

hammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . ."
 —HOLY QUR-AN, 33 : 4
 "e will be no prophet after me."
 —PROPHET MUHAMMAD.

The **Islamic Review**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نُفُوحٌ وَمُصَافَاةٌ عَلَى رَسُولِ مُحَمَّدٍ خَلِيقِ النَّبِيِّينَ

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BY THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

O men! there has come to you indeed an admonition from your Lord and a healing for what is in the breasts and a guidance and a mercy for the believers.

Say: In the grace of Allah and in His mercy, in that they should rejoice; it is better than that which they gather.

—The Holy Qur-án Ch. V. v. 57-58.

The Meaning

The all-absorbing passion of modern humanity is the amassing of wealth and multiplication of possessions. Therein lies its sole pleasure. But behind this apparent pleasure one can detect uneasiness of mind and dissatisfaction with life in general. The heart of man is restless, because it has no thought of God and a sense of His all-encompassing mercy. The Qur-án assures man in such a state of mind that its words will bring back to him his lost sense of the Divine in human affairs and thus heal the wounds of his heart caused by wrong thinking and wrong occupations in life.

THE SIMPLICITY OF ISLAM

BY A BRITISH MUSLIM

There have been many answers to the plain question : " What is Religion ? " and the answers have been very varied, so varied indeed, that it would add to the confusion they have created to attempt to add to the number. It may be more profitable to consider briefly the effect, if any, of religion upon its adherents. The qualification is necessary for it is sometimes impossible to distinguish any effect religion has upon the lives of many who would be affronted if told that outside the ranks of those who profess and call themselves religious are to be found numbers of people noted for their kindness, charity, goodwill, benevolence, high morals, devotion to duty and other virtues which are claimed to be marks of religion, yet who do not follow any religious creed.

In the eyes of many, Muslims are still ranked among the heathen—a favourite description of them in olden days was "infidel", a word meaning "unfaithful" but it was used to denote unbelievers, meaning, of course, unbelievers in God, that is unbelievers in the God of the accusers. Yet almost daily there is adduced evidence of the increasing appreciation of the great devotion in prayer, an admission that to profess the Islamic faith is to believe in a religion that sets a high value on prayer and sacrifice and reliance upon the Supreme Eternal Power. That is borne out by many converts to the Faith in almost every issue of the *Islamic Review*.

Why is this ? There is but one answer. Religion to the Muslim is a very real thing. It is not a garment he can don and doff at caprice. Islam is not only a challenge to the world at large but to the Christian world in parti-

THE SIMPLICITY OF ISLAM

cular. The Holy Prophet Muhammad was a warrior and Muslims acknowledging him as their leader are also called upon to be warriors. But the Prophet did not spend all his time upon the battle-field. Much of it was spent in a rest-camp in a cavern on Mount Hira. He found it essential to prepare for battle by prayers and meditation, just as Moses and Jesus and other prophets had found their rest camp on Sinai, Olivet and other mountains. In each instance they had been cheered and strengthened by the ministry of angelic messengers,—a ministry not denied to the faithful of the present-day.

Religion is a very simple thing, but how powerful it is when practised! The world of scientific investigation records that some of the most wonderful things are so simple that men wonder they should have remained undiscovered and unknown or unappreciated sometimes for centuries. Religion is so simple that men are constantly trying to make it complex. It was so with the teaching of Jesus, who delivered the same message as Moses and the other prophets who preceded and Muhammad, who succeeded him. Even in the lifetime of Jesus but particularly immediately after his departure men found his message so simple that they set to work to add to it a system of theology so complex and discordant that those who assumed the description of being his apostles and ministers formed themselves into sects giving forth varied and contrary views of his teaching. That practice has been multiplied almost indefinitely since apostolic days and so we find hundreds of factions teaching contrary doctrines, but all claiming Jesus as the author. The like disaster happened immediately after the death of Muhammad and, sad to relate, is being repeated at the present day, though to lesser extent than happened to the teaching of Jesus. The Faith of Islam is simple, so simple

that a child of tender years can understand it without difficulty and all who profess that faith and would do honour to the name and faith of Muhammad should resist to the utmost any attempt to add anything to his teaching that would tend, in even the slightest degree, to make the simple faith complex. Islam requires no foot-notes. A certain publishing firm, to my knowledge, once refused to publish a work by a well-known scholar on a subject on which he was an acknowledged master, because it had no foot-notes and that because all necessary explanations had been incorporated into the text. So with Islam. Many have found it, as it is, to be so simple as to pass all misunderstanding, and yet like a railroad constructor, they have introduced at various points curves and junctions, with varied coloured signals to try and prevent collisions between travellers.

The marvel of the Islamic Faith is its simplicity and straightforwardness. The Will of Allah cannot be found in disputations and debates : it can only be found in submission and prayer. St. Francis of Assisi was disappointed in his main mission to end the Crusades by the conversion of his opponents from Islam to his peculiar brand of Christianity. He found the Muslims to be constant and unbending in their beliefs. A heavenly devotion can be as strong and as real as earthly affection.

LADY KHADIJA IN 'BRITANNIA AND EVE.'

We do not accuse the writer of the story about Lady Khadija, the devoted wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as appearing in the July number of 'Britannia and Eve,' of any evil intention. We admit that considering the taste of the readers for whom the journal caters, the story may be regarded as perhaps quite an innocent one. In its own way it tries to remove certain misunderstandings about

LADY KHADIJA IN 'BRITANNIA AND EVE'

the Prophet as current in the West. But innocence should not be the only virtue of a literary piece while dealing with a religious personality. It may not offend the Christian conscience to treat religious personalities in such a light-hearted manner, but it does offend the Muslim sense of propriety. We assure the editors of 'Britannia and Eve' that a similar treatment of Prophet Jesus or of Lady Mary or of John the Baptist is unimaginable in the field of Muslim literature. To begin with, the author has not cared at all for historical accuracy. It is an outrage on history to say, for example, that the Prophet "a helpless prey to strong convulsions of the body, had become a ghastly shadow of his former self." Those who are in touch with any living traditions of spiritual experiences, know that these experiences do not at all affect the external appearance of a person ; they rather add to the glow of the general appearance. Similarly, an authentic book of Muslim history would have told the writer that the age of Ayisha, the only virgin wife of the Prophet, was not nine at the time of her marriage but at least 14, a good age for consent in tropical countries. These are but two among many historical inaccuracies with which the story bristles and the most glaring of them too. The touch of romance given to the love of Khadija for the Prophet may be excusable in view of the current level of sex perception in the West ; but one must realise that such presentation of religious personalities is abhorrent to the religious outlook of the community concerned. The writer could further avoid such misleading words as "apparitions" while speaking of the Prophet's experiences in the Cave of Hira. What the Prophet saw was the angel Gabriel.

We assure the author that it is not the true Arab followers of the Prophet whose "fantastic imagination has enveloped the birth and childhood of Muhammed in a

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thick cloud of legends, supernatural events and prodigies." It was the Arab Muslims, it must be remembered, who gave birth to the scientific study of history and traditions and they made a start with the life-story of the Prophet and his utterances and day to day conduct. It was the Christian, Jewish and non-Arab elements mixing up with the body politic of Islam that created this nuisance for Islam. For a serious student of the subject Islamic traditions always provide the most reliable and solid data, which cannot be surpassed even by the modernmost and most widely known happenings in history. We admit, however, that these cannot be found in the works of Western scholars on the subject, but while dealing with a subject of this solemn nature, one is expected to take some pains in having access to the authentic sources.

