

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

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol. XXXII RAB'UL AWWAL 1362 A.H.
MARCH, 1943 A.C.

[No. 3]

A DECLARATION

I, (Mr.) SYDNEY WALTER COX of ... Broomgrove Gardens, Edgware, Middlesex, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others, and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

Lá iláha ill-Alláh Muhammad-un-Rasúl-Alláh.

(There is but One God (Allah) and Muhammad is God's Messenger.)

S. W. COX.

Dated : 1st October, 1942.

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ISLAM—THE HAVEN OF PEACE

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

Man wants peace. It is not the peace of inertness, of inactivity, that he desires. A true man is fond of struggle. Nay, his pleasure lies in this. A smooth running of life that knows no struggle may be the desire of some weaklings of men. But for all normal men—men who are capable of any achievement in life and of any new creation, this can be no object worth striving after. Because then their manly qualities, such as courage and bravery and power of endurance, will find no opportunity for any proper display. Their consciousness then will have no chance of attaining its full stature. And yet these also crave for peace. Even a Bismarck, a Cæsar, an Alexander wants peace, and this consists in the inner satisfaction of the spirit. In fact, in all that man strives for, the object invariably is to acquire this peace in the inner self, at the bottom of human consciousness. A man of action struggles and strives and produces heap upon heap of work in his life—in the only hope that these will bring him the desired peace. But it is very seldom that he actually gets what he desires. He may conquer the whole world and get all that is enjoyable in the worldly life, and yet the deep longing for inner peace of mind may remain unsatisfied. Seeing this, some have sought this peace in a complete dissociation from the activities of life and in a mystical ecstasy away from the world. These forget that our life on this earth is based on struggle. If some of us would avoid this struggle, the rest have to bear our part of it as well as their own. Besides, the monastic view of life will spell death to all civilization and culture. So the sanest religious view of life is that which proposes to give us the inner peace in the midst of life's hottest struggles. And this view

*Being the text of a lecture sent to the Conference of Religions held at Bagerhat, Khulna (Bengal), on the 28th of December 1942.—Ed. I. R.

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belongs to Islam. It does not divide humanity into the religious and the non-religious or the individual life into the worldly and the ascetic. All believers are worldly as well as religious. Every moment of our life has its physical as well as spiritual aspects. Nay, it is through the physical experiences that we attain our spiritual self-unfoldment. The question, therefore, taken up by Islam is not whether to act or not, or when to act, but *how to act*. And really it is on the manner of our acting that the inner peace of our soul depends. Whereas one manner of doing a thing leads to peace and salvation, another will lead to an increase of our inner dissatisfaction and restlessness and to perdition. The code of Islam, accordingly, is full of instructions for the manner of acting so that our acts may lead to the peace longed for by every human being. And it could not do otherwise, seeing that the root meaning of Islam is the "acquisition of peace"—peace in action.

Thus the first rule of action is that the action should not proceed from the egotistic human will. As we know, there are as many egos as there are men in this world. Each of us wants to order the working of this world in the way he desires to see it, and no two persons are in complete agreement as to the manner the affairs of the world should be conducted. And over and above the individual egos, there are group egos. Each group wants to live and thrive at the expense of others. Islam wants us to surrender all these egos—individual and group—before the will of God.

At every new undertaking we are spiritually to dedicate our raging and restless ego to the calm beneficent will of the Creator. This applies to individual undertakings as well as to national ones. True, sometimes we may mistake our own selfish desires to be the will of the Creator. But practice will gradually bring

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perfection, provided the attempt is sincere. On the other hand if no attempt is made in this direction, things will only go from bad to worse. Indeed, in the very interest of our existence and workable harmony in this world of conflicts and clashes, we are compelled every now and then to surrender our egotisms and make compromises. It is not this surrender of convenience, utility or expediency, however, that is needed, because it has no permanent and absolute value. Such a surrender has yet the ego lingering behind it, rankling with a sense of frustration. The surrender dedicated to the Author of the creation, on the other hand, transforms it into a principle, in an achievement that brings a greater fulfilment of life. As the Qur-án would put it :

“O soul that art at rest, return to thy Lord well pleased with Him and well pleasing to Him, so enter among My servants and enter into My paradise.”

Religion again is an attitude of mind towards the creation and the Creator. And an attitude of this kind, as we can understand, is a very subtle and abstract thing and as such needs a very careful ascertaining, as on this depends the fate of our eternal journey. The attitude towards God must therefore be of the right type; otherwise the whole system of thought and action based on it is bound to go wrong. Islam insists that He must be regarded as One without an associate. As for the first part of the postulate, Islam has a support in this from the universal human nature. Even where plurality of God is insisted upon, the Head God or the Supreme God is yet regarded as a single person all by Himself. Thus the Parameshwar of Hinduism and the Father God of Christianity is a distinct and single person, and is regarded as the highest authority, even if it be titular. The difference

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arises only when Islam insists on His being without an associate or co-partner. According to Islam, God undoubtedly has His agents, angelic and human, to carry out His will, but these do not share the glory of His command and authority. Had it been otherwise and had more than one will been working in the universe there would have been some collision somewhere sometime and the whole thing would have come to an end. As the Qur-án would put it :

“ Had there been other gods besides the one Supreme God in the Universe there would have been disorder.” (21 : 22)

If it be contended that there are subordinate gods who are gods without wills, well, it is improper to call such figures gods as the term “ God ” implies independent and dominant authority. He alone is God with whom lies the decision and the order. Hence it is that the Qur-án repeatedly speaks of God alone possessing the final authority or command. To Him alone, therefore, should all worship and prayers be directed.

