

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدًا خَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol.
XXXIV

DHU'L-HIJJA 1365 A.H.
NOVEMBER 1946 C.E.

No. 11

BY THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QURAN.

And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House : Our Lord ! accept from us : surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing :

Our Lord ! and make us both submissive to Thee, and (raise) from our offspring a nation submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), surely Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the merciful ;

Our Lord ! and raise up in them an Apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them : surely Thou art the Mighty the Wise.—The Holy Quran Ch. 2, vv. 127-123.

THE IMPORT.

The Jews and Christians whatever their mutual differences and feuds, have never been able to reconcile themselves to the idea of an Ishmaelite prophet in the person of Prophet Muhammad.

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They think that Ishmael was an outcast, although no reason is given anywhere for this strange view. They forget that there is a reference in the Old Testament itself to a prayer of Abraham for this eldest son of Abraham. The acceptance of this prayer is thus reported : " And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee : behold, I have blessed him, and I will make him a great nation." (Gen. 17 : 20).

It is this prayer, in its full context that is set forth here in its exact Arabic form. This was necessary in view of the Israelitish objection against the Ishmaelitish prophethood. The event took place in the city of Makka, and the house, the rebuilding of which is referred to here is the House of Ka'ba.

ARE MUSLIMS ECCENTRIC ?

BY A BRITISH MUSLIM

" How eccentric ! " was the remark passed by a lady whom I informed, in answer to a direct question, that I was a member of the Islamic faith and a follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. I agreed with her, for what does " eccentric " mean ? The dictionary tells that it means " not having the same centre as another " or " out of usual course." The Muslim, if true to his faith, works from a centre different, not only from people who constitute what is known as " the world " but even from many who profess and call themselves " Christian ". His centre is the Will of Allah and the Muslim endeavours or should endeavour to live in absolute conformity with that Will in both thought and act.

The world generally is centred on self. The aim of parents when starting their children in life is to place them in positions where they may " get on " a quite laudable ambition but no thought is given as to whether such positions are in accord with the Will of Allah. They want those children to rise to better positions, make money and become wealthy without thought as to whether the positions they covet are such as will help

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them to glorify God. If the thought should force itself upon them it is merely regarded as secondary.

The Prophet Muhammad was offered both rank and wealth and freedom from persecution if he would cease his propaganda but he spurned those offers because they were not in accord with the Will of Allah as it had been revealed to him. He was eccentric: his centre was different from that of the world. It was peculiar because it was exclusive and strange. God wants a peculiar people. He told the children of Israel (Exodus xix, 5):

"I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and *keep my covenant*, then ye shall be a *peculiar treasure* unto me among all peoples."

Again, in Deuteronomy xiv, 2 :

"The Lord God hath chosen thee to be a *peculiar people* unto himself."

Also in Deuteronomy xxvi, 18 :

"The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be a *peculiar people* unto himself."

And Psalm cxxxv, 4 :

"The Lord hath chosen Israel for his *peculiar treasure*."

The Will of Allah must be our working principle, our centre, if we are to live the Islamic life; a really eccentric centre because it is singular and peculiar. It may cause a sweeping revolution in our lives because all our thoughts and actions will revolve around Allah instead of self as their centre. What we once regarded as gain we now find to be loss, mere dross unworthy of our quest; for, says the Qur'ân (sura viii):

Know ye that your wealth and your children are a temptation unto you (as they were to Abu Lobāba) and that with God is a great reward."

THE WAY OF LIFE

UPON ENTERING THE WAY

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

Now, having made a preparatory consideration, as suggested previously, should anyone still desire in sincerity to enter the Way of Life, let him take good heart and, with a prayer to the One Eternal for guidance and strength, let him act ; for, again we must stress, action must come from himself.

Let him act in this wise. At a time when he is ordinarily at leisure, without pressing duties public or social to fulfil, let him set aside a few minutes of such true leisure definitely and purposely and easefully for a better realization of the following points.

Let his meditation be something after this manner :

"I am definitely setting out to find truth : truth is the foundation of all things eternally. Having truth, acting upon truth, living in truth, I have all things. Nothing can shake truth. In truth is established the only reality. It is the gem before which all else pales into a fleeting unreality—an illusion which must vanish as the darkness before the sun's ray.

"So, then, I am seeking truth : but let me reflect that truth may be other than my present imagination of what truth is. How, then, shall I know truth ?"

To this self-query we must supply the answer thus :

"The eye that is clear seeth aright : the mind that is cleansed thinketh aright : the heart that is pure knoweth aright."

We see, therefore, that for an apprehension of truth some form of cleansing is necessary.

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Let us proceed then. Right at the outset the following points should be firmly grasped, meditated upon, realised and acted upon :

1. The eternal and the temporal are co-existent.
2. By pre-occupation with the temporal, the underlying all-embracing eternal continues, unnoticed, unsuspected.
3. The temporal has its uses, but it is necessary to break the domination of the temporal before a man can enter the delight of the eternal.
4. The great purifier is the heart's prayer.
5. The practice of prayer is essential to the life of the soul, even as the drawing of breath is essential to the life of the body.
6. In deep reality the life of the spirit and the life of the body are not antagonistic. Is every garment antagonistic to its wearer ?

Prayer, then, is necessary to the life of the spirit.

In what manner should we pray ?

The heart knoweth its own needs and aspirations and will voice them to its Lord. But, for the practice of prayer and for the increase of spiritual life and spiritual well-being, there are certain general prayers of everyday efficacy, of universal application and of direct solace to the heart.

As an instance, and one I would commend to the use of all who may not hitherto have experienced its blessing I set the Opening Chapter of the Holy Qur'an. From the Arabic original I give an original English version :

Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures ! Merciful Provider, Merciful Rewarder, Lord of the Day of Destiny, Thee do we worship, Thee do we ask to help us. Guide us along the Right Way, the way of those who meet Thy Bounties, not the way of those who meet Thy wrath, nor the way of those who go astray.¹

¹The Holy Qur'an, I ; 1-7.

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Now we have said above that the eternal and the temporal are co-existent. We live upon this earth : the temporal is ever about us, pressing in upon us from all sides. If we desire to get into touch with the eternal we must break through the temporal, not forsake it altogether, not leave this earth entirely : for that is unnecessary. We can find the eternal here and now as we continue living upon this earth.

How is this to be done ? How are we to pierce through the temporal and, while not forsaking it, break its domination ?

Upon this wise may the first step upon the Way of Life be taken : sloth and forgetfulness must be slain ; for they are as giants holding deceptive curtains before the eyes of a man. A man must wake his attention and keep himself on the alert, unforgetting.

This may be achieved, by the grace of God, in this manner. Leave thy bed early before the glorious golden sun shines with million life-giving smiles upon the earth forsaking slumber. Haste thou to wash thine hands, thy mouth, thine eyes, thy face. Haste not to don thy clothes of the world, but, with suitable wrap against the cold, present thyself in quiet, expectant, before thy Lord. Breathe then His Name, praise then His name, in thankfulness fall down and adore Him. He is thy Lord beyond all things.

So, after this early morning prayer, thou wilt find thyself refreshed. The world will come clamorously about you. The thousand dinning voices of the day will sound, hurrying you this way and that way amid praise and blame, worry and contentment, failure and success ; but you have given the day beforehand to God, and the cross currents of the temporal will not disturb the underlying eternal.