Last but not the least comes the question of illustrations. We wish the writer of the story and the editors of the journal concerned knew that Muslims have an abhorrence for pictures and representations of religious personalities. They regard it an insult to the memory of the Prophets to draw any pictures of them, whether it be of Jesus or Moses or of Muhammad. It is striking to note that whereas the Muslim traditionists have given wonderful particulars of the Prophet's figure and face, no Muslim Artist has ever drawn a picture of the Prophet. Reverence for ladies of religious rank is still greater in this respect. The picture of Lady Khadija has consequently and quite naturally created a commotion in the Eastern Muslim Press, particularly when she is shown as standing in the market-place by the side of the Prophet, exposed to the gaze of the vulgar public. To a Western reader this may speak well of the status of woman in the religion of Islam but in the eyes of the believer a woman suffers in dignity in an appearance of this nature. We should not forget that the taste and way of looking at things vary

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greatly in the West and the East, and the heroine in the story is an Eastern figure. The semi-nude picture of Eve appearing before the Prophet in his vision brings the matter to a climax. According to Eastern traditions, holy persons even after they have gone to the world of spirits, maintain dignified robes as a mark of honour. As a matter of fact, Muslims believe in a spiritual dress corresponding to the material dress which men and women wear in this world and it varies according to rank and accomplishments. The virtues of this life such as modesty, honesty, truthfulness, self-sacrifice, devotion etc. go to form this dress for the spiritual body of man or woman in the life hereafter. Hence all religious personalities of bygone times, whenever they have appeared in vision to any one in this world, have invariably appeared in dignified robe. It is the paganistic art of modern times that has pictured Adam and Eve in a semi-nude state. To a man of religion they have appeared in robes resembling those of a monk or a nun in the Roman Catholic Church. A Muslim mind at least revolts to think of these first ancestors of man so scantily dressed as they are represented in modern art. That the Prophet, the founder of a religion, should be associated with such a picture is shocking to the extreme.

These are the criticisms we have to offer to those responsible for the publication of the article in question and this in a spirit of absolute friendliness. They must realise that Europe has not gained at all either in morality or in politics, by being irreverent to the religious personalities of the world, particularly to Prophet Muhammad. The calamities with which that continent is surrounded today should act as an indication that something is fundamentally wrong in the outlook of its people. And we may be excused for suggesting that the wrong lies in the growing tide of this irreverence which has unfortunately

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replaced the old-time ruthless fanaticism of Christian nations. The one is as bad as the other, and unless checked in time is bound to result in dire consequences.

THE FUTURE RELIGION OF THE WORLD

BY M. A. SAMAD, M.A.

He it is who sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all other religions"

—The Holy Qur'an IX : 3.

We have already begun to notice after the second world conflagration the welcome signs of the world returning towards religion. The dissatisfaction in the Western world against the hitherto popular material and anti-religious culture is more than apparent. But this time it is not going to be satisfied with any dogma-ridden religion either. The world has grown far too wise to accept the Mystery cult of a crucified Deity. The days of a purely personal religion, or the kind of religion which comforts and sustains the individual by promising a salvation only after death have passed away. The modern scientific man demands that religion should show him how to set about solving the practical problems of this world, and not merely promise him *Nirvana* after an immense series of rebirths, or a heaven whose nature is indeterminate and which can only be reached through the portal of death. Religion must not only give him the key to the riddle of the universe, it must show him how to control the forces which threaten to destroy mankind. In addition to being promised an individual salvation, both in this world and in the next, he wants a definite social, political and economic solution, —a solution which will show him how to overcome unmerited unemployment, undeserved inequality, oppression, exploitation, war, and other collective ills.

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Hinduism is too vague and indefinite to appeal to a modern practical man ; and wherever it does attempt to tackle social problems, it is too medievalistic and narrow-minded. Buddhism also concerns itself merely with the next world, and has no programme for making this world a beautiful and fit place to live in ; but on the contrary it advises the severance of all our connections with the world, considering it to be necessary evil. Christianity tried to face the problem by separating the 'things of the Cæsar' and 'the things of God', and having two separate and antagonistic codes, one for the worldly day to day life and the other for the spiritual life as a preparation for the next world. But we know that this dual conception of life has miserably failed ; it has only succeeded in our throwing the balance between belief and practice, and thus plunging the world in confusion and chaos. This is a fact which has been admitted more or less by every Christian apologist. Dr. Henry Wilson, Bishop of Chelmsford, observes in this connection :

Though there are many Christians in Europe and England it is only in a very limited sense that we can speak of these as Christian countries. Western civilization.....has rejected Christianity.¹

Recently the Archbishop of Canterbury also expressed himself similarly on the 'eclipse of religion' in the West.²

Now the question is : Will Islam succeed where the other religions have failed ? There are distinct signs that Europe itself is seeking its way to reply this question in the affirmative.

For instance, Professor H. A. R. Gibb of the University of London, who combines his intimate knowledge of the West with that of Islam, writes in his famous

¹ *The Sunday Tribune*, Singapore, August 7, 1938.

² *'Dawn'*, Delhi, May 28, 1943.

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book 'Whither Islam' :

.....We must wait upon the Islamic society to restore the balance of the Western civilization upset by the one-sided nature of that progress.....For the fullest development of its own cultural and economic life, Islam cannot do without the co-operation of European society ; for the fullest development of its cultural life, particularly of its spiritual life, Europe cannot do without the forces and capacities which lie within Islamic society. Only by the restoration of that interaction which they enjoyed under the Roman Empire can both recover and exert their full powers.

Within the Western world Islam still maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites. Opposed equally to the anarchy of European nationalism and the regimentation of Russian communism, it has not yet succumbed to the obsession with the economic side of life which is characteristic of present-day Europe and present-day Russia alike.

Its social ethics has been admirably summed up by Professor Massignon :

Islam has the merit of standing for a very equalitarian conception of the contribution of each citizen by the tithe to the resources of the community ; it is hostile to unrestricted exchange, to banking capital, to state loans, to indirect taxes on objects of prime necessity, but it holds to the rights of the father and the husband, to private property, and to commercial capital. Here again it occupies an intermediate position between the doctrines of bourgeois capitalism and Bolshevik communism.

But Islam has a still further service to render to the cause of humanity. It stands after all nearer to the real East than Europe does. And it possesses a magnificent tradition of inter-racial understanding and co-operation. No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity and of endeavour so many and so various races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small Muslim communities in China and the still smaller community in Japan, show that Islam has still the power to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and the West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation

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of Islam is an indispensable condition. In its hands lies very largely the solution of the problems with which Europe is faced in its relation with the East. If they unite, the hope of a peaceful issue is immeasurably enhanced—but if Europe, by rejecting the co-operation of Islam, throws it into the arms of its rivals, the issue can only be disastrous for both.

Islam is not merely a faith, a 'religion', a creed. It is the name of a complete system of life—a life to be lived. It does not only respond to man's religious yearnings, but to human life as a whole. It does not only give us an infallible metaphysics, but also a comprehensive and sublime code of individual and social ethics, a sound economic system, a just political ideology, and many things besides. Islam is the only religion which has succeeded in setting the age-long opposition between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', and has created a brotherhood of believers, in which the rich and the poor, the black and the white, are equally cared for and satisfied; and all this without any sanguinary outburst or any violent abolition of private property. The Islamic political system not only safeguards the rights of every citizen, but also succeeds in establishing peace and good-will in international relations. In addition to this, it has shown him how to establish a personal contact with his Creator; in fact it has helped him to feel the presence of God in every moment and every walk of his life. All this it has done by expressing its ideas, not in the form of vague, unpracticable sermons, but by establishing them as institutions. There is no opposition of belief and practice in Islam; in fact, belief, according to the Holy Qur'an, is 'the knowledge of certain truths with a conviction strong enough to convert them into action.'

