

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . .  
HOLY QUR-AN, 33 : 40. "There will be no prophet after me."— MUHAMMAD.

# *The Islamic Review*

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

Vol. XXXI]

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FEBRUARY, 1943 A.C.

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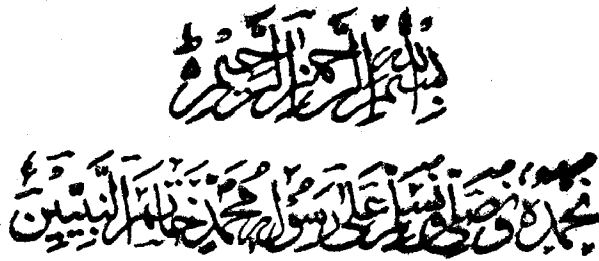
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# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol. XXXI]

SAFAR, 1362 A.H.  
FEBRUARY, 1943 A.C.

[No. 2

## A DECLARATION

We, MR. ROBERT EDGAR EALES AND MRS. MAY EALES, of .... Romford Road, Forest Gate, E. 7.; do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of our own free will that we worship One and Only Alláh (God), that we believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant, that we respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others and that we 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 31st May, 1942.*

R. E. EALES, M. EALES.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### MUHAMMAD, THE WORLD TEACHER

BY A. F. KHAN/CHOUDHURY, B.T., H. DIP.

ED. (DUB.), M.R.S.T. (LOND.)

There are indeed so many standpoints from which the question can be dealt with that I am at a loss to understand from which of these standpoints the question should be approached in the present article. I, therefore, intend to confine myself to a few salient aspects of the question and treat them in bare outline.

#### THE WORD OF GOD.

"The Prophet is the mouthpiece of God," so says Holy Qur-án. Listen to what the Holy Qur-án says :

"Say : If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be empty before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto." (XVIII : 109.)

It will thus appear that the problem of Prophet-hood is so vast in magnitude that I can at best take only a surface-view of the question.

#### MISSION OF A PROPHET

There are four functions of a prophet, as has been hinted at in the prayer of Prophet Abraham in the following inimitable words of the Holy Qur-án :

"O our Lord ! and raise in them an apostle from among them who shall release to them Thy communications, and teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them ; surely Thou art Mighty and Wise." (II : 29.)

It will thus appear, from even a superficial glance into this verse, that the main functions of the Prophet are :

- (i) Rehearsing the communications of Allah.
- (ii) Teaching the people wisdom.

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(iii) Imparting of knowledge.

(iv) Purging the hearts of people of all dross and impurity.

I wonder whether anybody else can give a more graphic and accurate description of the function of a spiritual teacher than those stated above. Let us now see how Muhammad pre-eminently fulfils the conditions set forth here.

### II

#### REHEARSING THE COMMUNICATION

We have pointed out that the primary function of the Prophet is rehearsing the communications of Allah. The word "communication" indicates in Arabic language adducing evidence and argument in support of a particular creed or doctrine. It will thus appear that rehearsing the communications implies helping towards belief in the unseen. This belief in the unseen cannot be acquired by self-effort but requires the instrumentality of a third person. Take for example the question of the existence of God, the Unknown, the Unknowable. The belief is so abstract and complex in nature that without the help of a Preceptor it is very difficult, though not impossible, to arrive at a correct conclusion. He alone can carry conviction with us who has himself gained the first-hand knowledge and experience of God and who can thereby advance cogent arguments in support of his contention. Similarly, there are thousand-and-one other questions *inter alia*, law of nature, existence of angels, prophethood, life beyond grave, etc., which require the handling of a mighty hand, so as to revive our faith in them, and appeal to our common sense and intelligence. Certainly the Prophet of God ought to be able to satisfy us on all these points, so as to free our hearts from all kinds of scepticism and misgiving.

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The above questions are so common and universal in nature that they have found an important place in the canon of all prevailing religions although the interpretation put upon these questions often differ very substantially. So the personage who can offer a satisfactory explanation of all these problems of life and death certainly deserves our spontaneous homage and tribute.

### MUHAMMAD'S APPROACH TO ALL THESE PROBLEMS

If we look into the teachings of the Holy Prophet in respect of all the above problems we are thoroughly satisfied as to the soundness and cogency of his arguments. It is Muhammad who for the first time taught that God being an infinite being can only be recognised and understood through His attributes. The nature of these attributes has to be explained by the Prophet according to the degree of intelligence of the people, particularly of his compatriots, so as to inspire in them spontaneous admiration and fear coupled with love for that great Lord of the Universe.

### PICTURE OF GOD

Muhammad gave such clear and rational exposition of the attributes of God which was not only befitting His Dignity and Majesty but which also appealed to the intelligence of a normal human being. He presented an unalloyed and picturesque description of the Lord which had a direct appeal to the heart and exonerated Him from all shortcomings and imperfections. He depicted Him as the Lord of Mercy, Grace and Benevolence Whose love for His created beings was deep and abiding. He pointed out that the love of God could be drawn by every individual being by the proper exercise of intelligence coupled with a due meed of devotion but not separately. His elect ones—called *Avatar*, (spiritual) son, *Nabi* in different terminologies—

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exemplify in their persons the true spirit of devotion and love and being duly anointed by Him, demonstrate in their persons some of His attributes though in a diminutive scale.

