

"Muhammad is... the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets..."—Holy Qur-ān, 33
 "There will be no Prophet after me."—Muhammad.

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

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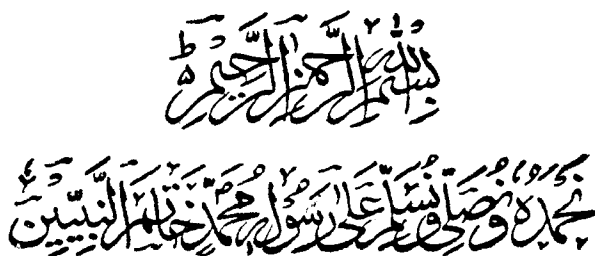
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A DECLARATION

I, Edward Thomas Dominic McGuire, of Michigan, U.S.A., 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 ilaha il-Allah Muhammad-un-Rasul Allah

[There is but one God (Allah) and Muhammad is God's Messenger.]

(Sd.) ABDUR RAHMAN MCGUIRE

24-4-37.

REVELATION—ITS NATURE AND FUNCTION¹

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD, B.A.

"And it is not for any mortal that God should speak to him except by Revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a Messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases. Surely He is High, Wise."

"And thus did We reveal to you an inspired Book of Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor what the Faith was, but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants: and most surely you show the way to the right path.

"The path of God, Whose is whatsoever is in the Heavens and whatsoever is in the Earth: now surely to God do all affairs return." (42:51-53.)

It is expected of a Scripture that it should explain everything that appertains to the religious life of man. The Holy Qur-án lays stress on this principle again and again. We leave it to the followers of other religions to see how far their respective Scriptures fulfil the demands of this principle. We, however, claim on behalf of our Scripture, the Holy Qur-án, that it does fulfil this demand. Leaving aside other points of religion, if a book claims to have come through Revelation, it should at least explain the phenomenon of Revelation itself. To-day there are many books existing in the world claiming to be revealed, but does one of them anywhere try to explain what Revelation is, how it comes, and what its function is? I am afraid all of them excepting the Qur-án are absolutely silent on this most important point.

The Qur-án speaks of three kinds of Revelation. The first kind is termed "Wahy," which is generally translated as "Revelation" for want of a better word. The significance of the word as used here is given by Raghīb as "A hasty suggestion." Every man or woman, at some critical point of his or her life, while despairing of any way out of a difficulty, sees the flash of a new light and catches an unexpected glimpse of resourcefulness that solves the whole difficulty. When such an understanding comes, even the most agnostic acknowledges in his heart of hearts that it is an external thing,

The text of a lecture delivered at a meeting of the Muslim Society in Great Britain held at its headquarters, 18 Eccleston Square, S.W. 2.

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and not in any way the product of his own mental faculties. But as time wears on, gradually in his arrogance he appropriates the credit of the discovery to himself, and thus relapses to his dark agnosticism again. To a person enlightened with the true state of affairs, I mean to one who has been initiated into the knowledge of spiritual things, this kind of knowledge is clearly distinguishable from the one that our mind consciously or sub-consciously acquires by means of its faculties from the experiences of the physical existences. To him it is evidently an external thing—a Revelation from God.

This experience being very common has been the primary cause of man's belief in the recurring interest of God in the affairs of humanity as distinguished from His original interest shown in the creation of the Universe with the Laws that govern it.

The second kind of Revelation is described as "from behind the veil." This includes true dreams and spiritual visions showing happenings far away in time and space. They are kindred experiences—the only difference is that whereas dreams come when the person is asleep, visions come when the person is awake.

This experience, though not quite so common, comes sometimes to all sorts of persons, some being *more privileged* than others. Most of us can recall at least one or two experiences of this kind in our life. In persons with keen spiritual perceptions, and leading lives of virtue and purity, these experiences are so frequent that they make them lean more to this source of knowledge than to any other. Thus the earliest experiences of our last Prophet, Muhammad, consisted of this type of revelation, which is thus described in the Hadith on the authority of Ayisha, his wife: "The first kind of revelation to which the Apostle of God was initiated was the true dream during sleep; and he never saw

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a dream but it came like the dawn of the morn. Thereafter solitude became dear unto him, and he withdrew into seclusion in the cave of Hira, and there applied himself to ardent devotion."

But this revelation from "behind the veil" includes another experience which is of still rarer happening, *viz.*, some words or phrases are comprehended by the faculty of spiritual hearing in man, prophesying or giving guidance about some important affair. The words are heard, but the speaker is not seen. This may happen either in sleep, or, less frequently, while one is awake.

One may ask here the question: "How are we to distinguish between a true dream and a false dream, between a revelational vision and an ordinary vision, and lastly between words created by the sub-conscious mind and the words that come as a revelation from the Divine Court?" The reply is: first, that the reality of any such experience is tested by facts. In other words when the dream or the vision or the prophecy comes true, the recipient of the knowledge can no longer doubt the nature of his experience. But, apart from that, just as a jeweller recognises a true stone the moment he sees it, the recipient of a piece of revelation can, from experience, distinguish it from other experiences that are unreal by its distinctive features. One who has experiences of revelation can never mistake it. The confusion lies only in the case of those who have no clear experience of the phenomenon.

Before I proceed further I must once more emphasize that revealed knowledge is an experience external to the mind of man. It is no product of the mind, conscious or sub-conscious. It does not hinder the working of our mental faculties; it comes to us when and where our mental faculties fail to guide us. It is to the eye of the mind what the telescope or microscope is to the physical eye.

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But what I have spoken so far about revelation concerns only those kinds of revelations which are more or less of a private or personal nature, and are, consequently, limited in their functions. The utility of these experiences is twofold. First, it makes a person acquainted with the phenomenon of revelation, and helps him in his belief and faith in the highest form of revelation about which I am going to speak, and which is of paramount importance to men as individuals and as a species. Secondly, it is the only sure proof of the existence of God. All our intellectual calculations can lead us to the conclusion that "there ought to be a God," "there should be a God," but not to the conclusion that "there *is* a God." Indirect indications or the circumstantial evidences of the existence of a thing may appear to be conclusive, and yet it is quite possible that the thing does not actually exist. It is only the direct evidence that finally proves the existence of a thing. This direct evidence has been furnished by the Voice of God speaking to the heart of man, saying: "HERE I AM."

Again, it is extremely foolish of man to think that he can discover God with his own intellectual light, as if God is a mineral substance which can be discovered by digging this dark and dead earth. It is true that there exists in man such a thing as the light of conscience or reasoning. But to employ that light in finding out God is as good as to try to discover the *sun* after it has set with the help of *candle-light*. The sun has to reveal itself to people in order that people can see it. And when it does reveal itself all the lesser lights that mankind possess are as superfluous as they were useless when it had not so revealed itself. So it is the child in man that talks of discovering God through the tiny lamp of knowledge called conscience and reasoning. Nay, it is

a kind of arrogance, most dangerous of all arrogance in its consequences. It makes man feel himself independent of that recurring spiritual sustenance of God without which he cannot reach the final goal of his spiritual journey. It makes him forget that whereas the intellect of man is capable of comprehending the laws that govern the physical world, it is completely beyond its powers to comprehend the laws working in the world of emotion. Intellect rather than understanding and directing the emotions is invariably found to act as their handmaid. Even the vilest act can be shown as the best, clothed in the fine dress of plausibility which the intellect can make for it. It is for this reason that purely intellectual philosophy, not backed by spiritual experiences, has always floundered in agnosticism, cynicism and passion-worship.

People talk glibly of conscience, not knowing what it actually is. I agree with conscience theorists that there is an intuitive feeling in man that is capable of distinguishing right from wrong, and thus tries to guide the moral destiny of man. But this capability is balanced by the stronger possibility of finding an ever increasing pleasure in wrong-doing. The fact is that the human mind is equally poised between good and evil and as such it needs an external help, an extra urge from outside that will enable it to realise its potentialities for good. The conscience or the inclination for good is there all right, but without some outside help it feels increasingly weak when beset by evil inclinations, and gradually gets merged into them. The intellect is like a double-edged sword cutting both ways. It always goes with the preponderating disposition, and supplies arguments to justify its conduct in the manner of a lawyer in a court of law. This accounts for high intellectuality and callous immorality going hand in hand.

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The Qur-án discusses this very important fact in the following words: "Consider the fig and the olive. And Mount Sinai. And this city made secure. Certainly We created man in the best make. Then We rendered him the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward never to be cut off."

In plain paraphrase this passage will mean: "Look at the spiritual achievements of Buddhism, of which the symbol is the fig or the banyan tree which belongs to the fig species, of Christianity, of which the olive happens to be the symbol, of Judaism connected with the Mount Sinai, and of the universal religion of Islam which is going to proceed from the Holy City of Mecca." They undoubtedly prove that there is the greatest conceivable amount of potentiality in man for spiritual development. But then this potentiality is surrounded with very mean and low tendencies, and the life eternal is only within the reach of those who have the external help of Divine Revelation to guide them in their conduct.

The phrase "those who believe" means those who realise the necessity of Divine guidance and consequently find and follow it.

The light of truth in the mind of man called "conscience" has indeed a very trying career before it. Fed by the spiritual energy received through Prayer, and guided, encouraged and confirmed by the revealed dispensation, it has to grow from a weak seedling to a huge tree covering all the emotions and faculties of man and absorbing all those tendencies which lead to chaos and darkness. The Qur-án divides this process into three stages. In the first stage it is weak as a seedling, entirely at the mercy of passions that can destroy it at any moment. The consciousness at this stage is called "nafsul ammara" or the consciousness monopolised by

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the rebellious and chaotic physical self in man. The spiritual humility and orderliness is too weak to make itself felt. The second stage is that when the spiritual self becomes conscious of its own rights and tries to assert them against those of the physical self. It is at this stage that conscience is able to chastise us for our evil actions. And if the struggle is continued with courage and fortitude we gradually reach the highest stage in our spiritual journey where our conscience has the fullest control of our emotions, and we are safe from the onslaughts of sinful tendencies.

