

"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.

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MOHAMMAD IN WORLD SCRIPTURES

A unique and wonderful work by Maulana Abdul Haque Vidyarthi, a book of which Muslims and non-Muslims alike felt the need for centuries.

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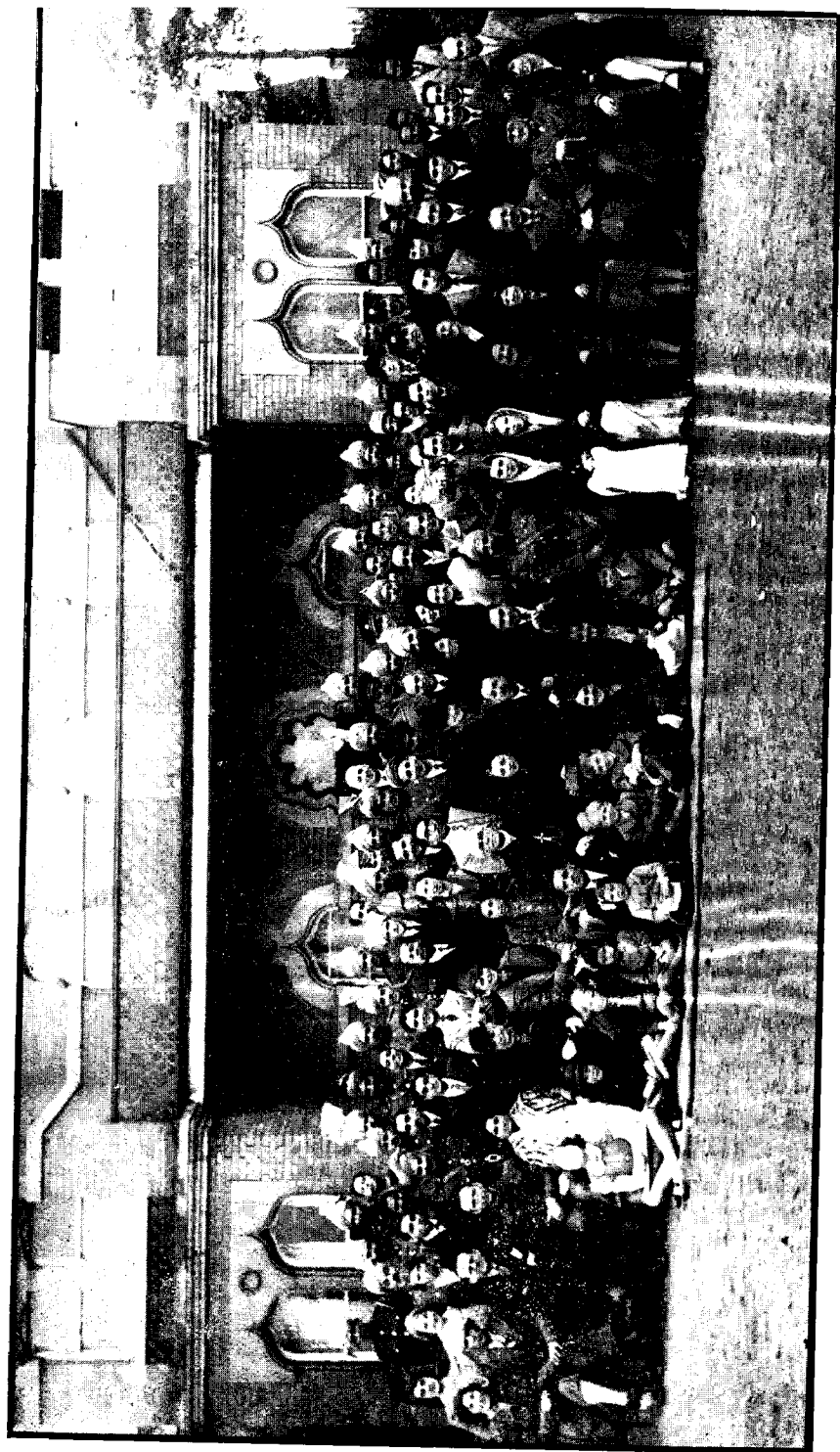
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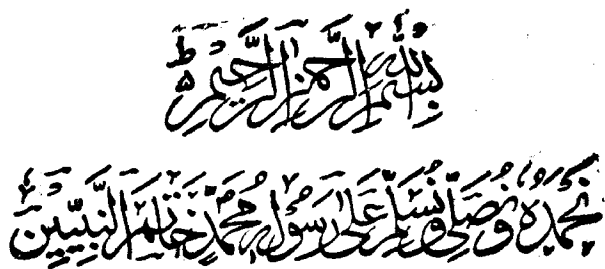
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A Partial Fraternal Group taken on the occasion of the 'Id-al-Fitr (1359 A.H.) Festival, after the Prayers, on Saturday 2nd November, 1940 at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking.



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SOME NOTABLE ADDITIONS TO THE WESTERN ISLAMIC BROTHERHOOD

As a rule we publish announcements of the acceptance of Islam together with the photos of the persons concerned. But this should not be taken to mean that they are the only persons who have joined the Brotherhood. There are many others who, for some reason or other, do not get their photos published. They are all the same staunch followers of the faith and prepared to make all necessary sacrifices for its advancement. Among these latter the following names are worth mentioning :

1. Mrs. Mabel Pearson of Watson Road, Cromwell, Sheffield, 10.
2. Mr. Richard G. Kreiner of Tidworth, Hampshire, joined the fold on 8th May, 1940.
3. Baron William De Cartier, of Balls Cross, Pelworth (Sussex), joined the fold on 3rd May, 1940.

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THE 'ID-AL-FITR AT THE MOSQUE, WOKING

"Muslims from all parts of the world celebrated the festival of Id-al-Fitr (or Ramadhan) which signifies the close of the month of fasting between sunrise and sunset at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, on Saturday. Despite restricted rail facilities there was a very large gathering which included representatives from the various Eastern Embassies and Legations, in addition to a picturesque contingent of officers and men of the Indian Army. Many of the women wore gorgeous native attire, while others were wrapped in heavy furs, which were more in keeping with the weather.

"Following prayers in a large marquee on the lawn facing the Memorial House, the ceremony of embracing took place, after which M. ABDUL MAJID, M.A., Imam of the Mosque, delivered an impressive address dealing with the two outstanding religions of the world—the Muslim and the Christian—and made a strong appeal for unity. He called on Muslims throughout the world to unite with Christians and overthrow Nazi tyranny, oppression and dictatorship and stamp out Fascism. If the war was to be won, he said, and peace restored to the world, it would only be by the united and wholehearted efforts of the peoples of the Muslim and Christian faiths. Neither Judaism nor Hinduism, nor any other religion could hope to defeat Hitler and Mussolini, but if Muslims and Christians united, they could bring about their early downfall."—*The Surrey Herald*, November 8, 1940.

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

1. To know what Islam is theoretically read the Holy Qur-án. To know it in practice read the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the history of the early Caliphate.

2. Islam means *peace* and it inculcates peace with God and peace with man, peace with God involving a successful struggle with the evil forces in one's own nature, and peace with man involving a determined effort to enable him to achieve his high destiny.

3. Islam presents a complete picture of the New Social Order the world is craving for in its anxiety for peace.

4. Islam means spiritual fraternity, social liberty, constitutional equality and democratic polity.

5. Democracy in Islam means just and equitable distribution of rights and privileges and not equal participation in the affairs of the state. It means freedom of discussion, but demands obedience to the decision of the good and the efficient and united action.