It is the manifold attributes of God that sustain the creation in its various planes. The most outstanding ones among these that vitally concern the present discussion are His attributes of hearing and speaking. He hears our prayers and responds to them. The present world of science having made some startling discoveries respecting the laws of nature has begun to wonder if any room is left for God to manipulate the laws in a way peculiar to Himself. This question has assumed such a perplexity that it has made many outstanding leaders of religious thought side with the champions of Science and has extorted from them the opinion that prayer is a device to fortify the mind against depression and cheerlessness resulting from adverse circumstances. Apart from this, these neo-religionists say, there is no benefit to be derived

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from prayers. This is practically a denial of God's power of hearing prayers. If God's knowledge and control of the laws of nature are nothing more than what man knows of them, well, there is no meaning in prayer, unless it be a process of self-hypnotism. Islam insists that this is not the correct position. The God of love cannot remain quiet when His creature implores Him in all humility to come to its help in a dark and dismal situation in its life. Even the most irreligious man will remember occasions in his life when he has so implored God and has received His succour. Nothing but a realization of the undependability of the world of matter and of the utter insufficiency of human resources would drive such men to prayer. For the time being such people feel that God does possess the power of handling the laws of nature in His own absolute way. But when the prospects take a turn for the better, they relapse into their accustomed faithlessness and vanity, and attribute the improvement in the situation either to the course of events or to his own resourcefulness and thus reverts to the denial of the efficacy of prayers. The Qur-án however insists that the prayers are heard by God :

“And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way.”
(2 : 186.)

The words “My servants” need a little illumination. Although every human being has an access to God in times of distress and gets redress from Him so often, the prayers of the devoted servants of God, those that have dedicated their everything to the pleasure of God,—an Abraham, a Moses, a Jesus, a Muhammad—are heard by God in a very palpable

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way. Their prayers are heard with a kind of challenge to the world. They change the course of history. That is why the Qur-án records many of these prayers that had far-reaching effects on the history of mankind. In the latest phase of religion which falls in our own historical period, *i.e.* the phase of Islam, we have a very clear demonstration of the efficacy of prayer as witnessed by history. Let us just think over the silent prayers of Prophet Muhammad in the cave of Hira, offered to the Merciful Lord, on behalf of a fallen humanity. Was it not these prayers that took the shape of material events in that astonishing course of revolutions—social, cultural, intellectual and spiritual—collectively called the Islamic civilization which kept the world amazed for pretty near one thousand years? Let the sceptic humanity take note of this, revise its view of prayer in the light of it and thus revitalize its faculty of praying at this moment when it is most needed. Possibly, it will be able to build up a new world out of the debris of the present one piling up before our very eyes. Ardent followers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing!) appearing in every age, have all of them dived deep into the realms of spirituality and have confirmed the truth of the efficacy of prayer through their own personal experiences. Even the present age is not devoid of such witnesses among the followers of the Prophet. Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, who lies buried in Baghdad, Hazrat Khwaja Muinud Din Chishti, whose tomb in Ajmer has almost become a pilgrimage-centre in India, and the great saint of Sirhind known as Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani, to name only a few among the hundreds of such witnesses, had all in their respective ages silenced the sceptics by numerous clear examples of accepted prayers. It is the faith generated by these people that is holding out a hope for humanity.

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And if God hears He also speaks. He hears without an ear and speaks without a tongue. In any case He does speak. The truth of this phenomenon, too, has been borne testimony to by countless religious personalities in every country and age. If some of the nations have lost their records of such revelations, others still preserve them. Some of the Hindu Scriptures are still believed to have come by way of "Shruti." The Old Testament is believed by the Jews and the Christians in general to have been revealed word for word. The same attitude is maintained by the Christians with regard to their own Scripture, the New Testament. The Qur-án, however, makes a universal rule of the phenomenon and asks its believers to say:

"We believe in the one Supreme God and in that which was revealed to us, and in that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and *in that which was given to the prophets from their Lord: We do not make any distinction between any of them. And to Him do we submit.*"
(2 : 136.)

The recipients of these revelations for the spiritual guidance of humanity—for they alone can undertake such a task—have appeared among all peoples according to Islam :

"For every nation there has been a Prophet."

"There has not been a people but a warner has gone among them."

The importance of the recognition of this principle laid down by the Qur-án will be realized by every one who has been taking a scientific view of the rise of various religions as also by those who are earnestly seeking to collect the forces of religion to combat the

