

"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

Vol. XXIX]

MUHARRAM, 1360 A.H.
FEBRUARY, 1941 A.C.

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Dear Imam,

For the last two or three years I have seriously and studiously been studying the Faith of Islam and I have now proved to myself that it is the only true Faith and the only Faith that a man can follow with a clear conscience to the salvation of his soul.

I wish to be accepted into the Faith of Islam and be instructed fully in the tenets of the Faith and in the observances I must follow for my ultimate salvation.

I pray that I may be found worthy of acceptance into the Faith of Islam and I declare that I shall be a good and true follower of the Prophet, for I know Islam to be the only true Faith.

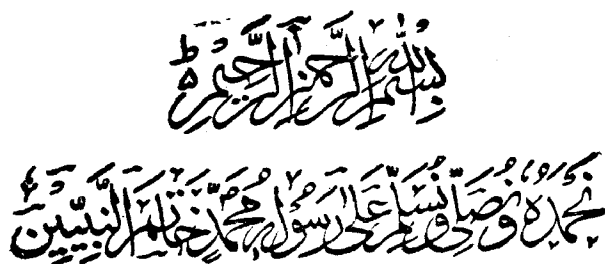
I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Mr.) ANTHONY CRUTHWELL.

Chester,

25th August, 1940.



THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol. XXIX]

MUHARRAM, 1360 A.H.
FEBRUARY, 1941 A.C.

[No. 2

THE BIRTH OF A MISCONCEPTION

[To the many misconceptions existing about the life of the Holy Prophet, a new one seems to have been added by the ignorant European writers—that the Prophet Muhammad is the prototype of Hitler. The Working Muslim Mission, ever jealous of the honour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the fair name of Islam, hardly ever loses an opportunity to expose the falsity of these misconceptions. The following three letters will enable the readers of the *Islamic Review* to form their views on the success of these efforts.

The letter from the Imam of the Mosque to the Editor, the "New Statesman and Nation," London, printed below, elicited a half-hearted apology in its issue for July 14, 1940. Another letter addressed to the Ministry of Information, London, promises help in this direction.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Our English brother-in-Islam, Mr. Farmer, wrote a letter to the Editor of the *Efficiency Magazine*, London. The Woking Muslim Mission sent complimentary copies one each of the *Ideal Prophet* by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din and *A Translation of the Holy Qur-án* by Muhammad Ali to the Editor. His letter makes interesting reading. We print it below.

We appeal to our friends either to place funds at our disposal for the free distribution of suitable literature in the hands of those interested in Islam and of those ignorant of its teaching, or to buy it from us and present it to their friends. To help the latter we print elsewhere in this issue a classified list of our publications. We solicit their attention to it.

Let us all make an effort to enlighten our non-Muslim friends.—ED., I. R.]

THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE,
WOKING.

July 16, 1940.

THE EDITOR,
THE "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION,"
LONDON.

SIR,

It pained me and the Muslim community in England to read in your issue for July 13, 1940, your observations in your article entitled "Hitler Proposes" which bracket the Prophet Muhammad with Hitler. Even in normal times these remarks of yours, which, let alone that they are wrong, unthoughtful and inopportune, are certainly far from being in good taste, would have provoked feelings of disgust and anger in the breasts of us Muslims. But it is not merely to give vent to our feelings of indignation that I am writing this letter. I am more concerned with the future of the relations of the Muslims of the world with the British Empire.

I might add that I know enough to understand that your observations were never intended to mean an insult to the Prophet Muhammad; for they are born of an ignorance and misreading of the life history of him in particular and of the history of Islam in general. But that they could appear in such a journal as

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The *New Statesman and Nation* where one expects to find better knowledge and the capacity to see things in their true perspective cannot be easily condoned. For leaving aside the plea that you did not know that the Prophet Muhammad is regarded by us Muslims as one of the foremost benefactors of mankind and that you did not accept him as such ; that you were never told that it is through his teachings and politico-religious genius that the unconscionable barriers of race and colour prejudice are prominent by their absence from amongst one-sixth of mankind and that there are three hundred millions of Muslims in the world, the fact that out of this vast number more than 110,000,000 live under the British Flag and that all the present Allies of the British Empire are purely Muslims—Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, etc.—should have been enough to make you pause twice before putting to paper such a hideous comparison that you have deemed fit to institute between the Prophet Muhammad and Hitler. Muhammad is the very essence of antithesis of Hitler. Indeed, it is nothing short of insult not only to the person of the Prophet Muhammad whom we Muslims respect and love as we do, say, for instance, the Prophet Jesus, but also to the intelligence of the world of Islam. I assure you that it is not a mere coincidence that the world of Islam, with all its unpalatable memories of the treatment of the British Government during the last century, is espousing the cause of the British Empire. It is the striking similarity that exists between the ideals of the British Empire and the world of Islam that is mainly responsible for this coalescence. The ideology of Islam is fundamentally opposed to that of Nazism. Islam stands for the universal equality of mankind, whereas the hall-mark of Nazism is racial particularism.

I do hope that you will publish this letter in the interests of a better understanding between the various constituent parts of the British Empire.

ABDUL MAJID,
Imam of the Mosque.

[We apologise for a comparison which has given offence to our friends. We need scarcely explain that the only point of the analogy was to emphasise to people who do not appreciate the danger of the Nazi movement that Hitler is to many Germans a prophet as well as a conqueror.—ED., N. S. & N.]

THE MOSQUE,
WOKING (SURREY).
July 20, 1940.

THE DIRECTOR,
THE EMPIRE DIVISION,
THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION,
LONDON.

SIR,

Of late ever since the dramatic successes of Nazism in Europe it has become more or less a matter of fact with the editors of, and writers in, responsible English journals to regard Hitler as the parallel of the Prophet Muhammad. This tendency is assuming

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such proportions that, I believe, if unchecked, it will, if it does not actually result in creating a gulf between us Muslims and the British Empire, at least leave a bad taste in our mouths. To any one not appreciative of the sentiments of us Muslims in England and those living in other parts of the British Empire, all this might appear to be innocuous. But such a reading of the situation will definitely be untrue and worthy only of those who cannot take a long-range view of things and certainly not reflect the pain these comparisons of Hitler with the Prophet Muhammad cause to the world of Islam. To bracket the Prophet Muhammad with Hitler is, in the first place, not to understand the sentiments of us Muslims and secondly not to understand the functions of a prophet in the religious life of man. I request your help in combating this upward sacrilegious tendency, in the interests of the solidarity of the British Empire, so that such thoughtless pronouncements are avoided.

I enclose the copy of a letter of protest which I addressed to the Editor of the *New Statesman and Nation* who, unfortunately, had instituted a comparison between the Prophet Muhammad and Hitler in his issue for July 13, 1940. I am thankful to him that he did see his way to print my letter in his issue for 20th July, 1940.

There is yet another thing which I take the liberty of bringing to your notice. I feel that my wish in this respect is rather difficult to realise. But even so I think I should point it out to you. It is being said by all speakers over the wireless and writers in the daily Press that Great Britain is fighting for Christianity. Now such remarks, even though partially true, are liable to cause misgivings and misconceptions, leading to cast a damper over the courage and enthusiasm of many who are not Christians. We Muslims, when we side with Great Britain, believe that Great Britain is fighting for the ideals of democracy, the equality of mankind, against the curse of dictatorship. I, for one, know that these ideals are inspired by the teaching of Jesus. But the trouble is this that the man in the street does not understand this and is liable to understand that Islam is one thing and Christianity another. I have recently received letters from English Muslim soldier friends who are very much perturbed by such remarks as seem to monopolise for Christianity all the high ideals of mankind.

