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APRIL, 1944 A.C.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مُحَمَّدٌ وَصَلَّى عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مُحَمَّدٍ خَلِيقَةِ النَّبِيِّينَ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol.
XXXII]

RABI'UL-THANI, 1363 A.H.
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[No. 4

A DECLARATION

I, MR. THOMAS S. TUFTON, of . . . Portugal Street, Cambridge, 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.

Dated Dec. 8, 1943.

(Sd.) T. S. TUFTON.

THE ID-AL-ADZHA IN ENGLAND

‘Id-al-Adzha (1362 A.H.) was celebrated at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, on December 8, 1943. As in the previous years when the festival fell in mid-winter, the prospect of having a fair attendance on the day was far from sanguine. The clamminess of weather added to the fact that influenza was prevalent at the time kept many visitors and fellow-Muslims away that day. Yet, unfavourable as the conditions were, this festival eventually turned out to be no less successful than the previous ones had been. When the call to prayer was made, over two hundred strong were assembled under the marquee. The gap made by the absence of many old and familiar faces through illness was filled by the presence of 34 members of the Indian contingent and 52 Bevin technicians over here from India. Two Turkish officers of the Turkish Air Force gave the medley crowd a truly representative character. Prayers were led by Al-Hajj Abdullah H. St. J. B. Philby, C.I.E., I.C.S. (Rtd.) as also was the sermon which will appear in a later issue of the *Review*. In his picturesque Arab robe he held the enthusiastic audience in rapt attention for over forty minutes. At the close of the sermon, the Imam M. Abdul Majid read a telegram from their Royal Highnesses the Amirs Faisal and Khalid of Sa‘udi Arabia expressing their regrets at not being able to join in the ‘Id celebrations because of their last minute departure from this country and that they wished every one of the Muslims happiness. At this point the feature of the day followed when it was announced that one Mr. Thomas Tufton, a graduate of Cambridge University, had chosen the occasion of the ‘Id to make a public avowal of the faith of Islam. A tall figure rose from amongst the crowd and advanced to the front by the side of the Imam. Here, without a trace of nervousness, Mr. Tufton repeated after the

(1361 A.H.) SERMON AT WOKING

Imam the words enjoined on all converts to Islam. Then the audience tendered their thankfulness to God for their newly found brother in Islam. The religious ceremony was to all intents over ; but the climax was yet to come. After the guests settled down to luncheon of Oriental dishes, a Bevin trainee from Bengal who had witnessed Mr. Tufton's conversion, was so moved, that he forthwith bought a copy of the Holy Qur-án from the bookstall and presented it to his new English brother-in-Islam as a token of his appreciation. His act was indeed a fitting finale to the fifth war-time 'Id.

THE ID-AL-ADZHA (1361 A.H.) SERMON AT WOKING

BY HIS EXCELLENCY SHAIKH HAFIZ WAHBA

Saudi Arabian Minister in London

[We owe an apology to the readers for publishing so late a sermon that was delivered more than a year ago. The cause of this delay is a simple one—the loss in the course of transmission of the original letter containing the sermon. The justification for publishing it is the valuable words that it contains—all the more valuable in the setting of modern conditions.—Ed. I. R.]

MUSLIM BROTHERS,

To-day we celebrate the 'Id-al-Adzha, while nearly all the nations of the world are in the throes of the most terrible and bloodiest war the world has ever known.

Although the world abounds in natural wealth and the products of nature are sufficient to meet the needs of the whole population, wars always cause the unavoidable evil of starvation and want, accompanied by untold misery and suffering. War is like a chronic disease, which can only be healed by sincere and real leaders who truthfully believe in God and whose hearts are full of understanding and humanity.

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May God the Almighty guide us all along the right path both in our personal and public life and may He restore once more to the world peace and security to all mankind.

May God the Merciful grant to our Muslim brothers in all parts of the world, on the return of this Sacred Festival, all happiness, amenity and prosperity.

Muslim brothers, the greatest blessing God ever bestowed on us, the Muslims, was when He endowed us with a mind of our own and granted the power with which to think freely and the right of every one of us to be able to judge and discuss matters with an open mind.

In many paragraphs of the Holy Qur-án God has called the Arabs to task (and naturally all people who act likewise) for their fanaticism which causes them to follow blindly the path of their ancestors without using the gift that God has given them. "Follow that which Allah has revealed ; they say :—We follow that wherein we found our fathers. What ! even though their fathers were wholly unintelligent and had no guidance."

On the foundation of thinking freely, our ancestors built and left for us the most priceless mines of knowledge in science, art and other subjects. Their great knowledge and brains had enabled them to lead the whole world for many centuries.

God will not change the circumstances in which one lives unless one is willing to alter one's way of life and to make up one's mind to lead a better life.

God praised in the Holy Qur-án His Prophet for his good behaviour and character. It is written : "And most surely your manners and morals are sublime."

Also the Prophet said : "I was sent to see that good behaviour and proper character prevailed."

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Through good behaviour and character all the differences between the different peoples disappeared. It is written in the Qur-án :

“ Thus it is by mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you.”

Islam is a practical religion and not a religion of hopes and wishful thinking. Thus it is written :

“ This shall not be in accordance with your vain desires nor those of the followers of the Book. He who does evil shall be requited with it, and he will not find, besides Allah, for himself a guardian or a helper.”

“ And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer—these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be wronged a bit. And who is better in respect of religion than one who submits himself entirely to Allah, and he is a doer of good and follows the faith of Abraham, the upright one.”

Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn Al-‘As said : “ I heard that the Prophet said : ‘ God never takes away knowledge from people’s brains straightway, but He takes away from them, knowledge, through the death of the learned ones. When all the learned have departed, the people choose their leaders from out of ignorant masses, who when consulted answer without knowledge and understanding and thus the people are misguided and misled.’ ”

No doubt, knowledge is the firm and strong foundation upon which every Government should be built. No Government, among whose people ignorance prevails, and who are led by ignorant leaders, can ever survive.

The best teaching is that of God and the best guidance one can seek is that of Muhammad the

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Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon his soul.)

The Qur-án says :

“ And Allah sets forth a parable of a town safe and secure, its means of subsistence came in abundance from every quarter ; but it became ungrateful to Allah’s favours, therefore Allah made it taste the utmost degree of hunger and fear because of what its people did.”

The Book says further :

“ And when We wish to destroy a town, We send Our Commandment to the people of it who lead easy lives but they disobey therein : thus the judgment was passed against the people of the town so We destroyed it completely.”