Above all, Islam is the Religion of Love, not love felt as a vague infatuation, but love expressed practically. The Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) gave a practical expression to the love

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of God and the love of His creatures, when he said :

Dost thou love thy Creator ? Love thy fellow-creatures first.¹

He defined Islam as "cherishing of the profoundest respects for the commandments of God, and extending sympathy to His creatures."² "A Muslim", according to him, "is he from whose tongue and hand people are safe",³ one who has made his peace with God and men, with the Creator as well as His creatures : and both these points are briefly but beautifully expressed in the Holy Qur'án in the following words :

Yea, he who submits himself entirely to God, and he is the doer of good to others, shall have his reward from His Lord and there is no fear for him nor shall he grieve.⁴

Islam is a universal religion, in which all the national traditions find a synthesis. Whatever good there is in other religions individually, is present in Islam collectively. Above all, by becoming a Muslim, one can still remain a good Hindu or a good Christian, for Islam is the same Original Message of Krishna, Buddha, Jesus Christ or Zoroaster. He can still hold on to what is dear to him and revere the prophets of his own nation, for they are equally the prophets of the Muslims as well. By accepting Islam, he passes from the narrow bounds of his own nation into a universal culture in which all the national traditions have a place, and all the prophets of all the nations are equally loved. The Holy Qur'án is the universal guide for all the nations and for all times.

Islam will be the only religion which will be acceptable to the present generation and the generations to come for it includes within itself a solution to all the world problems. The rapid deterioration of the influence of

¹ *Sayings of Muhammad,*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Sayings of Muhammad,*

⁴ The Holy Qur'án II : 112.

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other religions has brought new opportunities for Islam, and of fundamental importance in this connection is the success which Islam has achieved without paid missionaries and in the teeth of many a serious obstacle. The learned and highly-cultured element in the West is spontaneously paying its homage to Islam, and thousands of distinguished and sincere Europeans and Americans have actually joined its fold. The situation created by the success of Islam has alarmed the Christian leaders. For instance, the Rev. S. M. Zwemer writes :

The old missionary slogan has met with a counter slogan. Islam is challenging the West to accept Muhammad as the hope of humanity..... Muhammad has discovered America.....In North America there are scattered groups numbering, it is true, twelve thousand only but active in their propaganda.....In South America, i.e., Brazil, Argentina, Guadeloupe, and Guiana, there are over one hundred and ninety thousand Mohammedans. In France the number of Moslems is increasing ; in Paris alone there are nearly three thousand..... In Australia Moslems number twenty-five thousand and publish their own magazine..... In South-Eastern Europe (omitting the scattered groups of Britain and France as negligible in number, but not in influence) there are three and a half million.....Statistics are dry and often bewildering, yet it is only by statistics that we can measure the present expansion of a religion which began in the sixth century with a minority of one man who claimed to be God's last messenger..... Islam challenges Europe and America.....the conversion of Europeans and Americans to Islam has become a stock-in-trade argument against Christianity in Egypt and India."¹

Even Bernard Shaw could not fail to read the signs and tendencies of the time, and he prophesied in his book 'Getting Married' that :

The whole of the British Empire will adopt a reformed Muhammedanism before the end of the century.

The West is to-day on the threshold of Islam. Even Spiritualism, Theosophy, New Thought, Higher Thought

¹ "Across the World of Islam" by Rev. S. M. Zwemer.

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and Modernist Movement are the so many attempts, often imperfect and misleading, to grasp at the all sufficient truth of Islam.¹ It is the strongest proof of the spiritual power of Islam that although politically beaten it is going on conquering spiritually, and making strong headways among those very people who have politically and economically enslaved the world.² The groundwork for the acceptance of Islam by the West has already been done, thanks to the devoted zeal and selfless services of the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, the Working Muslim Mission and the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam of Lahore.* The misconceptions and misinterpretations of Islam which had been going on for centuries have now been demolished in less than thirty years. Now is the time for the Muslims to sow the seeds of Islam, and the days are not far off, nay, they are almost come, when they shall reap a rich harvest of Muslims. The light of Islam will soon shine (God-willing) in all the corners of the western world.³ The present is the time which will see the fulfilment of the following prophecy of the Holy Prophet :

My Lord contracted the earth for me (i.e., showed me a plan of it), so that I saw its Eastern lands and its Western lands, and I was told that the Kingdom of my followers will reach the lands which were shown to me.³

The Eastern lands are mentioned first in the prophecy, and Islam spread first in the East ; the Western lands are mentioned afterwards, and they will also as surely see the light of Islam as they see the light of day. The conversion of the rest of the world after the West has accepted

¹ For a detailed exposition of this point, read 'Towards Islam' by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

² "The Sun (of Islam) will rise from the West in latter days."

—Prophet Muhammad.

* Sayings of Muhammad.

JESUS THE SON OF MARY

Islam will only be a matter of days. The world is groaning and yearning for peace and healthy progress after the visitation of the second world catastrophe within a single generation ; this peace and progress can only be achieved through Islam ; the sooner the world realizes this the better.

JESUS THE SON OF MARY

HIS BIRTH AND DEATH

· BY KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD

(Continued from Vol. XXXIV, p. 296)

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The Apocryphal and the Canonical Gospels give different versions of the conception and birth of Jesus. They describe the various stages from a simple and natural occurrence to a minute and miraculously embellished story in which the events are traced back to the very earliest date. Mark and John are silent and content themselves with the mention of Mary as the mother, and of Joseph as the father, of Jesus¹. Matthew and Luke, however, give details of the circumstances attending the conception and birth of Jesus, as the Messiah, and are at pains to fulfil, as far as possible, all the prophecies of the Old Testament in the person of Jesus. Matthew is out to meet all the objections as may, or could, have been raised against the virgin birth theory, at the time this Gospel was written² or revised. Both of them, however, presuppose Mary to be the *espoused* wife of Joseph. The Apocryphal Gospels—the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, and some others, with most of which the early Christian Fathers agreed, narrate the origin of Jesus as the natural result of a legal marriage between Joseph and Mary.

¹ Mark, VI : 3 ; John I : 45 ; VI : 42.

² Matt. I : 8-25.

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Apart from the mere physical considerations the Gospels rely on the Divine Omnipotence, with which, of course, nothing is impossible. But by virtue of His Unity and Wisdom, the Almighty God never exerts His Divine Omnipotence without any adequate motive. Further, nothing less than an object worthy of God, and at the same time unattainable except by a deviation from His ordinary laws of nature, which He Himself has established, could constitute a sufficient cause for the suspension by God of His laws.

Cerinthus, one of the very early Christians, arguing against the virgin birth, urged that

It is impossible, because by the concurrence of two sexes is a new human being generated, and that the contrary would be most remarkable departure from all natural laws.¹

Forced with the strength of his reasoning the Christian apologists, opposing Cerinthus, did not hesitate to reduce Jesus to a *worm*, for they alleged that the birth of Jesus was in a manner like that of a worm and asserted that the following passage applied to Jesus:

I am a worm, not a man.²

The Christian apologists of a little later period, however, had to take another line of argument. They maintained that Jesus had come for the redemption of mankind, and, therefore, had to be severed from all original sin from his birth³. But to this is a simple answer: the exclusion of the paternal participation is wholly insufficient, because the inheritance of original sin was from Eve, and, therefore, the maternal participation should have been avoided, as was done in the case of Melchisdec whom Paul described as having been born without father and without mother⁴. It is then argued that the participation of the Holy Ghost was meant to purify the maternal participation. But this could have been done without violation of the natural laws. In any

¹ *Homil in Lucan*, XIII.

