pay attention to all branches of science. Philosophical discussions include, on the one hand, questions of detail, especially details of sciences, such as logic and psychology—sciences which deal with mental phenomena—and, on the other hand, ultimate problems concerning all sciences. This immense sweep of philosophical interest results in the production of philosophies of various types and shades. Not only are philosophers peculiarly liable to be affected by their views on their pet sciences—arts, religion, politics and social and other influences of their age, but the temperament and experience of each philosopher are peculiar to himself. The result is an apparent conglomeration of diverse and contradictory philosophies.

But a moment's reflection will show us that this variety instead of being a loss is a direct gain to philosophy. By the very nature of philosophical inquiry this result might have been foretold. No one individual, or set of individuals, in any age can possibly lay claim to an all

## **"WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"**

round familiarity with all sides of life and culture, especially culture of the advanced type required by a philosopher. The diversity and apparently contradictory nature of the views of different philosophers, represent the nature of reality as they see it from their respective positions, and all are right as long as they express what they really experience. The only false philosophers, if any, are those who do not say what they mean, or who do not mean what they say. The hypocrite and the liar have no place in philosophy. Sometimes, however, men, without being hypocrites, are so fond of high-flown language that it is difficult to understand what they are driving at. On the other hand, there are those who get so immersed in details that their study, instead of being philosophical, degenerates into details of science. "They fail too often," says Viscount Haldane, "not only to see the wood for the trees, but the trees themselves, because of undue attention to the bark, and even the bark itself because of our concern over its specks." That is the danger of over-specialization.

"I have an extreme dislike for vague, confused, and oracular writing," says C. D. Broad, "and I have very little patience with authors who express themselves in this style. I believe that what can be said at all, can be said simply and clearly in any civilized language or in a suitable system of symbols, and that verbal obscurity is almost a sign of mental confusion. Some writers . . . are struggling to express profound ideas in imperfect language."

The REAL or GOD is concurrent with Nature and all Natural phenomena. In the analytical treatment of sciences, the whole reality from which we start has to be left behind. Reality as a whole cannot be cut up or analyzed. But for scientific argument such cutting up or analysis is absolutely necessary. Science deals with the particulars of knowledge,

Analysis and  
synthesis.



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

not its universals. Hence the necessity of philosophy or rather of philosophical synthesis. *Philosophy thus interpreted becomes the complement of all sciences.* It gathers up the scattreedy threads of all sciences and weaves them back again into the whole, of which they are parts and where they always remain. The scientific analysis of these threads of Reality is, just like philosophy, merely a mental process. In analytical knowledge, Reality reveals its various aspects, whereas in philosophical synthesis it shows itself as a whole.

Having stated above, our view of the analysis of science and the synthesis of philosophy, we must guard against an error in which a great many philosophers are

Philosophy  
must not imitate  
science.

becoming involved, and in which we ourselves might be involved if we do not clear it up here once and for all. The approach of science to the investigation of the nature of reality is, and can only be, by regarding its subject as a kind of dead matter on which the intellect of man makes its operations, and finds out the reality it is seeking. For example, when a biologist examines organisms, he studies them, just as a physicist does matter. The biologist analyses life just as the physicist does matter, and in order to get at his results he can only proceed in this way. There is no other way open to him. Vivisection and a thousand other operations of the doctor and the biologist are on the same footing as the weighing, cutting and measuring of dead or inorganic matter by the physicist. The doctor or the biologist cannot be thinking of the feeling of his patient or subject of operation. But with the philosopher it is just the value of these feelings, passions and life impulses that are his all-in-all. Unless the philosopher rises above the plane of the scientist, he may go on in his investigations for a thousand years, without finding anything about the ultimate nature of the Reality which governs the whole

## "WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"

universe. That is where the difficulty and nebulosity of philosophy come in. Philosophy, in this respect, is like poetry of the sublimest type, but again philosophy is not poetry. Poetry is a play of imagination. Philosophy is strictly rational, though its premises are not ordinary matters or ordinary organisms, but the mystery which is in both and yet beyond them both.