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rising tide of materialism and atheism—both economic and philosophical. And if it is necessary to recognize the universality of revealed guidance, it is also necessary to recognize the continuity of the phenomenon of revelation. The passage of time tends to create doubts in any event in history in the absence of contemporary verification. If the leaders of religious thought to-day would frankly express their minds it will be revealed that the fact of revelation has not that hold on the minds of people to-day as it had in bygone times. This is one of the principal reasons why there is not that zest in the observance of religion to-day which was to be seen in the past. And the logic of such laxity is quite understandable. In the absence of contemporary witnesses the phenomenon of revelation is liable to be suspected as a superstition of a less advanced age. The revealed scriptures known as such thus lose the principal force behind them and the utmost that can be believed of them is that they are the work of well-meaning human beings. A product of human mind, however, cannot have that sanctity and infallibility, which can attach to a piece of revelation from God. Thus apart from whether or not the records of any particular Scripture are to be found in its original purity, and whether the principles and teachings set forth in it are sound on the face of them, this fact of the absence of the continuity of the phenomenon of revelation takes much away from the importance of the Scriptures concerned. The Muslims regard it as a great favour of God that in Islam this continuity of the tradition of revelation has never been broken. Although no prophet is to appear after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the social, moral and spiritual guidance of humanity having reached perfection in the Qur-án, which has for that reason been never allowed to be tampered with by human hands, saints have all through-

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out been appearing in this community who testify to the truth of the phenomenon of revelation, by their experiences on a lower plane. And it is extremely reassuring to note that even in this twentieth century when scientific knowledge reaching very giddy heights of progress have thrown a challenge, so to speak, to all religious beliefs, persons have been found who have challenged the world of scepticism in turn on the score of this very question. And the reassurance value of such a challenge is not confined to the faith of Islam. It brings a timely relief to the ardent followers of all the various religions. It is, indeed, perplexing to a thinking mind if speaking is an attribute of God, why it should cease to manifest itself to-day when the critical scientific spirit of the age feels the least inclined to believe in its possibility. It is also felt, and quite rightly, that it is the experience of revelation that raises religion above philosophy. If the conception of God were left to mere philosophical speculation and not supported by the experience of revelation, faith in God could never have been any basis for human action. The certainty about Divine existence could come, and indeed has come, through this direct process of revelation and not through the indirect process of speculation, which has equal possibilities for affirmation as well as denial and which can never end in any certain conclusion.

And if we look deeper into the causes of the present calamities of mankind, we shall find their source in a lack of faith in revelation. But this concerns that aspect of revelation in particular which pertains to social guidance. It has been admitted by even die-hard atheists that all existing social units of humanity have their basis in religious guidance. This to them is an unpleasant state of affairs. They were therefore hoping to see a social order based on rational (meaning material) principles of existence. As a result,

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various systems of life began to be established on the basis of conflicting theories of social order. Nominally adhering to the faith of Christianity, the various philosophical and economic systems in the West, have for all practical purposes taken the place of religion there. The result is the present conflict, raging with increasing fury as the time passes. It can be safely predicted that if these Western pseudo-religions do not shortly surrender to the revealed religion of God, they will certainly lead civilized humanity to a total annihilation. The reason is not far to seek. The laws working in the social life of humanity are far too subtle to be detected and comprehended by human intellect, even in its most developed condition. It is not given to the mind of man to comprehend its own laws. It needs some power which is above humanity and understands man more than he himself does, to legislate for it in a perfect manner. We have a lesson to learn in this matter from the physical vision of man. Man can see everything excepting a great part of his own body and that part in particular which contains the eyes. He needs some external device—a mirror for example—to enable him to see his own face. A similar law applies to the mental vision. It can comprehend the minutest laws working in the material plane of existence, but it miserably fails to comprehend its own laws. Revelation here comes to his help. Man may discuss for centuries on the pros and cons of just one item of social behaviour, without anything like approaching a decision. As a matter of fact, the more intellectually advanced we are, the more warped unfortunately our intuition becomes and the less clear our thinking on social questions. In our own times we see the most primitive rules of social life questioned by highly intellectual persons. So that is the position of human intellect and there comes in the necessity of revelation.

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The trouble with our present-day world is that it does not know its own position. It fails to see that the stage of evolution in which it finds its social mind to-day is a creation of revealed religion. Whatever social consciousness it feels to-day is the gift of some revealed religion in the past. Sceptics have found fault with a diversity of religions in the world. These should know that this phenomenon is the result of a fundamental law of sociology. From the class-consciousness to the international-consciousness human mind has quite a number of stages to pass. Revelation having had to guide the human mind at every stage of this evolution, it had to be repeated in a progressive manner. The trouble with us human beings is that we always try to enjoy the benefits of a larger social relationship while our emotions are yet in a lower stage of social consciousness—a consciousness to which our remote ancestors were awakened by a revelation quite advanced for their times. In our perversity of mind we are never prepared to see that the evolution in social consciousness can be brought about by revealed guidance alone and by nothing else. Pride and prejudice have always contrived for every community to deny the need for progressive revealed guidance. Even that nation which has been systematically guided by revelation from generation to generation for a very long time and which has preserved, to a great extent, the records of such guidance up to this time, failed to accept their prophets as they came. I mean the great Hebrew race. This shows the incorrigible vanity of the human mind. As the Qur-án would put it :

“Nay ! man is most surely inordinate.

Because he feels himself self-sufficient.”

(96 : 6—7.)

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The spirit of independence from Divine guidance is at the root of our present troubles. Alas ! if man had but realized that his waywardness cannot alter the law of nature. To quote the Qur-án :

“ You will never find an alteration in the laws of God.” (33 : 62.)

However advanced man may be intellectually, he cannot experience the needed expansion in his social consciousness befitting this age of internationalism by the mere exertion of his brain. It has to come through revealed guidance, however much he may dislike the process.