### ANGELS

Take next the case of the angels. Muhammad, of all Prophets, gave a true and rational explanation of those celestial beings and rebutted all the arguments against their existence. He repudiated the arguments of those who would regard them merely as courtiers of God and nothing else. According to him the angels are invisible beings in the spiritual hierarchy and stand as intermediaries between the man and God. Their existence is as certain as the existence of other invisible elements and beings in nature. Their position is not that of courtiers in the presence of a sovereign, whose main business is to keep the master in good humour and cheer by various devices, among others flattery—but they are the main pillars in the spiritual superstructure without whose presence the very edifice would come down.

### LAWS OF NATURE

Muhammad also gave clear and rational arguments of the much-thorny question of the Law of Nature which would satisfy the curiosity of people of all shades of intelligence. The philosopher and the scientist analysed and examined his explanation from different angles of vision and found it quite sound and reasonable with the result that all their doubts and scepticisms were set at rest.

### PROPHETHOOD

Muhammad, of all Prophets, laid particular stress upon the correct understanding of the nature and function of Prophethood. The power of making Prophecy is an important characteristic of the Prophets, which

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is not limited and is not static but dynamic in all resources, which like fountain yields perennial water. Prophets are like spiritual suns, without whose presence the world would have been like a dark dungeon. He emphasized the importance of developing an inner eye and likened it to that of physical eye, without which the poor human being would for ever grope in the darkness of ignorance.

### LIFE BEYOND GRAVE

Muhammad gave such edifying and convincing explanation of the theory of life beyond the grave that the question ceased to be merely of academic interest but came to be understood by a common layman. He explained that the instinct of man naturally cried for reward or punishment for his acts of merit or demerit. Greater the reward the greater is the necessity that it should be kept under proper cover so that the charm and allurements which it possesses may not be lost upon the votaries—based upon the principle embodied in the maxim, "Distance lends enchantment." The life beyond the grave is not an isolated phenomenon but the continuation of this very life—the present being the prelude to the future. The soul being freed from the bond of material body will pass through the gamut of purgatory (if necessary)—which according to Islam is a kind of spiritual hospital—until being thoroughly purified and purged of all dross and blemishes, it attains to the august presence of the Supreme Being—and achieves union with Him. Paradise is, therefore, the destined and penultimate goal of every child of Adam—the difference between individual and individual is the difference of degree, time and order and not of the quantity or quality of reward.

From the foregoing discussion it will appear that the problems which otherwise baffled the imagination



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and intellect of the sages and savants of the earth were so clearly, lucidly and comprehensively solved by the Holy Prophet that his solution carried conviction to every sensible mind and which but for him would ever have remained enigmas to the intelligent people.

### III

#### TEACHING OF THE BOOK

The next function of the Prophet is the teaching of the Book. Here too the Holy Prophet acquitted himself creditably and proved himself unapproachable by any other teacher. It was Muhammad, of all teachers, who for the first time pointed out that the Divine Code, Dispensation or Ordinance, call it by whatever name you like, is nothing but a blessing—inasmuch as it is the correct rule of life and conduct—which is higher than and superior to man-made legislations, being the expression of the will of that Great Omnipresent and Omniscient Being, and as such perfect and appropriate to all ages and climes. It is, therefore, an all-comprehensive, elastic, and immaculate law, perfect in every detail, and as such should be accepted unchallenged and unquestioned, based, as it is, upon the rock of certainty of knowledge of that great Supreme Being. This Divine Code is not, therefore, a burden or penalty but the outcome of love and beneficence of the Deity for His created beings, and as such should be taken as a veritable benediction of God. The Divine Code of conduct and ethics has saved its votary from much of the trouble and anxieties and misgivings to which votaries of other creeds are subject (whose main principle of codification is the principle of trial and error) and has cut short much of the labour in the onward march of spiritual progress. The Divine Code should neither be taken as an ordeal nor as a punishment, but as a torch-light in the path of well-being and progress of humanity.

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### UNIVERSALITY OF CODE

Muhammad further taught that the Divine Code should be universal in its nature both in theory and practice and should take cognizance of individual and national differences in respect to the capacity, temperament and outlook and further pointed out that the code which fails to take account of all these factors is self-condemned and can only enjoy an ephemeral existence.

### A COMPREHENSIVE CODE

The Holy Prophet taught that the Divine Code should be a comprehensive one in respect of its nature, scope and character. In the first place, it should contain within its body provision for moral, social and political well-being and advancement of its votaries. Secondly it should be somewhat elastic and not too rigid in its character so as to be able to keep pace with the intellectual progress and advancement of the people, must be able to meet criticism of the friendly and hostile critics of succeeding generations. The advantages gained thereby are that his code has saved the community from decay and degeneration, characteristic of a static faith, and enabled it to rise equal to the occasion with the progress and advancement of science and culture of different ages, thus making the religion a dynamic force in the realm of spirit.

## IV

### IMPARTING OF KNOWLEDGE

The Holy Prophet's teachings were pregnant with deep wisdom. God of Islam, according to him, is not a despotic God, but is in most cases a constitutional sovereign whose rule is characterised by beneficence and mercy. He is not only Mighty but also Bountiful and He does not do anything for the mere satisfaction of His cupidity, greed, ego, etc., but for our own good.

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He is also the greatest judge and His justice is always tempered by grace and equity. Every word of His has some deep meaning attached to it and it, therefore, behoves His servants that they should take all His mandates submissively, coming as they do, from the fountain of all wisdom and act up to them. It is for this reason that all His teachings as embodied in the Holy Qur-án, are surcharged with deep significance. Every command that He gave, whether positive or negative, had a cause annexed, pointing out the reason for this formulation of law, and contained warning as to the possible consequence of violation of the law. So those who acted up to His teaching can have the satisfaction in their heart that what they are doing is only right and appropriate and what they are forbidden to do must be dangerous and as such pernicious for the orderly progress of mankind, both here and in the Hereafter. This produced a kind of inward pleasure, used in a psychological sense, and as such people did not consider the commandment as irksome but a positive blessing in disguise.

