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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَجْلَدٌ فِي مَضَى سَنَةِ رَسُولِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

THE  
**ISLAMIC REVIEW**

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**THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADZAN**

By the time the present issue reaches the hands of our readers they will be in the midst of the holy month of Ramadan. Let them not forget that we are engaged in a spiritual *Jihad*, one that is to bring peace and happiness to a distracted world. The kingdom of God has to be re-established on this earth. The spiritual exertions of the Muslims alone have to do this. The month of Ramadan is a month exclusively set apart for a concentrated exertion of this kind. The chances of world peace are far greater at this moment than at any time during the last four years. May the Id-i-Ramadhan synchronise with cessation of hostilities between the belligerent nations of the world !

EDITOR

# ISLAMIC REVIEW

## THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

### I—THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM

BY RABI'AL-KARIM, M.Sc.

“ISLAM.”—This singular word signifies clearly and brightly the inner and outer aspects of the religion of the Muslims—it shows its inmost vision most vividly just like the serene, free and bare view of the earth peering out of the dark veil of the night with the floral touch of the dawn—like foliage and blossoms blooming on trees with the advent of the spring—like dew drops sparkling on the green landscape with the peeping of the globe of gold. As the fragrant perfume of the rose speaks of its nice, delicate and sweet form, so the utterance of the word “Islam” acquaints the human mind with the beauty and flow of the religion of the Muslims.

Nowhere is found such a glory in name—such a mode in expression—such a variety in force. And in Islam rings the throbbing of the vitality of the Muslim and in it lies his mighty, superb glory. It was not sword that crushed the all-conquering royal power of Persia—it was not spear that penetrated and rent the invincible martial power of Rome—it was ISLAM. But Islam is not the piercing point of the spear, nor the fine blade of the sword. It is not manifested in the din of battle and clash of arms from one quarter of the globe to the other, nor by the all-pervading sounds of drums and trumpets. Islam is to the human soul what fragrance is to the flower, the chlorophyll is to the foliage, the infinite blue is to the limitless heavens. It is the expression of the inner feeling of the mind of mankind for the Eternal Effulgence expressed through all ages in hill and dale, in mount and cave, in forest and wilderness. In the snow-capped mount or fertile river-bank, in the burning sandy desert or the lovely

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green meadow, in the lowly thatched hut or lofty palatial mansions, wherever man's mind has been dedicated to The Lord of All the Worlds—The Source of All Blessings—The Most Merciful Creator of the Universe—the expression is ISLAM. It is the merry rhythm of the everpouring of the heart and soul of mankind in the quest of the Eternal Unknown Who is beyond our senses.

That is why the Muslims have accepted all those Prophets who came to preach the doctrine of The Omnipotent in different ages. The religion of Prophets Abraham and Moses, Noah and Jesus, has been recognised as the religion of Islam. The extraordinary love of God manifested in the life of the Biblical Job or the Quranic Ayyub—his keen desire to submit to the will of God most cheerfully and respectfully, sacrificing his all, represents Islam. The Muslim is, therefore, justly proud of this magnificent term and all that it connotes.

Man's sacrifice of his restless self at the Altar of the Creator and his complete submission to His Will and his absolute and unreserved dependence on Him are symbolised in Islam alone. Auspicious was the moment when the human tongue first uttered "Aslamtu"—"My Lord, I submit to Thee; I am dedicating everything to Thee; I am accepting all Thy commands with all my heart and soul. In weal or woe, in sorrow or happiness, Thy will is my Crown—Thy gift is my cherished Blessing. My Lord! In my life and work—in my being and doing, Thy will be done; My Master, may Thy rhyme ring always in my life-wire! May Thy will bloom like lotus in my life-ocean."