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Now, when thou hast been tossed upon the waves of thine earthly affairs, when duties have presented themselves and retired despatched, lo ! the onward moving hours have brought the midday and the sun beginneth to decline from the zenith. Respite comes to you. There is a pause in work. Business is set aside for the purpose of midday meal, for bodily refreshment, for mental relaxation.

At such time mayst thou beware of forgetfulness.

Having washed, having eaten, having freshened thyself and having washed thy mouth after eating, remember thou thy Lord with a sincere remembrance. Seek out some quiet spot. There thou wilt find thy Lord undoubtedly. There remember the High Name : there glorify Him in thy heart : there with adoration give thanks before thou dost return again to thy daily affairs ; and assuredly it will be well with thee.

Fear ye the Day in which no soul of man will be able to support or stand sponsor for another, in which no intercession or recommendation will be accepted from any, in which evil-doers will be left without help or influence from any quarter.¹

Invoke Me in prayer and I will bear you in remembrance. Render Me grace for grace, and shew not yourselves unmindful of My kindness.

O true believers, implore Divine aid by perseverance and by prayer, In very truth God doth sustain those who are constant in piety.²

We see, therefore, the value of prayer and the constant remembrance of, and gratitude to, the eternal amidst the affairs of everyday life. But it is not only in these natural intervals in the consuming rush of modern civilization that a man should remember God, not only in the quiet of early morning before the toil of day begins, not only in the natural break in business activities

¹ The Holy Qur'an, II : 48.

² *Ibid.*, II : 152-153.

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at midday, prayer is also proclaimed at another and variable time, when the sun sets.

At such time one should, even at inconvenience, break through the temporal, set aside the everyday affairs of life and, with strength from God, definitely turn to Him, thus manifesting a preference for the things that abide over things that are transient. Thus is the domination of things temporal broken. Thus is the obsession of things temporal cast off as chains from the mind. Breaking free, the spirit enters the presence of the Eternal and finds cleansing, refreshment and renewal.

Remember your Lord at the breaking of the day, in the noontime and the setting of the sun. Remember Him, assuredly He will remember thee.

And whensoever My servants shall ask thee concerning Me, say that I am close to them. I hear the prayers of those who supplicate Me. Let them then make their prayers to Me and let them believe in Me, so that they may attain to wisdom.¹

God ! There is no God but He, the All-Living, the Everywhere-Active. Weariness and slumber have no part in His existence. Every being celestial, even as every being terrestrial, lieth fast in His Hand. Who then would dare ever to intercede in His presence without permission from Himself ? He knoweth all that men produce and all that they acquire. To nothing of His knowledge may they ever attain except what it may please Him to unveil to them. His Power embraceth all like the skies and the earth. No virtue goeth from Him in His conserving of the same. And verily it is He, the Most High, the Sublime !²

Having progressed thus far, having earnestly desired to enter in upon the Way of Life, having humbled thyself in prayer to the One Supreme and having thyself made active effort to overcome sloth and forgetfulness, there is now possible a second step towards fundamental felicity.

¹ The Holy Qur'an, II : 186.

² *Ibid.*, II : 255.

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Go forth and buy for thyself a copy of the Qur'ān which thou shalt love. Choose carefully. If thou art not versed in the excellence of Arabic, fear not, choose a translation into a tongue that is known and loved by thyself, whether it be French or English or Dutch or German or Chinese.

Having then with care obtained this prize, set thyself to the reading of it. And here I would crave your attention to the following remarks against your discouragement. In the approach to the study of Qur'ān I would stress these points :

1. Upon first reading expect not every verse and every word to have direct application to thine own case. How could the Qur'ān after thirteen hundred years apply in its entirety at once to thyself, so that each word should at once be understood by thee ? Not so.

2. There will necessarily be some portions thou dost not understand.

3. There will, further, be some portions that do not interest thee. But

4. Infallibly there will be many portions which, as thou redest, will shine forth as stars out of the mighty firmament. They will fill thy heart with a quick delight and, in remembering them, thou wilt ever renew the thrill or gratitude at recognition of truth. Read on, and if thou find but seven such passages (and assuredly thou wilt find a far greater number) thou wouldst say : "Praise be to God ! my reading is not in vain."

No use of force is permitted in matters of religion. Of its own nature Truth standeth clearly distinguished from error. He who hath turned away from false deities to believe in God, he indeed hath grasped an anchor solid and unbreakable. And God is He who understandeth all, who is acquainted with all things.

God is the Friend and Protector of those who believe that He

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leadeth them to the light from the shadow of death.¹

By the sun flashing forth his rays, by the moon, when she followeth close behind him, by the day which shineth bright at full noon, and the night which extendeth its cool darkness under the myriad stars, by the blue sky above us and by Him who raised it and set it fast there, by the firm earth beneath our feet and by Him who spread it out like a carpet, by the soul of man and Him who perfected it by warning it of its sins and by breathing piety into it, I declare that he who keepeth pure his soul shall attain to happiness but he who corrupteth it shall fall into catastrophe.²

So then, having entered upon the Way and having the guide of illumination in our hand accompanying us, there is but one thing still to remember and that is Joy. We must rest assured that Joy is the foundation of the complete and universal Life. If, entering the Way, we do not rejoice, there must be some, probably slight, maladjustment. It may be physical, mental or some uneasiness of the as yet not fully awakened spirit.

The traveller upon the Way will rejoice at all times. While making progress, he will be filled with gratitude for the marvel of the Mercy he hath already tasted, and will be filled with exaltation by the hope of the perpetuation of Mercy and by the unquenchable vision of Life Eternal, which, even amid the clouds of things temporal, is ever before his eyes.

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BY MUHAMMAD SADIQ DUDLEY WRIGHT PHIL. D., F.S.P.

The First Pillar : The Creed of Islam

Here is the Creed of Islam :

There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet.

Simple but comprehensive. It is the briefest of all creeds and it cannot be contracted. It does not lend

¹ The Holy Qur'an, II : 256-257.

² *Ibid.*, XCI : 1-10.

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itself to argumentation or disputation. If you postulate the existence of a Supreme Power then you are outside the ranks of the "dirty little atheists" which was the epithet Theodore Roosevelt once bestowed upon Thomas Paine, whose creed was almost as brief. He said :

I believe in one God and no more and I hope for happiness after this life.

These are the opening words of Paine's *Age of Reason* and they are practically identical with the belief of the Muslim. Charles Lamb, it may be remembered, on one occasion, described himself as a "One Goddite."

The Muslim believes in going straight to the point, whatever may be the subject-matter of a discussion. All the theology he needs is expressed in the creed he professes, which is the basis of his faith. He needs no elaborate system of dogmatic theology. We read sometimes of a "science of theology." Theology is not and can never be a science. "Science" is a synonym of "knowledge", whereas theology is equivalent of speculation. It is a system of human thought, setting forth opinions never proven to be facts. It may mark the dividing line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Dogmas, however, are but circles circumscribing thought and investigation, thus inhibiting that honest doubt commended by the poet, which is the gateway to liberty of thought.