I may forestall a possible misunderstanding at this point by saying that revelation, according to Islam, does not clog the path of intellectualism. It rather releases its hidden potentialities by providing it a proper and safe channel to flow. The relationship between intellect and revelation is the same as that obtaining between the human eyes and a telescope or a microscope. Revelation sharpens the insight of man and saves it from confusion and resultant despair. It is significant that whenever human intellect has been left to its own resources it has bungled the whole order of society and brought ruin upon civilization. The history of all ancient civilizations is a history of intellect running amock and vitiating the social energy. So let us beware in time.

The problem of evil has been exercising the philosophical minds of Europe at this moment. The leading philosopher of England, Professor Joad, has been agitated over it. For a long time in the past, people of the West had religiously believed that evil was the predominant force in the universe, that human nature itself was rooted in evil. When, however, they were deeply stirred in their souls by the advent of the scientific age, they subconsciously felt that there

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was some incongruity between this theory of evil and the spirit of scientific investigation and efforts for civilization. This latter spirit was evidently directed towards the removal of evil, a phenomenon impossible of achievement if evil were not a removable thing. The result was a separation of the religious conception of life from the scientific conception of it. Gradually, for all practical purposes, the religious view was relegated to the background and it began to be believed that evil had no existence as such, that it was want of proper order that created evil either on the physical or on the moral plane of existence. All that was necessary therefore to save humanity from evil was a proper knowledge of the laws working in these planes, and an ordering of the environment in the light of that knowledge ; and this could be done by the scientists, the economists and the psychologists. The present catastrophe in Europe, however, has upset the complacency of this theory and men like Professor Joad have been obliged to feel as if there is truth in the theory that evil is a basic factor of existence.

No other theory, according to the Professor, can explain such an astonishing cruelty and blood-thirst as obtains in Europe at the moment. Islam has, however, its own explanation of the situation—an explanation that will satisfy a thinking mind, free from all prejudices. It agrees with the Western scientific view that evil is eradicable, that it has no absolute existence. But it differs from it in that it does not believe that the full knowledge of the laws of nature is attainable by the unaided human intellect. The light of reason has to be supplemented by the superior light of revelation, to enable man to understand particularly the laws working in the sociological sphere of his existence. As it is, civilized humanity is not equipped to-day with this superior light and is therefore

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ignorant of the laws concerned. Whatever discoveries he seems to have made in this matter have been either wrong or one-sided. And the present conflict has its source in this drawback. The evil has arisen out of the mishandling of the delicate relationship between man and man, man and woman, group and group. True, it has reached astounding proportions and assumes the appearance of a fundamental law of creation. And yet the Qur-án emphatically asserts that it has no absolute and permanent existence. Given a true knowledge of things it is bound to prove "a vanishing thing" as the Book would put it. It would appear that the scientific attitude towards the problem of evil was an echo of the voice of Islam—although only an incomplete echo. As however the imperfections of its imperfect theory have begun to produce their bitter fruit, the philosophical mind of the West seems inclined to revert to the old theory, which would not allow any effort at civilization. I only wish the West had seen and appreciated the golden mean of Islam and thus given stability to its civilized social existence.

In fact in this matter, as in all matters, Islam seems destined to act as a loving instructor to Europe. In this religion alone can Europe, tired of its extremism, will find a balanced view of all things that vitally affect the life and progress of our species on earth. Eminent thinkers of Europe, itself have been gradually waking up to a realization of this possibility. Professor Gibb of the London University has expressed a categorical opinion on this point in a book edited by him called "Whither Islam?" He says:

"And it may be that the sequel will be the same, that we must wait upon the Islamic society to restore the balance of Western civilization upset by the one-sided nature of that progress." (p. 377.)

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The professor then proceeds to give a more explicit diagnosis of the trouble of Europe :

“ For the fullest development of its own cultural and economic life Islam cannot do without the co-operation of European Society ; for the fullest development of its cultural life, *particularly of its spiritual life*, Europe cannot do without the forces and capacities which lie within Islamic Society.” (p. 378.) (Italics our own.)

And he gives a finishing touch to the whole discussion when he says :

“ But Islam has yet a further service to render to the cause of humanity. . . . No other society has such a record of success in insisting in an equality of status, of opportunity and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Muslim communities in China and the still smaller community in Japan show that Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and the West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition.” (p. 379.)

If the Professor had written these lines just at this moment he might have appropriately added that the mediation of Islam was far more urgently needed to bring about a reconciliation between the several nations of the West, bent upon annihilating one another. One would, indeed, wish that this appreciation by the West of the potentialities of Islam may not remain confined to its intellectual perceptions but sinks deeper even to its emotional regions to be productive of action. A Muslim is naturally reminded at this point of a verse in the Qur-án :

“ And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam it will not be accepted of him.” (3 : 84.)

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A few more words addressed to my Indian compatriots and I have finished. It is an irony of fate that while we oppose the Western domination tooth and nail, we have adopted the Western view of life and the Western way of thinking in all their particulars. Morally and spiritually we have completely and irrevocably surrendered ourselves to the West. In our mad imitation of the West we have filled this ancient land of religion with political slogans and clamours in which there is no room for any religious thinking. I do not deny that politics of a certain kind must fall within the jurisdiction of religion. But that is a different kind of politics altogether. To give you an idea of the politics of religion I may refer to such principles of conduct as the following :

“Help one another in goodness and piety and do not help one another in sin and aggression.”