Hoping to be excused for this long letter and trusting that you will appreciate the motives that have impelled me to encroach on your time.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

ABDUL MAJID,

Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking.

BIRTH OF A MISCONCEPTION

LONDON :

22nd July, 1940.

MY DEAR IMAM SAHIB,

I much appreciate your letter of to-day and the motives that prompted you to write. Needless to say, we are entirely at one with you here in deprecating any attempt to draw analogies between Hitler and the Prophet Muhammad. I am raising the point with our Press Relations Department in the hope that they may be able to bring some appropriate influence to bear, but it would greatly help them and me if you could let me have any instances, besides that of the *New Statesman and Nation*, of the drawing of such a parallel in the English Press. That particular case was admirably dealt with by your own letter to the Editor of the *New Statesman*.

I also agree with you in deprecating by speakers and writers here on the Christian character of our war aims. You will, I know, recognise that in a Christian country it is natural for political leaders and publicists to identify the true and righteous things with their own form of religion. They do this unthinkingly without in any way intending to reflect upon other religions or to imply that Christian ideals are higher than, or essentially different from, the ideals of Islam. In a Muslim country, one would expect the converse to hold good. I agree with you, however, that it is most desirable that our spokesmen should constantly emphasise the universal character of our cause, and take full account of the fact that it is being fought for by Muslims, and indeed by members of many other faiths, no less valiantly or ardently than by Christians. Again, I am drawing the attention of those in higher authority to the important point that you make.

Believe me, I much appreciate your co-operation, which I hope will grow closer in the future.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

R. V. HODSON,

Director-General,

Empire Division,

Ministry of Information, London.

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CONFUSING THE ISSUES

* * * * *

[It is one of the weaknesses of the British public mind not to take an early notice of changes that take place in the world situation with the passing of time. In the present war it has lamentably failed to realise that the old conceptions of Christianity and Islam as prevalent in the West, propped up as they were on false data have been rendered absolutely untenable by the irresistible logic of circumstances. Christianity can no longer be shown off as the protector of civilisation by any device of sophistry. The mask has been completely rent. To take shelter behind a denunciation of the Germans as "Huns" and "Pagans" is a poor attempt at saving a losing game. The time cries aloud for a frank confession that it is Christianity, and not Islam, which is an avowed enemy of Civilization. That Christianity has, for some time in the past, existed side by side with Civilization is no proof that it either fostered or even helped Civilization. On account of its dangerously lacking in certain essential features of a religion, it has been evidently responsible for fostering the destructive forces of Communism and Hitlerism in Europe. To talk of saving Civilization in the name of this most disappointing religion is not only an unforgivable self-deception but liable to harm the very cause for which the cry is raised. It is but natural that even some British Muslims whose correspondence we publish below should protest against such thoughtless mixing up of issues. We are glad to note, however, that the Ministry of Information recognises the logic of the Muslim argument. Real satisfaction on the question, however, can be felt by the Muslims only when an official announcement is made clarifying the point at issue. The authorities should do well to bear in mind that, religious susceptibilities being what they are, it will be as repugnant to an average Muslim soldier in the field to be told that the war is being waged on

CONFUSING THE ISSUES

behalf of Christianity as to a Christian soldier that it is waged on behalf of Islam. And the Muslim has special reasons to be touchy on the point in view of the outrageous idea still lingering in the West that Islam is synonymous with vandalism. It is unfortunate that some British journals of repute should continue voicing this pernicious notion.

—ED., *Islamic Review*.]

ENGLISH MUSLIMS AND THE PRESENT WAR

LEEDS :

July 16, 1940.

THE IMAM OF THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE,
WOKING.

DEAR IMAM,

Assalamo Alaikum !

I have just had the pleasure of a talk with our brother, Mr. Rashid Kreiner, and we are both perturbed about the continued insistence, in the Press and on the Radio, upon the presumption that the present conflict is being fought for the preservation of Christianity.

You are, of course, aware that both Mr. Kreiner and myself are now serving as soldiers and you will realise how grievously disturbed we are by this insistence.

I feel that the Woking Mission should place clearly before the people of this country a statement showing the truly great part which is being played by Muslims all over the world in this struggle for "Decency and Civilisation." I am sure that all those Muslims who are assisting our Government by gifts of money and service, will feel, as we do, that the suggestion that we are engaged in upholding Christianity is unjust and untrue.

I beg you, dear Imam, to take this matter up, and I shall be glad to know what you think of it.

I am, dear Imam,

Yours most sincerely,

M. ABDULLAH WARREN.

[*The Woking Muslim Mission has brought the matter to the notice of the Ministry of Information, London. The text of the letter addressed to the Ministry is reproduced above.*—ED., *I. R.*]

HEADINGLEY, LEEDS.

July 17, 1940.

DEAR IMAM,

A few moments ago I received your most welcome letter and a copy of *Islam and the Muslim Prayer*, for which I am more than thankful. It is just the thing I have been after for years.

Yesterday I met brother Abdullah Warren and to-day he is coming to visit me and talk about the subject of this constant phrase "fighting for Christianity." He, like myself, would cease in

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our efforts if we thought that it was the real aim of the Empire. Our argument is that we are fighting and expect to get peace, freedom and decency at least. He tells me that he also is writing to you on the subject. At the moment I am waiting to get discharged from Hospital and I have not the least idea what my new address will be. So, if you would reply to the above, it will be forwarded on to me.

I do not know whether you will approve of it but Mr. Warren and myself are constantly making a nuisance of ourselves where Christians are concerned. We are getting dozens interested in Islam through doing this. The other day I was visited by a clergyman who came in very nicely, full of politeness, etc. After asking me where I came from and what was the matter with me, he suggested that I went to communion and I told him that I was very sorry but I was not interested any longer. He asked me why and I told him; he got up and walked away in disgust. Now I rather took a fancy of him; he was an elderly gentleman and I hated to see a person of his education and standing do a thing like that. The following day I met him and I said, "I have a bone to pick with you," and he stopped and asked me why. So I asked him if it was Christian attitude to get up in a temper and walk away without saying "Good-night." He left me full of apologies but had no satisfactory reply. I can only put these things down to the fact that either people won't see the truth or won't admit defeat.

Needless to say, I have not had time to even look at the book you sent me but sometime to-day I am giving some blood to someone who is very ill and I will be too sore to write afterwards. Anyway I will be writing to you again in a few days' time and hope to be able to visit you very soon.

Thanking you from the bottom of my heart, I will close.

Yours sincerely,
R. R. G. K.

LEEDS 6.
July 25, 1940.

To
THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE,
WOKING.

MY DEAR IMAM,
Assalam-o-alaikum!

Thank you very much indeed for the book (*Islam and the Muslim Prayer*) which I have just received. I am sure that it will be a great help to me and I trust to others who may be interested.

I am sure that at no other period in the history of this country has true need for the teachings of Islam been so great as it is now and we who are Muslims should spare no endeavour in order to bring true peace and comfort of our glorious Faith to the hearts of the suffering people of Europe. The fruit is ripe for the harvest and it would be to our everlasting shame if we missed this opportunity of propagation of our Faith. I humbly suggest that Muslims, everywhere, should try to seize this opportunity.

What is your opinion, dear Imam? And what course do you suggest to us to follow in our efforts to enlighten the people?

CONFUSING THE ISSUES

I notice with grave distress that Lord Halifax in his last speech referred to the war as being "a Christian Crusade" and I have ventured to address a letter of protest to him, the terms of which were as follows:

LETTER POSTED TO LORD HALIFAX

MY LORD,

May I as a Muslim, serving in His Majesty's Forces, be permitted to deprecate the publication of a passage in your recent speech in which you referred to our present struggle as "a Christian Crusade"?