One cannot write or talk like this without becoming a mystic and unintelligible, but it is well to point this out so that the reader may be prepared to follow the aim of this book, which is to discuss the ultimate nature of the Reality *from within*, making Reality itself guide us, and not our becoming its censor and critic which is exactly what a scientist has to do. The scientist has to consider himself as an individual superior to the subject he is investigating. But there is nothing superior to or beyond Reality. *The ultimate nature of Reality can only be studied by identifying ourselves with the course which Reality adopts in its various manifestations of organic and inorganic matter and the innumerable combinations of both.* Only in this way can we make any progress in philosophy, and only in this sense can philosophy be a guide to civilization as the compass is to the mariner. The strain of such philosophizing is tremendous and we must relax our sallies into the Real by occasional walks in the domain of science, but always intending to come back and be carried away by the live-current of the Real. And we must warn the reader that we are only able to get glimpses of the Real and are not able to stand in full view of the LIGHT that there is—here, there, everywhere.

No one can see the Real, but He sees us. He is always near, the Nearest One of all.

Like most other branches of knowledge which deal with Reality, philosophy seldom inquires into its own reality or necessity, and yet this inquiry is most pertinent. The neglect

The necessity  
of philosophy.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

of this principle has led to results which are obviously barren. One defect has already been pointed out in the last two paragraphs. Most philosophers begin to analyze the whole of reality as the scientist does, in his own particular branch of study. In their study of reality, the individual becomes the centre round which the reality is made to revolve. The whole of reality becomes an "objective," to this centre, which then necessarily becomes its "subjective." But this is entirely wrong. The individual is nothing but a transitory point in the whole of reality and part of it—an infinitesimal part of it which has its momentary appearance and being, and is then transmuted, or merged into the whole. The findings and judgments of such a transitory point in the whole of reality seem to vanish away with their own disappearance, and if anything remains, or appears to remain, it cannot be said to reveal or describe the ultimate nature of the whole of reality. We cannot treat the whole of reality as the scientist does his particular branch of knowledge. If we do so, then our findings will be nothing better than appearances of an appearance. The mind of the individual is an appearance and his judgments are appearances of his appearance and nothing more. We must try to get outside our own individual point in the universe, and try to view it as a whole from within itself. This is certainly very difficult and very nebulous, but it is the only right way of philosophizing.

We can dispense with philosophy no more than we can do with our daily nourishment. We, as human beings, having been born with the gifts of imagination and reasoning or rationalizing, cannot help philosophizing. Every child, as soon as it becomes conscious of himself or herself, begins to ask questions which are truly philosophical. We are born philosophers though we are

## "WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL"

not born scholars. We are not born with knowledge ready poured into our minds, but *we are born inquisitive. And philosophy is nothing but an inquiry.* Each human individual is single. But round him are other men—his parents, brothers, strangers. Then there are other animals, some of them useful and some of them harmful. He has also to take account of heat, cold, rain, air and water. These things are also very useful and sometimes very hurtful. No life can exist without water. But deep water drowns him. There is the whole world round each single individual. Things do not exist independently of each other. There is inter-connection of a confusingly complex kind. The more this human individual grows, the greater his experience of the world, the greater is this complexity of inter-connections—connections between men and men; between men and animals; between animals as a whole and inanimate matter. Then there are obvious connections between what individual men, societies of men, animals and groups of animals want for their living, and above all, what human beings think and desire. The problem increases in extent and complexity every moment of the individual's existence. The human being born with the rationalizing spirit seeks to find some unity in this complexity—some single view which will harmonize his own being with the rest of the world. One does not need to be a scholar to do this. Every child attempts it, but is generally repressed by the single answer—"we don't know," or, "don't ask such silly questions." The man of the world becomes wise, looks after his own business and leaves all questioning to philosophers who generally get little thanks for their pains. *But whether a philosopher be right or wrong, as long as he is doing his work honestly he is satisfying an inborn hunger after knowledge—the most difficult knowledge of all—of the ultimate nature of reality.*

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

The divisions and departments of philosophy are extending every day, but, by general agreement, three divisions are said to be its main departments. These are :

- Departments of philosophy.
- (1) *Ontology* (fr. Gk. *eimi* be : *ontos*, being and *logos*, knowledge).—Knowledge concerned with the essence of things or beings in the abstract, or the study of the ultimate nature of being or reality.
  - (2) *Epistemology* (Gk. *episteme*, knowledge and *logos*).—Theory of the methods or grounds of knowledge, or the study of the ultimate nature, validity and limitations of human knowledge.
  - (3) *Axiology* (Gk. *axioo* hold worthy of).—The study of the ultimate nature, reality and significance of values (goodness and beauty).

Ontology and Epistemology are grouped together and called Metaphysics.