This is the true way of life for nations and people. Happiness for those who thank God for His blessings, who follow His teaching, encourage education, improve their industry and agriculture, spread and increase their trade, and, generally speaking, employ every means in their power to reach the highest degree of civilization. Misery and slavery for those who neglect education and live in a state of delusion and do not try to help themselves. God helps those who help themselves. This is the way of God with people and a way that never changes.

Having spoken thus, I pray God to forgive each one of us and all Muslims and I call on you to pray for His forgiveness, for He is the Forgiving and the Merciful One.

ID-AL-FITR SERMON AT THE EAST LONDON MOSQUE

Extracts from the "Khutbah" (Sermon) delivered by our brother, S. M. Haffar of Manchester, after Id-al-Fitr Prayer (1362 A.H.) at the East London Mosque, London.

"Allāhu-Akbar, lā ilāha illallāh, Allāhu-Akbar wa Lillāhil-Hamd." The Greatness, the Transcendence, the Unity and the Praise of God are declared in these Arabic significant words by all Islam on solemn and festive occasions like this. Conscious of our immense debt to our Prophet Muhammad, we also invoke God's blessing on him : 'Sallal-llāhu 'alaihi wa sallam.'

We celebrate to-day the conclusion of Ramadhan, the month of fast, of devotions and of charity. But if we have just completed the period of abstention from food, drink and other sensual desires, our spiritual fast, the result of our discipline during Ramadhan only now begins. "Fasting is ordained on you . . . so that you may acquire self-restraint and piety." (2 : 183), thus and in these clear terms God directs our attention to the real object of the Ramadhan Fast. It is in this month, in particular, that Muslims are expected to overhaul the whole machinery of their living. Individually the experience of hunger and thirst tends to awaken in us, Muslims, the sense of our common humanity in general and our solidarity within our Muslim brotherhood in particular.

Fasting is an act of self-abnegation, which tends to develop and deepen our sense of honesty and sincerity. Who is it except God and ourselves who know whether we are really fasting or not ? In fasting we give proof also of our belief in God's awareness and His nearness to us : "Nearer than the jugular vein" (50 : 16). It is His pleasure that we seek, the reward is solely His, as our Prophet told us. We equally experience, in various degrees, the Grace and Mercy of God, for these redeeming attributes of God are no less emphasised in Islam than His Might and Absoluteness. Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim, the Beneficent and

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the Merciful are the two Divine Names most repeated by Muslims at every turn and movement. We take a balanced view of the universe and its Author : we are not sentimentalists in religion.

A special feature of the Ramadan is the pronounced practice of charity among Muslims. Zakat or the poor rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. out of our net income, or wealth, above a certain minimum, is expended in Ramadan, and it is further incumbent on every Muslim and Muslimah to give in alms what is equivalent to a day's meals to those in need ; even the poor have to give it to their poorer brethren. Guardians are responsible, on behalf of their dependents. This is "Fitrah," which must not be delayed beyond the first day of 'Id-al-Fitr.'

THE INSTITUTION OF SACRIFICE IN ISLAM

BY NAWAB SARWAR ALI KHAN SAHIB BAHADUR,
RULER OF KURWAI STATE

The Arabic word "Qurban" the equivalent of "Sacrifice" in English means primarily anything that removes the distance and takes man nearer a higher ideal. Sacrifice in this sense constitutes a law of God. It is seen demonstrated in the lives of all prophets. It is the sole guarantee of real life and its success. In this world of struggle that nation and individual alone comes out successful, which manlike and ungrudgingly can offer in sacrifice its life, wealth, offspring, time and comforts. The history of Islam and the history of our own times jointly bear testimony to this high place of sacrifice in human life, sacrifice in its true sense, in the sense the Qur-án attaches to it.

The religious sacrifice in the dark age of humanity were the product of superstitious beliefs and conception of life. People used to sacrifice lives, human and animal, in order to receive favours from their gods and goddesses or to be saved from their displeasure and chastisement. It was considered to be a method of

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pleasing the deities. This kind of sacrifice was meaningless ritual and was the outcome of weakness in man's own character. It only resulted in the loss of self-respect and loss of the power of endurance in man, in polytheism, in cowardice, and in other moral weaknesses. The more he shed the blood, human or animal, thus actuated by feelings of hope and fear, the more he was deprived of spiritual powers and moral strength. In this respect religions can be divided into two groups :

1. Jainism and Buddhism.—These two religions regard the sacrifice of animal life as the greatest of all sins and apply their whole energy to the killing of man's own desires and emotions. They hold that so long as man cannot free himself from the bondage of ' karma,' from the ties of his relationship with the world, and from the feelings of pleasure and pain and thus bring about self annihilation, he cannot attain salvation.
2. Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity.—All these three stand opposed, so to speak, to Jainism and Buddhism. The institution of Sacrifice was introduced in Hinduism in the belief that the gods and the goddesses could be propitiated with the offering of the flesh and blood of animals sacrificed, and their fearful wrath could be thus averted. The Jews offer sacrifices as an atonement for their sins, while the Christians hold that instead of offering scattered multitude of sacrifices, if faith is reposed in one great sacrifice (*viz.*, the crucifixion of Jesus) such a faith ought to be enough for the purpose of salvation.

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It comes to this then :—If the former religions aspire to attain salvation by killing the self of man, the latter three try to achieve that object by destroying others. Evidently both the methods are wrong. If following the guidance of Jainism and Buddhism one resolves upon killing one's emotions and desires, it will put an end to the free development of the human faculties ; and very soon nothing will be left in the world excepting despair and mendicancy. On the other hand, if following the line of Jewish and Christian thought we come to believe that man can attain salvation by the sacrifice of animals or of Jesus, as the case may be, the inevitable result will be that we shall cease to have any faith in our deeds. We shall in that case be no longer in need of virtuous deeds for purposes of salvation. On the contrary, we shall begin to depend on others for our spiritual safety.

There is another thing to be considered in this connection. As a practice or belief such sacrifices have no bearing on our civilization or worldly life. Jainism and Buddhism do certainly inculcate self-renunciation through their institution of sacrifice. But such renunciation is not in the interest of any improvement in our worldly life, but rather at its cost. Rather than making man a more useful member of society, it takes him away from it. It leads ultimately to the killing of the self-respect and self-confidence in man and to the killing of all power of action. This observation applies equally to Hindu, Jewish and Christian institutions of sacrifice. These prescribe sacrifice of other lives (animal or human) to please others (gods and goddesses). Those who offer such a sacrifice keep absolutely aloof from its operation. In short, the institution of sacrifice in Jainism and Buddhism, which began with the sacrifice of the self in man, led man to kill himself, *i.e.*, to the renunciation of the world and to

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moral and social suicide. The sacrifice instituted by Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity, which began with the sacrifice of animals and gradually human sacrifice came to be included in it, had, as their sole objective, the acquisition of a selfish and a false sense of security by causing pain to and taking the lives of, others than their own.