This is Islam. To submit one's own self completely to Allah, to accept most cheerfully what He is pleased to give and to resign one's own bubbles of

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wishes to His sweet ocean of will—that is Islam. It was this Islam, which the first Muslims of Arabia struggled with their lives to establish. As it is such a resignation to Allah's will—which brings into operation the active mercy of God for humanity. It is to be carefully borne in mind that Islam did not make its first appearance in the fertile and verdured land of India—land of spring, and flowers, of plenty and satiety—nor was it first preached on the dewy vernal pleasant Nile-washed land of Egypt nor did it first bloom in the fragrant rose-blossomed charming land of Basra. But it grew and developed in the bosom of a sandy stretch of barren land burning under a scorching desert-sun—where Nature herself seems always to heave fire—where life itself is dry, dreary and cheerless. In this unenviable place under this all-consuming fire and all-destroying simoom and against the murderous arms of the enemy, Islam was first accepted. The believer's inner heart rang with the resonant note of complete resignation to Allah and he expressed "I am a Muslim: My Lord! I am Thy servant. For Thee I live and for Thee I die: If Thou wilt let me die by inches with hunger and starvation, wilt let my body be battered with the strokes of the enemy, let me bleed with their blows, let me be agonised by cruel persecution—all these will I bear cheerfully and submit to Thy will. If it is Thy will, Thou mayest devastate my lively garden or pour the sweet water in my gold pitcher out into the salty ocean—destroy my dearest and nearest ones subjecting them to all sorts of sufferings—by sending down hail or storm or fire after fire, affliction after affliction or torment upon torment—I will accept all these as Thy blessings."

This is Islam—the religion of the Muslims. The strings of their lives were pitched to this tune; that is why a small number of people deserted by friends

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and relations, oppressed by one and all, bore ungrudgingly all the ridicules, starvations, insult and persecutions and stood like rocks and survived the bloody onslaughts of the murderous enemies. One of the Holy Prophet's grandsons, the apples of the Muslims' eye, Hazrat Imam Hasan, drank at ease the cup of poison—the other bravest of all heroes, Hazrat Imam Husain suffered the most tragic death on the burning plains of Karbala. They neither uttered a word of sorrow, nor did they heave a sigh of grief and this because they accepted the will of the Omnipotent most unflinchingly in their own lives. Remember Imam Husain at the time when the babies of his family—symbols of affection and love—the most cherished treasures of the Prophet's family, collapsed one after another for want of a drop of water on the sandy plains of Karbala and thereby manifested the will of Allah in a most tragic yet inspiring form. Just think of the anguish of Imam Husain when his wife fainted at the sight of her babe's tender throat wetted with blood instead of water and pierced by the enemy arrow and when the heart-rending wailings and lamentations of the inmates of the camp gave staggering blows to his power of endurance. Remember Imam Husain when at his lion-like charge, the bank of the Euphrates was cleared of the enemies and standing knee-deep in the waters he was about to wet his parched throat with water on the palms of his hands, but threw away the water, came back to the bank but stripped himself of all his armours, helmet and weapons and sat to pray and die—rather gave himself up to enemies' cruel arms—remember him in these different phases and you will then know what Islam is and who is a Muslim. He did not weep with his dying baby on his lap; he did not bewail the loss of his dear and near ones—he did not appeal to God in his impatience. He prayed

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on the contrary: "O My Lord, I am a Muslim. Islam is my religion. O Thou, my most beloved—These are all Thy blessings and I lift them on my head—These are Thy commands and I submit to these." And this is why almost winning the battle he threw away his armours and weapons and thereby the chances of victory, and embraced the most tragic death at the Lord's command.

This explains how an infinitely small number of Muslims possessed such an unlimited measure of strength and prowess. Their submission and resignation to the will of the Lord were most cordial and sincere. They merged their own might in the all-conquering might of the Almighty, and therefrom they drew such an overpowering strength that baffled—nay swept away like grass before the wind—all the powers of the time. Indeed, one cannot help wondering when one thinks how the Muslims defeated time and again the well-equipped and best-arrayed Roman armies numbering ten or twelve times greater than themselves, but when one considers that they were Muslims and their religion was Islam—wonder flutters away. Their resignation to the Almighty acted like a Divine electric wave when they attacked the enemy rank—all their arms acted like a single arm and the enemy had no strength to bear their pressure.