Can we define Allah, God ? That question may, perhaps, be answered better by claiming the Scotsman's privilege and asking another—"Is it possible for a finite being to define, that is, to limit, the Infinite, the Indefinable, the Omnipresent, the Omniscient ?" A very dear friend of mine, a Roman Catholic priest, who passed away recently, said to me on the last occasion on which we met before he went into the hospital to spend the last few remaining days of his life on earth : "I have been seeking for nearly fifty years to find out who and

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what God is, but without success." I reminded him that Zophar the Naamanite, asked Job : " Canst man by searching find out God ? " Job does not seem to have replied at once, perhaps because he was in the midst of afflictions. But there was no hesitancy, a little later on when, with ringing assurance, he made the declaration at the end of one of his arguments : " I know that my redeemer (margin R. V. vindicator) Liveth." There are some things that can never be proven : they can only be known. Did not Whittier give expression to this fact when he wrote :

By all that He requires of me,
I know what he himself must be.

In no religions other than Judaism and Islam have the Unity and Power of the Eternal, of Allah, been more firmly and persistently upheld, alongside of His Love and Mercy. With one exception (the ninth) every sura (chapter) of the Qur-án begins with the preamble : " In the Name of Most Merciful God " or " In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Again and again in the Qur-án Allah is described as being always ready to receive sinners and to pardon the truly repentant. It was a saying of Ibn Mas'úd (who learned seventeen suras from the Prophet's own mouth) that Paradise has eight gates, all of which are sometimes open and sometimes shut, with one exception—the Gate of Repentance, which has an angel in charge of it and is never shut. Allah is no bugbear or bogey to the faithful and obedient or to the truly penitent.

The Muslim tries to realize, as best his mental capacity will permit, Allah as the King, not only of this earth, confined to the five continents with the seas that surround them, which some regard as the universe, but as the Lord of All the Worlds. Some insight into the fuller meaning of that term has been granted to us in these days by

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the ever-increasing discoveries of astronomy. As King of all the Worlds, He demands exclusive service from all His subjects and no greater dignity or honour can be conferred upon the Muslim than to describe him as "the slave of Allah."

With awe and reverence the Muslim *fears* God, but his fear is not that of which Diderot wrote when he said :

There are people of whom we must not say that they *fear* God, but that they are *frightened* of Him.

The "fear" of the Muslim is better explained by the terms "deep reverence" and "piety."

Professor Momerie, who was a minister of the Church of England, said in one of his sermons :

I am sorry to say it, but say it I must, that the blackest devil ever described or imagined would be adorable in comparison with the horrible caricature of the Deity, which some have professed and endeavour to worship under the mistaken idea that he was the God revealed by Christ. I know of nothing sadder, nothing more shocking in the history of religion than the general prevalence of degrading and blasphemous conceptions of the Almighty that are often instilled into children, consciously or unconsciously almost as soon as they can speak.

The full, complete and comprehensive understanding of Allah may not be possible to finite creatures, but His handiwork may be perceived in everything around us, His love traced in all His dealings with mankind and the more fully those works and dealings are contemplated and studied, the more intensely will Allah be feared with religious awe. The more, too, will His Love, Compassion and Mercy be recognised. Nowhere, perhaps, is the story of that Love told more plainly and clearly than in the parable of the Prodigal Son, to which reference has already been made. That parable contains an epitome of the teaching of both Judaism and Islam with regard to the penitent transgressor—the simple teaching of which

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offers no opportunity for the introduction of the humanly devised doctrines of original and substitutionary atonement, although one is frequently forced into the story by the ultra-orthodox.

Islam maintains that there is nothing more dishonouring to Allah than to dissolve His Unity (al-Ghazzali makes use of the term 'Unicity') by according partners to Him. Sura cxii of the Qurán says :

He is God alone ! God the Eternal ! He begetteth not and is not begotton ! And there is none like unto Him !

Again, in sura xxviii, 70, we read :

There is no God but He ;
in sura iv, 51 :

Verily, God will not forgive the union of other gods with Himself ;

and in sura lix, 22 :

He is Allah, than whom there is no other God, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One.

Allah has no partners, nor can He be divided into three or any other number of persons. He is the Sole Preserver of the Universe, Lord of All the Worlds, with no equal, partner or rival.

Al Ghazzali regards the term *Unicity* as being more comprehensive than *Unity*. He said :

The real meaning of Deity is Unity in Perfection and Unicity in existence in the way of absolute sovereignty and He who is unique in existence is God, since there is no other co-existent with Him, apart from Him. for what is other than Him proceeds from His Power, it has no subsistence in itself, but subsists through Him.

This doctrine of the Unity of Allah was not a novelty, even when proclaimed by Moses. The Chaldean religion was practically monotheistic and some of the bricks discovered at Ur, dating back to 2500 B.C., had on them a litany with these words :

In heaven, who is supreme ?

Thou alone art supreme.

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On earth, who is supreme ?

Thou alone art supreme.

Thy word is proclaimed in heaven

And the angels bow their faces down.

Even more ancient is the illustration given by Professor Max Muller in *Sanskrit Literature* (p. 569) from an Aryan civilization which, according to Lenormant, has been extinct since 3000 B.C. The poem begins :

The Only One breathless in itself,

Other than It there nothing since has been.

Numerous illustrations of the prevalence of the belief in the Unity of the Creative Power might be quoted from Sanskrit, Persian and Hindu literature. One of the most impressive is the *Hymn to One God* given in full by L. E. Poor in *Sanskrit and its Kindred Literature* (pp. 34-35).

Islam, therefore, makes no claim to be the only Faith to originate or even to hold a firm belief in the Unity of God. It has always been the belief of Judaism, despite the fact that it has, at times, fallen into idolatry. It was the religion taught by Jesus and by all the prophets who preceded him, but Islam has never permitted the belief to become obscured by doctrines derogatory to the Unity of God. Judaism, however, is a racial or national religion, whereas Islam is universal. At the time of Muhammad, the Hindu belief in Unity had become obscured by idolatry. Jesus taught the doctrine but within a very short time after his disappearance from the scene of his labours the high standards which he raised were lowered and they were not raised again until the advent of Muhammad. Even then, many preferred the fantastic inventions and additions to the truth which had been incorporated into what was called Christian teaching, though they were in direct opposition to the teachings of their inspired prophet and confirmed and reaffirmed by his successor, Muhammad.

We hear a good deal sometimes about apostolical succession ; but Muhammad was in the line of prophetic succession. He had a message to deliver to his age and generation which was identical with that delivered by all the prophets who had preceded him, although it was wider in its application. We read of many attempts made to divert him from his aim, but they were without effect. He was offered wealth, power, position—all that the world counts as glory, but he remained steadfast, immovable and he never budged from his aim, which was to preach the Unity of Allah.

The Rev. J. A. McCulloch (a Christian minister) in his work *Religion* says :

The revelation of the absolute Unity of God came with the force of a tornado upon the minds of the superstitious Arabs and stirred their hearts to the most profound depths. Their nature worship was swept away in a moment and God stood out before them as the Person before Whom they must live in resigned submission, but from Whom, if they were faithful to Him, came high visions of dominion and future joy. The appeal of religion is never in vain if it be but authoritative and inspiring.

Another well known Christian minister, the late Rev. Dr. R. F. Horton of Hampstead, in *Great Issues* (1909, p. 199), wrote :

Mohammedanism has, or at least, had virtues of a very practical kind. The simple theism, the pure worship and the constant engagement in prayer, have produced men irresistible in battle, men for whom that great solvent of courage, the fear of death, has disappeared.