6. Islam gives impetus to individual efforts but only so far as it is consistent with the common weal. It abhors accumulation of wealth and enjoins definite rules for the free circulation of capital and equitable distribution of the national dividend. It avoids invidious class distinction but condemns class-consciousness.

7. Islam does not ignore the realities of life ; it recognizes the psycho-physical needs of man and prescribes ways for their orderly satisfaction.

8. Islam means unconditional non-violence of the spirit but makes physical violence mandatory to meet aggression, and suppression of the freedom of conscience.

9. Islam wants to make man have a glimpse of his spiritual destiny even while in this world through the proper fulfilment of his social duties. It does not believe in any spiritual self-unfoldment away from

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these duties. The real and the mystical are thus blended into a harmonious whole in the wise social texture of the Islamic religion.

ISLAM—THE ONLY SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF WAR

BY PROFESSOR SYED MOZAFFARUDDIN NADVI, M.A.

The problem of problems which engages our serious attention at present is: "How is it that every individual and every nation preaches peace and goodwill on the platform as well as in the press, but still the world is plunged into a war the like of which has been seldom experienced before?" Hitler, the most cruel tyrant of the present age, speaks of peace, harmony and new order on the one hand, and is crushing country after country without the slightest provocation on the other. How does it befit his mouth to talk of civilization and culture when his barbarous activities have already broken the previous records of famous tyrants of the world. Mussolini, another rash and arrogant dictator of the modern time, dreams of the resurrection of the glorious civilization of the Roman Empire, but does not hesitate in ravishing the helpless peoples of other countries and betraying a cult of mind of which any man with commonsense must feel ashamed. Stalin, the most mysterious personality of the world, waxes eloquent on the policy of "Live and let live," but, without any shadow of justification, swallowed half of Poland and destroyed the liberty of Finland. Coming nearer home, Mahatma Gandhi, the most saintly dictator of the present time, advocates peace and non-violence in season and out of season; but his recent policy of non-co-operation constitutes the negation of his proclaimed lifelong principle of peace and goodwill, inasmuch as it helps the forces of aggression both directly and indirectly.

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Do not these acts of great dictators prove beyond doubt that the "tongue has been given to man not to reveal his thought but to conceal it?"

A remarkable feature of the present war, like the last European war, is that almost all the nations engaged therein belong to the same continent, profess the same religion, follow the same traditions and maintain the same standard of life. Christianity is essentially a religion of goodwill. Why, then, all these rivalries and jealousies among its followers? It appears that either the aggressors do not believe in Christianity, or, if they believe, they do so only in theory, not in practice. How else could they justify taking up arms against their co-religionists?

If we analyse the circumstances generally leading to the outbreak of war, we shall invariably find that suspicion and greed are behind them. The politicians and statesmen of the modern time are more conspicuous by their selfish motives and lust of power than by liberal views and progressive outlooks. They move heaven and earth to achieve their own ends and are bent on monopolising all advantages for themselves to the exclusion of others. If leaders of different countries get rid of their narrow-mindedness and cultivate the habit of tolerance and forbearance for one another, war must stop, or at least its frequency will diminish.

In short, there is no getting away from the conclusion that "intolerance" is the root cause of war, and the best solution of the problem of war is that people must learn to respect the wishes of others as much as they do theirs and make allowances for the views contrary to their own. As Islam enjoins on its followers to be liberal and tolerant and commands them to rise above bigotry and narrowmindedness, it would be profitable to refer to the teachings of that religion on the subject. It is hardly necessary for

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me to say that Islam is not a religion of prayers and hymns only ; it is a practical and progressive religion the chief object of which is the establishment of peace and order in the world :

God says in the Qur-án :

1. " You have your religion and I have mine."
2. " There is no compulsion in Faith."
3. " If they (unbelievers) keep aloof from you and do not fight with you, then God does not allow you to have anything to do with them (*i.e.*, to fight against them)."
4. " God does not forbid you to co-operate with, and do justice and favour to, those unbelievers who did not wage war on you in respect of your religion and who did not drive you out of your residences ; indeed God loves those who do justice. Verily, God forbids you to co-operate with those unbelievers who fought against you in matters of religion and drove you out of your residences and who helped in your expulsion."

Qur-ánic verses stressing the necessity of tolerance and co-operation can easily be multiplied. The Prophet of Islam, by his words and deeds, was always liberal and generous in his dealings with non-Muslims. He mixed with them freely and talked to them cheerfully. He gave them seats in the mosque and never made discrimination between a believer and non-believer in worldly matters of general interest. Tolerance is an article of Faith with Muslims, who are bound to co-operate with other peoples unless non-co-operation becomes a necessary evil. The Prophet issued a Charter in the first year of his migration to Madina in 622 A.D. by which equal rights were granted to Jews and all blood-feud was abolished. In the sixth year of his

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migration he granted a Charter to the monks of the monastery of St. Catherine (near Mount Sinai), by which Christians were given important privileges. "In this Charter," writes the late Mr. Ameer Ali in his *History of the Saracens*, "the Prophet undertook himself, and enjoined on his followers, to protect the Christians, to guard them from all injuries, to defend their churches and the residences of their priests. They were not to be unfairly taxed ; no bishop was to be driven out of his bishopric ; no Christian was to be forced to reject his religion ; no monk was to be expelled from his monastery ; no pilgrim was to be detained from his pilgrimage ; nor were the Christian churches to be pulled down for the sake of building mosques or houses for the Muslims. Christian women married to Muslims were to enjoy their own religion, and not to be subjected to compulsion or annoyance of any kind on that account. If the Christians should stand in need of assistance for the repair of their churches or monasteries, or any other matter pertaining to their religion, the Muslims were to assist them."

Could tolerance and liberality go further ? This is the tolerance that was taught and practised by the Prophet and early Muslims about fourteen centuries ago, when Arabia and many other countries were wrapped in darkness. Should the modern politicians follow this noble example in their dealings with peoples of other countries, there will be little or no cause for the outbreak of hostilities.

Now let us turn to the principles that have been laid down by Islam in connection with war. Briefly speaking, they are as follows :

1. War of aggression is always forbidden.
2. There is no compulsion in Faith.
3. War is permitted only in self-defence or in the general interest of peace and order.

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4. When war becomes inevitable, it must not continue beyond the limit of necessity.
5. When war breaks out, clear instructions must be given to men and officers to respect the religious susceptibilities of the opponents. Further, they must be told that old persons and children should not be touched, women should not be dishonoured, trees should not be cut, harvest should not be destroyed and churches, monasteries and other places of worship should not be demolished.
6. As soon as the enemy seeks cessation of hostilities, an agreement based on equity and justice must be concluded.

I am not unmindful of the fact that several Muslim rulers did not observe the above mentioned principles of war enunciated by Islam. But it must be borne in mind that if anyone does anything against the clear instructions of his religion, the fault will be his and not of his religion. Such wars might have been Muslim wars in the sense that they were waged by Muslims, but certainly they were not Islamic wars as they were resorted to in contravention of the clearly laid down principles of Islam.

Thus the only war sanctioned by Islam is a war against war. It is a war to establish peace which has its own victories no less renowned than war.

THE HOLY QUR-AN ON JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

BY MAULVI AHSANULLAH

Verse 75.—"Wa min ahlil kitābi man in ta'manahu
Bi qintwarin yu'addihī ilaika
Wa min hum man in ta'manhu bidīnārin
lā yu'addihī
Ilaika, illā mādumta'alaihi qāiman ;
Zālika bian-nahum qālū laisa 'alainā
Fil ummiyyīna sabīlun,
Wa yaqūlūna 'alallāhil kaziba, wa hum
ya'lamūn."