This merry rhythm of self-absorption and self-surrender to the Glorious Creator, Merciful Sustainer and Powerful Lord which is the keynote of Islam gives resonance to the sweetest melody in different phases in the lives of all Muslims the world over. The great doctrine of Islam "*La ilaha Illallah*" (There is none to be worshipped save Allah) is enlivened by the sweet melody of Islam. The moment these words of *Tawhid* (oneness) come out of the Muslim throat then and there not only the supremacy of 360 millions

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of deities—sun and moon, ghosts and devils, birds and beasts, stones and trees crumble down to dust, but a determined denial is given to the superiority of anything worldly in his life. The word “No” tears down all the ties of bondage, shatters all kinds of lusts in the believer, crushes all his objects of love and these dwindle to non-existence. He says “My Lord! My Sustainer! My Creator! None there is save Thee as my Lord, I am servant of Thee alone and to none else do I submit. I do not serve passion, lust nor love nor do I yield to greed, anger and envy. I do not beg for wealth. Thy pleasure is the world’s best riches. I do not crave for any beauty nor do I pray for luxurious ease of a royal life, nor yet do I long for eloquent and sweet songs of beautiful nymph-like maidens. Oh Thou Beautiful! Thou art the only embellishment of all my refinement. Thou art the only water that quenches all my thirst. Thou art the only tune of my life-song.”

*(To be continued)*

## ISLAM AND MODERN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

*(Continued from page 242 of the last issue.)*

It is wrongly assumed that there is no adventure and thrill in the path chalked out by God for us. As has been rightly observed by a Persian poet, those who march along the path of submission experience every moment of their life a new existence, so to speak.\* As a matter of fact, there are far more new discoveries and conquests in the path Divine than in the path of man’s own construction, which is unfortunately always the one of Devil. But to have a view of this boundless field of adventure, one needs to be steady and persevering in the path of rectitude. In fact, the man-made path has scarcely any real adventure to offer. It may at best give some unhealthy excitement and consequent depression in the end.

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کشتگان خنجر تسلیم را هر زمان از غیب جان دگرست \*

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Besides, life is no mere adventure. It is a purposeful thing. Adventure is a good thing but it should have for its object the fulfilment of our ultimate destiny. As the Qur-án would put it, life is not a sport and a mere accident. "What did you then think that We had created you in vain?" (23 : 115). It has a serious purpose behind it. If our adventures end in a smoke, well, they are not worth trying. Our adventures should be of the useful type. Divine guidance alone can vouchsafe this for us. We must hold in check the false curiosity for the experience of wrong paths. It is not desired of us; it is harmful to us in all its various aspects. So even the spirit of adventure has its right and wrong channels to flow. We have to beware of this.

The experiments on social systems that have been going on in the West for some time past have something to do with this urge of false adventure. It is inspired partly by that vicious tendency in the mind of man which prompts him to feel his self-sufficiency and independence from God, and partly by this spirit of false adventure. But God will suffer none of these. The time has come when He must compel people to submit to His declared policy concerning the social life of man. Facts are speaking ever more loudly that man's findings on the rules of social existence are hopelessly one-sided, conflicting and injurious. It is indeed pathetically amusing to find the followers of one of these systems denouncing those of another as the greatest enemies of humanity, who must be annihilated in the very interest of mankind. Unlike the various religions, these conflicting theories belong to the same age and cannot thus be explained in terms of evolution. Neither can any of them be set aside as reactionary, when we see the older ones admitting, in practice, the force of the arguments of the newer ones. For

## MODERN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

example many of the protests of communism are now embodied in the practice of capitalistic systems of economics. The dole system, the provision for better housing for the labourers, the old-age pension, the restrictions in the hours of work, the provision for holidays, the health insurance, the Creche and similar institutions, signifying the right of labour on the resources of the State, are all, in fact, the admission by the capital, of the validity of the protests of labour. On the other hand, we find Soviet Russia gravitating towards the capitalistic position before the end of the second decade of its existence. When Lenin first established the Socialistic regime in Russia the world was told that it was the first step towards the realisation of an ideal which was still afar off—complete communism. The climbing down at the hands of Stalin is, therefore, very significant. The only explanation may be the rise of Fascism in the two neighbouring countries of Italy and Germany, the heat of whose flames must have been felt even before the war broke out. And in Russia itself, Trotsky's failure and Stalin's successful enforcement of the new constitution it is difficult to explain otherwise. This makes one thing very clear. Each one of the present-day movements takes an extreme view of things, the defects of which are discovered only when it is challenged by another movement equally extreme. This is like the swinging of a pendulum, with this much difference that the swinging in this case instead of tending to slow down as is the case with things physical, increases in fury and force as the time passes. And this is the indication that the path chosen is wrong. Reactions, no doubt, take place in a right course of action as well. But such reactions gradually make room for a more settled state of affairs. Take the case of the rise of Islam. No doubt, wars had to be waged to see Islam established in the land.

