

"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-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

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MAY, 1940 A.C.

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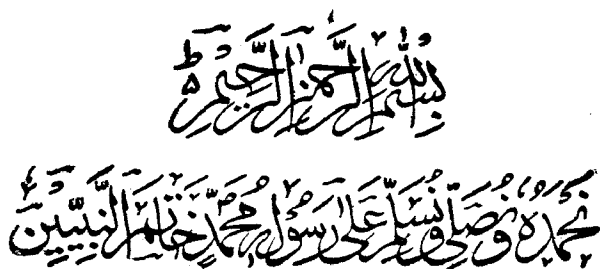
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*Ed. J. R.*



# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol. XXVIII]

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[No. 5

## THE CHARTER OF THE PROPHET\*

[Below we print an English translation of an Arabic document, which has been made public by Madame Jeanne Aubert in the form of a book "*Le Serment du Prophete*" (Paris, 1938). Our English version is a translation of the French translation. In the book itself there is a facsimile reproduction of the Arabic original, but, unfortunately, it is too small to be easily decipherable. But a superficial comparison shows that the French rendering is rather free. We are trying to get in touch with Madame Aubert and to obtain a photograph of the original for reproduction in a future issue of the *Islamic Review*.

A preface has been written to this book by Professor Edmond Poupe, Professor of History and President of the Society for Scientific and Archæological Research of Var, France. We give below

\*Translated from the French by Madame Shakir Mohamedi of London.

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a few excerpts from it, which will serve to throw light on the historicity and value of the document. The Professor says :

“ Amongst a collection of old papers originating, according to all evidence, from a French Officer who had served under Bonaparte in the Egyptian Expedition, Madame Jeanne Aubert, who came to know of their existence, had her attention aroused by three documents in Arabic.

“ Herself hailing from Egypt and being of an inquisitive mind and well informed, she found it easy to translate them. One of them was a *firman* awarding the title of “ Bey ” to a chief of a battalion of the expeditionary army ; the second, adorned with geometric and quasi-architectural figures illuminated with designs and letterings in red and black, dealt with Muslim law chiefly in respect of heritage and bondage ; the third document was a copy of the “ Charter of the Prophet.”

Of the three documents, noticed by Madame Jeanne Aubert, the last entitled the “Charter of the Prophet,” was the most interesting. Two questions arose :

Was the document authentic ?

If so, what was its importance ?

Madame Aubert was still seeking the solution of these problems, when in an issue of *Al-Ahram* of Cairo for the 12th December, 1937, there appeared the following article :

“ As a result of the abolition of the Foreign Capitulations in Egypt, the Government has withdrawn all the customs exemptions and other privileges accorded to religious societies and to monastic organisations, both Egyptian and foreign.”

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Upon this, the monks of Mount Sinai protested in a letter addressed to His Excellency Makram Ebeid Pasha, the then Minister of Finance. We quote the textual translation as follows :

“ Your Excellency,

The undersigned Poryphyrios III, Archbishop and Superior of Mount Sinai, has the honour of submitting to your Excellency the following :

This monastery conserves with meticulous care the most precious of all documents concerning itself. That document is the Deed by which the Prophet Muhammad, on the 3rd Muharram of the 2nd year of the Hejira, accorded to our monastery all its privileges, *e.g.*, the exemption from the payment of taxes on our lands and property and other belongings that we possessed then or should possess in the future till the end of the world.

This Deed is written by his son-in-law ‘Alī ibn Abī-Tālib and is signed by the Prophet himself and by his disciples present at the time it was drawn up.

Amongst other things the Prophet advised all Muslims to protect our Order against aggression, internal or external. The present Egyptian Government and those Muslim Governments which preceded it have accorded us all those privileges. We, therefore, request your Excellency not to make void this privilege acquired by us so many centuries ago.”

The Monastery of Sinai referred to in the letter is the same as the “ Monastery of Tour.”

The first question which occurred to Madame Aubert was thus solved in the affirmative. The document preserved in the papers of the French Offices was of indisputable authenticity.

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What was the nature of the importance attaching to the document ?

Historically, the text discovered proves that the Arab Muslims, far from entertaining any hate for the Christians, on the contrary promised to protect them. A Holy war had no "raison d'être."—*Ed. I. R.*]

### THE CHARTER OF THE PROPHET

"A declaration to the Christians of the entire world.

"To them security ! Protection to their persons and to their property !

"In giving this pledge I write in accordance with the Commandments of God.

"In whatever place the Christians are, they are placed there by the will of God. Such is the Supreme Will that nothing can happen against God. If the Christians are what they are, it is because God has so willed it. It is He Who has commended them to our hearts.

"Herein is stated how He ordains the rulers of His religion to act in obedience to Him.

"Those who, from the south to the north of the earth both in near and distant lands whether Arabicised or else remaining Occidentals, both known and unknown, all such as have embraced the Christian religion and its principles, must be protected by the highest officers and respected by all those who shall be in positions of power.

"The persons charged with public affairs shall facilitate the execution of this Charter with obedience.

"To transgress it would be contrary to the Divine Commandments, to neglect it would be an error. It should be observed with absolute fidelity, because it is an undertaking before

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God and to destroy a way traced by God Himself would be to expose oneself to the final malediction. It is immaterial whether the person concerned be the Sultan or a simple plain believer amongst the Muslims.

“ In adhering to the law of the Prophet, in the discharge of pious duties, all believers and all Muslims will observe this undertaking which has been given by me on behalf of those who follow my religion and are under my responsibility. To guard this pledge is the “ Promise of God ” to all creatures.

“ With my men and my horses I shall preserve their lands, with my arms, with my strength, with the Muslims attached to me, in every place far and near, I shall protect their churches, their holy books, and the habitations of their priests.

“ Whether they be in mountains or beside a river, whether they have built their houses by hollowing the rocks of mountains or whether they live in a public place or even in a monastery, whether they be on a voyage or in town, I shall protect them even as I shall protect myself, even as I shall protect the Muslims and preserve my own people. With justice I shall give to all peace and help.

“ Whatever the time and in whatever place in the world I shall repulse all harm which may threaten them.

“ My duty is to defend them even without their knowledge. In doing this I teach the Faith of the Pledge, and of Honour, because I pledge here my life and the lives of Muslims to come, and this trust must not be sacrificed ; the evil



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will have to pass first over myself and my co-religionists before it reaches them.

“ No one must humiliate the bishop in his bishopric, nor the priest in his church, nor the Christian in his Christianity, nor the ascetic in his cloister, nor the apostle in his seclusion. No one should remove stones nor any objects of the Christian church to use them for a mosque or the dwelling place of a Muslim.