Axiology is divided into (a) Ethics or Moral Philosophy, the study of the ultimate ideal and norms of conduct ; (b) *Æsthetics* or the Philosophy of Beauty, the study of the ultimate ideals and norms of art.

Besides these departments, Logic or the study of the general conditions of valid reasoning is preliminary to all other studies. Logic (Gk. *Logos*) is the study of knowledge in the abstract just as Mathematics is the study of numbers and spatial figures in the abstract ; but Logic underlies all reasoning and may be said to be the mother of all sciences. The knowledge which distinguishes man from other animals is Logic. A man need not be a scholar to be a Logician. Our speech and our conduct are all founded on logic—sometimes it is correct logic and sometimes it is not, but the appearance of logic only.

Most books on philosophy are written either as aids to university students to pass examinations in Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy, or as a refutation by one philosopher of the theories of

The aim of the book.

## “ WORDS ARE AS BREATH AND WILL IS ALL ”

another or others. In this way, books and systems multiply by the score. To quote Frederic Harrison, “ Oxford calls out to Edinburgh ; Birmingham challenges Harvard ; and Glasgow replies to Cambridge. And one and all appeal to Jena, Berlin, Tibingen, or Bonn. Now the cry is : “ Back to Kant ! ” Anon it is : “ Hegel to the rescue ! ” and then there comes to the front New schopenhaurianism, or the Pan-pessimism of Nietzsche, and the Pragmatism of Signor Papini. The cry is still : “ They come ! ” (*The Philosophy of Common Sense*, p. xviii.)

This Babel of philosophies would not matter if they were intelligible, but most of them are Greek or Dutch to the reader of the King’s English. To quote the same book again (p. xii) : “ The modern Metaphysical Tongue is far more bewildering to the unlearned than either Esperanto or Volapuk.”

The aim of the present volume is to state and interpret the philosophy of the Qur-án in as simple a language as possible. The philosophy of the Qur-án is summed up in its first sentence which, translated literally, is as follows :

“ The praise belongs to God, Lord of worlds ”

Paraphrased in proper English this means :

All goodness, truth and beauty are part of the Real (God Who is the source, nourisher, and guide of all that is known).

All the three departments of philosophy are contained in this one sentence.

Starting at the end we get first :

*Epistemology* : We must find out by perceptions and conceptions all that the human mind can find out by itself. That is the Universe and all that which is known.

This being done, we must realize that, with all that is known, is its source, nourisher and guide called *Rabb* in Arabic, and *Vital Principle* in this book. God is the

*Vital Principle* of all the worlds of minds and matter. The aim of all this knowledge and all this acknowledgment of the Keal is the realization of His values of Goodness, Beauty and Truth, and the cultivation of these values in ourselves.

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### CORRESPONDENCE

#### A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT

BY MISS (ZAITUN) HOWELL

[We have much pleasure in publishing this short but inspiring article by Miss Olive (Zaitun) Howell. Our readers are not unfamiliar with the Howell family, which has been intimately connected with the Mosque activities ever since their very inception. As Muslims, this noble family has now reached its third generation—*Ed.*]

What am I calling a great achievement? You may wonder. Well, only a photo in a monthly Woking magazine—the photo of the Mosque with a few other very important photos of Woking.

To many readers that may seem nothing. They have seen photos of the Mosque in magazines in London, etc. Yes! But in Woking! To me, who has lived in Woking, this is indeed a great achievement to see put in my door a book with the photo of the Mosque, quite beyond the knowledge of the Mosque residents. This little action cries out that we have nearly won—and what a battle it is that we have won. You all know the saying that—“A Prophet has no honour in his own country.” Well, in a manner, this applies to the Woking Mosque, the headquarters for the propagation of Islam in the West—the first place to attempt giving England the Truth of Islam. The inhabitants of Woking had no desire for Islam. Woking is a small but important place, narrow in its views, hating everything fresh, and from it up starts Islam, new to its inhabitants and unwanted by them—so unwanted, indeed, that they were determined that at all costs it must not be allowed to thrive—it must be nipped in the bud. But how? Oh! Leave that to Woking. First refuse to supply food for the Mosque people. Next cut all people off if they go to the place. I, as a child, went with my father and mother. At school I was given to understand I was wrong. However, the Imam at the Mosque fought hard to dispel the darkness of prejudice. I was taught the religion and was told to be proud of it. I am glad to say a time came when at the same school one was allowed to expound Islam, and was respectfully listened to. The Mosque used to have just a meeting of four people at first, with the imposing figure of Al-Haj Khwaja Kamal-ul-Din, who did so much to instil Islam into our childish brains.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din did not get troubled over the obstinacy of the people at Woking. God had sent him with the dearest old man—Munshi Neor Ahmad. All the children loved him even though their parents tried to frighten them by all kinds of tales.

