

"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-HAJI KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

Vol. XXV

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(peace be upon him)

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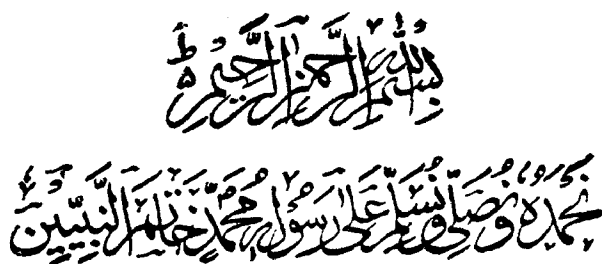
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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol. XXX]

DHULQA'DA, 1361 A.H.
NOVEMBER, 1942 A.C.

[No. 11

A DECLARATION

I, JOHN WILLIAM DE BRIONIIS MOLE, of . . Stuart Crescent, Stanmore, Winchester, Hants, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and Only Alláh (God) alone ; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant ; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others, and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Alláh.

La ilaha ill-Allah Muhammad-un-Rasul-Allah

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

Dated 20th March, 1942.

J. W. DE B. MOLE.

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IN MEMORIAM

MADAM KHALIDA BUCHANAN-HAMILTON

The Muslim community in Great Britain suffered a grave loss through the death at Letchworth, Herts., on 12th January, 1942, of Madam Khalida Buchanan-Hamilton, President of the Muslim Society in Great Britain. The funeral took place on 14th January, at the Brookwood Muslim Cemetery. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un.*

Mrs. Hamilton who embraced the religion of Islam in 1929 had been a very active and enthusiastic member of our community.

She was a product of that old-time English home discipline, which lent a hallow of dignity to womanhood, made it sacrificing, charitable and sensitive to others' suffering. But the deceased did not allow this tenderness of heart to be tainted by the parochial outlook of old English Society. She had the Islamic breadth of social outlook to add glory to her generosity of heart. Rich or poor, whoever among the Eastern Muslims came in contact with her felt as if she had been a life-long devoted friend. Her unaffected smile would remove the gloom from the saddest mind groaning under the pressure of insurmountable difficulties.

If her private charity was almost unlimited her public charities were equally remarkable. After the death of the late lamented Lord Headley, she was elected the President of the Muslim Society in Great Britain.

But even before her election, she used to give financial help to the Society every time an appeal was made. Knowing her resources that we did, we knew how valuable her contributions were from the moral point of view.

AN IMPORTANT MUSLIM MEETING

Our readers may be aware that the deceased was the widow of the Deputy Surgeon-General Charles William Buchanan-Hamilton of the Royal Navy, cousin to the first Duke of Abercorn and a nephew of James Buchanan, who was at one time American Ambassador in London and was elected President of the United States of America in 1856. General Hamilton died in the middle of the year 1929 and became a declared Muslim shortly before his death.

Mrs. Hamilton was a standing reply to the Christian charge that Islam recognized no soul in woman. She had a soul no less alive than any Christian man can claim to have.

Many a friend will remember the General's pleasant sea-facing house "Abercorn" in South Sea, which had an open door for Eastern Muslim guests. With the death of Mrs. Hamilton all that memory becomes a matter of the dead past ; but the couple's contribution to the faith of Islam will keep them alive in the ever-brightening horizon of true religious life in the British Isles.

AN IMPORTANT MUSLIM MEETING IN LONDON

On the afternoon of Saturday, 21st February, 1942, the Muslim Society in Great Britain held an At-Home at their house at 18 Eccleston Square, London, S.W.1. The purpose of the meeting was that the members of the Society might have the opportunity of meeting the members of the just recently formed Public Relations Committee and to hear a talk on the cultural movements of the Muslims in Poland which was delivered by Mr. Arslan Bohdanowicz, a Polish Muslim at present in London. In the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of the Society, Mr. Ismail V. deYorke, Mr. J. W. B. Farmer, Secretary of the Public Relations Committee, took the chair. Before the proceedings

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tea was served so that members might get to know each other. Mr. Farmer then called upon Mr. D. Cowan, who opened the meeting with a recitation of the Fatihah. After the recitation of the Holy Qur-án Mr. Farmer gave a short description of the excellent work the Public Relations Committee are doing to control the English Press so that nothing of a nature calculated to offend the Muslim community goes unrefuted. He also exhorted the Muslims to unite whole-heartedly in the task of opening the eyes of the country to the existence of a Muslim community and of spreading the light of Islam. This was followed by the talk of Mr. Arslan Bohdanowicz which we reproduce below, and after it had been delivered a number of friends availed themselves of the opportunity of asking the speaker questions about the Muslim community in Poland.

CULTURAL MOVEMENTS OF MUSLIMS IN POLAND

BY MR. ARSALAN BOHDANOWICZ.

I propose to speak to you about the cultural movement which existed before the present war, or more exactly between the two wars, among my compatriots, the Polish Muslims or Tatars.

The manifestations of the cultural life of a national or religious minority depends largely on the manner in which it is treated by the central authorities. It was precisely because the Polish Government not only tolerated but even favoured and supported our cultural movement that it was able to develop in a very interesting manner.

This benevolence of the Polish Government towards us was not the result of chance but of a long tradition, and it would appear to me to be necessary, before dealing with the subject of this talk and for its better understanding, to explain the reasons for this.

CULTURAL MOVEMENTS OF MUSLIMS

As our name shews, our ancestors descended from the Golden Horde and they had settled in Poland as the result of the policy of alliance which she had followed towards our country of origin. In fact, being obliged to defend herself against the Order of the Teutonic Knights in the West and against the Principality of Moscow in the East, Poland alone avoided conflicts with the Golden Horde and later even concluded treaties of alliance against her neighbours of such a character that the Tatars soon participated in the wars in the ranks of the Polish army. Thus Poland was the first continental power in Europe to practise a policy of alliance with the Muslims. I particularly stress that she was the first to conclude a treaty of alliance with the Golden Horde. She did this at the beginning of the 14th century, *i.e.* two centuries before the treaty which the King of France, Francis I, concluded with Turkey. Since this policy of alliance with the Golden Horde had yielded positive results, the Polish princes embarked upon the policy of establishing the Tatars in Poland by granting them lands in return for military service in war-time, and by this they populated deserted regions. It is thus the brotherhood of arms which explains the fact that at the time of the most violent struggles between Christianity and Islam a Muslim tribe flourished in Poland. The fact that Poland had granted our ancestors the rights of citizenship, resulted in their becoming rapidly Polonized. Towards the middle of the 16th century they had already forgotten their mother-tongue.

This circumstance—the forgetting of the language—gave our cultural movement a special character. The cultural movement of a national minority aims at the creation or the development of that minority's own culture. This could not apply to us. Having forgotten the language of our ancestors, and being not a national

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but a religious minority, we could not think of creating our own culture, since it would seem to me that an original culture presupposes as an essential condition for the possession of one's own language. Our aim was more modest. We wanted to enrich Polish culture by the support of the values arising from our religion and from the study of our history. I will speak more fully about this when summing up the article on the leader of our cultural movement, Olguierd Kryczynski, but it would seem to be necessary first to define the character of our cultural movement. This leads us to the fact that the cultural activity of my compatriots in other spheres is specifically Polish in character and of this I will not speak to-day.