² Olshausen; *Bibl. Comm.* S. 49.

³ Ps., XXII: 6-8.

⁴ Heb., VII: 1-3.

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case, nowhere is such a conception ascribed to Mary. The expression *the Holy Ghost* is specially characteristic of the New Testament, and occurs in it eighty-one times. The Jews did not regard the Spirit as personal and, therefore, Mary must have understood the words: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee* as identical with *the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*. But not so with the evangelists to whom, about a century afterwards, the term 'Holy Ghost' had become practically a proper name.

Leaving these special pleadings of the Christian apologists and their refutations aside, for they really do not lead us anywhere, I will now take up the evangelic records. The virgin birth, though definitely asserted in Matthew¹ and Luke², finds no echo in any other part of the New Testament; Mark is totally silent. If such a remarkable event had, in fact happened, and he had believed in it, would he have remained silent? The answer is obvious; but against this, a reference is made to the description of Jesus in Mark as "son of God"³, and it has been argued that Mark would not have styled Jesus as such if he did not believe in the virgin birth. I admit the force of this argument, and might have conceded the virgin birth theory on this argument alone, if there had been any basis for attributing the alleged words to Mark. These very words were also used by Luke⁴. But both the verses are the result of pious forgeries of the early Christians. In Mark the words were merely added⁵. The Sinaitic Syriac, which is of great authority, and the early patristic traditions represented by Irenæus and Origen, followed by Basil and Jerome, omit the words. In Luke the phrase, *the Son of God*, was substituted for the word *Holy*.⁶ These facts demolish the argument;

¹ Matt. I : 18-25.

² Luke, I : 5-80.

³ Mark. I : 1.

⁴ Luke, I : 35.

⁵ See marginal note in the Revised version, p. 1098.

⁶ See Revised version, p. 1126.

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but, in any case, the words, *the Son of God*, are to be interpreted in a metaphorical sense and not in a physical sense. The phrase *son of Mary*¹ can be explained by the fact that Joseph was dead when these words were written, for he had died during the ministry of Jesus. I would, by way of analogy, mention that the late King Edward VII is known as the son of the late Queen Victoria. No one would dream of suggesting any supernatural birth because of this fact. This kind of arguments clearly establish that the Christian apologists are on their hind legs to prove the virgin birth theory. Besides, Jesus is really spoken of as the son of Joseph.²

Mark, I repeat, ought to have known of this virgin birth, and since he does not mention it, it stands to reason to say that either he was ignorant of it or he did not accept it. There are still some traces which show that in the *Urmarcus* it was at the time of baptism of Jesus and not at the moment of his conception, that the Holy Spirit entered his humanity. Mark, therefore, could not have believed in the virgin birth of Jesus.

John is equally silent, and his silence is all the more significant since it was he, as is supposed, to whom Jesus, while on the cross, entrusted the care of Mary.³ He, therefore, would have been all the more likely person to know all the facts about the occurrence. It is argued that John believed that Jesus was the incarnation of God, of the *Logos*, and was co-eternal with God. The Christian apologists refer to :

Which were born out of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.⁴

And argue that John was not depending on any earthly father. To this I reply : he was not equally depending on any earthly mother. To cite this passage in favour of the virgin birth theory is to grossly misconstrue it. It refers in fact to *the sons of God* mentioned in the pre-

¹ Mark, VI : 3.

² John, XIX : 27.

³ John I : 45 ; VI : 42.

⁴ John I : 13.

JESUS THE SON OF MARY

ceding verse. In any case, the incarnation of the *Logos* in Jesus does not imply that the man Jesus was exempt from the laws of human generation, for it was at his baptism that, according to John also, the *Logos* descended into him. John merely elevates the idea of Mark, and preserves it in its external form. Accordingly, he never misses an opportunity of stating that Jesus is the son of Joseph. He records of one of Jesus disciples saying :

Philip findeth Nathanael and saith unto him ; we have found him of whom Moses in the Law and prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, *the son of Joseph*.¹

And again :

And they said, Is not this Jesus, *the son of Joseph* whose father and mother we know.....? ²

John could never have recorded these incidents. if they had, to his mind, conflicted with his theory.

Turning to the Apostles, we do not find the slightest reference to virgin birth in any of their Epistles. Paul speaks of the descent of Jesus according to the flesh³ and he says :

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, *born of a woman, born under the law*.⁴

Now if this verse is read without forcing its meaning it will appear to indicate the normal birth of a Jewish child. Paul makes two definite statements. He says that Jesus was *born of a woman*. He does not say Jesus was born of a virgin ; because he knew of Jesus' human generation, and asserted

Jesus Christ, our Lord, was *born* of the seed of David, according to the flesh.⁵

The expression *born of a woman* is not peculiar to Paul. In the biblical sense, it has a significance of its own ; and Paul must be held to have used the phrase in

¹ John., I : 45.

² John, VI : 42,

³ Rom., I : 3.

⁴ Gal, IV : 4. I have used the word *born* instead of *made*, as it is so given in the Revised version, p. 1288.

⁵ Rom., 1-3, I have used the word *born* instead of *made*. See R.V., p 1241.

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that sense only. In the Old Testament, when any one's normal human birth had to be described, he was referred to as having been *born of a woman*. Jesus used this phrase, in this very sense, regarding John the Baptist, and the rest of the people of his time, when he said :

Verily I say unto you, among them that are *born of a woman*, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist¹.

In the Old Testament we read :

Man, that is *born of a woman*, is of a few days and full of trouble.²

When Paul, therefore, described Jesus, as *born of a woman*, he meant nothing more than that Jesus was born in accordance with human nature with all its conditions.

A passage in Isaiah³ has been referred to to indicate that a virgin was meant by Paul. It is merely a play upon the Greek word *Bethulah* (virgin), which does not appear in the Hebrew text, and thus a deliberately dishonest translation of an Hebrew word *Haalmah* (woman) has lead to a confusion, where none existed.⁴ Dummelow admits that "the Hebrew word is not the distinctive" one for virginity.⁵

Rev. Prof. Donaldson in his discussion of the meaning of the Hebrew word *Haalmah* says :

Every one who is acquainted with the Hebrew word will be obliged to admit that the designation in question cannot mean anything more than a young or *newly married woman*.⁶

It may also be mentioned that the same word, *Haalmah*, was used for Rebekeh and she was not a virgin at that time.⁷

But Paul makes the matter absolutely clear, for he asserts that Jesus was *born under the law*. What was this Law ? I will let Jesus give the answer :

¹ Matt., XI : 11 ; Luke VII : 28.

² Job, XIV : 1 ; see also 4 Esdras, VI : 6 ; VII : 46 ; VIII : 35, etc.

³ Isa, VII : 14.

⁴ Revised version, p. 760.

⁵ Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 148.

⁶ Donaldson, *Christian Orthodoxy*, 476. ⁷ Gen., XXIV : 43.

