

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

# The Islamic Review

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

Vol. XXVII

ZILQA'DA, 1356 A.H.  
FEBRUARY, 1938 A.C.

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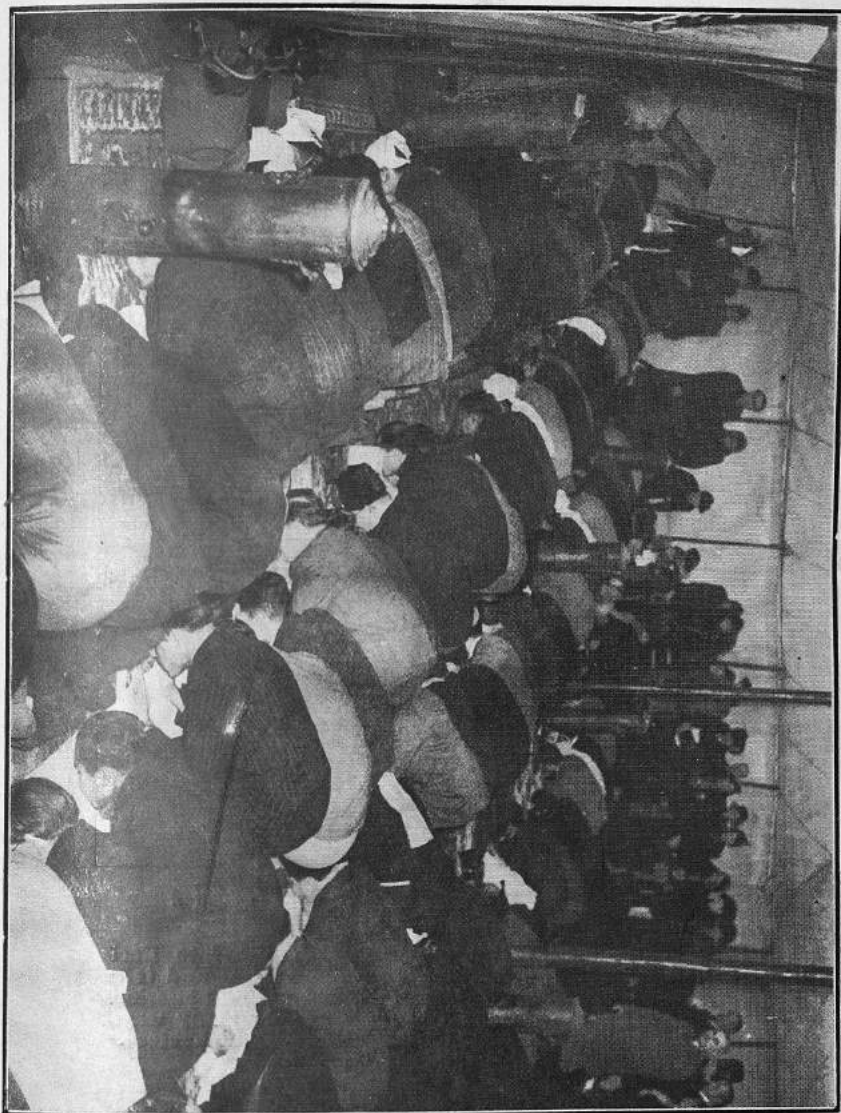
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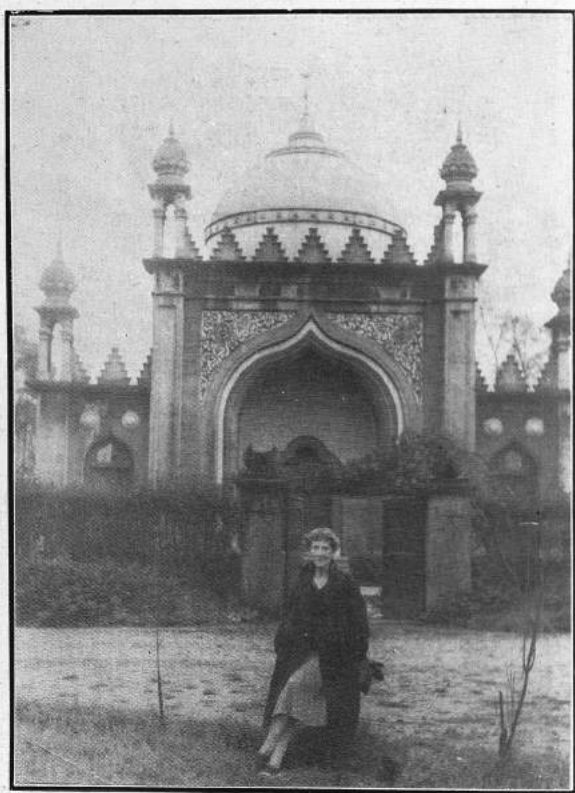
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدًا خَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

VOL. XXVI.]

ZILQA'DA, 1356 A.H.  
FEBRUARY, 1938 A.C.

[No. 2.

## THE LATE SHAIKH MUSHIR HOSAIN KIDWAI OF GADIA, BAR-AT-LAW, LUCKNOW

It is with feelings of the deepest regret, and the most poignant sorrow that we have to record the death of Shaikh Mushir Hosain Kidwai of Gadia, Barrister-at-Law, Lucknow, a sincere worker of Islam and a trustee of the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, which occurred in Lucknow at 9-30 A.M., on December 23rd, 1937.

*Inna lillahe wa inna ilaihe rajioon.*

(From God we are, and unto God we return.)

**THE EID-UL-FITR SERMON (1356 A.H.)**

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

“The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur-án was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction; therefore whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or upon a journey (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; God desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty, and that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of God for having guided you and that you may give thanks.” (Qur-án, 2: 185)

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Praise be to God that so many of us have been able to participate in this festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, or the breaking of the Fast.

Strictly speaking, this festival began with the month of Ramadan—the month of Fasting. Unlike other religious communities of the world, we Muslims do not officially celebrate either the birth or the death or any successful achievement of our founder, lest the glory of the Unity of the Godhead be in any way obscured thereby. Instead, we celebrate, for one thing, the anniversary of the first Revelation of the Qur-án. It was a spiritual experience of the Prophet—an experience undergone in absolute loneliness, while he was in ascetic contemplation in the Cave of Hira, near Mecca. Nevertheless, it was an experience undergone by him as the representative man for this last part of human history. Although the complete Revelation of the Qur-án, coming, as it did, piecemeal, with its various ordinances, explanations and directions—physical, moral, social, economic, political, administrative and spiritual—took the whole of the remaining 22 years of the Prophet's life, yet its beginning was witnessed in one of the last days of

## THE EID-UL-FITR SERMON (1356 A.H.)

the month of Ramadan—in the year 610 of the Christian era, *i.e.*, at the fortieth year of the Prophet's life. Hence the sanctity of this month, of which we celebrate the end to-day. Again, our way of celebrating this festival is also unique in the history of celebrations. We celebrate the whole month by fasting from dawn to sunset, from day to day. Indeed, if there has been any religious festival celebrated in a purely spiritual way, it is the Muslim festival of the Ramadan, or the first Revelation of the Qur-án; and this is quite appropriate to the occasion. Revelation has always been associated with the ascetic practice of fasting. The Holy Prophet Moses fasted for forty days preparatory to his Revelation, and so did the Holy Prophet Jesus. The Holy Prophet Muhammad was also fasting when this Revelation came to him.

