

Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets . . . " HOLY QUR-AN 33:  
"There will be no Prophet after me."—MUHAMMAD.

*The*  
**Islamic Review**

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

Vol. XXVII]

[ No. 2

ZUL-HIJJA 1357 A.H.  
FEBRUARY 1939 A.C.

Annual Subscription 10s.

Single Copy

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Published by

THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION AND LITERARY TRUST,  
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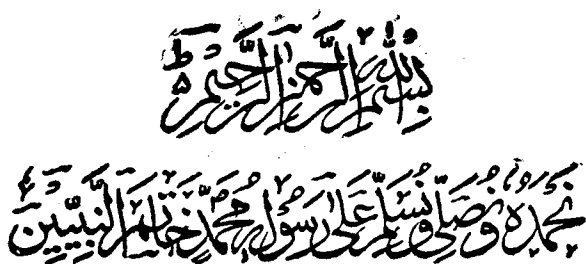
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# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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Vol. XXVII]

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## NEW YEAR MESSAGE

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It gives me great pleasure, as Chairman of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, to send you greetings for the coming year on behalf of my fellow members and myself.

Every year, after the *Eid* celebration, the fraternity, that is an essential of Islam, is brought more and more home to us, as we are all gathered together for the same purpose. This is all the more evident in England as over here there are always many Muslims from all over the world, and during the recent *Eid* celebration it was emphasized to any onlooker how great is the Brotherhood of Islam, for every Muslim Country was represented at that great gathering.

It is with this memory still fresh in our minds that we, the Members of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, send you all our greetings.

ISMAIL V. DE-YORK,  
B.L. (HONS.), BAR.-AT-LAW,  
*Chairman of The Muslim Society  
in Great Britain.*

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### THE EID-UL-FITR SERMON (1357 A. H.)

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

O, you who believe, Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed before you, so that you may guard (against evil).

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

(Qur-án 2:183-185.)

Brothers and Sisters in Islam,—

Praise be to God that He has enabled so many of us to observe the fasting of Ramadan this year, and to celebrate its end to-day by this short Prayer at this quiet centre of rising Islam in this country.

Those of us who have been prevented from fasting owing to illness or journeying should not fail to fulfil their obligations to this sacred institution when they are in better or favourable circumstances. We should take to heart the import of the Divine pronouncement, "God desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty."

Indeed, as things are in this world, the temporary and the passing ease brings difficulty at the end; whereas the temporary and surface difficulties bring abiding ease and comfort.

In this world of matter we have, of necessity, to handle physical things, but it is only to realise certain moral faculties that lie dormant in us. Our life's aim,

## THE EID-UL-FITR SERMON

indeed, is to realise moral truths in the midst of, and through contact with physical things.

The material world is, therefore, a means towards the end of life; and yet we are so apt to lose the end in the midst of means. As a matter of fact, at the present moment, the whole civilized world seems to have done so. The economic theory of life, which forms the corner stone of practically all civilized Governments of to-day indicates that very clearly. If you analyse that theory it will resolve itself into this: that we live, first and last, for the satisfaction of physical needs and the enjoyment of physical comforts, and that, if we observe any moral restrictions, it is for the realisation of those other objects. This is the attitude towards life which is termed materialism. The difference between this theory and the religious theory of life is this: that whereas this latter regards moral values at the end, and the satisfaction of our physical needs as the means to that end, the former places them in the reverse order. The reason man confuses this issue is that the moral values are less palpable than the physical ones. This, however, does not mean that the sense of the abiding value of moral virtues is at any time lost to man.

Neglected, it may become weak and faint, but it never altogether dies out. Suppressed, it manifests itself in increasing dissatisfaction with ourselves, apart from the growing disorderliness or our social relationships.

The present crisis is a case in point. I have said "present crisis," because, to my mind, we are still in the midst of a crisis—indeed, we have been so for a long time past. In this crisis, as we all know very well, every heart, in its own place, longs to see peace and goodwill and amity established in the world, and yet every one has, by force of circumstances over which he has no control, to prepare from day to day for a war which

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spells a growingly assured destruction to civilized humanity. Unfortunately, very few of us try to find out the cause of this strange paradox, and this in spite of our boast that we are the most intellectual of all generations of humanity. The fact is that, however much our intellect may comprehend the ways and the means of our physical existence, it is worse than useless for giving us any guidance in the realisation of our destiny. It is not through metaphysical thinking, but through the spiritual vision obtained through trained emotions that we can truly appreciate and realise the moral basis of our existence. This training of emotions involves certain restrictions on physical actions, accepted spiritually. It is, indeed, the lack of control over the physical actions by the inner consciousness of man that has ruined many of the noblest aspirations of Man—and that, accumulating to a large volume, has from age to age created crisis like the one we are now passing through. The Muslim Fasting of Ramadan, a simple matter as it may appear, gives us a very effective method of dealing with this great problem of civilized human existence. It gives a man power over his physical self which is so apt to overshadow his spiritual vision. In a less decisive period, a few years back, we were told, to the discomfort, sometimes, of the comparatively weaker amongst us, that the practices of Islam were one of the causes of Muslim decadence. To-day, Glory be to God, we can fling back the charge, saying: "the lack of these physico-moral observances amongst the materially-advanced nations is the spring of the destructive forces let loose upon the world to-day, while on the other hand the presence of these among the Muslims has made this huge, widespread, old nations, experiencing so many vicissitudes of fortune, socially immortal and morally steady, throughout these long centuries. Glory be to God! Indeed, the present crisis in the West brings "into relief" the

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miraculous safety of our own precious community from similar disintegration even during this long and tiring period of political depression, and unmistakably points towards the vital necessity of practices like those in Islam, for the cultural life of humanity.

There is also another aspect of this celebration of ours which should not escape our attention.

We commemorate through this Fasting the incident of the first Revelation of the Qur-án. The Qur-án, as you are aware, was revealed piecemeal over the twenty-two years of the Prophet's ministry; but the first Revelation came to him one day in the month of Ramadan, when he was fasting and at devotion in the cave of Hirá, near Mecca. In commemorating this incident we are, in fact, affirming our unflinching faith in a great principle—namely—that of revealed guidance. Many a non-Muslim community shares this principle with us in theory, but nearly all of them, for all practical purposes, have gone astray from it. One of the reasons for this aberration is that man is inclined to consider his light of intellect sufficiently strong to penetrate the mysteries of the socio-moral life, and to feel, in his ignorance, as if man has outgrown the age of revealed guidance. Although as a community we have never fallen a victim to this folly, yet we must confess that we had, of late, been a little nervous about the wisdom of our way of life, owing to the clamours and the false intellectual flourish of a materially powerful community. Let, therefore, the celebration of the Ramadan, this year particularly, hearten us in this matter. Let us with relief realize that, after all, in not following the so-called intellectual findings of the age in the field of sociology, we have, at least, been able to maintain a social solidarity which is an envy to others. Again, with redoubled faith and confidence, let us hasten back to the guidance of Revelation, viz., the Qur-án, the only Scrip-

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ture which the ravages of time have not been able to damage. Indeed, it is time we understood, never to forget it again, that all these theories which have been so over-emphasized in the social history of mankind are one-sided, and that they need harmonizing for the safety of our organic life as a species. Monarchy, Diarchy, Oligarchy and so on; Autocracy, Bureaucracy, Timocracy, Democracy and so on; Individualism, Socialism, Communism, Capitalism, Fascism and so on—all have their parts to play in an ideal society. Selecting one of them to the exclusion of the others, or even putting *wrong* values on any of them, and trying with all the violence of animal nature to mould the destiny of humanity on the lines of the chosen system, is indeed the greatest sin against the social life of humanity. The trouble is that modern humanity will not admit that it is not for the human mind to understand itself. Just as we cannot see the whole of our physical body with the help of our physical eyes, nay, not even our own face, unless it be with the help of some external apparatus, such as a mirror, etc., so we cannot mentally comprehend all the component parts of our own nature, unless it be through Revelation. Indeed, it is Revelation, and Revelation alone, that can reflect the full stature of human personality and harmonize all its facts and angles into one composite constitution. In the absence of this, a dynamic cultural force will merely release forces of antagonism and conflict—an example of which is before our very eyes to-day.