If I have limited the subject of this talk to the cultural movement of my compatriots between 1920 and 1939, that does not mean that it did not exist before that time. If one goes back to distant periods of history in reviewing the past of my compatriots, one will find traces of it even there. In this connection one might cite an extensive literature in Polish or White-Russian but written in Arabic characters. This includes the Tafsirs, often voluminous books, containing the translation and commentaries of the Holy Qur-án and the Kitabs, collections of stories and legends, generally on religious subjects. This literature has never been systematically studied and offers an interesting field for investigation.

Our cultural life, however, before 1920 had never an organized and systematic character, but was predominantly sporadic and individual. This is due to two principal reasons: Before the rebirth of Poland the representatives of our intellectual classes were scattered all over Russia and the Russian Government of that epoch did not view such manifestations among national minorities within the old Empire with favour.

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The situation changed as a result of the Russian revolution of 1905, when certain concessions in the matter of the freedom of the press and of association were granted. Thanks to these circumstances, some Polish Tatar students had formed in St. Petersburg in 1907 an association whose aim was the study of the Muslim religion and of history. This association was, so to speak, a nursery from which the future leaders of our cultural movement emerged, among them being Jacob Szyrkiewicz, the future Mufti, and the brothers Olguierd and Arslan Kryczynski. The activities of this association did not yield very tangible results and its importance lay rather in that it had strengthened in the consciousness of its members the realization of the need for continuing the work.

I will pass over the outlines of the evolution of our cultural movement between 1907 and 1920. But it would seem useful to mention in passing the activities of my compatriots during the Russian Revolution of 1917—1920. Impelled by the brothers Kryczynski, the Polish Tatars had played an active and important rôle in the movements of the Muslims of Russia towards independence, especially in the Crimea and in Azerbaidjan.

The re-establishment of Poland had opened up a new era to my compatriots both from the cultural and the religious points of view, and it compensated us to some extent for the losses suffered during the last war and the Russian Civil War. Since our cultural movement is closely linked with our religious life, we must say a few words about this. One of the first acts of the Polish Government in relation to us was the creation of an autocephalous Muslim community with an autonomous Muftiate. Jacob Szyrkiewicz, a doctor of Oriental languages, was placed at the head of the Muftiate. The creation of the Muftiate had given a

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very strong impetus to the religious life of my compatriots in simultaneously co-ordinating and strengthening it. Mufti Szynkiewicz had accomplished a great task. It was first of all necessary to raise the cultural level of the imams who were recruited, before the last war, from the poorest elements of the population and who had thus little influence over the Faithful, since their religious knowledge and competence was chiefly limited to the rites and the recitation of prayers. To remedy this, Mufti Szynkiewicz had organized courses for a better training of the imams. The subsidy of the Polish Government gave the imams the material means that would enable them to give all their time to their work. Near each mosque there sprang up a school in which the imam taught the children the Arabic alphabet and the rites. Mufti Szynkiewicz arranged the publication of several manuals of Muslim theology and of prayers, the latter in Arabic and in Polish.

As for our cultural movement, it was led by the brothers Kryczynski. This is the plan of its organization: In each centre having a sufficient number of Tatars a cultural association was organized. The work of all the associations was co-ordinated by the central committee and consisted chiefly of the organization of conferences on political, religious and historical questions, the distribution of literature, the collections of books, etc. During the holidays a troop of young people toured with theatrical plays.

The most interesting form of cultural activity was the publication of books and periodicals. This activity commenced with the publication in 1928 of the Armorial of the noble families of the Polish Tatars which was compiled by Stanislas Dziadulewicz, a gentleman of Tatar origin. I must confess that formerly I had not taken a great interest in this publication. Later, after having understood that the leading classes of the

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Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan, the last remnants of the Golden Horde, had been exterminated by the Russians in the 16th century after their conquest by John the Terrible, I realized that the Polish Tatar nobility was almost the only remnant of the leading classes of the Golden Horde. In these circumstances a detailed study of the armorial of Mr. Dziadulewicz constituted a useful contribution to the knowledge of the history of the Golden Horde,—a history, as one knows, which has yet to be written, especially as among the Tatars who are settled in Poland there have even been representatives of the dynasty of Jingiz Khan, the Zarewicz Ordynski and Punski. The latter, we should do well to remember, distinguished himself in 1572 in the war against Livonia after having raised a Tatar regiment at his own expense.

The most interesting manifestation of the cultural life of the Polish Tatars was the publications of periodicals. There were three—*The Islamic Review*, a quarterly, founded at Warsaw in 1930 by Vassan Girci Djabagui, a journalist of Caucasian origin and related to the Polish Tatars by marriage. This review was mainly concerned with religious questions. In order to encourage its circulation abroad the chief articles were summed up in French. *The Tatar Life*, a monthly review founded in 1934, was the organ of the Muftiate and appeared at Wilno. It was especially devoted to questions of interest in the everyday life of the Tatars. *The Tatar Year Book*, founded in 1932, edited by Arslan Kryczynski, also gave summaries of its most important articles in French. The difference between these three publications lay in that the Year Book had a scientific character while the first two were intended for a more general public. Polish Tatars alone contributed to *The Tatar Life* while *The Islamic Review* and *The Year Book* were largely open

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to all Muslims. Polish Orientalists also contributed to *The Year Book*. There were also differences in the sizes of these publications. *The Year Book* consisted of 300—400 pages while the other two reached 24—32 pages. The first two volumes of *The Year Book* were composed of various articles devoted to the history of the Polish Tatars and of Islam. The second volume contained, besides other matter, the article by Arslan Kryczynski about the contacts between the Polish Tatars and their co-religionists abroad. The third volume consisted entirely of the monograph about the Polish Tatars by Stanislas Kryczynski. The fourth volume was in the press at the beginning of the war and was to consist, among other things, of the work of Stanislas Kryczynski about the military service of the Polish Tatars in the ranks of the Polish army.

In our cultural movement Stanislas Kryczynski played an important rôle. He is of Tatar origin. His ancestor became converted to Catholicism in the middle of the 17th century and settled in Lwow. After the war of 1914—1920 the two branches of the Kryczynski family—the Christians and the Muslims—met for the first time in many generations and the young Stanislas (at that time he was still at school) felt attracted by the study of the past of his ancestors under the influence of the brothers Kryczynski. It is to him that we owe the best works about our history among whom this monograph is the fundamental one. It should be mentioned that in him the talents of a historian are coupled with great literary genius. He has especially written a few verses on subjects bearing on the Muslim religion, among them one entitled “The Eternal Word of the Holy Qur-án.” Unfortunately, I have not got it in my possession and thus it is impossible to give you a translation. Shortly before the war Stanislas Kryczynski became an official in the State

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Archives at Warsaw and there can be no doubt that a brilliant future awaits him. I have no news about him since the outbreak of the war.

One should mention also the publication of translations of books about Islam. We had published two and I am happy to note that one of them belongs to the series of the Working Muslim Mission Book Society. It is the book by Lord Headley on the power of Islam and the other is by Maulvi Muhammad Ali—*Islam : The Religion of Humanity*.