So you see conscience is neither a ready-made thing, nor a constant verity. It can be allowed to die by negligence and it can be cultivated to the point of the fullest knowledge of the Will of God, and our subservience to it. The Qur-án speaks of this fact in the following words: "Consider the soul and its perfection. So He intimated to it by inspiration, its deviating from Truth, and its guarding (against evil). He is indeed successful who causeth it to grow. And he, indeed, is a failure who stunteth it." (91: 7—10.)

Thus the spiritual element in man commonly referred to as conscience which guides his moral consciousness is a culturable thing, and left to itself is no more a power for good than is a grain of seed lying in the granary a power for vegetation.

Now, just as people talk loosely about conscience, they also talk about education. I have already shown that mere intellectual culture is no guarantee for the development of moral consciousness. When this fact is pressed on the attention of our educationist friends, they try to evade the question by saying that it must be the right sort of education. But this is moving in a vicious circle. After all, it is the predilection of the popular mind that ultimately decides what education is proper

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and what is improper, and this predilection is determined by the stage in which the spiritual consciousness of a nation lies.

Whatever the upholders of conscience and education may say, history shows clearly that the moral consciousness of nations has its ebbs and flows, and that nations have sunk to the lowest depth of moral degradation in spite of highly developed and widespread systems of intellectual culture.

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BY C. A. SOORMA

(Continued from Vol. XXV, Page 379)

CHAPTER V

BITTER PERSECUTION

The Arabs had always been notorious for their love of vendetta and feuds. When they found that the power of Muhammad was spreading and new converts strengthened the small band of Muslims, they determined on taking drastic steps to put a stop to the growing influence of Islam.

It is related by many traditionists that each household and family considered it its duty to torture any adherent of Islam over whom it exercised any power or control. At the beginning owing to the considerable power and influence which Abu Talib and notables like Abu Bakr and Osman were able to exercise, the Prophet was not subjected to the same amount of hardship and cruelties which most of his devoted band of followers had to bear patiently. At the same time, it must be admitted that the Prophet himself was certainly not spared. For instance, thorns were strewn across his path, stones and sticks were hurled at him. His face was cut

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and scarred. His teeth were knocked out. His body bore many a scar, injuries inflicted by a hostile people. They threw dirt and filth on him when he walked the streets and walked round the *Kaaba*. The street boys were set up to laugh, scorn and jeer at him. Filthy abuse and insults wounded his sensitive soul more than physical injury. But he bore all this patiently. Once he was driven out of the city and he had to seek refuge in Taif, a hill-station near Mecca. While on his way there, he was grievously assaulted and beaten. Wounded and bleeding, thirsty, famished, he went to a hillock, and raising his hands towards heaven, he cried :

“O Lord, I make my complaint to Thee. Out of my feebleness and the vanity of my wishes I am insignificant in the sight of men; O Thou most merciful! Lord of the weak, Thou art my Lord. Forsake me not. Leave me not a prey to strangers, nor to mine enemies. If Thou art not offended, I am safe. I seek refuge in the light of Thy countenance by which all darkness is dispelled and peace cometh here and hereafter. Solve Thou my difficulties as it pleaseth Thee. *Guide these people in the right path for they do not know what they do.*”

Instead of calling upon God to punish a people who had so ill-treated him and his followers; instead of threatening them with vengeance both human and divine, what do we find? We note that the man Muhammad, prematurely aged, weak and infirm through persistent and systematic cruelty and persecution, laments only his own weakness, vanity and selfishness. He begs God to guide him in his work and to give him strength of mind and body to fulfil his mission. Further, he prays to God to forgive the very men and

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women who had not spared him in any way, to forgive those who took pleasure and delight in persecuting him—nay, not only to forgive, but to give them light to see the error of their ways, to guide them in the right path!

Of all the episodes in the life of the Prophet that has impressed me most and made the profoundest impression on my mind, I have not the slightest hesitation in regarding the above episode as singularly divine in a character which possessed nothing but the noblest traits. No one who had studied the life of the Prophet, who has been to Arabia, had come into contact with the Arabs, had lived in their midst and was able to judge their character, had had a taste of the inhospitable climate and rugged and barren surroundings in which he had lived and died, can but be deeply moved by the generosity, charity and ever-ready forgiveness of the Prophet. If there is anything of which I, as a Muslim, am proud, it is this that I am a follower—amongst countless millions—of a man in whose heart there was never any bitterness, any desire for vengeance—a man, a superman, who taught us how to live; but better still, who taught us how to die!

Therefore, it is not surprising when we find that Bilal bore all his agonies of mind and body so meekly; nay, cheerfully. Bilal was a slave. His master was the rich and powerful Ommeyya. Daily, his master conducted him into the desert when the heat of the sun was at its greatest. Then he was bound hand and foot and placed on the burning sands with his face to the sun. On his chest was placed a large block of stone on which was written:

“There shalt thou remain until thou art dead or thou has abjured Islam!”

His master then took a fiendish delight in flogging him and repeatedly called upon him to give up Islam.

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But Bilal, weak and exhausted with pain and suffering, uttered merely "*Ahadun ! Ahadun !*" "Only one God! Only one God!" This lasted for many a day.

When Ommeyya found that Bilal's usefulness as a slave was greatly reduced as a result of the tortures suffered by him, he allowed him to be ransomed by Abu Bakr. The latter had also to ransom six other slaves.

This Bilal whose sufferings you have just heard me describe to you—and, may be, pictured and perhaps *felt* for yourself for one fleeting second, became the first Muezzin of Islam. It was his deep and sonorous voice which daily rolled over the sands of the desert, echoed back by the hills, that called the faithful five times daily to prayer. His mighty voice was a challenge to the silence of the desert—only the echo bore witness to the ultimate triumph of his Master!

Likewise, the Arabs of those days murdered Yasar and Samiya, his wife, after inflicting upon them excruciating tortures. Ammar, their little son, also suffered a similar fate.

I have no desire to recount to you any more of the ghastliness and the fiendish cruelty of the opponents of Islam. My purpose is amply served if I state that the procession of this band of the early martyrs of Islam is an evergreen and ever-recurring picture from the dim past. How can we forget them? How can we help loving them? How can we thank them? But for their faith in Allah and their devotion to their Prophet, can Islam ever have come down to us?

Just think for a moment and answer the question truthfully.

When the Quraish found that tortures, cruelty and even death did not prevent the Prophet and his ever-growing band of followers from abjuring Islam, they hit upon the brilliant idea of trying to *bribe* the Prophet

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to give up preaching Islam. With that object in view, they approached Otba, son of Rabiâ, a rich and powerful Quraish, but who held moderate views. Otba spoke to the Prophet thus:

“O son of my brother, thou art distinguished by thy qualities and thy descent. Now thou hast sown division among our people, and cast dissension among our families; thou denouncest our gods and goddesses; thou dost tax our ancestors with impiety. We have a proposition to make to thee; think well if it will not suit thee to accept it.”

When the Prophet heard the above, he said:

“Speak, O father of Walid, I listen.”

Otba thereupon proceeded:

“O son of my brother, if thou wishest to acquire riches by this affair, we will collect a fortune larger than is possessed by any of us; if thou desirest honours and dignity, we shall make thee our chief, and shall not do a thing without thee; if thou desirest dominion, we shall make thee our King; if thou desirest a maiden we shall bring one to thee that is fairer than the moon; and if the spirit (demon) which possesses thee cannot be overpowered, we will bring thee doctors and give them riches till they cure thee!”

Muhammad listened to what Otba had to say, with a sad smile on his face.

“Hast thou finished, O father of Walid?” asked the Prophet.

“Yes,” replied Otba.

“Then listen to me, O father of Walid,” said the Prophet.

“I listen,” was the reply.

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"In the name of the most merciful God. A revelation from the Beneficent the most Merciful God: A Book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur-án for a people who know: A herald of good news and a warner, but most of them turn aside so they hear not. And they say: Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us, and there is a heaviness in our ears and a veil hangs between us and you, so work, we too are working. Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your God is one God, therefore, follow the right way to Him and ask His forgiveness; and woe to the polytheists: To those who do not give alms and they are unbelievers in the hereafter. (As for) those who believe and do good, they shall surely have a reward never to be cut off." (*The Holy Qur-án, Chap. XLI, verses 1—8.*)

After he had recited the above verses, the Prophet addressed Otba thus:

"Thou hast heard, now take the course which seemeth best to thee."

Needless to say Otba and his companions went away sorely disappointed, for they had failed in their mission of bribery and corruption. One may well ask, "What else could they expect from a man like the Prophet?"

Here, too, one perceives the infinite patience, wisdom and gentleness of the true and inspired Teacher.

In the coming chapters, we shall describe how the Prophet was finally driven out of Mecca to seek shelter, refuge and rest in Medina; of how a small band of Muslims fled to Ethiopia, led by Jaafar, brother

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of Ali, and how the Quraish failed in their attempts to destroy them.

In this picture, you shall perceive in practice those singular attributes of character which none but the chosen few of God possess, and you shall further see in action those fundamentals of Islam which moulded, and should mould, our natures into an attractive pattern pleasing to the Creator and to His creation!

(To be continued)

THE QURANIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

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

(Continued from Vol. XXV, Page 332)

The Qur-án declared "*Innamal Mominuna ikh-vatun*"—Surely all Believers are brothers (XLIX: 10).

It was not a verbal declaration alone. The Prophet when he went as an exile to Medina with a few of his followers and when he found a few helpers (*Ansar*) in that town he linked each exile (*Muhajir*) with each helper (*Ansar*) into an *actual brotherhood*.

In verse 13 of the Sura xlix the brotherhood of man has been laid down on the broadest basis. All men are reminded that they have been born of a male and a female as if they were members of one family and their division into families and tribes and nations must not cause estrangement but a desire to know each other better.

No wonder that Muhammad's communism has proved to be everlasting and perfectly collective. It is in truth a superior communism altogether. The whole of humanity could bind itself under it not only as one community, one nation, but as one family, one brotherhood. Not only the greatest good of the largest number

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was to be the object of the life of every individual but of all the people in the world.