Let other nations, taking heed, make the best of their own respective Scriptures, and let us, on our part, hasten back to our Qur-án. Let us no longer try to examine the Qur-án in the light of these modern theories, which, by their very nature, must be one-sided, but, rather, let us examine these same theories in the light of the Qur-án.



## **THE FUTURE OF ISLAM IN GREAT BRITAIN**

May it so please God that the Intellectuals of Islam should wake up and make their contribution to the cultural life of humanity at this critical juncture. Humanity will be thankful to them, and God, the God of the Qur-án and of all the previous Revelations, will be pleased with them—will reward them here and in the hereafter.

May His light dispel all the darkness of misgiving in our hearts, and may He employ us as vehicles of His High and Sacred Will at this thrilling turning-point in the History of our Race.

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## **THE FUTURE OF ISLAM IN GREAT BRITAIN\***

By J. W. B. FARMER

A friend of mine recently asked me why I had turned to Islam. In reply to this question I gave three reasons. First, Islam is a practical religion, a religion free from mystery and superstition, a religion that can be easily understood; it is a religion that contains nothing irrational and is unencumbered by theological subtleties.

Secondly, it is a religion that deals with fundamentals. It gets right down to the basic laws of nature. It knows of no split between science and religion but recognizes that religion is the greatest of all sciences, the science of good and successful living.

Thirdly, it offers a complete code of living for all spheres of man's activity on this earth. No matter if it is a social, civic, military or commercial matter, Islam gives its guidance. Islam regulates all that a human being has to do; it deals with worldly conditions, it is for the people of the world.

As I enlarge upon these matters to my friends, I find an ever-growing number of them saying, "Yes, we

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\* The text of an address given to the Muslim Society in Great Britain at 18 Eccleston Square, S. W.

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can follow you in these things, we believe this and that" and, what is more, many of these friends tell me that somehow or other these matters, these fundamental truths of Islam, have always been in their minds as long as they can remember. Many of us here present this afternoon, I have no doubt, have experienced that somewhat curious sensation of feeling that they have been in a certain place before, or that a certain circumstance that they find themselves in appears to be a repetition of something that occurred in their life many years ago. It is just like that with some of my friends in regard to Islam; the truth is welling up within them.

I belong to a man's organisation that, thanks to the energy and foresight of an Anglican clergyman, has spread itself during the last fifteen years throughout the Empire. At one time a stronghold of Anglican thought, it is now showing great interest in Islam.

As I attend the meetings of my own branch and of other branches up and down the country, I find an ever-growing consensus of opinion directed towards Islam. The important point to note here is that many of these people who profess a belief in some particular fundamental of Islam are people who have never read a book or pamphlet on Islam, nor do they know what the word "Islam" means. Is this not a good sign for Islam? Does it not show that, when a man sits down and thinks about religious matters, when he frees himself from superstitious beliefs and theological entanglements, he finds himself right back to Islam? Truly the spirit of Islam is working in this country to-day in a miraculous manner.

Great Britain is regarded as a Christian country. This, I think, is a misnomer, especially if being Christian means allegiance to the Church creed; for not half of the people in this country know anything about the creed and many of those who repeat it Sunday after

## THE FUTURE OF ISLAM IN GREAT BRITAIN

Sunday do not fully understand what it is all about. Even within the Church itself dissensions are rife. Here and there an enlightened cleric will, with considerable courage, preach anti-creedal doctrines which are purely Islamic in conception, and for every preacher there are many more who, although not as courageous, are nonetheless convinced that their semi-pagan beliefs will not stand the light of reason.

So in religious circles there are signs that priestcraft has had its day. In this country the voice of Islam is being heard.

During the last twenty years, organised Christianity has suffered a severe set-back; this was a result of its failure to stand by its professed teachings during the Great War. In pre-war days, the Church preached "God is love," "Love your neighbour," etc., and "Thou shalt not kill," but, when the war came, these things were forgotten. The Church followed the State and so lost its spiritual authority over men. The parsons became camp followers of the opposing forces, and making no united stand, they were swept right into the war; they were found to be part and parcel of the most ruthless and destructive militarism the world has ever seen.

We, who went through the war, have now had time to reflect; we see the shallowness of priestcraft and the Church's conception of things. When the Church failed to stand for its principles in the Great War, Christianity was destroyed as a spiritual force; man's simple trust was shaken; the door has opened for Islam.

In this country we are keen on success—success in business, in politics, in sports, in all walks of life. At no time in the history of our nation has there been such a rush for knowledge—and in Islam do not we say, "Hayya alal falah"? We see something logical and tangible in these things and in so doing are we not emulating those great Islamic forefathers who carried

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the torch of learning across a priest-ridden Europe wrapped in ignorance and darkness.

No doubt some of you present this afternoon are engaged in industry or business or in some commercial undertaking. If so, you will have learned that the most successful undertakings in this country and in America are those that are operated on the principles of what we know as scientific management. Now scientific management is concerned with keeping in step with Nature's laws and in utilizing the same to man's advantage. My friends! Is this not pure Islam? Here, in this country, right in the forefront of our industrial achievements, we see the principles of Islam being applied to bring greater success.

Those of you present this afternoon who are conversant with both the commercial and industrial life of the country and with the basic principles of Islam will be able to follow me in this matter. But you might reasonably say: Yes, we can follow you in these things but these various signs of the prevalence of Islam are not showing themselves under the name of Islam; we do not see mosques springing up all over the country.

Quite right. That, I contend, is only a matter of time. This is a land of compromise; we never scrap anything in a hurry, nor do we take on anything new in its entirety. We run the old with the new in a manner that is inconceivable to people of other lands; and so it is with the official acceptance of Islam. If you say to an Englishman that you have a new religion for him, he will most likely not be inclined to listen but if you talk to him about a new system of living, about something that will help him to live a more successful life, then you are more likely to gain his confidence and lasting interest. There is a saying in this country that "the nearer a man is to his work the nearer he is to God." This takes on a new meaning considered in the light of Islam.

## THE FUTURE OF ISLAM IN GREAT BRITAIN

Now I have touched briefly upon the leaven-like method of the propagation of Islam that is going on in this country to-day. This is slow, but sure, which is, after all, a true British way of doing things. Now I should like to say a few things regarding its propagation from without for, although one might have good seed and good soil, the strong rays of a provident sun are necessary to give to a plant its form and colouring. And so, for this country to come out under the banner of Islam, there must be a shining of the light of Islam in its purest form.

For a lead in this, we naturally turn to our Imam of the Mosque, Woking, and in this respect we are indeed blessed in his personality. Some of you possibly do not realise the really good work he is doing for Islam in this country. It is not an easy matter for Eastern minds to become acclimatised to Western ways of thinking, yet our Imam has done this. He has penetrated into strongholds hitherto inaccessible to Islam; he is gaining the respect and confidence of an ever-increasing number of English people. It may interest you to know that on a recent occasion, when attending a meeting largely composed of young men of the Christian faith, the Imam was asked to take the closing prayers. Is this not a sign of the times?

Also Islam must be presented to this land by a solid front; there must be no split, no sects, no divisions. Such a thing is intolerable to the people of this country; we have seen enough of religious bickering and want no more of it. Let those who are responsible for the propagation of Islam in this country never lose sight of the fact that it is the Qur-ánic principles that matter, not some particular school of thought that has brought into being a particular sect. Also superficial sanctimoniousness finds no place in the make-up of a sincere Englishman (or Muslim for that matter). It will serve no useful

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purpose to tell us that we must not hang pictures on the walls of our houses or go to the theatre, or have a spot of fun, but tell us about the great fundamental principles underlying these actions and a useful purpose will have been served. Let us remember that Islam is a living religion, a religion for earthly people.

In its adaptation to the special needs of the West, I have no doubt some alterations of a minor nature will be made, but in this matter let the Holy Qur-án be kept to the forefront. Let us keep in mind the lesson of the early Christian fathers who, I have no doubt, in all sincerity borrowed a key from pagan sources, a key with which they unlocked a door that was to release a flood that swept away and deprived the world for ever of the true teachings and purpose of Jesus.