“ Who was this Muhammad, who could bend to his will the minds of a whole race—a nation, one of the most powerful that ever existed ? ” is the question asked by Robert E. Anderson, in *Extinct Civilizations of the East* (pp. 126-128) and he answers his own question in the following words :

He was a poor Arab lad of the Koreish tribe, left an orphan in charge of his grandfather, one of a race of herdsmen, carriers

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and traders, sometimes robbers, as so many of his people were wont to be. No schooling fell to his lot, but plenty of hard work. In the employment of an uncle he had to travel to Syria and Palestine and no doubt his keen observation of men and women supplied him with instruction. From the first, we are told, his thoughtfulness and sincerity were remarked; and from his character in business he acquired the title Faithful or Trustworthy. "This deep-hearted son of the wilderness," says Carlyle, "with his beaming black eyes and open social soul, had other thoughts in him than ambition." No historian now asserts, as was formerly done, that Mohammad was a vulgar impostor. He retired every year to a mountain near Mecca to live for some time in solitude; and, at last, after much study, meditation and prayer, told his friends that he no longer had doubts regarding the Will of Allah or regarding the duty of mortal men; he saw that idols were nothing, only miserable bits of wood; there was one God over all and in all.

God is great and nothing else is great;

God is great; we must *submit* to God.

Two phrases summarized his whole system of religious belief: *Allahu Akbar*, God is the Great One; and *Islam*, submission or resignation. The latter term has, therefore, come to be used for the religion—one of the leading faiths of humanity.

There is an unbroken chain of prophets and messengers of Allah from the beginning of known revelation. Muslims honour them all, but they do not dishonour Allah or the prophets by raising them to divine honours.

Muhammad is not worshipped as a god, nor is he regarded as a mediator between men and Allah. He was the revealer to man of the Will of Allah, as Jesus and all the prophets were before him. By example and precept they all taught men how to live a pure, upright and godly life. In the midst of race of idolaters sunk in barbarism, Muhammad proclaimed the Unity of the Eternal, of Allah, the One True God; mitigated and, in some instances, eradicated moral, social and spiritual evils and taught the people how to mould and regulate their lives in harmony with the Will of Allah. He sought not

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to impose his own will upon the people and spoke only under the inspiration of the Most High. He was not commissioned to found a new faith or religion, nor did he. This is made very definite in the Qur-án particularly in the fourth sura, verses 163-165 :

Lo ! We inspire thee as We inspired Noah and the prophets after him ; as We inspired Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon and as We imparted unto David the Psalms. And messengers we have mentioned unto thee before and messengers we have not mentioned unto thee and Allah spake directly unto Moses ; messengers of good cheer and warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise.

Three of these messengers stand out in bold relief : Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Moses, we are told in the New Testament (Acts vii, 22) :

was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and he was mighty in all his words and deeds ;
a great achievement, when the reputation in which the Egypt of his day was held for learning is given consideration.

Little is known of the education and training of Jesus but we are told in Luke ii, 46-47, that his parents found him at the age of twelve years, after three days' search for him :

in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers and hearing them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

Muhammad, we know from the Qurán, was unlettered; at the beginning of his career he could neither read nor write and his illiteracy is accepted, if not even confirmed, by secular historians. He was an unlettered camel-driver but, to quote al-Mūnawī, one of his companions :

The learned man is not he who studies from a book, for, in that case, since the Prophet did not study, he would be ignorant—but he who takes his knowledge from his Lord, when he desires it,

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without study or instruction : this is the man learned in spiritual things.

Muhammad was not only unlearned and ignorant of worldly knowledge : he was poor. He began his prophetic career in a humble condition and often resembled Jesus in not having where to lay his head. It is said of him that "a cloak spread upon the ground served him for a bed and a skin filled with date leaves for a pillow."

His marriage with Khadija provided him with means but, on her death, he seems to have reverted to poverty and suffered much from lack of means after his marriage with Ayesha. D. S. Margoliouth, in *Muhammad and the Rise of Islam* (p. 236) says :

Months used to pass, says Ayesha, without any fire being lighted in their dwelling, their food being dates and water. His daughter, Fatimah, was stinted and, after her marriage, the little recorded of her consists mainly of complaints about the misery of her lot. When presents of food were sent to the Prophet, he would share it with the "people of the shed", the homeless Muslims who were compelled to seek refuge in the mosque—where, in the course of time, a sort of hospital was started by a woman called Ku'aibah, daughter of 'Utba.

Neither Jesus nor Muhammad founded nor formed any church or organization for the propagation of the truth revealed to and taught by them to the people. I am fully cognizant of the words attributed to Jesus in Matthew xvi, 18, as Joseph McCabe has pointed out in *The Popes and their Church* (and full agreement with all the opinions of that author is not demanded and could not be accorded by the present writer, though one must acknowledge the fairness of his criticism generally and the accuracy of his scholarship) that the word "Church" had no meaning in the days when Jesus lived and taught. "There was, " says McCabe,

no such word in Aramaic and the word "church" was evidently inserted at a much later date : the word "synagogue" would have been used.

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Muhammad knew even in those days from experience that organizations and associations were not unmixed blessings. Formed generally with the object of the preservation of truth and the checking or eradication of error they frequently admitted and fostered divergencies which led to the formation of other evils which checked and sometimes annulled the objects and activities of the founders. This fact has very frequently contributed to the formation of some of the multitudinous sects into which Christianity has been divided, where one false teaching has succeeded another and led to the dissemination of doctrines prejudicial to spiritual health. Tolstoy has said :

It is necessary that they who, consciously or unconsciously, preach crude superstitions under the guise of Christianity, should understand that all these dogmas, sacraments and rites which they support and preach are not, as they think, harmless, but are, in the highest degree, pernicious, concealing from men that central religious truth, which is expressed in the fulfilment of God's Will in the service of men—and that the rule of acting towards others as one would wish others to act towards oneself, is not one of the prescriptions of the Christian religion, but is the whole of the practical religion as, indeed, is stated in the gospels.

The achievements of this unlettered camel driver were marvellous, indeed, so marvellous that he had strenuously to fight against the suggestion that they were miraculous, the fate that has befallen more than one religious teacher and reformer. One of the secrets of the success of his mission lay in the fact that he did the spade work himself and led the way to the performance of the necessary tasks. The modern method is for the leader to form a society or association and get other people to do all the hard work and then step in and take the credit for any success that may result. But Muhammad did the work himself, led the way and took the obloquy. He did it not to win fame and glory and fortune but solely because

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he knew it to be the Will of Allah. He had a single eye to the glory of God. He was a man of one idea—to do the Will of Allah and he unflinchingly pursued that idea equally in times of danger as in times of peace and quietness and these latter times occurred but seldom. He was a leader of men but his own place was in the forefront of the battle. Like the Oriental shepherd he led the flock and the flock followed him. Idols must be destroyed before the worship of Allah could be established and so he set about the task of destroying those idols with his own hands. False beliefs must be eradicated before Truth can be established and who could better destroy idols and false beliefs than the Prophet of Allah wielding the Sword of the Spirit. Fearless of the forces arrayed against him, Muhammad went forth and severed at the root all growths preventing the access of the creature to the Creator.