This association of Revelation with Fasting is not difficult to understand. The physical life of this existence necessitates a periodical tuning-up of the body if the soul is to soar to the highest point of which it is capable. The clamours of the physical senses, if not brought under proper control, will create a disturbance in the soul's communion with God, in the same way as the uncontrolled atmospherics do in our wireless transmissions. According to the Qur-án, there is a perpetual query addressed to the soul from the Divine Court

الست بربكم      “Am I not your Lord?” and the soul's perpetual response to it is بلئى      “Aye, my Lord.” In other words, the soul always recognizes the Lord. Why, then, is this world full of sin and disobedience? Certainly, it is the influence of the Flesh, which, by its confusing calls, prevents the soul from listening to the perpetual call of its Creator. It is to this phenomenon that the Prophet Jesus refers when he says: “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Indeed, the Flesh is too egoistic and one-sided in its demand, and in the

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interests of the soul, it must be checked and controlled from time to time. The institution of Fasting in Islam affords opportunity for such checking and controlling. As is known to you all, fasting is not merely abstaining from food and drink and smoking, but also abstaining from all kinds of sensual gratification. A full month's restraint of this sort in the year is certainly calculated to help enormously the spiritual faculties in the individual and in the nation. The mind, under this discipline, is surely more able to see and understand things Divine than it could otherwise be. Hence it is that the Qur-án is copiously recited during this month. All the Muslim houses, not to mention the Mosques, from one end of the world to the other, resound with recitations of the Qur-án. Indeed, no better time can be imagined for taking to heart the lessons given by a Divine Book than during this month of Ramadan. There is a special prayer designed for devoutly listening to the Qur-ánic exhortations and expositions, and it is called *Tarawih*. It is a late evening prayer. "Huffaz," or those who commit the whole of the Qur-án in its original Arabic to memory, and they are counted by thousands, if not by millions, throughout the Muslim world, give a complete recitation of the Qur-án during these prayers. The Muslim world creates spiritually in its own humble way, so to speak, the atmosphere which formed the background of the Qur-ánic Revelation and all revealed ordinances for that matter. Just as the whale that from time to time comes up to the top of the water for breath, so the Muslim world for one month in the year rises above the level of physical sensations and breathes in the free air of Divine Revelation.

The glorification of the Lord—the Takbir, as it is called by the Qur-án—which we are doing at this moment, is only the vocal expression of the internal



## THE EID-UL-FITR SERMON (1356 A.H.)

realisation which we have experienced during this sacred month. Indeed, when the soul is free from the interruptions of the flesh, the glory of the Divine Presence bursts in upon it like the sunbeams from a cloudless sky.

This short morning prayer of ours and this glorification of the Lord are undoubtedly a fitting sequel to the month-long spiritual festival which we have been celebrating.

Connected with the fasting is also charity. As you all know, our Holy Prophet Muhammad, who used to be very charitable in his everyday life, was unusually charitable during this month. As in every other wise provision in Islam, to save this charity from falling out of practice, the minimum has been fixed, which has to be paid on behalf of every soul in house before the head of the house joins in the congregational prayers. As I have announced so often, this minimum would be something like half-a-crown in English money.

It does not need any deep contemplation to understand the relationship between fasting and charity. Whereas fasting controls the greediness of the physical senses and subdues them in all their manifestations, charity makes a positive move to crush the very germs of greediness. You can easily understand how selfishness in man, in order to be perfectly subdued, needs positive acts of self-abnegation. Obviously enough, acts of charity act as a tonic to the mind after its cure from lust by the discipline of the Ramadan Fasting; and herein is revealed to us another aspect of fasting which bears upon the most pressing problem of our times. We are faced to-day by a serious strife between the rich and the poor—between the “haves” and the “have-nots”—a strife unparalleled in history for its brutality and callousness. It has deprived the whole of Europe

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of social peace. The Spanish scenes are liable to be re-enacted in any part of Europe to-day. It is undoubtedly a very menacing prospect. Yet, if we look closely, we shall find that the poor do not hate and detest the rich solely because of their own poverty or because of the opulence of the other party. They resent, not the rich man's wealth, but his brutal arrogance and callous indifference towards their sufferings. If the poor discover any inclination on the part of the rich to be charitable and anxious for the mitigation of their sufferings, they will not only not feel jealous of the rich, but even love them and follow them in all international and national affairs, even with great sacrifices, as they have been doing throughout the ages. Unfortunately, in the present-day West, this desirable solicitude of the rich for the poor, which is the only solution of this long-drawn-out class war, is totally absent. It should not be understood that the rich people of Europe are made of a clay different from that of the corresponding classes in other communities of the world, or that they are not anxious to have this problem solved by getting rid of a certain unwholesome mentality. To be just and fair to them, it must be admitted that they are a very well-meaning people as their occasional manifestations of charity show. A community that can produce a Nobel, a Rothschild, or a Nuffield cannot be regarded as inherently callous to human sufferings. In fact, it is the lack of proper discipline of the mind that stands in the way of the Western rich developing on a satisfactory scale their charitable feelings towards the poor. The ordinary English proverb is "Hell is paved with good intentions." It is a wrong understanding of the human mind to think that it does not need any practical guidance in developing its noble sentiments. It is equally wrong to think that external laws are all that is needed to make our

## THE EID-UL-FITR SERMON (1356 A.H.)

social relationships sweet and harmonious. What Communism has tried to do in the economic field of our social life has been done far more thoroughly, and without the concomitant cruelties, reactions and fuss by the Muslim Law of Inheritance. The effectiveness, however, of Muslim regulations for distribution of wealth arises from the fact that they come on the top of a series of drills on our socio-moral plane of life. The system of congregational prayers, which compels the rich several times a day, to rub shoulders with the poor, on a footing of complete equality, which is further supplemented by the system of *Zakat*, or poor rate, which compels the rich to religiously recognise the rights of the poor to a portion of the earnings of the rich, is enough to kill any sense of arrogance and exclusiveness in the minds of the rich. If there is any need for a training in the cultivation of an active feeling of sympathy and charity for the hungry and the starving, this is furnished by the Fasting of Ramadan. Indeed, no amount of sermonising can bring home the actual pinch of hunger to one who has never experienced any scarcity and want.

This ordinance of voluntary abstention from food and drink and other sensual enjoyments on the part of the rich, is, therefore, a training in socialistic feeling which is not only most effective but also unparalleled in the history of economic legislation. Very rightly does the Qur-án call itself "a guidance to men, and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction." Glory be to the Lord Who revealed it for us!

Further, the world is badly in need of Peace, and, paradoxically enough, it is preparing headlong for a destructive war. All the nations are engaged every moment in making huge preparations for a great war. We all know why it is so. It is the unbounded greed

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in man. Collectively and individually, those who have comparatively little want more, and those who have more want still more, without any regard to the limitations of propriety. We should not forget that the national mind is the reflection of the individual mind. It is a perniciously wrong idea that suggests that a bad and selfish individual becomes a saint when he or she deliberates on any collective action. It is rather the reverse. The individual loses his standard of thought and feeling when he is in a crowd. To control the collective greed, we must control it in the individual. To find altruistic feeling in a class or in a nation, we must first find it in the individual. The ordinance of Ramadan Fasting is aimed at securing the subjection of the lust in the individual mind, and at upholding and developing the altruistic feeling in man; and, in so far as it promises these, it holds before humanity the hope of that peace which seems so dead to-day.

Enemies have said that Islam is a dead weight on the soul of the Islamic world, and that it keeps it from all advancement and life-giving movements. I wish these enemies had the wisdom to read and understand the facts of history. Nations that once have throbbed with life and creative energy, when they fall, as they must eventually do, never recover their position. No one can trace to-day, far less find prosperous, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the old-time Greeks or the great Romans; but one does find to-day the Arabs, who at one time created, in the words of Lothrop Stoddard, a new world—the world of Islam—the Persians, who embellished Islam so marvellously in the course of its transmission as a culture and thought movement; the Egyptians who supported Islam so early in its history, and the Turks and the Afghans who rendered splendid military services to the cause of that faith.