“ He who disobeys in this will betray the “ Pledge of God ” and would be acting contrary to what we have written and would estrange himself from us.

“ One should not impose woollen garments on the arch-priests nor on the hermits in their cloisters.

“ One should not demand tax from the inhabitants living in the country, the hills or the wilderness.

“ Those who cannot afford to have servant-slaves and have no commerce, should pay a tax of a quarter of dram (drachma) of silver per year ; if this tax is too heavy, let them give a modest garment in place of the tax. If amongst them are any destitute people, let them receive immediate help from the treasury of the Muslims.

“ One should never arrest them or force them to make payment ; and also one should accept from them only what they can give, what their situation permits them to give, without privation.

“ The merchants, who sail the seas, who transport and exchange precious stones or silver, the rich and the notables shall be required to pay only twelve drachms of tax a year when they have a fixed abode or if they are sojourning temporarily.

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- “ This tax is not to be levied upon a tourist coming from outside whose domicile is not known. If he comes to collect an inheritance, he will be under the obligation of paying the “ tax of the Sultan ” and he should pay the tax of succession just as everyone else does.
- “ No Muslim should harm him nor take from him anything except that which his estate permits him to give at the time of the settlement of his estate and the valuation of his landed property.
- “ One must not inflict unjust impositions upon him nor make additional charges.
- “ The Christians will not be compelled to abandon their homes and go out with the Muslims to fight the enemy. They are not obliged to go to war while the Muslims fight to defend them.
- “ No one should compel the Christians to equip Muslims for the war. This is a voluntary matter left to the initiative of the Christians themselves.
- “ In any case we should not accept help from them but in accordance with tradition, after having ascertained that their means permit these expenses and that the Muslim treasury will guarantee the restitution of the equipment. If eventually it is too much dilapidated for return or too old or lost, then the loss should be refunded in full by the Muslim Exchequer (*Baytu 'l-Mál*).
- “ The Christian community is not to be treated brutally nor are Christians to be compelled to accept Islam nor should one try to convince them by force. One should not discuss this subject but with the best kindness, using

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tenderness and avoiding all things which may hurt and this upon all occasions.

“If a Muslim is requested to aid a Christian, he must respond to his appeal, help him with tenderness in charity, abjure danger by efficient counsel between him and his enemy, either by making him achieve success or by simply extricating him out of his trouble.

“A Muslim must never cheat, never quarrel with, never despise and never abandon, a Christian.

“I stand guarantee that all harm is hereby removed from the Christians and that the most kindly attention shall be paid to them.

“A Muslim will share with them a joint life in everything.

“No one should compel a Christian to marry another against his will.

“A Christian should not be compelled to marry the daughter of a Muslim nor should he be forced to give his daughter to a Muslim.

“He will not be obliged to give the hand of his daughter to a suitor, unless it is his own desire.

“A Christian staying with a Muslim should have the confidence of his Muslim host. The Christian may follow all his customs freely with regard to his own religion.

“Anyone who acts contrary to the aforesaid “commits a sin”; by us he would be considered “a liar among liars.”

“If the Christians stand in need of rebuilding their churches and their belfries, you Muslims, in pursuance of this undertaking which I have offered to them, should not resist their opinions, nor their religion.

“The Christians are not obliged to do anything either for war or for military purposes or as

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- agents of communications. Any one who does anything contrary to the above is guilty before God. We shall be displeased and he will be neglecting his religion, unless he fulfils all conditions indicated herein concerning the Christians. Nobody has the right to withdraw himself from this law nor to reduce its force; the conditions which we have established for them must be respected by the Christians also, in order to maintain the principle of the Pledge.
- “No Christian shall come to the aid of those who plan a war against the Muslims, either openly or secretly. Christians shall not hide an enemy of the Muslims in their homes, neither shall they supply war material, horses, money or men, etc., against them.
- “In their turn, when a Muslim traveller, who is passing through their territory, or when war refugees ask for hospitality, they shall be granted this for three days and three nights; they must come to their help and feed them and their animals and avert from them all harm.
- “If one of the Muslim refugees is pursued, the Christians must conceal him and not give him up and they should accept provisionally the burdens which are constantly upon Muslims.
- “If they act according to these conditions without deviating from them, the Christians may live in security and may practise their religion. They will be treated with all kindness and good-will.
- “He who does not follow these rules but violates these conditions and does what we have forbidden will violate and break the “Pledge of God.”

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“ I have put this Pledge in the hands of the priests to assure them of my peace, and I hold myself responsible everywhere for the sincerity of the execution of this promise according to the rules indicated.

“ The Muslim must protect the Christian with gentleness, kindness and perseverance, and must execute this Pledge till the Day of Judgment and the disappearance of the world.

“ And he who should do wrong to a Christian would be a breaker of the Pledge ; he would see in me his own adversary on the day of judgment.

“ I write this Charter with the testimony of thirty pious and pure witnesses.”

Abū-Bakr.

‘Umar-ibn-al-Khattāb.

‘Uthmān.

‘Alī-ibn-Abī Tālib.

Abū Zarr.

Abu Dardā.

Abū Hurayra.

‘Abdullāh-ibn-Mas‘ūd.

‘Abdullāh-ibn-‘Abbās.

‘Abbās-al-Zuhairi.

Sa‘d-ibn-Mu‘āz.

Talha-ibn-‘Abdullāh.

Fadl-ibn-‘Umar.

Bashīr-ibn-Qays.

Zaid-ibn-Qālib.

Said-ibn-‘Ubādāh.

‘Abdullāh-ibn-Maryam.

Mar‘ūs-ibn-Hasan.

Maryam-bint-Ibrāhīm.

‘Amāma-ibn-Marīr.

Sahl-ibn-‘Umar.

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‘Abdu’l-Azīm-ibn-Hasan.

‘Abdullāh-ibn-‘Abdu’l-Ahad.

‘Uthmān-ibn-Numayl.

‘Ayd-ibn-Mansūr.

Mu‘azzam-ibn-Mūsā.

Hasan-ibn-Sābit.

Abū Hayfa.

Hāshim-ibn-‘Abdullāh.

Abu ’l-Qadir.

### *Annotation from the Copyist*

“This Charter is written by ‘Alī-ibn-Abī Tālīb in the first days of Muharram, two years after the Hejira. There exist only three copies: one in the house of the Sultan in his coffer till now, the two others in the hands of the monks: one in the monastery of “Tour,” the other in the mountains of “Enachroun.” They bear the seal (that is to say, the signature or the impression of the seal) of the Prophet, who has ordered its execution. This copy has been made from the original with the help of God.