Another manifestation of our cultural movement is that the young men among the Tatars have been taking an increasingly great interest in the study of Oriental languages and civilizations. On the initiative of the brothers Kryczynski and thanks to the support of the Polish Government two of these young men, Ali Woronowicz and Mustapha Aleksandrowicz, were sent to Cairo to study the Arabic language and Muslim theology at the University of Al-Azhar, where our friend Mr. Cowan (Mr. Dawud Cowan, at present the Assistant Imam of the Mosque, Working—ED. I. R.) had met them. They had been very active at Cairo. I know through our Ministry of Foreign Affairs that they had made a close and interesting contacts with the representatives of the Egyptian press and society. In addition they published articles in the Egyptian press and finally also two books in Arabic, one about the Polish Tatars and the other about Marshal Pilsudski. Furthermore, they sent articles to Poland which appeared in our publications and especially in *The Tatar Life*. Mustapha Aleksandrowicz revealed himself as a journalist of the first rank and he became the correspondent of the semi-official daily *Gazeta Polska* in which he published articles about the Muslim countries of the Near East. On their return to Poland Ali Woronowicz was appointed Imam at Warsaw where

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he distinguished himself by the foundation of courses of the Arabic language and of Muslim theology. I heard about a year ago that he had been dismissed by the Germans and replaced by another Muslim who is not a Polish Tatar. As for Mustapha Aleksandrowicz, he entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and after the German occupation of Poland he was able to leave the country and join the Polish army in France. At present he is interned in Switzerland.

Another manifestation of our cultural movement were the contacts between my compatriots and their co-religionists abroad. Muslim countries always attracted my compatriots—it is perhaps a kind of nostalgic remembrance which leads to our leaving the land of origin of our ancestors filled with a feeling of religious need to make the pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Islam. Owing to the high cost of the voyage it was only the Mufti Szynkiewicz who was able to make the pilgrimage to Makka in 1930. Many of my compatriots made frequent journeys to Muslim countries, especially to Turkey. Mufti Szynkiewicz represented my compatriots at all International Muslim Congresses. It has equally been a great pleasure for us to be able to receive our co-religionists who often came specially to Poland to visit us.

In summing up the results of our cultural work one sees that a great part of our efforts was given to the study of our own history and our religion.

During a long time circumstances prevented the realization of our cultural aspirations and as a result our beliefs have become too superficial and the consciousness of our special origin has become weakened. Therefore it is natural that, as soon as circumstances had changed, we turned especially towards our past in order to find there factors which would fortify our sentiments about our special origin and the common elements of our history. It is the same with religion. It was, above all, necessary to make our beliefs more profound by the study of dogmas so as to be able to

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resist the influence of other religions. I believe that we have passed the preparatory period sufficiently well and in order to help you the better to understand the character of our cultural movement I should like to give you a resumé of the article by Olguierd Kryczynski entitled "The post-War Nationalist Movement and the Polish Tatars." This article occupies the first place in the work accomplished by my compatriots and constitutes an interesting contribution to the philosophy of Islam and of our epoch. To-day I lack the time to be able to do so.

I have stressed many times the outstanding rôle which had been played in our cultural movement by the Mufti Szyrkiewicz and the brothers Kryczynski. That which had been done was the result of their initiative and their work. The results obtained enable us to look forward to the future with confidence. Just before the war the brothers Kryczynski had conceived the plan of publishing in French and Arabic a collection of the articles summing up and setting forth the fruits of our cultural work. The war prevented the realization of this plan. I have no news of the Mufti Szyrkiewicz since the outbreak of the war. At the beginning of December, 1939, the Paris papers had published the news that Arslan Kryczynski, Vice-President of the Tribunal of the District of Gdynia,* was shot by the Germans together with other notables of that town who had been taken as hostages. Olguierd Kryczynski was deported to Russia and only a few days ago I learnt that he had been released.

I feel it to be my pleasant duty to acknowledge that my compatriots have found a very kind and hearty reception at the Mosque at Woking and that this partly compensates us for the tragic fate which has temporarily overtaken our fatherland. I also feel grateful to those who so kindly participated in the establishment of the Committee for the Relief of Polish Muslims.

*The author of about ten volumes on religious, political and historical questions who became a laureate of the Polish Academy of Literature shortly before the war.

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FROM THE CROSS TO THE CRESCENT

BY ABDUR RAZZAQUE SELLIAH

(Continued from page 311 of September 1942 issue.)

PRELIMINARIES TO THE WORSHIP

I asked myself the question what sort of preliminaries to worship exist in the Catholic Church? To me there was none. And if anything can at all be claimed as such it will be the confession. But it is a truism that the confessional is dying an earlier death than the church itself. It may as well be looked upon as drawing its last breath. Can anyone tell me that one out of ten makes a sincere and contrite confession? It may have been so in the days when ignorance prevailed, and the priests were the only people of intellect. But the world has changed since. I have already said something about this sacrament of confession, but it requires a further discussion as it is relevant to the matter in hand. What is confession in the first place? It is the sincere making known of our sins committed within a certain period to the priest, accompanied with sincere contrition and a resolution to amend our lives, and to avoid all occasions of sin. This act is completed by the penance which is imposed on the penitent by the priest. It is a very good thing after all to be contrite for our past spiritual crimes, and better still to avoid future occasions of sin. But these two latter conditions are necessary for any man, be it within or without the Catholic Church, to earn the forgiveness and love of God. The Catholic Church need not lay special emphasis on it as being the only body that inculcates such a truth. Man can understand that these things are essential, and his inner self will naturally prompt him to recognize it. What I cannot understand is, why make a confession of one's sins to a priest, who is no more than a man like us,

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and subject to the same pitfalls of spiritual crimes. It would be far sensible and better for the offender to go to the person whom he has injured and beg his forgiveness, and then to turn to the Merciful God in repentance and be truly sorry for his sins. On the other hand, most of the sins we commit are against our own selves, and no one is aware of it, save the Ever-seeing God. Suppose I commit a crime in such guarded secrecy that I fear the knowledge of it would bring on me disastrous results. Would I ever think for a moment of trusting the priest with it, who may 'give me away,' at any time? And again if I did confess it to the priest, fully confident that my crime would be known to none other beside him, and if this happens to be a crime in which the law of the land must be satisfied, would the priest be justified in covering me from the just law of the land under the cloak of confession? He would only be aiding a further crime on my part. We have to bear in mind that whatever sin we commit it is in the first instance committed against God, for it is His Law that we have violated. Therefore, we must turn to Him in repentance first, and gain His forgiveness, as then only can we feel that we have duly performed the necessary action which enables us to offer our worship to Him. But to go to a priest to be forgiven of that which *God alone* can forgive, is, to say the least, an act revolting to the mind. I have already stated elsewhere the verses which the Church claims as empowering her to 'forgive or retain' the sins committed by man. Here if we are to interpret what it means to convey, it would amount to this that whatever sins a priest forgives Christ (God) also forgives, and whatever sins the priest does not forgive, Christ (God) too does not forgive. This kind of interpretation can only appear as truth to such minds as are clogged with the notion that God has appointed His judges in the person