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They are all living to-day as nations, and not only living, but they have the ambition, a living hope, to guide the destinies of humanity once more—as soon as opportunity affords. Obviously, it is the religion of Islam that creates this exception for Muslims to the general rule of history. But for their unfailing religion, these nations must have gone the way that other nations like them have gone before. The living religion of God—Islam—not only has saved the Muslim nations from total collapse, but also seems destined to save the present civilised humanity from its threatened doom.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,—

As some great poet has rightly observed, it is not where the clamorous waves beat against the shore with terrific noise that we should seek the result of the blows of the sea at the land. At these ostensible points of the sea's excursions against the land we see more or less futile efforts. We see, at times, some sand washed away, at others some pebbles thrown ashore. Nevertheless, at distant corners far removed from the human eye, the sea is steadily, though silently, encroaching on the land, making creeks where none existed before, and making bays out of creeks. Its struggles after all are not in vain. In the world of thought and emotion, the same rule applies to Islam. One notices the rather negligible progress of Islam in the political struggles of Muslim nations, although signs of the reviving power of Islam are patent even in those struggles; but the real triumph of Islam is to be found in the life-and-death-struggle between Fascism and Communism; in the "pacifist" movement of Europe pitched against the neo-"religion" of Germany, based on pure militarism; in the inauguration and failure of the prohibition movement in Christian America; in the attempts of Hindu India to rid itself of the vice of drinking; in the progressive

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marriage laws of Western countries, and, above all, in the futility of all attempts at peace between Christian nations. The whole situation in the world outside Islam is crying aloud for a spiritual revolution, and this revolution has to be, as is evident, on the lines of Islam, as no other religion can promise anything like a solution and harmonisation of these conflicting problems—social, moral and economic.

It was in the seventies of the last century that a far-sighted Englishman, Mr. Bosworth Smith, made the following prophecy: "Islam itself is a thing of indestructible vitality, and may thrive the more when rid of the magnificent corruptions and the illusory prestige of the Stamboul successors of the Prophet."

Little did the gentleman realise that the words of his prophecy would prove far truer, in the course of half a century, than his wildest imagination could have comprehended. All sober and thinking minds in the West realise to-day that Islam, with its wise and practical ordinances, is the only hope for Humanity, and among these same ordinances, that of Ramadan Fastings, the end of which we have assembled here to celebrate to-day is of very great importance in that it has a direct bearing on the present confusion in the world.

## ISLAM AS MISUNDERSTOOD

### ISLAM AS MISUNDERSTOOD BY H. G. WELLS<sup>1</sup>

BY PROFESSOR T. L. VASWANI.

The following articles have been written by the famous Sindhi Hindu Scholar, Professor T. L. Vaswani, in reply to some observations in H. G. Wells' "World's History":

In his survey of the "World's History," the eminent English writer, Mr. H. G. Wells, refers to many men and many movements; he makes a list of men whom he regards as the greatest ones of history: in this list there is room for Bacon and Aristotle but there is no room for Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. He writes brilliantly but with a bias. He is not in sympathy with the vision of the East. I am not surprised at his ungenerous attack on the personality of Muhammad. Mr. Wells speaks of Muhammad's life as being "on the whole . . . unedifying:" Muhammad, to Mr. Wells, was a "man compounded of very considerable vanity, greed, cunning, self-deception and quite sincere religious passion." Mr. Wells is equally disappointed in the Qur-án "regarded as literature or philosophy." When, many years ago, I read the Qur-án in an English translation, I was much moved by its noble inspiration and, as I have from time to time heard the devout recite the Qur-án, mine eyes have been again and again touched with tears. Mr. Wells has read widely; but he has not abandoned crude conceptions regarding the Islamic ideal—an ideal which has been a shaping power in East and West.

Guizot and Draper had the frankness to admit that Islam freed Europe from feudalism. And did not Islam exert an uplifting influence on mediæval Europe? Long before the French Revolution, Islam gave to the nations a message of liberty, equality and fraternity. Again and

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<sup>1</sup>. By courtesy of "The Star of India," Calcutta.

again has Islam produced men and women of profound knowledge—men who, having reached the stage of illumination and ecstasy, have sung songs and lived lives which have, I believe, a meaning for the human race. What a profound philosophy of life is in the lyrics they have left,—the lyrics which sing of the nightingale and the rose, the moth and the candle, the camel and the desert, the lover and the lake-lyrics of Sasui and Punuh, Ummer and Marui, Yusuf and Zulaikha, Laila and Majnun.—lyrics of the soul's longing for the Love that makes the world, for all its struggles and sufferings, a wonder and a vision of mystery!

## *One of World's Mighty Heroes*

To Mr. Wells, Muhammad's life is "unedifying." To me, Muhammad is one of the world's mighty heroes. He has been a world-force, a mighty power for the uplift of many peoples. Read the old records and you will glimpse the grace and beauty of his life. A King and a spiritual leader, he yet mends his clothes, visits the sick, loves little children in the streets, lives on simple food, sometimes taking only dates and water,—milks his cattle, dines with slaves and mixes with the people as their comrade. "I sit at meals as a servant," he says, "for I am really a servant." "Show us the way that is established,—the way of those on whom is Peace"—this is his constant prayer. For this word "Islam" means peace. They persecute him: his very life is in danger: but he is loyal to the call; he moves about preaching the way of peace. Carlyle does well to speak of Muhammad as a type of the heroic prophet. Muhammad was a Hero and a Prophet. I have often thought of his last words "Lord, grant me pardon and join me to the fellowship on high,—yes, the Blessed Fellowship on high!" Am I wrong in saying that such a man was beautiful in life, beautiful in death?



## ISLAM AS MISUNDERSTOOD

### *Catholic Vision*

Muhammad had a broad catholic vision. Abraham, he said, was a true Muslim. "A perfect Muslim," said Muhammad, "is he from whose tongue and hands mankind is safe." Muhammad expressed the Rule of Life for the true Mussulman in the following significant words:

"Do unto others what you would have them to do to you: and reject for others what you would reject for yourself."

One day a bier passed by the Prophet. Being told it was the bier of a Jew, he said: "Was it not the holder of a soul from which we should take example and fear?" Muhammad realised that Jews and Christians like the Muslims were souls that belonged to God. Muhammad subordinated money to the immaterial values of life. "The love of the world," he said, "is the root of all evil." Capitalism, imperialism, commercialism, landgrabbing, exploitation: the root of it all is "love of the world."

### *A Democracy of Man*

When shall the modern nations place love of man above love of the world? There can be no democracy without love of man as man. This democracy is the very essence of Islam, Allaho-Akbar; God alone is Great; what a faith, what an inspiration, this ringing cry! How often did Muhammad declare that he, too, was a man, a man like others, a mortal, a servant of Allah the Merciful. All are equal in the sight of Allah: all need His mercy—Such is the faith of Islam. This faith makes Islam a Brotherhood, an International Brotherhood, a Fellowship of many races and tribes. This faith Muhammad cherished in his heart. He could not have cherished it if he had been, in Mr. Wells' words, a man of "shifty character."

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Mr. Wells does not understand Muhammad, or Abubakr, or the Qur-án. Consider for a moment what the faith which Muhammad preached has achieved. Islam abolished infanticide in Arabia; Islam enjoined on the faithful total abstinence from drink; Islam emphasised great qualities of faith, courage, endurance and self-sacrifice. Islam introduced into Asia and Europe a robust puritanism which the West needs to check the "cult of the naked." Islam abolished interest and monopoly.

### *Torch-bearers of Culture*

"Who is a Muslim seeketh after the Right Way."