For a creed to become effective something more than lip-service is necessary. It is well frequently to recite the Creed of Islam: THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH AND MUHAMMAD IS HIS PROPHET, but little headway in the spiritual life will be made merely by such repetition, however frequently it may be made. Make it the preliminary to action and good will result. It is well, but not sufficient, to read and study the life of the Prophet, but we must also be prepared to follow him on to the battle-field. The Islamic life has to be lived, not merely read or talked about. We may obtain help and inspiration by reading the lives of Muhammad and the Islamic saints—for, make no mistake, the History of Islam is a Book of saints. But if our lives are to be effective in the spread of Islam we must live the life, not in cell or cloister, but in the world, in activity, not in passivity. The life the saints have lived, we may, nay

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must live ; the character they possessed must pass into our own possession, but to live the life, to possess the character, we must follow in their footsteps all the way, live and act as they lived and acted, not in slavish imitation, but in submission to the Will of Allah. Great as were the deeds of the Muslim saints of the past, greater achievements *and blessings* are reserved for those who make the endeavour to live the Islamic life under the guidance and direction of Allah, inspired by the life and acts of the Prophet.

The Renaissance was a great historical event but it was not complete ! indeed, it has never been finished. It taught the people how missing treasures might be discovered ; it unearthed some priceless gems of literature hidden in previous ages, but it too often stopped there. Frequently the searchers remained satisfied and content with placing those discovered gems on shelves or storing them away in lockers—treasures which Petrarch and Boccaccio and their many helpers, often at the risk of their lives, found in hidden corners and in rubbish heaps but they were content sometimes to leave them on the shelves or in the lockers, while they continued the quest for further treasures. Lorenzo de Medici and other wealthy patrons supplied the means necessary for the explorations but the manuscripts often remained unexamined and unread for long periods. Galileo complained that people would not look through the telescope he made, but preferred to seek for knowledge in comparison of manuscripts. A creed is desirable, nay necessary, but it must not remain on paper. It must be put into practice.

Religion is not ceremonial, not ritual, not merely a declaration but life, a personal experience, resulting from living, personal contact with Allah. In that high attain-

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ment we may be assisted by external aids which help, first to awaken, then to sustain the desire for that communion. *Allahu Akbar* leads us to the contemplation of the Almighty Power of the Eternal. *Insha' Allah* leads us to realise our dependence on the Source of Life, the One to Whom we must render prompt, willing and unquestioning obedience.

This, then, is the first Pillar of Islam, the Creed of Islam :

THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH AND MUHAMMAD IS HIS PROPHET.

SYNOPSIS OF A SCHEME FOR THE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF ZAKAT ON CO-OPERATIVE LINES

BY DR. UMAR ROLF BARON EHRENFELS, PH.D. (VIENNA)

(1) *Basic Principle of Zakāt.*

Zakāt is a voluntary help, given by those who are able to save, to those who are in need. It is, however, a gift which is neither to be accumulated nor to be spent individually, but should be pooled together and distributed by an agency, the trustworthiness of which is acknowledged by the community. In the early days of Islām it has been the Khalifa who was entrusted with, and also actually fulfilled this duty. Those who paid *zakāt* therefore also felt that they were entitled to support in case of need for themselves or their next of kin and heirs.

The Holy Qur'ān, the Ḥadith and Shari'ah leave no doubt as to the correctness of this generally acknowledged conception of the basic principles of *zakāt*.

(2) *Necessity of Organisation.*

Various causes resulted in the decay of this important Islamic institution. The manifold reasons for this de-

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plorable development should be a matter of interest to the student of cultural and general history. For our present, practical deliberations it may suffice to state that the various Governments of Muslim countries, as well as most of the communities under the rule of non-Muslim Governments; both have failed, since long, to solve the problem of an organised accumulation and distribution of *zakāt*.

Members of some religious sects among Muslims, it is true, do pay *zakāt* to a 'Khalifa', or an Imām of their own choice, who is responsible for its distribution or use otherwise. Even though it may be argued that this somewhat arbitrary solution of the problem is better and hence more Islamic than no solution at all;—still the fact remains that this method does not solve the problem of *zakāt* for the great Muslim masses outside certain sectarian communities.

The small farmer, workman and the lower middle classes are especially hard hit by the lack of any *zakāt*-organization which ought to form the economic backbone of any truly Islamic social organization and which might well be expected to solve many of the social problems under which the Western world seems to be ailing.

But not only is this essential part of Islamic sociology and economy conspicuous by its absence, in the present-day world of Islām, both within, as also outside, the boundaries of Muslim-ruled states;—in addition to this defect, the religiously more scrupulous among Muslims hesitate to avail themselves even of the safeguarding opportunities, offered by the ordinary insurance institutions, as this would be considered by some as a kind of camouflaged taking of interests.

It must therefore be held as the most urgent necessity of the day to find an organized solution of the *zakāt*-

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problem for both: Muslims under the rule of the present-day, modern type of Muslim State, as well as for those Muslims who are living under non-Muslim rule.

(3) *The Safeguarding element in Zakāt.*

Zakāt is a free gift, given by the saving part of the population (the "rich") to those in distress, or in difficulties (the "poor"), inasmuch as it is a trust, given to the distributing agency (the Khalifa of Early Islām), for this expressly stated purpose. Qur'ān, Ḥadīth and Shari'ah leave no doubt that it was really the duty of those distributing agencies to help those who are in need, also, if they had previously been themselves *zakāt*-payers, or "rich". A sound Ḥadīth shows that also a Jew of Madinah was given the benefits of help from *zakāt*-funds, when he had lost his fortune, following the express instruction of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. Membership in a *zakāt*-paying community, therefore, entitles a person to receive help from *zakāt* funds, if and when this person is in need or in distress.

(4) *Application of Zakāt-Principle to present conditions.*

So long as, or if there is no Khalifa, organizing the economic life of the entire Muslim world, it is the duty of the Muslims to take in hand the accumulation and just distribution of *zakāt*-funds themselves.

A trustworthy committee of religious, economic and other experts, well-versed in the technique of the insurance business should therefore be set up to organize the accumulation, management and equitable distribution of *zakāt*, that means to say, of voluntary gifts, given by those Muslims who are able to save money from their earnings,—to those who are in need of help;—thereby applying the *zakāt*-principle to modern conditions.

Since Islām, in spite of its equalizing tendencies,—yet acknowledges the existence of different standards

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of living among different individual members or groupings of society, it will be only in the true spirit of Islām to vouchsafe an equitably higher amount of help to be extended to the former payee of a higher *zakā*-rate (or to his or her heirs), in case unemployment, certain types of loss, illness, or death should overtake him or her;—than would be the help, merited out to those who had previously paid less.

Yet the principle of a free and voluntary gift to the poor should be safeguarded by expressly laying down the principle of the planned co-operative society that its entire net-profit must be devoted exclusively to educative—, agriculturally and technically instructive, medical and generally social uplift purposes or institutions by which even such persons in need will be benefited who have not themselves contributed to the common pool through payment of *zakā*, having had no sufficient income for that.

