

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . ."
HOLY QUR-AN 33: 40. "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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Mrs. ZUHRA CLARA WILLIAMS.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ
مَنْجِيَّ الْوَسْطَى

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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SHAWWAL 1359 A.H.
NOVEMBER 1940 A.C.

[No. 11

A DECLARATION

I....(Mrs.) CLARA WILLIAMS....of Muswell Hill, London, do hereby and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

Lá iláha ill-Alláh Muhammad-un-Rasul-Alláh.

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

Dated 21st June, 1940

(SD.) CLARA WILLIAMS.

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THE QUR-AN—IN VINDICATION OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER

BY MAULVI AHSANULLAH

Verse 48.—"Wa yu'al-limuhul kitāba wal hikmata
wat-Taurāta wal Injil."

"And God will teach him
The Book and Wisdom, The Law and the
Gospel."

Verse 49.—"Wa Rasūlan ilā Banī-Isra'īla
Annī qad-ji'tukum bi-ayatin mir-Rabbikum
Annī akhluqu lakum minat-tīni ka-hai'atit-
tairi
Fan-fukhu fihī fayakūnutairam
Bi-iznillāh
Wa-ubri'ul akmaha wal-abrasa
Wa uhyil mautā bi-iznillāh
Wa-unab-bi'ukum bimā ta'kulūna wamā
tad-dakhirūna
Fi-buyūtikum ; innā fī zālīka la-āyatan
lakum

In kuntum mu'minīn."

And (appointing)

An Apostle to the children
Of Israel (with this message) :

"I have come unto you,
With a sign from your Lord,
In that I make for you
Out of clay, as it were,
The figure of a bird,
And breathe into it,
And it becomes a bird
By God's leave ;
And I heal those
Born blind and lepers,
And I quicken the dead,

JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER

By God's leave ;
And I declare to you—
What ye eat and what ye store
In your houses. Surely
There is a sign for you
If ye did believe."

Verse 50.—" Wa musaddiqal limā
Baina yadayya minat-Taurāti
Wa-li uhilla lakum ba'dal-lazi
Hur-rima 'alaikum waji'tukum bi āyatim
mir-Rabbikum
Fat-taql-lāha wa-ati'ūn."
" (I have come unto you),
To attest the law
Which was before me,
And to make lawful
To you part of what was
(Before) forbidden to you ;
I have come to you
With a Sign from your Lord.
So fear God,
And obey me."

Verse 51.—" In-nal-lāha Rab-bī wa
Rab-bukum fa'budūhu
Hāzā sirātum-mustaqīm."

" It is God
Who is my Lord
And your Lord ;
Then worship Him.
This is a way
That is straight."

Verse 52.—" Falam-mā ahas-sā 'Īsā min-humu-l kufra
Qāla man ansārī ilal-lāhi
Qāla-l-hawāriyyūna nahnu ansārul-lāhi
Āman-nā billāhi
Wash-hadū bi-annā Muslimūn."

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When Jesus found
Unbelief on their part,
He said : “ Who will be
My helpers (to the work of God) ? ” Said
the disciples :
“ We are the helpers : We believe in God
And do thou bear witness
That we are Muslims.”

Verse 53.—“ Rabbanā āman-nā bimā an-zalta
Wat-ta-ba‘nar Rasūla
Fak-tubnā ma‘ash-shāhidīn.”
“ Our Lord ! We believe in what Thou hast
revealed,
And we follow the apostle,
Then write us down
Among those who bear witness.”

Verse 54.—“ Wa makarū wa maka-ral-lāhu
Wal-lāhu khairul mākirīn.”
And (the unbelievers)
Plotted and planned,
And God too planned,
And the best of planners
Is God.

Verse 55.—“ Iz qālal-lāhu yā ‘Isā innī Mutawaffika
Wa rāfi‘uka ilayya wa mutah-hiruka
Minal-lazīna kafarū
Wa jā‘ilul-lazīnat-taba‘uka fawqal
Lazīna kafaru ilā yawmil qiyāmati
Thumma ilayya marji‘ukum
Fa-ahkumu bainakum
Fi mā kuntum fihi takhtalifūn.”

Behold ! God said :
“ O Jesus ! I will take thy soul
And raise thee to Myself
And clear thee (of the falsehoods)

JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER

Of those who blaspheme;
I will make those
Who follow thee superior
To those who reject faith,
To the day of Resurrection :
Then shall ye all
Return unto Me,
And I will judge
Between you of the matters
Wherein ye dispute."

Verse 56.—"Fa-ammal-lazīna kafarū fa-u'az-zibuhum
'azāban

Shadīdan fid-dunya wal ākhirati.
Wa mā lahum min-nāsirīn."

"As to those who reject faith,
I will punish them
With severe agony
In this world and in the Hereafter,
Nor will they have
Any one to help."

Verse 57.—"Wa am-mal lazīna āmanū wa 'amilus-
swālihāti

Fa-yu-waf-fīhim ujūrahum
Wal-lāhu lā yuhibbuz-zwālimīn."

"As to those who believe
And work righteousness,
God will pay them in full
Their reward ;
But God loveth not .
Those who do wrong."

Verse 58.—"Zālīka natlūhu 'alaika minal āyāti
Waz-zikrīl Hakīm."

"This is what we rehearse
Unto thee of the signs
And the message
Of wisdom."

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Verse 59.—"Inna mathala 'Isā 'indal-lāhi ka mathali
Adama

Khalaqahū min turābin
Thum-ma qāla lahū kun-fayakūn."

"The similitude of Jesus
Before God is as that of Adam :
He created him from dust,
Then said to him : ' Be ! '
And he was."

Verse 60.—"Al haq-qu mir Rab-bika
Falā takūnū minal mumtarīn."

"(This is) the Truth
From thy Lord ;
So be not of those
Who doubt."

Verse 61.—"Faman hāj-jaka fihi
Mimba'di mā jā'aka minal 'ilmi faqul
ta'ālaw

Nad'u ab-nā'ana wa abnā'akum
Wa nisā'anā wa nisā'akum wa anfusana
Wa anfusakum

Thumma nabtahil fanaj'al
La'natal-lāhi 'alal kazibīn."

"If any one disputes
In this matter with thee,
Now after (full) knowledge
Hath come to thee,
Say : ' Come ! let us
Gather together
Our sons and your sons,
Our women and your women,
Ourselves and yourselves :
Then let us earnestly pray,
And invoke the curse
Of God on those who lie ! ' "

THE HOLY QUR-AN AND ITS COMMENTARY

Verse 62.—"In-na hāza lahuwal qasasul haqqu
Wamā min ilāhin illal-lāhu wa in-nal-lāha
lahuwal 'Azizul Hakīm."

"This is the true account : There is no god
but God ;
And God—He is
The Mighty
The Wise."

Verse 63.—"Fa-in tawal-law
Fa in-nallāha 'alimum bil mufsidīn."

"But if they turn back,
God hath full knowledge
Of those who do mischief."