There is wisdom, there is inspiration in these words of the Qur-án—and history shows how well Islam in the day of its true greatness was a seeker after the Right Way. Islam founded the great University of Cordova which attracted Christian scholars from different parts of Europe. At a time when Europe was in darkness, the Muslim scholars of Spain held high the torch of science and literature. They taught medicine and mathematics, chemistry and natural history, philosophy and the fine arts. Islam built hospitals and asylums for the poor. Islam struck the first blow at slavery when Omar set all slaves at liberty after his conquest of Jerusalem. Islam opened free libraries, established observatories and endowed laboratories for chemical experiments.

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## ISLAM—A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

# ISLAM—A UNIVERSAL RELIGION OF PEACE AND PROGRESS

BY MAULVI ABDUL KARIM

(Continued from Vol. XXV. Page 440.)

### *What is Islam?*

Islam is not, as is generally believed by non-Muslims, the religion of Hazrat Muhammad in the sense in which Buddhism is the religion of Buddha and Christianity is the religion of Christ. "Muhammadanism" is, in fact, a misnomer; it has no place in the nomenclature of Islamic history. The word is a creation of the mediæval literature of Europe, coined on the analogy of Christianity. "Muhammadanism," if it means anything, may mean that phase of Islam which was preached by the Prophet of Arabia.

Islam, which is the entire submission of man to the absolute sovereignty of God's Will and peace with Him and His creatures, was the religion of all the true Prophets who preceded Hazrat Muhammad—the religion of Noah, of Abraham, of Moses, of Jesus. Every true religion, by whatever name it might have been called, originally came direct from God, and every true Prophet was sent by Him to teach the same eternal truth.

Religion, as a whole, consists of two parts—*Deen* (religion) and *Mazhab* (pathway), the abstract and the concrete. While *Deen* represents the fundamental conception or creed of man about the universe and its Creator, *Mazhab* denotes the complex of rules, customs, conventions and institutions which govern human life in its manifold spheres. While *Deen* in its nature has always been one and universal, absolute and permanent, *Mazhab* has largely been divergent, local, temporary and conditional in its character. Thus every Prophet while proclaiming the same *Deen*, had to adopt a different

*Mazhab* in order to meet the particular demands of time, place, the stage of human development and the specific requirements of different peoples, separated from one another by the barriers of geographical, racial, national, cultural, linguistic and political divisions.

With the advent of Hazrat Muhammad the period of national prophets and local *Mazhabs* came to an end. He removed all the misinterpretations and corruptions that had crept into the different *Mazhabs* and evolved a perfected and universalised *Mazhab*. Islam may, therefore, be said to be the fulfilment and completion of all previous religions. Thus in essentials there is hardly any difference between Islam and Christianity shorn of all man-made dogmas. This does not mean that humanity has reached a finality and there is no scope for further evolution. It merely means that *Mazhab* has now passed from the limited, local and national stage to the universal and permanent stage.

### *Formation of different Religious Sects*

Most people, for want of education and information, failed to realise the true import and implication of *Deen* and *Mazhab*. They mistook the forms and formulas, rites and rituals of *Mazhab* for real *Deen*. Thus they differed in their religious belief and formed different religious sects, each one of whom proclaimed that they were the chosen people of the Lord and they alone were entitled to salvation. Thus arose bitter religious controversies and quarrels which brought dissension and disruption to the human race. Islam put a stop to this by proclaiming that ever since the beginning of human habitation on the surface of the earth, there has been only one *Deen* revealed by God to His Prophets; it was only their *Mazhabs* that were different. Salvation, therefore, does not lie in joining a particular religious group or labelling oneself by the name of a particular



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sect, but in realising and practising the spirit of real *Deen* in thought, word and deed.

### *Islam's Scripture*

The Scripture of Islam, the Qur-án, is not a collection of dogmas, but a code of life. It is not a voluminous treatise on theism, but a social, penal, commercial, civil, military, judicial, international and yet a religious code, which regulates everything that a human being has to do for his welfare from the cradle to the grave. Though it gives solution to all important problems of human life, and provides for every contingency of human affairs, it is wonderfully laconic, the whole of its teaching having been condensed into 9,666 verses. It is the masterpiece of the Arabic language and is extolled throughout the world for the simple grandeur of its diction, the chaste elegance of its style and the variety and magnificence of its imageries. Unlike the scriptures of other religions, the Qur-án has come down to us in its pristine purity, genuine, undefiled and unchallenged. Its inspiration is the only miracle to which the Prophet lays claim. Failing to produce from the whole range of their language and literature, which had reached a very high level, anything that could approach a single verse of the Qur-án, the Arab idolators had to desist from questioning its divine origin. After thirteen centuries it still remains an unerring guide to humanity. Its teaching is purely rational, there is nothing dogmatic in it. It inculcates the noblest ideals of monotheism, universalism, democracy, fraternity, liberty and unity. It was first in the field to proclaim the unity of God and the equality of men.

### *Three Basic Unities of Islam*

The three basic unities on which the entire structure of the Qur-ánic message may be said to have been founded are (1) *Tauhid-e-Ummat*—oneness of the

nationality of mankind; (2) *Tauhid-e-Rabubiat*—oneness of the *Rab*, the Creator, Sustainer, Evolver and Guardian of all; (3) *Tauhid-e-Ibadat*—oneness of worship and the singleness of Almighty to Whom all should submit and surrender their entire selves. Although the differences of country, colour, race and language have divided mankind into thousands of groups they all constitute only one family of the house of Adam and Eve and one nationality of the human species. The one absolute and eternal reality of God cannot be changed by giving Him different names in different languages and by worshipping Him by different methods in different temples. When man's Creator is one, he should recognise His absolute sovereignty and worship Him and surrender himself to Him alone.

### *Simplicity of Islam*

One of the distinctive features of Islam is its simplicity. Its teaching is not shrouded in myths and stories and has nothing mysterious, nothing irrational, nothing impractical, nothing unattainable in it. It appeals to the intellect as well as to the natural sentiments in man. It is in perfect harmony with science, and it may be said to have been writ large on the face of nature, from the gigantic sun to the tiniest blade of grass. According to Islam every atom in the universe, while maintaining the general equilibrium, is incessantly busy proclaiming that submission to the Will of Almighty God which is the one universal religion all the world over. What scientists call Laws of Nature is, in religious phraseology, the Will of the Lord, which may be read in His Book of Nature. Islam is nothing but submission to God's Will. "Is it then other than God's religion that they seek (to follow) and to Him submits whatever is in the heavens and the earth willing-

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ly or unwillingly and to Him shall they be returned?" (Al-Qur-án.) "Foremost among the causes that contributed to the success of Islam," writes Arnold, "was the simplicity of the Muslim Creed. There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Apostle of God. Assent to these two simple doctrines is all that is demanded of the convert. The simple creed demands no great trial of faith and is within the compass of the meanest intelligence. Unencumbered with the theological subtleties, it may be expounded by any, even the most unversed in theological expressions. The first half of it enunciates a doctrine that is also universally accepted by men as a necessary postulate, while the second half is based on a theory of man's relationship to God that is almost equally widespread, *viz.*, that at intervals in the world's history God grants some revelation of Himself to men through the mouthpiece of inspired Prophets." "A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding," observes Professor Montel, "might be expected to possess, and does indeed possess, a marvellous power of winning its way into the consciences of men."

### *Universality of Islam*

In religion Islam laid the foundation of universalism which is its most distinctive feature. It is as wide in its conception as humanity. It is not meant for one people or for one age or for one country. The very first verse of the Qur-án proclaims the oneness of all people. There God has been described as "Rabbul-Alamin," the Creator, the Nourisher and the Guide of all, not as the God of Israel or any other particular nation. Nowhere it is stated that God is Rabbul-Muslimin, the Lord of the Muslims only. "Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Christians,

and the Sabians, whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve." (Al-Qur-án.) "And they say none shall enter paradise except he who is Jew or Christian. These are their fancies. Say, bring your proof if you are truthful. Yea, whoever submits himself to God and he is the doer of good (to others), he has reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for him, nor shall he grieve." (Al-Qur-án.) Thus according to Islam the goal of all true religions is invariably the same, though the means of its attainment might be different.