### V

#### PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL

The fourth function of the Prophet is the purification of the soul. None else but the Prophet could purge the soul of all impurities and enable his followers to imbue the attributes of the Divine, so that a good many of them became models of conduct for the succeeding generations. Each one of his disciples vied with the other in the race of charity and nobility of character. Friends apart, even his critics admit that the whole of the Arabian peninsula—nay for the matter of that the world at large,—was steeped in the deepest abyss of moral and spiritual degradation and in a degeneration of the most revolting type. The world, immediately before his advent, appeared to have been enveloped

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in the darkness of ignorance. In the first place, the followers of different creeds distorted the teachings of their respective faiths and, secondly, they thought that religion had become a sort of "back number," which as they thought "has survived its usefulness." Their moral condition too beggars description. They would indulge only too freely in all kinds of moral turpitude, chicanery, perjury, forgery, adultery, murder, incest, etc. and to crown all their sense of virtue and vice was altogether dead, and what is still more reprehensible they would often pride and revel in their iniquitous deeds and run the race with each other in the commission of such misdeeds. Certainly nothing could have been more revolting than this! Certainly, it was a Herculean task to effect a transformation among such a people as this. Yet it stands to the eternal credit of Muhammad that he was so successful in achieving his objective in a unique and unprecedented manner, that it evoked the spontaneous admiration of even his most hostile critics. People who were brutes in all but appearance became the mirror of nobility and goodness, the embodiments of Purity. He organised them under the banner of Islam and infused in them such a spirit of solidarity and cohesion that they became invincible. He raised their morale to such a high level that each one of them became a sage and a saint—like so many apostles of Christ. But all this was not achieved in a day or two but took years before the summit of glory could be reached. He and his followers had to encounter a formidable opposition, braved danger and uncouth persecution, suffered martyrdom and cheerfully faced all kinds of insults, indignities and disgrace, till at last his cause triumphed and he was crowned with glory. Patience and forbearance coupled with grim determination and power of will were the secrets of his success. People gradually became

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attracted to his mission and entered his fold in millions. A new heaven and a new earth were created for them, the blind was given the eye, the diseased was cured, and the dead was brought to life. A Millennium dawned upon them and their long-cherished dream was fulfilled. Cruelty and oppression gave place to justice and fairplay coupled with a sense of security and ignorance was replaced by enlightenment and culture. The world heaved a sigh of relief and felt a new throb—a new awakening. A new era was ushered in. The world saluted him not only as Prophet but the Master-Prophet—a veritable blessing—the greatest benefactor of humanity, the most exquisite offering of the earth to the Creator.

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## THE SAGE OF MOUNT NOH

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

*Author of "The Adventures of Alcaassim" and other books.*

[This argument for Islamic ideas as being the only panacea for the ills of the bleeding humanity before us, presented in the form of a dialogue, most eloquent and inspiring, is a very timely contribution of the writer, our most valued brother and co-worker in the field.

We commend it to the closest study of the readers, not merely for an intellectual appreciation of the points he has stressed, but to receive, with an open heart, the deep inspiration he has sought to communicate.

Indeed, the four outstanding 'Islamic' ideas—the Divine Unity, the continuation of life beyond the grave, the unity of the human race, and the secondary nature of worldly possessions, can scarcely be set forth in better words than it has been done here.—*Editor "Islamic Review."*]

I visited the Sage of Mount Noh. It was an arduous climb, but exhilarating. I came to his cave by the cedars towards the summit of Mount Noh, and found the Sage seated crosslegged, comfortably writing in a half-filled book upon a bronze stand before him. Seeing my approach, the Sage laid aside his pen and welcomed me with the one word, "Peace." Swiftly it flashed to my mind that that one word "Peace" was the answer to my visit, the object of my quest. Yet I thought this a mere casual coincidence and went forward, saying that I hoped that my intrusion was no

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inconvenience to the Sage. "Your presence is welcome," came the instant and spontaneous reply. "What do you seek? What do you want? Can I help you to happiness—to bodily, to mental or to spiritual comfort? Do me the pleasure of stating the reason of your visit." This gracious welcome of the Sage came as an agreeable surprise to me; for my friends, my acquaintances and those also who disapproved of me on principle, had alike tried to dissuade me from climbing Mount Noh and from visiting the Sage. "He has retired from the world," they said. "He cannot help the world. He is unacquainted with its special troubles. Your visiting him is useless. The Sage cannot benefit you personally, nor the world at large. However, everyone does what he likes, and prohibitions are but incentives nowadays. So go or not go, just as you like. At least, we will not waste our energy by going with you." Therefore, had I come to satisfy my own curiosity and to leave no stone unturned towards solving the intricate problems of a world faced with chaos, a world tossing wearily on its fever bed, seeking the coolness of peace. Yet I was not greatly hopeful of any good result; but now, confronted by the Sage himself and witnessing the content and the peace of his presence and of his surroundings, and finding him withal affably human, I decided to treat him with full sincerity and to demand from him full satisfaction in answer to my burning questions. I, therefore, wasted no time, but plunged at once to the heart of things: and my conversation with the Sage was, as accurately as I can chronicle it, as follows:

"What is wrong with the world?"