(The Holy Qur-án, 5 : 2.)

“O you who believe ! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for God’s sake, though it be against your own selves or your parents or near relations. . . .”

(The Holy Qur-án, 4 : 135.)

One can see very easily that this is a politics quite unlike the one we are familiar with. In our current politics the sense of patriotism is not based on piety, goodness and justice. Nay, these can be sacrificed at the altar of national or communal interest as it is understood to-day without any compunction. But not so in the politics of religion as preached and practised by Prophet Muhammad or other world-teachers like him. Whereas in our current politics, imported from the present-day West, we see all good in our own nation and everything bad in other nations particularly in times of strife, the politics taught by the Prophet Muhammad has an altogether different

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thing to say in this matter :

“O you who believe ! be upright for God, bearers of witness for justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably ; act equitably, that is nearer to piety. And be careful of God : Surely God is Aware of what you do.” (The Holy Qur-án 5 : 8.)

Nay, as a true message of peace for humanity the Qur-án will not allow the slightest sense of superiority to remain in the mind of a nation. Thus it warns us saying :

“O you who believe ! let not one people laugh at another people, perchance these may be better than themselves ; nor let women laugh at other women, perchance these may be better than themselves ” (49 : 11.)

So this is a politics entirely different from the politics we find ourselves in the midst of. I hope you do not misunderstand me. If politics means regulation of mutual dealings between individuals and groups on the basis of the eternal principles of justice, equity and charity, certainly religion cannot do without politics, because humanity cannot do without it. But if politics means jealously guarding and promoting the group-interest, irrespective of, nay, in total disregard and to the detriment of, the interests of other groups and this by all manner of hypocrisy and haggling and deceit, no man, having any sense of religion and love for humanity, can help denouncing it. Because our current politics is of this latter type, I, as a lover of humanity enter a strong protest against its adoption by humanity in general and my countrymen in particular. It is, moreover, a pity that while the West itself has been brought to the verge of ruin by the disservice of the politics of its own making, we, of the East, should be fondly relying on the same politics for our national

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salvation. Let there be no mistake that the Western politics is based on group-selfishness and inspired by a materialistic view of life and as such is incapable of lighting the path of humanity groping desperately for international harmony and world-peace. This spirit of group-selfishness has to be discarded immediately if humanity is to be saved from total extinction and a broader and more altruistic social consciousness developed in its place. But this means a deep emotional transformation, which nothing but a proper religion can effect. Will this land of ours, the home of so many religions and birthplace of so many inspired teachers of religion, attempt this much-needed task, or will it be left to the Westerners, between whom and ourselves there is not much love lost in these days ? I leave the answer to you, the worthy representatives of religious India assembled in this solemn conference.

FROM THE CROSS TO THE CRESCENT

BY ABDUR RAZZAQUE SELLIAH

(Continued from p. 448 of December, 1942, issue.)

Who is the man with an atom of intelligence that would give credence or countenance to such unholy and damnable beliefs ? Which intellectual and God-respecting person would without injury to his own soul endorse this unpardonable doctrine, or whatever the church may choose to call it ? One may as well be asked to believe that Satan is the perfect paragon of everything that is holy, and that God is just the opposite. Again that it is God that tempts all men to death and damnation, and Satan invites us to Life and Salvation. Queer indeed is the position of Jesus who is held to be God in this instance ! Sad also indeed to think that many good and intelligent people are blind to the plain words of the Bible. Distortion.

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twisting, and pernicious teachings cannot go any further. We have it plainly that Jesus, who is held as God, is asked by Satan to worship him, and in the face of all this the Church would have us believe that Jesus was no ordinary mortal, but God Himself. To me these are not, and never can be, the facts relating to Christ, much less to God. We clearly see Jesus manifesting himself as a man, when he emphatically tells Satan : “. . . for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Luke. iv. 8), meaning thereby that if I (Jesus) have to worship anybody, it is the Living God only and not you. If Jesus was really God, why should he tell Satan that worship is due unto God alone? Where was the necessity of Jesus trying to tell Satan that he was not God, but a messenger of God? Surely, Satan knew that Jesus was only a man, and that is why he directed his temptations towards him. One cannot help feeling that this single incident alone smashes the belief in the Sonship, or God-head of Jesus.

We must understand that messengers who come to us from God, are so protected by Him that there cannot be any temptation for them. Angels and Prophets are free from the assaults of the Power of Darkness. If this be so, how much more should God be exceptionally immune from Satan? Befogged understanding and gross ignorance alone can lead a mind to accept such teachings. Where was the necessity of temptation at all? Was not Almighty God aware of the capability of His prophets to deliver His message? Should He set up a test for them? No, God works with perfection and does not need the agency of Satan to tempt any holy person that He sends as messenger of His Word to this earth. The holy ones of God are well above the necessity of temptation, for their lives are absolutely pure and free from all sin, and they are specially

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protected from the evils of Satanic suggestions, and therefore one that is sinless by birth and continues so under God's special care has no need of Satan or his vile temptations. Moreover, viewed from the Catholic point, this teaching only brings the sanctity of Jesus to the lowest ebb imaginable. Further, it will also appear clear that unless we consent to incline towards evil, Satan would be powerless against us ; and so are we to infer that Satan tempted Jesus (God) because he inclined towards sin and evil. It is only the evil-minded and the sinful people who would propagate such unvirtuous tenets, and it is only stunted intelligence and bigotry that would hold on to such perfidious and unholy teachings like a leech. Such being the circumstances in which the Divinity of Jesus is regarded by the Catholic Church and Christianity in general, I for one could not be a co-believer with them, for my whole mind and heart so revolted against such a presentation of God that I felt I should only be subscribing to an utter falsehood, which would be nothing short of an open sin.