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But from the beginning of the creation God made them males and females, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife: and the twain shall be one flesh. So then they are no more twain, but one flesh.¹

By this saying of Jesus not only is *the law* explained whereby the generation of human being is made clear, but the other phrase which Paul used about Jesus being "born of the seed of David according to *the flesh*" becomes abundantly clear if we read it with the assertion that "the Messiah had to be the fruit of loins of David."²

Finally, in the prologue of the Epistle to the Romans it is clearly stated that:

Jesus..... which was born of the seed of David *according to the flesh*, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the *spirit of holiness by the resurrection from dead*.³

The words of Paul, therefore, leave no room for any doubt at all, for no one can identify the antithesis of flesh and spirit with the maternal human participation in the conception of Jesus. Jesus, in the words of Paul, born *according to the flesh* in the natural manner became the son of God *according to the spirit* at his resurrection and not at his birth. In other words, according to Paul, though Jesus was a *man in flesh*, yet he was the *son of God in spirit* only. The latter statement, of course, is a mere Christological assertion, and is also found in the Acts, in which the Messianic exultation of Jesus still dates from the resurrection.

"Neither Paul nor Mark," says the compilers of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* "betrayed any knowledge of the tradition" (of virgin birth). It was unknown to the Apostles, and did not appear to have formed part of the Apostolic preachings."⁴ Had such an event taken place, Paul would certainly have known of it and would have been the first to broadcast it to the world.

¹ Mark, X: 6-8; Cf. Gen, I: 27; II: 24; V: 2; 1 Cor. VI: 16; Eph, V: 31.

² Acts, II: 30.

³ Rom., I: 3-4.

⁴ *Ency. Brit.*, 14th Edn., Vol. 13, 20. (The words in brackets are mine.)

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The other Apostles were also ignorant of the virgin birth and are equally silent. James, the Just, the brother of Jesus, was the head of the Church at Jerusalem. He belonged to the Ebionite sect. He with them believed that:

Jesus is the Messiah, yet *a mere man* born by natural generation to Joseph and Mary.¹

In the Gospel according to the Hebrews it is narrated that Mary had been married to Joseph and had given birth to Jesus in a natural manner.² Jerome has preserved a verse from this Gospel which says:

The mother and father of Jesus were present at his baptism.³

Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson recovered an old Syriac manuscript of the Gospel in a monastery of Mount Sinai. In this was found an explicit statement:

Jesus' father was Joseph and his mother Mary.⁴

The History of Joseph the Carpenter tells us that Jesus, at the death of Joseph, uttered the following lamentations:

Not a single limb of it shall be broken, nor shall any hair of thy head be changed. Nothing of thy body shall perish, O! my father, Joseph, but it will remain entire and uncorrupted even until the banquet of the Thousand Years.⁵

The object of writing this History is revealed in the book in the words of the Apostles' address to Jesus:

Thou hast ordered us to go into all the world and to preach thy holy Gospel, and thou hast said: "Relate to them the death of my father, Joseph, and celebrate to him with annual solemnity a festival and a sacred Day."⁶

Thus we get the origin of the festival of St. Joseph's Day.

(To be continued)

¹ Hastings, *History of the Apostolic Church*, 318-32. See also Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. I, 214.

² Gospel of Heb., II: 3.

³ *Ibid.*, III: 2.

⁴ Lewis, *The Old Syriac Gospel*, 2.

⁵ Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 434.

⁶ *Ibid.*

CAN ISLAM STILL CIVILISE THE WORLD ?

BY S. MAHMUDUR RAHMAN, B.A., B.T.

To describe the extent and power of our modern civilisation, we need only mention some of its most outstanding characteristics. Firstly, it is imperialistic: the more one country can dominate and exploit other countries, the more civilised it is. Secondly, it is mechanistic: the more and more machine power is applied to industries and agriculture, the more destructive the engines of war are manufactured by pooling scientific knowledge and resources, the greater is the extent of civilisation. Thirdly, it is grossly materialistic: the greater the freedom of sex and the addiction to wine and vice, the more abstruse the theory of God's non-existence propounded by the positivists, the higher man rises in the scale of development and refinement.

In a nutshell, these are the material values on which the world of today has concentrated its body and soul. It is needless to say that they have thrown mankind into the most appalling catastrophes. It does not appear that the most destructive war of history has taught us any better lesson. There is no sign that the world, in spite of its tragic fate, has realised the necessity for a clear spiritual lead.

Imperialism, mechanism and materialism, all the three sins which have flung the world into the bottomless abyss of misfortune today have originated in the West. Christianity with its love of mankind has failed miserably to save the Christians from complete moral collapse. Rather Christ's religion of love has been travestied, mutual rancour and hatred briskly stepping into the sacred shrine of love and humanity. Hegel, Nietzsche, Treitschke and Bernhardt have befooled man by teaching him the indispensability and nobility of war and attracting nations

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and individuals to their romantic theory of militarism and state worship. Hitler's Germany was created out of Hegelian Philosophy. The Western pattern of democracy which is described to be inspired by Christian moral standards is nothing but a form of Government in which the majority rules the minorities, the powerful dominate the weak, and the capitalists keep the wage-earning class in a state of servitude. Subjugation and exploitation of the weak and helpless people by disarming them and at the point of bayonet are a corollary of such a democracy which the civilised Christians call rational humanitarianism and the missionaries preach and praise as Millennial Reign.

So Christianity has lost its claim to give a decisive spiritual lead to the world. Let the world no longer be duped into the monstrous belief that democracy of the Western type is the panacea for all evils. It has exhausted its possibilities. The party-system which underlies all modern democratic constitutions is at bottom a prolific cause of strife for sectional interests and leads to much hypocrisy and malicious propaganda, educating the people as it does, against the true values on which the foundation of happiness depends. Any intelligent man who will probe a little deeply into the workings of party-governments will realise the truth of what I have said. In a democracy the state does not owe allegiance to the immutable laws of God for the regulation of social conduct. It is guided by laws which can be changed at will by the ruling party. The party-representatives always try to secure laws in the interest of their own party and as a result there being a strong opposition from the discontented party or parties, universal willing acquiescence in the laws of the state is out of the question. Thus the struggle for party domination and the lack of universally acceptable laws have brought our civilisation to the verge of a steep rock from which it may crumble down to pieces.

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Then if we want to save our civilisation from a debacle we must look somewhere else for right guidance and direction. History makes one fact abundantly clear that Islam is the only religion with its all-embracing unambiguous moral and social laws and standards which has levelled up all men without distinction, given them the sense of right and duty and definitely laid down the rules of international relations and obligations. It is Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad that can give stable laws and government to the world, laws that need not be enforced by external compulsion, because the urge to obey Divine laws which admit of no distinction between man and man, nation and nation, in respect of rights and interests, comes from within. Where there is no law, there is anarchy. But it is a paradox that in all modern states in spite of their stupendous legal structure there is anarchy pure and simple. Any discerning eye will pierce through the cloak of the Governments and detect what happens in the name of law.

There is another reason why Christ fails to guide mankind. He teaches man, "Ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also." This doctrine of non-violence has been demonstrated to be absurd and illogical. The Christian world has to-day forsaken Christ simply because of the impracticability of his moral and social code.

On the other hand, Muhammad's view on the resistance to evil is clear, precise and logical. He forbids meek submission to the self-assertive, aggressive and militaristic nations. This not only demonstrates the fundamental difference between Islam and Christianity in the conception of social morality, but also the fact that the Christian nations of the West follow exactly what the Holy Prophet of Islam lays down as the basic principle of tolerance and resistance.