I beg to point out to your Lordship how greatly such statements distress all us Muslims who are humbly but loyally serving our King and Empire.

I am, my Lord,
Your Lordship's servant,
MUHAMMAD A. WARREN.

This letter I posted a few hours after I was made aware of Lord Halifax's statement.

I trust sincerely, dear Imam, that both your worthy self and the rest of our Muslim friends will approve of my action and of the terms in which I addressed his Lordship.

I feel strongly that we must not overlook any such wrong statements as that of which I have complained and I beg that all Muslims will join with me in stressing forcibly our deprecation of such loose and mischievous remarks especially when they are made by a responsible statesman.

God be with you.

I am, dear Imam,
Yours fraternally,
MUHAMMAD A. WARREN.

THE REPLY FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE

FOREIGN OFFICE,
S.W. 1.
26th July, 1940.

To

MUHAMMED ABDULLAH WARREN, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Lord Halifax has asked me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of July 23 and to assure you that no word in his recent broadcast was intended to be unfriendly to the Muslim or to any other religion.

In his view all true religions alike are faced by common danger—such as materialism and excessive nationalism—against which it is in the interest of all of them to make common cause. He who in this war fights for any one of them is—in his opinion—fighting for all alike.

Lord Halifax is glad that you drew his attention to this point, since it would distress him to injure—however unintentionally—the deeper feelings of any of His Majesty's loyal subjects.

Yours truly,
(Sd.)
PRIVATE SECRETARY.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

WHY I BECAME A MUSLIM

BY A. W. L. VAN KUYLENBURG

(*known as M. A. RAHMAN*)

The purity and simplicity of the Islamic faith, its freedom from dogma and sacerdotalism and its obvious truth made a special appeal to me. The honesty and sincerity of the Muslims, too, are greater than anything I have seen in Christians. The ordinary Christian puts on religion on Sundays as a respectable habit. When Sunday is over, religion is discarded for the rest of the week. With Muslims, on the contrary, there is no distinction between Sunday and other days. He is always thinking of what he can do in the service of God. Another beauty of Islam is its equality. It is only Islam that has real equality maintained between man and man and no other religion has anything like it. The faith of Islam generates unity. I myself have seen the believers praying. They follow only one Imam ; when he bows down, they also bow and when he goes down to the ground to kiss the dust of the earth, they do the same. That is why I have embraced Islam. One thing more. Islam recognises no distinction of rank. Even a king prays next to a fakir. The religion of Islam is also the cleanest religion in the world, because Muslims have to wash the exposed parts of the body five times a day, a practice not found in any other religion of the world.

SOCIAL LEGISLATION & DIVINE REVELATION

BY MAULVI GHULAM NABI MUSLIM, M.A.

(Continued from page 474, of Vol. XXVIII.)

Every individual has his personal propensities to satisfy and think and act, though most honestly in terms of his selfish motives first. Besides, influenced by climate, education, society and his peculiar aptitudes, every person differs from his associates in his outlook on life. Under these circumstances, it is impossible for men to realise the needs of one another and congregate to evolve a system of legislation equally acceptable and beneficial to all. In the words of Rousseau :

“ How could a blind multitude, which often knows not what it wishes because it rarely knows what is good for it, execute for itself an enterprise so great, so difficult, as a system of legislation? Of themselves, the people always desire what is good, but do not always discern it. The general will is always right, but the judgment that guides it is not always enlightened.”

Thus it is evident, that all men are not fit to formulate laws beneficial to their individual as well as collective existence. Now comes the question of the few intellectually advanced men of the age. Can they evolve a constitution to serve the purpose of peaceful social life ? A little reflection will show they cannot. How are those few chosen and learned men to assemble to design the destinies of their nations ? Will they be selected by the common people ? If they will, it is never safe to rely upon the judgment of every Tom, Dick and Harry since we have already seen how the common stock of humanity entirely lacks the ability to distinguish right from wrong. The present system of election and legislation, at any rate, has failed to achieve the desired end. Can you for a moment believe that the majority party in any country forms the

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government with the best people in the nation? Or, is it not true that even the Opposition benches are occupied by men superior in quality to the majority of their opponents selected by the multitude but rendered helpless by the tragedy of election? Besides, a large number of highly qualified men are neglected altogether. Leaving aside the procedure adopted by the nominees in their effort to get elected—which is as often fair as foul—when elected each of these guides to the destiny of the nation has, by the very nature of things, to champion one particular shade of opinion and one single interest. The resulting chaos in the joint outlook must of necessity be an appalling one, thus proving the case against the possibility of the common people governing themselves.

Then granting even that the best men have been elected to adopt a universal legislation for their nation, it can never be denied that they have been brought up under different circumstances, a fact that is bound ultimately to cause a wide difference in their principles and outlooks towards the welfare of the nation. To be more clear, a man may be interested from his boyhood in the moral problem and may have devoted his entire attention to this aspect of national life. He may be well read in that particular branch (though seldom competent and never all-competent) yet his opinion carries no weight in other branches of national life. The majority of his colleagues may always be a source of disintegration and corruption and may be casting their votes wilfully in opposition to a beneficial proposal of a really worthy person. In face of this state of affairs it is altogether difficult, if not impossible, to frame any beneficial law, and the soundness of the constitution can be well judged from this. This is the outcome of democracy—government of the people, by the people, for the people.

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Now, is it possible that instead of setting up a representative governing body, a nation could evolve an organisation composed of individuals who have specialised themselves in particular branches of human problems and entrust their destiny to it ? The answer is in the negative. Firstly, there can possibly be no agency to select such persons. Secondly, as the solution unearthed by these great individuals is always independent of the demands of other problems of life, their solutions are apt to err and fail through the inevitable clash with the issues raised in other fields of the national life.

In a democratic State, therefore, it is almost impossible to get the best men and the best constitution. How ridiculous and scandalous it appears that an "overwhelming" majority of fifty-one in a house of one hundred members should be controlling the state against the "meagre" minority of forty-nine members ! Besides its inefficiency to enact desirable legislation, can it rightly be said to represent the nation in its true sense ? How ridiculous that a man, barbarous, ignorant and uncultured, has the same status in directing the destiny of millions of his fellow-beings as the greatest genius of the age ! Dr. Iqbal has beautifully exposed this fallacy in the following quatrain :

اس راز کو اک مرد فرنگی نے کیا فاش
ہر چند کہ دانا اسے کہولا نہیں کرتے
جمہوریت اک طرز حکومت ہے کہ جس میں
بندوں کو گنا کرتے ہیں تو لا نہیں کرتے

"This secret was revealed by a great man of Europe though the wise men seldom declare it ; that democracy is a form of government wherein men are counted and not measured and weighed."

To proceed further, the Western political evolution owes its existence to the geniuses of the West. But are the teachings of these great and honest thinkers

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duly appreciated in their respective ages? Have the Western nations actually benefitted by the centuries-long exertions of these men in the domain of human needs? Had the Western nations recognised the talents of these great men of theirs in their lifetimes and tested the fruits of their labour, we would have been forced to conclude that it was so. But in spite of the fact that those men were admittedly at a higher stage of intellectual progress, even their own nations could not understand and assimilate their messages. Can we support the idea of the reliability of human mental faculties, in so far, at least, as the social sphere is concerned? Can humanity be entrusted with the arduous task of electing its legislators?