THE HOLY QUR-AN AND ITS COMMENTARY

BY THE LATE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

(Continued from page 369 Vol. XXVIII)

154.—The acutest of all sufferings is that which comes to us in the way of God. Sometimes this suffering goes to the extent of laying down our very lives. Those who experience that extreme form of suffering, no doubt die from the physical point of view, but they achieve the glory of an eternal life and their memory lives for ever. It is a well-known fact that persons who make some sort of sacrifice in life are ever remembered by people. How can then God forget such as give their very lives for His sake? People of the world may or may not quite appreciate such a phenomenon but the fact is that God keeps such servants of His alive. Such an achievement, however, can come only through patience. It is patience, again, that gives birth to perseverance and there is nothing in the world which cannot be achieved by man through perseverance.

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155.—It is to create this quality in us that different kinds of trouble befall us, such as fear, hunger, loss of wealth, loss of relatives through death and other kinds of losses. Evidently they tend to create patience and perseverance in us. If these qualities hold a very high place in human character and are indispensable to every kind of success in life, it is inconceivable how they can grow in a man, unless he is tested by these blows on the smooth running of his life. When a person, however, comes out successful through such a test and acquires thereby the quality of patience, he renders himself capable of every kind of achievement in life. It is to draw our attention to this fact that the verse concludes with the announcement that good news should be given to the patient.

156.—The sign of the patient is further given as that when any calamity befalls them they feel more than ever that they belong to God and have to return to Him eventually. In fact, unless and until such a realisation comes to man, he can neither have real patience nor experience real happiness. A man should have a state of mind which neither the ordinary happiness of this world nor its grief is able to perturb. He should be completely given to God and should be thankful to Him in whatever condition of life He may be pleased to place him. He should feel that the condition of life which is ordained for him by his Master is the best for him. He should gird up his loins for perpetual service to the Lord and he should cheerfully follow the road indicated by the Master. Let any one think over it; he is sure to realise that the position outlined here is the only correct position of man with relation to God. In fact, certain calamities befall us in such a way that they cannot be avoided or dodged in any way. Those alone can enjoy the tranquillity of mind in face of these mishaps who can

THE HOLY QUR-AN AND ITS COMMENTARY

bring about the above-mentioned change in themselves. Such alone will have real safety.

157.—It is to bring out this idea clearly to view that the next verse states that people who have got this evolved state of mind will receive favours from God and will be directly under His mercy. It is not the kind of consolation with which we often pacify angry children. It is an unquestionable fact, because if the highest object of life is to come out successful through difficult affairs of life, the achievement can fall to the lot of only such people as possess the laudable quality of perseverance. It is only such people whose memory lives in human history, so much so that people by themselves adopt certain ways of their life in honour of their memory. Even God confers similar honours on them by appointing certain affairs of their life as religious institutions for future generations.

158.—Thus the separation of Hagar from her husband and her rushing hither and thither in search of water to quench the dire thirst of the baby was, indeed, a great test of her patience. And all this took place to fulfil some wise purpose of God. The progeny of Ishmael was destined to establish the kingdom of God on earth, and the light of Divine guidance sent for this purpose was to attain perfection in the city of Makka. But, for the materialisation of this Divine purpose, the patience of Hagar in the midst of this acute suffering was an indispensable condition. She was running about everywhere in search of water, and she did not give up the quest in despair. In this incident is given to us the right interpretation of the word *Sabr*. It is, of course, improper to take to bewailing and lamentation in times of trouble. But to sit idly aside and not to do anything to seek relief is not included in the connotation of *Sabr*. *Sabr* lies in our not getting upset when face to face with trouble and, at the same time,

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in our being engaged in the task of finding some way out of it. However much baffled any one may be in the struggle, he should not relax his enthusiastic efforts. Near the sacred House of Makka, where the Lady Hagar had left her thirsty baby, where also lies the famous well of Zamzam, there stand two famous hills called "Safa" and "Marwa." The Lady Hagar was running about the space between these two hills in her search for water. In the course of her anxious wanderings she came across this well of Zamzam—an event which ended her troubles. This incident in the life of the Lady Hagar is very important inasmuch as it was, at bottom, a crisis affecting the very existence of her son Ishmael. Hence this act of Hagar has come to be part of the sacred ritual of our pilgrimage. So much so that our running in the course of our pilgrimage in commemoration of this incident in Hagar's life has been called *Sa'y*. The Lady Hagar made an effort in fulfilment of a Divine purpose, and God had this effort incorporated in the rites of the institution of Hajj.

159.—Among its other aspects, this happening is a sign of God, a very clear indication of His existence in that it points to the miraculous incident of a child being saved from death from thirst in a place absolutely devoid of water, and of that same child leaving behind a mighty heritage in turn. To conceal such a sign as this is to invite the chastisement of God. The advent of the Prophet Muhammad has a direct connection with this remarkable incident in the life of Hagar. Unambiguous references to this advent were to be found in the Israelitish books, and it was the duty of this people not to have concealed these evidences. Unfortunately they did conceal them. Naturally, they had to suffer the punishment of this sin, in that they not only found themselves under the curse of God,

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but were also despised by man wherever they went. In other words, they were accursed both by God and man. This is not merely a religious belief of the Muslims. The facts of the history of the Jewish race testify to the truth of this statement.

In Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, verses 18 and 19, mention is made of the curses that were to overtake the Jews. It is written how their wives and children, their wealth and their cattle would all come to harm ; how they would be involved in all kinds of diseases and epidemics. Further, in verses 40—68 of the same chapter, there is a description of the various ill-treatments which the Jews were to receive at the hands of the people of the earth. One's hair actually stands on end at reading the horrible descriptions of how the Jews came to be regarded as accursed in the eyes of both God and His creatures. And yet they obstinately persisted in their wrong course of actions.

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BY MRS. NADIRE FLORENCE IVES-OSMAN (NEW YORK)

(Continued from p. 369 Vol. XXVIII)

Warning had been clearly given : “ And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many . . . and shall shew great signs and wonders.” (Math. 24:11, 24.) By changing the very course of religion, Paul ventured ignorantly into a field where only prophets had walked. But as Christ was declared to be the last prophet, and soon to return, he must deny himself such an honour and, at the most, make himself equal with the eleven chosen disciples. “ Am I not an apostle ? Am I not free ? Have I not seen Jesus Christ, our Lord ? ” he demands, almost petulantly, in a letter to his poor followers. Who could tell ? He cut off all hope of enlightenment for them by his directions : “ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions . . . contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned ; and avoid them.” (Romans 16 : 17.)

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Both Peter and Paul claimed that they had been directed to invite the Gentiles. Peter received permission from the Council to do this. Paul speaks of himself, however, as "the Apostle of the Gentiles." (Romans 11 : 13.) He goes even further when he declares that the Gospel of the Circumcision was given to Peter while the Gospel of the Uncircumcision was delivered to himself. (Gal. 2 : 7, 8.) The climax of his audacity is reached when he adds :

"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing" (1 Cor. 7 : 19) and again : "therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision ?" (Romans 2: 26.)