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The very essence of Islamic civilisation^{*} is to fight the wrong and establish the truth. The Holy Prophet says : "To-day I trample under my feet all the values of the days of ignorance." The old aristocracy of Arabia was swept away before the overwhelming surge of Islam. The clear objective of Islam is mass-civilisation. Muhammad was a level-headed revolutionist. He must carry into practice what he professed. He razed to the ground all the artificial barriers of class distinctions and tribal exclusiveness and declared that all were children of Adam who was made of earth. The high and the low; the rich and the poor were raised to the same status of society and their rights and duties were determined by the inviolable laws of God. If you think what miracle he wrought by welding the disorganised and factious clans and tribes of Arabia into a highly organised brotherhood imbued with the consciousness of social equality and with common purposes and aspirations, you must say that Islam is a talisman which makes a man or a nation rise to a glorious height. What was achieved by him within a short space of twelve years is still beyond the reach of many nations which secrete reforms through their legislative machineries by ludicrously small instalments.

Education is the dynamic core of all movements for progress. Knowledge, as you know, is the forbidden tree of Christianity. Adam was thrown out of Paradise, the abode of perennial bliss and happiness, for no other fault than the eating of the Fruit of this forbidden tree. But Islam presents a great contrast. The Holy Qur'án lays down knowledge as one of the essential articles of faith. The first verses revealed to Muhammad in the famous cave of Mount Hira are about the acquisition of knowledge. Education is a duty incumbent upon every Muslim male and female and it was made compulsory more than thirteen centuries ago. But

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even to-day there are many states which have not yet accepted compulsory education as their deliberate policy.

Islam released its full civilising force in Spain under the Caliphs, and it was from the great universities of Cordova, Toledo and Seville that knowledge of arts and science found its way into Europe. The beginnings of the great Renaissance Movement in Europe were due to the Saracens and the Moors. The Muslims who lived on the coasts of the Mediterranean made stupendous progress in ship-building and navigation and had maritime supremacy in trade and commerce. They had great ship-building yards on the coastal belts. Geography was sedulously cultivated, for their ships laden with merchandise used to scour great seas in the east to reach the ports of India, Malay, China and Japan. It was quite natural that the art of navigation and the spirit of exploration would percolate to the Spaniards and the Portuguese who were the first to come in close contact with the civilised Muslims. Subsequently impetus infused into these two nations by the example of Moorish culture led them to enter into an open struggle for maritime supremacy and embark on exploration ventures. Thus the Muslims heralded the Age of Discovery and laid the foundation of Modern Europe.

In Spain civilisation made gigantic strides under Islam in an age when the other countries of Europe were steeped in barbarism. Under the Caliphs of Cordova education was not only compulsory, but also gratuitous up to a certain limit. In higher education, professors were not paid, they adopted teaching as a profession of honour and dignity. And it was a road to high offices in the State. They earned their livelihood by other occupations. The Schools, Colleges and Universities were open to the Jews and the Christians who sat side by side with their Muslim class-fellows at the feet of great scholars giving lessons in history, geography, medicine

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and mathematics. Such was the spirit of toleration fostered by the cultured Moors of Spain. It is recorded in history that a vast majority of Spaniards could read and write. The Caliphs who were great patrons of learning invited learned teachers from the east and created trusts and endowments for the maintenance of teachers who kept schools for poor children.

Science was cultivated not only as a pursuit of theoretical knowledge, but was also applied to agriculture and industry. Irrigation, gardening and agriculture made tremendous progress while ship-building, textiles, leather, glass-making, paper and pottery and other small scale industries were developed to enormous heights. Architecture was patronised and purchased by the Caliphs and the public with an extraordinary zeal. The same spirit and enthusiasm pervaded the courts of eastern Muslim countries and it is needless to detail them here. I refer to the achievements of the Spanish Muslims in order to show how the leadership of the world passed from the hands of the Muslims to the more adventurous Europeans.

The violent reactions produced by the unpractical and absurd commandments of Christ were manifest even in his life time. Instead of love and kindness which he insists on all through his teachings, we find treachery and murder running riot everywhere. Jesus himself was sold by his disciple for thirty pieces of silver and was almost hacked to death. His followers have indeed tried to explain away the crucifixion as blood sacrifice for the salvation of mankind, especially of those who believe in the unpractical dogmas of the Church. But evidently to this dogma of blood sacrifice owe their origin all the sins and vices which have made Christendom a veritable hell. Should we not say then that greed for money and thirst for bloodshed which scandalise the West have originated in the betrayal of the

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innocent blood ? Not to speak of the imperialism and aggressiveness of the Christian nations, their militant attitude towards all spiritual progress is also remarkable.

Let us pass on to the Church, the custodian of the Christian souls, and there is also the same history of murders and treachery, of lust and greed. It was mainly instrumental in the expulsion of the Moors from their homes and hearths in Spain and perpetuated on them cruelties unparalleled in history. A Western historian says :

The armistice signed on the capitulation of Granada guaranteed religious liberty to the inhabitants : the ecclesiastical authorities caused that armistice to be broken in every particular and once they had obtained the forced conversion of the Mohammedans, these came under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition and could be tried and burned for heresy.

I wonder what claim Christianity has to give the world a right direction. I wonder that even after the tragedy of the Second World War, the Christians want to impose their civilisation upon the subject nations and the less politically conscious and culturally endowed peoples. Even Sir Stafford Cripps, the Socialist leader of England, is not free from bias. I am at a loss to understand what logic he has in his possession when he argues that

If only all those who profess and call themselves Christians combine to insist on the real values as the test of all national and international policies, we could transform the world in the course of a few decades

Some people dazed by the misfortunes that have befallen the Muslim nationals all the world over have begun to think that the force of Islam has been spent up. There is no doubt that civilisation thrives for a time and then declines when the forces that work behind it are exhausted. This accounts for the fall and decline of Roman and Greek civilisations in Europe and Hindu and Buddhist Culture in Asia. Islam as civilis-

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ing dynamic attempted at certain radical reforms in an age when notions of equality and liberty were practically unknown. Humanity stood at so low a level that it was not possible to raise them to cultural heights within a century or two. The process must be a continuous one, and Islam with its superior ideals of life has a revolutionary effect on the minds of men. So rapid and tremendous progress is the result. When Islam came to India, Hinduism with its hierarchy of castes and stereotyped priesthood, with its social injustice and inequities and with its notions of special rights and privileges for the higher castes came into sharp conflict with the superior forces of Islamic civilisation. Its influence gradually permeated Hindu Society and the progress of reforms actuated by its humanitarian ideals has not stopped short. In all countries Islam is still a potential force at work, because there are still the Black and the White problem, the caste distinctions, the race hostilities, and the minority questions, besides the conflict between labour and capital. The solution of these troubles lies in the establishment of the universal laws of Islam.

If the progress of Islam has considerably slowed down it is not because it is incapable of adapting itself to the needs of the modern age, or solving the modern social problems, but because many newer forces have brought the world nearer to the achievements of ideals and objects for which Islam stands. Our schools and colleges and universities where children of all communities get the opportunity of promiscuous mixing, our tram cars, omnibuses and railway trains which admit passengers without any distinction, our Government offices which are filled by people of all castes and creeds make no small contribution to the wearing down of colour-bar and inter-caste and inter-racial hatred.