"Why do you suggest that anything is wrong with the world?"

"Well, warfare, unrest, starvation, exaggerated inequality of wealth . . ."

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"That is not the world, that is humanity ; there is nothing wrong with the world."

"Well, then, what is wrong with humanity ?"

"To catalogue the evils of humanity—warfare, unrest, starvation, exaggerated inequality of wealth . . ."

"Stop ! you are mocking me !"

"Not at all : those are some of the evils of humanity, and yet I say there is essentially nothing wrong with humanity."

"Explain this apparent paradox, this seeming contradiction. Use simple words. I will listen with the intentness of one who ardently seeks the truth."

The Sage then continued speaking to me thus, saying :

"Good ! I see you have come to me, not desiring argument or a battle of words and wits, but humbly and sincerely desiring to learn the truth. So many do not desire truth, but strive to bolster up and make plausible some position or theory they have taken up and espoused. Listen, then, the heart of truth is thus. There is nothing wrong with the world, the materially existing universe. There is, on the other hand, nothing wrong with the fashioning or moulding of mankind—bodily, mentally or spiritually. It is all a question of process, of development, of adjustment, of recognition, shall I say ? There are two shadows, falling over the path of life and causing uneasiness and distress : the first is ignorance and the second immaturity : say, if you like, lack of vision and lack of experience."

"O Sage," I said, "this I am prepared to believe, that, essentially, the universe is good and that, fundamentally, man's nature is also good ; but I see the torment and error and chaos now existing. Therefore explain, in brief, in what consists this lack

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of vision and this lack of experience. How can the two shadows be driven off? How can peace and harmony be won for this distracted world?"

And the Sage replied: "Get right first on fundamentals; that will remove the shadow of ignorance. Then proceed steadily upon those fundamentals, never losing sight of them, not in coward's way blinking at them with hypocrisy of heart and action, that will remove the shadow of immaturity, of inexperience."

"Proceed, O Sage," I said "to the fundamentals."

### II

#### THE FUNDAMENTAL OF THE ONE

"With the greatest pleasure," replied the Sage, and proceeded thus: "Recognise that there is One Great Dominant over all things, One controlling cause, having power and concern and immediate irresistible influence over all things and all life. Tear out of your heart that weed of the imagination that there exists blind force. Know with your body, with your mind, with your heart and indestructible soul, that this world, the earth, the planets, the sun and the greater suns and worlds beyond, be they Sirius or the Pole Star, are obedient to one wisdom, one control, one guiding destiny of fulfilment. Can you grasp this 'Fundamental of the One?' inquired the Sage, "for if not, we can proceed no further and the way to knowledge is for you inextricably barred."

And I replied: "O Sage, I can see the possibility of the truth of this first fundamental, but it is not clear to me. It looms up out of possibility like some steadfast rock, whose outlines are blurred by mists of uncertainty and illusion. Can the winds of your wisdom make clear the outlines of truth about this fundamental of the One?"

And the Sage replied: "The One Supreme Ruler over all things and all life is evidenced by the prevalence



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of order and harmony deeply observable in all existence. Be not misled. The casual observer says : 'I see no underlying order. I see difference, antagonism, variety, a chaotic assemblage of conflicting forces, by which progress in any one direction for a long period of time is rendered impossible'." "But," continued the Sage "the casual observer is a source of confusion, a menace and an obstruction. He recognises not the One Dominant, the One Supreme Ruler and, floundering in a torment of doubts and conflicts and theories, having no basis in truth, he is a danger to peace and to harmony ; and, seeking to impose by force some man-made salvation, he stirs up enmity and conflict and destruction."

Then I said : "Make this clear, O Sage, lest I be carried out of my depth and battle blindly with the whirlpools of half-knowledge."

"Willingly and readily," replied the Sage.

"Consider a state. The king rules. When his rightful authority is everywhere recognised, and when the wisdom of his laws is everywhere obeyed, harmony and peace prevail within the state and the continuance of good is rendered easily and naturally possible and actual. But, if in the state we are considering, there exists a considerable party, which is in doubt as to the real existence of the Ruler of the State, and flouts the laws of the State, and follows imaginary laws devised without authority by themselves, what, in obvious fact, is the result ? Is it not chaos ? and is not this chaos followed by severe punishment from the true source of power, the King, the actual holder of power and maintainer of law over the State ? "

And I replied : "Most certainly is this so, O Sage. Show me, then, in clear words the larger application of your illustration."

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And the Sage said: "In brief, the first fundamental to peace and continuing harmony in the world amongst mankind, is that the existence of one Supreme Ruler and Controller of all things and all life should be upon all sides recognised. The imaginations and vain desires and terrible despairs and blind-foolish wrongfulness, employing force to uphold theories and systems, which, of themselves, have no abiding truth or power of standing, all these and the devastations of destructive pride, seeking to outtop the laws of nature and humanity, all these are treasonable to the One Supreme Ruler, and as they transgress the laws controlling the universe, so they meet with terrible and explosive punishments afflicting wide areas of the earth and millions of humanity. Do you, then, understand?"

And I replied: "Now fully, O Sage, do I recognise and realise and grasp with my understanding, that the first fundamental to world-harmony and to continuing peace amongst mankind is the widespread recognition of the oneness of the Universe under the dominant control of One Supreme Ruler."