Finally, I wish to say a few words to our student friends here to-day. You have come from countries far off, no doubt, to learn some technical matters at present denied you in your own lands, perhaps to pass an examination, to obtain a Degree, and so set a seal upon your achievements. In all these things you have the special blessings of the Holy Phrophet Muhammad, who said: "He who leaves home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God." Yes, these things are all right but I would remind you that there is something else that matters too. Every one of you, who enters this country as a Muslim, whether you will it or not, be you active, passive, or indifferent, is actually a missionary of Islam. This country will judge you, perhaps harshly; you will be put to the test. You will find plenty of people ready to throw mud at you and not all the mud comes from the gutter. Some comes from high places. My friends, we cannot help the mud being thrown; our job is to see that none of it sticks.

The dawn of Islam is now breaking upon this country; we have a new faith founded upon reason,

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science, and the flashes of truth that come from the inner self. Islam, that had been lost to us, is coming back. May its light reflect on all the people of this land to the glory of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful!

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## HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

BY MAULANA SYED SULAIMAN NADVI

*(Continued from Vol. XXVI, page 450.)*

When Akbar finished off his conquest in Hindustan, he thought to subdue the Deccan. Murad and Khan Khana were accordingly sent on to the expedition. Burhan Nizam Shah ruled at the time in Ahmadnagar. He resolved to offer the Province of Berar to Akbar, but before it was done, he died. Akbar could not occupy Berar. Prince Murad and Khan Khana lay encamped in Gujerat waiting for the opportunity to make a raid on Ahmadnagar and it came at last. Burhan Shah's successor, Ibrahim Shah was killed by the nobles, and the fight for succession ensued between Manjhu, the Court-Counsel, Ahang Khan and Ikhlās. Each of them proclaimed an individual king of his own. The gulf of differences remained unbridged and wanton bloodshed took place. Manjhu wrote annoyingly to Prince Murad, requesting him to make an invasion upon the Nizam Shahi Kingdom, and promised him at the same time to surrender the fortress of Ahmadnagar to him. Murad departed at once. Khan Khana also hastened his march along with Shah Rukh of Badakhshan, Shahbaz Khan, Raja Jagannath, Raja Durga, Raja Ramchandra, and other nobles. When they reached the vicinity of Ahmadnagar, Manjhu Khan repented of his hasty and foolish move, inasmuch as he had suppressed all the hostile army and was himself the supreme power. He had, however, to leave the fortress.

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Chand Khatun, seeing that her ancestral kingdom would end in disaster, made a solemn determination to save it. She removed all the hostile nobles from the fortress, made compromise with others, sought help from Qutub Shah of Bijapur, and strengthening her fortress from all sides, waited the approach of Murad and Khan Khana. Prince Murad advanced his troops towards the fortress on 23rd Rabi-us-Sani, 1004 A. H. Chand Khatun stemmed the tide by heavy discharge of her cannons. Murad made strenuous efforts in vain to reach the fortress. Chand Khatun held him in stubborn check, and Murad, tired and exhausted, had to retire in the evening. The following day Prince Murad, Shah Rukh Mirza, Khan Khana, Shahbaz Khan and Raja Jagannath made an embarkment and besieged the fortress on all sides. They lay for months together in this futile siege and the fortress was invulnerable.

Meanwhile Adil Shah sent twenty-five thousand cavalry to Chand Khatun's help, and Qutub Shah also sent about six thousand cavalry and infantry. Manjhu Khan, Ikhlas Khan and Ahang Khan, and the Nizam Shahi nobles joined these troops and a powerful army was thus available to Chand Khatun. Prince Murad was very much disquieted by the fresh reinforcement of Chand Khatun, and his troops were still more overawed. It was decided, however, to subdue the fortress at all costs before the army arrived. It was not possible by fighting to gain entrance to the fortress. So five underground mines were dug in three months, which led to the parapet, and a bed of gunpowder was shrouded on the surface to blow up the fortress by setting fire to them.

Chand Khatun came to know of the Prince's projected plan. She made a counter-move to fill up the mines and draw out the powder from them. Murad desired that the glory of the conquest should be attributed to him only. He hastened with all armies to the forefront



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of the fortress, leaving Khan Khana in darkness and awaited the explosion of the mine. Chand Khatun had filled up two mines by this time and she had just begun the third when the Prince gave order to apply the fuse. A thunderous roar burst forth as if the sky had tumbled down. The walls of the fortress measuring fifty yards came down and the Prince stood in front with his dread array of the Moghul and Rajput soldiers. Chaos and confusion followed in the fortress, the people lost heart, the volunteers retired, the heads of the army took to flight and everything seemed lost.

But lo, Chand Khatun mounted on horseback, clad in arms, and with a sword in her hand, came out of her apartment. The Prince was awaiting the explosion of the other two mines when he would make an entrance into the fortress. But they were already countermined by Chand Khatun. She lodged, again, scores of cannons on the corners, put heart into her troops and encouraged them to make a bold stand. The Moghuls and the Rajputs advanced boldly but failed to gain a single inch of the fortress. Chand Khatun fought gallantly with her soldiers and the ditches outside were filled with the dead bodies of the Moghul and Rajput soldiers. The Prince retreated ungloriously in the evening. In the night Chand Khatun kept up vigilantly and reconstructed the dismantled walls of the fortress. The following morning the Prince was surprised to see the same wall standing against him. Chand Khatun met with a chorus of applause both from her friends and foes for her vigilance and enterprises. She was called Chand Sultana thenceforth.

Prince Murad was, thus, utterly disappointed of his success. The nobles of Akbar lost their heart, and sought compromise with the Khatun. Chand Sultana first refused it, for the enemies had already lost ground and a little more endeavour could bring utter destruc-

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tion on them. But her own people were tired of closing themselves within the fortress, so Chand Khatun assented to make peace. As arranged formerly, Berar was ceded to Prince Murad. (1)

Can a woman exhibit more gallantry than this? The foundation of the kingdom tottered, the nobles were divided by internecine struggle, the fortress lacked men and provisions, the walls of the fortress were dismantled, no adequate resources were available for its defence, and the formidable troops of Akbar the Great stood against, still the heroic Chand Sultana defended the fortress gloriously. It was certainly an exhibition of exquisite heroism and chivalry.

We return once more to that sacred part of the earth where we began our course from, we mean Yemen. In the middle of the fifth century A.H., Yemen had already gone out of the sway of the Abbasides and was under the control of the Fatimides of Egypt. It happened thus:— In Hazar situated in Yemen there lived the old dynasty of the Qadhis Al-Salih ( آل صالح ). A propagandist of the Fatimides named Liyad reached here and converted a young man, Ali bin Muhammad Salih, into an Ismaelite. Ali grew up an ambitious, magnanimous and adventurous youth. He married his cousin Asmah, who was unrivalled in her beauty, wit, wisdom, learning and chivalry. Providence thus linked the two versatile geniuses in a sacred tie, which glorified the destiny of Yemen. Yemen was brought under their suzerainty by their bold enterprises and sound wisdom.

Asmah always accompanied her husband in the battles he fought against his enemies. Once she was going to Mecca with her husband when the enemy made a sudden attack upon them. Her attendants were overpowered and she was captured. She remained in prison for a long time, but at last she broke out with skilful

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(1) Tarikh Rashid-ud-din Khani, p. 199.

## HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

manceuvres. She sent a letter to her son hidden in loaves of bread through one of the messengers who came to her in guise of a mendicant. Her son came with a formidable army and released his mother from the prison, and as long as Asmah lived she ruled as the sovereign of Yemen. She died in 497 A.H.

Asmah reared up two more chivalric women under her influence, one her daughter Fatima, and another, her daughter-in-law Syeda. Fatima sought boldly her freedom from her husband who had married another woman. She sent secretly a letter to her mother asking for troops in her aid, and when it reached her she left the place *incognito* dressed as a man.

Syeda succeeded her mother-in-law as the Queen of Yemen. Her husband, Mukarram, was a man of loose character and indulged in debauchery. She ruled the realm excellently well, built magnificent buildings, inhabited towns, led expeditionary raids, and subdued enemies both by the sword and through wisdom. She was addressed in high sounding titles in letters she received from the Fatimide rulers.<sup>(1)</sup>

We have still to turn over the pages of the history of scores of other Islamic kingdoms and hundreds of royal Muslim dynasties, but we do not propose to take the history of Iran, Turkestan, Africa, Morocco and Spain in this brief survey, although these places abound in numberless chivalric Muslim women. We cannot help mentioning here a few instances of moral courage, and soul-stirring chivalry of Muslim women which occupy a higher place than physical boldness.