"Among the People of the Book
Are some who, if entrusted
With a hoard of gold,
Will (readily) pay it back ;
Others, who, if entrusted
With a single coin,
Will not repay it unless
Thou constantly stoodest
Demanding, because
They say, ' There is no call
On us (to keep faith)
With these ignorant' (pagans).
But they tell a lie against God,
And (well) they know it."

Verse 76.—"Balā man awfā bi'ahdihī wat-taqā
Fa in-nallāha yuhibbul muttaqīn."
"Nay—These that keep
Their plighted faith
And act aright,—verily
God loves those
Who act aright."

Verse 77.—"In-nal lazīna yashtarūna bi-'ahdillāhi
Wa aimānihim thamanan qalīlan
'Ulā'ika lā khalāqa lahum fil ākhirati
Wa lā yukal-limu-humul-lāhu

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Walā yanzuru ilaihim yawmal qiyāmati

Walā yuzak-kīhim

Wa lahum ‘azābun ‘alim.”

“ As for those who sell

The faith they owe to God

And their own plighted word

For a small price,

They shall have no portion

In the hereafter

Nor will God

Deign to speak to them

Or look at them

On the day of Judgment,

Nor will He cleanse them

(Of sin) : They shall have

A grievous penalty.”

Verse 78.—“ Wa inna minhum la-farīqan yalwūna
alsinatahum

Bil kitābi litahsabuhū minal kitābi

Wa mā huwa minal kitābi wayaqūlūna
huwa min

‘Indal-lāhi, wamā huwa min ‘indillāhi

Wa-yaqūlūna ‘alal-lāhil kaziba wa hum
ya‘lamūn.”

“ There is among them

A section who distort

The Book with their tongues :

(As they read) you would think

it a part of the Book,

But it is no part

Of the Book ; and they say,

‘ That is from God.’

But it is not from God ;

It is they who tell

A lie against God

And (well) they know it ! ”

JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

Verse 79.—“Mā kāna li-basharīn an yu'tiahul-lāhul
Kitāba wal hukma wan nubuwwata
Thumma yaqūla lin-nāsi
Kúnú 'ibādan-li
Min dūnil-lāhi walākin kūnū rab-bāniy-yūna
Bimā kuntum tu'allimūnal kitāba wa bimā
kuntum tadrusūn.”

“It is not (possible)
That a man to whom
Is given the Book,
And wisdom,
And prophetic office,
Should say to people :
'Be ye my worshippers
Rather than God's ;'
On the contrary
(He would say)
'Be ye worshippers
Of Him Who is truly
The Cherisher of all :'
For ye have taught
The Book and ye
Have studied it earnestly.”

Verse 80.—“Walā ya'murakum antat-takhizulmalā'ikata
Wan nabiyy-yīna arbāban ; aya'murukum bil
kufri
Ba'da iz antum muslimūn.”
“Nor would He instruct you
To take angels and prophets
For lords and patrons.
What ! would he bid you
To unbelieve after ye had
Bowed your will
(To God in Islam) ? ”

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THE HOLY QUR-AN AND ITS COMMENTARY

BY THE LATE AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

(Continued from p. 129 of the current volume.)

In speaking of the virtue of liberality, the Book mentions some among those who are foremost in deserving our charity and alms. The first of these are the near relatives. Even among these, parents are given a priority. Service to parents is given such importance that in one place kindness to them has been mentioned next to the worship of God.¹ Teachings of this kind are also a special feature of the Qur-án. After the kinsmen, the Qur-án mentions others as well who have a claim upon our charity,² so much so that even a stranger is declared to have a right to our charities. Here, however, mention is made only of such objects of charity as are the most deserving of all. Further, these are mentioned in due order, viz., the orphan, the destitute, the wayfarer, the beggar and those in captivity. This last class of people includes those who have been fined but who are innocent or otherwise deserving of mercy in our opinion. But, generally speaking, the Qur-án uses the phrase "*Fil-Riqab*" literally, meaning "captive" in the sense of war prisoners.

These are people whom we capture after they have been defeated in a defensive battle and whose release is conditional upon ransom. Since all other forms of slavery have been abolished by the religion of Islam, when the Holy Qur-án speaks of slavery it is only in reference to this one form allowed by it. It is evident that wars resulting in such captures are waged with enemies alone. If a previous prophet, viz., Jesus of Nazareth, had given the teaching that one should

¹ "And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him and goodness to your parents." (The Holy Qur-án, 17: 23.)

² The Holy Qur-án, 4: 36.

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love one's enemy, this Book, the Holy Qur-án, showed a practical way of acting upon that teaching. It purports to say that the enemies whom you or your friends bring in as war-prisoners should either be released of your own accord or, as an alternative, provisions should be made by you for the payment of their ransom. It is surprising that the people who are supposed to follow the teachings of the Great Nazarene have never adopted this practical way of showing their love to their enemies. The reason seems to be that the Prophet Jesus never showed any example of this principle of loving one's enemies. This blemish attaches practically to all his teachings. This is because, as I have just said, he had no opportunity to do such good deeds in his life.

Up to this point, the discussion has concerned itself with virtues that make for benefits to others. Here it touches upon matters which relate to the reformation of the individual himself. The foremost of these is the practice of saying prayers. The injunction, here, is not for mere "saying prayer," but for "keeping prayer up." The "keeping up" of prayer implies bringing one's conduct in line with the words uttered in prayers, of which the finest part is the *Fátiha*. Next to the keeping up of prayer, mention is made of some social matters, among which *Zakát* comes first.

Islam has prescribed two kinds of charity for general good. The one is that which we spend ourselves in an optional way in love for God. This has been discussed above. The other kind of charity has taken the form of a tax, which we have to pay at any cost. Under this head of charity we have to give away a fortieth part of our wealth every year as a contribution to the National welfare. The Holy Qur-án elsewhere divides this contribution under eight heads of

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expenditure. This systematic distribution of charity is another peculiarity of Islam. Charity is a theme emphasised by every religion in the world, but its systematisation is the special privilege of Islam.

The commandments regarding prayer and fasting are followed by the one concerning the fulfilment of obligations. Only two sets of laws are needed to maintain general security and peace—the Civil and the Criminal. Revenue Laws mostly concern the government. Accordingly, civil affairs are treated first here. Among these, the thing that comes first is obligations and their fulfilment. The word “obligation” includes not only understandings formally reached, but also those responsibilities which arise out of social relationships, such as trusts, legacies and other rights on us involved in our membership of a certain society. Such obligations are inevitable in any condition of social existence. For example, we have to observe the laws enforced by the sovereign power of the nation. Similarly, we are pledged to such things as the protection of the wealth, the honour and the integrity of the connubial rights of others living in the same society as we ourselves. All these are obligations which our living in society entails. The whole system of Civil Law is composed of such obligations as these. Next to the fulfilment of obligations, the Holy Qur-án refers to a personal moral quality, the absence of which not only leaves the perfection of human morals incomplete, but also renders the individual concerned unfit to perform any work of enterprise or even to attempt it. It is the important quality of patience and perseverance. The presence of this quality in a person enables him to fight the difficulties and trials of life with the utmost bravery and courage. It is a great virtue to possess this quality and one who is devoid of it is not a worthy man.