Praise be to God ! ”

NOTE.—This copy has been transcribed at the time of the campaign in Egypt, where the Sultanate had existed as long ago as the 10th century. Since the drawing up of the original document in the 7th century, the three copies passed to their several destinations. The skin of the gazelle, which was later the property of the Sultan, was in reality in the hands of a high official whom they then called “Lieutenant-General” but who bore also the title of “Sultan.”

There have been Khalifas only after the death of the Prophet, and Sultans only after the Khalifas. As a result of the wars and the handing over by Egypt of the Standard of the Prophet to the Seljouks (Seldjoucides), the Coffer passed into the care of the Sultan. This is the explanation of how the document came to be preserved by this monarch.

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### IN DEFENCE OF ISLAM

BY A. O. R. RAHMAN

In the West, Islam is still misunderstood. Here is an example : In the course of a letter to the present writer, a Canadian friend says with reference to some religious discussion proceeding :

“ I was greatly interested in your discussion of religion and, while I agree with you in many instances, I find myself in disagreement in others. You claim Muhammad was the last of the prophets. How so ? After all, Christians claim Jesus was. I agree with neither, in that. I doubt whether either was a Prophet divinely inspired. True both men were inspired with a great passion for bringing about a better world—call that divine, if you please. There I go contradicting myself—I’ll modify my previous statement. It is my belief that Jesus and Muhammad were just ordinary human beings—but they were certainly great men. But there have been other great men—how about Socrates ? You claim Muslimism is the remedy for the world’s troubles. Perhaps so—but I do say this—nothing is perfect—we are always striving for the perfect—that is the purpose of life. If we were to reach the perfect, life would be futile.

“ Speaking of Fascism and Communism—perhaps they are inclined to be materialistic—but they needs must be to a certain extent—we must keep at least our feet on the ground, even if our hearts are groping into the unknown. The fact remains that both Fascism and Communism are making a bid for world power, while nothing else seems to be. Hence it is logical to believe that one will succeed sooner or later. You

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claim that these two systems are not in consonance with the natural inclinations of man—I wonder! It seems to me that man's first thought is for the materialistic; he resorts elsewhere only as a last hope. That's why I believe these modern systems will win temporarily at least. At this stage in the evolution of the human mind, man must have something concrete to grasp at—something tangible—which both Fascism and Communism offer. In other words, man to-day *has to be* more interested in food for stomach than in food for the brain. Remedy the cause of this outlook—or give him food for the stomach—then he will cease to be a materialist.

I suppose all this doesn't make sense to you—or does it ? ”

The present writer would not have taken the pains to quote at length from this Canadian youth, had it not been that the views expressed in the letter are typical and truly reflective of the great majority of Western minds, brought up and nourished as they, are in a conservative, Christian and ultra-national, atmosphere completely at variance with the outside world. The fact that bread and butter, wealth and fortune, personal pleasure and self-aggrandisement have formed the *raison d'être* of our Western brethren, that the be-all and end-all of their life is materialistic (a view expressed in a somewhat diluted form by the Canadian friend) is traceable to the fundamental incompatibility of Christian teachings (as opposed to the teachings of Jesus) with the conditions prevailing in the world from time immemorial and with the hard realities of life and with the essential facts of human nature. It is a historical truth borne out by impartial critics that Christianity has always been the greatest



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stumbling-block to civilisation, progress and enlightenment. While the priests, the monks and the clergy spared no pains to arrogate to themselves the full and unquestioned right to administer justice to the people in all religious matters, they left no stone unturned to interpolate the lines of the Holy Bible in order to establish and maintain their own spiritual hegemony over the masses. Naturally, they took to discouraging education and literacy in every possible way. In fact, as the late Al-Farooq Lord Headley has rightly pointed out, "the more ignorant a person was, the more spiritual he was deemed to be." Obviously, with the mighty machinery of the state at the command of these autocratic spiritualists and "benefactors of mankind," thinkers, philosophers, literators, scientists and other men of learning, who happened to express new ideas or old ideas in a new form, were burnt to death as "heretics." Naturally, as long as the conception of Christendom prevailed in Europe, or as long as the Papal hegemony flourished over the continent, Europe produced nothing remarkable or worth while in science or the arts. Fallacious beliefs prevailed. False conceptions of the Universe were held and are still thrust on educated and enlightened people through the medium of the Bible. For a considerable time during the Middle Ages, it was seriously believed that the earth was the centre of the Universe and anybody who opposed this belief was doomed to perdition and considered fit to be burnt to death. Similarly, there is a passage in the Bible purporting to show that the Almighty created the day and the night on the first day and the sun on the fourth. How palpably absurd ! Fantastic and ridiculous, is it not ? And yet such was Europe and such were the teachings of Christianity !

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At the same time the sciences were marching ahead with remarkable rapidity and bearing fruit in the barren sands of the Arabian Desert and in the soothing atmosphere of Muslim Spain. Such antagonism between religion and science as prevailed in Christendom has not, fortunately, been an article of the Islamic faith. Only the adventurous Greeks came in contact with the enlightened Muslims of the East and imbibed much of their culture and learning. Their trading connections with the Muslim nations enriched them with the new learning which they spread over the face of the whole of Europe when driven from Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. This influx of learning and knowledge was like a spark to the accumulated tinder of discontent against Papal dictation and clerical domination responsible for all the intellectual agony with which Europe was writhing. The reaction was stupendous, and Europe must be thankful to the conquering Turks for all it gained from the Renaissance. Even then the Church was responsible for furnishing ethical justification and religious sanction to the oppressions and tyrannies of the monarchies and privileged classes in France and Russia, with consequences too well-known to enumerate. It is no wonder, therefore, that young and imaginative Christian youths rebel against traditional religious notions and conceptions of ethics, morality and religion, and seek for "something tangible" to satisfy their curiosity and clarify their bewilderment. But the insidious and virulent propaganda of several centuries is so great as to prevent them from viewing Islam on the same footing as Christianity. The writer's correspondent, as also the great majority of intelligent people in the West, are obsessed with the notion that Islam is as much "other-worldly," as much "authoritarian," as much dreamy and visionary and

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divorced from the realities of life on this planet as is the faith preached by the Christian monastics. Such a view is essentially in contradiction with the fundamental tenets and the spirit of the faith of Islam, which is a message of progress and enlightenment rather than one of superstition and ignorance or even of purely theoretical spiritual development removed from practical reality.

Apart from the general, wider and more subtle question of the complete synthesis which Islam offers to us, let us analyse and examine the interesting and thought-provoking points raised in the letter quoted above, and answer them categorically for the edification of all seekers of Knowledge and Truth.