*Islam enjoins respect for all Prophets*

A Muslim, under the categorical injunctions of the Qur-án, can make no distinction between one medium of light and another. He has to believe in all the Prophets and Scriptures that were sent by God from time to time. Side by side with his Holy Prophet he is required to regard all other Messengers of God—Moses, Jesus, and others—as worthy of love and veneration. "We believe in God and that which hath been sent down to us, and that which hath been given to Abraham and Issac and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which hath been given to Moses and Jesus and that which was given to the Prophets from their Lord. No distinction do we make between any of them, and to God we are resigned." (Al-Qur-án.) "And certainly We sent apostles before you (Muhammad): there are some of them that We have mentioned to you, and there are others whom We have not mentioned to you. They who say we believe in some of the apostles and reject others and seek to take a middle course in the matter, they are really unbelievers, and We have prepared for the unbelievers an ignominious punishment. But they who believe in God and His apostles, and make no dis-



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inction between any of them, unto these surely We give their reward; and God is Gracious and Merciful.” (Al-Qur-án.)

The excuse for this long quotation is the necessity of stressing the sanctity of all the Prophets and impressing it not only upon those who do not know it, but also upon those who, in their fanatical zeal, are apt to overlook it.

### *Mediation has no place in Islam*

Every one, according to Islam, is solely responsible for his action. While on the one hand man is not held in any way responsible for what he does not actually do himself, on the other, there can be no expiation by another of what he does. Man, according to Islam, is born sinless; he is not at all accountable for the sins of his ancestors, nor can he get his own sins expiated by others. Thus Islam engenders in every one of its followers a sense of personal responsibility and does not recognise any mediator between man and God. A Muslim is directly accountable to his Lord for all that he thinks, or says, or does, and he has himself to work out his salvation by his own good deeds without the intervention of any mediator. Islam recognises no priesthood; no intermediary can grant a Muslim a free passport to heaven. The claim of the priest, the Buddhist Phungi, the Hindu Brahmin, the Jewish Rabbi and the Christian clergy, to stand between man and God, is regarded by Islam as the height of arrogance. The best among the Muslims automatically becomes the leader in a congregation or conference.

### *Islam—a Religion for Worldly People*

Man, who may be said to be a social animal, requires, for his guidance, a religion that concerns actual worldly affairs and conduct more than anything else. Such a religion is Islam which enjoins man to live,

as a rule, in the world and to serve its denizens. It is not intended for the anchorites who shun the world and lead an isolated, retired life.

Islam has made family life the basis of social organisation, holding matrimony essential for social purity and peace as well as for the general welfare of mankind. Maintenance of the family and rearing of children have been ordained as imperative duties of man; to be a dutiful son, a faithful husband and an affectionate father are to be counted as great virtues. Thus has Islam sanctified every detail of mundane life, and this is one of its most distinctive features.

Islam has put a ban on celibacy and renunciation of the world. While Christian doctors tried to combat the licentiousness of the age by setting forth the celestial merit of celibacy and the angelic virtue of virginity, Islam put in a strong protest against the exaltation of celibacy as a crown of piety. It thrust aside artificial virtues and replaced monkishness by manliness. According to it man's glory is not in killing his natural passions, but in controlling them and utilising them for the good of humanity. Thus Islam has made a life of service and sacrifice within the world the crown of human existence.

## MUSLIMS IN BULGARIA

## MUSLIMS IN BULGARIA

BY PROFESSOR M. WALI KHAN, EDITOR,

"THE CRESCENT."

I am glad to be able to say that my gallant co-religionists here in Bulgaria enjoy complete and perfect liberty in the exercise of their religious functions and ceremonies; in fact, they have extraordinary privileges conferred on them by the tolerant and generous government of His Majesty King Boris and the present Cabinet.

It will interest and, I venture to think, delight the numerous readers of your widely-circulated *Islamic Review* to know that a fully-installed Head Office of the Chief Muftiship of the entire kingdom is functioned here in Sofia. The Chief Mufti is assisted, in his determination of complicated property, marriage and divorce cases, by a Council of three elected learned Muslims. They have a fine four-storied building in the heart of the town which accommodates not only the Chief Law Officer of Islam and his three advisors, but also finds a room, spacious enough, for the Sofia Mufti and his staff. This last-mentioned officer ministers to the religious, spiritual, moral, social and educational needs of the Muslim community of Sofia and its environs. Besides attending to their multifarious requirements, the "Jamiat-e-Islamia," i.e. "Muslim Society" of Bulgaria, runs a chain of High Schools where they conduct complete courses in Theology, Hadis, Tafsir and Fiqh. Inspectorates of these High Schools are exclusively in Muslim hands, with the kindly Bulgarian authorities ever ready to give a helping hand in the checking of accounts and any other advice sought by Muslims. I beg your readers to contrast this liberal attitude of the Bulgarians to their fellow Muslims with that of the meddlesome, overbearing behaviour of some of our

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English rulers in India towards our Muslim brethren there. Let us hope the "new era of reform" will help to remove these and various other discrepancies, and ameliorate the lot of India's illiterate masses. By rectifying this colossal blunder, the politicians and educationists in India, particularly those belonging to the fold of Islam, will earn the lasting gratitude of Muslims all over the world.

The "Ulema" (Doctors of Islam) and the Muslim public here evince the keenest interest in the welfare and in the social and intellectual uplift of their brethren of the universal Faith of Islam in all quarters of the globe.

Events, such as the recent auspicious assumption of power by that young Muslim king, Farouq of Egypt, and the collision of the British Government with the tribesmen in far-off Waziristan, are followed with the keenest enthusiasm. There are, in all, about 800,000 Muslims in the kingdom. The towns of Phillipolis, Shumla, Rouschouk and the sea ports of Wazna and Burgaz are strongly representative of the Muslim community. Their principal industry is the cultivation and production of Bulgaria's famous and excellent tobacco. Unfortunately, our brethren have not yet developed it to the high economic degree to which their envied Serian (now Yugo-Slavian) brethren and the progressive Egyptians have attained. They need the shrewd acumen of that good Muslim economist, Talaat Pasha Harb, the noble founder of the National Banking Institute, *Bank Misr*; he is the virtual liberator of the deluded Fellahin from the clutches of those low Levantine sharks—the dregs of the population of the Mediterranean coast.

With a little more of this energy, the Bulgarian Muslims, too, may rival Serajova (Bosnia's centre) and Cairo.



## WHAT ISLAM WANTS OF THE WEST

May it be that the wide-awake organiser of the Misr Air Lines between Suez and Jeddah, the sturdy old Talaat Pasha Harb, will take it into his head to help the Muslim tobacco producers of Bulgaria by opening a branch of his world-wide financial institute here.

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## WHAT ISLAM WANTS OF THE WEST

BY KENNETH WILLIAMS

Recent declarations in connection with Signor Mussolini's tour in Libya upon the future relations of Italy with the Muslim world induce reflections upon the relationship of Christendom to Islam. Italy, the Duce has recently asserted, sends her sympathy to the whole Muslim world; less authoritative voices have proclaimed indeed that Italy shall be the protector of Islam. What really does Europe intend towards Islam? And what is Islam's reaction to such declarations from Europe?

One thing is certain: that Islam has no wish to be protected by anyone. Sympathy, yes: of that Islam is in need. The Muslim world, both that section of it which is independent and that which is subordinated to European governance, is only too anxious for the friendship, even the alliance, of the West; but it wants this on equal terms. It desires, and it needs, no foreign ægis under which it may express itself.