It must not be considered that the greatest good of the Muslim peoples alone of the world was to be kept in view but *of all the creatures of God*—Muslims or non-Muslims. The God of the Qur-án is not the God of the Muslims only. He is the *Rabbul-alamín*, the Evolver and the Sustainer *of the people of all the worlds*. A Muslim who does not act rightly should have no expectations at all of being favoured either in this world or in the next. As long as Muslims acted rightly, as long as they followed the Islamic principles, they were helped by God, they prospered—they were always victorious. They triumphed also mentally and intellectually. They possessed all the comforts. They conquered vast empires. Their communistic organisation gave them remarkable solidarity. Pivoted on the Islamic conception of God, the Muslim nation made not only miraculous progress in evolving a most refined and intellectual civilization and culture, but also succeeded in democratising the whole basis of man's social and political institutions. The spirit of affection for his fellow-being, and a tolerance unknown before the Prophet Muhammad, was inculcated in every individual which made him the most advanced communist, and all barriers of race, country, colour and even of creed were demolished. While all other religions, or even party-system including the Communist party in Russia, are required to be intolerant to other creeds and parties, Islam gloriously declares that all religions were based on truth, that all the people of the earth had God-sent prophets and guides, and that to whatever religion, party, school and persuasion we may belong, we should have no fear if we believe in the Creator, in our accountability after death and if we *act aright*. *Innal lazina*

THE QURANIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

aminu vallazina hadu vassabiuna vannasara man amana billahe valyaumil akhire va amila salihan fala khaufun alaihim vala hum yahzanun: (v. 6g.)

While up to this day a negro is lynched in the most advanced and cultured country, America, a negro slave in the time of the Holy Prophet was given the highest place in the mosque to call the Muslims to prayers and a slave's son was made the commander-in-chief of an army which had in its ranks men of the bluest blood. It was this purging of all prejudices against one another from the minds of all individuals and the establishment of a brotherhood of all the people under one Omniscient and Omnipresent God—the *Rabbul-alamin*—which gave a communistic tone to all that was Islamic—to the Islamic Faith, Islamic culture, Islamic civilization, and Islamic society.

But the most miraculous achievement of the Prophet was making the God-idea the basis of scientific progress.

We have cited Prof. Draper as a witness that: "Not one of the purely mathematical, or mixed or practical sciences was omitted by the Arabs."

How was this love of scientific investigation created in the minds of Muslims at a time when the learning of science was considered a sin and ended in the murder and even burning alive of scholars and scientists by Christians and Europeans?

This was done by laying down the principles, that an All-powerful, All-knowing God was the "Author of all the Universe," that this universe was not brought into existence in vain, that a law, unalterable except by His own free-will, was laid down for working it, that a demarcation has been made or a measure has been prefixed by God Himself for the use of man of everything which can be either beneficial or harmful to him as good or

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evil (*val qadre khairehi va sharrehi min Allah-i-ta'ala*) and that man has been given intelligence and reason to find out the good and evil propensities and a free-will, under certain limitations, to use them as he chose. "The right way," says the Qur-án, "has been distinguished from the wrong one and he who adopts the right way is for his own good and he who adopts the wrong way is for his own harm."

Man could profit himself greatly if he could find out the right measure of good in everything. He could even use a deadly poison to his own good if he has learnt how to use it properly and in due measure. The Qur-án declares: "Surely We have created everything according to a measure." (54:49.) There is no disease which has not a cure. Life-destroying herbs grow side by side with life-giving ones watered by the same rain, nourished by the same air and the same light. Everything depends upon man's investigations, upon the acquirement of knowledge by him. The deeper and wider the knowledge the more advantages he will be able to draw for himself from all the things in nature. All that is in the heavens and earth is at his disposal. The Qur-án says: "And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth, all from Himself. Most surely are signs in this for people who deliberate (think)." (45:13.) It is for man to find out what are the good capacities or propensities of a thing or an action and what are the evil ones. He will have to be active, he will have to brush up his intelligence, he will have to make a research so as to be able to use a thing for his own good—for the good of humanity.

The great factory of Nature is constantly at work on fixed laws, with a set purpose. The clouds float in the air. The burning sun rotates on its axis (*vashshamso tajri li mustaqarrin laha*, was revealed

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over thirteen centuries ago). The moon goes round the earth and the earth round the sun. The Solar system, the law of gravity and repulsion have their own objects. A Muslim poet has beautifully and very appropriately said:

*"Abro bado maho khurshido falak dar karand
Ta tu nane ba kaf ari-o-ba ghaflat na khuri."*

The clouds and the air, the moon and the sun and the heaven are at work, so that thou (O man) should labour for thy bread and not eat it in laziness.

A man is expected to be the vicegerent of Almighty God Himself on earth. He is not to sit idle. He should find out the laws and the mysteries and the hidden secrets of the earth and the atmosphere. His Ar-Rahman (All-Beneficent God) has anticipated his wants. By the natural processes, which worked for thousands or millions of years, coal-fields have been preserved in the bosom of the earth. While the properties of coal could be turned into an industrial boon those of the coal-gas were fatal for man. Man had thus to find out the pre-set or prefixed measures of both coal and gas. Muslims were told by God Himself through His last Prophet that scientific knowledge was the best gift of God. *Yutil hikmata manyasha va manyutal hikmata faqad ootiya khairan kasira.* (2:269.)

Thus was an incentive for scientific researches provided by the God-idea of Islam and thus was a scientific temper and sense created. Early Muslims, being true to their faith, engaged themselves in scientific activities to find out the right measure of everything for their use. They were also instructed to travel by land and by sea (*fa seeroo fil ardh*, 3:136). They were told to make subservient to themselves the air, the water, even the sun and the moon.

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Alas! after having taught Europe to find out the laws of natural things to their advantage, Muslims plunged into a death-like sleep. They became idle, and, worse of all, unthinking. In the meantime, Europe proved itself to be an industrious but *wicked* pupil so that Sa'adi, the greatest poet-teacher of the world, had to cry out:

Kas nayamokht ilme tir az man.

Ke mara aqibat nishana na kard.

"Nobody learnt the art of archery from me but he used ultimately myself as a target."

Europeans, after having taken lessons from Muslims for about a thousand years, have been attacking them ruthlessly for the last three or four centuries. They have taken from them, by force of arms, almost all their territories, all their riches. And worst of all, they have imposed upon them an inferiority complex. This they could do because the Muslims in their sleep lost all consciousness of their *past*. The Muslims forgot that they were the "torch-bearers," as honest Europeans themselves admit, when Europeans groped in the dismal darkness of bigotry, superstition and ignorance.

OUR DOUBLE NUMBER

As usual, owing to the month of Ramadan, we issue a Double Number for the months of November-December 1937.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER IN ISLAM

EXOTERIC AND ESOTERIC SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER IN ISLAM

By KHAN BAHADUR HAJI B. M. K. LODI

(Continued from Vol. XXV, Page 387)

Another noteworthy achievement of a perfected universality in Islam may be found in the number of times *Salât* is said, and the uniformity in number throughout the Muslim world.

While the Christian Church has set apart *one day in a week* for service, indeed a long interval between, too long to keep Satan away, Islam has introduced the service in the midst of *everyday* affairs—*five times a day*. Uncommon is the time of morning prayer. It is said *before sunrise*, involving a considerable sacrifice of sleep, and that too at a time when it is very sound. There may be an early morning *Puja* in Hindu temples, or a mid-night prayer in churches on festive occasions. A *Puja* that is performed by a paid priest and that may or may not be attended by others cannot be taken as an individual prayer or service by the public at large. None of the above is therefore on a par with the early morning prayer of a Muslim. Similarly trying is the timing of the remaining four Muslim prayers. It is so prescribed that it falls due just when man is most busy. The idea is that he is apt to overlook the thought of God when he is busy with his worldly occupations and that he should therefore be habituated to disengage himself from them and set apart a few moments for the service of God, so that his worldly and spiritual welfare might progress side by side. Nay, his future is more important to him than his present, so that a Muslim believes that “a moment with God is better than Solomon’s Kingdom,” and hopes to reach that moment in his prayer. It is this belief—it is this hope—that has

endowed him with the grit and will to sacrifice the best part of his sleep, and to rise about an hour before sunrise for the morning prayer, and for the remaining four prayers, to "switch off" his mind from worldly preoccupations, to concentrate it in the service of God for a few moments even in the midst of his engagements. The cumulative effect of this little sacrifice of mind and body, this little sacrifice of time and work in favour of service at the feet of God, though short by itself but of frequent repetition, tends to push the man nearer and nearer to God. As we have pointed out in Part I of this article, "prayer preserveth from lewdness and iniquity" (Qur-án 29:45), and when it is so frequent, there is no gainsaying that it acts as the most powerful and effective restraint on the commission of sin, and acts, as the Prophet said, as a polish to remove the rust and dust of the heart.

Compare these results with those of the *weekly* congregational service of the Christians. The Christians have themselves condemned it as having become in practice quite formal, lifeless and ineffective, while they appreciate the *Salât* of the Muslims. Here are the words of Lane: "There is plenty of real fervour in the prayer of the mosque, which shames the listless sleepy hearing of most congregations in England." (Pp. 83, 84, "Selections from the Qur-án.") A similar condemnation of one and appreciation of the other comes from a Christian clergyman (Rev. Canon Gardiner): "Our services are too frequently notable for slovenly or uninspired or uninspiring scripture-reading; the use of low grade hymn-music and, on the part of the congregation, a painful lack of reverence and attention. In spite of all ritualism, we shall nevertheless do well to hold fast to outward and spiritual reverence, even to the minutest detail in the externals of worship. Let us apprentice ourselves and our people to the art of reading the

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scriptures in public with some of *the beauty which the Muslim attains with the Qur-án* (the reference being to the recitation in prayer). (P. 21, Preface, "Wisdom of the Prophets," by Khan Sahib Khwaja Khan Sahib.)

The cream of *Salát* lies in its expression—the different postures and genuflections that the body assumes from time to time in giving effect to the feelings of the heart, and the significance of each. It is untraceable to the practices of other religions.

As a prelude, let us introduce the reader to the generally received theory that *everything created, not merely animate beings, but inanimate, has life in it*. This has been often and unmistakably propounded by a countless number of sages, philosophers and Prophets of all nations and of all times. It has since received the verdict of modern science. It is in other words the theory of *Pervasion*, the theory of *Immanence* that is, wherever there is life, it is the "life divine." It has been held equally positive that it is in the nature of every life-possessor to think of and adore the Life-giver, a principle that is so vividly and so often enunciated in the Qur-án (13:13, 15; 17:44; 57:1, etc.)