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of these priests to dispense with His powers of Justice and Forgiveness. Can any man believe that God is dependent on man in the carrying out of His work? The priests may as well tell us definitely whether we are labelled for Heaven or Hell. This is all rubbish, and such doctrines are not only irrational but absolutely dangerous to the moral and spiritual elevation of mankind. I once asked a priest to explain the position of the Church, where a certain man was known to have been incorrigible in the commission of a certain sin, and was advised and warned by the priest to refrain from committing it again, under the pain of not receiving "absolution" or forgiveness. But this poor man of a weakling falls into the same sin and makes up his mind to go for confession. Ere he starts off to the priest, he has fully realized the gravity of his sin and his past wicked life and with a heavy and repentant heart, together with a very firm resolution never to commit it again, traces his way to the confessional. The priest on the other hand, has already made up his mind that should this "incorrigible" confess to his old sin again, he would turn him off without absolution. Thus framed in mind the confessor and the penitent meet. The result is that the poor man is turned out without absolution and so, grief-stricken and contrite, he turns his eyes to the Unseen God and begs His forgiveness. The man's state of mind is such that he would rather die than commit his old sin again. With bitter tears of repentance, yet with a consolation that his Merciful Lord has forgiven him, he returns to his humble home, at a late hour in the night, and on the way the poor fellow is bitten by a venomous snake. Helpless he lies on the ground, the poison soon telling him that his end is nigh. He wishes to see a priest, if possible, at these last moments in life, hoping to fulfil the demands of the Church by making his

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confession and receiving absolution. But no such thing could be done. He thinks of his God once more, and ere he rests in his eternal sleep, he prays once again that his sins be forgiven. Will this man be forgiven by God or will he be condemned, because the priest did not forgive or grant him absolution? Now how will the Church apply the words "whosoever sins you have retained, they are retained"? The only reply that the Rev. Priest could give me was, "I suppose, God will under the circumstances forgive him." How will this strike a rational mind? Could he accept the fact that the poor man was destined to eternal fire, because the Church did not forgive him; or would God forgive him in spite of the Church? Which could it be? But the Rev. Father would not meet my question as put, and hurriedly made away. If the forgiveness of sinners is ultimately in the hands of God, where then comes the necessity to believe that confession is a sacrament of purification, and a necessary asset prior to the "receiving" of the Lord God? It is considered to be a mortal sin to partake the 'bread and wine' in the Divine Worship, unless you are purified through the sacrament of confession, by the priest, the absolver of sins. To regard the Confessional as a "spiritual dispensary," where our sins are "washed" through the "absolving purgative" administered by a priest, would be no less easier than the schoolboy, who gets his physical purgative on a Saturday morning. Viewing it in its correct perspective, the confessional is more of an encouragement for the commission of sin, than a restraint on it. Once you become habituated you may as well commit any sin and easily seek pardon through a priest. Moreover a Catholic is allowed such a long rope in this matter that he may live in sin, provided he makes his confession "at least once a year, or that at Easter or thereabout," as this is a commandment of

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the Church. Indeed, if the priest could forgive sinners of their sins, and thereby make them fit for Heaven, I wonder if it was not possible to obtain a "medical certificate" in time as "unfit for service in Hell." From all that has been said it could be gathered that the sacrament of penance is not and can never be the channel through which one may be purified before worship to God.

Now let us see what it is that is necessary as a preliminary to the worship of God as laid down by the Holy Qur-án. It warns the intending worshipper thus: "O you who believe, do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated, until you know well what you say, nor when you are under an obligation to perform a total ablution* . . . until you have washed yourselves . . ." (Ch iv. V. 43). And again, "O you who believe, when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands, as far as the elbows, and wipe your head, and wash your feet to the ankles" (Ch. v. V. 6.) In the first place these verses tell us that external purification is necessary before a Muslim could offer his worship. We have exhortations for external purity in the Bible as well. As an example may be cited the case of Moses who was commanded by the Lord when He appeared to him saying, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes, from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." (Ex: Ch. 3. V. 5.) There is also the well-known saying that 'cleanliness is next to Godliness.' And if we are to approach the place of worship, where we know for certainty that God is present, spiritually as well as physically, should we not present ourselves as clean as possible? It would be but natural that if a person is called to the presence of the king, or some

*Total ablution is a complete bathing of the entire body and is necessary after sexual intercourse or a wet dream.

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other dignitary, he would take the trouble to appear as neat and clean as he could afford. Then, how much more consideration should we give to ourselves when we are palpably in the presence of God! Not that He needs in us all these forms of cleanliness; on the contrary, it is given to us that we may more easily realize that the cleansing of our external selves reminds us of the higher necessity of the purity of the inner self to which it creates a predisposition. A Muslim is expected to be in a state of physical cleanliness whether he is at prayer or not. Unless we have some law to make us do this, it is possible that we would approach our prayer and worship (in every condition of filth). As a preventive a Muslim, while approaching his prayers, is asked to wash those parts which are most exposed to the dust and dirt and this in the following order: First, he washes his hands up to his wrists, and then the mouth and the nostrils, and then the face. Next come the hands up to the elbows, after which the head is wiped over with wet fingers, and the ears cleaned, and lastly the feet are washed up to the ankles. Each action of this ablution has its own significance. In washing the hands the Muslim is told that he should keep off from such sins as are liable to be committed by them. The washing of the mouth would mean that he should be truthful and gentle in his speech, and refrain from bad language, etc. When the face is washed it is a reminder to him that he should only behold such things as are pleasing to his Almighty God. The cleaning of the ears indicate that he should heed only the dictates of the Holy Book, and shun indecent speech and songs harmful to his morality, etc. At the time of his wiping the head he is reminded that whatever thoughts proceed from it should be for the good of himself and his fellow beings. And lastly the washing of the feet indicate to him that the path he treads is Islam, and therefore he must be

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clean in body and soul if he has to traverse the Path leading to Allah. In short, his thoughts, words and deeds must be such as would enable him to be a good and true Muslim. This form of ablution must be done five times a day for the five respective prayers said at intervals during the day. Besides this whenever he has to handle the Holy Qur-án he has to perform ablutions too. Having thus cleansed himself, and recalling to mind the manner of life he led during the interval of two prayers, he repents each action as he takes ablution, and resolves to better himself for the future. These ablutions are a constant reminder to a general examination of his conscience. This does not mean that every time he takes ablutions his sins are washed off as some people in ignorance think. As to the sins committed he will not escape the punishment that would be his due on the day of Judgment, for he will be held answerable for all his actions. Nevertheless, God in His mercy has granted him a manner whereby he could recall to mind his wrongful actions and thereby avail the opportunity for constant repentance and betterment in this world. Should a Muslim strictly adhere to this method of purification, there is no doubt that his chances of becoming entangled in the meshes of Satan are considerably lessened. As for the forgiveness of his spiritual crimes he has to direct his contrition to the Merciful Lord and seek His guidance and help through constant prayer and regular worship. Sincerity and regularity in his worship draws him nearer and quicker to God than he would expect, for we are assured that if we take one step towards Him, He will take ten towards us.

Finally, these regular ablutions not only aid him to be externally clean, but they produce in him a desire for general cleanliness and thus promote a "healthy body in a healthy mind."