MIRACLES

Diverting from this matter and surveying the other aspects of Jesus' life I could notice that there was the strongest argument and tendency to prove the Divinity of Jesus by the string of miracles he is supposed to have worked. In fact, these miracles are supposed to be the 'ball-bearings' on which the religion of Christ as presented by the modern Church, seems to run. But it is not a sound principle to try to prove the truth of a religion by miracles alone. The Catholic Church, in my opinion, claims the Divinity for Jesus by laying special stress on these miracles as an irrefutable proof that one could not have worked such wonders as the raising of the dead, healing of the sick, restoring sight to

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the blind, etc., unless he was God Himself. But we shall very soon see whether these particular miracles were not worked by others as well. Before I come to this point, however, I should like to know what could be the real purpose of miracles other than to transform the moral and spiritual lives of a people, especially of the ordinary men, by convincing them, through supernatural acts, the truth of the message intended to be conveyed. The number of miracles are so many that you have only to turn a page in the Gospels to find some or other of these narrated. A miracle, in my opinion, cannot be the beginning or the end of a religion. The most that can be said about them is that they are a means to an end, but not the end and much less the proof. The place of logical arguments may sometimes be taken by a miracle in order to carry conviction, but once this has been done it cannot be contended that the object itself has been attained. The final attainment of the object may be regarded as the end, but not the miracle itself. Having understood this fact clearly, I searched the Bible to see the general impression and result that these miracles of Jesus could have left on the minds of his witnesses, and it is most disappointing indeed to find that the success attained is far less than what could be reasonably expected. In fact, the reactions caused by these miracles are not even worth their name. We see that many, nay thousands, were healed, that multitudes followed him wherever he went, and that he drove unclean spirits out of many people, raised the dead and did many other great works, but to no avail. Many would not believe in him and he was even rejected as a liar. Even the sick whom he healed had little or no faith in him, although faith was a condition prior to being healed. His own following of twelve had often been rebuked by him as being of little faith, in spite

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of their constant companionship with him. It is rather strange to note that his chief disciple, Peter, denied him thrice at a very critical moment, and Judas even betrayed him into the hands of his enemies. On his way to Calvary bearing his heavy cross, he had not even the consolation of meeting his 'faithful band of followers'. All deserted him as a lost man, and one not quite confidently to be followed. And all this in spite of the 'many great works' he did. The only inference that one is forced to draw from all this is that the transformation Jesus intended to bring about ended in a sad failure. The four and five thousand who were fed miraculously on a few loaves of bread and fish dared not come to his rescue at all. They just left him to his fate. The result is that this great wonder-worker, in spite of the numerous miracles performed by him, is nailed to the cross where he hangs like a condemned criminal. Very sorrowful indeed is the end of him who did so much good to so many people. Even the raising of the dead to life was not sufficient proof that he was the Son of God or God Himself. All his miracles ended in the fact that he was condemned as a 'rebel and upstart' against the government. "And they began to accuse him saying: 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a King'." (Luke: xxiii. 2.) No one dared to come forward in his vindication by stating the numerous miracles he had worked in proof of his innocence. All had abandoned him so that he was driven to such extreme despair as to utter the words: "My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken me!" Such words evidently can only escape from a mortal and never from a Divine Being. This single expression, therefore, finally disposes of the Divinity claimed by the Church on his behalf.

(To be continued.)

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UPON RACIAL EQUALITY

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

Equality is a word and sentiment dear to the human heart. Perhaps there are but few ideas so instinctively welcome to humanity as that of equality. One might say that the Big Four were Justice, Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood.

Now to be brief, even in commencing, we may throw down the gauntlet at once and state that the idea of racial superiority cuts at the very root of the tree of human happiness. To the considered view of a thoughtful mind, can we, in truth, say that racial superiority exists?—for, if it exists, it must undoubtedly be faced. Reality must be accepted.

Fundamentally, racial superiority appears not to exist, to be a delusion, a dangerous conceit. Whence sprang race? When was race differentiated? By what channels of progress or periods of sheltered seclusion did race crystallize out into high and low, good and bad, advanced or backward? And towards what goal or desired consummation is it imagined that this advance has been made? Is it towards material power? Is it towards the annihilation of the individual in the swollen body of "the state" to be swayed or forced this way or that at the instance of one dominating human will, whether for good or bad? What excellence belongs to the vast human machine, drilled in millions, carrying out the orders of blind force? Or is this, in itself, a mark of racial superiority?

Be not deceived! If we admitted racial superiority to exist at all, it would be in the individual, not in the mechanized millions forced into one relentless mould, castrated of all personal liberty of thought or action.

Further, it would appear that the very advocates of racial superiority defeat their own boast by its mere

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assertion: for, assuredly, pride, indifference to the rights and sufferings of the weaker, and wholesale brutality towards the extermination of the "inferior" races, are no marks of superiority, but, on the contrary, of a very deep and dangerous barbarism—that brutal barbarism which is the open enemy of mankind, that octopus against which enlightened seers and prophets, poets and sages, have struggled down the centuries, warning mankind against the foul evil and decrying its ignorant outrages.

