

"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*

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Vol. XXXI]

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**SHAIKH MUHAMMAD JAHANGIR MIA SAHIB,**  
the late Shaikh Sahib of Mangrol, the father of the deceased.  
Born 29th October, 1860. Died 24th May, 1942.



**SHAIKH ABDUL KHALIQ MIA SAHIB,**  
**the Shaikh Sahib of Mangrol, whose untimely death is announced**  
**in this issue.**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مُحَمَّدٍ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ

## THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol.  
XXXI]

SHA'BAN, 1361 A.H.  
AUGUST, 1943 A.C.

[No. 8

### A CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION

*Resolution No. 307, dated 15th July, 1943.*

The Members of the Managing Committee of the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust record their profound grief and sense of irreparable loss at the sad and untimely death of Shaikh Abdul Khaliq Mia Sahib, the ruler of Mangrol, and convey their heartfelt condolence to K. S. Shaikh Nasiruddin Mia Sahib, the eldest son of the deceased and other members of the bereaved family.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### IN MEMORIAM

SHAIKH ABDUL KHALIQUE MIA SAHIB OF MANGROL

When the great Muslim, Shaikh Sahib Jahangir Mia of Mangrol, passed away in the month of May last year and the whole of Muslim India was plunged in grief as a consequence, a great consolation was found in the fact that he was succeeded by his worthy son Shaikh Sahib Abdul Khalique Mia. With the keen sense of responsibility for his state and his community that Shaikh Jahangir Mia Sahib possessed, he found Shaikh Abdul Khalique Mia competent to rule the state for all practical purposes long before he died. It was no small relief, therefore, that the state and the Muslim community felt when at the death of the illustrious father, this worthy son was duly installed into the rulership in his place.

Indeed, it made us immensely happy, at the time of his installation, to think that the noble traditions of Shaikh Jahangir Mia Sahib's time were going to be continued over a long period in future perhaps with added splendour brought to them by the youthful vigour of the new ruler. Scrupulously dutiful and devoted to Islam that he was, we expected great things from him in the interest of his state, his community and his religion.

Hardly any one among the large circle of friends and admirers of the ruling family, could suspect at that time that all these happy dreams would be shattered even before the year closed. Indeed, so sudden and unexpected is the death and so staggering in its effect that it took us some time before we could make ourselves believe that the event had actually taken place. A brief sombre telegraphic message from Mangrol just tells us that the melancholy event took place on the 10th of July, 1943. The young Shaikh

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Sahib was hardly 46 at the time of death. It is pathetic to say the least of it.

“Inná lilláhi wa inná ilaihi ráji’ún”

(For God we are and to Him do we return.)

Whatever our reactions as mortal beings, as Muslims we resign ourselves to the melancholy fact. The members of the bereaved family, being brought up in a strictly Islamic atmosphere, we have no doubt, will take the event in the traditional spirit of true Muslims. Man lives and man dies; but virtue never dies. Both the father and the son were virtuous Muslims and their acts of help and charity have acquired a wide fame in India and even beyond. It is impossible that they will not bring their reward in due time.

With these words we join the bereaved family in their deep sorrow, share their sense of irreparable loss and commend the young deceased soul to the mercy of the Lord and His blessings!

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## EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE TIME OF THE PROPHET

BY DR. HAMIDULLAH

*(Continued from p. 187 of the last issue)*

### POST-HIJRA ISLAM

Instead of a chronological arrangement of the data available regarding the Madinite period, we may conveniently divide the material under several heads such as administration of schools, examinations, boarding and lodging of resident students, arrangements to teach writing and reading, teaching of foreign languages, course and syllabus of general studies, women's education, education in provinces, inspection of provincial schools, and miscellaneous.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

To begin with, as we have just remarked, the Prophet had sent a teacher to Madinah even before he himself migrated to that place. Immediately after the Hijra, we see him, in spite of enormous preoccupations in connection with defensive and precautionary measures, finding time to supervise the work of eradicating illiteracy from Madinah.

To this end he appointed Said ibn al-As to teach reading and writing ; and he is reputed to write a good hand.<sup>1</sup> The Prophet was so much interested in this matter that a year and a half after his migration, when two score and more Makkans were taken prisoners by him after the victory of Badr, he asked those among them who were literate, that each one of them should teach ten children of Madinah how to write.<sup>2</sup> Ubadah-ibn-al-Sámit says that the Prophet appointed him a teacher in the school of Suffah (Madinah) for classes in writing and in Quranic studies.<sup>3</sup>

Suffah, literally an appurtenance of a house, was an enclosure connected with the Mosque of the Prophet in Madinah. This was set apart for the lodging of newcomers and those of the local people who were too poor to have a house of their own. This was a regular residential school where reading, writing, Muslim law, memorising of chapters of the Qur-án, *tajwid* (how to recite the Qur-án correctly), and other Islamic sciences were taught under the direct supervision of the Prophet, who took pains to see to the daily requirements of the

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1. كتاب التراتيب الادارية by Ibn Abdul Barr, p. 393, استيعاب  
والعمالات والصناعات والمتاجر والحالة العلمية التي كانت على عهد  
"تأسيس المدينة الإسلامية في المدينة المنورة العلية" by Abdul Hai  
al Kattaniy, I, 48 (citing Abu Dawud.)