Around these two men I really think the Light described as “Noor” shone. Well, they fought on just like a brave garrison, getting food and printing work done from London. I always remember someone telling my father that his business would suffer. Well, it did, but if these men were willing to give up homes and callings just to preach the Truth, then it must be a religion worth having. Years passed. Then gradually Woking realized this was a power which could not be subdued, and it started to supply food; but to be allowed to print Islam in its true colours—No, not *that*. Woking must not print anything for the Mosque. Its work was refused by a local printer on the ground that a Church magazine refused all their work if they touched Mosque work. These things happened before my eyes. But this did not worry the Imam, and he had the printing done in London. But a day came when a Woking Firm accepted the service, and even printed a Muslim version of the Qur-án. What a ladder to climb, and how this brave band of believers, looking more like Christ than an Englishman, can do, acclaimed Christ as a great Prophet, instead of condemning him as Christians condemned Muhammad.

But Islam means Peace, and so it fought on peaceful lines. Only to tell the Truth here came Khwaja and his comrades, and, as befitting the position of the preachers of Truth, they were patient and peaceful.

The cry for Truth continued, with Woking trying to drown it. Five times a day the cry for prayers rang out, as it did on the day when these two brave men opened the dusty doors of the Mosque.

Then Woking tried, after the War, to wipe Woking Islam out. The principal Churchman called Islam a “menace” in a local paper. Was he frightened? God knows. The paper, however, heard our view—as it had to. The reverend gentleman was invited to a debate. This he refused, but Woking learned a lot through that gentleman’s condemning Islam. They began seeing the Truth. But still Woking was stubborn. In 1934, after a canvasser had taken an order from the Mosque to print the Truth about Islam, he had to refuse, saying that his proprietors would not allow its being printed. But now, after two years, on the cover of their own magazine the self-same printer prints the photo of the Mosque with five important photographs, and what is more, as if a miracle had changed the attitude of the people here, the Imam is being invited by the most aristocratic of Woking Clubs—Rotary Club and the Round Table Club—to give them after-dinner religious talks. Glory to God!

This is not an article. I am no writer. But my heart was bursting. I had to give a cry of joy and here it is. No one knows



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

the struggle, the pioneers of the Mosque have had. Those who read this cannot realize. But never should they forget the great men who gave up their health, home and wealth for the sake of Islam. I only wish they had lived to see the great achievement, but I know they knew it would come, and now they call for you to carry on the work. There are still many places now, to-day like Woking as it was in those days, stubborn and ignorant. You must help.

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### NOTES AND COMMENTS

#### *The Duce and Islam*

The whole British Press was agog on the 16th of March with the news of Signor Mussolini's new rôle as "Defender of Islam." The vibrations of this Italian move continued for many days in British political thought. The reaction in the London Press was merely one of self-defence, some of the papers recounting Italian atrocities, others calling Mussolini a second Napoleon, still others giving him the title of a second Kaiser. The northern papers, however, took a broader view of the subject, and their opinions were not far from the truth as far as the political aspect of the matter is concerned. Of these, those of the *Manchester Guardian* are of special note. Quite sanely it remarked: "The unrest of the Muslims of the Mediterranean basin, which undoubtedly exists, is directed against all Powers under whose dominance they live, whether these are Britain, France, Italy or Spain. Islam, in so far as such a unity exists to-day, is not demanding substitution of one Western protection for another, but independence."

#### *The Feeling of the Muslim World*

The religious feeling of the Muslim world on this sensational move of the Duce was truly and wisely voiced by the Imam of the Mosque, Woking, and by Shaikh Al-Maraghi, Rector of the Al-Azhar University of Cairo. Their views, published by the English Press as quickly as they were expressed, went a long way towards impressing the Western mind with the wisdom of the Muslim

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

religious leadership. The Imam's opinion, as quoted by the London papers, was that "no non-Muslim can be a Defender of the Faith; the religious freedom of the Muslims in the Italian Empire, as proposed by Mussolini, is nothing new as compared to the freedom given by the British Government to its Muslim subjects, on account of which the British rule has been borne by them with such tolerance and faithfulness." Shaikh Al-Maraghi is reported to have said: "The only person who can be recognised as Islam's defender is one who professes and believes in the Truth of Islam, one who does everything in his power to carry out the teachings of Islam and the enhancement of the Qur-án's position. Anyone without these qualities would not be recognised." We do not think more words are needed to make the position clear.