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No doubt, a huge commotion was created at the advent of this religion. But even its worst enemies cannot deny that at the end of this commotion, law and order was established in Arabia in a manner that had no precedent in the annals of that land. In the case of communism, however, the reaction is growing severer at every new stage. The revolutions of France and some other continental countries about that time were bloody enough for any reformation and the world that considered these revolutions as a natural process, reasonably expected a calmer atmosphere to prevail after they were over. But these proved abortive, till the Russian Revolution came with horrors unprecedented. A reaction to this series of socialistic revolutions expressed itself in Nazism, which put even Russian atrocities to shame and so on it goes. The Spanish Civil War is most instructive in this connection. The happenings in this peninsular country, fomented by the growing tide of Fascism, must have thrown cold water, even before the present war came, on the enthusiasm of those who still pinned their faith in Sovietism as the destiny of their country. In fact, the very theory of reaction as applied to this particular case has proved a very weak one. Communism appeals to the gross animal needs of man, and as such there is not much room in it, if any, for any reactions. Reactions are expected in movements that demand an idealistic vision calling for higher virtues in man. Besides, Karl Marx himself regards the rule of the Proletariat as an inevitable consummation of a process of economic evolution. Thus granting that long used to capitalistic machinations the labourers are unable to readily grasp the Marxian proposals for the solution of the tangible problem of bread, once the proposed regime is established in a certain country, its people as a whole should be finally and unswervingly established

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in their faith in the communistic system. The evolutionary process should never know any retrograde step. The Spanish Civil War is thus a refutation of the Marxian theory. However much allowance may be made for outside help and incitement, there is no denying the fact that a great mass of Spanish people were found enthusiastically fighting under the flag of General Franco. The same kind of things happened in Germany. Communistic régime was more or less established there. But the impressions of its blessings could not prevent the rise of Hitlerism, which spread like a wild fire among the masses of German people. The voice of religion had issued a stern warning long ago to the very race to which Karl Marx belongs—"man does not live by bread alone." Karl Marx as though instigated by his distant ancestors, did his level best to invalidate this warning of the last prophet of his race. The word proceeding from the mouth of God will perhaps yet take some time to inspire the peoples of Europe to social activities. But impulses of a much lower type, *e.g.*, of nationalism and racialism, have already been proving too strong for the hunger for bread. Only recently the scientifically evolved bread hunger of the Russians was put to a test and it was found wanting. When hard pressed by the mad hordes of Hitler, the much-vaunted economic interest of the Russian was not found to supply enough inspiration to enable him to meet the situation, and an appeal had to be made by the present dictator to another feeling of the Russians. A new cry had to be raised, *viz.*, of fatherland. The world knows that but for this dormant patriotic feeling of the Russian peasant, all would be lost before long. The bliss of scientific economic consciousness, the crown of modern philosophical discoveries, thus proved too high a thing to be appreciated by humanity—its mind could not respond as enthusiastically to its call as it did to calls less evolved from the Marxian point of view. At this critical hour in the history of Communism, the world naturally expected a call to go forth, from the citadel of this new faith,

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in the name of economics upheld as the master passion and core of human social consciousness, if not to the whole world which is perhaps not yet able to grasp its heavenly vision, at least to the people of U.S.S.R. who are in the fullest enjoyment of its blessings, to arouse them to an action impossible of achievement by any other appeal. But an absolutely different thing happened. However, to resume the thread of our previous argument, if Capitalism introduced reforms on the lines suggested by Socialists, the movement that came as a counter revolution, termed reactionary by its opponents, I mean Nazism; started with proposals that are a virtual acceptance of the principal contentions of Socialism. As a matter of fact, the word socialism forms a part of the name used for this new movement bent upon annihilating Socialism. Here is much food for thought for those that would go deep into the question. It will be of great interest for such a student to read the following among the 25 points in the National Socialist German Workers' Party programme framed on the 25th February, 1920:

Point 10. It must be the first duty of each citizen of the State to work with his mind or with his body. The activities of the individual may not clash with the interests of the whole, but must proceed within the frame of the community and be for the general good.