It may easily be seen from this that Paul had very little real understanding of what the rite of circumcision actually meant. He jumbled all Hebrew observances together into that vaguely defined but much despised object, "the law." To him the Land of Canaan meant next to nothing, not even a strategic position. He was willing to amputate all Jewishness, with which he held no sympathy, in order to make his doctrine acceptable to the Greeks. As for their besetting sin, idolatry, he passed that over easily in speaking of that which "in the times of this ignorance God winked at." (Acts 18 : 30.) "They be no gods which are made with hands," he said to them. (Acts 19 : 26.) Nevertheless he did not push them too far ; he would still give them a personality, as they could visualise it, expressed in terms of the human form, to be worshipped.

Paul had his own theories : "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not 'and to seeds' as of many ; but as of one, 'and to thy seed,' which is Christ." (Gal. 3 : 16.) By so referring to Genesis 13 : 15, 16, Paul went athwart, with impunity, the entire tradition of the race of Israel : it may be

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noted that he is obliged to select from those very passages distinctly referring to the Covenant of Abraham, of which the rite of circumcision was to be a sign. Before Agrippa, he makes the presumptuous speech ; " And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers : unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews."

The new adoration of Jesus escaped Judaical persecutions by losing itself among the Gentiles. When the Jews would not listen any further, Paul cried, " From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." (Acts 18 : 6.) Even the fame of Peter does not come down to us linked with the movement among his own people. That small body of Jewish Christians who would still adhere to the Covenant of Abraham were soon out-distanced. The Gentiles wished to break completely with the Hebrew religion. They had no sympathy with its ritual. That small body of Jews who stoutly maintained that Jesus was a Prophet and a man, speaking in the allegorical manner peculiar to his people, were easily dismissed by the superior Greeks. We are told in Acts 18 : 13—17 that the Greeks took the Chief Ruler of the Synagogue and beat him before the judgment-seat, when his case was dismissed before the civil authorities, because he had dared to complain : " This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to law." From A.D. 70 to 150, almost all Christians were Greek-speaking subjects of the Roman Empire.

The Græco-Roman masses were fervently polytheistic. A chasm yawned, as it were, between them and the scholars of their race. They had triumphed in their case against Socrates for which the philosopher had been condemned to death because he had ceased

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to believe in their gods. Purely intellectual movements always progress slowly. The masses had not yet emerged from that age when gods and goddesses were declared to have walked the earth, participating in public processions. Even when bands of determined Christians threw down their temples, there were still to be expected recrudescences of "paganism," unless a new manifestation of Christian saint-worship took its place, by way of metamorphosis. The old religions were never dragged up by their roots: to change the metaphor, new clothing and morals were given to familiar friends, new purposes to old ceremonies. Christ, Mary and the Saints reigned in the heavens where formerly male and female divinities feasted and quarrelled together. Julian the apostate was able to stage a classical revival as late as the 4th century. St. Augustine, in the 5th, could thunder his denunciations against those who needed busts of Homer, Pythagoras, Christ and Paul in their chapels in order to woo a worshipful state of contemplation. The Gentiles were not embarrassed by any old traditions when they took a man, come down from Heaven and then returned to it, to be their God. Rather, they had been thoroughly prepared to do this by their allegories, poems and plays.

The new movement was embraced at first by slaves and by the lowly. Paul of Tarsus woefully but still proudly admitted: "For ye see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." (1 Cor. 1:26, 27.) The purity of life which distinguished some of the early converts, and the sense of security to which they seemed to have attained, even amid troublous times, gradually interested some of the more sensitive of the higher orders, in

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proportion as these same qualities irritated the worldly. Nevertheless, we find such references to vice itself, in the New Testament, associated with the early church, so that we are made to ponder on the workings of mass psychology which had originally propelled the converts. Even St. Paul was obliged to give further specifications for that delicate distinction of Jesus: Be not children in understanding . . . but in understanding be men." (1 Cor. 14:20.)

The first great test of the new religion came at Rome. Persecution flared up over a political controversy which involved the formal worship paid to the head of the state. Not every emperor chose so to try the Christians, or continuously. Rome was very tolerant. It understood polytheism. New gods were always welcomed. Under that most odious of Roman emperors, the cruellest tortures were devised. Yet even here some of their sufferings came about as the result of an irrelevant cause, the Christians being cunningly used as a scapegoat. Persecution, however, never tends to weaken; it cements and hardens. Conditions were propitious for the believers to survive underground. Only by a long series of vague hypotheses can the scene of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul be placed at Rome.

How simple it is, in this credulous world, for marvellous stories to spread. Without doubt any number of martyrs could be garnered, as we write, from among the humble followers of our negro contemporary, "Father Divine," of Harlem, New York City. They are quite convinced that in him they are serving God Himself. If the circumstances so surrounding this group were to be made conducive, even our own time of public instruction and science would be at a loss to account for their actions. Such happened in Iran, among members of a religious sect known to

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us as Bahai'ism, an offshoot of the Shi'ite sect of Islam. It does not appear to be so very difficult to convince others that a man is God. In the case of Jesus, there was this difference: those who believed in him as God the most ardently had never seen him. When we reflect upon that initial delusion, we cannot determine whether mankind has been made the victim of a fraud or of a mistake: most probably, the mixture of both. At any rate, at the bottom of that early obscurity rests the secret responsible for the moulding of world events.

The new religion of Christ, existing in many forms, did not appear to have been destined for world prominence until the fourth century, when the Roman Emperor, Constantine, in search of support, attracted to himself the Christian faction by declaring himself a convert. Thus the situation was abruptly changed. As civil advancement could be secured only within the ranks of the Christian party, the waverers hesitated no longer, while the ambitious came. Constantine moved the seat of his empire, for greater safety, to Byzantium, renaming it Constantinople, leaving behind a bishop in Rome. The bishops of the Eastern Empire became nought but creatures of their royal masters. But now we go ahead with our story. The real interest lies in the East, where books are to be written and traditions arranged, where amid shifting scenes a certain version is to gain the ascendancy.

C

The Greeks of the intellectual classes shared the alarm of the Jews when they saw Christianity spreading among their masses. They thoroughly despised the new movement, characterising it as ignorant. Here, as in the case of Rome, it was not because of any fear of a new god that they found objections: it was the

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emphasis laid upon sin which proved the disturbing factor.

Intolerance had been practically unknown under the *laissez-faire* order of the past where there had flourished more of a state religion than of a personal. Although there was an appreciation of character, ideally supposed to supplement the physical beauty, these spiritual and moral principles were never brought to perfection, as was the outer form. Vice had come upon them, by degrees, in proportion as their art expanded. It is true that certain religious movements inspired from the Orient had made their appearances in Greece and in Rome, but these had never obtruded actively upon the lives of the disinterested. Only those were approached who showed interest in this purity, to be achieved by physical means, or who desired to be taken, as an initiate, to receive the secret doctrine.