Rules for the distribution of *zakāt* to individuals in need, and of the net-profit to charitable institutions should be elaborately worked out in detail by insurance business experts, as well as laid down, and supervised by *The Board of the proposed Society for Distribution of zakāt on Co-operative Principles.*

(5) *The present author of the proposed Society*

Is ready to procure further details and proposals in order to submit them to any group of seriously interested Muslims who agree with him that the idea is a truly Islamic one and constitutes a potential solution of the problem how to apply the principles of *zakāt*, as laid down in the Holy Qur'ān, to conditions, now prevailing among the main bulk of Muslim nations, communities, minorities and individuals in many countries;—especially also such countries where converts to Islām have to face particular difficulties in fulfilling Islamic obligations, also in this respect of *zakāt*.

JESUS THE SON OF MARY HIS BIRTH AND DEATH

BY KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD

(Continued from Vol. XXIV, p. 374)

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

In one of the books of the Samaritan Chronicles there occurs the following passage :

In the time of Jehonathan, there was . . . Jesus, the son of Maryam, son of Joseph, the Carpenter . . . at Jerusalem, in the reign of Tiberius . . .¹

Jesus was a Jew, and to the Jews, amongst whom he lived and preached, he was *under the Law*. The Jews of his time, and of Galilee in particular, who knew him and his parents, did not believe in his Divine Mission or his virgin birth. They had two alternatives before them. They could either believe him to be a legitimate offspring of Joseph and Mary, or treat him, I hate to use the word, but for special reasons have no option, as a *bastard*.

Jesus, we are told, entered the synagogues and preached there.² Had the Jews looked upon Jesus as a bastard, they would not have allowed him to attend, much less preach in, the synagogues for it was ordained that :

A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord ; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.³

In face of this clear injunction, and what we are told of Jesus about his behaviour in the Temple at Jerusalem,

¹ *Journale Asiatique* 1869, II : 439.

² Matt. I : 23, X : 35, XII : 9, XII : 57, XXI : 12 ; Mark, I : 21, 39, VI : 2, Luke, IV : 33, 44, John, VI : 59, etc.

³ Deut. XXIII : 2.

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can any one seriously urge that the Jews of his time did not look upon him as a natural offspring of Israel ?

In the writing of an ancient Rabbi, who wrote just when virgin birth was first attributed to Jesus, we read :

Jesus was as legitimate as any other Jewish child in Galilee. His father was an artisan, a carpenter. The son learned the trade of his father and made goads and yokes¹

A happy chance has preserved the following Talmudic expression, which from the Jewish point of view lends a support to the Rabbinnical writings referred to above :

Jesu was a carpenter, a son of a carpenter.²

After taking into consideration the contemporary writings and other Rabbinnical literature the compilers of the *Jewish Encyclopædia* express themselves in the following terms :

The Jews, who are represented as inimical to Jesus in the Canonical Gospels, took him to be legitimate and born in the ordinary natural way.³

Whiston in his *Dissertation I* to the works of Josephus remarks :

All the believing Jews and all the rest of the Nazarene Jews esteemed Jesus with one consent, as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary.⁴

Hastings also says that :

It is quite clear that Jesus was popularly looked upon by his contemporaries as Joseph's son by natural generation.⁵

I have already mentioned that Jesus' parents had named him *Joshua* which also means *son of father*. It has been well said that there lay a deep significance in this name also. It was a warning, nay a counterblast, for such who should falsely ascribe virgin birth to Jesus.

¹ *Ab. Zar.* 3 b.

² *J. Yeban.* III : 2.

³ *Jewish Ency.*, Vol. VII : 170.

⁴ Vol. III, 276.

⁵ *Hastings, Dictionary of the Church & Gospels*, 808.

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I have so far refrained from discussing the versions of Matthew and Luke, and before I do so I must refer to another matter. So long as the early Christians did not assert the virgin birth of Jesus, none of his contemporaries challenged his legitimacy. But the moment Jesus was raised to the pedestal of godhead, the imaginations of the hegiographers had a full scope to indulge in the most affecting or foolish fabrications according to their literary skill. In the second century they attributed supernatural birth to Jesus. The Pagans retorted with the charge of illegitimacy. The Christian legendary cult has to thank itself for this calumny against Jesus and Mary. Josephus had provided the Pagans with a parallel ;¹ for he records that Mundus, a Roman knight, won Paulina, the chaste wife of a Roman noble, to his wishes by causing her to be invited, by a priest of Isis, into the temple of the goddess, under a pretext that the god Anubas desired to embrace her. In innocence of faith Paulina resigned herself, and would perhaps have afterwards believed that she gave birth to the son of this god had not the intriguer, with bitter scorn, soon after disclosed to her the true state of affairs.

The Pagans substituted Mary for Paulina and Joseph Pandera, a soldier, for the Roman knight mentioned by Josephus.

This calumny was taken up by the Jews of the second century, and found a place in the Talmud. Jesus was then styled as *ben* Pendra. It is of this calumny of which Celcus accuses the Jews and which is referred to by Origen² but of which the Jews of the time of Jesus were ignorant and innocent.

Now let me look into the Gospels generally and find the position of Jesus and his mother. It is very peculiar

¹ Josephus, *Antiq.*, XVIII : 3, 4.

² Orig. C : *Cels.*, I : 32.

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that there is no retrospective reference to the virgin birth of Jesus in the New Testament. Not one of the incidents contained in the New Testament allude even indirectly to this outstanding miracle.

Let us first listen to Jesus himself. According to the Gospels, he never made any reference, nor appealed, to the manner of his birth in support of his claim. On the other hand, however, we find expressions used by him which exclude the idea of a virgin birth. In Matthew he declared that he cast out devils by "the spirit of God".¹ This assertion rested on the basis that the Spirit of God filled his body, but not upon the idea that it was by the Divine Spirit that he had been begotten. This saying of Jesus clearly proves that he was absolutely ignorant about his supernatural birth, and he never realized that God had in any manner connected his mission on earth with the peculiar manner of his birth. Surely such a saying of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, would have been an improbability if Jesus had possessed the consciousness that his mother had been deemed by God to be worthy of a position so exalted, so singular, as the hegiographers have ascribed to her. I will presently how that he actually thought otherwise. In any case it can hardly be suggested that his parents could have concealed the happy event. It is recorded that when Joseph and Mary took the child Jesus to the Temple for purification, Simon took the child and prayed that, as he had then seen Christ, he may be permitted to die.

And his father Joseph and his mother marvelled at the things spoken of him.²

And we are further told that they took him to the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem when he was twelve years of age. After a day's journey on their return,

¹ Matt., XII : 28.

² Luke, II : 33.

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they found Jesus missing, and had to go back to Jerusalem in search of him. They found him after a search of three days, sitting in the Temple, in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. The narrative goes on :

And when they saw him *they were amazed*, and his mother said unto him : Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? *behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing*. And he said unto them: How is that ye sought me? Wish ye not that I must be about my Father's business? *And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*¹

Naturally, Joseph and Mary, knowing that Jesus was their offspring in the natural physical sense, failed to understand a child of twelve speaking of someone else as his father. This incident of all strikes at the very root of the virgin birth theory, and establishes beyond the least shade or shadow of any doubt that at least his parents had no knowledge of it. Of course, they could not have even dreamt of it, as they knew otherwise. Their lack of understanding Jesus thus becomes intelligent; while, on the other hand, it is rendered absolutely incomprehensible if supernatural birth, to the knowledge of his parents, is ascribed to Jesus. And would they not talk of this miraculous event between themselves and to others? In anticipation of such an objection the redactor gives us an answer, impossible to believe. He says :

But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.²

Anyhow, we are not told that Joseph also behaved in this foolish manner.