Point 11. Abolition of incomes unearned by work.  
Abolition of the thralldom of interest.

Point 13. We demand nationalisation of all business which have been up to the present formed into companies (Trusts).

Point 14. We demand that the profits from wholesale trade shall be shared out.

Point 15. We demand extensive development of provision for old age.

To those familiar with communistic slogans point 10 of this programme will appear as a paraphrase of "From each according to his capacity."

*(To be continued.)*

## SOME OBSCURE PASSAGES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT EXPLAINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE QUR-AN.

BY SYED MAQBOOL AHMAD, B.A.

*(Continued from p. 250 of the last issue).*

It is the last passage that needs some comment. The Jews sooner or later found out their mistake by discovering that Jesus was hale and hearty and in all his glory in their midst again after they had seemingly killed and buried him. This is the much-boomed resurrection of Jesus and his manifestation or advent to his disciples which occurred in the lifetime of his hearers. Before he finally disappeared or before his last drama of crucifixion, he is reported by St. John to have made a very remarkable statement. I quote St. John.

“ Nevertheless I tell you the truth : It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not on me. Of righteousness because I go to my father and ye see me no more). Of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth for he shall not speak of himself but whatsoever he shall hear, that he shall speak and he will show you all things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. All things that the father hath are mine, therefore said I, that he shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me ; and again, a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.”

St. John: XVI: 7—16.

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Who was this comforter ? Certainly not a woolly warm garment like the muffler, nor even the cloven tongues that settled on the stalk of early Christians, heated their head and affected their speech, nor yet the Holy Ghost, as none of these fit in with the description given by St. John. It is nothing but a confounded mistranslation of "Ahmad," Aramaic "Paraqalyon," literally translated in Greek as Paraclete and rendered into English by the change of a diphthong. A very learned exposition on this subject has been made by Revd. Benjamin David Kaldani, B.D. sometimes Bishop in Urumia in the pages of the "Islamic Review." The coming of the Comforter is undoubtedly a fact as the Qur-án has confirmed it, but the way St. John has reported it is open to following criticisms.

1. If the coming of the comforter was promised in the lifetime of Jesus' disciples, was it fulfilled by any other event than the reappearance of Jesus Christ himself after his crucifixion ?

2. If it meant cloven tongues or the Holy Ghost, does that event tally with this description of the promised comforter ? Obviously here it is meant a personality and that too a single one and not the Holy Ghost which is only an attribute or manifestation of God nor the cloven tongues that were in legions. None of these can be regarded as the comforter of the aforesaid prophecy.

Now let us see what the Qur-án says on the point :  
" And when Jesus the son of Mary said, O children of Israel, verily I am the apostle of God to you, verifying the law that was before me and giving you glad tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad—but when he did come to them with manifest sign, they said this is manifest sorcery."

(Ch. 61, V. 6).

## NEW TESTAMENT AND QUR-AN

You may dispute whether Comforter was Ahmad or not, but you will admit that the safest course to save the face of the narrators of the New Testament is to give an indefinite period for his coming and not an extremely limited period *viz.*, the lifetime of the narrator, for in the latter case it will embarrass their followers and successors and will compel them to make fruitless efforts to discover that personality, however ridiculously misfit it may prove or in the alternative in denying the whole thing to be a forgery. If I were a devoted Christian, instead of explaining it with the Holy Ghost or cloven tongues I would pick out St. Paul in whom at least no one will find or suggest any absurd comparison or anachronism.

It is really amusing how the early Christians indulged in their zeal in pious myths. I will give you two instances of this from the Acts of the Apostle.