### *A Lesson for the Muslims*

We do not wish to let this matter drop without a word of warning to our co-religionists. A clever man like Mussolini would not start a thing without judging facts for and against the possibilities of its achievement. Evidently he has grounds for believing that there are still Muslims in this world who are prepared to play into the hands of ambitious European diplomats. That the number of such Muslims was enormous in the past we have to confess with shame and repentance. We have a right to expect that that generation of simpletons exists no longer, and that a new and a wiser generation is leading the affairs of the Muslim East. Mussolini's move, however, creates some doubt in our minds in this connection. It seems that there is still quite a large measure of gullibility in the Muslim mind to be played upon by a shrewd European Imperialist. Indeed, it is extremely disheartening to find, not to mention Eastern Muslims, even some Western Muslims duped by the glamorous promises of the Duce. We are surprised, for example, to find an English Muslim, Mr. Khalid Sheldrake,

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

taking all that the Italian Dictator says at its face value, and actively engaging in the task of upholding him as the greatest champion of Islam in this age. His speeches and articles, as published in the Indian and South African papers, have very much shattered our hopes regarding the growing political wisdom of the Muslims. We only hope that our suspicions are exaggerated.

### *The Defence of Islam*

What amused us most was the anxiety of some British papers to take this opportunity to solve for the Muslims the problem of the Khilafat. Whatever might have led the Muslims of the world, particularly those of India, to launch the Khilafat Movement when, at the end of the Great War, the Allied Powers sought to and did dismember the Turkish Sultanate, in flagrant breach of the understanding to the contrary given to the Muslims of the British Empire, it would be absurd to think that the Islamic Faith has been rendered defenceless either by the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire by the Allied Powers or by the abolition of the Khilafat by the Turkish Dictator. We assure our friends that God of Islam is well able to look after His own religion, even when all His earthly agencies fail. The astounding material resources of Christendom, coupled with the flood of fraud and lies which the powerful brain of the West could devise, could not succeed even for a moment in checking the spiritual march of Islam even at the time when the political forces of Islam were practically nil in the world—we mean just at the end of the Great War. Rather it was at that moment, when politically Islam was for all practical purposes crushed, that its spiritual glory shone at its brightest. It was during the war that Islam, as a religion, had been taking its root in the heart of Western Christendom. In fact, the hand of God behind the Islamic religious movement could not be seen clearer than in the fact that when the materialist West thought that Islam was

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

vanquished even in its birthplace, they found, to their surprise, that it had in the meantime been established in the Christian West. Indeed, the rapid growth of Islam in England, through the humble services of the Woking Mission, is one of the standing miracles of history.

As for certain political safeguards of Islam, *viz.*, the independence of the Holy Places, even that was equally miraculously provided for at that critical moment. The rise of a political genius like Ibn Saud among the Arabs to reconquer in the real sense of the word the Hedjaz for Islam, was again nothing short of a miracle. So what little political defence was needed in the interest of Islam as a religion was providentially secured for it at the darkest hour of its history.

### *State and Religion in Islam*

It is true that Islam is not only a body of doctrines, but also a code of social laws that have their bearing on the political and administrative aspects of a State. It is this fact that has led many to believe that Islam cannot exist apart from political powers. This is wrong. The fact is that, although Islam has a conception of State of its own and has an elaborate programme for it, its minimum demands on the individual are such that even the most autocratic and whimsical non-Muslim ruler will not find them conflicting with his ruling policy, unless, of course, like the Christian fanatics of the Middle Ages, he holds the view that it is of itself a political crime that one should not believe in the way the established Church wants him to believe. In other words, whereas the maximum demands of Islam are a challenge to all the existing systems of social life in their entirety, its minimum demands are reconcilable with any secular State policy. A clear understanding of this fact is very much needed in the Western mind to enable it to appreciate the position of Islam as a religion.