(To be continued)

ISLAMIC TREATMENT OF CONQUERED NON-BELIEVERS

BY M. Y. KHAN

(Continued from page 367 of the last issue.)

What can be the better proof of the safety of movable and immovable properties than that the lands which the Zimmis held before the conquest were retained by them afterwards and that the Muslims were forbidden to purchase those lands?

The land-tax that was imposed was light. Nevertheless 'Umar was very conscientious and wanted to satisfy himself in every case that no harshness was applied while the tax was collected. This state of affairs continued till 'Umar expired. It was customary, on the receipt of land-tax from Iraq, for 'Umar to invite ten persons from Kufa and ten from Basrah to confirm under an oath which was repeated four times that no harshness had been shown in its collection. Two or three days before his death 'Umar sent for the settlement officers and discussed with them the question of imposing only a light tax.

One of the greatest rights that a subject race can enjoy is to be admitted to a share in the administration of the country. 'Umar always consulted the Zimmis in all matters relating to themselves. When the settlement of Iraq was in progress he sent for the Ajami chiefs at Madina and made enquiries into the land-tax. Maqukas was also consulted on many occasions in connection with the administration in Egypt.

The rights and privileges relating to the lives and properties of the Zimmis were not merely on paper, but were strictly observed. One of the peasants of Syria complained that soldiers had destroyed his harvest. 'Umar gave him 10,000 dirhems in compensation. 'Umar always issued Firmans to his district officers that the Zimmis must on no account be oppressed,

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In public he personally insisted on the observance of good behaviour towards the Zimmis.

Qazi Abu Yusuf in his book *Al-Khiraj* has narrated that 'Umar on his return from Syria noticed some men exposed to the extreme heat of the sun and oil was poured on their heads. He enquired about this fact. He was informed that they had failed to pay Jizyah. 'Umar asked their excuse for not paying it. The people replied, "Poverty." He ordered their immediate release and instructed the Muslims not to harass the Zimmis. He added, "He heard from the Holy Prophet that he who should oppress people in this world, would incur the wrath of God on the day of Resurrection." 'Umar wrote the following Firman to Abu Ubaidah after the conquest of Syria :

"Warn the Muslims not to tyrannise over the Zimmis. Let not others harass them. Their money must not be misappropriated. Fulfil all terms that you have made."

'Umar left the following will to his successor. This will has been copied by Imam Bukhari, Abu Bakr Baihaqi, Jahaz and many other historians. The last sentence runs thus :

"I left my will on behalf of those who are under the protection of God and the Holy Prophet, viz., Zimmis. The agreement made with them must be fulfilled. They must be protected and they should not be subjected to undue punishment."

So much regard had 'Umar for the Zimmis that he did not forget them even on his death-bed.

Ghurfaḥ was a companion of the Holy Prophet. A Christian abused the Holy Prophet in his presence. Ghurfaḥ slapped the Christian's face. The Christian thereupon approached Amr ibn al-As and complained against him. Amr sent for Ghurfaḥ and asked

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him for an explanation. Ghurfah related the whole case. Amr ibn al-As replied, "We have made an agreement with the Zimmis and they are protected." "God forbid!" said Ghurfah, "they are not permitted publicly to abuse the Holy Prophet. It is agreed that they are free to do in their churches what they please, and if they are attacked we are bound to protect them. They are not to be subjected to any improper treatment." Amr ibn al-As confirmed the above statement. This is a clear proof of the fact that the Zimmis (non-Muslims) were granted exemplary rights and privileges under Islam.

The Zimmis were allowed complete freedom in religious matters. They performed freely all their rites and ceremonies; they blew conches in public; they displayed cross on roads. All the rights enjoyed by their priests before the advent of Islam were retained by them even after their subjugation by the Muslims. In Egypt, Peter York Benjamin of Alexandria roamed for about thirteen years. When Amr ibn al-As conquered Egypt he granted him in 20 A.H. a written permission for which he was much obliged. He returned and occupied again the chair of Peter York. Allama Maqrizi has given in detail the account of this event on page 492, Vol. I of his book. Along with other matters, religious freedom was mentioned explicitly in agreements. A few passages from original agreements are noted below. Hazifah bin Aliman wrote the following words in his letter to the people of Mah Dinar :

"Their religion will not be interfered with and they will have complete freedom."

At the time of the conquest of Jirjan the agreement was made as follows :

"Their life, property and religion are immune and none will be interfered with."

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It was plainly mentioned in the agreement of Azarbaijan :

“ Life, property and religion are under protection.”

The agreement of Moqan contained the following words :

“ Life, property and religion are guaranteed.”

‘Umar was very enthusiastic about the propagation of Islam, this being part of his duty as Caliph, but even this was confined to persuasion or admonition. ‘Umar always made it clear that ‘Islam admits no compulsion in religion.’ He had a Christian slave, named Istasq. ‘Umar always recommended Islam to him, but when he refused to accept it, he confirmed that Islam was not to be enforced.’

If we faithfully follow the events that occurred in the régime of ‘Umar we come to the conclusion that he made no distinction between the Zimmis and the Muslims so far as political rights were concerned. If a Muslim killed a Zimmi, he was killed in return. If the Muslims used harsh language, they were chastised. The Zimmis paid nothing more than Jizyah and Ashur. The Muslims on the other hand paid Zakat which was higher than the two put together. The Muslims paid Ashur also, but it was less than the rate fixed for the Zimmis. The Zimmis were granted the same salaries from the Bait-ul-mal as were the Muslim volunteers. The Zimmis and Muslim invalids were supported from the public treasury without any distinction. This was first introduced in the time of Abu Bakr. The following words of Khalid contained in the agreement which was signed at the conquest of Hirah confirm this statement :

“ And I authorised them that if an old man became invalid or he fell under some calamity or he became a pauper after he was rich and therefore his co-religionists granted him alms, he must be

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exempted from Jizyah. He and his children all are to be supported out of the Muslim Bait-al-mal as long as he stays in Muslim countries. But, if he leaves for a foreign land, he is not entitled to that concession."

This privilege continued to be in force under 'Umar also. He standardised the same on the strength of the verse from the Holy Qur-án that *Sadaqah* and alms are to be given to the poor and disabled. The former refers to the Muslims and the latter includes the people of the book, viz., the Jews and Christians. The details of the case were: Once 'Umar saw an old man begging on the road. He asked his reason for so doing. He was told that Jizyah was imposed on him and he was not in a position to pay it. 'Umar brought him to his house and gave him something in cash. He informed the Superintendent of Bait-al-mal that invalids of that type in future be supported from the public treasury. He referred to the above verse in this connection and added that it was unfair to be benefited by their youth and then to turn them out begging in their old age.

The Zimmis were respected equally with the Muslims. Any display of contempt against them was considered highly reprehensible. Amir ibn Sa'd, who was the Governor of Homs and who had no equal in piety amongst all the officials of the Caliphate, once cursed a Zimmi off hand, saying, "May God disgrace you!" After uttering these words, he felt very much grieved and resigned his post, expressing regret before Caliph 'Umar in these words: "It is due to my official position that I committed this error."