The Greeks had always been susceptible to Oriental influence. Through the centuries, certain Greek thinkers had voyaged to the East, to announce later, at home, philosophical systems which were to gain renown under their own names but which were no other than beliefs current in Asia or in Africa. An example of this is to be found in Pythagoras's contribution of abstract ideas. Thus there had always been a slender current of Eastern metaphysics existing side by side with the popular religion and with speculative Greek philosophy. But, by that time, the broader stream of philosophy itself had widened considerably and gained in importance due to the scepticism which cut into the old faith. At that stage, Greek philosophy was carried, as it were, and deposited at the very doors of the Orient.

The prayer of Jesus recorded in Matthew 11 : 25 had sufficed for the simple: " I thank thee, Oh Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid

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these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes." This did not, however, obviate the need for "someone defender of the gospel who, versed in the learned arts, might be able to combat the Jewish doctors and Pagan philosophers with their own arms." (Mosheim Eccles. Hist., Vol. I, p. 63.) In other words, if the educated Greeks were to be converted, Christianity would have to be recast in a Greek form. We have attempted already to show how Paul of Tarsus performed this service for the simple. We may add, however, that he also took the Hebraic teachings of Jesus and made them illustrate the nebulous theories of neo-Pythagoreanism, with its doctrine of intelligence (Acts 17:28): he gave to the Greeks a new application of the triad, which had already served other religions, by associating in a new combination the names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Centuries were required, however, for this to become dogma. The divinity of Christ was not affirmed until the Council of Nice (A.D. 325), held under the auspices of Constantine. "Thus the simple, human, compassionate, democratic Teacher of Southern Syria was brought back to his homeland after a sojourn of some 300 years in the Græco-Roman World, as the 2nd person of a triune deity." (Abraham M. Rihbany.) The Council of Constantinople, 56 years later, affirmed the divinity of the Holy Ghost, at the same time that it insisted upon the Unity of God, declaring that the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity was to be the doctrine of the Church.

(To be continued.)

IMAGE-WORSHIP—BHAKTI RUN RIOT

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

“ And they serve besides God that which does not control for them any sustenance at all from the heavens and the earth, nor have they any power.

“ Therefore do not give likeness to God ; surely God knows and ye do not know.”—The Qur-án, 16 : 73-74.

“ Say : If there were with Him gods as they say, then certainly they would have been able to seek a way to the Lord of Power.”—*Ibid.*, 17 : 42.

It is happy to reflect that the light of reason prevailing, the gross form of idol-worship is scarcely defended by any cultured man to-day. It is true that idol-worship starts with the idea of representation ; but this subtle metaphysical distinction between symbol and reality, particularly in worship, is incapable of being maintained by an average man. Having, therefore, the fullest regard for the explanation offered by intellectual Hindus in regard to what they insist on calling “ image-worship ” it is difficult for us to see what difference it at all makes to the unlearned votary. To such a one the image itself possesses all that is ascribed to God, of whom it is intended to stand as a symbol. If it is argued that such representations are a help to the imagination of the devotee, it is pertinent to ask whether the system has ever helped a considerable number of persons to rise to the height of free, abstract worship. What is actually found is that even the most advanced minds keep joining the unimaginative in paying worship to these lifeless objects of man’s creation to the very last.

Some are found to advance the rather plausible argument that in any case the mind of man is incapable of soaring above a material conception of God. These

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hold that a formless God is inconceivable. But such an argument can come only from a person who has no refined experience of spiritual matters. The most elementary fact about human mind is that it proceeds from material experiences to abstract ideas. All ideas called "concepts" in logic are products of this process, called "induction" in technical language. Although associated with concrete things these ideas by themselves are of an abstract nature, not reducible to material form, in the strictest sense of the term. Of course, the intelligent votary, who worships an image as the symbol of the Eternal God, if he at all sticks to his avowed perspective, simply reverses this process. He has to call forth much of his knowledge acquired through this process of abstraction in aid of the image, through which he tries to worship his God. He has to imagine qualities in the image which are not there. For example, it is to be credited with a mind which it does not possess. It is to be believed as possessing the power of hearing, which is also contrary to fact. It certainly needs a violent exercise of mental faculties to have to cope with the fact that a lifeless thing is to be regarded as having control over the life and destiny of man. If there is any strain on the mind of man in worship, it must be the greatest in this process of regarding the idol as the symbol of Eternity. A great figure in modern Hinduism, who was by no means unorthodox in other ways of life, asked why he was not found to practise the Hindu mode of worship, replied that he had a living goddess to worship. Further asked where it was, he said that it was his mother. A very significant statement indeed! A straight worship offered to man is more understandable than the "image-worship." If, for instance, a person worships his mother, he is worshipping one who has not only a mind but also the quality of love, which is undoubtedly a

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reflection of a corresponding Divine attribute. As a matter of fact, among those whom the Qur-án will call "polytheists," the most sensible are they who worship their king, like the Egyptians of the time of Moses or the Romans during the latter part of their history. The mind in such a worship follows a course which is more or less natural. The king does have, however superficially, some power over the life, death and destiny of his people. He has some control over the provisions of life, moral and material. It is for this reason, that in all nations the king has been regarded as the representative of God on earth. Thus in the presence of living human beings, particularly of a king, it is absolutely devoid of any sense to create figures of wood and earth and metal for purposes of worship, after the pattern mostly of none but man himself. As for the figures of animals, real or imaginary, or symbols representing no animal life at all, we do not think this part of idol-worship will ever find any intellectual supporter at all. Incidentally, the fact that in all idol-worshipping cults, the worship degenerates into the adoration of these and even more reprehensible representations, goes to show that whatever the original idea in "image-worship," it very soon paralyses the spiritual faculties of its adherents.

If it be argued that everything in nature is a sign pointing to God and as such may serve as a reminder in worship, my reply will be "Why fix any object at all; anything that confronts your sight is good enough as a reminder in that way. Is not man's own self, with its wonderful constitution and enormous possibilities, the best reminder in this respect? If any external thing is needed at all, the very ground under his feet, the very sky over his head are quite potent reminders to the worshipper in any place. But with all the arguments to the contrary, the fact is that all

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polytheistic modes of worship are a concession to that weakness in human mind which wants to adore everything that is impressive and thrills his senses rightly or wrongly. The faculty of worship in man, on the other hand, is a far deeper hankering. Physical phenomena may arouse this hankering superficially on certain occasions but it needs a spiritual concentration, undisturbed by any physical sensations, to give it a real satisfaction. It is for this reason that in all polytheistic cults, the number of adorable things may be legion—so much so that every interesting pebble lying on wayside has been found to serve as the symbol in worship—and yet the spiritual hankering of the nation remains unsatisfied and is in constant turmoil in search of the unknown God. An example of this is met with in the Athenian altar for the “Unknown God,” which provided St. Paul with the theme for his first sermon in that city. I wish St. Paul could realise that that spiritual vacuum in the Greek mind could neither be filled by such an impressive human personality as that of Jesus. It could be filled only by a full-hearted spiritual thought of God Himself, existing in His Unity and shorn of all representations.