None of these blemishes attach to the Islamic institution of Sacrifice. This institution is in commemoration of a proud and inspiring historical event, that has been narrated thus in the Qur-án :

“ And he said : Surely I fly to my Lord : He will guide me :

“ My Lord ! grant me of the doers of the good deeds.

“ So We gave him the good news of a boy, possessing forbearance.

“ And when he attained to working with him he said : O my son ! Surely I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you : What do you think of it ? He said : O my father ! do what you are commanded : if Allah please, you will find me of the patient ones.

“ So when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead,

“ And We called out to him saying, O Abraham !

“ You have indeed shown the truth of the vision.

. ”

(Ch. 37, vv. 99—105.)

Having narrated the incident the Qur-án goes on to say :

“ Surely thus do We reward the doers of good.

“ Most surely this is a manifest trial.

“ And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.

“ And We perpetuated (praise) to him among the later generations.

“ Peace be on Abraham.

“ Thus do We reward the doers of good ” (Ch. 37, vv. 105—110.)

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The first two verses of the last quotation clearly state that Sacrifice is a trial. This implies that man does not lose anything by Sacrifice ; he rather gains by it. And the most outstanding example of this truth is the incident of Abraham's Sacrifice. The Patriarch was fully prepared to sacrifice his only son Ishmael in the way of God. But what happened ultimately was that Ishmael remained safe and the sacrifice was also accepted by God, Who accepted a ransom for the intended sacrifice.

Another verse that follows, *viz.* "Peace be on Abraham" is also very significant. The first two verses had said that sacrifice is a mere trial and that nothing is lost by it but something gained ; but that real sacrifice is that which is in obedience to the Commandment of God. Now in this verse God recognises the sacrifice of Abraham and his successful emergence from the test, and says that through this the doors of peace and safety are opened for Abraham.

Still another verse that deserves our notice is—
"Thus do We reward the doers of good."

After the announcement of peace and security, the Commandment comes that it is the Divine practice to reward the benevolent in this manner. In other words, it is a law of God that whosoever follows the line of action followed by Abraham, is and will always be rewarded in like manner.

And peace and security are among the irrevocable rewards of sacrifice. Indeed such nations and individuals alone enjoy the blessings of peace and security as first offer sacrifice for their price. The Muslim sacrifices of 'Id-al-Adzha are in commemoration of the sacrifice of Abraham. The occasion is intended to remind us of that great event and inspire us to similar acts of sacrifice in obedience to the Will of God. This was the reason why the spirit of surrender and obedience

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which is embodied in this incident has been appointed as an abiding sign for the guidance of humanity.

Let us now give an orderly arrangement to the various aspects of this event in Abraham's life :

- (1) Prophet Abraham receives this commandment for sacrifice not while he was awake but in his sleep.
- (2) The demand is not for an ordinary thing but for the sacrifice of his own son.
- (3) The son is not an ordinary boy. It was Ishmael,—handsome, charming, virtuous and a prophet-designate.
- (4) The son is in his full youth and is the eldest born.
- (5) The father is in his old age and does not hope to have a better offspring and successor.
- (6) The son is one that has been obtained as a result of earnest prayers.

It is only when we consider all these aspects together in thinking of Abraham's sacrifice that we can fully appreciate the dignity and solemnity of the situation presented by Abraham's determination. Neither the father nor the son is in the least disturbed by any anxiety or sorrow. The father is in a state of positive happiness as he approaches the act of sacrificing the son. He is not only fully prepared for the act but is actually happy to perform it. He makes ready for the act with all the grandeur of a festive ceremony. The son likewise is ready to be sacrificed by the father with the utmost of happiness and enthusiasm. This is real sacrifice and it is this type of sacrifice which the Muslims have been commanded to offer and for which a yearly reminder comes to us from God in the shape of this festival. This Commandment and annual reminder is there in order that we may attain to a position of

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honour, which if we are able to appreciate it, will make all other achievements in life look trivial and insignificant in comparison.

Such is, therefore, the Islamic Sacrifice and such its rewards. May it be vouchsafed to the Muslims to appreciate its blessings !

To sum up : The institution of sacrifice is to be found in all religions. But all of them, excepting one, totally lack the true spirit of sacrifice, and rational basis of its acceptance. It is Islam alone which says of its sacrifice that it aims at the perfection of human character and that it is this aim which constitutes the basis of its acceptance. The Holy Qur-án says :

“ There does not reach Allah their flesh nor their blood (*i.e.*, flesh and blood of the animals sacrificed) but to Him is acceptable the guarding (against evil) on your part ” (22 : 37)

Elsewhere the Book says :

“ Allah only accepts from those who guard (against evil) ” (5 : 27.)

Thus the most outstanding feature of Islamic sacrifice is that it fixes as its ultimate object and appoints as a basis of its acceptance, a truth which in itself is the object of human life. According to the teachings of the Qur-án the sacrifice does not consist of the flesh and the blood of the sacrificial animal but the piety and fear of God prompting the act of sacrifice. And piety, according to the sayings of the Holy Prophet, consists of being free from sins of all kinds. These definitions of Sacrifice and piety should set all such people thinking as thoughtlessly adhere to the mere form of the religion, are almost worshippers of mere custom and convention and indifferently slaughter the dumb animals without ever trying to realise the moral lessons underlying the act. These should be roused to a heart-searching and should spot out the

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animal in their own selves in the shape of selfishness and selfworship. Let us all sacrifice this animal in ourselves first of all and thereby attain to a real state of religious piety, as nothing short of this reorientation of ourselves will see the flood-gates of the reality of Islam and the truth of the Qur-án opened upon the pining life of humanity.

MUHAMMAD AS THE IDEAL FOR MANKIND*

BY MIZANUR RAHMAN, M.A.

In the Holy Qur-án, the Word of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him!) has been described as “*Uswat-ul-Hasanah*”—Model Par Excellence for Mankind.” It is a big claim, and deserves critical examination at least to satisfy scientifically sceptical minds, although the true followers of the Faith must accept the Quranic characterisation as absolutely true. And true it is, as we shall presently try to show.