One of the most important points in this connection is that if ever the Zimmis revolted, concession to them continued as before. To-day rulers who claim to be

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more humane and civilized try to show kindness towards their subjects provided they are loyal, but if any moment distrust of their loyalty arises, their fury knows no bounds and they surpass barbarians in their revenge. On the other hand, the Caliph 'Umar never stepped out of the field of justice. At the extreme end of Syria there was a city called Arabos, which was connected on the other side with Asia Minor. It was conquered along with Syria and an agreement for peace was made; but its inhabitants intrigued with the Romans and worked as spies for them. Amir bin Sa'd was the Governor there. He informed 'Umar, who instructed Amir to suggest that they should vacate their country and find accommodation elsewhere after they have been paid twice the value of all their property, lands and cattle. If they did not agree to this, they should be allowed one year for consideration before being exiled. As they did not stop their intriguing with the Romans they were turned out. Can a similar specimen of forgiveness be traced in this age of so-called civilization?

The best proof of the concessions and privileges enjoyed by the Zimmis under Islam is shown by the fact that they always sided with the Muslims at every occasion against their co-religionists. The Zimmis provided rations for the Muslims, arrayed Mina Bazar in camps, and constructed roads and bridges under their own supervision and at their own expense. Above all, they worked as spies for the Muslims, *viz.*, they informed the Muslims of the hostile activities of their enemies, although the latter were their co-religionists, the Christians and the Zoroastrians.

"THE GARDEN OF PEACE"

By W. B. BASHYR-PICKARD, B.A. (CANTAB.)

(Continued from p. 317 of the September 1942 issue.)

XXV

To-night I think of the prohibitions of Islam—how few and how salutary! Wine—avoid it—cut it off—touch it not. Simplify your life by the clean sword-stroke cutting out the lurking possibility of evil. Who hath at any time forbidden good fresh grapes, God's mercy to man? But wine, wherein is evil, dally not therewith, saying, "So much is good but beyond that cometh evil." In the drinking of wine the discernment disappeareth easefully. Does not the fancied line between imagined good and evil recede ever with the drinker? Are not some less able to withstand than others? How then shall many, or even few, drink together without evil to some? Excellent indeed is the prohibition: "Drink not wine at all. Take not intoxicants at all." And of other things: "Do not eat pork. Do not eat the flesh of swine." Is it not well known and agreed upon all sides that what a man feedeth on maketh him? If he eats much meat or little shall the body not respond accordingly, influencing the life and actions? Who can eat bad food healthfully, or unclean food cleanly? Or who can deny the filthiness of swine or the harmful nature of swine's flesh? Would anyone of intelligence lean over a pig-sty in the early morning and then go indoors and enjoy a dish of swine flesh? And would not the thought of acquiring even a few of the propensities of swine horrify the delicate damsel to whom beauty is such a valued possession? So I say, shall the habit of the ages still prevail in Europe and custom blind intelligent people to reality? Apparently, Jesus (on whom be peace!) thought swine a suitable habitation for devils. The eating of pork and bacon is not essential to human

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existence. It is simply a bad habit. Eat of the good things God hath provided. And a third prohibition is there: "Avoid a game of chance," by which I understand, "Have nothing to do with gambling. Do not bet on hazard." To do so destroys the meaning and value of money, destroys the fundamental values upon which the structure of society is raised. Money for work is well, but money from hazard or luck who shall say that that is well? Lightly achieved, it lightly goeth, and in squandering of money lieth no good. Or what profit to society is one who liveth by the tricks and vagaries of chance, ever scheming to get money for nothing, to receive without earning? Who sharpeneth his wits lest honourable toil should weary his body or fatigue his mind? Needeth some Heracles to cleanse the Augean stables of the race-course!

XXVI

To-night the hate-hounds are about. The night is moonless, filled with bright stars, frosty—a night for peaceful walking or the cheerful fireside, for meditation upon the wonder and glory of creation, for praise of the One Creator or for social friendship within doors—perhaps some festivity of family affection, not and thrice not and a thousand times not a night for devastation and wreckage, for violence and pain and fury. Yet such things must be. Who doubts but that the will of God is over such things, and that the eight-foot bomb does not escape His notice, is not one atom beyond His power and control.

When the earthquake rocks, is the power and majesty and mercy of God thereby lessened one whit? Let such thoughts vanish. At the same time let it be remembered that, though mercy predominates, chastisement also is in the resistless hand of God. He createth and preserveth. He also throweth down and destroyeth.

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Even in human affairs we find light and darkness, sorrow and happiness, activity and rest.

So, in this night sent by God, when the stillness is disturbed by the bursting of hurtling noise, the Qur-án is taken down and opened, and we read: “Say: ‘The Holy Spirit has revealed it from your Lord with the truth, that it may establish those who believe and may be a guidance and good news for those who submit.’ And certainly We know that they say: ‘Only a mortal teaches him.’ The tongue of him whom they reproach is barbarous, and this is clear Arabic. As for those who do not believe in Allah’s communications, surely Allah will not guide them, and they shall have a painful chastisement. They only forge a lie, these people who do not believe in Allah’s communications and are indeed the liars. He who disbelieves in Allah after his having believed (not one who is compelled thereto while his heart is at rest by reason of faith, but one who voluntarily opens his breast to disbelief), on such is the wrath of Allah and they shall have a grievous chastisement. This is because they love this world’s life more than the hereafter, and because Allah does not guide the unbelieving people. These are they on whose hearts and hearing and eyes Allah has set a seal, and these are the heedless ones. No doubt but that in the hereafter they will be the losers. Yet surely your Lord, with respect to those who flee after they are persecuted, then they struggle hard and are patient—most surely your Lord after that is Forgiving, Merciful.” (Qur-án, XVI, 102—110.)

XXVII

Although not yet spring, it is the month of the coming of spring. To-day I have seen the first clumps of golden crocuses, valiant with golden promise of days of golden sunshine yet to come, and calling to us with more certain voice than the early white snowdrops

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that beauty is not dead but is returning with undimmed splendour to blaze out from the bosom of the dark earth.

To-day, too, the strong winds have sounded their resistless call to the bare trees, whistling and storming around them to wake, to wake to the coming of spring. To-day, also, the gentle rains have descended slanting through the pale golden sunshine, and they too speak, saying: "Lo! the dark cold rains of winter have gone and soon we in turn shall yield to the ever-strengthening sunshine. Put on gladness: all nature turns now towards gladness." But, on the human plane, stress and turmoil have raged throughout the day. Uneasily the hours of daylight have raced, staggering and jostling with their burdens of thronging duties. And, at the fall of night, the unwelcome howlings of hate have resounded through the stillness. Yet the Garden of Peace remains secure, undisturbed. Its extensiveness is as the heavens and the earth and the hand of God is there above, a sure protection. The Qur-án is opened and these verses are read: "Praiséd, Glorious God! The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. Most surely in the heavens and the earth there are signs for the believers. And in your own creation and in what He spreads abroad of animals there are signs for a people that are sure: and in the variation of the night and the day and in what Allah sends down of sustenance from the cloud, then gives life thereby to the earth after its death, and in the changing of the winds, there are signs for a people who understand. These are the communications of Allah which we recite to you with truth." (Qur-án, XLV, 14.)