Each creation is engaged in its own way of adoration and worship of its Creator. Wherever we may cast our eyes in the universe, we can realize, with a little observation and contemplation, that the whole creation is in a silent state of prayer, though we may not be able to understand it in the sense in which we understand the word "prayer." This is what is implied in the Qur-án, 17:44 quoted above. For instance, *mountains* are in prayer, sitting; the *trees*, standing; the *quadruped*, bending; and *creeping animals*, prostrating. And *man* is the last link in creation and the best. The world consisting of all these

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animate and inanimate beings "found its culmination in *man*, its best expression" (Tagore). Originally springing from earth, he has passed through different evolutionary stages of his mould, and experienced the life of mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms before he reached the highest pinnacle in the divine expression and manifestation. Briefly, man is "the whole creation's summary," and that is the uniform opinion of the philosophy of the world; he represents the entire creation, the whole universe. He is the *microcosm of the macrocosm*. It is therefore in the fitness of things that he should pray in a manner as all-embracing as Nature is, as comprehensive as himself.

Realizing, as he did, the mystery of Nature, that it is, under a fixed Law, in a silent state of prayer, the Prophet of Islam prescribed for his followers a similar law of "natural" worship, that is, that form of worship which Nature, in its diverse garbs, adopts; the sum-total of which man, as the counterpart of Nature, must reproduce. In other words, a Muslim's prayer is a combined product of all the forms that Nature has conceived to manifest. There are thus four stages in prayer:

(1) The first is *standing (Qiyam)* corresponding to the position of trees and plants.

(2) The second is *bending (Ruku')*; this is identical with that of quadrupeds.

(3) The third is *prostration (Sajdah)*, the lowest and humblest position a servant can assume before his master when he "kisses the dust at the door of his master." This is similar to the position of creeping animals.

(4) And the fourth and last is *sitting (Jalsa-Qaida)*, like mountains and the mineral kingdom.

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Thus a Muslim worships his Master in all postures and positions that creation can, in its very nature, possibly assume for purposes of worshipping its Creator.

Another equally natural characteristic of *Salát* is that it reflects the exact relationship subsisting between a servant and his master, while the several positions and genuflections represent the actual attitude which we can see a servant assuming in the presence of his master, and the nature of conversation that transpires between the two. When a servant appears before his master for duty, he stands erect (like the *Qiyam* in *Salát*) with his hands folded in front—an initial token of dependence, submissiveness and humility. This is followed by the praise of his master, and there is a response to it by the master, just as in the *Fatiha* (the first chapter of the *Qur-án*) with which the *Salát* begins. As a further manifestation of his feelings, the servant bends his head, and bows before his master (*Ruku'*)—the second stage in *Salát*. This is also expressive of the fact that his back is "bent under the load of his sins." While in the posture of "bending," he glorifies his master as "the Great," and in resuming his standing position, he expresses himself as if his master has heard and accepted his praise. Then in consummation of all the aforesaid gestures and expressions of obeisance, the servant falls down and prostrates himself, an attitude in which he condescends to place the best and noblest part of his body—the *head*—on the ground, the dust of which he was originally made, to which he will one day return, and like which he ought to feel low and humble. This is the extreme sign of servitude which can be expected of a faithful and obedient servant. In prostration he again glorifies his Lord as the "Most High." Pleased with the servant's

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obeisances, both in words and actions, the Master asks him to lift up his head from the ground. He obeys the command, but is not satisfied with a *single* prostration. His head is again down on earth, and kisses the dust at the feet of his Master. He is again asked to lift up his head. Immensely pleased, God asks the servant to *sit* (*Qaida*) just as a king grants permission to his favourite servant to sit.

This is exactly what *Salât* transpires between the worshipper and the Worshipped. Before sitting finally, the servant has had to bend his back nearly fifty times more *i.e.* in the course of his daily prayers, both obligatory and voluntary, each bending followed by double the number of prostrations. When a servant is granted the honour of a seat, he is asked what present he has brought with him for the King, the King of Kings, and he replies: "All good and pure things and praise are for Thee; all prayers and worship rendered are due to Thee and Thee alone, O Lord. I also bear witness that none deserves to be worshipped but Thee. And Muhammad is Thy Servant and Apostle." Can any other form of present be conceived, which man dare take before his Lord, and which He can possibly accept? The Lord is pleased with the present, and says: "Peace be to thee, to the Prophet." The worshipper finally says "Peace be on all of us and on all worshippers." This is the gist of what is recited at the last stage of sitting called *Tahiyya*.

To sum up, *Salât* is not a mere ritual, is not a mere *opus operatum*, is not a lifeless or insipid prayer. It reflects on the other hand the life and spirit of "prayer." *The heart, the tongue and the body* all work together and in harmony, and move towards one and the same goal—the nearness of God. The innermost sentiments of the heart are given expression by

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the tongue, while the body translates each and every verbal expression into action, and assumes different postures accordingly.

What a highly-developed form of worship and justly required for the moral and spiritual elevation of man! What an ideal means of communion with God! What a spiritual park it is for the lovers of God to enter in search of a few glimpses of their Beloved! Can we find a parallel in the practices of other religions? An unparalleled heritage indeed is *Salât* which the Prophet of Islam left for his followers, and not merely for his followers, but for all who seek God in real earnest.

SOME GEOGRAPHICAL POINTS IN THE QURAN

BY PROF. SYED MUZAFFAR-UD-DIN NADVI, M.A.

CHAPTER I

Introductory

THE QAHTANIDS

Qahtan was the forefather of the Yemenite Arabs. In the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, we find Yoqtan instead of Qahtan,¹ but, in its Greek version, we have Joktan, the "Ya" being changed into "J." So the words Qahtan, Yoktan and Joktan are different forms of the same word. This theory did not, at one time, find favour with the Christian scholars, but it is now generally taken as an established fact. The "Encyclopædia Britannica" also supports it.² The Rev. Forster who in the middle of the 19th century wrote "A Historical Geography of Arabia" was rather anxious to identify the Yoqtan of the Old Testament with the Qahtan of Arabia.³ Now in all the oriental transla-

¹ Genesis, X-24.

² Vol. II., P. 284 (13th Edition).

³ Forster's Historical Geography of Arabia, Vol. I., Chap. II.

tions of the Bible the term "Qahtan" is generally used in preference to "Yoqtan."

The most convincing argument in favour of the identity of Qahtan and Yoqtan (or Joktan) is that the homes of all the sons of Yaqtan named in the Old Testament have been located in Yemen, "from Mesha into Sephar, a mount of the east" (Genesis, X, 30). Both Mesha and Sephar are untraceable, but the latter refers to Zafar situated in Yemen, and, if Mesha be taken to stand for Hijaz (because one of the sons of Ishmael was so named), the meaning of the Biblical reference will be that the sons of Yoqtan (or Qahtan) spread from Hijaz to Yemen. This view exactly corresponds to the Arabs' account of the Qahtanids.

The thirteen sons of Yoqtan (or Joktan) according to the Old Testament were Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah and Jobab (*vide* Genesis, X, 26—29). The Arabs were aware of only Jerah (Yarih), Hazarmaveth and Sheba. Ecclesiastical scholars of Europe have tried their best to locate the homes of all sons of Joktan. The results of their researches, though their correctness is not above dispute, are given below :

(1) Almodad and his descendants settled on the coasts of the Persian Gulf, towards the east of Arabia, because Ptolemy fixed the home of an Arabian tribe "Allumiacoto" (which bears affinity to Almodad) in the above mentioned place.

(2) Sheleph and his children occupied the land between Medina and the mount of Dhamis. Ptolemy mentioned in his Geography a tribe under the name of "Shelephni."

(3) Hadoram and his descendants lived in the neighbourhood of the descendants of Sheleph. The

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Arab geographer, Abul Fida, mentioned a town by the name of Hadrama which in Arabic is spelt Hadrama.

(4) Uzal and his children occupied the place in Central Yemen, where San'a now stands. In Yemen, there was a town Uzal, named after him, which was a commercial place in the 6th and 7th Centuries B.C. From there, iron, cassia and celamus used to be exported (Ezekiel XXVII, 19). The Jews still call San'a (which was built on the site of the old town Uzal in the 6th Century A.D.) by its former name, Uzal.

(5) Diklah.—There is a place in Yemen named "Dhul-Khala'ah" which, perhaps, may be the Arabic form of the Hebrew Diklah.

(6) Obal.—No trace has been discovered of him in Arabia. His family might have migrated to Africa (Ethiopia).

(7) Abimael.—According to some archæological experts, his descendants dwelt in a place between Hijaz and the home of Sheleph.

(8) Ophir and his children occupied the coast of Yemen, and hence, after them, the place was named "Ophir," which was a port of ancient Yemen. "The ships of Solomon came to Ophir, and fetched thence gold . . . and brought to King Solomon" (I Kings, IX, 28). The gold of Ophir is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament (*vide* I & II Chronicles).

(9) Havilah settled in Yemen on the north where a town was so named after him.

(10) Jobab (called Yobab in Hebrew) and his descendants lived in the south of Yemen. Ptolemy mentioned a tribe (living on the south of Yemen) by the name of "Jobaritee," which may be identical with them.¹

The remaining three sons of Yoqtan (or Qahtan) are described below in some detail.

¹ For details refer to Forster's Historical Geography of Arabia, Vol II, Chapter II.

HIGH STANDARDS OF MORALITY IN ISLAM¹

BY MR. R. S. NEHRA, SOLICITOR (LONDON)

There are three reasons why a Hindu is speaking on this subject. First of all, though born a Hindu, I have always had Muslim neighbours and friends from my childhood. You all know that there was no segregation of Hindus and Muslims in residential areas. Secondly, the Hindu religion does not teach its followers to deprecate or look down upon other religions. One of the cardinal principles of Hinduism is toleration and harmlessness. Thirdly, I have studied the Muslim religion and have been practising Muslim Law for the last 15 years. Several years ago, I was the first solicitor to assist and advise a Muslim friend of mine to get married by proxy. The gentleman was living in Tanganyika Territory and could not come here but he was married to an English lady in London and I acted as the proxy. So you may conclude that I do know something of Muslim Law and Practice.