In the beginning of Islam, numerous women bore tremendous amount of hardship for their faith and religion, but did not divert from the right. Summiya was the mother of the illustrious Companion Amar bin

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(1) *Vide* Tarikh Umara-i-Yemeni, India Office, London.

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Yasar. She was struck to death with spears by Abu Jehl, because she adopted Islam.

Umm-e-Fakih was a Lady Companion of the Caliph Omar who, before he accepted Islam, beat her mercilessly till he was tired. "I have ceased beating you," said he, "not because I feel mercy upon you, but because I am tired." "Omar!" she answered patiently, "if you remain unconverted to Islam, God will punish you for this mercilessness on your part." Zanira was another Lady Companion, who was maltreated for her adherence to Islam. Abu Jehl beat her till she lost her eyes. Nahdiya and Umm-e-Abees, two other Lady Companions, also suffered pains unflinchingly for their convictions to Islam.<sup>(1)</sup>

Abdullah bin Zubair founded a rival caliphate in opposition to the Ommayyads in Hedjaz. Hajjaj attacked him with a powerful army. Abdullah's followers began to desert him till only very few adherents remained with him. Abdullah was disheartened and he went to his mother to ask permission for making compromise with Hajjaj. "My child," said the chivalrous mother, "if you are in the wrong, you would better have made compromises long ago, but if you are in the right, you should not be discouraged with the scanty number of your followers. To fight for the right is itself a triumph."

Ibn Zubair, clad in chain-armour, came to say farewell to his mother, who clasped him to her breast. Finding the body of her son stiff, she questioned him. Abdullah said that he wore double armour. "This is not," answered the mother, "how the martyrs of God have done." Ibn Zubair put off his armour, but said he feared that his corpse might be cut into pieces. "Child," replied the mother, "when a goat is slaughtered, she feels little pains in her skin being aflayed." Thus the mother

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(1) These facts can be corroborated by any standard biography of the Prophet.

## ISLAM, THE INVINCIBLE RELIGION

sent her son to be sacrificed at the altar of the truth and righteousness.

After Ibn Zubair was martyred Hajjaj hanged his corpse at the roadside. A few days after, Asmah passed by the way and saw her son's corpse hanging. She was naturally expected to be discomfited by the scene, but she kept quiet and passed in careless ease. "Has the rider," said she meaningfully pointing to the corpse "not got down from his horse." (1)

Where will you get such instances of chivalry, moral courage and patience.

Before we leave our readers, we will take them to the scene, when the last Sultan of Granada, Abu Abdullah, handed over the key of his fortress to the Christian conquerors. He gazed back upon the country which the Mussalmans ruled for 600 years. Tears overflowed his eyes. The Sultan's mother stood beside him and reproached her son thus, "You may well weep like a woman for what you could not defend like a man." (2)

This single sentence speaks volumes of chivalry and courage.

This has been but a hurried glance on the deeds of Muslim women of the past, let us see what the present Muslim women leave behind to be recorded down in the Islamic history.

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## ISLAM, THE INVINCIBLE RELIGION

BY M. ABDUR RAZZAQ SALLIAH

An article appearing in one of the recent issues of the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* of Ceylon under the caption, "That Nations may be Fortified against Mohammedan Proselytism," remarks rather distastefully that "Christianity and Civilization is threatened by the Islamic Menace."

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(1) *Vide* Tarikh Tabri for details.

(2) History of the Moors in Spain by Lane-Poole, p. 276.

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One fails to understand why the Catholic Missionaries should use such un-Christian phrases against another religion, when no provocation has been offered to them, nor is there any justifying cause. If it were said that Christianity as a religion was threatened by Islam (which no doubt is a fact, and an admitted fact) it would have been nearer the truth than to have coupled "Civilization" with Christianity. But it has always been the case, as is well known, that Christianity or more correctly "Church-Christianity" has never been able to stand on her own legs, and looks to something else for assistance and support.

There is an old adage which says that "You could fence the whole world, but never a man's mouth" and this is quite applicable to the missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church who have shown their bare teeth to Islam and all matters connected with it. The Catholic missionaries, after admitting that Islam has taken such long strides as to make a headway of the Catholic Church, also say that "Civilization also is threatened by the Islamic menace." Such vociferations, however, are not strange to the Islamic world. We have had untruthful statements of that kind more than once and have dealt death blows to these, from which a resurrection has not yet manifested itself.

One should, however, like to know whether the "Islamic Menace" is a menace to anyone else besides the Catholic clergy. I wish these clergy could exhibit more of the real religious spirit when writing on matters pertaining to religion. Is religion in the first place to rush into print with a few prejudiced and ignorant thoughts? Should not the Catholic Church teach these missionaries a more peaceful method of wielding their pen? If these people had any virtue of frankness left in them, they would have readily admitted that if there is any menace to civilization from the side of religion it is through

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Christianity, the morbidity of which has become so patent as to create the disappointing sight of "empty pews and vacant benches,"—rather a lamentable sight for a religion, but nevertheless the order of the day in Christendom.

The missionary is right when he says that Islam is a menace to Christianity, because in this religion Christianity is actually faced with a determined and conquering rival. Small wonder the Catholic missionaries will find Islam a menace to them for the simple fact that Islam is the only one Great Religion to come after Christianity; the one that definitely claims to correct, complete and supersede Christianity; the one that categorically denies the truth of Christianity; the only one that has signally defeated Christianity; and the only one that in several parts of the world is to-day forestalling and gaining on Christianity.

But to say that civilization, or more particularly the civilization of the present day, is equally threatened is a lie and a blunder which needs to be ruthlessly exposed. Let not the Catholic Missionary forget the menace he has proved in bygone days; let him not forget the Dark Ages and the Inquisition, which utilised every weapon conceivable in the suppression of Civilization and Culture: enough to breed moral ulcers in Christendom. Let him probe and dive further to find out from which religious body Civilization and Culture spread into the East and West. If the Catholic Missionary had any sincerity in preaching the sublime and lovely teaching of Christ in the words, "If thy brother smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn unto him the left also" he ought to have first followed and acted up to it himself, instead of manufacturing a "Menacing or Corrupted Christianity," the history of which has been written by fire, sword and the blood of the persecuted.

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I would wish to know from the Catholic Missionary whether he believed that a proselyte to Islam is guided by the Devil, and not by his common-sense and reason, or if he regards both as identical. It would be to the credit of their own dignity to have exercised a little tact and avoided the use of such irreligious phrases.

The Untouchables in India, who embraced Islam recently, did not do so simply to seek social equality only, but for other reasons as well. In my opinion social equality does not merely mean the fragmentary honours, titles, or Caste Systems, but it means mental and social liberty, and a dignity of one's morals.

The reason why the Untouchables departed from their ancestral faith was because they were finding it an impracticable and incomprehensive and unpleasant burden.

It is a proud tribute and very gratifying to hear Christendom admitting and recognizing that Islam has made such strides, not only in Africa but other countries as well, and that it is Islam that will stand for all times. It is not associations social and political only that gives Islam the foremost place in the world; it is because the Truth is embedded in the Religion of Peace and Love, which Islam certainly is.

The Catholic Missionary says that "Christianity and Civilization is once more threatened by the Islamic Menace," and that prayer alone can avert the catastrophe. Let them pray for what they are worth, but never will they be rid of the fact that Islam will certainly be a menace to "corrupted Christianity." If the Catholic clergy could, they would move Heaven and Earth to get rid of Islam, but let them be calmly assured that "Truth will live for Ever and Falsehood vanish."

Almost all the countries in Europe are thoroughly dissatisfied with "Church Religion," and the proof of this is the manner in which the Sabbath is observed, and



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the steady decline of the Church and peoples turning away from Christianity. In addition to this certain countries in Europe are so bored and disgusted that they are actually taking drastic methods to be rid of the "Catholic Menace," which it has been from its inception unto this day. "It is surprising though a painful fact," so says the Catholic Missionary, "that in a number of places Mohammedanism has actually made more headway than the Church in spite of the self-sacrifice of her heroic Missionary priests, Brothers and Sisterhoods."