If we admit for the sake of argument that, in spite of the differences voiced by their nations, these men succeeded in evolving beneficial laws, let us see if those laws were really beneficial equally to all the members of the nation and for all the ages to come. What we observe at present does not warrant such an assumption. The institutions set up by these great men do not command the consent of all the members of the society for whom they stood. They are reared on the ruthless suppression of their opponents. The states which uphold them simply represent and support a particular group at the cost of others who happen to differ. The laws, even in this case, are not stationary and the nation is every now and then effecting considerable changes to cope with the changing situation of the advancing time. This is a vivid proof of the futility of the legislation worked out by these luminaries of the age. Does not the abrogation or abolition of the old laws or the principles governing legislation in any country indicate the poverty of human intellect in solving only a few human problems? So far about an

SOCIAL LEGISLATION & DIVINE REVELATION

institution as regards its effect on the members of the same nation.

The international relations have been widely straitened since the initiation of these "Rational Institutions." The intellectual leaders of the world have succeeded, maybe unconsciously, in dividing mankind into numerous hostile groups. Every group, confining itself to the geographical barriers, is, instead of devising means to promote the economic, social, moral or intellectual status of its members, centralising its national forces for the subjugation of the adjoining nations. And all this is done for the sacred cause of human progress as foreseen by the men of this group. This highly intellectual group has not only deprived their own nation of the blessings of peaceful life, but also have plunged mankind in a perpetual state of war and constant mutual fear. This seed of hatred, enmity, and discord is not the deliberate product of the brains of the promoters of these institutions, but are to be found in the very nature of the enactments which seek to materialise these dreams. Neitsche, the staunch upholder of the theory of "will to power," excited the Germans in unequivocal terms against the Christians and the Anglo-Saxon nations. Karl Marx, the father of Socialism, urged the proletarians to crush the bourgeois class. Hitlerism aims at the extinction of the Jews at least from the German soil. Italian Fascism dreams of the revival of the old Roman Empire through the subjugation of the Mediterranean States both in Europe and Africa. All these systems are the result of the best brains of the most advanced age. But none can deny, in view of the present state of European affairs, the utter futility of human intellect in solving the social problems of mankind.

Human intellect has, worst of all, preached intolerance and mental slavery. In the totalitarian

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states of Germany, Italy and Russia, etc., liberty of opinion and conscience is a crime often punishable with death. How scandalous ! Could a man think of a more blasphemous barbarity and injustice ? If a man, the founder of a totalitarian state, has a right to think about a matter, as his brain directed him, why could not another man do the same rather with better results ? Why is a man exalted to a state of infallibility ? What is the idea in forcibly silencing a man who after an independent enquiry and research dares to expose the hollowness of the principles laid down by a great man preceding him ? Did not, after all, his predecessors expose the fallacies or misunderstandings of his predecessors and so on ? But while those previous men were rather listened to, appreciated and given strong support this one of the present age is denied the same encouragement and cool consideration. Unfortunately, selfishness has always stood between man and his principles and the efforts of great men have always been sacrificed, in human principalities and institutions, at the altar of greed, avarice and brute force. Hence it can safely be concluded that humanity at any age cannot solve its problems with the help of intellect.

One may say here that, admitting the inability of the general public to enact laws beneficial to them, there may be always men who are above worldly desires or material ambitions and they can rightly guide humanity in their daily problems.

Let us, in the first place, consider whether any man, of any moral or spiritual status, is free from personal desires demanding satisfaction.

Every human being, it cannot be denied, stands in need at any stage of progress, of lodging, boarding and so many other requisites of life. Before acquiring a position of importance he must have passed through many vicissitudes and imbibed certain inclinations

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(if intellectual greatness is not the monopoly of any particular class) that may have moulded his habits into a second nature. He will certainly consider any matter in the light of his personal experience and ability. He will enact the laws in the light of the difficulties he might have experienced during his past life. He will be, moreover, though to a less degree, impressed by the lives of those surrounding him and will try to benefit himself, though unconsciously, and do justice to the problem he was personally influenced by. Even though the legislators were given no powers they will not be prevented from sliding down the lofty steps of divinity. The limited knowledge of the things, little practical information of human affairs, shallow insight into the collective as well as individual innate propensities, along with their self-interest, influence of their natural relations, deep impression of environments and, last but not the least, the conflicting qualities of human nature make it extremely impossible for even the highly intellectual man to enact laws equally justifiable and appreciable to all even for a particular time and nation.

Rousseau finds himself in a most difficult position when he refers for legislation to gods in the following words :

“In order to discover the rules of association that are most suitable to a nation, a superior intelligence would be necessary who would see all the passions of men without experiencing any of them, who would have no difficulty and yet know it thoroughly ; whose happiness does not depend upon us, and who would nevertheless be quite willing to interest himself in ours ; and, lastly, one who, storing up for himself the progress of time, the far off glory in the future, could labour in an age and enjoy in another, gods would be necessary to give laws to men.”

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The profundity of the views expressed in these words is beyond question. But can a man for a moment believe that the description of the "god" as pictured by this great man could be met with in a mortal, as a man is? He is right when he says that God the Almighty is the only personality best suited for this incredibly sublime task, and his description of the gods corresponds with the attributes of God alone, but he could not apprehend the possibility of Divine legislation through revelation. Ignorant of the sources of Islam, he was conscious of the only "Revealed religion" of Europe—Christianity. But it appeared to him to be a collection of vague and absurd ideas and shook his belief in the possibility of Divine revelation.

That he was disappointed with Christianity is evident from his following remarks :

"Christian law is more injurious than useful to a firm constitution of the state."

"There is a third and more extravagant kind of religion—such is the Roman Christianity—The third is so evidently bad that it would be a waste of time to stop and prove this."

While discarding Christianity as an injurious religion he is impressed by Islam and Judaism. He is deeply impressed by the really sublime laws of Moses and the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon them both). It is from the laws preached by these two God-inspired personalities that he concluded the possibility of a man evolving a solid, comprehensive and eternal legislation. The qualities of "god" referred to are inferred from the selfless and sublime lives of these founders of the two actually most rational systems of law. He himself pays homage to them in the following words :

"The legislator puts into the mouths of the immortals that sublime reason which soars beyond

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the reach of common men, in order that he may win over by Divine authority that whom human prudence could not move. But it does not belong to every man to make the gods his oracles, nor to be believed when he proclaims himself their interpreter. The great soul of the legislator is the real miracle which must give proof of his mission. Any man can engrave tablets of stone, or bribe an oracle, or pretend secret intercourse with some divinity, or find some other clumsy means to impose on the people. He who is acquainted with such means only will perchance be able to assemble a crowd of foolish persons but he will never found an empire, and his extravagant work will speedily perish with him. Empty deceptions form but a transient bond. The Jewish law, which still endures, and that of the child of Ishmael, which for ten centuries has ruled half the world, still bear witness to-day to the great men who dictated them; and while proud philosophy of blind party-spirit sees in them nothing but fortunate impostors, the true statesman admires in their systems the great and powerful genius which directs durable institutions."

Whereas these words most clearly manifest the wisdom of Islam they, besides, set a seal on the necessity of Divine revelation. According to Rousseau, although he has been forced to admit it unconsciously, true law can only be revealed by God Himself. Let us follow his line of argument.

1. He admits, as quoted in the beginning, that could we receive justice from God direct we would have never bothered about setting up legislative bodies.

2. He declares that the Divine men—gods—alone could be entrusted with the sublime task of the enactment of laws.

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3. Out of the great personalities of entire human history, before his time, he found only two—Muhammad and Moses (peace be upon them)—that could be cited as true examples of divine (?) men who founded institutions really beneficial and enduring. But it is a fact that Muhammad and Moses (peace be upon them) claimed their teachings as revealed to them by God. In other words, Rousseau admits that no other personality than God Himself could be entrusted with the arduous and most intricate task of planning human institutions and that He performs it through the prophets.