THE HOLY QUR-AN AND ITS COMMENTARY

The word *sabr* translated by the English word *patience* has got a wide significance. It does not consist merely of a quiet forbearance in the face of a calamity. The best manifestation of this quality is in our having control over our emotions and desires. In other words, we should be able to withhold the expression of an emotion or of a desire, when it is not the proper occasion for its exercise. Similarly, it will be a case of *sabr* if we do not take revenge for any harm done to us by someone out of sheer stupidity. It will also be a case of *sabr* to fight the difficulties and trials lying in the way of the performance of an enterprise, or to bear with patience the unpleasant experiences in providing matters necessary therefor. In the same way, it will be an act of *sabr* to perform very difficult tasks in doing our duties, for example in the observance of Divine commandments. According to the Holy Qur-án, calamities come to create this most essential quality in man. What is ascertainable in this connection is what, after all, constitutes religion in the opinion of this Book. It is evident that, unlike other religions, Islam does not consider religion to consist of certain devotional practices and rituals. On the contrary, everything that helps the growth of high morals in man falls, in the terminology of the Qur-án, under the category of Religion. Thus, in the course of this very discourse, it is stated that the performers of the afore-said tasks are alone truthful, *i.e.*, are such as demonstrate the truth of their religious beliefs. Further, the doers of such good deeds are also termed “virtuous.”

(To be continued)

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HADZRAT 'AISHA'S AGE AT THE TIME OF HER MARRIAGE

BY A. F. M. ABDUL MAJID RUSHDI, M.A. (ALIG.),
M.A. (CAL.),

Librarian, Islamia College, Calcutta.

There exists a great controversy about the age of Hadzrat 'Aisha, the third wife of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), at the time of her marriage and the date of the marriage among the Traditionists, the Arab Historians and the Orientalists. It is remarkable that her father Hadzrat Abū Bakr, the most renowned genealogist and historian of his time, who had described the age and dates of all important personalities and events of Arabian history with the utmost minuteness, did not care to mention anything about his beloved daughter. History or tradition has not given any final verdict on this point.

Imām Bukhārī says that the ceremony of “‘Aqd” of her marriage was performed when Hadzrat 'Aisha was six years old and the “Rasūmāt” (marriage consummation) when she was nine.*

Imām Abū al-Husain Muslim b. al-Hajjāj b. Muslim al-Qushayrī and Imām Ahmad b. Hanbal say that the “‘Aqd” and the “Rasūmāt” of Hadzrat 'Aisha took place at the age of seven and nine years respectively. The great Arab historian, Ibn Sa'd, and Muhaddith Mawlānā Badr al-Dīn 'Ainī say that the “‘Aqd” of Hadzrat 'Aisha took place when she was nine years of age and the “Rasūmāt” after five years or four years of this “‘Aqd” (i.e., at the age of 14 or 13 years respectively).†

**Al-Bukhārī-Kitāb-al-Jamī'al-Sahīh : Le Recueil des Traditions Mahométanes.* Edited by M. L. Krehl. Published by E. J. Brill: Leyden, 1868, Volume III, page 429.

†*Ibn Sa'ad—Al-Tabaqat*, Pt. VIII, page 41; and *Mawlānā 'Ainī—'Umdat al-Qāri*, Pt. I.

HADZRAT 'AISHA'S AGE AT HER MARRIAGE

Besides the difference about her age at the time of "‘Aqd" and "Rasūmāt," there was a great controversy among the above-mentioned authorities about the period that elapsed between the "‘Aqd" and the "Rasūmāt." Imām Bukhārī says that the "Rasūmāt" took place after three years of the "‘Aqd" while Imam Muslim and Imām Ibn Hanbal, after two years and according to Ibn Sa’ad, after five years, and, according to Mawlānā ‘Ainī, after four years. Though there are differences about the interval between the "‘Aqd" and the "Rasūmāt" and the age at the time of "‘Aqd," yet, curiously enough, there is complete unanimity among these scholars about the dates of the "‘Aqd" and the "Rasūmāt." The relevant dates can best be shown in a tabular form :

Authorities	Age at "‘Aqd"	Date of "‘Aqd"	Age at Rasūmāt	Date of "Rasūmāt"	Intervening periods between "‘Aqd" and "Rasūmāt"
1. Imām Bukhārī	6 years.	10th year of Nabuwwat, i.e., before three years of Hijra.	9 years.	Month of Shawwāl in the 2 A.H. after the Battle of Badr.	After the "‘Aqd" the Prophet lived at Makka for three years and five months.
2. Imām Muslim	7 years.	Do.	Do.	Do.	Silent.
3. Imām Ibn Hanbal	Do.	Do.	Do.	Do.	Do.
4. Ibn Sa’d	9 years.	Do.	14 years.	Do.	5 years.
5. Ibn Hisham	Silent.	Before 1½ years of Hijra.	Silent.	Silent.	Silent.
6. Mawlānā Badr-al-Din ‘Ainī	Silent.	Before two years of Hijra.	Do.	Month of Shawwāl in 2 A.H. after the Battle of Badr.	4 years.
7. Dr. Margo-liuth.	7 years.	Silent.	Do.	Silent.	Silent.
8. Sir W. Muir	6 years.	Do.	10 years.	Do.	Do.

At first we shall try to determine the period that intervened between Hadzrat ‘Aisha's "‘Aqd" and "Rasūmāt."

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By a simple calculation of her age on the two occasions as stated by our authorities we can see that :

According to Imām Bukhārī that period was three years.

According to Imām Muslim that period was two years.

According to Ibn Hanbal that period was three years.

According to Ibn Sa'd that period was five years.

According to Mawlānā 'Ainī that period was four years.

On the other hand, a consideration of the dates of the two occasions indicates that that period was five years. Imām Bukhārī mentions that, after the " 'Aqd," the Prophet lived at Makka for three years and five months. But he also admits that " Rasūmāt " took place in the second year of Hijra. Therefore, these two years of the Hijra during which, it goes without saying, the Prophet lived at Madina and not at Makka, are to be added to those three years and five months in order to get the period that actually passed between the " 'Aqd " and the " Rasūmāt ; " this gives us five years and five months. Although other traditionists and historians are silent on this point, Ibn Sa'd definitely states and Mawlānā 'Ainī also that the period was five years and four years respectively. This discrepancy between these various traditionists suggests that there might have been some mistake in these statements ; because a consideration of her age on these two occasions gives us periods of varied duration, whereas a consideration of the dates of the " 'Aqd " and " Rasūmāt " gives us a period of five years on which some traditionists are silent but Imam Bukhari and Ibn Sa'd and Mawlānā 'Ainī agree. If it is difficult to accept a point on which all differ from each other, there should be no hesitation in accepting a point

HADZRAT 'AISHA'S AGE AT HER MARRIAGE

on which those that mention it are almost of the same opinion. Therefore, we take it that the period that elapsed between the " 'Aqd " and the " Rasūmāt " was five years. The next point to consider is her age at the " 'Aqd " ceremony. A glance at the chart given above will show that the age given by the authorities varies from six years to nine years. When there is such a great difference, we cannot accept the version of any one on this point as correct, except that of Ibn Sa'd who definitely says that her age at " 'Aqd " was nine years and that the " Rasūmāt " took place after five years of it. It has already been pointed out that this version of Ibn Sa'd is the only true one. Further, the traditionist and historian, Ibn Hajar, who flourished in 1449 A.D., helps us a great deal in solving this age difficulty and, by construction, we shall find that he confirms the verdict of Ibn Sa'd.