There is in European conceptions of the Muslim world still abundant misunderstanding. In the earliest days of Islam, as all students of the East are aware, the creed preached by the Prophet Muhammad, and spread like wildfire by his zealous exponents, was treated as but a Christian heresy. There was, in fact, sufficient similarity between the two faiths to give colour to this error. But the spirit bred by the Crusades, significant examples of true tolerance and perception though those fights

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in the Holy Land exceptionally produced, hardened the temper of Europe towards the Saracens. And with this hardening of temper came the propagation of false notions upon the real nature of Islam—notions which have endured almost until our own time. Few indeed were the publicists of the centuries prior to the twentieth who realised that, fundamentally, that section of the East which is monotheistic is at one with the West. Europeans were taught to believe, or at any rate gained the impression, that Muslims were outside the pale of decent society, that every Muslim had at least four wives, that in the Islamic belief women had no souls, and so on. "Turks" and infidels were as one in being beyond the social intercourse of right-minded, civilised people.

To-day, happily, we know better: but we do not know enough. There is now no prejudice against Muslims as such. We are aware that a good citizen of a Muslim State is just as worthy as a good citizen of any other State, yet there is still room for improvement in the social relationship of European to Muslim. This unfreedom in social intercourse is possibly more marked between Britons and Muslims than it is, say, between Frenchmen or Italians and Muslims—a remark that does not, admittedly, apply to Britons actually living in Muslim countries but rather to Muslims sojourning in Great Britain.

Against this British defect, however—a defect which may well arise from the innate British reservedness, must be set the fact that other nations, more easily though they may mix with Muslims, have not, with the possible exception of Holland, quite the same high attitude as has this country towards the Islamic world. The British practice throughout the globe where British influence is dominant is to respect existing religious beliefs and institutions. So, it may be said, is it the practice of other

## WHAT ISLAM WANTS OF THE WEST

nations. Is there not a mosque in Paris, another in Berlin? But what, beneath the façade of genuine tolerance, is the intention of other nations towards the Muslim peoples? Is it not to draw them nearer and nearer, culturally, spiritually, and in every other way, to their respective capitals?

No such ambition informs the British attitude towards Islam. Great Britain has no wish that the Muslim people should slavishly imitate the West. Far rather would she see them, with whatever degree of modernisation that may be necessary, reviving their glorious traditions, developing their innate culture, making their own individual contribution to the civilisation of mankind. At the moment, it is true, Muslim States are largely preoccupied in their own local affairs: the wave of Nationalism through which Europe has not yet passed beats hard against the world of Islam. Yet there still exists in Islam a sense of brotherhood, a oneness, which Christendom, unfortunately, has lost: and this fine sense Great Britain would assuredly not care to see pass away.

It should never be forgotten that Islam is not only a religious creed: it is also a way of life. Certain European nations are content enough that the creed should be preserved, but they would like to alter the way of life. Yet the two are really inseparable. Muslims may progress as they will, and as, indeed, they are fast progressing. In many Islamic States old customs, mere accretions on and not essentials of the Islamic faith, are being forsworn. This, where it springs from popular desire, is a healthy sign, a sign of new life, of fresh resolve. But Muslims should be left to work out their destiny in their own fashion. Certainly the West should help them. Not yet is the debt repaid which the West owes to the East, that East particularly

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which, when Europe was benighted, kept alive the flame of European civilisation. But to attempt to Europeanize Islam, to encroach upon, minimise, and ultimately to undermine Islamic culture is a retrograde step. Of this, Muslims are generally aware: and that is why, whatever be the temporary differences which may arise, they realise that the most abiding and most reliable friend of Islam is the British Empire. It is for us to see that that friendship remains constant, unimpaired by passing dispute or transient misunderstanding.—

*Great Britain and the East.*

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### SOME OF THE SAYINGS OF MUHAMMAD

Islam consisteth in cherishing the profoundest respect for the Commandments of Allah and extending sympathy to His creatures.

No man is true in the truest sense of the word save he who is true in word, in deed, and in thought. One of the acts of charity is to feed the wayfarer.

All God's creatures are His family; and he is the most beloved of God who trieth to do most good to His creatures.

God is gracious to him that earneth his living by his own labour and not by begging.

To extend consideration towards neighbours and send them presents are charitable acts. Humility and courtesy are acts of virtue.

Whatever mishap befall thee, it is on account of something which thine own hands have done.



## CORRESPONDENCE

## CORRESPONDENCE

MR. D. B.,  
MAGDELENE COLLEGE,  
CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR MR. B—,

*Blessings of God be upon us all!*

I am afraid I have not been able to read the book kindly sent by you—"The Truth of Christianity." I hope to do so in the near future.

In the meantime, I have gone through the passages in St. John's Gospels, and have understood all that you mean to convey to me through them.

Let me at the outset clear up one point about the Gospels. We do not and cannot take them as the inspired words of God. I wonder if you know that none of them was written by a direct disciple of Jesus, nor were they written by contemporaries.

As for their inspired nature, we are told by Luke in the first verse of his Gospel that it is no more inspired than the "Encyclopædia Britannica" of our own times. If you need any further satisfaction on this point, I can send you literature that shows conclusively that, far from being the word of God, these Gospels cannot be credited with even the accuracy of a chronicle.

Nevertheless, we credit the Gospel-writers with a sincere, though over-zealous, attempt to hand down to the following generations some account of the sayings and doings of a great inspired teacher. It seems they are more careful when they are recording his sayings than when they narrate events or give their own opinions on these events. This is understandable, because the utterances of inspired personalities are retained by devout followers, through memorizing, but the retention of the events is not possible by this process.

We Muslims, therefore, are inclined to rely on the direct words of the teacher, to the exclusion of what is said of him by others or by the Gospel-writers themselves.

Before we proceed further, it is necessary to elucidate the principal points at issue between Islam and Christianity. The first and most important difference between these two religions is that, whereas Christianity insists on regarding Jesus as co-sharer with God in the Divinity, Islam would credit him only with the power of regenerating people as a prophet—a human being purified by the hand of God and filled with the Holy Spirit. I should like, for the present, to concentrate on this one issue, as on the establishment or disestablishment of this point depends the existence of the other issues. You need hardly be told that, in Christian theology, the Divinity of Jesus is the hub of the whole wheel of the other doctrines. Original Sin, Fall of Man, Atonement, Redemption and other similar ideas all wander in a blind alley as long as this Divinity of Jesus is not proved. The disproof of this Divinity should be conclusive for a believer in this religion, if it comes from the mouth of the person whom he regards as Divine.

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Believe me, we Muslims are no less anxious than our Christian friends to uphold the dignity of Jesus—we feel that we are even more so. We contend against the position taken by our Christian friends simply because, rather than making him appear great, it makes his position very precarious. The least that is expected of a great man—and especially of an adorable personality like that of Jesus—is consistency. I am afraid the Christian position does expose him to the serious charge of inconsistency. I take the strongest possible ground taken by them with regard to his utterances—Verse 16 of John 3, which you have also included in your list of references. It runs thus: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." As against this, let me place the following verses: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the Sons of God*" (Matt. 5: 9): "For neither can they die any more; for they are equal with the angels; and *are sons of God*, being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20: 36). The most challenging passage in this connection is the following: "I and my Father are one." Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?" The Jews answered him saying, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Jesus answered them: "Is it not written in your law '*I said, ye are gods*!' If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath *sanctified* and *sent into the world*, thou blasphemest, because I said, '*I am the Son of God*?' (John 10: 30—36.)