But apart from the fact that representations, inasmuch as they attempt to stir our spiritual faculties through the mediumship of our physical senses, do their job in an indirect way and very imperfectly on account of the very nature of things, with all the efficiency of the art of representation, man can give only one expression to an image. Each one of the multitude of gods and goddesses in any one pantheon can represent, therefore, only one aspect of Divine glory—either His power, or His knowledge, or His grace or any other. This analytical view of the Divine Being is the very opposite of what the human soul needs. The self of man realises itself by the exercise of its

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power of synthesis. Gathering, collection and centralisation are the methods by which man fulfils himself. The idea of Unity is the natural culmination of this eternal hankering of the human soul. The conception of one power covering the whole of cosmos is only a logical sequel to man's ever-expanding urge for synthesis. It is the acme of the process of summing up, of which human life consists. The invocation of ONE Supreme God, explaining the whole of life and existence, brings, therefore, that satisfaction which the soul needs in its synthetic grasp of its being. Any proper name standing for that synthetic ideal in its entirety will serve the purpose—whether it be Jehovah, God, Allah, Khuda or Parameshwar. But any attempt at decentralisation will be a violence to this natural flow of the human soul. Far from being helpful in the attainment of its objective, such a conception of the Deity will shatter the central object of worship to pieces.

The force of the argument of Unity is implied by the replies of the polytheistic worshippers themselves, when they say that these image-gods or goddesses are subordinate ones, acting as intermediaries between the Supreme Invisible God and mankind. It is significant that in the Hindu pantheon there is no representation of Parameshwar or the Supreme God.

If we analyse the pantheons of the polytheistic nations of the world, the representations for purposes of worship can be divided into four classes :

- (1) Representations of forces of external nature, *i.e.*, manifestations of Divine attributes in nature such as Lakshmi in Hinduism and the Sun and the Moon, the Sea, etc., in all polytheistic cults.
- (2) Representations of past heroes.
- (3) Representations of passions and emotions of the human mind such as Cupid, the Roman god.
- (4) Anything curious or imposing, real or imaginary.

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An examination of the order in which I have placed them, will reveal a gradual fall in the scale. Left to its own resources human mind first stumbles on the objects of nature in its search for the controller of his destiny.

Slipping further down in the scale, he bows before his fellow human beings with impressive personalities and great powers over men.

Getting more confused, he begins to adore the passions of man which are generally found to ride over man's mind.

Lastly, in a reckless condition of his spiritual struggles he seems to surrender himself to each and every thing that creates sensation in his mind.

It should be remarked here that the correct method of approaching God should be and has always been, revealed to man. The revelational origin associated with all the great religions of the world points towards this fact, as also the other fact that original worship in any of these had invariably been the same, *i.e.*, monotheistic. For example, it is admitted on all hands that original mode of worship in Hinduism, as observed in early Vedic days, was of the monotheistic type. The Christian prayers, in the time of Jesus Christ, were strictly monotheistic. We do not find there the worshippers associating Jesus with God in their prayers. Nor does one find any Buddhist of Buddha's time facing any statue of Buddha or even Buddha himself in his prayers. So far as Hinduism is concerned, the first beginnings of polytheism are to be seen in the hymns addressed to certain objects of nature in certain Vedic *mantras* of a later date. The contentions of Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj to the effect that original Hinduism was monotheistic in nature are accordingly based on good grounds although it is not correct to hold that the Vedas as they exist to-day breathe an

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unadulterated spirit of monotheism. Be that as it may, the fact that all attempts at reformation in Hinduism invariably aim at a monotheistic conception of God shows that Hinduism must have been monotheistic at its foundation.

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BY MAULANA ABDUL MAJID, M.A.

In a short article entitled "The Religion of Humanity," which appeared in the *Sunday Times* for 7th January, 1940, there are some interesting, though provocative reflections on Islam and Buddhism. As they come from such an important Church dignitary as Bishop Hensley Henson, they are worth a dispassionate and objective examination. The reverend gentleman expresses himself thus :

" . . . If Judaism be omitted as incorrigibly nationalistic, there are but two religions which can be reasonably brought into comparison with Christianity—Buddhism and Mahomedanism. Both these great religions have displayed wonderful expansive power. In that respect it would be impossible to demonstrate the uniqueness of Christianity. When, however, the enquiry is extended to the ethnical quality of the following which the three religions have secured, and the likelihood of their success in maintaining their ground under the novel conditions which modern civilisation has created, it may be fairly maintained that Christianity has an apparent superiority, and that this does provide a foundation for the belief, that it may finally make good its claim to be the Religion of Humanity. Finally, if the enquiry be carried from the credenda of

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the religions to their practical effects in politics, in society, and in personal morality, the conclusion can hardly be avoided that Christianity carries the promise of universal acceptance. The expansion of Buddhism has been almost wholly limited to Asia, that of Mahomedanism to Asia and Africa. Both religions appeal to the coloured races. Now Christianity includes within its profession "all sorts and conditions of men," and though the course of its history has made it predominantly a white man's religion, yet its expansion outside Europe has been so considerable as to demonstrate its ability to win also the acceptance of the coloured races."

From the above four conclusions follow :

1. That ethnically the followers of Christianity are superior to those of Buddhism and Islam.
2. That Christianity has influenced politics, society and the personal morality of its followers.
3. That Islam and Buddhism are suited best to the coloured races, which, according to the reverend gentleman, explains the eastward rather than the westward spread of Islam.
4. That Christianity is a universal religion.

Not only are these conclusions obviously debatable, they are contested by other religions also. Let us, therefore, examine them a little more closely.

As to the claim that the white races are ethnically superior to the coloured races, it is evident that Bishop Hensley Henson, if not echoing the threadbare views of those who believe in the now antiquated Nordic or Aryan race theory, is at least assuming that the present materialistic progress and achievements of the Western

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world are the direct outcome of their supposed ethnical superiority. He assumes a thing the validity of which is yet to be established. If the Western races are essentially and intrinsically superior to the Eastern peoples, then one wonders at the entire obscurity of western superiority in days when other civilisations prior to the Renaissance were in their full glory. The truth is that no nation is ethnically superior to any other. Nations, like individuals, rise and fall. Every people has its heyday, its day of the unfolding of its latent capacities. Each plays its destined part and then suffers eclipse. We can talk of the superiority of certain outlooks on life, certain principles, but not of the essential superiority of peoples. In passing, a reference may be made to the deep influence which the Islamic peoples exerted on the culture of Europe. Islam has affected the speculative and applied sciences of Europe; Islam has influenced all the European languages; Islam has contributed to the development of the technical industries of Europe; it has left its unmistakable mark upon the arts and letters of Europe, and upon political, social and pedagogical institutions of Europe. All scholars recognise the considerable extent of the influence that Averrhoes had on St. Thomas Aquinas, that Abumassarra had on the Franciscan school, that Ibn Arabi had on Lola, and that the Muslim eschatology had on the writings of Dante. Books as *Der Einfluss der Araber auf die Kultur Europas* by Gustav Diercks, Leipzig, 1882, *Die Renaissance des Islams* by A. Mez, Heidelberg, 1922¹ and Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, London, 1921, will enable the reader to form an idea of the influence of Islam on the culture and thought of Europe. Therefore, we would not talk of Indians, Chinese,

¹Translated into English by S. Khuda Bakhsh and D. S. Margoliouth, Patna, 1937.