A SHORT SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTHDAY OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

By

**His Excellency Dr. Hassan Nachat Pacha,
Egyptian Ambassador in London**

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I am very happy to be asked to take the chair at this meeting which recalls to our minds a memory so dear to the heart of every Muslim, a memory which is likewise respected and appreciated by non-Muslims who have had the opportunity of studying the teachings of Islam and the life of the Prophet. Recalling the birth of Muhammad brings to our minds the advent of the new era which Islam marked in the history of the civilization of the world by ushering in new principles of life and laying the foundation of a glorious culture.

I do not intend to encroach upon your time by dealing now with the life of the Prophet or by mentioning instances indicative of the greatness of his soul, nor by citing the examples he set in his life in pursuance of noble ideals and rules of justice and morality. Nor

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do I intend to discuss the deep religious and social reforms which followed the establishment of Islam as a religion.

The history of the life of Muhammad proves how great he was. Being an orphan and the son of a poor family, he relied upon his strong personality and his unblemished character and purity of spirit to acquire during the early part of his life an outstanding position among his people who named him "the faithful."

It was these qualities which fitted him to receive the Holy Message which he was called upon later to deliver. This message contained not only religious principles, but afforded the Muslims rules and teachings to help them in their spiritual and temporal life. The rules Muhammad introduced, whether in the spiritual or temporal sphere, were simple, reasonable and democratic. He was, in fact, a leading reformer, inspired by the oldest traditions and principles of democracy which Islam still advocates for the whole world.

Is it not a wonderful thing to profess a religion which considers all believers equal—even the Prophet himself—no preference being given to one above another except in consideration of the good deeds performed during his lifetime? Is it not wonderful that the Prophet, who delivered this message, asked the believers to pray for him as being as much in need of Divine mercy as they?

These principles, simple, just and democratic, succeeded in bringing about the solidarity of an immense number of followers—irrespective of race, nationality or colour. The unity of their ideals and the unity of their belief united and still unites all Muslims over the whole world. Indeed this Islamic unity is worthy of being an example for the world brotherhood visualized by idealists who love to picture to themselves a world of mutual understanding and co-operation.

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You will thus see that we celebrate to-day the birthday of a truly great man in the history of the world—great by reason of the noble teaching of the religion he established—great by reason of the high social reforms he introduced.

THE TEXT OF A SPEECH ON THE LIFE OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

BY MR. ISMAIL DE YORKE, B.L., BAR-AT-LAW

YOUR EXCELLENCY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We assemble here to commemorate the birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. This act is in itself not peculiar to the Muslim world. All communities and nations keep alive the memories of their leaders, heroes and great men in one form or another. All sing praises in their honour for the light shed by them on the path of their disciples. But, if we were to confine our attention to the great religious personages of the world, we should find, unless our vision were blurred and clouded by religious prejudice, that Muhammad's personality is unique in more than one respect. For instance, his is the only personality that is historical in every sense of the word. I am conscious of the reactions that this observation of mine may evoke in the minds of some of my non-Muslim friends who have honoured us with their presence on this occasion and I should like to avoid at once any possible misunderstanding. I am confident, if there is any such feeling in the minds of my friends that what I shall say in the course of my talk will dispel all such sentiments.

I am attempting to follow the example set by the Holy Prophet himself when I seek to make the road

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to mutual understanding an easier one to travel. For it was Muhammad himself who was most anxious to avoid causing misunderstandings in the minds of his listeners. It was Muhammad, let it be said to his eternal glory, who made it obligatory for his followers to believe and respect and love all the prophets of God without any distinction of time and place. I cannot over-emphasise the far-reaching effects of this attitude of the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad anticipated the march of liberal thought by at least 1,400 years when he enjoined upon his followers to accept the various prophets of others even as their own. Now-a-days it is in fashion to accept all the prophets of God and for that matter, Muhammad as a prophet of God. I have even heard people born in the Jewish faith accepting Jesus as a prophet of God. Muhammad did not leave it to the caprice of his followers to accept one prophet and reject another. Thus we read in the Holy Qur-án: "We make no distinction between one prophet and another prophet." Even to-day, when so much liberal education has led to so many different results, the religion of Muhammad is ahead of its sister religions in the matter of this progressiveness, which some regard merely as the result of the modern times. The members of the sister religions to Islam are vying with one another to keep abreast of the times by declaring that they would accept Muhammad or Jesus as prophets of God, but for such a belief they could not show any sanction in their religious books or in the words of their masters. It is about this man Muhammad, with such unparalleled liberal views, who was most solicitous not to give the slightest umbrage to the feelings of others, that I have the privilege to talk to you this afternoon. In order to give you a better mental picture of the Prophet, I think it would be fitting if I gave you a brief outline of his life history.

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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE HOLY PROPHET

Muhammad, the son of 'Abdulla and Amena, was born on the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal—29th August, 570 A.C.—in a family of the Quraish, in Makka. His father had passed away a few months before his birth, and he lost his mother when he was in his sixth year. The charge of the orphan was undertaken by his grandfather, 'Abdul-Muttalib, who, after four years of fostering, confided the boy to the care of his uncle, Abu Talib. At the age of twelve, Muhammad accompanied his uncle on a trading expedition to Syria. From his early childhood up till the age of 40, he showed all the noble instincts of human character that command respect from friend and foe alike ; and, indeed, the Arabs used to call him " Al-Ameen," or " the truthful one." He married at the age of 25 a venerable lady, Khadija, in whose service he was a caravan conductor. The lady was fifteen years his senior, and several children were born to them. One notable achievement before his Call to prophethood deserves mention ; for it affords us a glance into the heart of the Prophet. He formed a band of honest men, whose aim it was to track down offenders and to bring them to justice, and to adopt means to protect the widows and orphans who were mostly the victims of oppression.

When the Call came to him, the Prophet, weighed down with the sense of great responsibility, sought relief and consolation from his wife. The words she used to comfort him are worth recording : " God will never forsake you ; for you show due regard for blood ties ; you carry the burden of the decrepit ; you practise virtues that are extinct ; you entertain guests ; and stand by what is righteous in the face of odds." The first to accept his assurance of the Divine commission were Khadija, his wife, and his friends Zaid,

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'Ali, Abu Bakr and Arqam. The hurling of open denunciation at the ancestral idols of the Quraish, by Muhammad, had set all Arabia by the ears. This resentment of the Quraish led them to approach Muhammad's uncle, Abu Talib, in an endeavour to persuade him to silence his protégé. The uncle, under the collective pressure brought to bear upon him, agreed to counsel his nephew to desist from his efforts. Muhammad said, "Uncle dear, even if they were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left to turn me from the work I have in hand, verily will I not pause till the Lord carry my cause to victory or till I perish therein." Upon these words he burst into tears. His uncle said, "Go in peace, son of my brother, and say what thou wilt ; for by God, I will on no condition abandon thee." This least expected decision of Abu Talib to stand by Muhammad came as a surprise to the Quraish. They resolved to try to entangle the feet of Muhammad in allurements. They said to him, "Listen : if your ambition is to possess wealth, we will amass wealth for you, as much as ever you wish ; and if you aspire to power and honour, we are prepared to swear allegiance to you as our overlord and king : and if you have any fancy for beauty, you shall have the hand of the fairest maiden in the land." Muhammad's reply was, "Neither do I want wealth, nor do I want power. I have been commissioned by God as a Warner unto mankind. I deliver His message unto you. Should you accept it, you shall have felicity in this life and in the life hereafter ; and should you reject it, surely God will decide between you and me."