To begin with, the Arabian Prophet's life is a well-documented chapter of human history, full of the minutest details recorded with unerring precision. In the case of Muhammad's life, it is not dearth, but overabundance, of details that confronts us. Nothing about his eventful and dedicated life is shrouded in mystery. It is an open book from start to finish. This is one speciality about the Prophet of Islam which deserves notice. The case is otherwise, so far as the Prophets, who preceded him, are concerned. And we, Muslims, consider Muhammad to be the last of the Prophets specially commissioned by Allah to deliver His final testament for the guidance of mankind, as the holy Qur-án puts it—“*Al-yauma Akmaltu lakum*

*Delivered at the Milad-Mahfil of the Muslim students of the Bengal Veterinary College, on 22nd December, 1943.

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Dinakum wa Atmamtu alaikum Ni'mati"—“ This day have We perfected for you your religion and completed My favours upon you,” in reference to the Prophet's message of Islam.

Let us examine Muhammad (peace be on him !) as Man and Guide for Mankind. As man, Muhammad never proclaimed himself to be a superman. “ Ana basharun mithlukum yuha ilayya ”—“ I am but a man like you all but divine revelation is received by me.” That is his claim. The claim is modest but true in all respects. Recall to your minds the historically-recorded facts. Muhammad was born as other mortals are. No mystery surrounds his birth. The date, hour and place of his birth and death are on record, as also the details about his struggles and achievements. He was brought up and grew into manhood, as others are and do. But the orphan child of Abdullah and Amina showed his peculiarities even from the very dawn of his life.

The child, who was destined to deliver the final message for mankind, was put to test from the very infancy. It is trials that test the mettle of a man. Muhammad had to pass through the fullest baptism of tribulations. The father predeceased him ; the mother left him a child of six ; the grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, also died when Muhammad was about eight years old, leaving the orphan to the tender mercy of the uncle, Abu Talib, under whose roof the boy grew, tending cattle and doing other domestic drudgeries. The boy never cavilled, but did his work well and assiduously.

Even as a child, Muhammad earned a well-merited and highly distinctive appellation from the Makkans none too favourably disposed towards the orphan child who struck a jarring note against their cherished ideals. The appellation was “ Al-Amin,” the

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“Trusted” or the “Trustworthy.” “Al-Sadiq,” the “Truthful,” was another glorious title he received from his compatriots. And why? Because the child was such as won universal admiration for his sterling qualities of character. That is undoubtedly worthy of the Model Par Excellence.

The “Trusted” and the “Truthful” was destined to receive a Divine Trust for which he prepared himself for full forty years, both in the midst of the din and bustle of life, as also away from it in the serene stillness of the Hira Hill, where he resorted off and on and passed hours together in deep meditation. The things about him tormented his soul and made him hanker after a solution. There was darkness all around, but light, Divine Light, descended upon him at the fortieth year on the Mount Hira, since designated as the Mount of Light. It was a dazzling light which almost dazed the recipient who hastened home and unburdened his mind to the life’s consort, Khadija, 15 years senior to him in age. Khadija heard and believed and accepted the light of Al-Amin’s Prophethood, and thus became the Lady of Light—the first convert to the new faith, Islam, the Divinely perfected Code of Humanity, which has done for womanhood what no other faith has done.

Muhammad now proclaimed himself to be the Prophet of Allah, and started preaching *Tawhid* in preference to the corrupt practices which then prevailed. From the very boyhood, he was against the idolatrous worship. The Makkans got wild with rage at the open declaration by one of them against their gods and goddesses. They sought to persuade him away from the new path with offers of wealth, honour and even empire. But Muhammad was not to be won over. Not to speak of worldly riches, not even the sun and the moon from the highest heaven, if placed in his

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hand, said he, could deter him from the divinely determined purpose. Oppressions followed. The Prophet and his followers had to leave the land of their birth. Then came wars, all in the vicinity of Madina where the Prophet took shelter, the Makkans being the aggressors, for over 10 years. It is not the sword of steel but truth that spread the Faith.

The Prophet ultimately triumphed and came to Makka as victor. But how did he behave with the oppressors? They were all forgiven, except a few directly concerned in murderous crimes. The conquest of Makka by the Prophet of Islam was the most bloodless victory ever recorded in history. But he did not compromise with untruth. The idols in the House of Allah were not spared: the sacred House had to be cleared of the obnoxious growths. The Majesty of Allah had to be established, for “*Jāal Haqqu and Zahaqal Batilu, innal Bātila kāna Zahúqá*—“Truth has come and falsehood has vanished: verily falsehood is evanescent.” This magnificent treatment towards the erstwhile enemies had its effect. The hour of victory came and the hordes flocked into the fold of Allah. The whole of Arabia lay prostrate at the feet of Muhammad who in his faith lay prostrate, as ever, before Allah Whose Servant and Messenger he was. Triumph only deepened his unflinching faith in the mercy and majesty of Allah.

The initial struggles being over, the Prophet now took steps for establishing the Divinely-given Faith far and near. Success crowned his efforts. The Prophet also enunciated the various codes of life—social, political, economic and spiritual—for the guidance of his followers for all times to come, through personal practices as well as learned discourses and expositions. Let us briefly examine these codes and try to find out if these are the safest, surest and simplest rules of

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conduct for mankind. Be it noted that we can merely touch the fringe and cannot attempt the fullest exposition which will need volumes.

After all, what is the *summum bonum* of life ? Is it the acquisition of wealth, honour or position ? No. These are welcome but ephemeral. Human life worth the name ought to aim at something higher, nobler and more permanent. This earthly life is but a fleeting show. It has its value and importance but, according to the Prophet of Islam, "Al-duniya mazri'at-ul Akhirah"—"This world is the cultivation for the next." We have to think of the life beyond the grave, which is an eternal one. This life's purpose is to "imbue oneself with the attributes of Allah" Whose servant, creature and vicegerent are we on earth. The Prophet of Islam has laid greater emphasis on the life in the Great Beyond, and rightly.