In the title of the subject for this afternoon I use the word "Morality" in a very wide sense. I will arrange the subject under three heads, *viz.*, *Business Morality*, *General Morality*, and *Sexual Morality*. I am going to illustrate my statements from my experiences during the course of my several years' practice, so I will deal as briefly as possible with each heading.

I wish to make it clear that what I speak on is the real standard of morality founded, preached and practised by the Great Man Muhammad and by his true disciples. It is such a high standard that the modern man or woman, drowned in the deep stream of materialism, finds it rather difficult to live up to.

Let us take the *Business Morality* first. Every one knows that the only religion on earth that condemns

1. The text of a lecture given at a meeting of the Muslim Society in Great Britain at 18 Eccleston Square, S.W. 1.

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the acceptance of interest is Islam. If you analyse this most useful and high principle, you will find that the modern economic system, based on interest, is entirely wrong. Money is not a live thing; it does not multiply. Leave £1 in silver or gold anywhere for any length of time and it will never become £2. It will always be one pound in the hands of a king, a general, a director or a peasant. Hence it is that the Founder of Islam enjoined its followers not to accept or give interest. It is the most wicked form of cruelty to fellow-beings that greed has invented, the materially-ridden, spiritually-blind people observe it with foolish pride. The consequences of interest taking and giving are very far-reaching and annihilating to the peace of mind of society. It is a racket which rebounds with manifold force on the followers of this practice. Modern legislation has legalised interest to 48 per cent. Perhaps some of you are not aware of that. A money-lender can charge interest up to 48 per cent in England, which means that, if one borrows £100 to-day, in a year's time he will have to pay £148, and in two years nearly double the amount borrowed. How many families are ruined by this usury! I have seen cases in which havoc has been wrought by these money-lenders. When once a man gets into the hands of money-lenders, the interest being so high, it is seldom that he gets out safe and sound from the greedy financier. The modern economists praise the system of money-lending. What for? Simply because of the interest principle to get something extra which is not theirs. This money-lending is going on a colossal scale and the result is that greed on a colossal scale and selfishness are rampant and rife everywhere and the nations of the world are living on the edge of a great precipice ready to be blown over and hurled into self-destruction at any time. Building

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Societies, Banks, Insurance Companies sound on the surface as very useful, good and necessary institutions. I will give you an example which is common in my professional experiences. A man bought a house for £1,200 and had to pay instalments of £8 per month. Out of this £8, more than half is interest for the first 10 years. For 7 years he had been paying these instalments with great hardship. In the 8th year, he fell ill and suffered loss in business and could not pay the instalments for 3 months. The Building Society, which is nothing but a glorified demon of a money-lender, went on inflicting fines each month. I was acting for the poor but honest borrower. He could not pay the instalments but, to add to his misfortune, this legalised money-lender increased the burden with fines. Finally, the Society instructed its own Solicitors. I approached them, requested them and begged them, explaining the circumstances of the honest borrower. The reply was, "Sorry, rules must be obeyed. The directors cannot do anything but proceed with realising for the instalments due." They filed the case and finally took possession of the house and expelled the man and his family after 7 years' sojourn in the house. It was all legal, and some will say fair. But was it human? If there were no principle of interest, the man could have paid the principal easily and the company would not have been so heartless, as they would have had no necessity and no temptation for suing the man, getting possession and selling the house again to someone who could regularly pay the principal and the interest. In Islam, a merchant may lend money to a fellow-merchant or friend and the borrower uses it and returns the amount borrowed with real gratitude and thanks. Imagine the human side of it and genuine fellow-feeling and love engendered by this noble and high principle of not accepting interest.

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No one uses his money for encouraging greed by accepting interest. When there is humanity in business dealings, there is less of selfishness; consequently less friction in life and more peace of mind in daily and business life. I could give scores of instances of the cruelty and inhumanity of the interest-lending institutions of modern times. Many people have queer ideas about Islam. Very few people study Islam at its origin unpolluted by the actions of its weak-minded and lip-service followers.

Next, let us take the subject of *Sexual Morality*. In Mohammedan Law, some of you have heard of the principle of "valid retirement." In Arabic equivalent is "Khalwat." What is it? It is the highest principle of *Morality* as applied to human beings in their personal relations to the opposite sex. I had better define it for the benefit of those who are not familiar with this principle. Though the Great Founder did not know much of electricity, he fully knew the necessity and virtue of insulation in human life. To talk in terms of science. Sex is nothing but electric current in human beings.

It is necessary for the continuance of life but it is equally necessary to observe rules and principles by which it can be best preserved and carried on without ruining, burning or upsetting Society. A man is essentially a moral being. You all know the saying: "When wealth is gone, nothing is gone; when health is gone, something is gone; when Character is gone, all is gone." A human being without high moral character is worse than a beast and more dangerous than a snake. Hence Muhammad the Great enunciated the highest principle for preserving high moral character. Valid retirement in Muslim law means that, if a man and a woman who are not related to each other near enough to exclude the legality of marriage between them are found

together in a room or place where they are entirely alone and undisturbed, they have committed the offence taken cognisance of by law. I think I have made the meaning clear though I have used a semi-legal phraseology. To revert to the instance of electricity. Those who know the principles of electricity are fully aware that there are positive and negative electricity, always ready and anxious to join together. As long as the distance between the two is enough or there is some insulating material, both the currents run in their own container, but once either the insulation is removed or the distance is decreased to a certain point, there is the spark. The whole world may sit and pray that there should be no spark, but would that be of any use? There is law and rule in everything. Break the law, the consequences will follow. The human and moral world is subject to inexorable laws as much as is the physical world. Hence it is that the principle of valid retirement is the highest principle to enable man and woman to retain their highest morality. The same principle is observed when people in the West keep chaperons who serve as insulators for young people. Some consider these insulators as old-fashioned things. Islam does not encourage people to give up good principles by calling them old-fashioned. It may be that many people are not true Muslims and do not observe its high standards, but my object is to point out the existence of these high standards in Islam. Who does not know the increasing wave of immorality in the world and its consequential downfall on the slippery road to destruction? The day is not far distant when we all shall pay for the follies of those who do not observe the high standard of morality, though occupying important and prominent positions in life. I could enlarge upon this branch of subject if I had time.

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The modern practice of young men and women roaming about freely and meeting when and where they like, without any control, is responsible for the unsatisfactory state of affairs in the world. Happiness is decreasing. I have handled many matrimonial cases mostly of English couples during the last 9 years of my practice in England. I can tell you how unhappy those couples are who do not observe high standards of morality. Some Muslims have come to grief by forgetting their religion and its high standards. Health and happiness of individuals and indirectly of nations and the world depend upon the healthy and high standard of morality both in business and in private life. Islam provides it. I wish every Muslim were a true Muslim. Islam would then spread further and wider than any other religion. I will add a few words on *General Morality*. Islam is the only religion that categorically prohibits the use of any intoxicant, *e.g.* liquors. The Modern World, particularly the New World, found that for good general daily life liquor was an evil that should be avoided; consequently America brought in State Prohibition and the results were very satisfactory. In Islam in no circumstances and for no ceremonies is a follower allowed to indulge in drink. The evils of drink are altogether too well known to need detailed narration. How many families are ruined every year, how many bright, promising young people are blighted in the beginning of their useful careers! In Islam discouragement of luxury is very pertinently enjoined. A true Muslim should not have pictures hanging on the wall or elsewhere. Simplicity of life is the most highly-cherished practice. It is luxury that creates differences amongst people and make the rich selfish and forgetful of the poor and needy. Look at what is happening in the West. A rich man rolling in wealth may have a

poor brother living in the East End of London. All the West End theatres, cinemas and restaurants are full every day, while millions of persons are unable to find food and adequate clothing. This state of affairs is considered normal and just. How standards of justice and fairness get twisted with self-indulgent human beings!

The limited time at my disposal does not allow me to go into further details. I have tried briefly to point out some of the salient and striking points. No doubt, those of you who are Muslims, know of and practise more of the virtues of Islam than I have had the chance to mention this afternoon.

ISLAM—A UNIVERSAL RELIGION OF PEACE AND PROGRESS

BY MAULVI ABDUL KARIM

Religion.—Religion is the recognition of a Supreme Being with Supernatural powers, and the performance of man's duties of love and obedience towards Him. Since his very creation man had to realise the existence of such a Being as the Creator of the Universe. Man is perhaps the greatest and the grandest handiwork of this Supreme Being, generally known as God. But man's nature is most complex; there are in it germs of all that is good and great as well as of all that is evil and ignoble. By developing the former man can raise himself to the highest of the high, whereas by giving way to the latter he may degrade himself to the lowest of the low. While by the exercise of his moral and spiritual qualities he can surpass even the angels and approach the borders of Divinity, by indulging in his carnal passions he may drag himself down to a level lower than that of brutes. Thus man has a

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capacity for unlimited moral and spiritual progress as well as for unbounded iniquity and animalism.

Prophets.—In order to teach man how to develop and exercise his capacity for higher progress and how to check and control his evil passions, God was pleased to send from time to time inspired teachers known as Prophets. Thus there appeared among all nations in different ages and in different climes, Messengers of God for the instruction and uplift of mankind.

Tribal Prophets.—For want of inter-communication among different isolated peoples on account of inaccessibility of different places, the earlier Messengers had been intended for particular nations and particular countries and their teachings were exclusively adapted to their needs and conditions. What they—Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus—had taught was corrupted in course of time, and unwarranted interpolations had found place in the Scriptures revealed through them. That some of these Scriptures had to be “modernised” from time to time in order to make their teaching suited to changed circumstances, unmistakably shows that they were not intended for all times.