Islam's progress may seem to be something surprising to come, but let these people but watch for a few more years, when they will realise and be bewildered to find that they have no ground to stand on.

Certainly Islam, in all humility, is proud to see the great progress it is making in the face of all opposition, but let not the Catholic Missionary forget the beautiful words of a late great Muslim who said, "Every atom in the Universe is on its way to progress. Advancement is the order of the day in the Realm of Nature. From a sea-shell to a cathedral, from a blade of grass to gigantic oak, from the luminosity of a firefly to an electric arc, from the song of a cricket to an oratorio, all things created by God are always on their way to a continuous progress. There is no stagnation, there is no retrogression." Similarly if the Catholic Missionary wants progress and advancement in his religion let him not run amok amongst others, for a religion can only progress for all times when the Absolute and Whole Truth is embedded in it; or else. But perhaps the only thing that pleases him is to fall on with others.

In conclusion let me say that those who live in glass-houses should not throw stones. The vulgar abuse of other religions, in an endeavour to uphold their own, will only discredit them in the eyes of all intelligent and thinking people.

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### MUHAMMAD AND HIS MISSION

BY SYED F. SHADMAN

It is not my intention to discuss the problems which have puzzled learned men and women throughout all ages. I want to try to give my impression of the belief in God and of the mission of the one whose aim was to break down superstitions and show the way to the real truth.

We live in an age of doubt—doubt concerning anything and everything. From the scientific point of view it is advantageous because it is the source of modern progress in science which has given us wireless and television.

Nevertheless, are we less ignorant than our forefathers about the problems of life and death or of the beginning of the world?

There are learned people who do not believe in God, and there are scientists who do believe in Him. Let us consider this from the scientific point of view. Are those who content themselves with what they see and understand more broadminded than those who consciously humble themselves before a power which they feel rules over them? This difference of belief alone shows that the everlasting problem of the Creator is not as easy as some people think; otherwise there would be no learned men believing in God.

Man has always thought about something beyond this visible world. He has felt the Infinite since first he could feel. Pasteur, the great French genius, in his address to the Academie Française explains the bewilderment of humanity when he says: "The school of Positivism which believes in positive conception by scientific means, forgets the most important conception, that of the Infinite; what is beyond these starry heavens, another heaven? True, then what is beyond that? Can our imagination limit time and space?"

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The idea of God is a form of this conception, and as long as this mystery of the Infinite weighs upon the thought of man, temples will be built for the worship of the Infinite, whether we call it God or Allah."

Thus Pasteur, like many other men of science, sets forth the fact that there is something beyond the visible world which surrounds and rules us.

The discussion of details is not my intention here to-day. If we consider the history of humanity striving to discover the source of this overwhelming Power, we shall find that the progress of human thought has an astonishing link with its conception of this Power.

If one compares the principles of all religions—from the remotest age until Muhammad proclaimed his mission, one will realize that the trend of all creeds is nothing but a gradual development of the explanation of the idea of God, as if humanity was preparing itself to be able one day to grasp the idea. That is why in Islam all previous religions are accepted.

One of the strangest things in the history of the human race is the fact that it was by an Arab orphan, a son of the desert, that the way to the knowledge of God was discovered.

The value of Muhammad's activity cannot be understood without a thorough knowledge of his environment—the disunion of the Arab tribes, their superstitions, cruelty, disregard and contempt for women, etc.

He was the man who, among idolaters, saw the right way to his God, the God of the whole universe. Was it due to his independent character, to his genius, or through divine inspiration? He was just a man like others and he said clearly and distinctly: "I am like any of you except that I am inspired" and I think that every great problem is solved only through inspiration. Thus you see that Islam is not, as millions of people think Muhammadanism, by which I mean the worship

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of Muhammad, which is contrary to the teachings of Islam. He is a man, a man chosen by the only Everlasting God to lead his fellow men; and there lies the important point, that Islam is based on very human facts, very simple and yet very deep.

This seems to us rather trivial but we must not forget that even to-day there are very few people who can understand the real meaning of this great declaration.

Mecca itself was, among others, the most important centre of idolatry, and men and women alike, ignorant of the unseen God of all, worshipped what they themselves had created, and it was no easy task to teach them the right way to the truth. Was Muhammad chosen to teach his own people and to help them alone or had he something for the whole world? His thought could stretch beyond the borders of his native land: he had something for all time and for all peoples.

His teachings were not confined to limited spaces or communities: his declaration was a revelation which revolutionised the ideas of millions of people throughout the ages. Islam gave material for thought to philosophers who studied it in many different countries, from Spain to China and the Philippines. Some partial writers have tried to show that it was due to the Arab Conquest that Islam flourished. Nothing can be further from the truth. Islam itself had a conquering power: it opened the eyes of nations who had worshipped their own handiwork: they had no idea before, that there is something else more powerful, more important, endless and supreme.

After being educated in a home of which even his enemies and detractors cannot deny the purity, Muhammad travelled and saw for himself different peoples and scenes by day, and at night he would talk to various individuals, Arab idolaters, Jews, Christians, priests, etc., and, after listening to their inner thoughts,

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he sometimes went into the mountains to reflect upon them. The mountain solitude is very soothing, very inspiring. Muhammad had time and opportunity to think over what he had seen and heard but he was not satisfied: his heart would tell him: "Oh Muhammad, there must be something beyond all that you see." He would hear a cry from the solitude which told him something of the greatness of the Infinite, and it is natural, logical and reasonable that the man inspired by that mysterious power which we know, should come to reveal what he had found to his fellow men, to ask and even to beseech them to abandon those idols and to come to God from Whom everything has its being.

His word was not a cry in the wilderness: it reached many parts, and still to-day we can hear it within our hearts.

There was a time when even the most learned people of other creeds abused Muhammad; and Luther, together with many leaders of different sects of Christianity and other religions, was so biassed that he could see nothing but evil throughout the whole history of Islam. That time is past, and nowadays there are many people who may not even believe in God but who agree that Muhammad was sincere in what he said, and that what he said is to the benefit of mankind.

When forty years of age, he received that inspiration which gave the world a new and complete idea of God: but it would not at first listen to him. A few indeed could understand what this Messenger of God had revealed. Zeid, his adopted son, Ali his cousin, Abu Bakr and his wife, Hadjida, embraced Islam. Still he did not preach openly: it was some time later that he was commanded through inspiration to preach openly. Then began new difficulties: he was laughed at and called a magician or mad. His few followers also were tortured and Muhammad felt remorse on seeing such

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sincere adherents suffering at the hands of those who would not listen to the word of God, but he endured all this because he believed that mankind must be saved and shown the way. It is difficult if not impossible to realize the influence of his words among the Arabs. Omar, the second Caliph, listening to some parts of the Qur-án when read at the house of his sister, was so attracted that he became a convert to Islam. Students of Arabic literature know that in those days poetry and oratory were at their zenith, and it was the words of Muhammad, by which he revealed his mission, that gradually convinced the most eloquent Arabs.

How difficult is the task of a man whose mission is the guidance of people who, throughout centuries, have worshipped what they should not, and denied or ignored what they should know and venerate! To the men asking forgiveness from idols and listening to soothsayers, he declared this: "In the name of the most merciful God, say God is one God, the eternal God, He begetteth not, neither is He begotten, and there is no one like unto Him." This is the basis of a religion which has shown to the world the way to discover an eternal God, and it has freed humanity from the bonds of superstition.

One of the most attractive features of Islam is that it gives one the power to have communication with God independently of any other being. It is this independence which has liberated the soul of man from temptations. Why is it that there are practically no Muslims who revert to other faiths? There are different sects within Islam, various explanations of its principles: there have been many ups and downs in the history of Islam, but the basis is unchanged and, as long as humanity feels the everlasting power which rules over its life and thought, the definition which Islam gives of God will remain true and complete.

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The Qur-án gives this definition precisely and distinctly in order that no suspicion may be aroused by explanations or commentaries. It repeats this and refutes any idea of God being associated with any other power.

This simplicity and straightforwardness do not appeal to some authorities who have written about Islam, perhaps because they believe that complication is more essential than simplicity.