Muhammad's message, in its pristine purity, is embodied in the very word ISLAM, which he preached in its perfected form. But he did not found Islam. Islam is co-existent with creation. The Prophet of Arabia merely gave Islam its final form. What does Islam mean ? It means Peace, or Causation of Peace, and Submission to the Will of Allah. To my mind, the word *Islam* connotes both the end and the means. Islam inculcates Peace with Man and Peace with Allah. Peace with man presupposes brotherly feelings towards fellow men ; hence the emphasis by Islam on the brotherhood of mankind. The Prophet himself proclaimed : "Innamal Muminuna Ikhwatun"—Verily the Believers are a Brotherhood. And Peace with Allah can be secured only through complete submission to the Supreme Being Who shapes the destinies of the whole creation. *Innalláha alú Kulli shay'in Qadir*—Allah is powerful over everything.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

This is what the Prophet of Arabia not only preached but practised all his life—in the hours of trial and triumph. It is a message worth remembering and practising. Islam embraces the whole humanity. It does not advocate racial arrogance or compartmental groupings. Islam's tune is universal or international. Iqbal expounds it rightly in his soul-stirring strains: "Chino Arab Hamārā, Hindustān Hamārā ; Muslim Hain Ham, Watan hai Sārā Jahān Hamārā." This is the real burden of Islam. Geographical-entities or nationalities are out of tune with Islam. This parochial nationalism has brought the world on the verge of destruction. The proofs are flying about us for years past.

Islam's solution of the different problems of life is simple, dynamic and practical. It is not couched in abstruse philosophy. Philosophical dissertations may be appreciated by the enlightened few but not by the generality of mankind. Equality and fraternity preached by Islam are not mere ideals. These are to be daily seen in mosques and prayers when the master and the servant, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, are on the same level. Reserved pews are not to be seen in Muslim houses of worship. Social distinctions are inevitable incidents of society. It is no use stressing the impossible in reference to the fleeting show. This world is not the be-all and the end-all of life. Socialistic or communistic ideals are of a piece with those of Islam with the soul left out. And the soul is the thing of supreme importance.

To sum up, look at Muhammad from whatever angle you like, and you will find him to be a perfect and practical model to be followed with ease. The Prophet of Islam was no dreamer. He was a most practical teacher Divinely inspired and guided. He enunciated a combined but practical code of conduct

O PRIEST, WHAT OF RELIGION?

for all humanity. Consciously or unconsciously, the world is moving towards the Divinely-Perfected Code. It must. Divine Will must be fulfilled, slowly but surely. Don't be misled by the Model's unworthy followers, or dazzled by the glitters of glory for gold. Real gold may be rusted, but it will glitter sooner or later. The Quranic declaration, which is Divine Revelation, cannot go in vain—"Innad-Dīna 'indallāh-il ISLAM"—Islam alone is the Religion of Allah. Muhammad (peace be on him) was not only the last but the most magnificent of Allah's Messengers. His teachings must prevail, for these are based on the correct appreciation of practical values. Politics, Sociology, Economics and Spiritualism—these all important elements of life are harmoniously moulded and attuned into Islam, as promulgated by the latest and the greatest teacher of mankind.

O PRIEST, WHAT OF RELIGION?

BY W. B. BASHYR-PICKARD B.A. (Cantab.)

It used to be said, "Watchman, what of the night?" but in these latter days is that saying applicable? When night is turned into day, when watchmen are multiplied, when the silence of night is submerged beneath the droning of innumerable planes, when search-lights vigilantly sweep the darkness of the night skies, and civilization is sleepless, restless and fearful, when all are watchmen, the saying becomes obsolete.

Therefore we turn to something new, to a vital question that to-day clamours for an answer, "O Priest, what of Religion?"

First, we should realize the fundamental nature of this question. In brief the outline is thus: civilization, humanity itself, rests upon life (without life, no civilization, no humanity); life rests upon God

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(the Ever-Living, Who pervades all life eternally); religion is the handmaid, who gives service to God, and by devotion and worship obtains unerring knowledge of right and wrong and of the great fundamentals of society, justice, good-will and brotherhood.

By these clear steps we observe, therefore, that for the essential well-being of humanity, of world-society, of civilization, religion is requisite.

But what in present-day actuality do we find? Whither has religion flown? whither hidden? Is it in the hearts of men?—but, if so, the heart is the prime mover of action, and, religion in the heart, mankind is safe, securely at peace. If not in the heart, perhaps religion dwells in some outward place. If so, where? What outward signs are there? O Priest, where are you? Can you answer this? Where is Christendom? Where, indeed, but in an empty name? Can any human power of imagination proclaim Europe, groaning under the burden of devil-devised armaments, as the true follower of him, who walked the earth humbly, and said, “If any one smite thee, turn again the other cheek.”?

Nay, nay, and thrice nay! a negative is not a positive; neither is brute force good-will; nor are armaments the tokens of brotherhood. Is not the religious world of Asia (Japan being regarded not as religious but as national) nearer to truth, nearer to God, nearer to brotherhood, than the material giant of the West?

If, O white brothers, you rise up, and in the indignation of quick anger, say, “No, we do not believe this! Europe is undoubtedly Christian, and directs her actions and policies by Christian motives”, then, if this be so, O white brothers, give me the answers to the following perturbing questions, that assail me despondingly.

O PRIEST, WHAT OF RELIGION?

If religion means anything in Europe, is not Rome the seat and stronghold of one form of Christianity? If so, then must not Italy be the most Christian nation of the nations of Europe? If so, upon what pretext, or right, or shadow of a right, could Italy enslave forcibly law-abiding Abyssinia? Or again, upon what pretext, by what shadow of right, could Italy with forcible intent and the overwhelming power of her armies invade, with the violence of international highway robbery, the neighbouring, well-nigh defenceless, in no sense dangerous, free state of Albania? and that, too, upon the day of days upon which this very Roman religion exists and has its being?

If, O white brothers, you cannot satisfy my vexed heart with any but hypocritical answers to these vital questions, then I must proceed.

Looking upon the situation from the other side, it appears that one man is greater than Rome, greater than all the sons of Rome, stronger than the fountain of Catholic Christianity.

If not, how can one man sway a Christian nation to unrighteousness? to unchristian actions? to brutal barbarism? to devilish mass destruction?

This troubles me; for doubtless again it will be affirmed, even with indignation, "Indeed, Christendom does exist! There are Christian nations!"

If I ask where? Doubtless again I should quickly be told, "In Europe and in America!"

In America! yes, possibly! The Pan-American Conference of the Peace-loving States of the Western Hemisphere leaves us, in truth, that bright vestige of hope. May those States prosper! and may successful abundance and the firm concord of brotherhood establish them in the paths of peace, wherein religion may walk in sincerity and quietness of heart!

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But in Europe!—O Priest, where shall religion be found? Is it amongst the tanks and guns and the massed armies of Central Europe? or is it in the air-planes? the war-planes, droning peace and good-will from the sunlit skies?

If not here, then where? and again where? for, of a truth, little else remains of the manhood of Europe that bears not arms, whose attention is not concentrated upon destructive power.