2. Kattaniy, *op. cit.* i. p. 48 Ibn Hanbal I, p. 247 Ibn Sa'd, 21. p. 14 ;  
روض الانف by Al-Suhailiy, II p. 92.

3. Kattaniy, I, p. 48, citing Abu Dawud and others.



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boarders.<sup>1</sup> The students also earned their living by working in their spare hours.<sup>2</sup>

The school of Suffah provided instruction not only for the boarders but also day scholars and casual visitors attended it in large numbers. The number of the boarders in Suffah varied from time to time and a record shows that at one time there were seventy living in the Suffah.<sup>3</sup>

Besides the local population, batches of students from far-off tribes used to come and stay there for a while and complete their course before returning to their country.<sup>4</sup>

Often the Prophet asked some of his trained companions to accompany the tribal delegations on their return journey in order to organize education in their country and then return to Madinah.<sup>5</sup>

In the early years of Hijra, it seems to have been the policy of the Prophet to ask all those people who embraced Islam from among the people living outside Madinah, to migrate to the proximity of the metropolis,<sup>6</sup> where sometimes he allotted them crown lands for colonisation.<sup>7</sup> The military and religious reasons which might have actuated this decision are obvious. Ibn Sa'd<sup>8</sup> records, that once the Prophet sent a teacher, as usual, to a tribe recently converted to Islam. The teacher, according to the general instructions, asked the tribesmen to leave their homes and migrate to Madinah.

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1. And share with them his daily bread.

2. Bukhariy, Battle of B'r Ma'ūnah.

3. Ibn Hanbal III 375.

4. Bukhariy, رجة البهايم by Tabariy, XI p. 50: تفسير خازن: concern- ing verse 9: 122.

“And the believers shall not all go out to fight. Of every troop of them a party only shall go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in rel'g on and that they may warn their folk when they return to them so that they may beware' (9: 122). Ibn Abdul Barr, العلم pp. 20-21.

5. Kattaniy I, 43 ff.

6. Wensinck مفتاح كنوز السنة s. v. هجرة

7. Abu Dawud II p. 32; and others.

8. وفود طبقات

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

And he added : 'who so does not migrate, his Islam is no Islam and he will be treated as an unbeliever.' A delegation of the tribe set out for Madinah, waited on the Prophet and were enlightened. The Prophet explained to them that if they found difficulty in leaving their country on account of landed and other vested interests, it was not at all incumbent upon them to come over to Madinah. They would nevertheless be treated just as those who had embraced Islam and had migrated to Islamic territory.

The despatch of teachers was a regular feature of the educational policy of the Prophet all through his life in Madinah. In the case of Bi'r Ma'unah, he had despatched 70 of his best Qur-án-knowers obviously because they had to deal with a vast country and a very large tribe.

The arrival of batches of students was not the less frequent. As said above, the Prophet personally took interest in the school and boarding house of Suffah where they were generally lodged.

Suffah was not the only school in Madinah. Ibn Hanbal<sup>1</sup> records that at a certain time, a batch of 70 students attended the lectures of a certain teacher in Madinah, and worked there till morning. There were at least nine mosques in Madinah even in the time of the Prophet,<sup>2</sup> and no doubt each one of them served simultaneously as a school. The people inhabiting the locality sent their children to these local mosques. Quba is not far from Madinah. The Prophet sometimes went there and personally supervised the school in the mosque of that place.<sup>3</sup> There are general dicta of the Prophet regarding those who studied in the

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1. III 137.

2. Abu Dawud ff. عینی شرح البخاری کتاب المراسیل II, 468.

3. Ibn Abdul Barr. العلم p. 97.

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mosque schools.<sup>1</sup> He also enjoined upon people to learn from their neighbours.<sup>2</sup>

An interesting episode has been recorded by Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As,<sup>3</sup> that one day the Prophet found, when he entered his mosque, two groups of people, one of them was engaged in prayer and devotional service to God, and the other in learning and teaching Fiqh. Thereupon the Prophet remarked that both the groups were doing praiseworthy things, yet the one excelled the other. As for the first, it prayed to God Who may or may not give them what they asked for at His will. As for the other, it learned and taught the ignorant. And in fact he (the Prophet) himself was raised up as a teacher (mu'allim)—and the Prophet took his seat with this latter group.

In this connection I may also refer to the famous and oft-quoted tradition that a learned man is far harder on Satan than one thousand devout ascetics together.<sup>4</sup>

The Prophet also taught personally. Umar and many other prominent companions regularly attended these classes and learnt the Qur-án, etc. Sometimes the Prophet inspected the study circle in his mosque and if he found any incongruity, he at once took steps to put it right. So, al-Tirmidhiy<sup>5</sup> mentions that once the Prophet heard a discussion in his mosque for and against predestination. He came out of his room and he was so angry that, in the words of the narrator, the juice of pomegranate seemed to have been poured over his cheeks and forehead. Then he forbade discussion in such matters and remarked that many a former nation went astray on account of that question.

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1. Ibid. p. 14.

2. Ka'taniy, *op. cit.* I, 41.

3. Ibn Abdul Barr, *العلم* p. 25; and others.

4. Suyutiyy *op. cit.* s. v. *علم* and *تقيه* citing Bukhariy and Dailamiy.

5. *شمائل* *in loco*.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Again, it was the decided policy of the Prophet, that only the most learned in the Qur-án and in the Sunnah should conduct the religious service<sup>1</sup> which implied the chieftainship of the place, tribe or town, and so people vied with each other in learning and passing the tests of government schools.

These attempts did not prove futile, and literacy spread so rapidly that very soon after the Hijra the Qur-án could prescribe compulsory records in documents and attestation of at least two persons for every transaction on credit, however small. In the words of the Qur-án the aim of written documents was as follows :

“ This is more equitable in the sight of Allah, and more sure for testimony and the best way of avoiding doubt between you.”<sup>2</sup>

Obviously this could not have been enforced without a large diffusion of literacy<sup>3</sup> among the inhabitants of the Muslim State. The writing down of the *wahy* (revelations) political treaties and conventions, state correspondence, enlistment of militia,<sup>4</sup> permanent representation, especially in Makka, to inform the central government of what was going on in other countries and states, census,<sup>5</sup> and many more such things, were in those days directly connected with and necessitated the expansion of literacy. More than 200 letters of the Prophet have come down to us in history<sup>6</sup> and many more must have been lost since the Prophet ruled over a country of over a million square miles in area for a whole decade.