### *Islam and the Coptic Church*

The *Church of Ireland Gazette*, in its issue of the 5th of March, publishes the following piece of news: "Some of the leaders in the Coptic Church are becoming seriously alarmed at the increasing number of the *nominal* members of their community who are embracing Islam. The number last year was said to be about 600. The C. M. S. Evangelist student centre in Cairo is co-operating with Coptic leaders in tackling this problem." (Italic is our.)

We beg to differ from this version of the situation in only a small matter of detail. The "nominal" Christians are not those who are becoming Muslims, but those who are persisting in their old Church. It is only those who do not care to know what Christianity is and what Islam is that can actually adhere to the Christian Church, and those are the people that can rightly be called "nominal" Christians because it is only a sort of communal patriotism which makes them stick to a faith that their mind does not comprehend. On the other hand, those that take the bold step of renouncing their ancestral faith, in spite of the fact that it happens to be the faith of the all-dominating West, are certainly persons that try to understand religions—the one that has been handed down to them by their ancestors as well as that which they find professed by their compatriots of the other religious communities—and these can by no means be called nominal Christians. If one insists on calling them nominal Christians, we can boldly say that there is no Christian to-day in the whole world, unless Christianity is taken to mean conventionalism.

### *Muhammad, an Apostle of Christ (?)*

It is interesting to see how the attitude towards the Prophet Muhammad not only of the Christian laity but of the Church leaders in this country is fast undergoing a change. No sensible preacher is found repeating now

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

the old theories about the Prophet. They have quite other things to-day about him, but nothing to the effect that he was an impostor, and did not do any good but only harm to humanity. An example of this change of front comes from the report of the address given by the Rev. J. Reid Christie, M.A., at the Muswell Hill Presbyterian Church on Sunday, the 28th of February. Speaking of the Prophet, he is quoted as saying: "Muhammad, who was born at Mecca in the year 570 A.D., was a great religious reformer, to whose soul came the great truth of the One God, and who swept away the idolatry of the Arab tribes by his whirlwind preaching of that great truth. For his knowledge of the sacred things, he was greatly indebted to Judaism, and it is a reproach to the Christian Church that, if it had been true to its missionary call, in that age, it might have won the great religious genius of Muhammad to be a sixth-century apostle of Christ, instead of being the founder of a rival religion."

We do not wish to quote the speaker any further, as that will land us into an unpleasant controversy with him into which we do not wish to enter in view of his candid opinion on a fundamental point of religion. We also refrain from criticising his view on the Prophet's knowledge of sacred things, as that is based on the confused ideas of Christendom on the nature of revelation. Probably, it will take a long time yet for the people of the West to be so established into the true doctrines of religion as clearly to understand such fundamental spiritual things as revelation, salvation and the like. In the meantime, we feel bound to express our appreciation of the way in which the reverend gentleman has spoken of the mission of Muhammad, and although it is no compliment to Muhammad to regard him as an apostle of Christ, his remarks do certainly make a very close approach to the following Qur-ánic verse:

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

“Say: O followers of the Book! Come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but the One God, and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides God.” (3: 63.)

On the Muslim side, the offer of co-operation as contained in this verse is as binding to-day as it was in the time of the Prophet. The Rev. Christie is right in saying that the Christians of that time failed to appreciate this offer. Will the Christian Church of to-day, at least the Presbyterian section of it, respond to it now with any earnestness? It is for the Rev. Christie to reply.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Religion of Islam.**—*Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., author of “An English Translation of the Holy Quran, with Text and Commentary.”*

(Published by the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at-i-Islam, Lahore, (India), 1936 : pp. xxviii 784. Price 15s. Postage extra.)

The name of Maulana Muhammad Ali is well known to the English-speaking world of religion and even beyond. His English translation of the Holy Qurán, with commentary, was the first translation of the Holy Book in a European language by a Muslim. Since then, he has been incessantly wielding his pen in expounding the religion of Islam for the benefit of the modern world of science and reasoning.

The present work epitomises his intellectual labours in this connection for the last quarter of a century or more, and is divided into three parts, besides the introduction—(1) The Sources of Islam, (2) The Principles of Islam, (3) The Laws and Regulations of Islam.

He approaches Islam not only as “the most civilizing and the greatest spiritual force of the world” but also as offering “a solution of the most baffling problems which

## BOOK REVIEWS

confront mankind." In this last connection, the author opens up a new phase of research in Islamic theology. He resumes the task of old-time Fuqahá in applying the principles of the Sharí'a'h to the changing needs of human social life. Accordingly, the light of discursive logic which he has thrown on the third part of his work entitled "The Laws and Regulations of Islam" is not only a courageous, though much-needed step, but also one that is likely to commend Islam to the practical West, tired of, and almost antagonistic to, the mystical side of religion.