Broadly speaking the following points have been stressed :

- (1) Why should Muhammad be considered to be the last Prophet and not Jesus ?
- (2) What justification is there for treating them as Divine Messengers ? They were only great men as was also Socrates.
- (3) Nothing is perfect. How can Islam be ?
- (4) Religion is ethereal and unreal. It offers no solution for the crying needs of the human stomach. Fascism and Communism, on the other hand, offer solutions for the hunger and poverty of the masses. Naturally, it is one of them and not Islam that will emerge triumphant.

Let us now examine these points one by one :

- (1) Jesus, humble and unassuming as he was, made no parade of his own greatness as a spiritual messenger. He came as leader, guide and philosopher to the down-trodden Jews to lift them from the abyss of depravity into which they had fallen since the death

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of Moses. He came with the mission to infuse a new life into his people and to teach them the supreme lesson of sacrifice and love—important elements of religious belief no doubt. His chief object in life, however, was to ameliorate the position of the Israelites and to make them believe in the Oneness of God. Jesus Christ himself declared, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth : It is expedient for you that I go away ; for, if I go not away, the Comforter will come not unto you ; but if I depart I will send him unto you. . . . I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth ; for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. . . . He shall glorify me.” (John, XVI : 7 and 12—14). It is evident, therefore, that Jesus never put forward any claim to be the last of the Prophets. On the other hand, he held out the promise of a future Comforter who would complete the message of God, which he himself was unable to accomplish. From Christ’s own admission, as acknowledged by the Christians themselves, he was not the last Prophet. There was to follow him somebody mightier in personality and more successful as a preacher, who should yet speak not his own words, but those of the Almighty. The fact that it was Muhammad alone who could fulfil the prophecy is borne out by the remarkable revolution he brought about in the spheres of politics, society, knowledge and learning,

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as a result of his simple teachings in idolatrous Arabia, which was, at the time of his advent, torn by internal strife, narrow dogmatism, brutal inhumanity, horrid superstitions and general moral, social and political bankruptcy. In further support of this view, there is the repetition in the Holy Qur-án of the declaration that, "he does not speak from his own desire except what is revealed unto him." It is, therefore, obvious that the assumed rival claim to the last prophethood by Muhammad and Jesus is but a figment of the imagination of scheming Christian priests. It has no semblance of appeal to the average man of intellect and there is not an iota of truth in it.

- (2) The second question presupposes the existence of the Divine Being—the Almighty ; otherwise there could be no question of divine inspiration. If it is admitted that the unity of the world is an immutable physical law (as believed by all advanced scientists to-day), it follows as a necessary corollary that in this limitless universe, with the law of uniformity ever in force, there is some great purposive mind that makes for the order, the cosmos that rules the Universe. That unity of the physical and spiritual world having been admitted, it does not require much intelligence to realise that this mighty force, this *wājib-ul-wajūd*, will make itself felt, and offer some guidance and instruction to the people of this planet to follow a well-ordered life, not as creatures of the wild that act according to their impulse, but as rational beings capable of understanding

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what is good and what is bad for them, both as individuals and as members of society. That is why, according to Muslim beliefs, hundreds and thousands of prophets and divine messengers have, from time to time, appeared in different countries and among different nations to guide them along the right path. They have been distinguished from mere impostors by virtue of the truth of their sayings verified by subsequent history, as also by the force of their own character. Jesus Christ was, no doubt, possessed of supernatural powers, bestowed upon him to satisfy the idle fancies of the ignorant and superstitious Jews, who were capable of being easily overawed by startling feats. But his greatest achievement was his teaching of the Oneness of God and Love, as well as the prophecy concerning the advent of a greater Prophet, a prophecy fulfilled by Muhammad, whose achievement has, in its social, ethical and political aspect, been greater than that of any other human being. Now it is evident that none but a divinely inspired person could foretell the coming event in the way Jesus did. Nor could anything but spiritual experience of the highest order make him conscious of the existence of the Almighty, while he was surrounded by an atmosphere of sacerdotalism, ceremonialism and idolatry. His gentleness and humility in the face of the gravest provocation, moreover, raises him above the ordinary mortal. Had he been merely great, as so many warriors and chieftains, kings and princes, statesmen and

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men of letters have been, he could not heal the sick and wounded simply by a touch of the hand. No amount of delving into the mysteries of science, no amount of jugglery could enable him to show this remarkable phenomenon in order to convince his intellectually backward people of the strength and purposiveness of the Creator.

With Muhammad, however, things were entirely different. His greatest and, practically speaking, only miracle was the Holy Qur-án. Unsurpassed as a piece of literature, even the greatest of the Arab bards found it impossible to produce a single verse that might stand comparison with any of its lines. The majesty, grandeur and beauty of style of the Holy Qur-án can better be appreciated when we realise that Muhammad was absolutely unschooled and unlettered. He knew absolutely nothing of history except what he heard during his travels. And yet the Holy Qur-án comprises some historical accounts, accurate with regard to chronology and geographical references, and in strict conformity with available accounts of the past, which have not been, hitherto, contradicted or challenged by a single scholar of history or geology.

To examine briefly even a few of the salient features of the Qur-án would, however, require volumes. Let us, therefore, content ourselves with only two more. Some thirteen centuries ago when the sciences were absolutely dormant, the Holy Qur-án declared the truth, which scientists have only recently discovered, that even plants are possessed of a certain amount of sensation and differentiation of sex. The Holy Qur-án would not lose a single grain of its worth if it did not contain this reference to a physical truth. But our present object is only to demonstrate, to those dubious of its Divine origin, that there is no justification for their doubts.

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To turn to another well-known point, Muhammad was not a student of biology, nor was that science at all developed in his time. Yet he could declare the actual process of development of the child that took place in the womb of the mother. Curiously enough, his account actually coincides with the one given by modern physicians. Are not all these signs of divine inspiration and revelation ?

Could a mere passion for a better world, without Divine aid and guidance, make an unschooled, unlettered Arab of the burning deserts, one who knew not a word of literature, history, philosophy, geography or any of the physical and social sciences—realise the serious peril which threatened the world and enable him not only to work out a tremendous change in the national economy, politics, ethics and general manners of the Arabs, but also to give to the world a message of life and endeavour, whose wide importance has begun to be understood and appraised by non-believers only now ?

In order to escape the odium of being deified and idolised, Muhammad himself always declared, "I am only a man like yourselves." But he did also say, "I speak not of my own accord but what is revealed unto me." Could Muhammad, without the Qur-án and Divine guidance, have been a tenth part as great as he was with them ? Could he have been the same Muhammad ?

Once his prophethood has been acknowledged, we cannot but accept his word, "I and the Day of Judgment are like this," which he said with two of his fingers joined together. Surely the Divine Messenger cannot lie !