In the first chapter of the Qur-án we find that good people are "those who believe in the Unseen and continue in prayer and spend from what has been given to them, and who believe in that which has been revealed by thee, and that which was revealed before thee, and those who believe in the resurrection."

This shows that Muhammad's mission was to complete the teaching of others in existence before him and, as Muslims believe him to be the last of the Prophets, he gave the last word, and through *his* mission, not only a religious movement began but throughout the Islamic lands a scientific wave expanded the source of which was the reasonable spirit of Islam which freed man and his soul from superstition.

The word "Islam" itself is significant, as it means resignation to God and peace. It takes a very long time to speak about the details and causes of fights between Muslims and their opponents, but there is no doubt to any impartial judge of Islamic history that the man who qualified God as merciful could not believe in force or the sword, and the progress of Islamic culture alone shows that there was something essential and lasting in the teaching of this religion. I should like to say clearly that the Arab Conquest and the Islamic Conquest are two totally different things. True, when the Arabs conquered other lands, they were Muslims but soon came a time when the conquered lands put aside the

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yoke of the Arab Invasion although they retained what Islam as a religion had given them, and it proves that they could realize the noble teachings of a creed which preached the brotherhood of men and their equality before God.

Beyond worldly affairs, Islam brought an essential revolution in morality and the conception of life. Look at this interesting movement, this ideal well known and yet very little understood, which teaches tolerance and self-sacrifice,—I mean mysticism, or as we call it *Tasawwuf*. This mystic movement is an inner revolt of man's conscience against greed, social injustice, snobbery and so forth. Encouraged by the principles of Islam, mystics were and to-day still are, the most tolerant and broad-minded people of good-will to whom are due many noble ideas from which humanity can derive great benefit.

It is a pity that, although there are many good books on Islam, the bulk of people in European countries do not know the very principles of the religion which acknowledges Jesus to be one of the greatest prophets. Sometimes I have been astonished when asked whether Muslims worship either Allah or Muhammad or both!

It seems to me that the religious hatred of the Middle Ages still survives, and people have some kind of fear of approaching the reality. It is high time that we all of us should endeavour to try to sink our prejudices in the hope that we shall be able to understand the whole truth.

Those who see but superstition and backwardness in Islam are either ignorant of what Muslim science and philosophy have given to the world, or they are partial, and because of having prejudices, are powerless to acknowledge the spiritual force of Islam.

Romans and Greeks, whose culture was of a higher standard than that of the Arabs, were also conquerors, but, although they had cultural influence even in



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Islamic countries, they could not give to the peoples that faith which frees man's heart from doubt and anxiety.

To-day in many parts of the world, Muhammad's word is venerated and if, as some think, this religion owed its progress to the sword, people would reject it as soon as they no longer felt the Arab yoke. I insist upon this point because I have often heard and read that Islam is a religion of the sword.

I cannot help but refute another group who think that the Arabs fought because they were promised "a land flowing with milk and honey, and an everlasting life under the shadow of trees in the company of hours." To those who are impartial this kind of argument sounds childish. The Arabs believed in what Muhammad told them but why should we not ascribe this loyalty and self-sacrifice to the strength of the inspired words of Muhammad, who was eager to demolish the roots of evil?

Muhammad was born amongst people who took an intense pride in their ancestry and good looks, and who were of such conceit that they thought no other race could compare with them. Such were the men to whom Muhammad had to preach. They were a fighting race, possessed by the idea of looting, and devastating whatever they could not carry away: they buried their daughters alive because of their contempt for women. Arabia was a land of anarchy, superstition and cruelty. The continuous struggle between tribes, and the life in the endless desert would not allow them to work together. Out of these elements, Muhammad founded the basis of a huge institution which was, and still is, the source of many ideals.

Muhammad crushed the vain pride of the Arabs in their ancestry, taught them the means of a better life, showed them the falseness of their belief in idols, stars and witchcraft, and preached the religion of one God,

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the most reasonable and the highest idea which humanity may have of the Creator of the universe. If it was not due to his character, to his sincerity and to his eagerness for the destruction of injustice and deceit, Islam would not have such tremendous and lasting influence.

Islam could not compromise with unjust institutions, habits and creeds. Mecca was the centre of commercial activity, and it was there that Muhammad preached against usury. Women were, at that time, in the worst conceivable state and it was Muhammad who recognised their rights and introduced them, as one might say, to society which previously had refused to look upon them, as ordinary human beings.

It would require hours to give the real situation of Arabia prior to Muhammad in order to enable you to appreciate what he has done to raise the standard of morality.

Islam cannot be contradictory to science. The heyday of Islamic civilization, and the thousands of scientists, writers and philosophers who have dealt with the most subtle questions while under the inspiration of Islam, prove that this religion can live with science.

Let us hope that the spirit of brotherhood, which is the essential of Islam, will take root in all communities, and let us ask the God of all to accord all peoples light and to show them the way to the truth. It will indeed be a great day when humanity is able to believe in one everlasting God and to have the same ideals. Then the goal will be reached.

Muhammad was a man who lived the life of a man and, through his inspiration, the world saw a revolution in morality which to-day still has its beneficial hold. To those who believe in his divine mission I have nothing to say. They know him as they should. To the rest I should like to say that he was a man, sincere in what he preached, having a heart which felt for the suffer-

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ing of the poor and helpless: he wept for those stricken by misfortune: he tried to crush injustice and he helped humanity towards an independence of spirit which has cleared the way to an endless progress.

As a messenger of God, Muslims revere him, and, as a sincere teacher and reformer, humanity owes him respect. I beseech God to grant us His blessing through the soul of Muhammad and other chosen prophets who have tried to help and to teach mankind.

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## IS ISLAM A "BORROWED FEATHER?"

BY KHAN BAHADUR AL-HAJJ B. (M.) K. LODI

(Continued from Vol. XXVI, page 411.)

### PART III.

#### THE REAL CAUSE OF THE PHENOMENA OF SIMILARITIES NOT BORROWING, BUT "DIVINE" INSPIRATION.

In Part II of this article (vide Vol. XXVI, Nos. 10 and 11-12 of the *Islamic Review*), I have enumerated and explained at some length a number of dogmas and doctrines pertaining to different religions, including Islam, bearing traces of resemblance in ideas and revealing a common basis of their principles. If so, how do you account for the phenomenon, particularly when no external relations have ever existed, as we found in Part I of this Article (vide Vol. XXVI Nos. 4 and 5 of the *Islamic Review*) amongst the several Prophets and Teachers of the world. It is, indeed, a wonderful phenomenon, a phenomenon that would compel an unstinted admiration and appreciation from a student of religion. If you have the patience to apply yourself to its study to pursue the subject to its logical end, you arrive at its solution, and you will discover that the connecting link is internal and that it is *one, one only*. What it is?

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The laws of Nature largely contribute to our study. Look at one of the well-known physical phenomena. The same face is reflected in several glasses; the same sun is seen through different windows and its image is reflected in a thousand eyes beholding it. Similar are the phenomena of *mind*, although the research of psychologists is still incomplete, and the results still imperfect. Nevertheless, they are unanimous in holding that thoughts are common to human minds, and that "human minds act with extraordinary similarity in given circumstances all the world over." Much more definite are the results when minds are overshadowed by a *like* cause, and this "like" cause, and this "given circumstance" is, in the language of Theosophists, no other than the "Higher Mind" which condescends to enter into the lower, and illuminate it. It is "a descent on earth from the Kingdom of Heaven." But no one could claim that this Higher Mind is the monopoly of one man, or of one faith, or of one race, nor could the things that proceed from one Infinite, Perfect and Higher Mind become multiplied, marred, or mutilated by the diversity of human minds, provided they comprehend them. Human minds work wonders. The Qur-án has repeatedly emphasised the fact that man's mind possesses capabilities of the highest order, that it is in his hands to soar high or descend low, that that power of mind is latent in himself, the existence of which he could never have dreamed, and the possibilities of which have not yet been sufficiently explored even by the Western Psychologists.

It is obvious that, while the fundamentals of the teachings and dogmas of *revealed* religions may more or less correspond with one another in principle, because of the *common* source of their revelation which is *one* and *divine*, they vary according to the social and intellectual minds of the different peoples and ages, whom they

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come to guide. Differences in exposition in the case of "inspired" soul could only be apparent and not real, skin-deep and not deep-rooted, social and not spiritual.