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Turks and Arabs who have indubitably left their impress on the material and mental progress of mankind. We would proceed to examine if there is any truth in the claim to ethnical superiority. Not to mention the races that have accepted Islam (and they are by reason of the various causes confined to the regions lying between 17 and 41 of the northern latitude), the claim of the white races to ethnical superiority cannot even be established when one compares the white races with the blacks, who, as some believe, cannot boast of a glorious past to their credit.

In the United States of America experiments have been made which prove conclusively that the Negro is not inferior to his white compatriot in anything whatsoever. It has been established that it is more a question of environment and opportunity than of capacity. In 1860 there were 4,441,830 Negroes in the States, of which 4,215,614 were in the Southern States, where the law had prohibited, under pain of severe punishment, the teaching of Negroes to read and write. Ever since their emancipation, the percentage of illiterates has fallen rapidly. In 1880 there were still 80 per cent., in 1890 57·8 per cent., in 1910 30·4 per cent., in 1920 22·9 per cent., in 1930 14·7 per cent., which is three times less than in Spain. The university education at Tusgere, Howard, Fisk, Atlanta, Xavier (New Orleans), Lincoln, Morgan, Hampton, more than 22 official higher schools, 17 higher schools run by the Blacks themselves, represented in 1926 a revenue of three hundred million Belgian francs and a landed property of more than one milliard. All this is directed and controlled by the Blacks themselves. Out of 1,046, there are 903 Black teachers and the number of students is 17,506. It must be added that till 1916 the great majority of the Blacks lived in the Southern States, and, till 1890, 19·4 per

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cent. of the Blacks lived in villages and that it was prohibited by law for the Blacks to frequent the schools of the Whites. Also that on the fields of Alabama or Carolina, where the villages are dispersed and where the Blacks live on the plantations of cotton, the schools were rare. Besides, the one dozen great States of the South allocated in 1916, according to the report of Thomas Jesse Jones, 6,429,000 dollars to the higher education of the Whites and 350,000 dollars to that of the Blacks. The same report stated that there still were required more than six thousand rooms for the accommodation of the schoolgoing population of the Blacks. In the Mosley School of Chicago, experiments by comparative tests on the mental capacity of the Blacks and the Whites have been made. One has made use of the test method of Gray for oral and loud reading. The Blacks of the North who lived in towns and in the same milieu as the Whites, succeeded as well as the Whites. The Blacks of the South having had their parents who were still illiterates and not having known anything better than the life of the cabin on the plantations were evidently at a disadvantage. It is, therefore, rather a question of the milieu than of racial aptitudes (*cf. Revue de l'aucam*, Louvain, for February, 1940).

Why Islam did not spread westward is a very interesting and intriguing speculation despite the fact that it was knocking at the gates of Vienna in 1683 A.D. and reigned supreme in Spain for about seven centuries. And also despite the fact that the relations between the Muslims and the Christians of the early centuries were harmonious and sweet. Professor C. H. Becker, in his monograph, *Christianity and Islam*, London, 1909, tells us that, in the teachings of Islam, in the actions of Muhammad and his immediate contemporaries and his immediate followers, there was no anti-

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Christian fanaticism. Muslims never refused to worship in the same building as the Christians. Religious animosity, if any, was a very subordinate phenomenon. "It was a gradual development, and seems to me to have had a spasmodic beginning in the first century under the influence of Christianity. It may seem paradoxical to assert that it was Christian influence which first stirred Islam to religious animosity and armed it with the sword against Christianity, but the hypothesis becomes highly probable when we have realised the indifference of the Muhammadan conquerors. . . . Their attitude towards other beliefs was never so intolerant as that of Christendom at that period. Christianity may well have been the teaching influence in this department of life as in others. Moreover, at all times and especially in the first century the position of Christians has been very tolerable, even though the Muslims regarded them as an inferior class. Christians were able to rise to the highest offices of state, even to the post of vizier, without any compulsion to renounce their faith. Even during the period of the Crusades, when religious opposition was greatly intensified, again through Christian policy, Christian officials cannot have been uncommon: otherwise Muslim theorists would never have uttered their constant invectives against the employment of Christians in administrative duties. Naturally zealots appeared at all times on the Muhammadan as well as on the Christian side and occasionally acts of oppression took place. These were, however, exceptional. So late as the eleventh century, church funeral processions were able to pass through the streets of Bagdad with all the emblems of Christianity and disturbances were recorded by the chroniclers as exceptional. In Egypt, Christian festivals were also regarded to some extent as holidays by the Muhammadan

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population. We have but to imagine these conditions in a Christian kingdom of the early Middle Ages and the probability of my theory will become obvious." (Pp. 29—32.)

Naturally the assumption that Islam is best suited to the needs of the coloured races and that Christianity is better than Islam will not carry us very far. It will not convince many. A Muslim will maintain stoutly in his place exactly in the same manner as will a Christian. Thus if we wish to understand the reasons that led to the spread of the religion of Islam eastward we shall have to approach the question from the historical and later psychological causes. Islam appeared about 1,400 years ago and before even the world could realise the extent of its dynamic capacity, it had spread, within fifty years of the death of its promulgator, from the bank of the Indus, on the one hand, to the coast of the Atlantic Ocean on the other. All this happened without the aid of a secular emperor and with the "indifferentism of its conquerors." Its sister religions owed their spread to the material help given to them by one emperor or another. Buddhism owes its spread to the might of Asoka, Christianity, after having remained hidden in the nooks and corners of the world for three hundred years, to the manipulations of Constantine, Zoroastrianism to the fabulously wealthy and powerful Cyrus. Not so Islam. Yet, strangely enough, it could not fasten its roots in Europe. The fall of Jerusalem into the hands of the Muslims in 637 A.D., coupled with the rising tide of the power and success that attended the arms of Muslims that led to the critical period of the Crusades, has resulted in a wide gulf between Islam and the people of the West. The two worlds have stood constantly in opposition to each other ever since then. The West, more accurately the clergy, of those days gave currency

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to such grotesque and absurd propaganda against Islam and Muhammad that we, when to-day we read it ourselves, are simply left aghast and amazed. An etymological study of the word "Muhammad" in the *Great Oxford Dictionary* is an instructive commentary on the methods of misrepresentation of those days. A translation of the Qur-án was forbidden under papal bulls. The earliest translation of the Qur-án in the English language is not more than 200 years old. The misunderstanding has ever since been so deep that the West has spurned Islam "as a religion bitterly rejecting its monotheism and its iconoclasm, and practising, even with its own Christian monasticism, far less human brotherhood and abstemiousness than were the characteristics of Islam."