Firstly, in *Isaba*, Ibn Hajar says that Hadzrat Fatima, youngest daughter of the Prophet, was born five years before the Holy Prophet Muhammad attained his Prophethood (ﷺ), the year in which the Ka'ba was repaired. In another place in the same book he says that Hadzrat Fatima was five years older than Hadzrat 'Aisha. This shows that Hadzrat 'Aisha was born in the first year of " Nabuwwat " (Prophethood). Now Imāms Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Sa'd all definitely say that the " 'Aqd " ceremony took place in Shawwāl, in the 10th year of " Nabuwwat." Therefore she would be about 10 years old at this time. But Ibn Sa'd is definite that she was nine years old at that time. This little difference of about a year is, however, no difficulty at all. It can be explained by the fact that the " Nabuwwat " began on the 27th Ramadhan ; and before the first year of the " Nabuwwat " had passed, she was only three months old, even if we take her birth to have taken place exactly at the

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beginning of the “Nabuwwat;” therefore, by the most liberal calculation, she could not have been more than nine years and six months at her “‘Aqd.” On the other hand, if she was born at the end of the first year of the “Nabuwwat,” she could not have been younger than eight years and six months. Avoiding the extremes, if we take a middle course, we get the age as nine years, exactly the age as given by Ibn Sa’d. It may be conceded that in such controversial matters on which no exact date can be obtained it is safer to remain as close as possible to the statements of the authorities concerned; therefore, we accept the statement that Hadzrat ‘Aisha was nine years old at the time of her “‘Aqd” ceremony.

Secondly, in the same book Ibn Hajar states that the marriage of Hadzrat Fātima, the youngest daughter of the Prophet, took place in the month of Shawwāl in 2 A.H. in her 18th year. As she was five years younger than Hadzrat Fātima, Hadzrat ‘Aisha could not have been more than 13 years in Shawwal in 2 A.H., the year of her “Rasūmāt.”

Thirdly, Imām Bukhārī quotes Hadzrat ‘Aisha as saying that at the time when the 54th Chapter of the Qur-ān, that is, Surah Al-Qamar, was revealed, she was a little girl and that whatever part of it she heard, she got it by heart.* The Traditionists and Commentators of the Qur-ān have accepted this version as true. It is also true that this Chapter was revealed before the fifth year of the “Nabuwwat.” There is no difference of opinion among the Imāms about the correctness of these two statements. Now, if we accept the first statement of Imām Bukhārī and his and Imām Muslim’s statements that at the time of “‘Aqd,” in the 10th

* “عن عائشة قالت لقد أنزل عليّ أحمد بمكة و أني لجريّة لعب بل الساعة مودعهم . الساعة ادهى و أمر”
Al-Bukhārī, Pt. III, Page 343.

HADZRAT 'AISHA'S AGE AT HER MARRIAGE

year of "Nabuwwat," she was six or seven years old, then she would be only a year or two old at the time when the Chapter in question was revealed. But it is difficult to think that she could state a fact that took place in the first or second year of her life ; this clearly indicates that Hadzrat 'Aisha was probably at least four or five years old at the time when Al-Qamar was revealed in the fifth year of "Nabuwwat," the year in which she was at least four years old, she could not have been less than nine or 10 years in the 10th year of "Nabuwwat"—the year of her "Aqd."

It does not seem necessary to say anything on the conclusion arrived at by Sir W. Muir and Dr. Margoliuth that Hadzrat 'Aisha was six or seven years old at her "Aqd ;" because they are neither original authorities nor do they seem to have made a critical study of these conflicting points. They seem to have accepted the opinion of Imām Bukhārī and Imām Muslim completely without caring either to examine the inaccuracies inherent in their statements or to rectify their mistakes and to give the expression of Ibn Sa'd that weight and consideration which it obviously deserves.

It may, therefore, safely be asserted now that Hadzrat 'Aisha was nine years old at the time of her "Aqd." If we accept what we have already said, *viz.*, that there was an interval of five years between the "Aqd" and the "Rasūmāt," there can be no hesitation in agreeing with Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Hajar on the point that Hadzrat 'Aisha was at least 14 years at the time of her "Rasūmat."

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ISLAM AND THE WESTERN SCHOLARS

By M. Y. KHAN

For a considerable period Europe was unaware of Islam and its institutions, but, if any attempt was made to learn about this faith, strange, fearful and superstitious notions overtook the minds of its people. In the middle of the 17th Century, the era of European culture and civilisation, as it is called, thought and action were freed, and persons interested in things Oriental made honest but misdirected efforts to know Islam from original sources. Choice of books fell to Christian authors who were the subjects of Muslim governments. Thus their information was based on the works of non-Muslim writers who were ignorant of the Arabic language and original writings. Those literary men devoted themselves to mould deliberate fictions into veracious records. Margoliuth complains about the numerous motives used in fabricating so many traditions that a historian is always a victim to serious errors.

Next to them were those who were well-versed in history, philosophy and the Arabic language, but who knew nothing about Muslim theology and law. Their bold assumption of their deep study of the language led them to criticise unhesitatingly the Faith and its Founder. The writings of Daniel, Luther, Melanchthon, Spanheim, de Herberts and Maracci are full of abuse and disgusting vituperation. Dean Prideaux is another hopeless writer—uncompromising and intolerant.

The great German writer, Sachau, whose vast knowledge is undeniable, while writing on the subject of Islamic principles in the preface of *Alhind* by Beruni, made references that shocked even his admirers who began to doubt his identity.

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Dr. Sprenger, in the words of the writer of the "Essay on the Life of Muhammad," has adopted an exaggerated style and his mind is so much occupied and warped by prejudice and bigotry that ill become any writer, more specially a historian. To Sir William Muir his work appeared to be based upon erroneous assumption and "wanting in dispassionate research and candid investigation, inasmuch as its author has likewise taken his subject-matter from an ill-adjusted and confused mass of puerile traditions."

Noldke, who studied the Qur-án specially, showed extreme ignorance and prejudice in his article on the same in *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XVI.

Palmer, in spite of his deep study and aptitude for research, fared no better than other men of lore.

Margoliuth made religious efforts to attach significance to fables and he has left a curious collection of falsehood which gives him no credit. "The number of motives," he says, "leading to the fabrication of traditions was so great that the historian is in constant danger of employing as veracious records what were deliberate fictions."

Even Sir William Muir, who is reputed to have written one of the best books on the life of Muhammad, fails to convince Margoliuth who accuses him of confessedly Christian bias.

Excessive condemnation of Islam and its Founder by Christian writers has had a reaction in the birth of writers of uninfluenced integrity such as Edward Gibbon, Godfrey Higgins, Thomas Carlyle and John Davenport who have laboured hard to vindicate the honour of Islam and the Holy Prophet.

Gibbon writes :

"The wars of the Muhammadans are sanctified by the Prophet, but among the various precepts and examples of his life, the Caliphs selected

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the lessons of toleration that might tend to disarm the resistance of the unbelieving. Arabia was the temple and patrimony of the God of Muhammad ; but he beheld with less jealousy and affection the other nations of the earth. The polytheists and idolaters, who were ignorant of his name, might be lawfully extirpated, but a wise policy supplied the obligations of justice and, after some acts of intolerant zeal, the Muhammadan conquerors of Hindustan have spared the pagodas of that devout and populous country. The disciples of Abraham, of Moses and of Jesus were solemnly invited to accept the more perfect revelation of Muhammad ; but *if they preferred the payment of a moderate tribute, they were entitled to the freedom of conscience and religious worship.*”

Godfrey Higgins says :

“ Nothing is so common as to hear the Christian priests abuse the religion of Muhammad for its bigotry and intolerance. Wonderful assurance and hypocrisy ! Who was it that expelled the Moriscoes from Spain because they would not turn Christians ? Who was it that murdered the millions of Mexico and Peru and gave them all as slaves because they were not Christians ? What a contrast have Muhammadans exhibited in Greece ! For many centuries the Christians have been permitted to live in peaceable possession of their properties, their religion, their priests, bishops, patriarchs and churches and at the present moment the war between the Greeks and Turks is no more waged on account of religion than was the late war between the Negroes in Demerara and the English. The Greeks and the Negroes want to throw off the