### III

#### THE FUNDAMENTAL OF THE LARGER LIFE

When I had thus attained the vantage-place of knowledge by mastery of the fundamental of the One, the Sage expressed his delight with so much warmth and sincerity that I felt a strong attachment and devotion towards his personality entering my mind and heart alike. "A great gladness invades my heart," said the Sage, "at the readiness with which you have mastered this first fundamental of the One. Your eyes will now look forth above the mists and low-lying clouds, which before obscured the vast and expansive field of knowledge; but, when once more one has set one's face in the right direction of truth, how very sweet thereafter is every step of progress, though

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achieved with painstaking toil and sometimes tempestuous buffets of voyaging! Rejoice, then, with me and, before we proceed to the display and recognition of the fundamental of the Larger Life, let us, as good comrades, eat together."

"Readily, O Sage," said I.

The Sage then disappeared into the further depths of his cave, but soon returned laden with provisions of gladness—fruits, milk and flat, round flour-cakes of barley. These we shared with a peace and mutual content greater than any I remembered present at the baked meats and savouries of worldly feasts. After our repast, the Sage excused himself briefly for his devotions, leaving me alone indeed, but enwrapped in the thousand charms of meditations. Upon his return to my presence I noticed an alertness and vibrating energy upon the Sage. He smiled with a deep assurance of comradeship and addressed me as follows:

"Let us proceed at once to the fundamental of the Larger Life, which, without doubt, is necessary for the attainment of world harmony of humanity. Briefly it is this. Men and nations must realise that this mortal life of humanity is but a step, a stage, a brief practising-ground for the wider life, the larger life that merges into eternity. Life is not a game, a sport, a plaything, a trivial unaccountable drama, farce, comedy or tragedy, enacted willy-nilly upon the uncertain stage of seventy years. Life is a continuous striving, an enduring succession of actions, reaching up from one plane to another, progressing from the less to the greater, from the smaller to the wider and more expansive. Humanity must recognise and adjust themselves, attune their thoughts, emotions and actions to the more comprehensive view of life, this life and the hereafter, life before death and life beyond that door of death."

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The Sage paused. Then, seeing him about to continue, I quickly raised my hand to delay his words, while I said: "I am prepared to grant, O Sage, that this life is not all, that death closes not all; but how would the general recognition of this truth aid the attainment of the world-harmony of humanity?"

And the Sage replied: "The recognition of the larger life, a hereafter following upon this brief mortal life, brings with it the conviction of inevitable rewards and punishments. Actions may or may not find their reward or punishment in the briefness of this present life, but in no respect can reward or punishment fail to attach itself upon any action, if not in this life, then in the largeness of the hereafter. Were this life all, how few would trouble themselves with things eternal, with justice, with Truth! how many, tasting the bitterness of this life with its frustrations, disappointments, hardships and impasses would yield to despair, saying: 'If this is all, we care not; we will loose the reins and drive a-gallop headlong over the precipice of darkness.' But not so, facing the hereafter and the certainty of rewards and punishments meted out with justice, subservient ever to an all-prevailing mercy, mankind gains courage, hope and resolution, and battles forward with face towards the light and feet trampling on fears and despairs. When this knowledge, this conviction of the inescapability of reward and blessing for what is well and goodly done and the punishment tied inextricably about the neck of evil, subject only to an all-prevailing mercy, when this conviction is widespread over the races of humanity, the path is paved for the feet of peace. Is it not a mere forgetfulness of the hereafter which fosters greed, avarice, desire of worldly power, domination and possessions? And are not these mastering passions, these turbulent blinding obsessions, the chief causes and sources of wars,

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oppressions and injustices ? With the hereafter kept well in view, the material and temporal side of life sinks down into its rightful subordinate position—not to be disregarded, but not to be set up and made the object of all action.”

The Sage paused, as if waiting for me to speak. Therefore I said: “I admit that the widespread realisation of the certainty of the hereafter and the knowledge that reward and punishment, blessing and chastisement, are securely in the hands of eternal justice, would not only tremendously lessen the extent and prevalence of evil, but would also very appreciably sweeten the endurance of existing hardships, and go far to create a store of patience in the human heart that would triumph over adversity and facilitate its speedy removal.”

I ceased, and the Sage then continued, saying: “Good! before we leave this subject, there is one illustration I would gladly bring before you. Suppose we were to enter a theatre, where a stage-play was being performed, and suppose, in a few brief words, we were to convince the audience that the stage-play before their eyes was everything, that there was no other life outside the theatre, that not one of the audience would in fact ever leave the theatre to participate in any wider life, but the stage-play was all,—would not horror, anger, disinterest, nausea and despair descend upon that audience as so many furies, rending them with various torments ? ”

And I said: “Certainly that is so.”

“So,” said the Sage, “it is only the remembrance and wakeful conviction of the certainty of the Wider Life beyond that can sweeten this present life, and can harmonise humanity therein to such an extent as to usher in abiding world-peace and the tranquil brotherhood of nations.”

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### IV

#### THE FAMILY OF NATIONS

A feeling of contentment, an exhilaration of ecstasy, came over me, breathing the pure air of the mountain in the calm companionship of the Sage. I began to get a glimmering that what had hitherto been held up as an unattainable ideal, a lofty perfection, for which humanity might strive, but might never arrive, was indeed in the realm of truth and reality quite possible and practicable, was indeed a result of blessed certainty, which must inevitably follow upon the preliminaries envisaged by the Sage. In the excitement of realising this, I wanted to rise up and at once descend from the mountain, and proclaim to all the world the path of peace and permanent progress of attainment, so clearly laid bare before my eyes. I began to express my thanks to the Sage preparatory to taking leave of him, but, meeting the deep sincere eyes of the Sage, I felt myself checked and compelled to listen to his further words, which were upon this wise.