In the meantime Islam had been making slow but constant progress. The Quraish had realised that Muhammad was not to be turned aside from his object, so they decided to try the effect of putting the Banu Hashim—the family of Muhammad—under the ban of

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ostracism, because they had refused to disown him. But, as before, this device died a natural death, and the ban was revoked.

Muhammad's efforts, attended by physical persecutions and mental tortures and extending over a period of 13 long winters, were utterly wasted upon his own kinsmen. He now turned in despair to the people of Taif to convince them of the truth of his mission. But here, as well, a none-too-promising outlook—rebuffs and scorn—awaited him. The people of Taif even went so far as to pelt him with stones, so that his heels bled.

The persecution waxing ever hotter and more intense, Muhammad had already advised about a hundred men and women of his adherents to seek refuge from the inhuman cruelties of the Makkans by emigrating to the Christian country of Abyssinia. Shortly afterwards, when he stood sorely in need of the protection of his uncle Abu Talib and the comfort of his wife Khadija, the cruel, indiscriminating hands of death snatched them both away from him, thus affording the Quraish a freer hand in dealing with the situation. And they lost no time in deciding upon extirpating his disciples and making short work of Muhammad on a certain night, but the Prophet, under the guidance of Divine Revelation, fled for his life to Madina, 150 miles distant from Makka, accompanied by his friend Abu Bakr—the precise date of the Prophet's flight being June 20th, 622 A.C. This epoch-making event in the history of the world marks the beginning of the Muslim Era called "Hijrat." The Prophet and his companion were pursued. On their way they hid themselves in a cave on Mt. Thaur, three miles from Makka, for three days. Hearing the footsteps of the enemy, who had reached the mouth of the cave, Abu Bakr said, "We are but two, and the enemy are many."

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“Do not be downcast,” said Muhammad. “We are two, and God in our midst, a Third.” After eight days’ journey, they reached Madina; but there, too, the enemy would not let Muhammad rest. An army of 1,000 men marched against him, and the Muslims, who were but 313 strong, won a victory at Badr, situated 30 miles from Madina and 120 miles from Makka. Having learnt nothing from this defeat, the Makkans rallied once more to the call of Abu Sufyan, their leader, to make another desperate attempt against the rising tide of Islam. A second battle was fought, this time at Uhud, which lies 12 miles from Madina and 138 miles from Makka. The Makkans were driven off. Having expended their strength, they showed from now onwards no marked signs of hostility against the resistless power of the Muslims. They entered into a truce with Muhammad in the 6th year A.H. (628 A.C.).

Two years later, Muhammad triumphed over a new foe—the Jews; and in 630 A.C. he made a bloodless entry at the head of an army 10,000 strong into the town of Makka—his birthplace, from which, eight years before, he had fled a hunted fugitive. The Makkans, remembering full well their past dark record, were surprised at the general amnesty granted even to such as had attempted to take the Prophet’s life. The Prophet said, “There is no reproof against you, O Makkans, God will forgive you; for He is Merciful and Loving. Go, you are free.” History fails to record any other such display of magnanimity, where a person, wielding the sceptre of power, freely forgoes his vengeance on the vanquished foe.

The Ka’ba—the House dedicated to the worship of Allah—was purged of the 360 idols standing in it. In another two years Arabia had either embraced Islam or sworn loyalty to the Prophet. Shortly before his death, Muhammad had succeeded in effecting a

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mighty reformation. He had swept away all corruption, he had stamped out the vice of gambling and female infanticide, he had raised the status of women, he had abolished wine drinking, he had put a check on polygamy, he had put a stop to constant and bloody wars and had welded the warring tribes of Arabia into one brotherhood. The whole of that land was, so to say, transformed into a garden on earth during the short period of but 23 years. And when the Prophet completed his mission, he addressed a vast congregation of over 120,000 people in the plains of Mina, in the following memorable words :

“ Ye people ! Hearken unto my words, for I know not whether in another year it will be vouchsafed to me to find myself amongst you in this place.

“ Your lives and properties are sacred and inviolable amongst you, as this day and this month are sacred to all, until ye appear before your Lord. And (remember) ye shall indeed appear before your Lord, Who shall demand from each of you an account of his actions.

“ Ye people ! Ye have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you. Treat your wives with kindness and love ; verily, ye are responsible for them to God.

“ Usury is forbidden. The debtor will return the principal, and a beginning will be made with the loans of my uncle Abbas, son of Abdul-Muttalib.

“ The aristocracy of old time is trampled under my feet. The Arab has no superiority over him that is not an Arab, and he that is not Arab has no superiority over the Arab. All are children of Adam, and Adam was made of earth.

“ Ye people ! Hearken to my words and understand them. Know that all Muslims are brothers, one of another. Ye are one brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to another can be lawfully possessed by

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any, unless freely given out of goodwill. Guard yourselves against committing injustice.

“And your war-captives ! See that ye feed them with such food as ye yourselves eat ; and clothe them with the stuff that ye yourselves wear ; and if they commit a fault which ye are not minded to forgive, then part with them, for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be harshly treated.

“I am leaving to you two noble things ; so long as ye cling to them ye shall not go astray : the Book of God and the Tradition of His Prophet.

“Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent : for it may be that he who shall be told may remember better than he who hath heard it here.

“O ye that are assembled here ! have I delivered my message and fulfilled my word ? ”

The assembled congregation cried out with one voice :

“Yea, verily thou hast.”

A sudden glow flashed upon the face of the Prophet, and with eyes filled with grateful tears he raised his hands towards heaven and said thrice :

“O Lord ! I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness unto it.”

(To be continued).

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THE STATUS OF WOMAN IN ISLAM*

BY MISS IGLAL HAFIZ.

I feel very happy to have this very fortunate occasion of talking to you on the celebration of the birthday of our Prophet. Firstly as a Muslim, secondly as a woman who is studying in a European University and who knows something about the position acquired by woman in Europe after a long struggle and, last but not least, as one who is eager to do justice as far as possible to Islam and its views of women about which many people have a wrong impression. This wrong impression arises, in my opinion, from two causes. Firstly, people do not like to discuss deeply what Islam has enjoined regarding woman. Secondly, the present conditions of Muslim Society are such as might be called the dark ages of Islam.

To understand the high position given to woman in Islam we have to go back a little and see the condition of woman in the world before the advent of Muhammad.

Woman was in man's view not a human being. It would surprise you to know that on many occasions men argued whether she had an eternal soul like man. Moreover to know that there was a conclave in 568 A.D. in France which after long consideration came to the conclusion that a woman has a soul but nevertheless she is and she must always be a humble creature and an obedient servant to man. She was regarded more or less as a property; she could not inherit, but could be inherited. She must be against her will a wife to the eldest son of her deceased husband. As a general rule she had no right to be a member of society. The

* Being the text of a speech delivered on the occasion of the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad celebrated in London under the auspices of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, on Saturday the 20th April 1940. His Excellency Dr. Hassan Nachat Pacha, the Egyptian Ambassador, presided.

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coming of Islam heralded the freedom of woman from the yoke under which she had groaned for a long time.

Islam gave her equality with man in every religious duty and function, and they would be both equally rewarded or punished in the other world according to the good or evil he or she had done. Woman has the right to attend prayers in the mosque and to perform the annual pilgrimage to Makka, and it is worth mentioning that she must either be veiled or wearing gloves.