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yoke of their conquerors, and they are both justified in so doing. Wherever the Caliph conquered, if the inhabitants turned Muhammadans they were instantly on a footing of perfect equality with the conquerors. An ingenious and learned dissenter, speaking of the Saracens, says, '*they persecuted nobody ; Jews and Christians all lived happy among them.*'

“But, though we are told that the Moriscoes were banished because they would not turn Christians, I suspect there was another cause. I suspect, they, by their arguments, so gained upon the Christians, that the ignorant monks thought that the only way was by the Inquisition and the sword ; and I have no doubt that they were right as far as these wretched powers of answering them extended. In the countries conquered by the Caliphs the peaceful inhabitants, whether Greeks, Persians, Sabeans, or Hindus, were not put to the sword as the Christians have represented but, after the conquest was terminated, were left in peaceable possession of their properties and religion, *paying a tax for the enjoyment of this latter privilege, so trifling as to be oppressive to none.* In all the history of the Caliphs, there cannot be shown anything half so infamous as the Inquisition, nor a single instance of an individual burnt for his religious opinion, nor do I believe, put to death in a time of peace for simply not embracing the religion of Islam. No doubt the later Muhammadan conquerors in their expeditions have been guilty of great cruelties which these Christian authors have sedulously laid to the charge of their religion ; but this is not just. Assuredly religious bigotry increased the evils of war,

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but in this the Muhammadan conquerors were not worse than the Christians."

Davenport affirms :

"Muhammad imposed tribute and exacted ransoms, but in every instance respected the religious beliefs of the conquered, always, it is true, recommending his religion, but never enforcing its adoption by law ; thus carrying into execution what he had written in the Qur-án, " Say unto the blind (in spirit), ' Embrace Islam and you shall be enlightened.' If they are rebels, you are only charged with preaching unto them ; God knoweth how to distinguish His servants.

"Muhammad's successes in this instance principally arose from the clemency and moderation he showed to the Christians from whom he claimed only a moderate tribute. Thus, when he returned to Medina, he left in the country he had subjected *every heart astonished at the clemency of his religion.*

"It is expedient to cure men of this prejudice, viz., that Muhammadan is a cruel sect, which was propagated by putting men to their choice of death or the abjuration of Christianity. This is in no wise true, and the conduct of the Saracens was as evangelical meekness in comparison with that of popery, which exceeded the cruelty of the cannibals."

Religious rancour, racial hatred and political motives are the causes, besides others, which are responsible for malicious propaganda made against Islam. The prejudiced second-hand reports of the opponents of the Faith have actually deceived those who came after and there are very few books on Islam whose authenticity is not questioned.

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“In writing the life of our Prophet,” says Sir Syed, “or in tracing out ecclesiastical history, very few European writers have devoted to their subject that degree of patient research and enquiry due to its importance. On the contrary, actuated, it is to be feared, by prejudice and enmity, they wilfully blinded themselves to the light which glared in upon them, and thus proved the truth of the saying, ‘None are so blind as those who will not see.’”

“In dealing with different branches of theology, viz., *Hadith*, or Sayings of the Holy Prophet, (2) *Siar* or Ecclesiastical history, (3) *Tafsīr* or Commentary on the Holy Qur-án and (4) *Fiqh* or Muhammadan Law, our intention is solely that of tracing out the right path for the guidance of future critics on our religion, since many, ignorant of the circumstances which accompany our theological literatures, have indulged in the bitterest invectives and sarcasm at the expense of our religious books, an example too often blindly followed by succeeding writers.”

(*To be continued*)

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A MYSTICAL READING OF ISLAM

BY KHAN BAHADUR B. M. K. LODI

(Continued from Page 152 of the current volume)

Leaving apart the etymological aspects of the word *Alláh*, there are certain significant aspects in the letters of its composition. The word *Alláh* consists of four letters—*Alif*, two *Láms*, and *Hu*, corresponding in sound to the English letters A, L, L and H. If you drop the first letter 'Alif,' the remaining letters when pronounced as *Llah*, denote 'the worshipped one,' 'the worshipped God ;' if you drop the first of the two *Láms*, even then the remaining letters point to God only, until the terminal word *Hu* remains, which too points to God.* This is not an imaginary or ingenious interpretation ; it is based on the Quranic text itself where each of these words is repeatedly used in the sense of *Alláh* only. Here lies one of the wonderful beauties of the Arabic language, to admire and appreciate as unique.

A word of explanation as to how the last letter of the word *Alláh*, *Hu*, came to indicate *Alláh*. The stress is as pointed out already on the last syllable of the word. *Hu* is in Arabic a singular personal pronoun meaning *He* and denoting a 'concealed invisible third person' † and denoting here—'He Who exists'—the Eternal, that is God, and that the rest, namely His creation, is 'non-existent,' 'temporal,' 'perishable,' so that *Hu* has become the quintessence of the word *Alláh*. That it is so is clearly indicated in several verses of the Qur-án itself. The idea is, however, not exclusively Quranic. It is identical with several ancient Non-Islamic Scriptures.

There is another remarkable significance in the letter and word *Hu*. We have seen that the word *Hu*, just

* *Tafsir-i-Kabir* Vol. I, Part I, by Imam Fakhruddin Razi.

†

ضمير غائب

A MYSTICAL READING OF ISLAM

as the word *Alláh*, applies only to the recondite *Reality* of God, and is not attributive. The word has thereby become the best disinterested medium between the manifest man and the un-manifest Reality. He who thinks of God and calls into being any of His attributes, does it with a motive—with a private consideration of some help or other. An exclusive and unselfish thought of the *Reality* of God just as the one that is indicated in the word *Hu* without any thought of His qualities, and devoid of any motive, is acceptable to Him most. Besides it is the profound exercise and concentration of mind and thought in the Absolute Reality alone that makes the mind forget itself in and realize the Higher mind. The word *Hu* eminently fulfils the above object in a natural manner. It constitutes the respiratory faculty of man, his 'respirometer' as it were. He can pronounce the word *Hu* only when he exhales his breath. In fact *Hu* is his outward breath which is drawn in again. So that a number of devotional practices of the respiratory faculty have arisen in the form of certain formulas. This is what is called the 'control of breathing,' or the *Pranayama* that is referred to in the Bhagavad Gita,* or the *Zikr-ias anfas†* of the Sufis. There are certain orders of the Sufis who have, by means of these practices, involving a continuous, controlled and orderly breathing, realised that the contemplative and concentrating faculty of man is thereby developed so as to produce certain occult powers in him, and to take his soul nearer and nearer God. Moreover, the practice of controlled breathing generally has since been looked upon by the Medical world as highly beneficial to physical well-being.

One more structural beauty of the word *Alláh*: There are two *láms* (two *Ls*) in the word; the second

* B. G. 14—29.

†

ذکر پاس افاس

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would be redundant if the first were used with the Arabic symbol *w** over it as is ordinarily done to indicate the doubling of a letter. This rule is not followed here, but the letter *Lám* is repeated, and two *láms* are used. Why? Etymologists and Philologists have so far not accounted for the exception of this rule, while Theologians and Sufis have.† Their theory is this: On account of the repetition of the letter, one *lám*, that is, the first *lám* which is merely ‘descriptive’‡ is and must necessarily be *silent*,§ and the second *Lám* which is *real*,|| is *moving*¶ so that the first *Lám* joins with and disappears, or rather merges, in the second which nevertheless retains its reality. This is said to be metaphorical of the theory that *man* is the Vicegerent of the Reality of *Allah*, and is ‘descriptive’ or ‘phenomenal’ of the Reality, and that after achieving a knowledge of the Reality, he forgets the knowledge itself, and forgets himself and gets merged in the *Reality*, through the Reality (*the Dhát*) still continues to remain as It was before. This is what the *Sufis* call—*Wasl***—that is, ‘Union with the Reality,’ and it may correspond to the *Gnana-Yogam* of the Vedantic philosophy (Union of all existence).