(To be continued)

DIVINE EXISTENCE REFLECTED IN MAN'S INNER NATURE

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

And when your Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants, and made them bear witness against their own souls: 'Am I not your Lord?' they said; yes! we bear witness.' Lest you should say on the day of resurrection; Surely we were heedless of this.¹

This is a statement unique in the history of Scriptural assertions. It purports to say that the inner voice of man proclaims faith in the existence of the Divine Being. It is a well-known fact that at moments of perplexity even the most die-hard atheist recline on that power which is believed to control the Universe with all its myriad forces, acting and interacting on one another. But he explains it away as a weakness caused by convention. The Holy Qur-án refers to this so-called weakness in the following verse :

He it is Who makes you travel by land and sea ; until when you are in the ships, and they sail on with them in a pleasant breeze, and they rejoice at it, a violent wind overtakes them and the billows surge in on them from all sides, and they become certain that they are compassed about, they pray to Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience: If Thou dost deliver us from this, we will most certainly be of the grateful ones.²

Call it weakness or whatever you will, but, has there been a man, who has been able to overcome this weakness? The attempt has been there throughout the ages but no one is known to have succeeded in this attempt. The term 'weakness' implies unnaturalness. If belief in God is a weakness, as it is alleged to be, it must be alien to human nature: and it is strange that an alien thing should dominate human mind from times

¹ The Holy Qur-án VII, 172.

² The Holy Qur-án, X : 22.

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immemorial and the natural state should never be able to assert itself with all the efforts of free-thinking.

We, however, propose to show that belief in God is a basic factor of human nature and on the intellectual side it is based on a sound observation of the facts of life. Whoever has developed the faculty of thinking about the general trend of events, must acknowledge that the course of events is only nominally controlled by man. Efforts are man's but the resultant event is seldom his objective. And yet the affairs of humanity are seen to follow a kind of system, a method. This is so outstanding a fact that it alone provides a fertile field for the growth of religious belief. Open-minded men cannot help recognising in this the evidence of a controlling hand which is not human.

Even if we ignore this positive aspect of human life and only look closely into the facts, we notice even in the most morbid atheist a tendency to find fault with the order of things around himself. The more analytical a thinker, the more bitter his outlook in this respect. The general cry during the last devastating war: "If there were a God, why this horrible war?" is symptomatic of this general attitude towards things. Civilized humanity to-day is almost atheistic in its practical life. The term 'if' is indication enough for that. And yet this question. This in itself shows an implied yet deep-seated belief in God. It is believing in spite of disbelief. The faults, real or supposed, are never attributed by man to his own self, who is so self-confident nowadays that he hardly needs any God to guide his affairs. When things go well with him he ascribes it to his own intelligence and resourcefulness. But as soon as they go wrong he lays the blame at the door of God, Whose existence he is only too ready to deny in easier times.

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Well, whether there is a God or not, someone must be responsible for this disaster. We people of religion before we reply to the question whether or not such calamities disprove the existence of God, are inclined to ask back: "Is then man himself responsible for these?" These two successive World Wars are not fought on religious grounds. They were conducted by people who cannot be suspected of any weakness for religion. Their plans were hatched by scientists and scientific-minded people, with emancipated reason and highly developed intelligence. Are we then to hold man and his "emancipated" mind responsible for these fearful happenings? Let God be a figment of imagination. But man himself is a solid reality as also the wonderful powers of his mind. And if there is no God to be responsible for these calamitous happenings, certainly the whole responsibility for them lies with man. Certainly this is not a very enviable position for man to hold. And if man is responsible for this blemish in the order of things, then as an intelligent being he should not lose any time in putting it in order, seeing that they concern a plane of existence which is purely a creation of the human mind. The social plane of existence, we must remember, has nothing to do with the blind forces of nature which, generally speaking, lie more or less outside the mind of man, and which have to be known and understood as one understands any other object which he has not made. Indeed, according to the modern so-called civilized man's own logic, there should be less difficulty in re-establishing peace in the social order than in the physical world. His anxiety, therefore, to accuse God in this respect is extremely anomalous. Nay, it is even amusing seeing how little the modern man cherishes in his practical life the thought of God and how little is his regard for His Commandments. Indeed, it will be no exaggeration to say that the intellectual atheism of any age pales into insignificance before this

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practical atheism of our times. For people steeped in such atheism to attempt to prove or disprove the Divine existence on the basis of sufferings, which, at all counts, we richly merit, is most ludicrous of all human actions. Be that as it may, one may discern even in this ludicrous action an indirect admission on the part of man that the shape of things is not ultimately designed by man—that man and his will are subject to a will that transcends both. Yes, in his heart of hearts, man feels that the shape of things, even the destiny of man, lies at the hand of someone who is above and beyond himself. He does not feel this when things run smoothly but as soon as they go wrong he cannot help thinking of that Power or Being, who, he feels, is immensely more resourceful than himself. As we all know, it is difficult times that bring us face to face with the realities of life, whereas easier times keep us under the spell of delusion. The true verdict of human nature expresses itself at times of calamity and perplexity. The fact that at all moments of disturbance, man becomes anxious to lay the blame at the door of that power whom he is reluctant to recognise, shows clearly that hidden in the inner recesses of his mind, he has the undetected recognition of the existence of a Being the stamp of whose hand his very existence bears.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Imam,
Mosque, Woking.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin,
U. S. A.
May 17, 1946.

Dear Sir,

Several years ago, I wrote you concerning my interest in a subscription to the *Islamic Review* and my interest in a literary copy of the Qur'ân. Due to the intervention of the war, I did not press the matter.

CORRESPONDENCE

In view of the world-wide interest in the establishment of a Parliament of Religions worshipping a single Deity to parallel the United Nations Organization, to provide world-wide support for a United Nations Organization, it has appeared probable that the Mohammedan church would be represented on an equal basis as the Christian church.

With yourself being the outstanding connection to the English-speaking world, it has appeared to me most likely, under your inspiration, that the *Islamic Review* would be editorializing the aspects of contemporary Mohammedan thought of the requirements of an acceptable Charter of a unified world-wide organization recognizing equality of religious organizations as the United Nations' political organizations. With this in mind, I have deemed it desirable to obtain the *Islamic Review* at this time.

I have looked in vain in the American book stores, from New York to Kansas City, for a suitable English presentation of the Qur'án, which would be readable as the modern versions of the Christian Bible are being made available to the public in editorial presentation and arrangement reflecting up-to-date standards of scholarship and the printing art so that there is an eye-appeal and intellect-appeal from even a superficial observation.

I would appreciate your forwarding me such copy in English of the Qur'án as you would believe most suitable for an understanding of a reader in English.

I, of course, have copies of the Sale's translation, which appears to be able to be improved upon. There are enough biographies about, as well as the collateral reading from the Burton's "Arabian Nights," but the deficiency appears in a first-class English Qur'án, itself.

I enclose draft for 5 pounds sterling to your order, which I would appreciate your applying on a year's subscription of the *Islamic Review* to the above address, as well as, to a payment on account of a suitable English Qur'án.

If there is any balance owing, please send the Qur'án C. O. D. for that balance to me at the above address.

Yours very truly,

H.W.I,

Attorney & Counsellor at Law

Bekenham, Kent.

April 27, 1946.

Dear Sir,

I had a letter from you in August last year, when I was in

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India, in which you kindly gave me some names of people to call on. I am now hoping to be able to come over and see you at the week-end if you can give me a time convenient to you. I am keenly interested in your Mission, and believe, with present conditions in India, that such bodies need urgent support if India (especially Muslim India) is to have any lasting peace.

I am,
Yours faithfully,
N. W.

Chesterfield,
Derbyshire
June 6, 46.