As for woman as a wife, Islam has given her rights and imposed duties upon her in the same way as it has upon man. Islam has divided work equally between man and woman. It ordered the man to work outdoors as he is fit and much more capable of shouldering the burden of life. And so it is his duty to earn money to defray all expenses and defend his family. We find that meaning explained in the verse from the Qur-án : “Men are supervisors to women on account of the qualities with which God has gifted the one above the other and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them. Virtuous women are obedient, guarding in secret that which God has guarded.” And it ordered woman to work indoors, to look after children and to fill her house with happiness so that a man might find himself in an atmosphere of relief after his troubles, and the many perplexities of his work. But, in general, Islam did not forbid woman from practising any kind of external work if she was capable of doing so.

As for the meaning of marriage itself from the Islamic point of view, some people may understand it to be neither more nor less than a contract between wife and husband like any other legal civil contract. But from the following verse from the Qur-án you will certainly be able to understand the basis upon which Islam sought

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to found marriage. "And one of His signs is that He hath created mates for you of your own species to feel confident of them and to have mutual understanding and has put love and tenderness between you."

And though in theory the right of divorce is in man's hand, because a woman may in contracting marriage give up some of her rights in exchange for the rights she would gain by being a wife, yet she could, if she so wished, stipulate her right to divorce herself from her husband should the occasion arise.

You may also be surprised to know that Islam gave the woman some rights which till now a European woman in some countries is denied. A Muslim woman has the right to sign a civil contract without any sort of supervision from a man, while in some countries now a married woman cannot sign a contract without her husband's signature.

It is also worth mentioning that even in the golden ages of Islam, when the Muslim lawyers had a remarkable authority among the Muslims, women were not shut out from the community, and here is a story which may give you some idea about the point I am emphasising.

A jurisconsult, Alā'u 'd-Dīn as-Samarqandī, wrote a remarkable work called *At-tuhfa*, for the school of Abu Hanifa, and he made up his mind that he would not give in marriage his daughter, who was a scholar in jurisprudence and who used to sign jointly with her father the *fatwa* (law verdict), to any one except one who could comment on that book. A certain Al-Kasānī, popularly called Malik'ul 'Ulamā, undertook to do the work and he did it remarkably well and wrote a commentary called *Badāi'u s-Sanāi' fī Tartībī s-Sharāi'*. He married the daughter and from that time on the *fatwa* was to be signed by three persons, the father, the daughter and the husband.

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Moreover, according to some schools in Islam, woman could be charged with any duty in the state except that of Khalifa. She could be appointed as judge, she could be a witness, she could even be a Sultan. And we know from reading the early history of Islam that women went with the Muslim armies to nurse the wounded and to look after any business of the army.

There are many other things to be said about the status of woman in Islam, and its views could easily be defended, but your time and the occasion do not permit me to say any more. Nevertheless I could not leave my place without saying a final word. Indeed you may find some faults among the Muslims regarding the position and treatment of woman, but it is not the fault of religion. It is the fault of those who call themselves Muslims in name. But we must always make a difference between a thing in theory and when it is put into practice. Only in this way can we be just to any principle of life.

A MYSTICAL READING OF ISLAM

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

[The line of thought adopted in this mystical presentation of certain aspects of Islam may sound a little strange in the ears of the readers of the "Islamic Review." As, however, it gives us a glimpse of that enormous heritage of Islam called "Sufism," together with its broad accommodative spirit, so characteristic of the religion of Islam, we are glad to publish this article in the hope that it will arouse a new curiosity in people's mind about the possibilities of Islam in the world that is in the making.]

We may add here that, however deep the mystics in Islam might have gone in the metaphysical analysis of the being, they never discarded matter and its demands on human existence. They wonderfully managed to reconcile their social obligations with their mystical experiences. Hence their peculiar culture, far from being a handicap to the normal course of civilization, gave an impetus to it in its vital aspects.—ED., "Islamic Review."]

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A L L A H

(GOD)

“ See ONE, Know ONE, Speak ONE, Desire ONE, Chant ONE, Seek ONE ”^(a) (*Jami*)

And that *One* is *Allah*, the *summum bonum* of human existence. Allah is not the tribal God of the Arabs, or Arab-Muslims or Muslims, as is supposed by some non-Muslims out of ignorance. Allah is the One Supreme God whom hundreds of thousands of Prophets^(b) from the very first Prophet *Adam* downwards preached to the people as the God of entire humanity, of the entire creation, of the entire universe, of the material as well as the spiritual worlds. The very first chapter, nay, the very first verse of the Qur-án opens with a praise of the “Lordship” of *Allah* in a brief but all-embracing terminology of “*Rabbul-’Alámín*”^(c), that is, “the Lord of the Worlds.” The theory of all-comprehensiveness of the Lordship of *Allah* constitutes by itself the strongest testimony of the cosmopolitan nature of the religion of Islam. As the *one* Lord of all, Allah has no rival, no partner, no likeness, no sex; He is the Eternal, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting; the very First and the very Last, but beyond the limits of time or space, the most hidden and at once the most manifest; Inconceivable, Unperceptible; there was, there is and there will remain nothing save Him. He never sleeps nor slumbers; He never tires nor weakens; “Every moment He is in a state of glory.” He is the great Originator; He is the *Alpha* and the *Omega*; everything is from Him, and everything returns unto Him. Everything is His manifestation, and on Him rests the existence of the Universe. He is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth.

(a) یک بین و یک بدان و یک بگو
 یک بخوان و یک بخور

(b) Traditions make it appear that there were 124,000 Prophets and Apostles.

(c) رب العالمین

A MYSTICAL READING OF ISLAM

THE ESOTERIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD AND NAME OF ALLAH

This conception of *Allah* is, after all, an outward expression of a finite mortal's feelings, and it is but the commonsense philosophy of the unique and supreme nature of God. Deeper is the implication of the word and name of *Allah*. Those who call upon Him by that name are not merely to move their lips, but also their hearts. Those who hear the word with one ear are not to let it pass by the other. In reciting or hearing the name, it needs be imprinted on the soul, on the heart until it penetrates into the hearts and souls of the reciters and hearers, and until their whole being becomes the word itself, and becomes inseparable from, or independent of, and absorbed in, the word, so much so that they remain unconscious of their own self(a) in which stage "fire cannot burn, sword cannot cut, water cannot wet, wind cannot dry them away" (b). If so, what is it that makes them so unconscious? Is it not the nectarine pill of the glorious *name* and *self* of God? It is related of Abu Sa'id (c), a great Sufi, that he was repeating the word "Allah" continuously for seven years with the result that every atom of his being began to cry aloud "*Allah! Allah!*" With the Order of the *Qadiries*, whose founder is *Shaiikh Abdul Qadir Jielani*(d) the name is to be recited 78,586 times in one strain and at one stretch in order to see the Divine Light as the author of the Order did. The aim underlying this recitation times without number is to fix every faculty of man upon

(a) Pp. 7 and 8. "Studies in Islamic Mysticism," by R. A. Nicholson.

(b) For a similar idea, *vide* Bhagawat Gita II—23 and 24.

(c) *Abu Said Ibn-ahl-Khayar*. Born 96 A.D. Died 1649 A.D. A contemporary of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), the Murshid (spiritual teacher) of that well-known Saint of Baghdad, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jielani; with Ibn Sina he came into personal relation. A great quatrain-writer, the first master of theosophic verse.

(d) A very famous Saint of Baghdad (1165 A.D.)

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one point (the Most High), and to reach that point which is his final goal(a).