Besides the above grammatical, etymological and structural beauties of the word *Allah*, there are certain other characteristics in the word, but of symbolical character. Far-fetched they may appear to some and imaginary or capricious to others, but, emanating as they do from the tongues and pens of certain theologians

* تشدید

† Vide *Tafsir-i-Kabir*, Vol. I, P. I, by Imam Fakhruddin Razi.

‡ تعریفی

§ ساکن

|| اصلی

¶ متحرک

** وصل

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of high repute, they may be interesting in their own way.

The first is this: The Arabic word *Alláh* may be found physiologically inscribed in the face of *man*. Please note that the word *Alláh* is composed of four perpendicular lines (*Alifs*) and a line which is a part of *Hu* and a semi-circle.

(*To be continued*)

AN ADDRESS TO NON-MUSLIMS

BY MAULVI ZARAFATULLAH

(*Continued from P. 87, Vol. XXIX*)

There are men who dissent from the true belief in two widely different ways.

(a) One class of people say that there are neither such things as Divine Revelations nor any need for them. There appear men particularly zealous for the reformation of the evil ways and manners of their neighbours or countrymen, and with their ordinary human faculties soar in the high regions of their own minds or higher selves, and discover truths which they impart to the unknowing people. Let us see how far this is true.

(i) Can every man and all men thus soar high in the upper regions of their minds? If so, why do they not do so, even when there is an urgent need for that? If some special stimulus is necessary from above, it shows the will and choice of the Almighty. If not, it must be admitted, there are men who are specially gifted for the purpose. This again means the will and choice of God. He deigns to become an instructor of such a person either from the very beginning or at least at a particular point of time.

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- (ii) Real facts of life show that other men, however high they may soar otherwise, cannot discover ultimate truths, and their discoveries are so very widely different that they give rise to great many schools and sects and consequent struggles and jealousies. This we generally find to be the case in the periods between the advents of two inspired reformers or prophets who settle these differences, definitely, finally and clearly beyond all doubts citing their Divine Authority and nothing else. On the other hand any sound mind can clearly see that the teachings of any two prophets themselves are one and the same.
- (iii) The Prophets declare that they receive direct revelations from God. Can they be liars? Then all their teachings are devoid of any value.
- (iv) Human laws, though framed by great intellectual giants, are ever-failing and are liable to alterations and amendments as experience increases, whereas the laws made by the Prophets need no alteration until and unless they are corrupted by men, and continue to benefit mankind as long as they are faithfully adhered to. It is only where these laws are perverted and corrupted by men that they are to be amended or rather purified, and purged of the alloys mixed by men, and a new Prophet comes to do it specially with reference to the needs and requirements of the time, place and persons he has to deal with.

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- (v) Think of our existence, our progress ! How far they extend ! We are to know them and to know everything that is necessary for its smooth running. Thus an instructor or a lawgiver is to soar very high, indeed, to discover these : in his flight he must transcend all limits of his mind unto the highest region of his soul and even beyond that where he touches the Infinite, sees and hears God—the Author of all laws of existence—face to face ; otherwise he cannot declare that Supreme Existence with the whole force of conviction in the manner of an eye-witness ! And this is the source and essence of religion. It has its rise in Divine revelation and, as such, removes all screens (doubts or objections) from the belief in the Divine Revelations.
- (vi) According to these sceptics the Creator and the Creation exist in two parallel lines, never to meet. But if they think deeply they will find how untrue it is. The Infinite touches and connects this finite, crude universe, the material creation, through various stages of graded refinement as the soul touches the body. Perhaps this class of people are in the habit of thinking that the Creator has left His creation to its fate after creating it, Himself sitting idle, never after interfering with it. Any person who has any sense of religion left in him knows that it is not the case. He is always working in it, directing and sustaining it ; He is the soul of the universe.
- (vii) It is universally recognised that in all countries and nations, such persons have

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appeared from time to time as have brought messages from on high, persons that have proved themselves enormously superior to their contemporaries intellectually, morally and spiritually.

The fact is that these sceptics ignore patent facts of history which have their testimony in our ordinary experience of life. They seem determined to deny all supernatural agencies. Very often they do so out of pride and arrogance on account of their little learning, sometimes for fear of being superstitious, and at others being anxious not to be classed with the common people. But there are things supernatural, in spite of them and the supernatural becomes really natural if the meaning of nature is extended to nature other than material, and if it be realised that the great nature extends beyond the seen to the unseen (air, gases, electrons, ether) beyond the material to the non-material (mind). How many things do we see or know even of this visible universe and how many new things are daily being brought to our notice by inquiries and researches ? Did the Creator Who is invisible Himself create only these things which we can touch and see ? In fact, all things are natural and are in their own places; it is the limit of our crude senses which binds us down to some of them only which we call natural. So, everything which we cannot see or comprehend should not be branded as "superstition."

In fact, revelations come to every one, but there are different grades of them.

- (i) First, there is the conscience which is distinct or indistinct as our minds are pure or engrossed, near or removed from the spiritual or the higher side of our existence.
- (ii) Again, in our meditations and prayers (or in vacant minds, sometimes), truths suddenly

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dawn upon us without any casual links to connect them. The knowledge so gained is called intuitive and is the common property of all like the conscience, with this difference that the latter is constant and innate whereas the former are occasional and extraneous. In both the cases, the source remains indistinct, hidden.

- (iii) There are special cases of religious and spiritually advanced men (saints), in which more distinct and definite voices come when there is need for them. These are called inspirations.
- (iv) The last (the highest stage) are the revelations proper where, in the cases of spiritually chosen, perfectly pure-minded men called Prophets, it becomes direct and most distinct.

The first three kinds of men may commit sins, may fall. Many saints were vicious men in their early lives, but Prophets are sinless from the very beginning of their lives, as they are directly under the Divine guidance.

(b) The other class of people hold a quite different view. They say that God Himself condescends to be born as a man of human parents, His creatures, in order to mend matters in the world and call the original instructors or religious reformers *avatars*, i.e., incarnations of God. Let us examine the correctness of this view.

1. From the above little glimpse into the nature of creation it is wholly inconsistent. God is All-Mighty, All-Merciful, Omniscient, Omnipresent, All-Pervading. It is neither necessary nor consistent with His nature to descend on this earth in the shape of man to work here. He pervades and permeates His creation

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as the soul does the body (even more than that) and extends beyond, infinitely. Anything in a finite human shape becomes naturally part of the creation and a part cannot be the whole.

2. God is just and impartial and is expected to deal with all nations in the same way. We know that in other countries and among other peoples the original instructors have neither claimed to be nor been recognised as anything more than human beings with Divine messages, and this attitude fits in nicely with an understandable scheme of creation. In other words there have, among other peoples (*e.g.*, Israelites), come only Prophets, *i.e.*, men with Divine messages. And it is not reasonable that God should send messengers among some and appear in Person among others.

3. If the same class of beings are known as only human beings in some places and incarnations of God Himself in another, what can reasonably be their real status? Had they been really God, certainly God cannot make Himself known as human beings (for in that case He would be concealing the truth) nor can the people rest satisfied with regarding Him as men. But if they are men like ourselves it is possible that weak human nature, which has a tendency to deify everything great and good, in its over-zeal and error, may regard the very human beings as God or God-incarnates. We have an example of this in India. How often do we see here spiritually advanced men, reformers, even political leaders like Gandhiji, the exact likes of whom are known simply as human reformers and politicians in other countries at the same period of history, are easily transformed into God-incarnates!