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1. Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj *in loco*.

2. Qur-án, 2 : 282.

3. There were also professional scribes for the use of the public. Kattaniy, Vol. I., pp. 275—77.

4. Id., p. 221, citing Muslim.

5. Bukhariy, pp. 56 ; 181(1).

6. Cf. my “Corpus des Traités et lettres diplomatiques de l’Islam à l’époques du Prophète et des Khalifes Orthodoxes.”

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The Prophet was the first to introduce seals in Arabia.<sup>1</sup> His care for legibility may be gathered from his *obiter dicta*, that you must dry the ink on the paper with the use of dust before folding it;<sup>2</sup> that you must not omit the three curves of the letter ( م ) and not dash it with a single stroke of ( — )<sup>3</sup> as it shows carelessness and laziness; that you must put the pen, during the intervals of writing, on your ear since this is more of a reminder to one who dictates ( اذكر للمدلى ).<sup>4</sup>

Already in the time of the Prophet, specialisation had developed considerably and the Prophet encouraged it. So, he has said that whoever wants to learn the Qur-án must go to such and such a person, and whoever wants to learn *tajwid*, and the mathematics of dividing a heritage and law must have recourse to such and such persons.<sup>5</sup>

There are several traditions forbidding teachers to accept any remuneration,<sup>6</sup> which shows that it was a custom of long standing to reward the teacher. Ubadah ibn al-Samit relates that he taught the Qur-án and the art of writing in Suffah and one of the pupils presented him with a bow. The Prophet, however, commanded him not to accept the same.<sup>7</sup>

As the head of the State, the Prophet required the services of those who knew foreign languages. Zaid ibn Thabit, the chief amanuensis of the Prophet, is reputed to have learnt Persian, Greek (روميه?), Eth'opian, and Aramaic.<sup>8</sup> And at the express instance of the Prophet, he learnt the Hebrew script in some

1. Kattaniy, I. p. 177; Baladluriy, فتوح etc.

2. Kattaniy, I. p. 129.

3. Id., p. 125ff.

4. Kattaniy.

5. Ibn Sa'id and others, *in loco*.

6. Suyutiyy جمع الجوامع S. V. علماء citing Tabaraniy; Bukhariy, 37, p. 16, Abu Dawud 33: 36.

7. Abu Dawud II, p. 129, also cited by Shibli سيرة النبي II, p. 88.

8. Kattaniy, I, p. 202, citing Ibn Abd Rabbih عقدة الفريد and others.

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weeks.<sup>1</sup> It was he who wrote letters addressed to Jews and it was he who read out to the Prophet letters received from them.

The question of the course and syllabus is difficult to pronounce upon with exactitude. From the scanty material at our disposal we come to the conclusion that no uniform course was followed everywhere. The teacher rather than the course was the main factor. Still we can glean this much of information that besides the all-embracing Qur-án and the Sunnah, the Prophet enjoined instruction in shooting (of arrows),<sup>2</sup> swimming,<sup>3</sup> mathematics of dividing a heritage in the Quranic proportions,<sup>4</sup> the rudiments of medicine,<sup>5</sup> astronomy,<sup>6</sup> genealogy<sup>7</sup> and the practical phonetics necessary in reciting the Qur-án.<sup>8</sup> Again, the teacher was to be treated with respect.<sup>9</sup>

The Arabs of Makka laid great stress on purity of language and on desert life free from the vices of the cosmopolitan Makka. So, they used to send their newborn babies to various tribes in the interior of the country for several years. The Prophet himself had undergone this useful training and remembered it in his later life. It is said that the practice has not been discontinued to this day among the aristocracy of Makka. Again, as commerce was the main profession of the Makkans, young men were apprenticed to leaders of caravans.

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1. Kattaniy I, p. 203; citing Bukhariy and others.

2. Suyutiyy *op. cit.* s. v. *ابو نعيم* citing *ابن مندة* *علموا*

3. *Id.* s. v. *ابو نعيم*, *ابن مندة* *علموا* citing

4. *Id.* s. v. *علموا* citing *طبرانى* *دارقطنى* and others; Ibn Abdul Barr *العلم* p. 80; Abu Dawud 18: 1; Ibn Majah, p. 23: 1.

5. Suyutiyy, s. v. *تعلّم* citing Malik.

6. *Id.*, s. v. *تعلّموا* citing Ibn Saniy.

7. *Id.*, s. v. *تعلّموا من النساك* citing Malik, Tirmidhiy, Tabariy, Baihaqiyy,

8. *Id.*, s. v. *تعلّموا من امر النجوم* citing Dailamiy.

9. *Id.*, s. v. *تعلّموا* citing Tabaraniy.