Dear Sir,

Very many thanks for yours of 4th instant and for sending me a copy of the New World Order by M. Ali, which I shall read with much pleasure and profit I am sure. I am watching with keen interest the position of Muslim World just now, especially in Palestine. I hope you will be conciliatory in attitude towards Jews and other nationalities. With every good wishes,

Yours faithfully,
C. L. I.
Windsor.

Dear Sir,

Please instruct me how I may learn more of the Muslim faith and perhaps gain admittance.

Sincerely yours,
R. H.

Henley on Thames,
June 9, 46.

Dear Sir,

I have lately returned from India where I served with the Royal Navy for 2½ years, during which time I became greatly interested in the Holy Qur'án. I have a number of books which I brought back with me. Will you please be kind enough to give me details of your branch at Woking, also where—in London. Can I get into touch with the right people to enable me to study Islam deeper—and also, where can I purchase literature.

Thanking you,
I am,
Sincerely yours,
M. A.

CORRESPONDENCE

Greenford, Middx.

June 13, 46.

Dear Imam Sahib,

I expect you remember that we met on the occasion of the last 'Id.

Mr. K. with whose family I am living at the above address seems interested in Islamic literature. He wants particularly to read the Holy Qur'an. I am afraid with all my expenses I am not in a position to make any gift of books to him. Does your Mission distribute religious literature free? If so, would you kindly send some at an early date?

Thanks and best regards,

Yours sincerely,

S. Z. Ali.

Feversham, Kent.

July 10, 1946.

Dear Sir,

I should be grateful if you would send me particulars of the Muslim faith—any illustrations or pamphlets for the use of children would be especially welcome.

Yours faithfully,

W. K.

Norton, Evesham, Worcs.

June 10, 1946.

Maulvi Abdul Majid,
Imam of the Woking Mosque.

Dear Sir,

Acting on the counsel of Mr. H. St. John B. Philby, who kindly permits me to mention his name to you as introducer, I am writing to ask you to guide me on a line of study concerning Islam. As I am staying at Surbiton from next Monday, 24th June, perhaps you could very kindly name a day on which I could call on you personally. If this cannot be arranged, I should be grateful to know what books I ought to study. It is my heart's wish to enter the fold of Islam. For some years I have had Muslim friends and colleagues, but it was not until I went to India in 1944 that insistence of Islam on the unity of God struck me very forcibly.

In the summer of 1945, while still [in India, the desire to embrace Islam became very apparent and grew deeper, but I preferred to wait. It was with intense regret that I left India in March this year, on the closing down of the.....and

ISLAMIC REVIEW

recall of the staff. I thought that resumption of contact with the West might affect my wish, but this has not been so. The desire has remained constant. I must say that at no time has any one attempted to influence me. I have found among Muslims a complete absence of proselytism. My reading has been rather round the subject than about it, but from personal observation and books I have gained some knowledge of Islam. A short while ago I wrote to Mr. Philby and he advised me to get into touch with you.

Believe me, with all respects,
Yours faithfully,
E. S.

Stratford,
London, E. 15.
June 13, 1946.

Dear Mr. Majid,

It is a long time since you have heard from me, but perhaps you will have understood that while 'tied' to service in the Army I was hardly a free agent—hence, for instance, the fact that I have not visited you since September 9 last year.

As I have told you before, there is a quality manifested in the Muslim religious celebrations at Woking that are not to be so clearly seen elsewhere that I know of. I would very much like to visit you again, and the sooner the better—but rather than just 'drop in' on you I would rather you suggested when I might best come, because, owing to present circumstances, I am free all day for perhaps several weeks to come. I would like to assure you personally that I regard your friendship and understanding as one of the greatest blessings that have come to me in recent years.

I will bid you farewell for a short time longer therefore, and trust to have the great pleasure of another letter or card from you soon.

Please believe me to remain,
Yours most sincerely,
Gilbert E. Smith.

London, W. 14.
May 26, 1946.

The Imam, Woking Mosque.

Dear Sir,

I am studying the present position of Religion among the Muslims of Soviet Russia and find it very difficult to get

CORRESPONDENCE

reliable information. If you could advise me of any publications in English or French I might consult I should be grateful.

For instance, the Census of 1926 gave the number of Mosques as 1312. But there seems no possibility of finding (1) whether any new ones have been built since then, and (2) whether permission will be given to rebuild such as were destroyed during the War.

Also, the Russians say that the Mullas in Central Asia have declared that Communism is not in opposition to either the Holy Qur-án or the Shariah. But in no case do they quote the exact text of such declaration. Nor can I fix the exact position of Arabic in religious services held in the old Khanates.

With apologies for troubling you,

I am,

Faithfully yours,

E. C.

London, S. W. 1.

July 4, 1946.

Dear Imam,

Very many thanks for your letter of June 18th and for sending the *Islamic Review* and the booklet. I am sorry that my travels have prevented me thanking you before.

I have read the *Review* and the booklet with great interest as they certainly present Islam from a different angle than I have up till now been accustomed to. They also stimulate me to undertake further reading. I have at the moment the following books at my disposal — perhaps you would be so good as to give me briefly your opinion on them.

1. The Legacy of Islam — Arnold & Guillaume
2. Mohammedanism — Margoliouth
3. Whither Islam — Gibb
4. Islam Today — Arbery & Landau
5. Dictionary of Islam—Hughes, and of course Palmer's English Translation of the Qur'án; others are available in the Library but perhaps you have some suggestions—particularly on Islam and the modern economic and social systems. Would you like me to return the ones you sent me or may I keep them?

I shall make a point of seeing you when I am next in town though that may not be for a long time.

Yours sincerely,
W.K.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Helsinki, Finland.

April 27, 1946.

Dear Sir,

By chance I got a copy of the *Islamic Review* and now I beg to ask you some questions regarding Islam. I am no important person but I think it would be right first to tell you who I am.

My name is.....and my nationality is Finnish. I am 32 years old, married and have two small daughters. I have studied Politics, Economics, Social Science and German at the University of Helsinki.

By birth I am a Lutheran but in my heart I have — with intervals of doubt — been a supporter of Islam. Nominally I am still a Christian. I have been studying the Holy Qur'án and have read Lord Headley's "A Western Awakening to Islam" both of which have been translated into Finnish by the late Z. T. Ahsan, a Turkish merchant who lived in Finland and with whom I had corresponded. Also I have read books on Islam written by Christian missionaries but have found them false and unfair. I believe in the one God and I believe that Muhammad was His Prophet.

I would be very grateful to you, dear sir, if you would be so kind as to give me some information about various religious questions. In the Holy Qur'án there is a statement which I do not quite understand. It is Verse 13 of Chapter XXXII. Does that verse imply that Allah from the beginning has condemned some people without giving them any chance?¹ And this question is connected with the entire question of predestination. Do we have a free will to choose between evil and good? And then: what is the Muslim view on the descent of man?² The Holy Qur'án clearly states that a man may take several wives, but Turkey has forbidden this. Was that wrong or right? How should the relations between man and woman be regulated in the world of today?³ What is the Muslim view on the birth and death of Jesus? What are the conditions that a man must fulfil to be accepted as a Muslim?

Dear sir, I ask you to excuse me for asking you so much but I do it only in order to find the right path and peace for my soul. I would be very grateful too if I could get some information about the progress of Islam in the Western world.

Awaiting your reply,

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

V. M.

¹ Read *Taqdir* by Dr. Basharat Ahmad—Ed, I.R.

² Read *The Biblical and Quranic Adam* by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

³ Read *Status of Woman in Islam* by Maulvi Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad.

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