Universal Prophet.—Change of world circumstances enabling people of distant countries to meet and exchange thoughts and ideas made the appearance of a universal Messenger at a central place, with a message for the whole of mankind, essentially necessary. A religion of peace and progress that would have brought peace to the world by uniting the warring tribes under a common faith and would have ushered in an era of cultural progress by furthering the cause of Science and Civilisation, was the crying need of the time. The advent of such a Messenger for the propagation of a Universal Religion was not unanticipated. It had been foreshadowed by some of the previous Messengers

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of God. "The piety of Moses and of Christ" truly says John Davenport "rejoiced in the assurance of a future prophet more illustrious than themselves, and the Evangelists' promise of a Paraclete or Holy Ghost, the Comforter, was prefigured in the name and accomplished in the person of the greatest and last of God's Prophets." To Asia, the cradle of prophets and patriarchs, of saints and sages, belongs the credit of producing this great Messenger, whose noble message of the unity of God and the equality of man served, more than anything else did before or after, to bring about the uplift of the human race and to establish peace and good-will on earth.

Prophet of Arabia.—"The greatest and last of God's Prophets," referred to by Davenport, was Hazrat Muhammad, also called Ahmad, the Prophet of Arabia. His predecessor was Jesus Christ, after whom no prophet, worth mentioning, appeared for about six hundred years. During this period unthought of demoralisation took place in the world. Hazrat Muhammad's advent, therefore, synchronised with a time when intellectual sterility and spiritual stagnation prevailed all over the world, gross immorality and rank superstition swayed all mankind and horrible religious persecution and disgraceful wranglings over creeds played havoc with the social harmony and political homogeneity of the human race. Arabia, at the time we are speaking of, was perhaps in a worse condition than any other country. The Arabs were sunk so low in idolatry, immorality, superstition and barbarism that no language can give an adequate description of their social disorganisation and spiritual degradation. They had no belief in the life to come and no idea of reward for good and punishment of evil. Drunkenness, debauchery, gambling, rapacity, blood-thirstiness and such other heinous

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vices were rampant among them. The sword was unsheathed on the slightest provocation and blood was shed on the flimsiest pretext. In fact there was hardly any vice to which the Arabs were not passionately addicted. This was the people of all peoples who required most personal instruction by an inspired teacher for their regeneration.

Inception of Islam.—Uninfluenced by the vicious environment in which he was born, Hazrat Muhammad gave, early in life, such unmistakable indication of noble qualities of head and heart that he came to be called "Al-Amin," the Trusty. Though engrossed, up to the age of twenty-five, in worldly affairs, he always thought of the social, spiritual and political regeneration of his countrymen. How to purge them of their evil ways and to bring them to the path of piety and righteousness and how to make them a great nation by uniting the warring tribes and repelling the foreign invaders, who had parts of the peninsula under their domination, was the dream of his life. As soon as his marriage with a wealthy lady placed him above want, he began to frequent a cave in a mountain near Mecca, where he sometimes spent nights and days in prayer and meditation. At last inspiration came from the Lord, the Light for which he was longing so long, dawned upon him, the inner voice spake unto him. He unmistakably realised that God is Great (*Allah-o-Akbar*) that there is nothing else so great; that He is the Reality, that all things are but a shadow of Him; that He is the only object of worship; that our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him; that the service of His creatures is the best means of His adoration. "If you love your Creator, love your fellow-beings first; he is the most favoured of God from whom the greatest good cometh to His creatures."

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Monotheism, the only True Religion.—The more he meditated about religious reform the more was he convinced that the only true religion is pure monotheism, the essence of which is the glorification of God and love of Man. Besides, he came to the conclusion that it was not an esoteric religion with intricate rituals, contentious dogmas, questionable principles and unattainable ideals that could regenerate demoralised humanity, but a simple, rational, practical religion that could be easily followed in everyday life, that could be actually lived and not merely loved. He found that before his advent some of the Arab tribes had embraced Judaism and others had accepted Christianity. But neither the intricately elaborate Judaism nor the highly sophisticated Christianity of Greek speculation and dogmatism could make much headway in idolatrous Arabia. On the contrary, they were themselves much affected by Arab idolatry. They had, however, played their part in preparing the spiritual soil of Arabia for the enthusiastic reception of a purely monotheistic religion, which Hazrat Muhammad promulgated.

In most of the religions prevalent at the time, originally one supreme immaterial God was the only object of adoration, but in course of time matter in some form or other came to be worshipped as god. Moreover, each of these religions got subdivided into various sects, bitterly antagonistic to one another. Thus religion which was originally intended to be a source of peace and order, came to be a pretext for disorder, anarchy and even war.

Pondering over this deplorable condition of mankind, Hazrat Muhammad came to the conclusion that such a reformed religion was required for their regeneration as would elevate and not demoralise humanity, would construct and not destroy society, would unite and not divide the people.

HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

BY SYED SULAIMAN NADVI

(Continued from Vol. XXIV, Page 355)

In 90 A.H., during the Caliphate of Walid bin Abdul Malik, the Mussalmans made an expeditionary raid to Bokhara. Qutaiba was sent as the Commander-in-Chief of the troops. "The tribe of Azd" was noted for its prodigal heroism and valour, and the Islamic conquests owed much to its valiant deeds. The Turks of Bokhara were also admirably equipped to oppose the Mussalmans. The people of the Azd tribe offered themselves to make the first onslaught alone. Qutaiba permitted them and they rushed forward. They attacked the Turks courageously, but the latter were no second-rate fighters. They held the Azds in check and, not long after, compelled them to retreat to their camps. The women saw the Mussalmans on the point of being broken. They rose to the occasion and mercilessly drove back the horses to the fighting field. A tumult was the consequence, but the Mussalmans took courage, stood firm, and with a strengthened vigour attacked the Turks successfully. The women had not drawn the sword on this occasion, but the rout was checked mainly because of them. But for these women, the Mussalmans had left the field.

The Kharjites are much noted in Islamic history. Unlike other sections of Islam they did not indulge in any underhand conspiracies but raised openly the banner of revolt against the despotic authorities of the State. In seeking freedom of action, liberty of speech, equality and fraternity, they were always repressed by the sword, but they kept themselves nevertheless alive by their patience, perseverance, and valour, and still exist. Their views as regards the State were similar to those held by the Nihilists in recent days.

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In 77 A.H. when Abdul Malik was the Caliph of Syria, and Hajjaj was the Governor of Iraq, Shabib, a Kharjite, rose in Mosul against the authority. Ghazala, and Jeharza, the wife and mother of Shabib, respectively, always accompanied him in battle. Hajjaj sent five chiefs successively to quell Shabib, but not one of them came back from the field. Abdul Malik at last sent troops from Syria, and Hajjaj personally led them.

Shabib started from Mosul for Kufa, but Hajjaj had outdistanced him by reaching Kufa earlier and occupying Qasrul-Amarah. Ghazala had taken a solemn vow to observe two *rika'ats* of prayers in the Friday Prayer Mosque of Kufa. She came to the mosque along with her husband, accompanied by seventy persons only, although all the city was hostile to them, and even the Syrian troops lay encamped in it. Shabib stood guarding the door of the mosque with his sword in hand, and Ghazala prayed composedly in the mosque. It was not an haphazard observance, for she recited *سورة البقرة* (The Cow) in her first *rika'at*, and *آل عمران* (The Family of Amran) in her second, which are the two great chapters (*سورت*) of the Holy Qur-án. After she had finished her prayer, Ghazala went back to her camp. The forces of Hajjaj stood speechless in bewilderment. When the fight began, Hajjaj advanced impetuously with the forces of Kufa, Basra and Syria. Shabib had an insignificant number of followers, but they fought gallantly. Hajjaj stood in the rear and harangued his soldiers, who outmanœuvred the Kharjites and occupied their mosque. Ghazala and Jeharza were also busy in the fight, but Hajjaj despatched clandestinely a few soldiers who took Ghazala unawares and killed her instantly. Shabib escaped to Ahwaz. Ibn Khalikan says that Jeharza was also killed in the battle,

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but Ibn Athir and Tabari write that a few days later Shabib's horse fell from a bridge into the Tigris, and he was drowned in the river because of the heaviness of his armour. Someone conveyed the news to his mother that he had been killed. It was impossible, rejoined his mother, that Shabib should be killed. She was told next day that he died because he was drowned. She believed this. This, besides showing the exquisite sense of chivalry in her, proves that she was existing up to this time.

In some battles Hajjaj and Ghazala stood face to face, but the former failed to make a stand against her and retired timidly. It was the very Hajjaj who ruled Iraq and the Hedjaz with blood and iron. A poet says:

اسد على وفي الحروب فعامه
فدخاء تصفر من مغير المصافر
هلا برزت الى غزالة في الوغى
بل كان قلبك في جناح الطائر

(Hajjaj is bold like a lion upon me, but he is coward in battles, he becomes a coward like a lazy ostrich. Hajjaj! Why did you not sally forth against Ghazala? How can you do this, your heart was palpitating. ¹)

In 139 A.H., during the Caliphate of Mansur, the Emperor of Rum brought utter destruction upon Maltia by invading it. Mansur sent troops to chastise the Emperor. Saleh bin Ali, and Abbas bin Muhammad were in charge of the army. They colonised Maltia afresh and then turned to Constantinople and occupied a number of the Emperor's cities. Umm-Isa and Lubaba, the daughters of Ali, sisters of Saleh and Caliph Mansur's aunt had vowed to go on *Jehad* when the Ommayyads would be destroyed outright. Accordingly they joined this holy war in Constantinople. ²

1. "Ibn Khalikan," Vol. I., p. 223.

2. "Ibn Athir," Vol. V., p. 197.

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In 178 A.H., during Harun Rashid's rule, Walid bin 'Tareef, the Kharjite, raised the banner of revolt in Khabwer and Nasibain. A renowned chief of the court, Yezid Shaibani, was sent to quash the rebellion. The Kharjites were defeated and Walid was killed. When Walid's sister Faraa learned of her brother's death, she donned the helmet, seized her weapons, and rode to make an attack upon the Imperial troops. Yezid himself came to oppose her, and struck down her horse. Yezid advised her to go home, which she did. But her eyes overflowed with tears as she read these pathetic lines composed by herself:

فيا شجر الخابور مالك مرقا
 كاتك لم تجزع على بن طريف
 فتى لا يهيب الزادة من التقي
 ولا المال الا من قنا وسيرف
 فقد ناك فقد ان الشاب وليتنا
 قد يناك من فتيا نذا با لوف
 عليه سلام الله و قفا فاذن
 اربي الموت وقا عا بكل شريف

(Oh, the tree of Khabwer, why are you green? Are you not restless on Walid's death? Walid was a young man who loved the wealth of piety, sword and arrows. Oh Walid! we have lost you, just as someone loses his youth. Oh, could we sacrifice thousands of youths on your single person! May God bless Walid! Death is to come one day to every gentle soul!)