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Some distinction was made even in those early days between the education of children and that of adults. Shooting and swimming were expressly enjoined upon children (*sibyan*). Again, the Prophet said that boys of seven should be taught how to take part in religious service, and should be compelled at ten if they disregarded it.<sup>1</sup>

Girls were treated separately. The Prophet set apart a special day when he lectured to women exclusively and replied to their questions.<sup>2</sup> Spinning was regarded by him as their special occupation.<sup>3</sup> A tradition records that he asked a lady to teach the art of writing to one of his wives.<sup>4</sup> His wife 'Aishah was so gifted in Fiqh and Muslim sciences besides letters, poetry and medicine<sup>5</sup> that the Prophet is said to have remarked that she mastered half of the human sciences. The Qur-án had also specially enjoined upon the wives of the Prophet to teach others.<sup>6</sup> An interesting tradition says :

“Who possesses a slave girl and teaches her and teaches her well and trains her and trains her well, and then liberates her to marry her as a regular wife, he shall have double merit.”<sup>7</sup>

Gradually the Muslim State, which at first consisted only of a part of the city of Madinah, extended far and wide in the Arabian peninsula, and not only nomadic tribes but also settled Arabs of towns and cities embraced Islam in large numbers. The conversion to

1. Suyutiy, *op. cit.* s. v. *علموا الصبي* citing Ibn Hanbal, Tirmidhiy, Baghawiy.

2. Bukhariy *العلم*

3. Suyutiy s. v. *علموا* (نعم لهوالمومنة فى بيتها الغزل) citing Abu Nuaim, Ibn Minda.

4. Kattaniy, *op. cit.*, 1, pp. 49—55; citing Abu Lâwúd and Qa'dî 'Iyad.

5. Shibli *سيرة النبي* 11., p. 407; etc.

6. Qurán, 33 : 34.

7. Ibn Abdul Barr *العلم* p. 46.

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the new faith necessitated a very extensive educational service embracing the million square miles under the Muslim sway in the time of the Prophet. Teachers were sent from Madinah to important centres and the provincial governors were made responsible for the organization and control of local schools. The long document<sup>1</sup> exhaustively enumerating the duties of Amr ibn Hazm as governor of Yaman has fortunately been preserved by historians *in toto*. It contains express instructions for the diffusion of knowledge of Muslim sciences, the Qur-án, Hadith and Fiqh. There is an interesting sentence which throws a flood of light on the distinction between religious and secular education. It runs: "And persuade<sup>2</sup> people to take to religious lore."

Daily ablutions, weekly baths, congregational services, yearly fasting and the pilgrimage to the Ka'ba were also to be taught by the governor-teacher.

To enhance the standard of provincial education, the Prophet appointed at least in Yaman an inspector-general of education, who was a touring officer in the various districts and provinces and looked after the schools and other educational institutions.<sup>3</sup>

Finally we may refer to the theoretical aspect of education as emphasized in the Qur-án and the tradition.

The Qur-án is full, from the beginning to the end, of most unequivocal and vehement denunciation of unimaginative imitation,<sup>4</sup> enjoining original thinking

1. Ibn Hisham, p. 961—62; Tabariy, Annales, p. 1727—29 I, 248—49, Suyutiyy.

2. Suyutiyy s. v. علموا

(علموا ولا تعنفوا فان العلم خير من العنف—علموا ولا تعسروا)  
citing Ibn Sad Baihaqiy, Ibn Hanbal.

3. Regarding governor of Makka, etc., cf. Kattaniyy 143 ff.

4. Ibn Abdul-Barr. *التمثيل في العلم* referring to

التخذ واخبارهم و رهبانهم اربابا من دون الله



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and personal investigations. No other religious Book in the world has laid such stress on the study of nature, the sun, the moon, the tide, the approaching night, the glittering stars, the dawning day, plants and animal life, presenting them all in testimony of the laws of nature and the power of the Creator. According to the Qur-án, knowledge is unending and the whole universe is made subservient to man, the Agent of God in this world. Again one must abide by the truth and not be prejudiced by narrow notions of hereditary customs and beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

In the Hadith also learning has been praised lavishly and learned people have been declared to be the best of men<sup>2</sup> and even the inheritors and successors of prophets.<sup>3</sup> Lastly, I shall refer to an oft-quoted tradition.<sup>4</sup> Though not universally acknowledged to be genuine in its present form of wording, yet its sense is quite in consonance with the general teaching of the Qur-án and the tradition. I mean the command: Seek knowledge even if it be in China since the seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim, man and woman.”

1. Cf. Abu Dawud pp. 24 : 1, 3 ; Tirmidhiy, pp. 39, 2, 19.

ff مقدمة الدارمى 31 ff مقدمة ابن ماجه

2. من يرد الله به خيراً يفقهه فى الدين (Bukhariy, 3 : 10, 13 : 96 : 10—  
علم العلم 23—Ibn Abdul Barr, مقدمة ابن ماجه ff 17—  
علم العلم 25, 31.) مقدمة الدارمى (خير الناس العلماء والمتعلمون 17—16 pp.

3. العلماء ورثة الانبياء (Bukhariy, 3 : 10 ; Tirmidhiy, 39 : 9 ; Ibn Abdul Barr, p. 21.)

4. اطلبوا العلم ولو كان باليمن فان طلب العلم فريضة على كل  
Ibn شعب الايمان Baihaqiy, العلم العلم 23—Ibn Abdul Barr, مسلم و مسلمة  
Ediy الكامل)

7. Ibn Abdul Barr, العلم p. 84 ;

(اللهم انى اسألك علماً نافعاً و رزقاً طيباً و عملاً متقبلاً)

[“O God I ask Thee for useful learning, righteous livelihood and actions accepted by Thee.” Such was the prayer of the Prophet.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### ISLAM AND MODERN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

Successive generations of inspired religious teachers have throughout the ages emphasised the fact of revelation as the only sure indication of the existence of God. But the number of those who are anxious for and are thus favoured with this instrument for the sure knowledge of God, is very small in every age. For the teeming millions of ordinary men and women of the world, however, revelation of a certain type is indispensable to their very worldly life even if they do not feel any urge for the understanding of the higher purpose of life. In this latter case it is the revelation of general rules of social conduct, without which civilised existence cannot last even for a moment. It is not a personal experience for all, but has to be received from one with whom it is. With all his sagacity man, buffeted by the storm of conflicting emotions and passions, cannot clearly understand the laws governing his social existence. Since the beginning of time he has to depend for this understanding on the guidance of God revealed through one or other of the highly evolved souls among mankind. With all the talk about the Christian New Testament of salvation by grace, the English social laws are still based on the Ten Commandments, laid down in the Old Testament. This unmistakably shows the limitations of man's understanding of things pertaining to social life.