It is one and the same purpose and benevolent will, working for the redemption of man that expresses itself through different prophets and seers and reformers.

It is certain that there is a *common* cause behind all similar and identical sayings of the different Prophets, Reformers and World-Teachers, that the common cause is their common *divine essence*, their *divine inspiration* and that, in view of the striking resemblance between some of the fundamental teachings that emanated from the lips of Muhammad and the teachings of many of the older religious systems, the only logical conclusion is that Muhammad is also *one of the inspired*, i.e., he must have derived the necessary inspiration from the same divine source which inspired his predecessors.

Apart from the similarities and resemblances between the teachings of Muhammad and his predecessors, which could decisively had traced as above to a common inspiration, and *not to borrowing*, there are certain other remarkable circumstances amounting to *internal* evidence, and pointing to their "inspired" and "revealed" character. For instance, how do you account for certain *scientific* truths which are mentioned here and there in the Qur-án, truths which severally lay dormant in the womb of Astronomy, Biology, Physiology, Chemistry, Physics, etc., until discovered and re-established since by scientific and systematized methods. They are Truths of which Europe was admittedly ignorant for a long time or which it ignored as a mere phantom or cock-and-bull story. Take for instance:—

(1) That *water* is the primitive element and the first work of the Creative Power; and is the source of all life (a).

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(2) That everything created, even the so-called inorganic, has life in it, that that life is divine, and that it is in the nature of the life-possessor to think of and adore the Life-giver (b).

(3) The various evolutionary stages (c) that a child passes through in the embryo, the several processes of development through which man passed before he attained his present physical perfection, and so on.

(4) The modern scientists have held that the Universe is nothing but a vast ceaseless change of "moving and becoming," a theory which the Qur-án (d) expounded 1350 years ago in the following words:—"Every moment He is in a state of glory," and a theory which the French Philosopher, Bergson, has dealt with in its different stand-points in his *Creative Evolution*, and concluded that this tendency to change is due to "an original impetus of Life passing from one generation of germs to the following generation of germs which bridges the interval between the generations, the very principle that is implied in the Qur-ánic verse quoted above."

(5) "That all things are created in Pairs" (e).

(6) They say that the origin of the Universe began with the formation of incandescent gas, that this in turn gave rise to the nebulae, that these nebulae formed the countless Stars and Sun, that the planets of the Solar system were formed from the sun, being portions detached from it by the approach of another sun, that the whole universe is expanding at a terrific pace, that the groups of star-clusters recede, and so on. With these scientific discoveries before you, please read and contemplate on verses 30 to 33, chapter XXI of the Qur-án, and see if

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(b) XII—15. LV—6, LVII—1, XVII—44.

(c) XXII—5

XXIII—12, 13, 14.

LXXI—14, 17, etc.

(d) LV—29.

(e) XXXVI—36.

## IS ISLAM A "BORROWED FEATHER?"

the Qur-án did not anticipate 1350 years ago the revelations of modern Astronomy.

(7) A reference (a) to the *Sun's* apparent orbit in the heaven represented on the earth by the ecliptic that is bounded by the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, or to the Sun's revolution in space, or to the time when it may cease to give light, etc., that the *luminaries* moved in their respective orbits, that each orbit or sphere consisted of a sort of liquid matter in which it floated; the heavens are mentioned in the Qur-án as *full of ways signifying* the orbits of the various planets, the truth of which is demonstrated in the subsequent discovery that "every star is the centre about which planets revolve." The moon borrows light from the *sun*; *the moon follows the sun*.

(8) The suggestion of the present scientists that there are living beings in all the planets as in the earth, for instance, *Mars*, and the possibility of all of them meeting together are hinted in the Qur-án (b).

(9) When the Qur-án (c) speaks of *numberless Easts and Wests*, it hints at the roundness of the earth.

(10) The reference to the prostration of the stars and trees (LV—6), is a hint evidently of the revolution of the earth and the stars.

These are theories which no one in the world knew through science in pre-Islamic days. Can it ever be imagined for a moment that these scientific truths which even Europe of the 7th century A.D. did not know, ever entered into an unlearned Arab mind of that century, without the *divine* medium? It is for the readers to judge.

Then again there are certain noteworthy *prophecies* in the Qur-án, prophecies of such a nature that they could

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(a) XXXVI—38, 40 and Note 2083, LI—7, XCI—2, English Translation and Commentary of the Qur-an, by Maulvi Muhammad Ali.  
(b) XLII—29.  
(c) LV—17.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

not have emanated save from inspired men who thereby went by the name of *Prophets*. For instance, the prophecy contained in verse 2 and 3 Chapter XXX regarding the initial defeat of the Romans by the Persians, and their subsequent victory, during their life-long struggle. The second prophecy is contained in verse No. 4 of the same chapter, foretelling the complete overthrow of the Meccans and the fall of Mecca in the same year. There are a few others (vide XXVIII—85, CX—1 to 3 etc.) All these prophecies eventually came to pass, a fact which none of the foreign commentators of the Qur-án have yet been able to discard as unreal. These prophecies have nothing in common with prophecies attributed by the writers of the Gospels to Jesus Christ, none of which, however, came to pass. The most noteworthy prophecy of this kind was that “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Math. IV—17).

The only irresistible conclusion is, as it was of the late lamented Sir Syed Ahmed Khan of Aligarh fame, that “the resemblances of the principles and doctrines of Islam to those of other *revealed* religions is the greatest proof of its being divine and inspired (a). It was acknowledged by John P. Brown (b) that “Whatever Muhammad said or taught of Islam he did it under inspiration, particularly the Qurán. At any rate he believed (c) it to be “a revelation from the High.” He believed it so, because he was conscious of his own illiteracy and incapacity to produce the Qur-án himself, but that he produced it at a time when his heart became overshadowed and illumined by the Higher Self. If so, what else could it have been same *revelation* from above?

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(a) P. 19, Essay on various Religions of the Pre-Islamic Arabs, by Sir Syed Ahmed, in his Essays on the Life of Muhammad.

(b) P. 69, Dervishes or the Islamic Spiritualism.

(c) This belief is one of the effects of **Cosmic-conscious experience.**



## CORRESPONDENCE

Paddington,  
London, W. 2.

First, my great thanks for the honour you did my house and the pleasure you gave me by your sacrifice of time and leisure last night and the interest, pleasure and instruction I derived from the conversation I was privileged to have with you and from your address at Romford.

Now, deep and serious thought, prayer, and inspiration during the night have rendered quite definite in me at last the conviction that has been growing gradually in me for some time, that I must seek for the privilege of formal admission to the community of Islam, and make my formal profession of faith as a Muslim at the first opportunity.

The difficulty which probably confronts some male converts does not exist in my case, as I am circumcised. (I have always understood, by the way, that circumcision at 13 or at conversion was a religious obligation in Islam, but it is not mentioned in any books I have recently looked.)

What, if any, formality or ritual customarily accompanies the admission of a convert I do not know, nor do I know what (if any) instruction it is customary to require a prospective convert to receive before permitting his formal reception as a convert, but I am hoping to hear as to these points from you, and will, of course, comply with whatever is customary.

If nothing unforeseen happens to prevent me, I hope to be at the Eccleston Square centre at 1 p.m. on Friday of this week.

I am prepared, from the time of my formal admission to the Muslim community, to undertake, as far as I understand them, the binding obligations and restrictions of Islamic religious and ceremonial law—the five time prayers per day, and whenever I happen to be near enough to any Mosque or prayer-centre, the attendance at such place at those times—abstention from wine and other intoxicants—abstention from pork and other forbidden foods—the observance of the day-time fast through the months of Ramadan, if ever opportunity offers (though I do not see how it is ever likely to be possible) also the duty of pilgrimage to Mecca; also alms-giving within the scope of my means—though I imagine that the formally regulated *Zakat* hardly applies in a country where the government and administration are not Islamic, and there is no organized community, and where that percentage of one's possessions which should go as *Zakat* is taken in the form of miscellaneous taxes, partly applied to social purposes and poor relief, by the secular government; and *Jihad*, or the taking part, when necessary (in my case probably by tongue and pen in the way of propaganda) in defence of the Faith, of believers, of the oppressed and the weak, and of religion, and of the religious institutions of all creeds, against persecution and aggression.