But the same belief is strengthened by subsequent historical developments since the time of Muhammad. Can any one of the great historical figures compare



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

with him in achievement or influence ? Has any human being after him played so many and varied rôles with perfect success ?

Combining and even surpassing in his religion all that was best in the older codes, the piety of Moses, the love of Jesus, the sacrifice of Abraham, the compassion of Buddha and the justice and magnanimity of Solomon, Muhammad gave to the world the final Dispensation of God, the observance of which will mean the salvation of humanity.

As to Socrates being regarded as one of the messengers, there is enough scope in the statement, "I have not left any people without a warner," to allow him that exalted status.

(3) The writer's interpretation of his Canadian friend's comments is that the abhorrence felt towards the Qur-án to-day by believers in modern political doctrines has a twofold basis. Firstly, that a religious code need not and cannot guide human beings except in the domain of spiritual development and philosophical pursuits, which matters obviously cannot be the concern of the average man, if the affairs of everyday life are to proceed unhampered and in a rational way. Secondly, that a code laid down thirteen centuries ago for the help and guidance of the people of Arabia cannot have a universal applicability and must, in the modern age, be treated as a dead letter.

The first objection is readily overcome, when we consider that it arises from the dualistic mentality of the Christians, as also of some neo-modernists, who consider the world to be a hotbed of sins and thus set up an antagonism between matter and spirit. Islam does not seek to demarcate the regions of the spirit

## IN DEFENCE OF ISLAM

and the flesh. On the contrary, it considers them to be mutually contributive in every respect. Being a faith of action and not of mere belief and dogma like those religions which are based on a dualistic conception of the universe, Islam discountenances the development of an other-worldly mentality. It recognises the fundamental rationality of human beings, who can attain to the highest perfection, not by isolating themselves from one another, but by living a harmonious life of universal brotherhood. It is, therefore, quite natural that the differentiation between good and evil has been indicated in the Qur-án for the guidance both of individuals and of society. Maulvi Aftabuddin Ahmad has very ably explained the whole point thus :

“ It is a false religious outlook that makes people feel that religion need not bother about social legislation. As a matter of fact, this is the most difficult part of the function of a religion. Islam rightly thinks that the major part of our moral feelings are those that concern society. The intellect, not being superior to the emotions, cannot comprehend their laws, far less control them. These laws have to come from outside, and from outside they do come. This had to be so because man cannot view life as a whole and cannot rise above his emotion and interests.”

The belief that the Quránic decree cannot be of practical help to humanity in its present-day troubles, rests on the misconception that it does not claim in itself the seeds of progress and development but lays down only rigid and inflexible laws, which, though of practical help to the inhabitants of the burning deserts of Arabia in the 7th century, A.D., cannot be applied with beneficial results in the twentieth century. In order, however, to understand and appreciate the

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teachings of Islam, one must remember that the Islamic laws relate themselves primarily to the moulding of human nature, which, as even a sceptic of the standing of Mr. George Bernard Shaw has been forced to admit, is "pliable." Once the social mind has been trained to differentiate between good and evil, it can easily guide itself along the path of progress and well-being. It can face economic issues, issues on which depend the development of healthy social life, from a wider and broader angle of vision than the sordid mundane fashion in which the problem has been tackled even by our ardent socialists and rabid communists. Just an ordinary reference will make the point clear. When Mr. Winston Churchill, in his characteristically pungent and suggestive way, describes Mr. Shaw as, "at once an acquisitive Capitalist and zealous Communist," he only lays bare the heart and mind of the average believer in the Marxian doctrine, who, though aiming at a moral reconstruction of the world and society, approaches the question in a curiously individualistic spirit and is impelled more by a sense of discontent against his present lot, than by the desire of bettering of those worse than himself. Considering this, we find that the Islamic method is much more radical and aims at the complete liquidation of the problem by the prevention of every kind of exploitation specified in the Qur-án and Hadith as sources of evil. The institution of *Zakát* (or compulsory poor tax), the equitable distribution of wealth and property, the prohibition of transactions on interest, and the abolition of slavery, monopolies, inequitable profiteering in business and artificial inflation, etc., contain in themselves enough seeds of development, and can form the basis of legislative enactments of the greatest magnitude. These will, no doubt, serve as a check upon any possible rapacity by members of society and

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will often prove the means of curing its acute ills. But an equally important part can be played by the social conscience of the people, which can be developed by an understanding of the spirit of the faith. That is why it is essential to study the Qur-án between the lines. We may take, for example, a passage in the chapter Al-Fajr, which says that prosperity is denied to people that are unjust to widows and orphans and usurp their livelihood. Evidently there is much more in the passage than meets the superficial glance. It gives the plain suggestion that if experience shows that the social and economic position of widows and orphans is in jeopardy, it is incumbent on the state to take measures to see them protected. If, however, there is no serious detriment to their interests, the injunction stands that the *status quo*, if just and equitable, should be maintained. Does this not afford enough scope for progress and development ?

Then again, here is the well-known saying of the Prophet, "Give the labourer his wages before his perspiration be dry." Is it, then, any wonder that in the presence of such definite and broad-based injunctions, Arab life was transformed with the most remarkable success into a perfect and workable socialistic state ?

Thus it is by furnishing a definite social and political code and by affording scope for the development of the communal conscience, that the Qur-án furnishes a way of living that would give the world the peace and happiness it so much needs. The position at present can be further improved and increasing prosperity obtained through gradual efforts. But to suggest that Islam limits the field of human advance is palpably absurd. As the late Khwaja Kamaluddin

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has said :

“ Al-Qur-án declared that man was not only *God's image*, but His vicegerent on earth who, through acquiring the necessary knowledge, can receive homage from angels, those sentient beings who, as the Book says, move forces of Nature and actuate her potentialities.”

Besides, the fact that a particular generation of men and women have succeeded in conducting their affairs with the most perfect success, does not mean that the next generation would be equally virtuous. They have to face their own problems and strive by their own efforts for the perfect. Islam indicates the line, but does not delimit the achievement.

If, therefore, Marxian and Hegelian dialectics of old are credited with applicability to-day, there is no reason why the tenets of Islam should not be considered to be capable of contributing to the general evolution of the human mind, which, to be candid, is seldom uniform and progressive.