The Qur-án and the Prophet Muhammad have nothing in them to encourage the view even in a casual observer that they do not constitute a genuine religious movement, like others that have preceded it, not excluding Judaism and Christianity. Nay, if one takes into account the marked civilizing influence of the

## MODERN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Islamic teachings, the rational, universal and scientific setting in which those teachings are presented, one cannot help thinking that Islam is a religion *par excellence*. And yet strangely enough in their attempt to find a new and broader basis for social life, the Western thinkers have never thought of the ideas and principles laid down in the Qur-án. In this, one may perhaps discern a morbid tendency of the human mind to steer clear of all Divine guidance.

These people are averse to any attention being paid to the Qur-án not on any rational ground, but only because it is associated with the principle of Divine intervention in human affairs. They pay an outward regard to their hereditary religion not because this provides any solution of the problems of social existence, but because it is incapable of bearing any rational scrutiny and thus standing any chance of forming the basis of the complicated social structure of the times. It is retained because it can be safely discarded for all practical purposes. Muhammad is abhorred as a Prophet just because in his presence no false prophet of a philosopher or social reformer stands any chance of thriving. God, however, has His own way of compelling allegiance to His own system.

He allows men to wander about in wrong ways, till exhausted by the fruitless meanderings and unable to bear the suffering attendant upon the wrong course of action adopted in social behaviour, he humbly comes to offer his allegiance to the direction of God. And it is this submission in the matter of social laws which constitutes true submission or resignation, so much mentioned in religious discourses. Without this man's religious submission is not complete. Nay, it is devoid of any value. In the seclusion of his private life a man may offer his submission to his Creator many a time in

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his life. He may be helped by Him, forgiven by Him, as often as he applies to Him. But this leaves God's demand for submission yet unsatisfied. God has created man in this world of matter. He has so made man that he must live in society. Peace and order in this complicated existence called civilization is an unavoidable necessity. In view of the fact that man cannot discover the subtle laws that govern this system, God has taken upon Himself the revelation of these laws through His elect ones. As the Qur-án would put it "It devolves on Us to show the way." History bears testimony that it has been the practice of God to keep men informed of the laws that govern human relationships. Whenever man is found to forget such laws once revealed, or his expanded social life stands in need of a fuller guidance, a new prophet appears on the scene and delivers a new message from God, containing the needed guidance. On the other hand, the average man of the world has generally been averse to such revealed guidance and felt himself competent to discover these laws by his own human intelligence. The invariable opposition to the prophets has its origin in this. "But we rejected him and said, Allah has not revealed anything . . . " (67:9) This is the insubordination which the Devil was guilty of and which man instigated by the Devil has been guilty of, since the days of Adam. And unless and until he submits to this dispensation of God bearing on his social conduct, he cannot be regarded as having submitted to His will. Here I recall a talk that once took place between myself and a gentleman, who at that time was a Jew but has since become a Muslim. He was a Levy and in spite of higher education, meticulously observed Jewish laws about food and drink and other matters of social behaviour. He would not take any food at the Woking Mosque, which he came to see, on the

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ground that some Jewish laws of cleanliness were not observed by us Muslims. As I had to go to London the same evening the gentleman offered me a lift to create an opportunity for a heart to heart talk. Among the many questions he asked me on our way to the metropolis one was: "If a non-Muslim scrupulously follows his own religion and proves himself every way a God-fearing and virtuous man from the universal moral point of view, would you even then require his conversion to your religion to ensure his *bona fide* in religious faith?"

It was a difficult question from a free intellectual point of view, so I had to pause a while before replying to it. "Yes," I replied at last. "God's will is not static. It is dynamic and as such has a new manifestation in every age. Submission to this will, therefore, involves submission even to its latest phase in operation. The slightest reservation in this matter would amount to disobedience. As for virtuous conduct, the truest type of it can come only from the fullest submission to the will of God. Any other will at bottom be found to be either convention, or vanity or show." Since this conversation I have given further thought to the question and I am convinced that the position of religion is exactly what I stated then. And if this is the position of a person following a revealed religion, how much more insecure will be that of a man following his own fancy, call it philosophy or by any other name you please. It will not be out of place here to notice how man's own findings, however wrong and consequently fraught with pain they may be, give him much more excitement and an apparent pleasure than the things and ways suggested to him by God and are of assured safety and happiness. It is difficult to say whether it is presumption or vanity that lies at

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the bottom of this tendency. Perhaps it is both. There is a saying of some European author to the effect that if he were offered truth on the one hand and search for truth on the other, his choice would fall on the latter. As applied to moral truths such a spirit at first sight would appear marvellous ; but if we dive a little deep below the surface we shall discover a great fallacy underlying its logic.

*(To be continued)*

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### **SOME OBSCURE PASSAGES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT EXPLAINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE QUR-AN.**

BY SYED MAQBOOL AHMAD, B.A.