Rather would it seem, therefore, that essentially racial superiority is non-existent, and, coming down to the bedrock basis upon which humanity is founded, racial equality is the only reality.

But, here again, care must be taken rightly to understand the inner meaning of the two words "racial equality". In brief, here is the essence of the matter: racial differences obviously do exist as clearly to the reflective mind as, with the physical eye, one may observe black faces, white faces or brown faces and many that are none of these, but yellow. But who shall assume such arrogance as to judge of high or low? Who shall appoint himself the proud, infallible assessor of intrinsic merit? Or who shall weigh with the scales of certainty the striving human soul and proclaim with the trumpet, "These fail; these are found wanting: Let them be exterminated!"

Further, what mighty, invisible warder is there, who for thousands or even millions of years might have preserved the purity, or rather the isolated continuance, of any so-called superior race? May not even merits, which are now so much vaunted, have arisen from past infusion or subjection?

It should be cried broadcast through the world of to-day that greatness consists in conferring benefit upon humanity. The greatest nation is that which

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confers the greatest benefit upon the rest of humanity. Only so will the truly existing (though not realized) brotherhood of nations be shown forth as an actual fact of practical daily life, as a recognizable foundation, upon which world-order may be enduringly established.

But how shall this desirable end be achieved? By proceeding in accordance with the universal laws of natural existence. Thought must precede valuable action: the idea must first flash into existence before the form can be moulded and shown forth in the symmetry of beauty. Let the thought be born, spread abroad; the idea become no longer strange and new, but familiar and desirable; so will the action of achievement follow.

That this can be so—indeed must be so—is evident even now beneath the surface. Already, is not the standard of individual excellence that of use and service, the extent of benefits conferred, not of destruction or brutality or damage done? If we look carefully, do we not find, in every nation, that the people of the one sympathize with the people of another? The mass of the individuals of which States are composed do not in their hearts feel any burning desire to destroy their fellows belonging to other States, but rather view such an affair with repugnance as a catastrophe, a disaster, a setback to the natural progress of mankind.

This for the present—but what of the future? What has the future in store for racial pride, for this accentuated racial caste system pronouncing untouchables? Who can give to the future, but conjecture? And what should conjecture be based upon but the testimony of the past and the probability of the present?

What must have created in the first place the divergencies of race? Is it not prolonged isolation, difference of habitat and variety of geographical conditions prevailing over long periods? And what will,

UPON RACIAL EQUALITY

one must conjecture, break down racial barriers, smooth away racial differences and make of humanity an amiable family of nations? Is it not the reverse of these ancient processes? Is it not quickened intercourse, better understanding producing wider sympathy, but, above all, the gradual realization that, of human values, the material is in truth lower than the spiritual, that force savours of ignorance and brutality and the barbarisms of a bygone age that had not yet recognized the truth, that to respect liberty is greater than to crush it, and that the highest merit is to confer benefit?

So, becoming more practical, we cast our eyes over the world of to-day and, beneath the war-tormented surface in volcanic ebullition, we find ancient religions still existing, still offering a way of peace and a solution of the major problems of humanity, which are indeed not material but spiritual. The religion of Jesus differs little, if at all, from the religion of Muhammad. But, as we are considering practical matters, the practice of the Christian church is found to differ widely from the practice of Islam in matters of the brotherhood of races. Have we not found in India, to take one instance, separate churches for "white Christians" and separate churches for "coloured Christians"? In Islam, what do we find? King and pauper, rich and poor, Indian and European and African standing side by side in a peaceful equality in prayer before the Eternal, sitting also at meal together in friendly sociability.

Let one who reads these words judge which is the true path and practice of brotherhood.

For Islam, excellence consists not in the accident of race or of birth, but in the fulfilment of duty towards God and towards humanity—the most excellent is he who conferreth most benefit upon humanity.

"Surely the most honourable among you in the sight of God, is one who is most dutiful."—The Holy Qur-án, 49 : 13.

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'ID-AL-FITR (1361 A.H.) SERMON

BY ALLAMA ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI, M.A., C.B.E.

The 'Id is a festival of rejoicing. This year there are not many facts over which we can rejoice, either in the Muslim world or in the world at large. But the great merit of our religious festival is that it is independent of the condition of the outer world. Religion deals with an inner world, whether in the individual or among mankind. If we order our lives wisely that inner world will not be obscured by the clouds outside, but will rather send forth powerful rays to penetrate the gloom, doubts and uncertainty without. For gloom there is not a word to be said. Gloom often leads to despair and despair is an attitude absolutely inconsistent with faith and religion. No truly religious man ever allows himself to be cast down by despair. The darker the prospect the more it stirs the religious sense to action, the stronger is the call for that which is at the core of our being, the more lively is our perception of the need of God and the guidance of God. The man or woman who shows a cheerful spirit in the adverse circumstances is the one who can call his soul his own. In the world without, clouds bring hope to the husbandman and to all who are asking for rain. They tend to create in them an inner feeling of satisfaction.