In my distress, I struggle to view this matter in the clear light of truth: and it seems, the nearer I approach to the truth, the greater is my distress.

Yet let us not yield to despair; let us attack the question again. If a nation is Christian, where are those Christians? and what are they doing?—

After a time comes the answer, "They are in munition factories, making a mountainous stock of destruction; they are wheeling in the sky in war-planes; they are digging trenches, building forts and laying entanglements of barbed wire; they are studying scientific mass destruction."

But I say, "Nay, nay, answer me again!"

And after a longer time, comes the answer, "It is so! We have considered again. These are the Christians. We find no others—or, indeed, but few—the weak, the crippled, the blind. All the Christians are now actively making war preparations."

Is this indeed so, O Priest? Are the Italian armies full of devout Roman Catholics?—are you not fooling me? mocking me? What state of affairs is it, then, when, at one man's orders, all these devout Christians should, on the day of days in Christendom, advance into aggression? What avails this religion at all, if its head is "in chancery" to brute force? if its conscience goes down in slavery to a military order—not of self-defence, but of aggression?

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For things temporal, for this world, then, as far as Christendom is concerned, religion would appear to be something remote—to be practised, certainly, in times of peace, but, admittedly, at times to be set aside, so that the panoply of war may be donned.

Be not deceived! This is not religion! How can religion be the slave of militarism? of aggression? of destruction? May I remind you, O Priest, of what in your innermost heart you will recognize as truth? True religion is the dominant motive power of humanity. Many have yielded their lives readily out of love for God—many are the martyrs—their testimony availeth, even in the days of darkness. When, O Priest, when, O sons of humanity, will you rise up in indignation and loathing, and be no longer the slaves of militarism, break your fetters, emerge from the blinding, smarting smoke of hatred, and be at peace, not alone as regards the next world, but now even in this?

ISLAM AND WESTERN SOCIALISM

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

[This article should be read with advantage along with another article "Islam and Modern Social Movements," published in three instalments in the August, September and October, 1943 issues of this journal—Ed. *I. R.*]

The proletariat as a whole is really never worthy of the powers of rulership. The contentions on behalf of leadership, therefore, are sound, as they accord with the scheme of nature. It has been rightly said that leaders are born—leaders in any sphere of life, in science and arts as much as in politics and religion. The responsibility of the society in this matter is to remove the unnatural obstructions from the path of the true leaders rising to power. That should be the aim of all reformatory movements. It is unnatural, therefore,

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that a whole body of people who are the least imaginative, least responsible and least capable—for this is what proletariat in a natural society means—should aspire after rulership over those who are better than themselves in every way and who are always in the minority in any society. But leaving aside this general leadership of the nation, even with regard to economics, it is obvious that all men and women are not equally capable as producers. There are geniuses in economic production as in any other activity of life. The financial administration and welfare of the nation must go to these natural leaders and not to the vast mass of the unimaginative and unenterprising proletariat. The step towards any progress is that in which the weak and the low is raised up to higher levels and not that in which the high and the advanced is dragged down to the levels of the low and the backward. That there will always be weak and indolent as well as strong and active members in any society and that there will always be a graded scale of efficiency in all departments of life, no sensible man will deny, as to deny that will amount to denying the structure of society itself. Of course, economically speaking, the best leader is he who, being a genius of production, dedicates all his productive energy to the interest of the people at large. But an enforced Communism in which the dull proletariat dominates is incapable of bringing such geniuses into play. It will rather kill them. Religion alone is known to have produced this miracle.

The leaders of Soviet Russia realise this fact in their heart of hearts as is evident from the manner of their administration which admits of grades of efficiency and remuneration and it is a false hope which they hold out to people when they say that the present system in Russia called Socialism is only a stepping-stone towards the more perfect stage of Communism

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wherefrom each will be taken what it is his capacity to produce and to each will be given what he needs. At least mere administrative laws cannot call such a society into being. This is never to be and the pronouncement of the Qur-án :

“ And He it is Who has made you successors in the land, and raised some of you above others by various grades, that He might try you by what He has given you ” (Ch. 6. v. 166.)

“ And Allah has made some of you excel others in the means of subsistence so that those who are made to excel do not give away their sustenance to those whom their right hands possess (*i.e.*, their subordinates and dependents), so that they shall be equal therein” (16 : 71)

will hold true for all times as it has held true up till now in all systems of economic administration, not excluding the system in force in Russia at the moment. There will always be grades of money-possessions as there will always be grades in any other possession in life—gifts of art, of thinking, of penmanship, of oratory, of poetry, of administration, of military skill, of sportsmanship and every other power of body and mind. We generally forget that a person, if he is a follower in respect of one gift, may be a leader in another. If a king leads his subjects in one sphere of life, he is led by some of his subjects in other spheres of life. If a millionaire dominates over people in one aspect of life, he is dominated and awed by many of his compatriots gifted in other ways. The trouble arose in our times when misguided by the Jewish values of life we began to think that material wealth was the only measure of a person's greatness and resultant honour. The Capitalistic callous competition and exploitation had its source in this perverted valuation of things. And it is a pity that while Socialism proposes

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to combat the evils of Capitalism, it accepts the valuation of things as given by Capitalism as if with a vengeance. Whatever its practice, Capitalism acknowledged in theory at least other values of life besides material wealth. Socialism came forward with a theory of life, wherein the acquisition of bread and butter is virtually a religion. This is, indeed, a trial. When the only competition left between man and man is of material wealth, there is bound to be chaos in the world, as man's desire for wealth is insatiable, whereas the quantity of wealth in this limited world is always limited, with all our devices of increased production. Besides man always desires more than he deserves. The law of avarice and jealousy works irrespective of equality or inequality of possessions. If, on the other hand, a diversion can be created in other forms of possession, the tension of competition in the material plane of existence will be much relieved, particularly if it be in the plane which pulls at the other end of this tendency—such as the moral qualities of sacrifice, self-denial, asceticism and the like. This was the great truth missed by Karl Marx when he repudiated religion as a basis for social endeavour. Sometimes you best serve a cause by leaving it alone and the cause of economics is a case in point. We do not mean that there should be no guidance whatsoever in this matter, as we know that it is an absolute lack of guidance in Christianity in this regard that has created the present situation. All we mean is that there should be the minimum of directions—some very broad principles and general rules to guide our steps—leaving the higher faculties of man to do the major part of the work of the economic adjustment between man and man—which faculties again should be given some positive encouragement. And this is what Islam has done. It has not neglected the economic side of man, rather it has made it one of