When we Muslims say that the Qur-án is the revealed Book of God we mean nothing more or less than what the Book itself claims and proclaims in every page and which is evident from the style it adopts in addressing Muhammad which is always in the second person. Muhammad is comforted, is encouraged in his mission, his despondency and doubts are set at rest, he is often chided for his human weakness and forgetfulness, he is given hope for the success of his mission, old prophets are cited and their trials and tribulations are related to strengthen his heart, his people and he himself are shown the right path and are commanded to perform duties. they are promised in no unequivocal terms the triumph and ultimate victory which is coming to them in a few years when they will be made Khalifs on earth and David's words are recalled which the psalmist sang—"And the righteous shall inherit the earth." The vanquished Greeks are foretold a success over the conquering Persians in the land adjoining Arabia and Muslims.

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are told that they too will rejoice by their own victory on the same day which occurred on the battlefield of Badr. So, if Von Hammer and his fellow-Christians believe that the Qur-án is as much the word of Muhammad as Muslims believe it to be the word of God, it only discloses the perverse mentality of the Christians with respect to their own books. For though the Christians and the Jews likewise regard their respective scriptures as the revealed books of God—and the Muslims do not dispute this claim, excepting that they only consider it to have been interpolated and so to have lost all value as a book of guidance—as the one true and pure faith of Islam or submission preached since the dawn of enlightenment came on humanity, yet one need an extraordinary gullibility and faith to call it even an indirectly inspired book as it is not only not supported by a single evidence in the book itself, but the narratives and anecdotes are so stamped with human essays and errors that it will almost amount to blasphemy to make God responsible for it, specially for some passages of the Old Testament which no parent will like his minor children to read and which he himself cannot read without blushing. If any old history, personal biographies and reminiscences, wonder-tales could ever be called a revealed or inspired book of God, then surely every book is a book of God from the standpoint of its devoted readers.

The New Testament in our hands consists of a short biography of Jesus Christ composed, no doubt, by the persons whose name it bears ; one of them is a man of literary style whose book begins with a short preamble. He has also composed a post-Jesus history—the activities of Jesus' disciples specially of St. Paul, the two other authors are men of mediocre understanding and learning and the third is undoubtedly

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an eccentric philosopher and visionary who takes up Philo's dissertation about Logos and gives it a rendering which will puzzle even Philo himself—who, for instance, could conceive such a rigmorole as "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the Word was God, etc." He has also written another book which will amaze and amuse the pious and impious reader according to his light—a confusing allegory called Apocalypse. Then sewn with these tracts are the letters of St. Paul and others. St. Paul occupies a prominent part in this epistolary essay and appears to have been influenced more by his heart than his head. He is, if not moon-struck in the words of Proconsul Festius, was undoubtedly *Christ-struck* and it is he who is responsible for the ideal of Jesus' atonement of sin by his death and resurrection. One wonders, how it would have tickled Jesus if he were living then. The Jews hanged him but he escaped and disappeared because only the accursed and not the prophets deserve hanging, he showed himself occasionally to his trusted disciples in secret hiding and lived perhaps up to a good old age, unrecorded, preaching among the lost tribes of Israel, but he never thought of telling anybody what his devoted follower St. Paul invented for him. He was a simple-minded Hebrew, a man of God, or the son of Man—a son of the soil more appropriately—(as he himself styles) or even the son of God as the Jews would call every pious man without meaning it too literally. St. Paul on the other hand having come from Tarsus and being a Roman citizen versed in the mythology of the Romans, had found good materials in Jesus' last episode to place him on the pedestal of a Roman god.

I have read the New Testament on my voyage and journeys when the officious missionaries, my fellow



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travellers, attempted to convert me and save my soul from damnation by supplying me a nice copy of the book. I read it through and through during my long voyage between Bombay and Yokohama in the year 1934 and laid it aside and now I am putting down as a review some obscure passages of the Book which I have not understood but which I have tried to understand in the light of our own Qur-án. If I am right, so far so good, if I am wrong, I would be glad to receive enlightenment I need. Alas, I cannot expect my dear old missionary friend on Board P. and O. steamer who had already crossed man's span of life when I met him and yet was serving his God among the heathen Chinese in far off Manchuria, to come across this writing. He must be dead now. To proceed—

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.”

Mark: 25.

If Jesus means what he says, then I join with his disciples in their astonishment as reported in the preceding and the following verses. Did he really condemn all rich men in an absolute manner? I cannot believe it was so but who will tell me what was really said and what ought to have been said? Let us now turn to the Qur-án which by a happy coincidence uses a similar “camel and needle-eye” metaphor. After all, the fountainhead of both is the same.

“Verily, those who say Our signs are lies and are too big with pride for them; for these the door of heaven shall not be opened, and they shall not enter into paradise until a camel shall pass into a needle's eye.”

—Verse 38, Chapter Al-A'raf.

So it is an unbelieving richman, a proud American or European multimillionaire, of whose shoe a black nigger

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including Jesus is not worthy to open the latch of, who is in danger of forfeiting this right of entry in heaven and you must note that Jesus too has declared this condition as a necessary qualification—in so far as he followed the Ten Commandments and did not rely on the atonement of sin by his own blood.

Talking of the Kingdom of God, we find another very elusive term in the New Testament which should have been understood in the light of the Qur-án. The New Testament has defined the kingdom of Heaven in the following terms : (1) Heaven or paradise. (2) The coming of Christ. (3) The Millenium on earth. (4) The end of the world. (5) Worldly kingdom of righteous people. It will be rather a lengthy digression to discuss any of these, but there is a parable of Jesus to which we find a key in the Qur-án and which shows that in one case at least it is definitely No. 5, and the New Testament itself, as I will show, confirms this in the parable of Vineyard.

“ And he said, so is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth brought forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear. After that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle because the harvest is come. And he said whereunto shall we liken the Kingdom of God ? Or with what comparison shall we compare it ? It is like a grain of mustard seed (*sic*) which when it is sown in the earth is less than all the seeds that be in the earth. But when it is sown, it groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth

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out green branches ; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it."