I do, of course, believe that there is no true Deity or legitimate object of the highest kind of divine worship except the

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Supreme Being, Who is the First Cause, named by Muslims *Allah*; and that Muhammad is God's envoy; I am prepared to accept as revealed truth the whole content of the Holy Qur-án (though I may reserve the right to interpret or explain it in places otherwise than it is most commonly interpreted or explained by most who are recognised as orthodox Muslims, if my own conscience, intellect or inspiration leads me to do so in order to reconcile with it beliefs not commonly held by the majority of so-called "orthodox" Muslims on any point compatible with the exclusive divinity of God, and the prophetic mission of Muhammad) and to accept as true prophets all who, living before Muhammad, have been generally revered as religious heroes by any large community in any nation; believe in the future life, and in disembodied spiritual beings, whether or not I conceive of their nature in quite the same way as the customary Muslim conception of the nature of angels.

For a time I may feel obliged by material necessities to refrain from too public a proclamation of my conversion to Islam.

Incidentally, I should be very delighted if there were any opportunity of my using my literary skill and ability as a translator to join in work helpful to the spread and defence and study of Islam. I am an experienced writer, speaker and translator with a thorough knowledge of French, and though my knowledge of German is far from thorough, it is sufficient to make an excellent and accurate translation of any German literary work with the help of dictionaries, etc., in which way I have translated already a couple of important German works for English Catholic publishers as well as several French works.

I now intend to study Arabic intensively and as rapidly as possible to attain sufficient knowledge of that language to be able to undertake translations from it if possible later on.

Sincerely yours,  
C. E.

*Supplement to the Islamic Review, February, 1939*

THE ADVENTURES OF  
**ALCASSIM**

**An Iranian Entertainment**

*by*

**MAULANA W. BASHYR-PICKARD**

B.A. (Cantab)

*Pages 352      Price Rs. 7-9 or 10s. 6d. net      26 Illustrations*

THE pattern and colouring of this unusual book have the fascination of a Persian carpet. With a great variety of incident and description, it unfolds the adventures of Alcassim, the potter's son of Ardeb, who abandons the tedium of the potter's shop to travel throughout Persia with a company of merchants. Improvidently he runs short of money and, in consequence, runs into a number of unpredictable predicaments. Later, captured by brigands, he makes many diverse acquaintances, both good and bad, and is brought into close touch with their lives and sentiments through the narratives told for diversion by Persian, Egyptian, Chinese and Indian merchants. Throughout, Alcassim's travelling companions contribute an abundant geniality to the incidents and inconveniences of life in caravanserai, by the camp-fire, or in the ease and affluence of cities.

## Some Appreciations

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THE ADVENTURES OF ALCASSIM should be read by all who are interested in the Near and Middle East and in the Muslim World.

This book, I am sure, will greatly appeal to the ordinary reader, who is not acquainted with the world of Islam.

Mr. BASHYR-PICKARD deserves the thanks and gratitude of those who read him as well as of those who know the world he describes.

(Sd.) AGA KHAN.

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Although it is a book of fiction, it comes from one whose religious devotion verges on saintliness. As such, it is unique amongst books of this type.

The right kind of fiction dealing with Eastern life is almost unobtainable in the Western languages, particularly in English. And fiction written by a Westerner whose appreciation of the East is not only intellectual, but deeply spiritual, is still rarer. It is only recently that the appearance of such books has been possible. The author has successfully attempted to revive in Western minds the old feelings of romance and adventure associated with the East in times before the circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama. In a poetical strain he gives to the readers an attractive picture of the social life of many Eastern countries, on the background of a fancy which reminds one of the *Arabian Nights*. What is more dexterously woven in the story is an ideal picture of the resigned and serene Muslim life, which the Western mind tired of its material civilisation is unconsciously searching for.

— *The Islamic Review*, Woking (England).

This is a book of fascinating stories, full of adventures and thrills, woven around the person of Alcaassim, son of a potter of Ardeb.

Altogether the book contains 12 stories covering a wide range of interest. The author, Mr. Bashyr-Pickard, must be congratulated not only on his wonderful gift of story-telling, but what is perhaps more, on his creating a right Oriental atmosphere proper to each story. It is an achievement which should easily take its place by the side of the *Arabian*

*Supplement to the Islamic Review, February, 1939 3*

*Nights Entertainment* and should, like that book, prove a source of entertainment to peoples of all nationalities the world over.

A word about the author may arouse additional interest in the book. Mr. Bashyr, as the name shows, is an English convert to Islam. He graduated from Queen's College, Cambridge and saw active service during the Great War, resumed post-graduate study at London University in 1921, embraced Islam at the Mosque, Woking, in 1922, and acted as Imam at the Id Prayers at the said Mosque in 1932. He is the only man in the world who calls out the Azan daily in his residential house before saying his prayer; for it is written in the Quran that blessed are the houses in which God's name is called out.

—*The Light, Lahore.*

This book is of that select class to be kept and read again and again for its skilful Oriental imagery and beauty of expression.

*The Publisher's Circular and the Publisher and Bookseller,*

London.

The translation of Oriental phraseology into correspondingly flowery English is a temptation to the writer with an Oriental theme, but Mr. Pickard does not fall into it. Out of a long association with Persian thought and writings, which is evident here, he has compressed into the adventures of Alcaßim, the potter's son of Ardeb, much wisdom entertainingly disguised in the stories Alcaßim hears from Li No Hang, the Chinese merchant, or from Bhota Lala Jung, the Indian merchant, and others. It is not always pleasant caravanserai and story-time with Alcaßim. Thrilling adventures and gruelling hardships are his share. Alcaßim, the typical youthful idealist; Hami-Raz, his wise but very human uncle; Hassan, his cousin, droll and fond of good things, making an admirable foil for Alcaßim; fierce brigands; the simple gardener of Damghatabad; the love-lorn queen of a subterranean region; they all form into a pattern like that of a Persian carpet each section and corner and design balancing the rest but never insisting on emphasis for itself. This should make an ideal gift book.

—*The New Statesman and Nation*

Mr. W. Bashyr-Pickard, of Hertford,.... has produced a literary work which is outstanding. Its merit lies in the beauty of its prose and the imaginative pattern of events woven into an Eastern story, or rather a series of stories..... Without doubt this is a fascinating book for those who read and do not merely scan.—*Hertford-shire Mercury.*

4 *Supplement to the Islamic Review, February, 1939*

Mr. Pickard infuses the traditional Oriental atmosphere into this entertaining account of a humble Persian's Odyssey.

—*Scotsman.*

.....“creditable and original.”—*Aberdeen Journal.*

The characters and setting of this unusual book are reminiscent of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, except that instead of the vivid and fast moving stories of djinns and magicians, we have the deep and placid story of Alcas-sim, the potter's son of Ardeb, which flows like one of the wide rivers of Asia, or pauses to rest in one of the gardens of the sleepy and beautiful country in which his adventures take place.

The author has a style and phraseology as rare and philosophical as might have come from the pen of the philosopher-poet, Omar Khayyam. The reader is captivated, and finds himself lost in a world so old and strange that it might belong to another planet, and yet he discovers that the hearts and emotions of the people who inhabit it are as his own. *The Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore.*

the claim on the dust cover that “the pattern and colouring of this unusual book have the fascination of a Persian carpet” is no more than the truth the story... flashes into the loveliest colour as his (Alcassim's) new acquaintances unfold to him their lives Indians, Egyptians, Persians and Chinese.

Here we are forcibly reminded of “The Arabian Nights.” The stories of these adventurers—both men and women—form the cream of the book, and beguile us with adventure, romance, fantasy and fun. There is a rather roisterous simplicity about some of the tales that is deeply refreshing after the sophistication of the modern novel; and others are dashed with an Eastern wisdom which can hardly fail to appeal to the imagination.

Treated as a book of short stories, however, into which the reader may dip when he is in the mood, it is a fine adventure. Though much of the description is sensuous, there is none of that sophisticated sensuality that seems to be the monopoly of Western civilizations. It is the pictorial imagery of the Song of Solomon rather than the satires of Juvenal.—*The Church Times.*

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