Lest we confuse issues here, let us analyse the position of this last statement. It is made in reply to the Jewish charge that he was calling himself an incarnation of God. If he were so, as our Christian friends think he was, the reply should have been something like this: "You stone me or do whatever you like—I am the son of God in that sense which you abhor, and if you stone me to death, I achieve the object of my coming all the more easily as I have come to atone for the sins of humanity by self-mortification through Death." Instead of this, we find him explaining his position with reference to the Old Testament verse which emphatically refers to all righteous servants of God as gods, which is far more serious from the point of view of persecuting Jews than calling oneself a mere son of God. If his claim were anything different from and greater than the claims of the inspired human beings of old, there was no occasion for him to refer to the phenomenon as narrated in the Old Testament.

We should also note that Jesus speaks of himself as sanctified by the Father. This dashes to pieces the Christian theory that he is co-eternal and co-sharer with God in His purity. There must have been a time when he was *not* sanctified!

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He also speaks of himself as having been sent, which shows that he did not come of his own accord. It is interesting to note in this connection that in the Qur-án all prophets are called "Rasuls" which means *those who are sent*.

Taking all these aspects of the matter into consideration, one has no other alternative but to take this statement as meaning his denial of the claims to Divinity, and an assertion of the fact that his claims by no means went beyond those made on behalf of inspired teachers of the past.

So this passage and the others that speak of the "peace-makers" and the spiritually-resurrected people as "sons of God" run counter to John 3:16, unless we take the words "only begotten Son" to apply only to the time and the people to whom the words are spoken. Further, there is a point which our Christian friends never care to understand. They forget the scientific fact that an inspired teacher comes in a society when that society has lost the spark of spiritual consciousness, just as a shower of rain comes on a land when it has exhausted its resources of water. The inspired teacher comes as a medium through which the spiritual consciousness of the nation is to be reawakened. The society itself is incapable of producing any person with a living spiritual consciousness. There is no fire anywhere from which a person can light his own soul. So the direct intervention of God takes place. He with His own hands lights the fire in one man who, in his turn, is to give the same fire to others. Thus, in this sense, every prophet and spiritual regenerator is, metaphorically, "the only son of God" in his own time, in that he is regenerated by God Himself, and is the only person of this type in his time and among his own people. Unfortunately, our Christian friends never apply to Christ the rules that are applicable to all speakers. No speaker unless he says so in so many words should be considered as applying his remarks to all times and all peoples while addressing an audience. There is nothing in the Gospels to show that Jesus meant his remarks to apply to all times and to all places. It is unwarranted, therefore, to suppose that he claimed anything for himself which could not be, and had not been, claimed by people before and after him.

Coming to your assertion that you have obtained "free salvation" in the living person of Jesus, I must tell you that I have heard the assertion from many religious-minded Christians. I do not disbelieve those who say this, but I certainly hold that they are under some delusion. If all these Christians had actually attained salvation from sin, the atmosphere in Christendom would have been very different from what it is to-day. I, therefore, cannot help feeling that these well-meaning people do not really know what salvation means. The moment a person attains full salvation he becomes a dynamic force for virtue. His company would change the life of a stubborn sinner. He would be a moving spirit of moral resolution. One such man could transform the moral life of a whole nation, and several such would transform a whole world. Evidently this



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experience has not come to these well-meaning Christian friends. It seems that they confuse with salvation an aversion to a certain vice. I wish they had known that real salvation is far, far beyond this feeling. It is a far more difficult achievement than they can imagine. If I were asked what creates this confusion, I should say that a sudden turning from the gross sensual atmosphere of the present-day West to the Gospels and the atmosphere which is associated with them must appear to those who so turn as heaven does to a creature of hell. There is no doubt that the atmosphere which the Gospels breath is positively spiritual and, to the present-day Westerner, sick of the prevailing materialism, its impression is tremendous. The poor man however is but too likely to confuse this river bank with the sea-shore, and in fact he does so. Scarcely does he know that this slight spiritual influence cannot carry him across the mirage of spiritual confusions through which lies the soul's journey to God. In his amazement and owing to the Christian tradition of home and nation, he at once takes the spiritual personality of Jesus to be God Himself. By this he once and for all ties down his unbounded spiritual ambitions to a ray of Divine glory as manifesting itself through a helpless creature. Little does he know that, even as examples of self-unfoldment of the human soul, there are greater personalities than that depicted by the Gospels! Let me stop here for the present, hoping that this opens up for you a new line of spiritual thought.

With best wishes, and hoping to hear from you as soon as you are in a position to tell me something in reply to my criticisms,

I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD,  
*Imam.*

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### NOTES AND COMMENTS

#### *Christianity and Christian Conduct.*

Christian propagandists are never tired of ascribing every progressive step in Christendom, on the social, intellectual or moral plane, to Christianity as a religion. Freethinkers of Europe have long exploded the falsity of this arrogation. It has been satisfactorily proved by this class that every progressive step in the West has been taken in the teeth of Church opposition. Free-thinkers, however, have a bad name in religious circles. Nevertheless, evidences to this effect are not wanting from religious quarters of the Christian community. The *Sunday Times* for 5th September, for example, reports, in fragments, the speech of Mr. Claud Mullins, the London Magistrate, given at the modern Churchmen's Conference at Cambridge. Here are two extracts:

"The disturbing factor in the present religious situation is that so much of the progress towards Christian conduct has been, and is, due to the work of those aloof from, or hostile to, all Christian Churches, and even to Christianity itself, as they understand it." "Again this year legislative changes of the highest importance have been made in the law and procedure concerning matrimonial failure, but the attitude thereto of ecclesiastical organizations has made me wonder sometimes whether Christian marriage is not best upheld by those aloof from the Churches."

With regard to these two observations, the speaker could have as well said that the spirit of Christ is best demonstrated in both these directions by those who are inspired by the teachings of Muhammad—professedly or secretly. In fact, it is only the gross ignorance of the Islamic laws and practices that makes the enlightened Britishers think that they are, and should remain,

Christian. The present writer recalls the case of a highly placed marriage registration official changing in the course of an hour from an enemy to a friend of Islam on being shown that his conception of married life was every bit Islamic, and had nothing Christian about it.

### *English People deserting Christianity*

Concluding, Mr. Mullins observes:

"All around me I see thoughtful people refusing to bring their babies to baptism; their adolescents do not come for confirmation; no member of the family attends Divine Service. In plenty of cultured Christian homes, the Bible is as little known as the books of Euclid. Yet, by every test of conduct, a large proportion of these people are Christ's followers."

The last sentence of the speaker exposes itself to criticism. He does not make it clear whether to be a follower of Christ one need or need not subscribe to the dogmas set up by current Christianity. If one need not, we make bold to say that the best specimens of men and women, from this point of view, are to be found in the fold of Islam. Politically weak, the Muslims are yet the only people where the qualities of faith, love and charity are best demonstrated. Indeed, it was rightly observed by an English friend of ours, the other day, that the bulk of thoughtful Englishmen to-day are more Muslim than Christian in their views of religious life. May it please God to lead them soon to the fold to which they spiritually belong!

### *Comic Cartoons draw crowds to the Church*

To what disgraceful lengths an institution that has outlived its utility can go in its attempts to justify its existence is shown every now and then by amusing acts of the Church leaders. For a long time, empty pews and vacant chairs have been a problem in the Churches, in spite of the enormous earthly resources at their com-

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mand. We drew the attention of our readers to this deplorable aspect in the affairs of the Church as long ago as February 1924, when we quoted the Rev. F. J. H. Humphrey, D.S.O., as saying:

"The experiment is being tried of transferring an ordinary Church evening service to a picture house; the Church Deacons and members have agreed to sacrifice the custom and comfort of an ordinary service in a familiar place, to go into some less familiar into which new Church-going people are ready to come."