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the five pillars on which its socio-religious structure rests. It has evolved a whole system of law, administrative and fiscal, to work the institution in the practical day-to-day life. It has done all this but it has not made the mistake of making economic production and distribution the basis of social existence. It is noteworthy that the difference in wealth has been characterised as "trial" by the Holy Qur-án. If it can mean anything it is that if some will be carried off their feet by the accentuated temptation it provides, there will be others who, realising the unreality of its appearance and of the excitement it causes and the futility of making it any objective in life, would be inclined to shun it as an unmitigated evil. Unfortunately for Christianity if its followers were tried by the latter appearance of wealth at one time, they are being tried by its former appearance at the moment. The master had asked whosoever would follow him to sell all he had in the shape of material wealth ; his present-day votaries cannot think of life without material wealth. We have yet to realise that what Karl Marx says about Socialism being an evolved state of Capitalism has more truth in it than what appears at first sight. Indeed, it was Capitalism which made money the measure of life's happiness and success. All that Communism adds to this theory is that what is sauce for the goose, should also be sauce for the gander. Communism is therefore money value of life plus the idea of the equality of all human beings.

Islam, the latest expression of religion, proposes the following as against the Soviet programme for the social salvation of man :

(1) The government by the good, the conscientious and the selfless, irrespective of their economic affluence Money should be neither a qualification nor a dis-qualification for rulership.

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(2) The Government must be responsible for the relief of economic accidents in the life of the individual as also of financial drawbacks of the enterprising. But it should not be expected to encourage indolence by enforcing a dead level of equality in economic possessions.

(3) The Government must as a systematic policy discourage the tendency of attaching exaggerated importance to material possession and encourage the appreciation of higher values of life.

(4) In order to effectively achieve the last object the Government must suppress with a heavy hand callous hoarding of money and its immoral display.

GLIMPSES FROM THE CHARACTER OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD*

From the Hadith or the recorded sayings of the Prophet, and incidents of his life from contemporary evidences.

Anas reported : I was walking with the Messenger of Allah upon whom there was a gown made in Najran with thick border. A desert Arab overtook him and gave him a hard pull with his cloth till the Holy Prophet came back near the throat of the desert Arab. Then I looked to a side of the shoulder of the Messenger of Allah whereon the border of the gown impressed marks on account of his excessive pulling. Afterwards he said : O Muhammad ! pass order for me from the property of Allah which is with you. Then the Messenger of Allah turned his look towards him and laughed. Thereafter he passed order for a gift to be given to him.—*Agreed.*

Same reported : The Apostle of Allah was the best of men, the most generous of men and the bravest

*For these *hadithes* and others that are published in these pages from time to time we are much indebted to *Al-Hadis* of Maulvi Fazlul Karim.—Ed. I. R.

CHARACTER OF HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

of men. The people of Madina were frightened one night. (It was at a time when there were wars and rumours of wars all over Arabia.—Ed. *I.R.*)

The people hastened towards the uproar. The Holy Prophet who had gone previous to them met them while he was saying, "Be not frightened, be not frightened" and he was upon an unharnessed horse belonging to Abu Talha without any saddle thereon, and there was a sword hanging from his neck. He said: I have indeed found it (like) a sea.—*Agreed.*

Jabir reported: The Apostle of Allah was never asked for anything but he said "No" (*i.e.* nobody that asked for any help from him was ever refused).—*Agreed.*

Anas reported that a man begged the Holy Prophet of the sheep between two hills. He gave them to him. He came to his people and said: O people! accept Islam. Verily Muhammad certainly gives away in charity so much that he does not fear poverty.—*Muslim.*

Jubair-b-Mut'im reported that while he was travelling with the Apostle of Allah in his caravan from Hunain, the desert Arabs clung to him begging till they drove him to a thorny tree which scratched off his sheet. The Holy Prophet halted and said: Give me my sheet. Had I had sheep equal to the number of these plants, I would have certainly distributed them among yourselves, and even after that you would never have found me either a miser, or a liar, or a coward.—*Bukhari.*

Anas reported that any common woman out of the women of Madina could have caught hold of the hand of the Apostle of Allah and taken him where she intended.—*Bukhari.*

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‘Ayisha reported : The Apostle of Allah never assaulted anyone, neither a woman, nor a servant, with his own hand, he only fought in the way of Allah. Nothing was ever taken from him for which he took revenge from the possessor except for something which went to destroy the sacred things of Allah. Then only he used to take retribution for Allah.—*Muslim*.

‘Ayisha reported : The Apostle of Allah was neither indecent by nature nor indecent by compulsion, nor a wanderer in the markets, nor did he use to return evil for evil but to forgive and pardon.—*Tirmizi*.

Anas narrated about the Holy Prophet that he used to visit the sick, follow the bier, respond to the invitation of a slave and ride upon asses. I have indeed seen him on the Day of Khaibar upon an ass with a rein made of date tree fibres.—*Ibn. Majah, Baihaqi*.

CORRESPONDENCE

NIZI,

BELGIAN CONGO,

19th May, 1943.

THE IMAM,

THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

HONOURABLE SIR,

I have lived most of my life in Egypt and have been taking a great interest in the Muslim Faith, and I would like to study further.

I shall be obliged if you would send me a copy of the Holy Qur-án in French language if possible ; if not, I will be also very glad to get it in English with the book of the late Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din “Islam and Zoroastrianism.”

Very truly yours

E. C.

CORRESPONDENCE

*Below is the correspondence between Mr. Collin Evans,
(M.A.) our English Muslim brother, and an enquirer
after Islam :*

DEAR MR. EVANS,

I hope you will not mind this letter, but for some years now I have been anxious to get to know something more about Islam particularly with a view to accepting it, and of eventually becoming a member.

The Qur-án made a strange appeal to me as a boy of 10 years and I had a copy for many years. It has always seemed to me that it was impossible to get any information on the subject except perhaps for a few old books in the Public Library.

Ever since I read the article in the March-April number of *Esperanto Internacia* I have hoped to find more and at last I have ventured to write to you to ask you if you will be good enough to recommend books, let me know from whence further information can be obtained, if there is a society or association which I could join in order to learn more about it, whether there are any monthly or quarterly journals to which I could subscribe, etc.

At present I am with the Air Ministry (Engineering Branch) being a Chartered Mechanical and Electrical Engineer and whilst I have many other interests I will not occupy your time by telling you about them.

Yours very sincerely,

F. H.

Reply from Mr. Collin Evans :

DEAR MR. ,

Far from "minding" your letter, it was a great pleasure to me to receive it.