“Though, indeed, peace might descend upon humanity upon the basis of reality already revealed to you by my preceding remarks, more speedily and more surely will it arrive if the trackway of advance is more clearly and with greater detail mapped and planned upon the pages of your memory. Listen then. Mankind is one unit, one family. I speak in essential terms of reality, not in terms of the present phase of world-existence, for then I should have said, ‘Mankind is a set of quarrelsome schoolboys, filled with individual conceits and glorying in the destructive exhibition of material power.’ Nay, let us disregard the temporary, the transient and let us now dwell amidst firm-placed essential reality.

## THE SAGE OF MOUNT NOH

“Mankind, I repeat, is one unit, one family, one brotherhood. Peace and world-harmony and the attainment of human destiny will only arrive when the antique pride, the quarrelsome conceit of national boastfulness, is cast out as a poisonous viper from the human breast. Humanity must learn national self-forgetfulness; they must say and feel, ‘We are men; these men are our brothers; let us stand by them; let us help them, though against our immediate temporal interest.’ As in individuals, so in nations. Nation must say and mean, ‘My brother is as myself. Nay, often my brother shall be before myself.’

“As with nations, so with the deeper differences and divergences of race. Pride of race must pass. I do not say that excellence of race must pass, though, with a wider view, it would seem that all races must pass, must blend, must fuse, must with harmony develop and ferment and merge, to reappear as one human race. one world-race. Simpler then were world-harmony, world-peace, world-brotherhood.” “So, my most welcome guest,” continued the Sage, “if, as I hope, your time of sojourn upon this Mount Noh is not yet made short, I would very briefly outline the development of race into world-unity. Races, the white, the black, the yellow and the brown, must each and all respect one another. By this I mean that no race, from presumption and a narrow ignorance of conceit, must look down on any other race; but races must help one another from sincerity of heart. The deficiencies of one being made up by the excellences of another, the strength of one going out and being freely spent to support the weakness of another, and the wisdom and excellent attainments of one fostering, aiding and developing the progress of another less gifted.,

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“So, having cast out pride and insufferable racial arrogance, entereth love. And with love cometh honourable marriage : so that no longer shall any stigma be found upon marriages of one racial colour, lawfully and honourably made with another racial colour; neither shall any stigma or handicap or social penalty be found attaching to the legitimate and honourable offspring of such unions, as nature through human love decreeth. Let marriage be a sacred social contract, and let all beings of whatever race be equally free to enter into the bonds of social blessedness without let, hindrance or stigma. I have said ‘social blessedness,’ for, most assuredly, I see no enduring society where marriage is not widely and generally observed and respected.”

The Sage was silent, seeming in a brief space to have travelled ahead of my presence into the years of history yet to be. A sensation of awe came over me. I could not speak. I felt I could not, with rash intrusion, break in upon the Sage’s distant vision. And, while I waited, before the eyes of my own meditation I could envisage the breaking-down of the barriers, the fleeing of mistrust, suspicion and fear ; and I felt my thoughts entering a new world, even a world that had been considered an impossible dream, an unattainable ideal. Yet I knew now that the blessedness of that new world had already been born ; for the future is born in thought, and the enthusiasm of that thought had leapt into my heart so that I longed to bring it to actuality.

### V.

#### THE STUMBLING-BLOCK OF MONEY

Therefore I rose up, drew a deep breath of the pure mountain air, and, leaning towards the Sage, who still remained seated in undisturbed meditation, I spake from my burning enthusiasm and said : “O Sage, I must depart. The mountain may be good for vision,



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but, when once purpose is kindled, it were better to set dreams aside and to act. The world of humanity lies below, the suffering, struggling, despairing, wrong-headed, frustrated world, talking ever of progress, while they wander blindly further from the truth, I must act. I must descend. I must make evident to them the truths I now behold. Once the truths are known, no need for persuasion or coercion ; for I feel it is deeply a part of human nature, when right is once recognised, to desire to follow it."

Seeing my ardour, the Sage broke from the stillness of his meditations, and replied to my words, saying : "Excellent ! this ever should be, that discussion and sincere argument should reveal the light of truth, and truth, once revealed, should kindle the human breast to action. This indeed is good ; but perhaps, before you leave the sublimity of Mount Noh, I had better caution you and warn you and point out to you a great stumbling-block that is set in the way, lest your hurrying feet fall headlong thereover."

And impatiently I asked : "Be brief, O Sage. What is this stumbling-block ?"

And the Sage replied instantly : "Money."

Then said I, "How so ?" and the Sage continued upon this wise : "Many of the evils that beset humanity to-day are directly traceable to money. If the basis of the building up of civilization be faulty, what wonder if an octopus of evil spreads foul tentacles, bright-coloured but of poisonous tenacity, over the lives and aspirations of many millions of struggling humanity, who feel the crushing and cramping of the tentacles, but flounder therein in ignorance of the monstrous source of their desperate affliction.

"Money, and the thought of money, and abuse of money, and the niggardly hoarding of money, the besetting fear of lessening the golden hoard, the

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crouching, lurking fear of facing hardship or insecurity, the dominant desire of escaping the consequences of one's own carelessness of action or negligence—all these have thronged upon humanity to produce a great rallying around the standard of: "Safety at any price! We will pay heavily so that we can live carelessly with no consequences to face!"

"Now," continued the Sage, "I say not that money is evil, that money is bad. Indeed far otherwise: Money appears to me to be a necessary convenience for the smooth flowing and for the progress of human existence. But I do say that there are many false moneys abroad by the brief juggling of figures, money, which may be acquired in masses without any corresponding benefit being conferred upon humanity.