This elegy is full of pathos, and is reckoned of a very high standard by learned scholars. Abu Ali Quli has quoted this in his "Amali." Ibn Khalikan says that the elegies of Faraa were equal in standard to Khansa's.

This Walid's sister is named Faraa and Fatima by Ibn Khalikan, but Ibn Athir names her Leib. Ibn Khaldun has mentioned this event, but does not give us any name.

ISLAM—THE RELIGION FOR THE MODERN MAN

ISLAM—THE RELIGION FOR THE MODERN MAN

BY MR. MUHAMMAD AMIN, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

Many a modern man is in search of a religion that will satisfy both his heart and his intellect and will, at the same time, offer a solution of the great political and social problems which face humanity at the present day. The principles of Islam deserve the earnest consideration of all such seekers after light.

The Holy Prophet's Mission

The Holy Prophet of Islam was the greatest socialist the world has ever known. He did not like to call his followers his disciples, but called them *ashab* which means comrades. Though he became virtually the King of Arabia and was its Law-giver, Chief Judge, Commander-in-Chief and Dictator, he lived in poverty, respecting everybody's conscience, encouraging everyone to develop his own faculties and disfavoured (in fact strictly forbade) compulsion in religion. He abolished usury, gave equality to women, declared all men (without distinction of caste, colour or creed) equal before the law, prescribed a poor tax (to be collected from the well-to-do) for the benefit of the destitute, abolished absolute monarchy, encouraged trade and commerce, inculcated more humane methods of warfare and allowed war to be waged only in self-defence or in defence of the weak (all aggressive warfare to be eschewed), and placed the acquisition of learning, both secular and religious, on a higher footing than other religious duties. The message of such a man deserves our careful consideration.

The Prophet was not a mere dreamer but a very practical man. He did not give us mere theories but worked out in practice what he taught. His own example and that of his companions serve as beacon-lights to all those who believe in his message.

Islam and Science

He did not call his religion after his name but called it Islam, which means to live in harmony with the divine laws which govern all creation from the humblest clod of earth to the highest type of beings. He laid so much stress on acquiring a knowledge of the universal laws that he told his followers to go even to the ends of China in search of knowledge. On another occasion, he said "the ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr." On still another occasion, he observed: "Knowledge is like the lost camel of the Muslim; take hold of it wherever you come across it." It was in obedience to these behests of the Prophet that the Arabs gathered the knowledge of India and Greece, Egypt and China and, after improving and adding to it, passed it on to all seekers after light. As an act of gratitude they called mathematics "hindsa," showing that they had taken it from the Hindus, and called medicine "unani" showing that they had learned its rudiments from the Greeks.

The Arabs ransacked the oceans and prepared charts and invented the compass. They were the first to introduce milestones, to light the public streets at night, to make pure water available to all house-holders by means of tubes. They invented the sewing needle. They laid the foundations of modern chemistry and it was at their universities in Spain that the European scholars learned to do research work in all arts and sciences unhindered by prevailing ideas. They established libraries wherever they went and took equal delight in learning from others and in teaching them whatever they themselves knew.

Toleration

Islam teaches toleration. Since God is one, all men are brothers and, as He is not partial, He has been

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sending his teachers and Prophets from time immemorial to every people in every age. We are, therefore, taught in the Qur-án to respect the teachers of all the religions that came before it and regard the Holy Prophet as having completed the work commenced by the previous Prophets. We believe in the law of evolution in matters religious as in matters secular. The teachings brought by the earlier Prophets were suited to the needs and circumstances of the people among whom they preached until the time came when humanity, having as it were attained its majority, the Holy Prophet of Arabia appeared, completing the religious structure commenced by his predecessors and giving us teachings which provide for all our needs and are suitable for all times, as they are based upon the fundamental laws of nature and conduce to the highest good of all humanity.

Liberty in the West

It was remarked by an American writer recently that the civilisation of the West is based upon three great principles to which the French Revolution gave birth, *viz.*, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Let us see how far this assertion of the American author is justified by the present state of society in Europe or America. Let us take, for instance, liberty. In Europe and America, the majority has the right to legislate for all, and the minority is bound to obey the laws made by the majority. Surely it cannot be said that the majority always consists of the wisest, the most virtuous and the best and the fittest people. Rather, our experience shows that the saints, philosophers and scientists are generally in a minority. What right has the majority to frame laws for the minority and why should the latter be compelled to abdicate the throne of their consciences in favour of the former? Herbert Spencer has given the following

definition of liberty: "Every one is free to do that which he likes provided that he interferes not with the equal liberty of any other man." Keeping this definition in mind, it is clear that there is no liberty enjoyed by the minority in the West, whereas in Islam the Qur-án declares the fundamental laws which govern both the majorities as well as the minorities. There is only one law for all. Whether we are governed by a Caliph or a Sultan or by a Parliament, none of them can change the laws of the Qur-án which are meant for the good of all. Our rulers can give effect only to those laws and have no right to legislate to the detriment of any member of society.

Equality

As regards equality, not much of it is found in the West. There we find the extremely rich and the extremely poor, the Lords and the Commons. Some are so rich that they cannot even count their wealth, while others are so poor that they do not know where to lay their heads. On the other hand, Islam does not merely talk of equality but has framed laws to give practical effect to this spirit of equality. For example, during prayer times, all Muslims, rich and poor, high and low, the black and the white, stand shoulder to shoulder in the mosque. Secondly, a poor-tax called *Zakat* is collected from the rich for the benefit of the poor. Every well-to-do person has to pay one-fortieth ($\frac{1}{40}$) of his capital and savings, which is collected by the State and kept in deposit for the benefit of the poor who can always resort to it as a matter of right and not as a matter of charity. Thus there are no destitutes left in a Muslim society, because this is a fund which is always there to help those in need.

To Help the Poor

Our common experience tells us that, if poor people are not helped in their misfortune, they are often tempted

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to steal, to commit robberies, to cheat and to commit frauds and other crimes. We have then to employ the police to arrest them, magistrates to try them, and to build jails to imprison them. All the expense of employing the police and the magistrates, of constructing jails and of feeding the convicts inside them, has to come from the pockets of the rich by means of taxation. Whereas Islam says, "Better give them *Zakat* voluntarily so that they may happily employ it to remove their destitution instead of feeding them in jails. This will breed love and gratitude on the part of the poor for the rich, and the rich will look upon the poor as their comrades."

Law of Inheritance

Next our law of inheritance does away with capitalism. However rich a man may be, his property at his death is divided among his heirs. These include his sons, daughters and widow, so that money keeps on circulating. The reason why the sons get double the share of the daughters is that, at the time of their marriage, the sons have to give dowers to their wives, while the daughters, at the time of their marriage, receive dowers from their husbands. Thus their shares become equalised.

Interest

Next, Islam has prohibited the giving or taking of interest. Giving or taking interest makes the rich go on becoming richer and the poor go on becoming poorer and so leads to some people being too rich and the others being too poor. The rich become haughty and lazy, and the poor lose their self-respect and are overworked. That often leads to fear on the one side and hatred on the other, and sometimes results in bloody revolutions. To prevent that, Islam has condemned the giving and taking of interest. A great English writer says that there is not enough wealth in the treasury of any Government

to carry on a modern war for more than one week without floating a war-loan. If interest was prohibited, no one would lend money to any Government without interest and therefore the Governments would not be able to go to war. What the League of Nations has not been able to accomplish would be achieved, and wars would become a thing of the past.

Storing of Gold and Silver

Islam has also prohibited the storing of gold or silver in our houses, so that gold and silver may always remain circulating for the benefit of society, and should not be uselessly locked up. A good instance of what happens by storing up gold and silver is provided by America. During the last war, America lent large sums of money to some of the fighting nations, and these loans have been repaid in gold and silver. All that gold and silver is lying useless in the vaults of American Banks. At present, there are millions of unemployed people in America. It has been rightly remarked by an American Senator that the reason for their unemployment is that Asia and Europe have not sufficient gold or silver to buy goods from America. Thus their factories have stopped work and this has led to great unemployment. Now, if the gold and silver lying useless in America were to be given back to Europe and Asia, they would be able to buy American goods, the American factories would start work again and there would be no unemployment in the country.

Trade and Usury

Islam says, instead of lending money at interest, we should invest our money in trade. If you open a factory, many labourers will find work in it, and the importers and the exporters, the railway companies and the shipping companies will all be benefited. Trade

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makes us honest, because we soon learn that we cannot succeed in business without honesty. Trade teaches us the art of government, because we have to use all our faculties to please our customers. So we learn to rule human hearts, whereas interest destroys the nations because all wars are carried on by money borrowed on interest.

Woman's Right to Property and Divorce

Next, Islam gives equal rights to women. Women can hold property. There can be no marriage without the consent of a woman and she has the free right to divorce, called "Khula." Islam says that for every man there is a woman and for every woman there is a man, so we must be careful in selecting our partners. Should there be disagreement after marriage, the husband and the wife should each appoint an arbitrator to make peace between them. If peace cannot be restored, rather than be always unhappy, let there be a divorce. After the pronouncement of the divorce by the husband, four months are given within which they can be reconciled. If no reconciliation takes place, divorce becomes absolute, and both are free to marry according to their choice; whereas, in English society, there can be no divorce by mutual consent. It is necessary in England to go to a court of law to prove adultery and cruelty in order to enable a woman to obtain divorce. Besides, divorce proceedings are so expensive that they are beyond the reach of the poor. Still it is remarkable that neither Christianity nor Hinduism allowed divorce. Christian countries have passed laws allowing divorce and the Hindus are trying to get a law passed which will enable Hindu women to obtain divorce in certain circumstances. That shows how the whole world is coming to adopt the principles inculcated in Islam.