- (4) The fact has already been explained, in the preceding paragraphs, that Islam is not an other-worldly faith. According to Islam, the degree of one's virtue in this world will determine his happiness in the next. Its denunciation of asceticism and mendicancy is the greatest evidence of its sense of realism. Certainly, it is unjust to say that Islam offers only food for the brain and not for the stomach, it being assumed that Fascism and Communism do ensure the latter. Had this been true, we should not have witnessed the obvious fall in the standard of living in Soviet Russia and the depredations of the Fascist powers upon the weaker nations of

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the world. Fascism is based on the conception of race superiority and racial hatred; Communism on indiscriminate interference in the economic activity of the citizens, tending to the development of red-tape and the oppressive bureaucracy of the commissars. Both are totalitarian in the extreme and do not concede to the citizens the right of independent thinking and judgment on vital issues, which is the monopoly of the coterie of the Duce, Fuehrer and commissars. Both believe in violence as an instrument of policy, and pogroms and *coups d'etat* are the order of the day. Even in the Soviet, where a classless society is said to exist, conflicts are bound to arise between agricultural labourers and the town proletariat, between superintendents and managers on the one hand and workers on the other. The inequality of wealth must become visible, simply because of the absence of any wide moral basis for society and owing to the prominence of discontent and jealousy.

Under Islamic society, on the other hand, as it existed in the days of the Prophet and the four Caliphs, and as envisaged in the Qur-án, things stand differently. Under Islam there could not exist any privileged classes; even high state officials and bureaucrats were accorded the treatment of ordinary citizens. But, as opposed to Fascism and Communism, difference of opinion was encouraged. Private property was guaranteed security and private enterprise encouraged, though every effective measure was taken to prevent exploitation of any kind, as already mentioned above. Even the monstrous accumulation of capital at the expense of the mass of the people has been effectively avoided

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through the Islamic system of inheritance. In this connection I cannot help quoting from a speech delivered by that adroit statesman Mr. M. A. Jinnah in the Central Indian Assembly. He said :

“ I find and I have no hesitation in declaring that the Islamic code of Law with regard to succession is most equitable, most just, most advanced and most progressive.”

The other economic laws have also been dealt with by the present writer in an article appearing in the *Islamic Review* of December, 1938. But it would not be out of place to refer to the great institution of *Zakât* (or compulsory poor-rate), which formed the golden mean between blood-sucking capitalism and red communism. Every citizen who had an annual saving of at least Rs. 40 or £3 had to pay at the rate of rupee one or 1s. 6d. to the *Baitul-Mal* ; and the amount which was collected, apart from the state taxes, was to be spent exclusively for the removal of the hunger and poverty of the masses. This made it possible for individuals to preserve their initiative and originality and also to make ends meet in times of distress. It also helped industrial development and enterprise. But the most remarkable feature of *Zakât* lies in its mitigation of the inequality of wealth and the manner in which even a man of comparatively meagre income was made to feel his duty towards his less fortunate brethren. This principle of making charity a social obligation was realised in England as late as 1601 and even then not in its entirety. In fact, the institution of *Zakât* (poor tax) made it impossible for a single citizen to go hungry : and all this without abolishing private property or killing individual initiative and enterprise. Thus it is that the Islamic laws have provided food for the stomach without involving the people in a fratricidal warfare based on lust and

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aggrandisement upon the earnings of others. In other words, Islam provided for the establishment of the communal spirit without destroying the possibilities of those high and noble achievements which a sense of individualism gives us, private initiative being, in the opinion of J. S. Mill, the root of all change and progress. For while Islam provides for the utmost freedom of contact, it prevents the evils of unfair competition and the exploitation of labour.

In contrast with the well-fed Islamic Commonwealth, we have the following picture of Russia given by Mr. Littlepage in his *In Search of Soviet Gold* :

“In 1929 hundreds of thousands of ambitious and energetic farmers were dispossessed of their property. Members of the dispossessed groups were permitted to buy enough food to keep themselves alive, if they had the money ; otherwise it was their own look-out.”

Evidently there is a wide gulf between the two creeds—Islam and Communism.

The details entered into in this brief dissertation are far from exhaustive. But it is hoped that, if Islam is studied in the proper light, it will be of immense help to the chaotic modern world, and especially to the statesmen and politicians of the West, in its present hour of trial !

Surely, it can serve no good to rely on the bliss of ignorance and indifference !!



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### THE HOLY QUR-AN AND ITS COMMENTARY

BY THE LATE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

[Continued from Vol. XXIII, page 261.]

*Tazkiyya*, or purification, is of three kinds, and the idea of all these three is contained in the meaning of the word. First, it means the growth of a thing; secondly, it means its being cleansed from all impurities; thirdly, it means the manifestation of that essential quality in a thing which forms its *raison d'être*. It is this last mentioned purification which is called *Faláh* in Arabic. Indeed, the very purpose of revelation is *Faláh*, as is mentioned in the fifth verse of the chapter entitled "The Cow." *Faláh* is attainable to such as have experienced *Tazkiyya* or purification, as has been stated in the chapter called "Al-Shams"—"He indeed has attained *Faláh*, who has purified himself." Take any fruit-bearing tree; it will furnish you with a very good example of *Tazkiyya*. When its seed is sown in the ground, it experiences the first stage of *Tazkiyya*; it starts growing from day to day. The appearance of the sprout, and of branches therefrom, the formation of wood in them, the growing of the leaves, giving further birth to flowers and fruits—all these are included in the first stage of *Tazkiyya*. Apart from this, the tree rejects, in its every stage of growth, all that is no longer needed. For example, the seed sown in the ground, assimilates many earthly ingredients necessary for its existence, but these ingredients invariably consist of elements superfluous at the sprouting stage of its growth, when they have to be rejected. Similarly in the wood stage some more unneeded elements are further rejected in the interest of the healthy growth of the tree. In the same way in the leaf stage, when much that goes to make up the constitution of the wood has again to be left behind.

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And through all these processes of transformation the real essence of the thing manifests itself in a systematic course of gradual development. After this, the leaves draw aside and the real essence manifests itself in the shape of a flower. But there are some crude elements even in flowers, which are discarded in the fruit stage. This is the second meaning of the word *Tazkiyya*. In ordinary language it may be called "freedom from dross." It is, as we know, the crude and refuse materials that are called "dross." To conclude, when the essence of a thing manifests itself in its last stage of evolution, it fulfils the third meaning of *Tazkiyya*. In the same way, the real and final object of "Prophethood" is the purification of consciousness. According to the prayer of Abraham there are four functions of "Prophethood." First, there should be revelation from God; Secondly, this revelation should finally take the form of a Book. Thirdly, the distinguishing feature of man being reasoning, whatever this Book or revelation should teach must be based on wisdom.

Passing on to the fourth function of "Prophethood," it states that it should be instrumental in bringing about the purification of consciousness. In other words, coming in the form of a voice from outside the human consciousness it should teach us what we should do and what we should not, in order that the real essence may finally emerge out of our consciousness. This is what is known in religious circles as Dispensation or Law. In Arabic it is called "Shari'ah."