"Say to those who believe that they forgive those who do not fear the days of Allah that He may reward a people for what they earn. Whoever does good, it

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is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is against himself : then you shall be brought back to your Lord." (Qur-án, XLV, 21.)

"Nay ! do those who have wrought evil deeds think that We will make them like those who believe and do good . . . that their life and their death shall be equal ? Evil it is that they judge." (Qur-án, XLV, 24.)

"And they say, 'There is nothing but our life in this world ; we live and die and nothing destroys us but time ; and they have no knowledge of that ; they only conjecture'." (Qur-án, XLV, 26.)

"Say : 'Allah gives you life, then He makes you die, then He will gather you to the day of resurrection wherein is no doubt, but most people do not know'."

"Therefore to Allah belongs all praise, the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the earth, the Lord of the worlds. And to Him belongs greatness in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise." (Qur-án, XLV, 36-37.)

XXVIII

Considering peace, what is the fundamental of peace ? What is the root of peace, from which springeth up, groweth and blossometh the most beautiful flower of peace ? The root of peace is the firm assurance of reality, a clear-sighted apprehension of eternal values, to be certain of the hereafter and yet not to be blind towards, or to despise, this present life wherein God has placed us and wherein is the spirit of God dwelling and working, blessing and punishing, setting up and casting down, remote from the proud and boastful, but nigh to the humble, who strive hard towards righteousness, who seek justice and well-doing and in whose hearts the memory of the Belovéd abideth. Peace cometh not from the world, which ever is restless, uncertain, changeful, mocking. True peace lies in the

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vision of the eternal through the temporal, to see the hereafter, but to realize that the present is necessary and full of meaning and value as leading up to the eternal, as a preparation towards greater bliss beyond. Omnipotent, Omnipresent God, which of Thy humble faithful servants would despise Thy bounties in this world so beautiful? Yet which of Thy devoted servants would not place the highest happiness in Thy nearness beyond, and deem the beholding of Thy face the supreme rapture of eternity? To this happiness, to this way of peace, the Qur-án is the sure guide. Reading therein this night, these verses shine from the page: "Allah does not love the public utterance of hurtful speech, unless it be by one to whom injustice has been done: and Allah is Hearing, Knowing. If you do good openly or do it in secret or pardon an evil, then surely Allah is Pardoning, Powerful. Surely those who disbelieve in Allah and His apostles and who desire to make a distinction between Allah and His apostles and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others: and desire to take a course between this and that, these it is who are truly unbelievers: and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement. And those who believe in Allah and His apostles and do not make a distinction between any of them . . . Allah will grant them their rewards: and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" (Qur-án, IV, 148—152.)

"Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it; and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like of it; and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. Say: Surely, as for me, my Lord has guided me to the right path: to a most right religion, the faith of Abraham, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists. Say: Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all of Allah, the Lord of the worlds; no associate has

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He ; and this am I commanded and am I the first of those who submit. Say : What ! shall I seek a Lord other than Allah ? and He is the Lord of all things ; and no soul earns evil but against itself, and no bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another ; then to your Lord is your return, He will inform you concerning that in which you differed. And He it is Who has made you to inherit the land and raised some of you above others by various grades, that He might try you by what He has given you. Surely, your Lord is quick to requite evil and He is most surely the Forgiving, the Merciful.” (Qur-án, VI, 161—166.)

XXIX

Now considering peace again, fundamental peace must be an unassailable peace, a tranquillity of mind and heart that endures unshaken, unshakable, at all times, not only during times of universal peace but during times of universal war, not only in respect of this life but also of the next life, in adversity as in prosperity, in sorrow as in gladness, in sickness, if it should so fall, as in health, in wounds and maiming as in bodily vigour, in imprisonments no less than in freedom, in loneliness as amongst friends—such peace will be worthy the name of peace, and such peace may be found in the way of life which is Islam. For consider now, Islam permits, nay recommends, fighting in a just and holy cause, in self-defensive fighting, in fighting against every lawless, impious, oppressive aggressor. Were it not so, we might behold churches and mosques and synagogues thrown down and desecrated, religious liberty trampled underfoot and the highest aspirations of humanity subjected to the basest passions and persecutions.

This holy permission to fight against aggression brings with it a deep inner confidence, a deep inner calm, a state truly of peace in war and no coward's

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peace, but a peace of courage and conviction—a good heart for the battle of right and wrong. Again, by the teaching of Islam, the world, riches or poverty, is a non-essential, a matter of indifference, powerless either to undermine or to overthrow the secure walls of the city of peace.

In prosperity, then, a Muslim will not be dazzled and led astray by great wealth, neither will he be incommoded by the luxury thereof as being something hateful to God. Likewise, in adversity, a Muslim will not be brought to despair and to rebellion against the way of God, but with patience and with quietness of mind will continue in humility and love towards God, realizing that what is withheld is after all only a non-essential, not a separation from the Belovéd but in very truth a means of nearness.

In the reading of the Qur-án these verses appear : “ And Moses said, O my people ! if you believe in God, then rely on Him, if you indeed submit. So they said, ‘ On God we do rely : O our Lord ! make us not subject to the persecution of the unjust people : and do Thou deliver us by Thy mercy from the unbelieving peoples.’ And We revealed to Moses and his brother, saying : Take for your people houses to abide in Egypt and make your houses places of worship and keep up prayer and give good news to the believers.” (Qur-án, X, 84—87.)

And again it is written : “ Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. A likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is a lamp ; the lamp is in a glass ; the glass is as it were a brightly shining star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof almost gives light though fire touch it not—light upon light—Allah guides to His light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth parables for men, and Allah is Well-aware of all things. In houses which

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Allah has permitted to be exalted that His Name may be remembered in them. There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the poor-rate. They fear a day in which the hearts and the eyes shall turn about: that Allah may give them the best reward for what they have done and give them more out of His grace; and Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without measure." (Qur-án, XXIV, 35—38.)

XXX

Latterly the rains have been heavy—almost incessant. The rivers have flowed, swollen and turbid, hurrying with rejoicing waters. Over the low-lying meadows, tranquil sheets of silver water have stretched in beauty amid the living emerald. The bounties of God have descended with abundant rain, making the earth glad beneath the returning sunshine. At night, the heavens have been filled with the uproar of hate, of violence and destruction, shaming the gentle moon. Yet we know that God hath power over all things, that God's will is accomplished in all things, that the decree of God is but "Be" and "It is." The expression of God's decree being its instant accomplishment. We know, too, that out of the pain of travail joy is brought forth, that from sorrow, patience and sacrifice cometh, with God's good pleasure, the great achievement. Therefore, hope and faith unite and produce confidence and trust. We pursue the appointed path steadily, having no doubt concerning the ultimate overthrow of injustice and oppression. We remember that "Only the unbelieving people despair of the mercy of their Lord." We feel deeply assured that freedom and brotherhood will ultimately prevail

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amongst the nations upon earth. So with unshaken calm we take up the Qur-án once more and these are the verses we find inscribed upon the sacred page : “ And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know. Surely the day of separation is their appointed term, for all of them : the day on which a friend shall not avail a friend aught, nor shall they be helped, save those on whom Allah shall have mercy ; surely He is the Mighty, the Merciful.” (Qur-án, XLIV, 38—42.) And again : “ Surely those who guard against evil are in a secure place, amidst gardens and springs ; they shall wear silks, both fine and thick, sitting face to face. Even so, and We will unite them with pure, beautiful ones. They shall call therein for every kind of fruit in security. They shall not taste death therein, save the first death, and He will save them from the chastisement of the hell, a grace from your Lord ; this is the great achievement.” (Qur-án, XLIV, 15—57.)