Economic causes fed the religious fanaticism fanned against Islam. In the name of religion the West launched against Islam a series of wars whose motives mainly were relief for European over-population and success in the commercial enterprise of the Genoese and Venetians. To add to this, came the sudden and irremediable decadence of Muslim civilisation. And when the time came to realise the debt which Europe owed to Islam, Europe found before its eyes the world of Islam prostrate, evincing no signs of life and vitality. This ended in the subjugation of practically the whole of the world of Islam by the West. It is these circumstances that led to the spread of Islam eastward and to the drawing of the muddled conclusion that the Bishop has done. But a scholar should think and know better. The question of colour has nothing to do with the eastward spread of Islam.

In their higher forms, it is interesting to note that there is nothing to choose between Islam and Christianity; if there is any claim that Islam makes in the pages of the Qur-án, it is that it supplements in places

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and rehabilitates in others the teachings of Jesus Christ. Europe knows more of Islam now than it did, say fifty years ago, yet it does not know enough.

Even so in Europe to-day there are eight million Muslims, including those in Russia and Turkey, out of which 1,750,000 are Jugoslavs in a total population of 15,000,000. Almost four-fifths of the total number of Muslims are Jugoslavs, while the remainder are of Turkish and Albanian origin.

How far the teaching of Jesus has affected the life of Europe is a point and claim which need not be belaboured. One has to cast a cursory look around and to form one's own judgment on the matter. Capitalism, armaments, disregard, even scorn, of a different race or colour, the accumulation of riches are some of the characteristics of Europe which are antithetical to the fundamentals of Christianity.

As to the claim on the universality of Christianity, let us see if there is any germ for this claim in the words of Jesus. It is on the eleven concluding verses of Chapter 16 of St. Mark that the claim to the universality of the teachings of Christianity is based. And it is these eleven concluding verses that have been proved to be spurious; they are forgeries and admitted additions to the ancient MSS. It is these eleven verses of St. Mark that supply the justification of the Christian Foreign Missions. Also the verse of St. Matthew (28 : 19) is no authority on the point either. In it the word "nations" is a mistranslation and a wrong substitute for the "tribes" by which is meant the rest of the Jewish tribes scattered all over the world. (Cf. *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, p. 1880, Section G, Wescott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Appendix.)

"Christianity did not make its appearance as a truly universal religion, not even as a new religion nor

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as a mystery of salvation : it, in the first place, gave itself out as the accomplishment of the Jewish hope which defined itself in the notion of the ' Kingdom of God. '

" It is this accomplishment that Jesus the Nazarene, after John the Baptist, announced, having himself received the baptism from John.

" It is equally certain that Jesus was not proclaimed as Christ, nor as ' the Prince of the Kingdom to come ' until after his death.

" But the new faith did not move as the mystery of salvation nor did it detach itself radically from Judaism until after the capture of Jerusalem by Titus and the destruction of the Temple when the Christian propaganda had directly touched the pagans." (Alfred Loisy, *La Crise Morale du temps présent et l'éducation humaine*, Paris 1937, pp. II et seq).

RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL PROMISES IN ISLAM

BY SIRDAR IKBAL ALI SHAH

An inviolable respect for all treaty engagements is time and again enjoined upon the Faithful, not only in relation to contracts between themselves, but more explicitly to all international covenants ; for the Qur-
anic command has it : " O you who believe ! Fulfil the obligations." (Chapter V : 1.)

The word used is " 'Uqūd " which not only means covenants with God, but also includes all agreements, treaties, international promises mutually contracted by men, and the Faithful are to consider the scrupulous adherence to such as an important factor in international social relationship.

The command is emphasised further by the saying :
" And fulfil the covenant of Allah when you have made

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a covenant, and do not break the oaths after making them fast . . . ” (Chapter XVI : 91.)

A breaker of engagements is likened in a Quranic parable to a woman who, after spinning her yarn and giving it the strength of unity, tears it into shreds and thus destroys “the strands of mutual accord.”

It is clear from the above that both through direct commands and by inferential meaning, the keeping of a promise when once made either between two men or two states is to be strictly observed. Whosoever does not fulfil the terms of his solemn pledge is unfaithful not only to the Muslims, but to God.

Incidents can be cited to prove how strictly these injunctions were observed in Islamic history. One example will suffice : It is a story of the most scrupulous integrity and respect for treaties, and as it appertains to the Prophet himself, we can take it as the true symbol of all Islamic practice.

With fourteen hundred pilgrims, the Prophet was journeying towards Makka. None was armed except with swords, for the taking of swords was as perfunctory during those days as the carrying of walking sticks is to-day.

The Quraish, the enemies of Islam at Makka, began to prepare for war. But the Prophet sent word to them that he was coming with his followers in peace to Makka, only to perform the pilgrimage, and that he had no warlike intentions. But the Quraish forbade the Muslims to enter Makka. After a few skirmishes a ten-year treaty was signed.

Its six clauses are significant. It was agreed that that year no pilgrims were to visit Makka, that next year they could do so, provided that they did not stay more than three days ; that their swords were to remain sheathed during the pilgrimage ; that no pilgrim would be permitted to remain in Makka after the pilgrimage;

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that should any Muslim resident of Makka leave the city, he should be made to return by the Muslims; and, finally, that the tribes of the desert should be free to choose with whom they should ally themselves in battle.

When the treaty was being written out, and while Suhail, the Quraish delegate, waited, some men in the camp ran to remove the chains from the legs of a refugee. The unfortunate man was staggering with privation and fatigue of the journey. The Muslims washed his wounds where the chains had eaten into the flesh.

Then, before he could relate his story, he fainted. Every effort was made to resuscitate him, and when he revived he was taken before the Prophet.

One horrified look he gave Suhail, the Quraish, who sat beside the Prophet of God. The treaty had just been signed.

It was the turn of Suhail to speak: "To prove that you are faithful to your contract," he addressed the Prophet, "a fitting opportunity presents itself. This refugee is my own son, Abu Jandal; because he has embraced Islam a befitting punishment has been given him. That he has been put in chains is proof of what I say."

He looked at his son and then, with that cruel voice by which the men of the desert knew Suhail from afar, he insisted that the refugee should be sent back to Makka wearing the very same chains with which he had escaped from that city at the approach of his co-religionists. Suhail pointed to the terms of the treaty.

Fourteen hundred warriors stood around the Prophet—warriors who had won battles. Even now they could throw themselves upon the unbeliever, the father who would tolerate, even demand, the torturing of his own son!

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These men of the desert were not a whit inferior in military skill to Suhail, the vile Quraishite, and he was alone in their midst. What if his blood flowed ! He richly deserved it ; and, above all, a Muslim's life was in danger,—a Muslim who was so utterly helpless that even his father desired his persecution.

What seas of passion must not have been heaving in their hearts ! What fire must not have been burning in their eyes ! And what would the Prophet now command ? Why did he wait ?

“ But the treaty was not signed,” said the Prophet to the delegate of the Quraish, “ when your son entered the camp.” Suhail only looked at the man in chains like a viper that devours its own serpent-born : “ Aye, aye,” he replied, “ but the terms of the treaty were agreed upon.”