The human species is a branch of the animal world. When plant life experiences the more evolved stage of flesh and emotion, it attains to what is called animal life. Further, when these animal emotions feel the urge of more refined possibilities, animal consciousness assumes the form of human consciousness and, in the

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language of the Qur-án, is called *Nafs*. For the sake of facility of discussion, I have used the expression "animal consciousness" with regard to the emotions as they are, and I shall use the expression "human consciousness" with regard to the emotions when they are found to exhibit certain special features and higher possibilities. It may be mentioned at the outset that all the possible emotions are not to be found in animal consciousness, whereas all these emotions, which are possessed by animals severally, can be seen existing together in human consciousness. For example, the sense of cleanliness, which is noticed in a cat, is not present in a pig. In the same way, the humility that characterises a cow, cannot be seen in a wolf. In man, however, both the spirits of humility and aggression are seen existing side by side. One cannot find in a dog the fellow-feeling of a cow; a dog as we know, is hostile to every other dog. In man, however, we find the quality of sympathy as well as antipathy. In the same way, every animal manifests one or other of various emotions; but, in man, all these are found existing together. To speak metaphorically, the consciousness of man is like a zoo, in which there are a dog, a cat, a pig, a wolf, a cow, a tiger, a monkey and all the other animals. The perfection of human consciousness can be a reality only when man can use these various animals, or animal impulses, in their proper places—which faculty is another characteristic of human consciousness. In the human stage, the emotions feel the urge of certain new impulses. First, the expansion of emotions. For instance, our knowledge expands from day to day, whereas purely animal knowledge does not expand. Human emotions assume some such forms as have no parallels in the purely animal. The emotion of anger is found both in the man and in the animal, but in man it expands

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into justice, fair dealing and courage. This phenomenon, however, is not seen in animals. Similarly, our knowledge of yesterday becomes the basis of, or the datum for, our experiences to-day. Both these things, however, are absent in an animal. The monkey often sees travellers passing their nights in forests, and kindling fire for their necessity with fire-sticks. By nature the monkey is a lover of fire. When the travellers stop anywhere in a forest, the monkey comes and sits by their fire. Then again the monkey has a strong tendency for imitation. With all this, however, it lacks the logic necessary for lighting fire itself with fire-sticks. Apart from the extension of knowledge, man has also the capacity of refining his emotion. He knows the occasion for the proper display of a particular emotion and avails himself of it accordingly. An animal does not know the right occasion for the use of anger; but a fully developed man does. He knows, moreover, in what measure it should be used for a certain purpose. It is on the development of this capacity that the real essence of man appears on the surface and he experiences what we call the "purification of consciousness." Under the guidance of prophethood, the animal emotions of man, cleansed of their impurities, finally reach this stage, where they are used in the proper way and measure. This is exactly the function of the revelation or the law as vouchsafed to a prophet. If, however, the revelation of a person does not furnish these requisites, that person cannot be called a *Nabi*.

There can be no doubt about the recipient of such a revelation being a God-realised person. It is inconceivable that one should receive messages from God, while he has not attained His nearness. Below the position of a prophet, there is a lower stage, which, however, is itself above the mere reception of Divine

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Communication. This lower stage is the stage of *Muhaddathiyya*. Every recipient of Divine communication cannot be called a *Muhaddath*. He alone can be called a *Muhaddath* who receives these communications copiously and frequently. One may call such a person "one having the semblance of a prophet." A *Muhaddath*, nevertheless, can be a *Nabi* only when his revelations contain instructions for the refinement of animal emotions. In order that faith in the phenomenon of prophethood does not suffer deterioration, the door of revelation as such has been left open for the followers of the Prophet Muhammad. The law, however, having reached completion, no *Muhaddath*, coming after Muhammad, can attain to the position of prophethood. We believe in the finality of prophethood with the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, because our Holy Prophet says so and because it is so written in the Holy Qur-án. Unfortunately, there are people, not equipped with proper knowledge of the subject, who would make unwarranted interpretations of these sayings of the Prophet and the verses of the Qur-án that bear on the subject. We hold to this idea of the finality of prophethood because we do not find materials for the purification of our consciousness or the refinement of all the animal emotions reposed in us, in the revelation granted to any recipient of revelation appearing after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Applying this standard, we are not prepared to accept even the prophethood of previous prophets, relying merely on the remnants of their teaching, as extant to-day. Our acceptance of these prophets is based on two considerations; firstly- that the Holy Qur-án itself calls them prophets; and, secondly, the Book also persistently refers to the loss or interpolation of the books associated with these holy names—an allegation which has become a verified fact in these

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days. Consequently, we acknowledge that any one, whom the Holy Qur-án calls by the name of "Prophet," must have come with the teachings essential to the function of the prophethood, but that these teachings are now lost to the world. This loss, however, does not affect the prophethood of these prophets and so the Holy Qur-án insists on calling them "Prophets."

Moreover, there are certain instincts in man of which no traces can be found in other animals. And, strictly speaking, the special function of prophethood is the education of these instincts. Here I propose to name two such instincts. One is the instinct of worship and the other that of corporate social life. No other animal excepting man has ever worshipped any power greater than itself. It is only man who has bowed his head in worship before stones, trees, stars, etc., considering some or all of them to be possessing higher power than himself. It is this very instinct, we should not forget, which manifests itself in a refined form in the worship of God, the Invisible Creator. Similarly, in the world of animals, it is man alone who lives a corporate social life. Both these instincts are of such a nature that their proper use alone can assure a safe civilisation and culture for us. If we fail to make proper use of the instinct of worship and social life, we cannot achieve any success in our life. It is to refine these two instincts that God speaks to man. If, therefore, materials for their refinement are missing in the revelations of a person, no real benefit can accrue from them to others. Hence, it is that the term "revelation of prophethood" can apply only to such revelations as have instructions for worship and social life. ●

Although prophethood is co-existent with humanity yet the Prophet Moses is the only person in the whole history of prophethood who is found to purify

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in a perfect manner the idea of God, from all kinds of embodiment and representation, and who taught man to bow before the One Invisible Creator of the Universe. The details of this subject have already been given. Other prophets besides the Prophet Moses had also been giving the same lessons respecting the unity of the Godhead. But, unfortunately, their followers all, in course of time, became polytheists. Even among the Hindus, unitarianism was the original religious principle, but this gradually gave way to incarnation worship. All the elements of nature and their combinations in thousands and millions of different forms became objects of worship. Evidently, it was the manifestation of this very instinct of worship which was finally corrected and refined by the Holy Qur-án. This Book uprooted the tendency of polytheism in such a manner that, since its revelation, its followers never betrayed the weakness of idol-worship. This is not the proper place to discuss how far polytheism has played havoc with human culture. It is a fact, nevertheless, that this curse of polytheism has deprived humanity of every kind of real progress and prosperity. It is evident from this that the proper training of this instinct of worship is of surpassing importance.