XXXI

God created man. Is there any who will deny this ? Is it not impious to say that God's creation is evil ? Man, therefore, cannot by nature and by the essence of God's creation be evil, be sinful. To say, therefore, that “ in sin my mother conceived me,” is a slur upon the handiwork of the Creator and a blasphemous condemnation of the fundamental laws laid down by the Creator for the continuance of human life. The more we consider this problem, the clearer becomes our conviction that man is by creation sinless and, by the grace and guidance of God, can continue sinless : or, having strayed and become smirched with the colouring of sin, may again, seeing that God is Forgiving and Powerful over all things, attain to a state

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of sinless purity, the essential qualities for regaining this actual sinlessness being humility, submission unto God, repentance, sincerity of prayer and striving.

So Islam regards man by birth and by nature as sinless, and fixes upon each man himself and each woman herself the responsibility for their own actions, the working out of their own salvation (by the grace of God) and attaining reward or punishment unto themselves. One cannot bear the burden of another. One cannot reap the reward of another. One cannot meet with the punishment of another. God is just. God is merciful: ye will not be wronged one whit. So, while thoughts fly to the Merciful, the Oft-returning to Mercy, the Great Forgiver, the Most Merciful of the merciful ones, the Qur-án, the Resplendent Book, the Book of Light, the Book of Peace, is opened, and this is the reading therein: "Nay, Allah purifies whom He pleases, and they shall not be wronged one whit." (Qur-án, IV, 49-50.)

"And as for those who believe and do good deeds We will make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them for ever; they shall have therein pure mates and We will make them enter into a deep happiness." (Qur-án, IV, 57.)

XXXII

And now it is made clear to me. The way of Islam is the way of righteousness, the way of truth, facing reality, leading through things material and temporal to things unseen and eternal, the veritable way of God, the gladsome pilgrimage towards the One Beloved who (and do you find this strange?) is ever present, a Sure Guide and Ready Sustainer, the Loving, Kind and Merciful, Whose ever presence turneth what some have termed "the vale of tears," "the valley of the shadow of death" into a country of abundant blessings, filled with wells of clear water,

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bright with vistas of loveliness, bright with springing blossoms of perfection, a valley of the beauty of the presence of the Belovéd, even the valley of peace, set in the Garden of Peace.

Whoso loveth God, let him seek God. Who seeketh God, shall he not find Him? Who findeth God, let him submit himself humbly, tasting the rapture of the recognition of the Belovéd, for He is the Light of the heavens and the earth, our Lord is One Lord and He is the High, the Great.

XXXIII

And now dark winter is over and gone ;
And the sun rides high in the heaven of blue ;
And every bird is a-carolling :
“ ’Tis spring ! ’tis spring ! ”
And the golden light on the stream shines bright ;
And the green earth wakes to her blossoming !
Mercy of God ! Ah ! mercy of God !
’Tis spring ! ’tis spring !
Now smiles the fair earth.
Now beauty hath birth.
Now joy transcending awaketh !
’Tis God’s ! ’tis God’s, this Garden of Earth !
He knoweth : He worketh : He maketh.
How glad is the air ! and the wind in the trees
To the buds on the boughs is a-whispering :
“ Come wake ! come wake ! In the joy partake
Of the springtime merrily beckoning.”
How fragrant the meadow ! and music resounds
As the stream hurries onward a-murmuring :
“ Sweet spring is here ; all things praise God,
Who filleth the earth with her loveliness.”
Then praise we God Who gave us this,
And ’neath it still that deeper bliss,
The Garden where the Belovéd is !

CORRESPONDENCE

BREIGHTON

25th March, 1942.

DEAR MR. COWAN,

Assalam Alaikum!

Many many thanks for your kind letter of the 18th and for the literature. One of my future studies will be literary Arabic.

The personal touch in your letter is very much appreciated by me. For three-and-a-half years I lived in two Arab countries and learned to like the Arab race. The desert inclines one to monotheism and I spent many happy hours in the solitude of the wide spaces.

This preference for the Muslim faith is not new, not a thing of impulse. For some years I have considered the matter well and there is now no doubt in my mind.

Yours very sincerely,

W. WILKINSON BOYD.

STRATFORD, E. 15.

14th April, 1942.

DEAR IMAM,

While my visit of yesterday remains very fresh in my mind I feel I must write and tell you how I enjoyed my brief visit to the Mosque. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that, short though it was, it was supremely worth while. There is something so intensely personal and intimate about my 'introduction' to Islam that I should have the greatest difficulty in impressing anybody else with its significance. I do not just simply regard the Mosque as a pleasant sort of 'social club' which I find it soothing and satisfying to visit now and then. I have been led to see in it far more than that. I see it as a tangible manifestation of all that has gone to make Islam what it is, all the qualities which represent and will always represent the fruits of developed humanity at its best—bravery, courage, modesty, kindness, justice, brotherhood, toleration, in fact all the things which are the very spirit and soul of Islam. I do most honestly think that one of the most convincing and beautiful of all proofs of the Divine inspiration of our Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) is the fact that often it was he alone who stood between his followers and the darkest despair—no further proof is needed than the mention in the Holy Qur-án of the Holy Prophet on the occasion of critical despair in battle when he rallied the panic-stricken Muslims—truly did history pivot upon one single personality on that day, as on many others in that incomparable life. I know that Islam can be likened to a beautiful plant which blossoms beside one and goes wherever we may go performing, comforting, refreshing and blessing our every moment. To lose or to wilfully neglect the spirit of Islam once God has bestowed it

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upon us can be regarded as the greatest possible calamity and to be avoided at every cost. What part our Faith may or may not play in the future years depends entirely on the sincerity and steadfastness of each one of us. There is obviously nothing worthy of service but the source of all things and it is as certain that nothing can earn the Creator's approval more than a policy of continual and scrupulous service and self-dedication—and *can* this course be other than Islam?

With all best wishes and sincerest regards to all,

Yours sincerely-in-Islam,

OSMAN SMITH.

LONDON, E. 15.

13th June, 1942.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER-IN-ISLAM,

Assalam Alaikum!

It is some time since I last wrote to you, but I am pleased to tell you that I wrote to Mr. Flight of Plaistow and got a very cordial and kind invitation to tea. I am most grateful to your kindness in making this friendship possible. I have of late been reading again that wonderful book—*The Ideal Prophet*. Such is this book's beneficial influence on me that I feel peace and a very real sense of well-being come over me as soon as I open it. It is certain to give me strength, courage and inspiration on any occasion. Next to the Holy Qur-án I doubt if I truly value any other book in my possession more than this one. I hope I shall soon have the great pleasure of visiting you all at Woking again, and so far now I will say good-bye and send you my sincerest greetings and regards.

Yours sincerely in Islam,

OSMAN SMITH.