"I say that the massing of capital and the taking of interest upon the same, to hoard and to increase capital and to spend and circulate only the interest, is a vast error. Let there be no interest upon money; no borrowing of money upon interest! If this were carried out, would the sum-total of money in the world be less? Or would the supplies of life's necessities be less?

"Nay, but the domination of money over the hearts of men would vanish.

"False, injurious, spurious moneys would vanish; and clean money of intrinsic value would circulate in freshening streams through the veins of the healthy body of civilization." "But," concluded the Sage, "I see, my very dear friend and departing guest, my words do but delay your descent from the mountain back to the world, where struggling, stricken humanity urgently and blindly calls for the help, which you now are in a position to give. You have seen the vision, witnessed the truth, and the duty of serving and helping

## TIMES OF PRAYER IN HIGHER LATITUDES

humanity now rests with you. Therefore I say, Adieu !”

Then I departed from Mount Noh and returned again into the world.

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## TIMES OF PRAYER IN HIGHER LATITUDES

BY MAULVI ABDUL MAJID, M.A.

We read in the Holy Qur-án :

1. “ Establish worship at the going down of the sun until the dark of the night, and the recital of the Qur-án at dawn. Lo ! The recital of the Qur-án at dawn is ever witnessed.”—Sura XVII, V. 78.
2. “ So glory be to Allah when ye enter the night and when ye enter the morning—Unto Him be praise in the heavens and the earth !—and at the sun’s decline and in the noonday.”—Sura XXX, Verses 17, 18.
3. “ Recite that which hath been inspired in thee of the Scripture, and establish worship. Lo ! Worship preserveth from lewdness and iniquity, but verily remembrance of Allah is more important. And Allah knoweth what ye do.”—Sura XXIX, V. 45.
4. “ Worship at fixed hours hath been enjoined on the believers.”—Sura IV, V. 103.

From verses 1 and 2 all commentators have deduced five different times of prayer ; besides, the action of the Holy Prophet Muhammad also supports it. Verse 3 states the purpose of prayers in explicit words. Verse 4 makes it obligatory for a Muslim to say his prayers at the appointed times.

Although the words of verses 1 and 2 clearly state five prayers yet as far as the specified times of these

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prayers are concerned, with which those, for instance, in India are acquainted, we do not find in the above-mentioned verses any explicit mention of them. A further study of these verses reveals that God has made use of brevity and conciseness about the fixing and description of prayers.

Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, an Indian commentator of the Holy Qur-án, in his translation comments upon verse 2 thus: "This verse can mean both the remembrance of God and the five prayers, for prayers are also the remembrance of God. In this verse the five different prayers are clearly mentioned; in entering the night there are two prayers, the sunset prayer and the late night prayer, then the morning, afternoon and mid-day prayers." But in none of the verses do we find any clear statement of the exact times of these prayers. We are only told that from the time of sunset till darkness we must keep up prayer. Nevertheless in verse 4 the words are quite clear that prayers must be said at appointed times.

Now the question arises, why is it that the Qur-án employs this brevity in the matter of the times of prayer? Why does it not say in so many words that prayers should be said at such and such times? The views of the famous Egyptian scholar and authority on Islam, the late Imam Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, Mufti of Egypt, as expressed on this question in his book 'Tafsir-el-Qurán el-Hakim,' Pt. 3, p. 171, would be useful in discussing the problem of allegorical and explicit verses. He expresses himself thus: "One of the kinds of verses of the Holy Qur-án of which the meaning is not clear is those dealing with the times of prayer. In this there is an underlying wisdom though the Holy Prophet Muhammad in the normal country of Arabia with more or less equal days and nights explained this through his own action and thus fixed

## TIMES OF PRAYER IN HIGHER LATITUDES

the times of prayer. The Arabs of those days had no knowledge that there were other countries in which their five times of prayer could not be observed, *e.g.* in such countries where the sun only appears for two hours and the day only lasts two hours. For this reason the Qur-án refers to the times of prayer in verse (No. 2 given above). The reason for not expressing the times of prayer clearly is that the Qur-án is a universal way of life and not confined to the Arabic countries. Therefore it was essential that wherever the religion of Islam might reach there should be ease in following it. This kind of brevity in the matter of times of prayer is a question for those who are well grounded in knowledge so that they might use their intellect in the deduction of commandments to suit occasions. In this way whenever there is an apparent necessity there may be found a commandment to suit it according to the Qur-án. This kind of allegorical verse in the Holy Qur-án is one of the greatest blessings of God."

From the commentary of Shaikh Muhammad Abduh we deduce many things. Firstly, that the teachings of Islam and its commandments are flexible so that they can suit various conditions and occasions. In other words the commands of the Qur-án are neither tied down by time nor to any particular country. Secondly, the Qur-án mentions certain principles which as far as their application to conditions and situations is concerned can be changed to suit those conditions. Thirdly, the deduction of such changes should be left to learned authorities ; *e.g.* the matter of the principle of prayer has been settled but the specification of their times has not been made clear. It should be left to the learned to make this ambiguity clear. Fourthly, the decisions of the learned must be according to the meanings of the Qur-án.