The terms in which Jesus referred to his mother are also incompatible with the virgin birth theory. I will narrate but two incidents. Jesus had gone with his

¹ Luke, II : 48-50.

² *Ibid.*, II : 51.

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disciples, we are told, to a marriage party and had asked for wine. Mary, who was also present, informed him that there was none in the house. He at once turned on her, and

Jesus saith unto her, woman : what have I to do with thee ?¹

On another occasion, it is recorded, that the Jews, alluding to the Holy Ghost, having descended on Jesus at his baptism, alleged that Jesus was possessed of an unclean spirit, Jesus was discussing the question thus raised, when :

There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them saying, who is my mother or my brethren ? And he looked round about on them, which sat about him, and said : Behold, my mother and brethren ! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.²

These harsh sayings of Jesus conclusively prove that Jesus was disassociating himself from his mother, brothers and sisters because they, according to the Gospels, would not believe in him. This fact is further made clear by John :

Neither did his brethren believe him.³

The context makes it quite clear that John was speaking of the blood-brothers of Jesus. It is not surprising, if the virgin birth theory did not exist at the time, that they did not believe in him. We know that James, the Just, did not accept him till after the crucifixion. The last passage stands connected with a circumstance, which Matthew tries to disguise and Luke omits altogether, and which is preserved only by Mark. He narrates :

¹ John, II : 4.

² Mark, III : 31-35 Cf. Matt. XII : 48-50.

³ John, VII : 5.

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And when his *kinsmen* heard of it, they went out to lay hold of him; for they said *he is mad*.¹

Before proceeding further I must point out the manner in which, for obvious reasons, an effort has been made to dilute the force of this incident. The word *kinsmen* has been replaced by the word *friends* and the words *He is besides himself* have been substituted for *He is mad*.

Who these *kinsmen*, or *friends*, were we learn from Matthew² and Mark:³ they were his mother and brethren. They had set from Nazareth and reached at a time when he was having a controversy with the Scribes. Even if we regard it as possible that Mary chose to keep her secret, she knowing of his supernatural origin, would never have thought of him as *mad* or *besides himself*. Jesus' saying on another occasion is also germane to the present subject. Jesus was preaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath day and many were astonished and said:

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Jose, and of Juda and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And *they were offended at him*. But Jesus said unto them: A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among *his own kin, and in his own house*.⁴

The words *among his own kin* have been singularly omitted by Matthew⁵ and Luke.⁶ Why? The answer is too obvious to be mentioned. Jesus never boasted of his Divine origin, but rather claimed inspiration from God.⁷ The view that Jesus first received the Holy Spirit at the time of his baptism⁸ and that up to that time Jesus had not yet been glorified⁹ could never have arisen if the

¹ Mark, III : 21.

² Mark, III : 31.

³ Matt., XIII : 57.

⁴ John, VII : 28.

⁵ John, VII : 39.

⁶ Matt., XII : 46.

⁷ Mark, VI : 3-4.

⁸ Luke, IV : 24.

⁹ Matt., III : 15-16; Mark., I : 10-11.

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theory of virgin birth had been in existence from the first. He himself claimed to be like unto Moses, and asserted that he was a son of Abraham.¹ He was styled as a mere *man*,² and he spoke of himself as such.³ He was spoken of by others as the *son of Man*, and he also described himself as such—thirty times in Matthew, fourteen times in Mark, twenty-four times in Luke and twelve times in John. He is described as such in the Acts and the Revelation. Never did he speak of himself as the son of God except in two passages, and which I have already discussed.

As to the meaning or significance of the phrase, the *Son of Man*, we must turn again to the Old Testament. In the Book of the Prophet Ezekeil we find that the term *Son of Man*, *Ben Adam*, is the standing phrase by which the Prophet describes himself.⁴ This was no doubt in Hebrew, but Aramaic was only one of its dialects. Again every descendant of Adam is spoken of as *son of man*.⁵ It is impossible to imagine that the Jews, who were extremely devoted to the Old Testament, would have forgotten so frequent a usage of this phrase. Whatever degradation the phrase may have suffered, in common speech, the Biblical use must at any time have been capable of being revived as a mode of address of a *man*. Rev. William Sanday says that "to the Jews and to Jesus, who was a Jew, this phrase as a whole meant no more than a simple man."⁶

I have discussed this phrase to show that Jesus would not have referred to himself as *son of Man*, if he did not

¹ Luke, XIX: 9.

² Matt., VII : 27 ; Mark, II : 7. VI : 2 ; John, I : 30, VII : 27-28, 46. Acts XI : 37, II : 22.

³ Mark, XIII : 34 ; John, III : 13, VIII : 40.

⁴ Eze., II : 1-34, III : 1, 3, 4, etc.

⁵ Job, XXV : 6 ; Ps., CXLIV : 3, CXLVI : 3 ; Isa., LI : 12, LVI :

⁶ Sanday : *The Life of Christ*, 213.

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mean to convey that he was just a man himself, a man with all the implications of a human being, including male participation in his conception.

I will now go into further details to show how the New Testament teems with references against the virgin birth theory. Mary is described as the *espoused* wife of Joseph;¹ and again by the simple description of *wife*.² Joseph is referred to as the husband of Mary.³ Not only Mary does herself describe Joseph as the father of Jesus,⁴ but Joseph is referred to as the father of Jesus in many places,⁵ and further both Mary and Joseph are mentioned as the parents of Jesus,⁶ a description which could not have been used in any other sense, but to convey the natural conception of Jesus. The naive efforts of the redactors to disguise the paternity of Jesus by forgeries have no limit. To mention a few: In Matthew the words "*the carpenter's son*" were substituted for Joseph.⁷ In Luke the words *His father* preceding *Joseph* were omitted⁸ and in another place the words *Joseph and Mary* were omitted and the words *his parents* were substituted.⁹ While the words *his parents* appearing before *Joseph and Mary* were also omitted.¹⁰ The oldest six codices have, in Vs. 41 of Ch. II, the words *Joseph et Maria* after *his parents* and these also were omitted.¹¹

It is for Christian apologetics to explain why these forgeries were made.

The fact that Jesus was acknowledged as the son of Joseph, in the physical sense, cannot be denied. This

¹ Matt., I : 18; Luke, I : 27, II : 25.

² Matt., I : 20, 24.

³ Matt., I : 16, 19.

⁴ Luke, II : 48.

⁵ Luke, II : 33, 48, IV : 22; John, I : 45, VI : 42.

⁶ Luke, I : 32, II : 27, 41, 43.

⁷ See R. V. p. 1074.

⁸ Luke, II : 33, R. V. p. 1128.

⁹ Luke, II : 27.

¹⁰ Luke, II : 43.

¹¹ Luke, II : 41.

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fact was not infrequently alluded to contemptuously and by way of reproach in his presence. I am, of course, referring to description of Jesus as the *son of a carpenter*.¹ Not once did Jesus repudiate it and assert his immaculate conception. I have already quoted two passages from John² in which reference was made to Joseph, as the father of Jesus. It is obvious that these statements were made, in the presence of Jesus, manifestly in the real sense of paternity and nowhere is this represented to be erroneous. The entire narratives exhibited the Apostles as having a right belief on the point.