Mark : IV 26—32.

Compare this with the following passage of the Holy Qur án:

"He it is who sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth so that it may prevail over all religions, for God is witness enough. Muhammad is the Apostle of God and those who are with Him are strong against the mis-believers, compassionate among themselves, thou mayest see them bowing down, adoring, craving grace from God and His goodwill—their mark is in their face from the effects of adorations—that is their similitude in the Law and their similitude in the Gospel, as a seedling putteth forth its sprouts and strengthens it and grows stout, and its standing firmly on its stem, delighting the sower—that the mis-believer may be angry at them. God has promised those of them who believe and do right forgiveness and a mighty reward."

(Ch. 48, vv. 28-29).

So, it is Muhammad and his followers that constituted the Kingdom of God, but, of course, I do not expect a Christian to accept it politely and readily. However, if he has discerning eyes to see and discriminating ears to hear, Jesus Christ will tell him that the Qur-án is right. Let me quote him in full :

"Hear another parable. There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent

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his servants to husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves: This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance and they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto these husbandmen? They said unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus said unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stones which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner—this is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."

St. Mathew. XXI, 33—45.

The parable is plain and simple enough. The Lord of the vineyard is God, the husbandmen are His chosen people the Jews, vineyard is the promised land

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or the Holy Land. The servants are the prophets that came successively among Israels to reclaim and reform them, but they were reviled, persecuted and killed. Then the Son is sent and who that can be? Why, of course Jesus Christ and he is also disposed of. What then the Lord of vineyard is to do? Has He not done exactly what Jesus foretold and what history has confirmed? The sons of Hagar who were rejected became the corner-stone and snatched the Holy Land from the Jews and their masters the Romans. And stone is the symbol of Arabia. To the Romans all North Arabia which was the birthplace and cradle of Islam was Arabian Petra, and the very word Hagar the mother of the Arabians means stone—a rejected stone—in the eyes of the children of Sarah. It is true that in the Acts of the Apostles the corner-stone has been understood as Christ but is it an honest interpretation? Let those who still doubt look into Daniel where four Kingdoms which came after one another in the Holy Land, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Macedonians and the Romans are followed by a stone described exactly as Jesus has described, and smashed the last Kingdom of iron and clay, and who came in Palestine after the Romans. But a Christian unfortunately will still persist in rendering everything to Christ and tell you of this fifth monarchy—there was even a body of fifth monarchists in England in the time of Puritans—as Christ's second advent on earth. Now the advent of Jesus is another ticklish problem in the New Testament. In this book Jesus' next advent is depicted as follows—

“ Verily I say unto you, people who are standing here shall not taste death until they have seen the son of Man coming in all his glory.”

If there is any cryptic meaning attached to this passage an explanation is possible, but to a non-Christian

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and even to a sensible Christian it will mean nothing but an absurd lie as the whole promise is belied by facts of history. The advent of Jesus never occurred in the lifetime of his hearers, and who will believe that after a lapse of two thousand years the hearers are still living in expectation of it? Is there any greater delusion in the Holy writ than this piece? Let us now see how the Qur-án unravels this mystery. According to this book Jesus was never crucified, *i.e.*, killed, but eluded the bloody measures of his enemies. He had influential disciples in the Government who conspired with the help of Roman officers and guards, to save him from the disgraceful death on the cross.

Thus the Qur-án, as it does not accept crucifixion, cannot naturally accept his resurrection and his second advent in the sense which the Christians attach to it. There is, however, one passage in the Qur-án which gives us a key to the understanding of the passage quoted in the Bible.

“And for their (the Jews) misbelief and their saying about Mary a mighty calumny and for their saying, verily we have killed the Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of God, but they did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but the matter became dubious to them. And verily, those who differ about him are in doubt concerning him but only follow an opinion. They did not kill him, for sure, nay, God exalted him in His presence, for God is Mighty and Wise. And there was not one of the People of the Book (those who have heard him) but believed this before his death and on the day of judgment he (Jesus) shall be a witness against them.

Ch. 4, vv. 155—160.

*(To be continued)*

## SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

17, NAPIER TOWN,

JUBBULPORE

*Dated 24th May, 1943.*

DEAR SIR,

Kindly let me know whether it is essential for a Non-Muslim embracing Islam to be circumcised. Again what is the position of the practice of circumcision in Islam, and what are its benefits ?

The following are some of the objections levelled against Islam by some of the Non-Muslims with whom I had an opportunity of talking about our religion. Kindly give adequate answers to the same :

1. The first objection brought out against the Qur-án is that the description of the heaven given therein is sensual. The streams of milk and honey, the shadows of beautiful trees and the company of the Houris appeal only to the sensualist ; they possess no charm for the sober-minded. The Houris specially seem to be the main objects of their attacks.
2. The second objection is that Islam makes obligatory on its followers certain unnecessary ceremonials—like the Pilgrimage to Makka, ablution before prayers, facing towards Ka'ba while praying, circumcision, etc.

Please give exhaustive answers to these objections, and such that the Non-Muslims will have no more grounds to raise further objections. Thanking you—

Yours fraternally,

M. A. SAMAD.

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DEAR BROTHER-IN-ISLAM,

*Assalamu-Alaikum !* Yours of the 24th ultimo.

Replies to your queries would be as follows :

It is not essential for a grown-up new Muslim to be circumcised. The custom is to circumcise a male child born in Islam. The practice of circumcision goes back to the days of Prophet Abraham. It was a sign of that sacred covenant which secured for Abraham's progeny the spiritual leadership of the world. As such it has been in vogue both among the Jews and the Arabs. The hygienic principle underlying it is being increasingly appreciated by the West and the enlightened Christians have their children circumcised in large numbers these days.