Polygamy

The permission to have more than one wife in certain circumstances does not bear hardly upon the women, as the conditions laid down in the Qur-án are that the husband must be able to do equal justice to them all. He has to pay them their dowers, and the first wife can stipulate at the time of her marriage that the husband shall not marry a second wife during her life-time. Islamic law allows every woman to make it a condition of her marriage that, in case of disagreement with her husband, she will herself have the right to divorce. This protects her from the whims of her husband. Besides, the second wife cannot be married without her consent. So that, if a woman is averse to polygamy, she need not marry a man who has another wife living. Thus, the women in any particular town or village can abolish polygamy by passing a resolution that no woman should marry a man who already has a wife. At the same time, whenever the male population happens to be decimated by a war, the right to marry a man who already has a wife prevents the compulsory virginhood of thousands of women, as in Europe.

Slavery

Islam lays down that we must treat our slaves well. We must feed them as we feed ourselves, and clothe them as we clothe ourselves, and allow them to emancipate themselves. Thus Islam has taken away the sting of slavery, whereas in America, though slavery was abolished in the letter, it still exists in spirit. If a negro is seen kissing a white woman, he is burned alive.

The reason why the Prophet did not abolish slavery at one stroke, is that this would have led to a rush of the emancipated slaves upon the labour market. It would have been impossible for them all to find work immediately in order to supply their needs, and their

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consequent starvation would have driven them to violent revolution and useless bloodshed. Islam therefore brought about the reform in a more humane form.

Internationalism

Islam has done away with the distinctions of nationality and colour. All men are brothers, and the whole world is our homeland. As the great poet Iqbal says: "China is ours and Arabia is ours and India is ours; we are Muslims, the whole world is ours;" so that, instead of nationalism, we have internationalism and do not hate anybody.

Universal Brotherhood

At the time of the Muslim pilgrimage, people of all nationalities collect at Mecca. This League of Nations has been meeting every year for the last 1,400 years. They all feel like brothers and imbibe the spirit of the oneness of humanity.

Islam says we must not take anything for granted but use our own reasoning to discriminate between right and wrong. We must search for knowledge and discover the Laws of Nature. We must study history to understand what leads to the growth or the degradation of the nations. There is no difference between religious knowledge and secular knowledge; all knowledge is sacred, and every mosque used to be a university where all kinds of knowledge was imparted to the Muslims, who were formerly in the vanguard of learning as long as they were true to the commandments of their religion.

Islam teaches universal brotherhood; there is no bar of nationality or colour, and we are taught to be merciful even to our enemies. According to Islam, our best interest lies in the good of all, for all men are regarded as members of one body. If the body suffers, all members suffer. We must therefore all co-operate.

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Co-operation rather than Competition

Islam has substituted co-operation for the competition which is ruining Europe. According to Islam, we must co-operate with the good, wherever we find them, and we must not co-operate with the evil-doers, even though they be our relatives. Islam thus brings all the good people of the world on one platform. The Holy Qur-án says that the most honourable among you near God is he who is the most faithful to his duty.

Islam thus establishes a universal brotherhood and gives a death-blow to all ideas of aggressive nationalism, violent Communism, freedom-throttling Fascism, sword-rattling Naziism, atheistic Bolshevism, unjust colour and caste prejudices and usury-fed capitalism. Islam is the religion of peace, brotherhood, toleration, sympathy for the unfortunate, and universal co-operation of all mankind for increasing the sum total of general human happiness.

CORRESPONDENCE

BIRMINGHAM 9

2nd March 1937.

DEAR SIR,

Yours of the 16th ultimo to hand, for which many thanks. I am pleased you have clarified for me the Islamic teaching about the Resurrection.

I quite agree with you that the first followers of Jesus had not the quite definitely Pagan beliefs of the Athanasian Creed, although I am afraid I shocked my Church-going friends and relatives when I maintained the fact that the creeds bear no relation whatever to the New Testament teachings which I, up to now, believe represent the true teachings of Jesus. In this connection, I note with interest the writings of Milne and Gibbon, which to me seem to prove that the early Christians held a faith similar to that which I enunciated to you in a previous letter. If the lives and writings of some of the early so-called "Fathers" are studied, it is possible to make the gradual descent from the New Testament teachings that combination of errors which characterises the Roman Catholic superstition and the multitudinous sects of so-called Christianity. I refer

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to such men as Justin, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Pautamius, Clemens Alesandus down to Arius and Athanasius, in the order mentioned. The epistles of the seven ecclesias or Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3, appear to me not only to refer to the actual state of those Churches at the time they were written but also to justify the coming apostasy (also mentioned in 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 2). Thus, I think the Laocliccean state of Christianity began with Constantine and continues to the present day. (Compare Rev., Chap. 3, v. 17, with the Roman Catholic Church!)

Still, as I have intimated above, I am only too willing and anxious to put my beliefs to the test, and so would be pleased to read the two books you recommend—"The Sources of Christianity" and "Are the Gospels Inspired?" In a previous letter, your Secretary has intimated that your literature is free, but I am in receipt of over-much of your kindness, and *should like, if I may offer to do so without offence, to pay for these books and postage.*

I may say that I am re-reading the Qur-án with pleasure, especially since the ideas of God therein are beautiful indeed, and my chief reason for applying to it for guidance is that I find it to hang together very well. Still my prayer to God is continually to cause me to walk only in Truth, if it be His will.

Yours faithfully,

K. S. R.

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Is Islam Moribund?

Every now and then we receive reports of Christian preachers abroad telling their uniformed listeners the most astounding and brazen-faced lie that Islam, as a religion, is on the point of collapse. Perhaps it is the echo of their apprehensions about their own religion. It is an acknowledged fact that, as a religious force, Christianity is more than dead to-day. Nay, it is synonymous with the rankest form of paganism and irreligion. On the other hand, Islam is not only rapidly regaining its spiritual consciousness among the races that have already been converted to it, but has also been carrying its spiritual influence into races hitherto indifferent or hostile to it. Lest any one should be tempted to challenge this statement, let us quote Christian writers of

the English Press. Writing in the *Yorkshire Post* of 16th March, Mr. N. P. Macdonald says: "For every Christian convert in Africa, ten turn to Islam: in 1901, there were fewer than 2,000,000 Muslims in Europe; to-day there are 8,500,000." The Rev. Dr. Melville Jones, in the course of an interview with Mr. Christine I. Tinling, as published in the *Christian* of 6th May, says: "Islam has spread, and is spreading, among the pagan tribes. A large Mosque at Lagos calls attention to the progress of that religion." Mr. N. P. Macdonald, writing again in the *Evening Chronicle* of 15th April, after repeating his figures for Muslim converts in Africa and Europe, further says: "It is calculated that seven or eight persons are converted to the Muslim faith each week in Great Britain."

The Perversity of Christian English Journalism

The *Sunday Mercury* of Birmingham, while publishing in its issue of 30th May, an account of the forthcoming Coronation Ceremony of His Majesty King Faruque of Egypt, puts the following words as its sub-heading: "The Sword of Muhammad." In anxiety, we read the article through to see what new discovery had been made in connection with the false allegation of violence against the Prophet Muhammad. Our surprise and disgust knew no bounds when we came to the following passage serving as a plea for this deceptive headline: ". . . after which Shaikh Maraghi will invest him with the sacred jewelled sword of Muhammad Ali the Great, founder of the present dynasty." Indeed, this is Christian truthfulness and charity! In spite of the proverbial shortness of the public memory, it will certainly remember how, only a few weeks ago, the Christian King of England had to receive a sacred and consecrated sword from the Archbishop of Canterbury at Westminster Abbey, and this sword, we should do well

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to remember, was associated with the name of a patron saint of Christianity. Yet no one ever suggested that this sword was the sword of Christ. Although the sword that Shaikh Al-Maraghi is to present to the Muslim King of Egypt has no sacred association with it, and is secular in all its aspects, yet the very mention of it is made the occasion for a foolish reference to the Holy Founder of Islam. Let us remind the British Press that such behaviour on its part serves only to bring disgrace upon the great nation which it claims to represent.

Christianity and Indian Untouchability

The *Church Times*, in its issue of January 8th, has the following interesting passage in its columns, under the caption "From a Journalist's Note Book": "Even the Roman Church is troubled by the caste system in India. I have received a copy of the issue of the *Times of India* of December 18th, in which there is a report of a scene in a Roman Catholic Cathedral at Kumbakonam. A large number of Adi-Dravida (Harijan) Roman Catholics (the Adi-Dravidas are South Indian untouchables) who had come to attend the service, took their seats with Caste Catholics, not confining themselves to the places allotted to them. The Caste Catholics did not like this innovation and, when they noted that any persuasion at the time would be of no avail, they left their seats in a body and went out. The bishop exhorted the Adi-Dravidas to conduct themselves justly and fairly, having regard to the prevailing feeling. He advised them to occupy the western wing of the Church."

What have Christian enthusiasts who are collecting vast sums of money for the conversion of these millions of untouchables to the Christian faith to say to such an open challenge of facts to their illusive benevolent programme?

A Christian West no longer

Published in the same issue of the same *Church Times* is an account of the tenth quadrennial conference of the Students Christian Movement, held in Birmingham. It contains a summary of the speech of Dr. W. A. Visser T. Hooft, the General Secretary of the World Students Christian Federation, the outspokenness of which can hardly be excelled. He is reported to have said: "There was a time not so very long ago when the expression 'the Christian West' would seem to be no less natural than such platitudes as the 'Sunny South.' Western civilization was at that time conceived as completely synonymous with Christian civilization. To-day they were living in a very different time, and they found it hard to understand that there was ever a time when people could talk about a Christian West. With civil war, racial persecution, the piling up of murderous armaments, the suppression of religious freedom, the rebirth of paganism, the exploitation of weaker nations and classes, they might as well talk of a Christian jungle. Western civilization had been living for several centuries under a cloud of hypocrisy."

We unhesitatingly state that this position of the Western nations is due to their following a Church that has been hypocritical throughout—worshipping mammon whilst pretending to worship God.

WHAT IS ISLAM?

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[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-AN.—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 believes in neither Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Pre-measurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and in 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

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the 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 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 to 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 moment. 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.