There is a purpose in preferring the name of *Allah* to His other names for recitation. In the name of *Allah* is indicated His absolute and recondite *Reality*, while in others His glorious and manifest attributes. In calling upon Him by His attributes, we invoke the intervention of one or other quality of His, in which case the prayer becomes tainted with a motive. A prayer or worship with a motive of a reward or out of fear of punishment, becomes servile, utilitarian and "commercial." "Pitiable are they who work for fruit"(b). "He who wants nothing . . . is dear to Me,"(c) are the sayings of Sri Krishna. When, on the other hand, the name of *Allah* is invoked, the invoker's thought is fixed on His *Reality* alone out of love and nothing else. This is what may be called the *Nishkama Dharma* of the Gita. In this thought of the *Reality and Reality* alone, where he perceives and realises only He in His recondite nature, the thinker forgets himself and other manifest creation. It is in this stage that *he becomes beloved of God, and God beloved of him.*

TO SEEK AND REALISE GOD—ITS NECESSITY AND ITS DIFFICULTY

It is related that a certain ancient philosopher was asked: *Who is God and What is God?* The philosopher requested a day's time to think out the answer. On subsequent days he always doubled the period required for deliberation, and when enquired of the reason, the philosopher replied that the longer he considered the subject, the more obscure it appeared(d).

(a) Qur-án, III : 14.

(b) Bhagawat Gita, II : 47.

(c) Bhagawat Gita, XII : 16.

(d) P. 221, "Pleasures of Life," by Sir John Lubbock.

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God encompasses a circle "whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." If so, how to conceive Him? Can any mortal and any finite attempt it? It is a universally received theory that no finite being's attempt, however unremitting, will be fruitful, nor can a mortal, so long as he is a mortal, reach His abode—"the veritable no-man's land," "the region of the Unseen," "the region of *Non-Plao* (of the Greeks), the *Brahmapuram* (of the Hindus), the *Heavenly Kingdom* (of the Christians), the region of *La-Makan* (non-Abode or *Wara-ul Wara* in Islam)(a). Once you reach His abode, you are no more a mortal. Once you get into His Presence you are never heard of afterwards. The more we enter into the boundless ocean of Ontology, the more will we find ourselves lost in the depth of its metaphysics. The position is analogous to that of a person carrying a heavy load on his shoulders and crossing a stream; the deeper he enters into the water, the heavier becomes the burden, and the greater becomes the risk of his being drowned. And yet, he has to cross the stream and discharge the burden. The burden here is "to see the *One*, Know the *One*, Speak the *One*, Desire the *One*, Chant the *One* and Seek the *One*." It is indeed a weighty burden resting on his shoulders from time immemorial, nay, from the time of the beginning of his soul. It is, in other words, the load of the Christian of the "Pilgrim's Progress" awaiting its discharge. How long and how hard the Christian struggled in order to discharge the load on his back is known to the readers of that wonderful book of allegory. It behoves us, therefore, to lay our hands on the plough and furrow the soil, though realising as we do, that we are treading upon very unsafe ground, that we are embarking upon

(a) *لامكان ورا* (Lamakan Wara) When the Prophet was asked : Where the abode of God was, he said, "He was *La-Makan*."

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an enquiry of a very profound and sacred nature. A superficial or desultory study will only be gloomy. Bacon and Pope have rightly said that "deep draughts of learning always lead to God, while a little knowledge may turn away from God." What is, therefore, wanted is a deep and a close search for the realm of knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

**Saadi* has said that knowledge is that which leads one up to God, else it is no knowledge, it is ignorance(a). Evidently he alludes to the intuitive knowledge of the *rishis*, gnostics, seers, 'Arifs and so forth who, by virtue of their knowledge, are not in need of any definition or description of God or of any logical proof of His existence. Does a child seek proof of its mother? The child's knowledge of its mother is intuitive. So it is with the *rishis* and other seers, as the very etymology of their designations indicates. The word *rishi* is derived from the Sanskrit *Drs*, meaning "to see," while the root-meaning of the word *gnostic* is "to know"; so is the Arabic word '*Arif* derived from the root '*Arafa*, meaning "intuition or knowledge." But it is a knowledge not capable of communication to others in words. To be brief for the present it is a kind of knowledge that may be comprehended, illustrative language allowed, in the sense of conjugal acquaintance of a husband with his wife. The mutual experience of the husband and wife is known to them alone, is cherished by them alone, and is inexpressible to others. It is what they call an "empirical" experience. They have, therefore, to acquire a personal experience of their own if they can, or to depend upon, and be guided by, the experience of the seers, be it communicated in whatever form. This alone will lead to a "belief."

*Hazrat Ali said that knowledge is that light of the soul which enlightens self.

(a) علمے کہ راہ بحق نمانی جہالت است

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BELIEF IN GOD

“Believe and thou shalt learn,” is the biblical saying. We believe in the conclusions of scientists, without verifying them ourselves. Scientists are as much inspired as sages and seers. If the scientists say that water is composed of oxygen and hydrogen, we do not verify their conclusion, nor do we see the component parts ourselves. Has anybody seen an *atom* or *electron* even with the most improved and powerful microscope? And yet we are asked to make a mental admission and to believe in its existence and constitution. We go to hospitals, get medicine given by compounders and take them in, though we know that they are also keeping poisons there. That there is a city like London is believed even by a person who has not seen it, by one who has not studied geography, because others have seen it. How well has the Bible put it: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (a). Man should, therefore, be able to believe in God even without the medium of matter. The belief must be as firm and resolute as that of *Hazrat Ali*, who said: “Even if I were to see God with my physical eyes, my faith would not increase by a grain thereby” (b) or as determining and decisive as that of an Arab of the desert, who when inquired as to how he knew the existence of God, pointed to the footprints of a bird on the sand, and said that he inferred the action of God as plainly as from that impression he inferred the passage of the bird (c). There is again the conviction of the seers of the Upanishadas that the consciousness of the *Reality*

(a) Hebrews, XI : 1.

(b) (1) “Fathhur-rabbani,” by Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jielani; and (2) “Nahjul Balagha,” Chapter 31.

لر كشف الغطاء لما ذات يقينا

(c) P. 67, “The Existence of God,” by Joseph McCabe, The Enquirer's Library Series.

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of *Brahma* is as real as the consciousness of an *amlaka* fruit held in once's palm. It is this consciousness that is considered by the animists like Frazer (in opposition to humanists like Spencer) as "the germ of religious ideas." Man is constituted a "religious being"; his very soul, his innermost, therefore, impels him to a belief in something higher than himself. The famous German philosopher Kant was inspired to say that "the phenomena of conscience alone guarantees the existence of God." Man is "endowed with the power or faculty to conceive and to adore some invisible superhuman Being; else, he could not evolve the idea of such a Being from gross ignorance, rude fears or frightful dreams" (a). It is this intuitive faculty of his that gives rise to, in the words of *Sir Oliver Lodge*, "a religious sense which teaches him that he is actually in touch with the higher order of creation, that he can have intercourse with it, that he can derive thence help and comfort, that he is not isolated and stranded, not temporary and evanescent, but that he has within him the seed of immortality, that on the spiritual side his roots go down to infinite depths and that he may blossom into religious supernal" (b). How convincing is the language of Herbert Spencer "The conviction that an infinite Being exists seems forced upon us by the manifest incompleteness of our finite knowledge. To say that we cannot know the Infinite is by implication to affirm that there is an Infinite. In the very denial of our power to learn what the Infinite is, there lies hidden the assumption that it is, and the making of this assumption proves that the Infinite has been present to the mind, not as nothing but as something" (c). This is but inherent in man's nature. Then again "A religious sentiment which impels man to believe and worship a Supreme Being has become an evidence of His existence" (d).

(a) Page 84, "The Teachings of the Vedas," by Maurice Philips.

(b) Page 110, "Making of Man."

(c) Page 88, "First Principles."

(d) Mansel's *Banton Lectures*.

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OPINIONS

ON

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