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Now, if the Qur-án had mentioned in clear words the times of prayer then for such people as might travel to countries where the days are 19 hours long and the nights 5 hours, or *vice versa*, the saying of prayers which is a duty incumbent on every Muslim would become impossible, let alone difficult. In France, England and countries in the North, during summer the days get longer and longer and the nights shorter and shorter. In the Southern Hemisphere the opposite obtains. In England on June 21 the day is about 17 hours long and the night 7 hours. Even further North in Norway on June 21 the sun never sets and on December 21 never rises. For this reason at such places we cannot have the same times of prayer as in countries where the days and nights are equal.

There is another fact worthwhile considering. The Qur-án not only mentions the times of prayer inexplicitly but also uses such words as may be applicable to times covering more than one prayer. For example, ' *Tumsun* ' (ye enter the night) in verse 2 covers the sunset and late night prayers. From this it becomes clear that in the knowledge of God it was present that a time would come when the Muslims owing to their travels or duties would have to say two prayers at a time without any appreciable interval between. Besides these words also refer to the fact that Muslims would migrate to countries other than their own where climatic conditions and lengths of days and nights would be different, that Islam would not remain confined to Arabia. The more one ponders over the brevity of description of the times of prayer the more one increases in faith that this book is from God. For if this book had been devised by a man then surely detailed times of prayer would have been fixed and a non-Muslim would say that it is only meant for people living in Arabia and the neighbouring countries.

## TIMES OF PRAYER IN HIGHER LATITUDES

There is yet another thing to be mentioned in this connection, namely the description of the word Faith by the Holy Prophet who said: 'Faith is Ease'. In other words, in matters religious useless harshness should never be introduced. It is for this reason that in the religion of Islam there are many concessions although it would be quite right to say that every concession should be used with the utmost caution. But it is safe to assert that the purpose of these concessions is to make the religion of Islam easy. The religion of Islam is "Mercy and Peace of Mind," not a burden and a misfortune.

Therefore, in countries situated near the Poles, it is quite within the meanings of the Holy Qur-án to make changes in the times of prayer to suit the climate and latitude. In my opinion in countries like Norway, England and France the sunset and late night prayers may be said during the months of May, June and July without any considerable interval. Likewise in November, December and January the mid-day and afternoon prayers may be said without any long interval. As the days and nights become more or less equal one should go on effecting changes accordingly. Therefore, in the remaining months the five prayers should be said at their appointed times as in India and Arabia. I have expounded a principle which I believe is according to the teachings of Islam and in its light everyone can appoint for himself the times of prayer to suit his special conditions and place of abode.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### 'ID-AL-FITR (1361 A.H.) AT WOKING

On Monday, 12th October, 1942, the Muslim community in Great Britain and their friends and sympathizers assembled at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, in order to celebrate the happy Islamic festival of 'Id-al-Fitr 1361 A.H., which terminates the fast of the month of Ramadhan.

In spite of the difficulties of travel occasioned by the war conditions and the fact that the festival fell on a Monday when so many friends are tied to their work it was nevertheless a large and representative congregation of 350 Muslims and friends which attended.

We were favoured with our usual good weather and although the cold air warned us that winter was not far off yet the sun shone brightly all the morning as if reflecting the brightness of the hearts of the Muslims on that happy occasion.

For the purpose of the prayers we had a large marquee erected on our lawn in order to accommodate the large congregation and this marquee was well heated so that none felt uncomfortable in spite of the cold outside. By 11-30 a.m. some 300 Muslims and friends had assembled and a special note of colour was lent to the scene by the presence of a party of 40 officers and men belonging to the Indian Contingent at present serving in Great Britain. We were also honoured by the presence of six Javanese Officers of the Royal Netherlands Navy. These and many civilian friends had travelled a long distance in order to be with us and we thank them for coming to make 'Id-al-Fitr the great success it was.

Prayers began at 11-30 a.m. and were led by Al-Hajj Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, C.B.E., M.A., I.C.S., the well-known translator of the Holy Qur-án, who



## **'ID-AL-FITR (1361 A.H.) AT WOKING**

also read an eloquent Khutba of exhortation to remain fast by the sound principles of Islam which will appear in our next issue.

After the conclusion of the sermon the Allama Sahib wished all his congregation a Happy 'Id and they in their turn wished each other the same with embraces and handshakings.

Then all present were entertained to lunch by the Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque and this they all enjoyed thoroughly. Much of the afternoon was then devoted by the guests to meeting and chatting with old friends whom they have the opportunity of meeting in these times of stress only at their religious festivals. But by the late afternoon most of them had departed so as to be home before being inconvenienced by the blackout and late travelling.

Once more we had celebrated 'Id-al-Fitr and its great success was assured by the hard work and enthusiasm of all those upon whom it fell to make the preparation.

Among those present were :

H. E. Shaikh Hafiz Wahba, M. M. R. Zada, Col. Erdelhun, Dr. Fuad Azabahitch, Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. B. Farmer, Sir Azizul Haque, High Commissioner for India, Prince Amzi of the Veiled Tuareg of the Sahara.

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### CORRESPONDENCE

DUBLIN, EIRE  
19th June, 1941

Dear Sir,

I should be much obliged if you can help me with some queries I wish to make regarding a declaration of faith in Islam. Some months ago a friend of mine lent me some copies of the *Islamic Review* and *Islam and the Muslim Prayer*. I had previously had a superficial interest in Islam having made some study of various religions in my search for faith. Having read this literature I then borrowed a copy of the Quran, and after much heart-searching I realised I had found a true faith. I am now convinced that Islam can be my salvation. I should like to know whether I should make any special arrangement for being received into the Faith. I shall be very grateful if you will write to me at your earliest convenience and let me know what I must do.

(Sd.) MABAL COMMINS.

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