Since then various world-problems have arisen, and the Church's disgraceful cowardice and failure to face them have made it all the more repulsive to its already doubting flock. So much is this the case that one of its leaders, the Rev. Clifford Lever of Shepherd's Bush Methodist Church, is attracting big congregations, according to the *Daily Sketch*, dated August 26th, 1937, by "comic customs and catchy slogans." One of the slogans is quoted as follows:

"Does your wife nag you? Do you shout at your wife? If so, you are suffering from soul starvation. Come here. We will put you right."

We wonder if religion could be presented in any cheaper form!

### *Self-Condernnation of the Church leaders*

While presenting religion in such a cheap form, the sponsors of the movement no less expose their own moral standard. As a matter of fact, this is inevitable. After all, the Church is no aerial thing. Its constituents are the persons that govern it. Its attitude and taste will be only a reflection of the attitude and taste of the individual Church leaders. The slogan quoted above may be a good indication of humour in the person responsible for it, but it does not show either any high value put on the spiritual life of man or the recognition

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of the necessity of a dignified bearing on the part of a religious institution—and all this is due to the mind or minds that is or are working behind the Church. The poverty of this mind is even more clearly demonstrated in a poster which is reproduced in the paper just mentioned. It begins with these words:

“We are not snobs or pious humbugs. We admit quite frankly we are not saints, but just honest folk trying to be Christians, because we know that Christ is the only solution for life’s problems.”

And it ends with the words:

“Every seat is free, but we do not provide nuts or chocolates.”

The first few words are a clear admission by the Church leaders of the uncomplimentary feeling associated in the popular mind with that institution. Then comes a justification of its own existence—a very poor justification though; as after all just trying to be Christians is no qualification for asking a whole world to be Christians, and the end is made by a reference to the alleged materialistic outlook of the popular mind, the responsibility for which, the author forgets, devolves again on the Church. If all this is not meant, and the words are there just to create amusement in the people’s mind and to attract them to what goes on inside the Church, then not much difference is left between a comic theatre and the Church. This surely is the severest possible self-condemnation of the Church leaders. One wonders how it can still keep the dignity that it has.



## BOOK REVIEW

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*Mohammedanism.* By C. Snouck Hurgronje. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York. New Edition, 1937, pp. 154. Price 6s. net.

This is a series of lectures by Professor Hurgronje delivered under the auspices of the "American Committee for Lectures on the History of Religions" in the year 1914. They were delivered in different places in America, and were first published in book form in the year 1916 by the present publishers. They deal with the origin of Islam, its religious and political development, and its position in relation to modern thought.

As is to be expected, the book is behind times in many ways. More recent survey of the historical position of Islam has induced the Western orientalists, in spite of their psychological drawbacks, to waive certain objections against that religion which the author has persistently maintained in these lectures. For instance, he harps on the old and since smashed theory that the Qur-án embodies heresy accounts of the Old Testament stories and apocryphal writings. He ought to have known that wherever the Qur-án differs from the Old Testament, it does so in the interests of morality and rationality. Further on he labours hard to show that Muhammad's inspiration for reformation work came from a certain inferiority complex in him. Here, although the author is dead, and to run down a dead person is very unchivalrous, we cannot help feeling that unconsciously he has betrayed the motive force behind the actions of modern Western intellectuals, if not of the whole European community. This charge is at bottom the same as that of ambition which has been so thoroughly smashed by that great English writer, Carlyle, in his "Heroes and Hero Worship." The author ought to have noticed that the humility of mind and simplicity of habits that characterised Muhammad

in his early life never left him even when he was the temporal and spiritual overlord practically of the whole of the Arabian peninsula. As a matter of fact, there never has been an equally powerful man with a fraction of the humility that characterised Muhammad. In the course of his attempts to trace the origin of Islam the author has also supported two other absurd theories concerning this religion that have ceased since to have any great hold on the popular mind—one concerning the employment of force in the spread of that religion, and the other to the effect that Muhammad never conceived the idea of making his religion a world movement. As for the first theory, we need hardly discuss it. The whole history of the spread of Islam and its treatment of conquered unbelievers will give a direct lie to the charge. The very positions of the places where the Prophet had to encounter his enemies would, moreover, show that the first battles of Islam were simply forced on the believers. As for the worldwide mission of Islam, the author, ostrich-like, pretends to ignore the value of the tradition which says that he sent letters to the political leaders of the world inviting them to embrace the Faith of Islam. He calls the narration a legend. We wish he had known that one such letter has since been discovered in its original form, and it is exactly in the same wording as it is represented in Muslim traditions. But apart from this, how is he to explain that, unlike Jesus, the Prophet Muhammad from the very beginning of his mission, freely received converts from people not belonging to the Semitic stock? Of these foreign converts the names of Bilál, the Abyssinian, and Salaman, the Persian, are of special note as they ranked first among the Prophet's companions.

In the second chapter, entitled "The Religious Development of Islam," the author again labours hard to show that the insufficiency of religious guidance left by

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the Prophet led his followers to accept many ideas and institutions of an extraneous nature, labelling them as "Hadith." A more libellous statement concerning the holy traditions of Islam has never been made. We assure the school of thought to which the author belongs that the position of Hadith in Islam is less assailable than any body of tradition in any community, religious or secular. We can further assure them that the critical study of Hadith has created a science unparalleled in its dignity by any other set of canons on the science of critical study. It seems the author had to create this theory concerning the Hadith only to minimise the glory of Islam in the matter of adaptability, which he cannot help acknowledging. Bearing this thing in mind, one will find this chapter of the book a very interesting study.

We need not stop long to discuss the third chapter on "The Political Development of Islam" as it is difficult to persuade a modern Westerner to look at the question from any other standpoint than the sordid and the material. And yet, in passing, we must protest against the wholesale denunciation of the Muftis and the Qadis. We do not hold that these officers were at all times above reproach. We are also prepared to acknowledge that the conduct of many of them during the decadent period of Muslim civilization was very reprehensible. But, after all is said and done, it must be remembered that on the whole the conduct of these civil officers of Islam was far better than the conduct of the Holy Church of Rome in Christianity. Neither can we let go unchallenged the suggestion that Muslims believe in employing, and have actually employed, force in matters of religious observance. No such thing has ever been done and is intended to be done. The religious police system in Islam is absolutely a figment of the imagination. Certain social vices, strongly condemned

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in the Qur-án—such as gambling, illicit sexual indulgence and drinking—are no doubt punishable by the Islamic law, although they are not cognizable offences in the so-called Christian laws of to-day, but to regard them as examples of violence in matters of religious observance, is a poverty of intellectual understanding which cannot be too strongly condemned.

The last chapter of the book "Islam and Modern Thought" is the most redeeming part of it. Here the reader finds the author acknowledging the greatest merit of Islam as a religion, namely, its intrinsic unity. Rightly does he say that "the unity of Islamic thought is by no means a word devoid of sense;" that the spiritual diversity of Islam "has not given rise to anything like the division of Christianity into sects" and that "besides the agreement of the canonists, of dogmatists and of mystics, there are a dozen more agreements, social, political, popular, philosophical and so on." He is equally candid when, towards the conclusion, referring to Kipling's pessimism about the fusion of the East and West, he says:

"To me, with regard to the Muslim world, these words seem almost a blasphemy. The experience acquired by adapting myself to the peculiarities of Mohammedans (Muslims) and by daily conversion with them for about twenty years, has impressed me with the firm conviction that between Islam and the modern world an understanding *is* to be attained, and that no period has offered a better chance of furthering it than the time in which we are living."

This is, however, not the only admission of the merits of Islam. His observations on the alleged fatalism and the institutions of slavery and polygamy in Islam are equally judicious, and show that, after all, the author had not lived his life among Muslims in vain.

A. D. A.