What about doubts? They say that modern tendency is to cultivate doubts in all things. I do not think that such a negative tendency will help. Certainly the cock-sure attitude of ignorance is to be condemned. Meet every new situation with a due sense of our own shortcoming but with a stronger and stronger reliance on the providence of God. The more uncertain the chances of life, the more is there a call on our moral fibre to assert itself and prove itself superior to the

'ID-AL-FITR (1361 A.H.) SERMON

material factor without. Nor is there any room for uncertainty in the faith of Islam. That faith does not rely on any dogma. It does not build itself on abstract theological arguments. It is based on the proved fact of our outer and inner life.

“ Have We not made the earth as a wide expanse,

“ And the mountains as pegs ?

“ And (have We not) created you in pairs,

“ And made your sleep for rest,

“ And made the night as a covering,

“ And made the day as a means of subsistence ?

“ And (have We not) built over you the seven
firmaments,

“ And placed (therein) a Light of splendour ?

“ And do We not send down from the clouds water
in abundance ;

“ That We may produce therewith corn and vege-
tables,

“ And gardens of luxurious growth ?

“ Verily the Day of Sorting Out is a thing
appointed.”

—*The Holy Qur-án* 78 : 6—17.

It is on faith in these that it bases its assured faith that God is a just God, before whom can stand neither folly nor falsehood, neither inaptitude nor deceit. From this it follows that our life should be pure and holy even in this work-a-day world, for after all, the uncertainties will pass away and what will be left will be worthy things that deserve to stand before the glorious throne of God.

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CORRESPONDENCE

LONDON, E. 15.

July 22, 1942.

Dear Brother-in-Islam,

Assalam-u-Alaikum !

I have just finished reading parts of Chapter 3 of the Holy Qur-án. I have never yet opened this Book on any occasion without a deep inward feeling that I am embarking on a great and awe-inspiring adventure. This is the best way the feeling can be described. Also, I do not think I ever close the Book without a feeling of lingering reluctance at having to "break off" my reading of it, but I rejoice that there must be the same feelings that many millions of other Muslims have.

Yours sincerely in Islam,

OSMAN SMITH

IDAHO FALLS,

IDAHO.

31st July, 1942.

Dear Sir,

I do not know where this letter will go since the only address I have is the one given in a book which I found in the local library and this address is not complete. Then, too, the country of England is at war and I am not sure that this letter will ever reach that land.

While looking through the library not long ago I found a little book entitled "Islam and Civilization." This book was very interesting and had a list inside of other books by this same author. I should like to read some of these other books if I knew where to locate them in the United States. I would like especially to read "Sources of Christianity," "Religion of Jesus," "Towards Islam," and "The Existence of God."

CORRESPONDENCE

To tell the truth, I would like to read all of the books listed but I am unable to even discover how this book came to be in the library of Idaho Falls, Idaho, United States of America.

If this letter reaches someone who can tell me how to obtain the information for which I am seeking they may be assured of my sincerest gratitude.

Yours very truly,
J. H. B.

STRATFORD, E. 15.
October 13, 1942.

Dear Sir and Brother-in-Islam,

Assalam-u-Alaikum !

I must write as soon as I can to tell you how much I enjoyed and deeply appreciated my visit to Woking yesterday on the occasion of 'Id-al-Fitr. It is very rarely indeed that I am privileged to the one of such happy gatherings. I shall remember the colourful and unusual scene for a very long while indeed. Now that it is all over I realize what a truly happy and blessed gathering it was. It was a happy manifestation of the incomparable world brotherhood, that is one of the most vital features of our religion. Everyone was so very happy. The main attraction at this gathering was not to honour just one personality among their number: all were honouring each other and at the same time celebrating a very personal occasion. Of course, the most unique and striking feature was the various nationalities and races present. If I had still been in need of a proof of the essential worth of Islam I should have found it in this great and significant assembly of all nationalities on one common level. What a wonderful and impressive article it would make if people everywhere were told of the truly international spirit and character of the whole assembly ! The news that on Sunday last the first

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Anglo-American Church Parade was held was given deserved prominence by both radio and press. How much more worthy our celebration of yesterday was of being regarded as news of great and significant importance! Every one who ignorantly asserts that Islam is dead should see what happened yesterday at Woking. If Christianity is the living force that many of its adherents claim it to be, then Islam is at the very least also the living faith. If Islam does not live then nothing else does. If the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be eternal peace) did not create a mighty and immortal work then truly no man ever did. The personality of one man who lived 13 centuries ago lives in the hearts, and guides, comforts and abides with over 200* millions of this world's inhabitants. The Prophet's personality and deeds, his words and actions, grow unceasingly in splendour and in majesty and yet the greatest glory of all is that Muhammad's great glory is not to him, but is due to Him Who made him His Messenger. This fact was laid down with such emphasis that never under any circumstances will it be in the slightest danger of being forgotten by Muslims. May God bless and give His guidance to all who helped to make this 'Id-al-Fitr such a glorious testimony to their faith!

Yours sincerely-in-Islam,
OSMAN SMITH

HORNSEY N. 8.
26th October, 1942.

Dear Mr. Abdul Majid,

Our little circle have read the book you kindly loaned me and I return it herewith with our best thanks. We all found it most interesting and it has led us to study other books on Islam which we realise is much misunderstood in Europe.

Again thanking you for your kindness :

I remain,
Yours very truly,
L. E. S.

*600 millions according to Muslim computation.—Ed. I. R.

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