Throughout the New Testament the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah is based on his descent from David.³ This descent can only be attributed to Jesus if he was born according to natural law, for he is styled to be *of the seed of David* and had to be the fruit of the loins of David according to the flesh.⁴ And we find that Luke appreciating the importance of this fact says that Joseph was "of the house and lineage of David".⁵ Dummelow also realizes this difficulty and says :

The accuracy or inaccuracy of the genealogies, does not affect the main point at issue, our Lord's descent, *through his legal father Joseph*, from David. Joseph's family certainly claimed descent of David.

In these circumstances, the term *seed of David* requires some explanation. It has been furnished by Trypho, the Jew of Justin Martyr. He says :

For we all await the Christ, who will be a *man among men* . . .

¹ Matt., XIII : 56 ; Luke, IV : 22, Mark, VI : 3.

² John, I : 45, IV, 22.

³ Matt., XII : 23, XV : 22, XX : 30-31, XXI : 7, 15 ; Mark, X : 47-48, XI : 10 ; Luke, I : 69, XIX : 38-39 ; John, VII : 42 ; Acts, II : 29-30, XHI : 23 ; Rom., I 2 Tim., II : 8, Heb., VII : 14, Rev., I : 3, V : 5. XXII : 16.

⁴ Acts, II : 30.

⁵ Luke, II : 4.

^{*} Dummelow, *Comm. on the Holy Bible*, 622. (Italics are mine).

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the Messiah will be descended from the *seed of David*, he will not be born of a virgin, for it was God's promise to the ancient King that he who is to come, would issue from *his seed*. Are we to think that God was merely mocking him ?¹

Trypho, of course, was using the term in the natural sense and was adopting it as an argument against the virgin birth theory.

(*To be Continued.*)

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FINNISH MUSLIMS SEEK ADVICE

[Under the above caption a note appeared in "By The Way" columns of *The Civil & Military Gazette* of Lahore, in its issue for September 6, 1946. As it was a rather important religious question we sent an exhausted reply elucidating the points raised and this was very kindly published by the Editor in the same columns of the paper in its issue for 13th September 1946. We reproduce below both the original note and the reply to it, since it is calculated to remove a certain confusion that lurks in many minds.—*Ed. I. R.*]

ORIGINAL NOTE

Al Azhar University, the world centre of Muslim theology and culture in Cairo, was recently faced with a problem that taxed all its erudition, says Reuter.

Muslims in Helsinki (Finland), numbering about 850, asked the Rector of the 1,000-year-old University for advice on their Ramazan problem. They were in a quandary because this year Ramazan fell in the middle of summer.

According to the Qur'án, Muslims must abstain from food or drink between sunrise and sunset, throughout the fast.

But the Faithful in Helsinki pointed out that in Finland—the land of the midnight sun—the sun is on the horizon for 22 hours of the 24, and emphasised that

¹ Justin, *Dial Cum, Trypho*, 49, 68.

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it is not humanly possible to fast 22 hours a day for a whole month.

Reuter is silent as to the advice given.

Helsinki's Muslims have asked the University authorities for guidance on another problem. This one concerns marriage. It appears that the number of female Muslims in Finland greatly exceeds the number of males, and Sheikh Waly Ahmad el Hakim, leader of the Finnish Islamic Colony, has been approached by some of the women for permission to marry non-Muslims.

OUR REPLY

As regards Fasting in countries where days and nights are of abnormal length the people living in them should follow the medium time as found in Arabia. The counting of time on the basis of sunrise and sunset is prescribed only for countries where the time follows the normal course. The words of the Holy Qur'án :

“ Therefore whoever of you experiences the month he shall fast therein ” (Chapter 2, verse 185) are quite decisive on this point. The normal computation according to the movement of the sun is only meant for places, which are in the normal zones. As for countries in abnormal zones such as Finland, the time should be computed according to the working hours and measured by the medium length of the day in the world. We have an authority for this, by implication, in a saying of the Holy Prophet on the question of the times of prayer when the length of day is abnormal. The saying runs partly as follows :

“ We asked, O Messenger of Allah ! (As for) the day which will be like one year, will the prayer of one day be sufficient for us therein ? He replied, No, Measure it for a measure ” (Ch. “ Signs before the hour ”—Mishkat).

REVIEW

It is quite reasonable to hold that what applies to prayer in such abnormal cases must also apply to the time of fasting. So it is not a problem that should at all tax the erudition of Muslim theologians.

As for the surplus Muslim women in Finland, the leaders of the Finnish Islamic colony should better ask the Government to allow them to follow their own personal law in the matter.

It is an open secret that all enlightened students of Law in the Western countries now acknowledge in their heart of hearts the wisdom of the Quranic provision for polygamy in such abnormal conditions.

Leading thinkers such as G. B. Shaw have proved by facts and figures the absurdity of the modern Christian attitude towards the question. (Early Christians did not disdain polygamous marriages). In France there was an agitation in favour of polygamy after the First World War. There is a similar movement in Germany just at this moment. If the Christian legislators of Europe are still shy in this matter they can at least allow the Muslims living in their midst to have their own way in this matter. If they are not prepared to allow even this much we shall be obliged to say that Christian prejudices are still a stumbling block in the way of the social progress of humanity. The dilemma therefore is an artificial one created by blind faith in tradition on the part of the Christians.

REVIEW

Arafat, a monthly critique of Muslim thought—Editor—Muhammad Asad. Published from 'Fair View,' Dalhousie (India). Annual subscription Rs. 7-8 or Fourteen Shillings.

The first issue is before us. The Editor is a Western Muslim of Jewish stock. The Eastern background of his

ISLAMIC REVIEW

outlook has cultural naturally given him a deeper insight into the cultural assets of Islam that is not generally expected from an average Westerner in these days. He first tried to stir the Muslim thought quite a good few years back by his well-written book "Islam at the Crossroads." But the time then was not quite so opportune as now when the chaotic condition of the world outside and the agitated condition of the Muslim mind in India has broken the complacency of the Indian Muslim mind as never before.

The journal is in fact a call to "heart searching and brain searching." In other words, it is an appeal for internal reformation of the Muslim social life. Painful though the process is, who will deny that through this alone can a fallen people regain its bearing in a world of rapidly changing thought and action? We whole-heartedly agree with the Editor when he says :

"For them (Muslims) religion was not just 'one of the contributing factors' of cultural development—it was the root and the source of the development."

But while agreeing with the Editor in all that he says about the basic importance of the Shari'a in our cultural life, we feel tempted to point out that there is a still higher thing which the Qur-án came to establish in the minds of its adherents and this is a sense of the living presence of God in all His Unity, Majesty and Mercy, but for which even the Shari'a, the grandest socio-moral system ever vouchsafed to man, will fail to inspire people to vigorous moral and social activities. No student of the Qur-án can fail to notice that the Book's whole anxiety is about this sense of the Divine presence awakened in the human mind. This should, accordingly, be the concern also of every one desirous of reforming the Muslim community in our own days. We only hope this aspect of the question will also engage the attention of the learned Editor, as this alone will provide the necessary urge for heart-searching, the principal objective of the journal under review.

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