Rational though the author may appear to be in his exposition of the doctrines and principles of Islam, and even in his application of those principles to the practical needs of society, he is nevertheless scrupulously orthodox as an expounder of Islam. Rather as a scientific expounder of the subject he recounts those principles in the beginning of the book to clarify the issue for the readers. His scrupulousness in this matter may be judged by his giving no fewer than 2,500 references and quotations to prove his contentions.

We do not give the author any position of infallibility, neither does he claim it. Nevertheless, to him must be given the credit of leading the way in a most important field of religious investigation, if Islam is to prove the salvation of humanity in this most complicated of all ages.

**Sahih Al-Bukhari.**—By Leopold Weiss alias Muhammad Asad. The Arafát Publications. Srinagar, Kashmir. 1935 : pp. 80.

Price 4s.

This is the English translation of the famous book of Traditions, "Al-Bukhári," the documentary value of which is justly regarded as ranking next only to that of the Holy Qur-án itself.

The appearance of Muhammad Ali's English translation of the Qur-án, with Arabic Text and Commentary, about two decades ago, marked the New Era of the



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Muslim's reviving interest in the cause of his religion. Since then the Qur-án has gone through many editions in English and in other European languages through Muslim efforts, and the contents of the Qur-án, with their true meanings, are rapidly becoming more and more known to the Western public.

It was in the fitness of things, therefore, that the Muslim's attention was now turned towards the next important thing in Islam, *viz.*, the Hadíth; and it is gratifying to note that this much needed want is going to be fulfilled by a Muslim of European extraction. Mr. Weiss had already shown his remarkable grasp of the spirit of Islam in his book "Islam at the Cross-roads" before he attempted this gigantic work. One might discover in that book an infection of the general Muslim pessimism in matters religious, and also of the feeling of religious exclusiveness which had lately grown in the Muslim race, if such a phrase be permitted. Nevertheless, the philosophical understanding of Islam by a European just initiated into the Faith as exhibited in that book was nothing short of a miracle.

The present book reveals the spiritual genius of the writer in a far greater degree. As a matter of fact, the way in which he has understood and explained so many orthodox Islamic ideas to the modern world, belies his own theory that the European mind is unfit for the spiritual understanding of Islam. No doubt ideas have been expressed in the course of his explanatory notes in which we are bound to disagree with the author, keeping in view certain clear and fundamental principles of Islam. For example that on page 79 to the effect that although Islam does not countenance force in the propagation of religion, it can be resorted to in the case of Believers who are lax in its observance. We are afraid this interpretation of the 25th Tradition of his book cannot be regarded as orthodox, as it nullifies, for all practical purposes, the

## BOOK REVIEWS

unambiguous and unreserved declaration of the Qur-án in Surah 2, v. 256, to the effect that there should be no manner of compulsion in matters religious. There are other and minor misreadings of the Hadith, which are excusable in the case of a new member of the brotherhood like Mr. Weiss, who has to fight not only against the predilections of his own racial traditions, but also against the mass of different and sometimes subtle corrupted notions prevalent among the different sections of Muslims themselves, because of their general ignorance of the Qur-ánic teachings. This ignorance, we must hasten to make clear, is owing to two reasons: (1) indifference to religion arising out of the material prosperity they had attained to just before their decadence started, and (2) perpetuation and deepening of this ignorance at the present age owing to their material energy being deflected by political and economic subjection. Great caution should, therefore, be exercised in picking up ideas about Islam away from their original sources, the Qur-án and the Hadith—the one the basic Code and the other the authoritative explanation of Islamic religious principles.

Nevertheless, we welcome the book, as it is, as the harbinger of a new stage in Muslim religious activities, and wish it all success in its attempt to cast the spiritual light of the greatest character of the world on the intellectual horizon of the Western nations.

The present volume brings us to the end of the second book of “Al-Bukhári,” *viz.*, the Book of Faith. The English translation is given side by side with the Arabic Text in the manner of Mohd. Ali’s translation of the Holy Qur-án, the only difference being that in this book the vowel points are missing—an omission, we are assured, that will be made good in subsequent editions. The annotations are extremely learned and enlightening, and form by themselves an exhaustive treatise on the various matters connected with the Faith of Islam.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

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A. D. A.

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