4. Among other peoples (*e.g.*, Israelites) these messengers of God have declared themselves again and again to be just human beings sometimes in contradiction to the tendency in the people to call them

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God-incarnates. And really it has been in many places the chief business or mission of these messengers to remove the belief in God-incarnates and put a stop to all kinds of deification, the sources of untold evils to mankind. This has, in fact, been the main item on any programme of religious reformation. If they be lying therein (in calling themselves human beings), then all their teachings fall to the ground. Even in India or in Palestine the so-called *avatars* never called themselves God—they even protested against it (Ram Chandra, Krishna and Jesus afford instances of this). If Krishna seems to speak in the *Gita* in the first person he is, in fact, in the midst of a holy communion with God Who speaks through him in the same way as we find it done in the case of the Hebrew Prophets, and even some saints of world-wide reputation.

(To be continued)

CORRESPONDENCE

SOUTHAMPTON :
15th July, 1940.

DEAR IMAM,

I have seen several of our fellows to-day and they have told me what a great time they had with you yesterday, and I am writing on behalf of every one who had the pleasure of listening to you to express our sincere gratitude for your very important service to our organisation. I hope you enjoyed the meeting as much as our men enjoyed your address.

Yours sincerely,
CHRIS HEDGER,
Southampton Post-War Brotherhood.

HAMMERSMITH, LONDON :
19th July, 1940.

DEAR IMAM,

I trust you will pardon my delay in acknowledging the book entitled "What Is Islam?" which you so kindly sent me in reply to my enquiry. I have read it through several times very carefully and think I now have a fairly clear understanding of what Islam teaches and for all that it stands for. I am deeply and sincerely interested, as also are three of my friends to whom I have lent the

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book in question. It is my sincere desire to accept the Islamic Faith but as I am not quite clear as to the procedure necessary and would like to be enlightened on one or two other questions, I suggest that I come to one of the Sunday lectures at the Mosque as soon as I can arrange to do so.

I thank you for your kindness.

Yours truly,
T. MATHESON.

CHANCERY LANE,
LONDON :
24th July, 1940.

To
THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE,
WOKING.

DEAR SIR,

Thank you very much indeed for your kind letter of the 22nd. I have just torn up a four-page letter to you because it said too much but not enough. I must try to get the core of it into a small compass.

First of all I am convinced that the way out of the world's troubles is some true faith honestly followed.

You will agree with that, of course, but I wonder if you will agree that it does not matter fundamentally which truth one chooses for one's personal purpose. There is only One God. There is only one truth. There is only one truth at the bottom of every faith. And it must always be the same truth. Therefore, what does it matter if you find the truth through Christianity or through Buddhism or through Islam? All ways, followed sincerely, lead one to the same end. In other words, in every human action there can only be the right way and the wrong way, and if one chooses the right way one is practising every faith. How can the Buddhist, who acts thus because it is the true way, be different from the Christian who also acts thus because it is the right way? Euclid said that things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one another.

There you have my personal standpoint and the reason why I do not profess any faith. I have studied them all and found the truth in them all. I am satisfied to strive to follow that truth that is the heart of them all.

But what about the world? The world in general follows no faith. It must, but how to persuade it? Put the argument to the world that I have just put to you and the world will reply: "Yes, but what is this truth that you talk about?"

To that I could only reply: "Read the Bible or the Qur-án or the Upanishads or the sayings of Lao Tze or the Aphorisms of Patanjali. Grasp the inner meaning of any one of them and you will know the truth."

CORRESPONDENCE

But such a recommendation would be useless. The only useful recommendation would be to choose one of those Books and to tell the world to seek the truth there—to walk along the path.

Therefore, the broad statement that any true way, sincerely followed, achieves the same end, though true, is ineffectual. It would only have effect if the world was ready to accept the essence of the teachings and ignore surface differences. Consequently, it is necessary to take one of those Books and say, not that it is *the* only right way, but that it is the best and most practical way. And the best and most practical way seems to me unquestionably to be Islam.

I want to say of this Book of Islam : “ Here is a plain, commonsense code that the rational mind can accept. This teaching is obviously true. It is logical. It is practicable. It recommends that every intelligent person must see the right way of life because it is a way that conforms to logical, scientific laws. It is in fact the Law—a guide to life governed by the laws of Nature. It is not dead dogma that held good a thousand years ago. It is a living truth which, if followed in our daily lives, would lead us out of this dreadful tangle into which we have got ourselves.”

I want to put that argument forward coldly, not as a Muslim trying to gain converts to his faith but as a rational, everyday kind of person, who has by accident stumbled across a rational, everyday code that he is convinced will work in practice. I want to explain the code, say where it came from, how it worked out in the past, how it still works out to-day and why I think it can work out in the future better than any political, sociological, philosophical or religious code that is at present being practised in the West.

I want to do that because I am convinced that a world that followed Islamic Law would be a better world.

I have been spending some months reading the history of Islamic civilisation, the theory of Islam and the many available lives of the Prophet, whose name I mention with all the prophets. He is the greatest. I have lived among the splendid people of North Africa and seen him in them, alive in their tremendous faith and still preaching to the world through the excellence of their lives.

I wonder if I have made myself clear ! Among the books listed at the back page of the *Islamic Review* which you so kindly sent me and which I am sure I shall read this evening with much pleasure, I see many titles that I am sure would help me. Every one of them would interest me personally. Any suggestion you could make, therefore, would be gratefully received.

I asked about Russia because I feel that Islam's way to the West is through that country. Something is being attempted there. Perhaps it is not altogether succeeding but I am certain that there is a sincere desire to better the Russian people in its efforts. And the Russian people, so Tchekoff points out, are people who must believe in something. He says : “ If a Russian tells you that he does not believe in God, it is because he believes in

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something else." At the moment they believe in the State. But what will happen when they find, as I think eventually they must, that the State alone is not enough? They will be left high and dry gasping for faith. What an opportunity that will be to show them a State in which they can believe—a State that is also a Religion! Islam's opportunity . . . especially when one remembers that many of the Soviet's millions are already Muslims.

There is so much more that I would like to say: I would like to ask you about Sufism: but I will not weary you further. Thank you for your offer to help me and please be sure of my sincere desire to pass along a little of the encouragement and inspiration that I have received from even my superficial study of the life and teachings of the wonderful man who is your leader.

I am,
Yours respectfully,
E. A. C. B.

CHANGE IN THE QUALITY OF PAPER

We owe a word of apology to the readers for the new kind of paper which is going to be used for the printing of the *Islamic Review* with the current number. It is with great reluctance that we at last bow before the universal scarcity of paper caused by the war in Europe. We are extremely sorry to have thus to interfere in the standard of the journal's get-up, so uniformly maintained since its inception 28 years ago.

We hope, however, to return to the old standard as soon as the circumstances improve. Let us suggest that even now the difficulty of the dearth of paper can be overcome by an appreciable increase in the number of its subscribers. It is up to the present subscribers to see that this dream of ours is realised.

Manager.

The Prophet's Munificence.
 The Vedic Rishi's Prayer for the Prophet.
 A Joint Testimony of Three Vedas.
 A Description of Ka'ba.

CHAPTER IV

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 What the name Adam signifies.
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 Noah's Prophecy.
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 He came with ten thousand Saints.
 The Psalms of David and the Holy Prophet.

OPINIONS

ON

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