The Mosque, Woking (which is sufficient postal address) is the main centre of Islam in Great Britain, and best source of information, etc. The Imam in

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charge there (Rev. Abdul Majid, M.A., Imam, The Mosque, Woking, Surrey) is a man of great scholarship and culture, both Eastern and Western, and most cordially helpful to inquirers; he is also in charge of the Muslim Literary Mission in Great Britain, and of Islamic Book Depot and the British interests of the *Islamic Review*, a monthly printed in India but published from Woking; and he is also associated with the Muslim Society in Great Britain. This Society used in peace time to meet frequently at 18, Eccleston Square, London, S.W. 1., where also weekly prayers with English Sermon were held every Friday afternoon followed by informal afternoon tea and chat, and attended by members of English Muslims, of the English-speaking India and Egyptian and Arabian Muslims, and of English sympathisers or inquirers. I still receive at intervals invitations to big receptions and meetings of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, but unluckily for a year or two past every one of them has been a date when I could not possibly attend, so that I have rather lost touch.

I am by no means the only Englishman who has become a Muslim as a convert in England, without ever having been in any land where our religion is that of a majority population, or any eastern land; there is quite a large-ish little band of English Muslims in this country—of whom I hope you will, some not—too—distant day, be one.

I wonder whose translation of the Qur-án you have. The best known and most widely circulated in England is Sale's—but it is not good; and was written with a pronounced anti-Muslim bias; rather better are Palmer's translation and Rodwell's translation, both obtainable in cheap editions of handy pocket size (one in the Everyman series, and the other in the World's

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classics, I think); but no translation of the Scriptures of any religion by people who do not accept that religion can ever be really satisfactory, and of course both Rodwell and Palmer are Non-Muslims. There are, however, a number of English translations by Muslims. Only one of these is by a Muslim of English birth and upbringing—"The Glorious Qur-án" an explanatory translation by Marmaduke Pickthal, published by Alfred Knopf, New York. Other translations by Muslims, handicapped by not being English writers by birth, include: Translation by Muhammad Ali with very full and useful notes and long useful introduction, of which there are various editions available varying from one edition in paper board covers of which the copy I have is rubber stamped "For free distribution" but of which the cost is perhaps about 4/6 (I am guessing) for anybody who will pay for it, obtainable from the Woking Mosque, up to the standard edition with the Arabic text and fuller version of the introduction as well as the translation and commentary. Another excellent English translation by a Muslim who, though not English, was a Cambridge man and writes good English, is that of Ghulam Sarwar, beautifully got-up with introductory summaries, but no notes; about 12/6 also obtainable from the Mosque if still obtainable at all. A very fine translation also is that of Yusuf Ali, published in parallel columns with Arabic text in two volumes.

A big and invaluable book on Islam both theoretical and practical—a very complete account of the religion, its rites and prayers and its philosophy and history—which should be in the hands of every serious inquirer who can afford its price and can (as not all servicemen can) accommodate its bulk, is the 'Religion of Islam,' by Muhammad Ali. An excellently readable illustrated life of the Prophet by a Muslim in English

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“Muhammad the Prophet”, big and expensive, obtainable at some public Libraries, by Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah. Small, cheap, and very excellent is “Islam, The Religion of Humanity,” by Syed Abdur Razzaque published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, but probably obtainable from the Theosophical Society in England or through the Theosophical booksellers whose address they could give you.

Small, cheap even if bought, and often given without charge to inquirers is an excellent little book : “Islam and the Muslim Prayer” by Kamaluddin, founder of the Muslim Mission, Woking, and obtainable from the Woking Mosque. From there also can be had a fuller book-list.

I should certainly advise you to write to the Imam of Woking : To save time, I am taking the liberty (which I hope you will not mind) of writing to him myself enclosing your letter ; but do not let that prevent you writing him direct without waiting to hear from him first.

All that is required to become a Muslim is : (1) to be certain that one seriously wants to and is in earnest, and that one knows enough about it ; (2) to make, in the presence of others who are Muslims, the declaration, “I declare that there is no deity but God, and that Muhammad is the Prophet of God”—preferably but not essentially, in the presence of an Imam or acknowledged leader of a formal congregation of Muslims, but, at a pinch, anywhere in private where there is a Muslim to witness your declaration. My own and, a week or two later, my wife’s admission to the brotherhood of Islam by this declaration was made at 18 Eccleston Square in the presence of the former Imam (now in India) and of a large congregation, both English and Eastern, after Friday Prayers there, a good many years ago.

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On some points, my interpretations in the article in *Esperanto Internacia* are, of course, coloured by the fact that I am a spiritualist as well as a Muslim: rather a surprising proportion of the Western-born Muslims in England are spiritualists, and the Imam is a welcome and frequent speaker on English Spiritualist Church platforms; but anybody accepting the faith I have, would of course not take the same view as I do on these particular points, and most of my fellow Muslims would not quite accept them; the latitude of belief and opinion on these and other points that is compatible with strict adherence to Islam itself is greater than in any other organised religion.

Sincerely yours
COLLIN EVANS

SIR,

Mr. Collin Evans has very kindly informed me that I may write to you for information on Islam. As he has already sent my letter to him on to you, you will know that I am very desirous of getting to know all I can about the faith.

My interest in Islam developed from a very early age. My father had travelled all over the world; he had spent a lot of time in India, a still longer time in China, as also in the East and West Indies. He had become imbued with the soundness of Eastern Religions, especially Islam. So from my earliest days I listened to stories about the East. I do not know whether he ever actually became a member of Islam, but I do know that he preferred it to Christianity.

My father had quite a lot to do with the Arabs, and I think, it was from them, as much as from the Chinese that he developed his serenity of mind and—almost fatalistic—or resigned attitude to life.

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Egypt he knew very well and I know he always visited the Mosque.

My interest was really aroused when my father gave me a copy of the Qur-án when I was about ten or twelve years old, and all I wanted to do was to go abroad and to live in the countries—India, China or Arabia, where I could really practise the faith.

Allah willed otherwise and so far I have not had the opportunity which I have desired for so long. It may come yet. I am forty-eight years of age, but—who knows? I enclose herewith a cheque for £3 which I think will cover the cost of books I want to commence with. May I also subscribe to the *Islamic Review* please?

Very sincerely yours,
B. H.

WHAT IS ISLAM?

[The following is a very-brief account of Islam, and some of its technique. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

ISLAM: THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission, as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.* the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-AN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: Belief in (1) Allah; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Pre-measurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Almsgiving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Makka.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of

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All the worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the saying of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

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