The description of the heaven and the hell being meant for people of this world had to be in terms which could be understandable to them. Such expressions are called allegorical. To call them sensual is to abuse an expression. Such expressions are permitted in all languages and for all purposes. The only question that one can legitimately ask is whether the Qur-án means them to be allegorical. Any student of the Book can unhesitatingly say it does. The key to the descriptions of the hell is provided by the verse :

“ It is the fire kindled by Allah,

“ Which rises above the hearts.” (104 : 6, 7)

As for the heaven, its nature is sufficiently disclosed by such verses as :

“ A likeness of the garden which the righteous are promised : there flow beneath it rivers etc.” (13 : 35).

“ So no soul knows what is in store for them of that which will refresh the eyes : a reward for what they did ” (32 : 17)



## SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The Holy Prophet's comment on these words are still more explicit :

“Allah says,” he says, “I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eyes has seen, and no ear has heard, and what the heart of man has not conceived” (Bukhari).

“Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and to a garden, the extensiveness of which is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth ; it is prepared for those who believe in Allah and His apostles . . . ” (57 : 21).

“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is (as) the heavens and the earth ; it is prepared for those that guard (against evil) ” (3 : 132).

The last two verses clearly indicate that the paradise of Islam has no special existence.

The word *Huri*, the target of much attack from our Christian adversaries, is a plural noun and is in the common gender. It is not, luckily, as has been ably shown by Maulana Muhammad Ali in his learned commentary, necessarily feminine gender. All that we may infer from the expression is that the paradise is accessible to both the sexes inhabiting this world of ours and that they will enjoy each other's company, provided they have become purified, for the literal meaning of the word is “*pure, beautiful ones.*”

In some of its verses the Qur-án clearly speaks of virtuous wives entering the paradise along with their virtuous husbands and *vice versa*. (see Ch. 43, vv. 68--70). To the Christian conception of sex, this may sound as preposterous, as sex has no higher conception in this religion than the connection that

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leads to procreation. In such a conception it is forgotten that the act of procreation is more or less a cruder manifestation of the sex union. The whole constitution of man, mental, moral and spiritual, supplements that of woman and *vice versa*. The physical union is, no doubt, an inalienable part of the whole union, and it is made so by the Creator with a definite purpose; but all sensible people will readily admit that given a virtuous life in both the parties, the resultant love and harmony far transcends the physical aspects of the union. Rather it is common experience that where the love rests wholly on the physical aspects of the union, in spite of all that Dr. Marie Stopes may say, it wears out sooner or later. As a matter of fact, the general failure of marriages in the West, to-day, is due to this overmuch emphasis given to the physical aspect of marriage unions. Throughout its history the Christian West has been taking extreme views of things. In its attitude towards sex, if at one time it totally ignored the physical aspects of sex-life, at the present moment it appreciates nothing else but its physical aspect. Islam takes a middle course. It admits that the physical and the spiritual have spheres of their own but it also admits their inter-relationship and holds that a proper control and regulation of the physical leads to its sublimation into the spiritual. This applies to sex affairs as much as to others. When sublimated, the faculty concerned becomes independent of the physical and as such goes to form a part of our eternal life. A *Huri* man and a *Huri* woman are thus sublimated sex-man and sex-woman of Doctor Freud. Purged of impure inclinations and looks in matters of sex, and rising above the gross sensual urges of sex-life, they have become veritable pictures of white

## SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

chastity and modesty. They diffuse around themselves a bliss which is peculiar to sublimated sex-life—love, charity and compassion. It should be remembered here that unlike Buddhism the spiritual life in Islam consists in a life of higher consciousness and not in the annihilation of consciousness. Sex forms a very large part of our consciousness, and thus far but no further is Dr. Freud correct, and as such it is foolish to think of a consciousness without it. All, however, that is crude and gross, ugly and perishable in it has to be discarded to transform it into a spiritual faculty. But this applies also to every other faculty through which life finds expression. Any faculty to find a place in heaven has to be “pure” and “beautiful” and sex is no exception to this rule. If a man fails to understand this, it is because he does not understand life and the constitution of human mind.

As for rites connected with pilgrimage, ablution etc., we must first understand that our mind and body, though they have separate existence, influence each other. The purity or otherwise of the one, thus, produces a corresponding effect on the other. We can understand this from a simple fact of life. An ailing body cannot find a cheerful mind in it. Physical preparation for a spiritual undertaking is, accordingly, quite Scientific. The only thing we have to see is that the rite in question does, in fact, help the intended process of internal purification, *i.e.*, it helps to create the frame of mind which the devotee has in view, in a particular observance. If it does not, it is an obnoxious superstition. So far as Islam is concerned, the rites in it have been reduced to the irreducible minimum, and their *raison 'd'etre* made easily understandable. Unfortunately, this cannot be said of the rites in other religions. It should be borne in mind that devoid of

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practical observances, religion degenerates into a speculative philosophy to be indulged at leisure, whereas too many rites and rituals having no bearing on the spiritual object in view, make the religion a dead-weight of superstitions, as it has been the case in Judaism and Hinduism to mention only two out of many such religions. The golden mean has been kept only in the religion of Islam. One eager to know the scientific relationship subsisting between the religious rites in Islam and the spiritual objectives they are intended to lead to, should read books like *Islam, the Religion of Humanity* by Maulana Muhammad Ali and *The Five Pillars of Islam* by Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-uddin.

Yours fraternally in Islam,

AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD,

*Editor.*

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