One must have a heart of stone not to be moved by this human drama, but the faithful engagement was placed above all other considerations—a word of a Muslim was something sacred, something which admitted no ambiguity, a contract which could not be broken.

In silent resignation Abu Jandal was borne away in chains : “. . . and Allah shall open a way for thee,” said the Prophet to that true son of Islam.

That Abu Jandal did receive his freedom, and later joined the Muslims, is beside the point. What is of importance to note is the extraordinary degree of faithfulness which was exhibited by the Prophet towards respecting all international promises once entered into, no matter what circumstances might arise after a contract had been sealed and the solemn pledge had been taken.

Strong as this example is regarding the fulfilling of engagements, some critics of Islam have presumed that the restoration of Abu Jandal to the Quraish was

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owing to the weaker military strength of the Muslims as compared with the Quraish at the time ; and, inadmissible though the argument is, I am yet prepared to give another example of positive respect of international treaty by the Muslims even at a period when the might of the Islamic legions could not be effectively challenged ; that is, during the Caliphate of 'Umar.

On an occasion when the Muslim armies under Abu Obeida had besieged Damascus, and when the Muslim general Khalid had actually forced one of the gateways of the town, and victory was within his grasp, the people, opening other gates unknown to the attacking Muslim general, made a treaty with the high command of Islam.

Order was at once given to Khalid to stop the war and give peace to the people. The actual conquest of Damascus was thus stayed when no one could have prevented the Muslims from making the city their own within a few hours.

Finally, in the Qur-án to refrain from fighting against those with whom one has a treaty is signified as a duty ; and observance of the clauses of treaties " to the end of their terms," is strictly enjoined upon Muslims. Only two of the tribes, namely, Banu Damra and Banu Kinana, had adhered to their engagements and against them the Muslims did not fight ; but permission to do battle against others who had broken covenants with the Muslims was granted, for they had sent their challenge to the Muslims through Ali in the following terms :

" O Ali ! deliver this message to your cousin Muhammad, that we have thrown the agreements behind our backs, and that there is no agreement between him and us except smiting with spears and striking with swords."

From these and many other examples of Islamic history, it can, therefore, be proved how important

CORRESPONDENCE

the Muslims hold any contract that they sign with others. Indeed, so much is this so, that the Qur-án enjoins upon the Muslims the duty of fighting when treaties are broken.

CORRESPONDENCE

"Another on the Threshold"

SYDNEY,
AUSTRALIA.
24th April, 1940.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

I am writing to tell you that I wish to become a Muslim. My people have no objection as they consider it very good.

Ever since I was quite young it was my intention to study all religions and I find in Islam such beautiful truths which cannot be traced in other religions. Its universality, broadmindedness and simplicity appeal to me especially.

I would be very grateful if you would send me information and more literature regarding prayers and fasting.

Yours sincerely,
M. HAMPTON.

SHANTI SADAN,
LONDON.
June 21st, 1940.

DEAR IMAM SAHIB,

On behalf of Shanti Sadan I am asked to thank you most sincerely for your kind invitation of last Sunday.

For many of us it was a unique opportunity and we are more than grateful for the hospitality shown to us.

May your work be blessed and prosper so that the Truth may reach all human beings.

Yours truly,
H. HALLIDAY,
Secretary.

SOUTHER HOSPITAL,
DARTFORD, KENT.
24th June, 1940.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

Thank you very much for the parcel of literature sent to this hospital. It will be much appreciated by the wounded soldiers.

Yours faithfully,
M. MILLER,
Librarian.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

LONDON, N. 10.
27th June, 1940.

DEAR IMAM,

You expressed a wish that I should write and tell you my reasons for becoming a Muslim. Here they are.

I was given a copy of *Islam and the Muslim Prayer* by the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-din. Before I had read to page 18 I knew I had found a religion that would help and satisfy me. Two things especially impressed me :

1. The Muslim belief in the inherent sinlessness of men.
2. That Muslim prayers are not selfish.

As Christians we are taught to believe that we are born in sin and can only be saved by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that we are "baptised" and later on "confirmed." I tried hard to believe all this but my commonsense refused. It was all childish and seemed an excuse to do as one liked and wriggle out of the consequences. The coward's way in fact !

I could not believe that the babies I saw were sinful and again I found that most of the so-called sins were just a breaking of community laws and not God's Laws at all. It was a great relief to find that under the teachings of the Qur-án nothing is in itself right or wrong but only the use or abuse of it.

Secondly, although the Muslim prayers puzzled me at first (for I could not understand them ; something was missing it seemed) yet when I began to study them I realised they were all praise or very nearly so ; they sing nothing but God's mercy and greatness, and I am sure that their constant recitation must foster a desire to be more godlike in our daily lives. This contrast with the Christian prayer, which is a constant whine to be saved from the results of one's misdeeds or for things we think we need.

We, as Christians, are taught God is a kind Father, Who is always listening to our prayers, ready to grant all we wish, if only we ask long and loud enough.

I, for one, always asked for all I wanted and I have had my prayers answered only to find I would have been happier had I left myself in God's hands. For my vision was short and the things I prayed for so constantly one day became a burden and a chain around my neck a little later.

So these things alone decided me and I am glad. I feel I have left the child's state of religion and now through adult eyes see the Truth.

Every day I am learning to love the simplicity and justice of Islam and the wisdom of the Holy Qur-án.

The Bible seemed so full of useless matter and much that I thought horrible.

I hope this has not bored you. I shall try to attend prayers at 18 Eccleston Square on Friday next (28th).

I am,
Yours sincerely,
(MRS.) CLARA WILLIAMS.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER IN ISLAM,
ASSALAM-O-ALAIKUM!

I am sure as a Muslim you are anxious to see Islam properly understood. May I help you to realise this aim by making a suggestion or two?—Induce your friends to read books on Islam and let them see what Islam is. You must have a few non-Muslim friends. They can, as a rule, be divided into two sets of people—those who are favourably inclined towards Islam and intellectually dissatisfied with Christianity and those who know nothing of Islam.

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A.—BOOKS FOR THOSE FAVOURABLY INCLINED

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|---|----|---|
| English Translation of The Holy Qur-án with Essays on the Life of the Holy Prophet—An authorised and most sincere presentation of the Holy Qur-án in English, by Al-Hajj Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar, M.A., I.C.S. | 13 | 2 |
| Translation of the Holy Qur-án, by Maulana Muhammad Ali | 10 | 6 |
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Buy these books and educate your friends. This is a duty incumbent on you. "Deliver what has been revealed unto you from your Lord."—(The Holy Qur-án, Chapter 5:67.)

D.—You can also do an immense amount of spadework by paying a year's subscription (10/-) Ten Shillings for the *Islamic Review*, Woking, on behalf of a non-Muslim friend of yours.

I remain,
Yours sincerely and fraternally,
ABDUL MAJID,
Imam of the Mosque, Woking.

Obtainable from:
THE MUSLIM BOOK SOCIETY, Azeez Manzil, Brandreth Road, Lahore
(Punjab, India)
or
THE BASHIR MUSLIM LIBRARY, The Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.