Next to the instinct of worship comes the instinct of social existence. It is undeniable that provisions for the refinement of this instinct were not wanting in the times before the Prophet Moses. Civilisations like those of the Egyptians and Phœnicians existed before the revelation of the Torah. The instructions for social existence, however, that can be seen in a systematic form in the pages of the Torah, have no parallel anywhere else. The Ten Commandments of the Prophet Moses and the Law of Retaliation are only different forms of the principles of social existence.

## THE HOLY QUR-AN AND ITS COMMENTARY

To make a mighty ruling nation out of a people that had spent generations in the servitude of the Egyptians, certainly needed a very effective system of instruction in social life. Since the instinct of resistance, without which there could be no defence, had altogether died in this race, they were given the Law of Retaliation. The same people, who had not spirit enough to raise their heads against the most destructive onslaughts, became, under the training of the Mosaic Dispensation, objects of fear to other nations, as is seen from the last chapters of Deuteronomy.

The Israelite Prophets, that followed Moses, so perfected the civilisation with the help of revelation, that a magnificent King like Solomon came to be born in this line. As compared with this, if one looks at the teachings of the Holy Qur-án, this last revelation will be found to have kindled the light of civilisation in a form surpassingly resplendent.

There seems to be no aspect of civilised existence on which the Holy Qur-án has not thrown sufficient light. Leaving aside other parts of the Book, if one examines the short opening chapter, called *Fátíha*, one will find it covering each and every aspect of civilisation—the physical, the moral, the economic, the political and the spiritual. Above all, this last prophetic mission has instituted such a comprehensive series of Divine attributes, that it covers not only the instincts of worship and civilised life, but every other instinct that belongs to man.



**ISLAMIC REVIEW**  
**CORRESPONDENCE**

KETTERING :  
3rd November, 1939.

THE SECRETARY,  
WOKING MUSLIM MISSION,  
WOKING, SURREY.

DEAR SIR,

In the course of my reading I have seen an interesting reference to your work, and as a student of Comparative Religion I should be glad to receive any literature you might care to send.

Yours faithfully,  
FREDK. A. HALL.

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LONDON, W. 10.  
7th November, 1939.

THE MOSQUE, WOKING

DEAR SIR,

I am enclosing herewith my subscription for six months for the *Islamic Review*.

I must say I greatly enjoyed reading this magazine during the last twelve months, and it certainly is a very enlightening work; but I feel it is definitely not enough to contemplate embracing a religion with book knowledge only, and though I have made great effort to find Muslim friends I have only been successful in finding more non-Muslim friends than I know what to do with.

I wonder if you could suggest a way in which I can make friends with Muslims (pen or personal and either sex) about my own age (25). I should like to have the opportunity of getting in touch with someone, preferably Indian or Egyptian, who really would be enthusiastic to answer questions and discuss matters which arise from time to time. I am, and have always been, keen on accepting the Muhammadan religion but it appears rather purposeless to accept the faith and live isolated from one's believers. Moreover, I must exhaust all my arguments and be absolutely sure before I can feel justified in committing myself to take a vow, especially of such a serious nature.

I must apologise to you for taking up your valuable time but if you can help me I really shall be grateful indeed and you may pass my name and address on to anyone if the opportunity arises.

Yours faithfully,  
R. E.

## CORRESPONDENCE

PALMERS GREEN,  
LONDON, N. 13.  
10th November, 1939.

THE SECRETARY,  
THE MOSQUE,  
WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

I would be very interested indeed if you would forward me some literature on the subject of Islam.

For some time past I have been seeking a satisfactory form of spiritual solace, and have the idea that ultimate peace might be through Islam.

Having been born of fairly orthodox Jewish parents, I have become somewhat of a freethinker (although definitely not in any way atheistically inclined) and should welcome your guidance.

Yours,  
S. R. LEWIS.

THE IMAM,  
THE MOSQUE,  
WOKING.

GUILDFORD,  
19th November, 1939.

REVD. SIR,

I, together with two friends, would much like to visit the Mosque for the Service—I believe it is Friday. If we may be allowed to do so, would you tell me the hour of the Service and also if any particular form of dress is required? I know we must remove our shoes.

I have studied Arabic by myself for some time, but, having no opportunity to hear it, cannot speak it at all. It is such a beautiful language; but so very difficult!

Apologising for troubling you,

Truly yours,  
O. M. A.

THE WORLD SERVICE GROUP,  
13, CHESHAM PLACE,  
BELGRAVE SQUARE,  
LONDON, S.W. 1.  
21st November, 1939.

HIS EMINENCE THE IMAM OF MOSQUE,  
WOKING, SURREY.

DEAR SIR,

Please allow me to express my very deep appreciation of the service you have rendered by giving us all this delightful lecture this afternoon. I feel that you have boldly propounded many excellent problems which will be considered by our audience, and, furthermore, I believe that we very much need the contribution which Islam can provide to the solution of our present difficulties.

With grateful thanks,

I am,  
Sir,  
Yours sincerely,  
EDMUND BENTLEY,  
*Honorary Secretary.*

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

SALISBURY, WILTS,  
27th November, 1939.

DEAR SIR,

I am writing to ask you if you could be so kind as to forward to me a list of books suitable to get a knowledge of Islam; what it stands for, and its principles, as I am very interested, especially after attending the festival of Idul-Fitr.

This, needless to say, would be very much appreciated, as I have been giving a great deal of thought to your religion.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank you for the hospitality shown to us on the occasion of our visit to the Mosque.

Yours sincerely,  
T. R. FRANCIS.

---

### WAS IT SLEEP ?

BY EDITH M. CHASE.

Islam, did you sleep  
When time, unfurling banners in the wind,  
Whipping the earth with steady, marching feet,  
Seemed to forget you in its flight ?  
Did sleep weight down the curtain of your mind,  
When gold was hoarded in the city vaults,  
Usury spread wide the seams  
Of Western might ?  
O, to have slept  
When fighting planes first glistened in the Sun,  
And men, with steel in hand, went out to find  
Their warned brothers lying in the dust !  
The moon is shrouded by the night,  
A vision might be lost in broken dreams,  
If sleep and rest could never follow day,  
And who has seen the Morning Star at Noon ?

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