We read the following words in the Book of Deutonomy, chapter XVIII, verse 18 : “ I will raise them up a prophet among their brethren, like unto thee ; and I will put my words in his mouth.” This is confirmed by the Qur-án in the following verse :

“ Verily We have sent unto you an apostle bearing witness against you as We sent an Apostle unto Pharaoh.”

(Ch. 73, V. 15).

If these words do not apply to Muhammad they still remain unfulfilled for similarity of Moses with Muhammad is so very evident and in so many ways. Both were law-givers, both started their successful life from the land of their emigration. Then Muhammad was undoubtedly from the brethren of Israel, *i.e.*, the Arabs, who were the children of Ishmael.\*

Further, Jesus himself never claimed to be the prophet alluded to. Even his disciples were of the same

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\* Both had to fight their enemies, both were nation-builders.—Ed., *I. R.*

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opinion, but now they look to the coming of Jesus for the fulfilment of the prophecy! How wonderful.

“Whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy Prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers. A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatever he shall say unto you.”

Acts III. 21-22.

Jesus' second advent can hardly fulfil the words. Jesus as is believed by the Church, will appear as a Judge and not as a law-giver; but the promised one has to come with a “fiery law” in his right hand. In ascertaining the personality of the promised prophet the other prophecy of Moses is, however, very helpful where it speaks of the shining forth of God from Paran, the Makkan mountain. The words in the Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter XXXIII verse 2, run as follows: “The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them—he shineth forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them.” None of the Israelites, including Jesus, had anything to do with Paran. Hagar, with her son Ishmael, wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba and afterwards dwelt in the wilderness of Paran. (Gen. XXI, 21). He married an Egyptian woman, and through his first born Kedar gave descent to the Arabs who from that time till now are the dwellers of the wilderness of Paran. Thus the Qur-án says:

“By the (mount of) Fig and Olive (Seir), And by Mount Sinai, and by this safe land (Paran or Makka)”

(Ch. 95, vv. 1—3.)

## NEW TESTAMENT AND QUR-AN

Is it the ignorance of the Old Testament or obstinacy that makes the upholders of the Christian view of the subject insist on this pious makobelief? And here is another glaring example of this uncritical faith. Every reader of the Old Testament knows that Jews are forbidden to partake of the flesh of swine, the animals that are strangled, the blood, and meat offered to idols. It is related in the Acts of the Apostles that some dispute arose whether the non-Jewish people accepting Christianity should refrain from these forbidden articles of food. The matter was referred to the disciples. While they freed them from circumcision and many burdensome and irksome Jewish laws (one wonders whether they also allowed these proselytes to substitute Sabbath Saturday for Sunday), the disciples were adamant in refusing the forbidden food as laid down in the Jewish Law. We read in the Acts—

“That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which if ye keep yourself, ye shall do well.”

(Acts XV, 20 and 29).

Compare this with the following passage of the Qur-án :

“Say, I can find nowhere I am inspired in, anything unlawful for the partaker to partake, unless it be dead (of itself) or the flesh of swine for that is abomination or the blood that has been shed or that is consecrated to other than God. But who is forced, not wilfully nor transgressing them, verily thy Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.” (Ch. 6, V. 151.)

No doubt the Qur-án regards swine's flesh as abominable or 'fisq' and 'fisq' in Arabic also means 'fornication' or any evil or sinful act. So it is not at all unreasonable to assume that in the Biblical passage

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swine's flesh substituted 'fornication' is a deliberate and wilful alteration. In fact, the mention of fornication in the midst of prohibited articles of food, makes the whole sentence look so absurd. Are we to understand that fornication is an eatable thing and comes in the category of forbidden food or that it was not considered a sin by the proselytes, so as to make it necessary for the disciples to remind them that it was a sin. And what was the result of this impious change? Bacon which the disciples condemned became the main article of food to the Christians and the swines to whom Jesus Christ consigned the evil spirits filled their hearts and soul so that even the communion bread and wine could not replace it. The Christians have surpassed all other nations of the world in their brutalities and hard-heartedness, from the burning of witches and heretics, to the lynching of niggers in modern America. The history of Christianity is besmeared with the bloodshed of an internecine war and crusades of which no parallel and example can be found in any non-Christian nation, and they surely deserve the fate of the swines of Gaderene, in the end, unless of course they abjure the whole tradition of dishonest interpolations in their own sacred scriptures, repent for all their past misconduct and as a practical demonstration of their inner change take to the upright and unadulterated faith of Islam, whose holy founder they have so unscrupulously slandered for so many centuries.

# INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION ON EUROPE

BY KAZI AHMAD MIAN AKHTAR

‘ You may destroy a nation, burn her literature and demolish her monuments, but the influence left by her cannot be effaced by centuries : it is stronger than bronze bedrock and no human power can obliterate it.’—Le Bon.

So says the famous French writer in his monumental work *Histoire de la Civilization des Arabes*.

The past rules the present, and nations follow in the footsteps of those that have gone before. They mirror the culture and civilization of the preceding people and in their turn, if they work out their capabilities properly, they leave a model for the coming generations. Greece owed her culture to Assyria and Egypt, and Egypt must have been indebted to some other ancient nation which history has yet to discover. Pascal has rightly observed that we must suppose all the nations who came in the world one after the other, a living being who every day acquires knowledge of something new. The Romans, the Persians, the Phoenicians, and the Indians all borrowed the attainments of others to make a bedrock for their own civilization. The Arabs were the only nation that has proved an exception to this universal rule. They excelled others in their culture and brought civilization to a height not reached before ; and this all within a period that excites the marvel and wonderment of the world for its shortness. Historians have racked their brain to attribute this rapid and unique progress to some external causes, but they failed in their efforts and had to trace it to only one source and that was Islam. Every other nation that came in contact with the Muslims was as well highly benefited. The world had already lost her ancient acquisition at the advent of Islam. She was nearing to death and decay and

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was groping in the darkness of ignorance<sup>(1)</sup> when the Sun of Islam arose on the hills of Paran (Makka) and began to enlighten the benighted corners of Egypt, Persia, Syria, Spain, Northern Africa and India.

Islam brought a religion of progress and taught principles and tenets that were sure to uplift humanity to her destined goal. Dr. Draper bears testimony to it in the following words :—

“ Too often, in the world, success is the criterion of right. The Mahomedan (Muslim—*Ed. I. R.*) appeals to the splendour and rapidity of his career as a proof of the divine mission of his apostle. It is altogether a misconception that the Arabian progress was due to the sword. The sword may change an acknowledged national creed, but it cannot affect the conscience of men. Profound though its argument is, somewhat more profound was demanded before Mahomedans (Muslims—*Ed. I. R.*) pervaded the domestic life of Asia and Africa before Arabic became the language of so many different nations.<sup>(2)</sup> ”

The teachings of al-Qur-án worked out wonders and Europe, for that which is good and noble in her culture, is greatly indebted to Islam. ‘ How deeply to this book’ (Qur-án), says Draper, ‘ Asia and Africa are indebted for daily guidance, how deeply Europe and America for the light of science.’<sup>(3)</sup>

M. Sedillot, the French Orientalist, while referring to the Muslim research work in the province of Science, makes the following observation :—

“ It was thus that the influence exercised by the Arabs manifested in every branch of civilization. From the ninth to the fifteenth century

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(1) For details see Amser Ali's 'Spir t of Islam', Introduction.

(2) Intellectual Development of Europe, Vol. 1, p. 33.

(3) *Ibid*, p. 345.

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the most voluminous literature extant was formed, productions were multiplied ;—valuable inventions attested the wonderful activity of men's mind at this epoch ; and their influence felt throughout Christian Europe, justified the opinion that the Arabs have led us in all things. On the one hand we find inestimable material for a history of the Middle Ages ; narratives of voyages, the happy idea of biographical dictionary ; on the other unequalled industry, building grandiose, in thought and execution, important discoveries in the art. Does not all this reveal the work of a people so long disdained ?<sup>(1)</sup>.

### THE CRUSADES AND REFORMATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The introduction of Islamic influence into Europe dates back as far as the Crusades. The event proved a great means of spreading enlightenment and culture throughout the whole continent of Europe.

The Roman Catholic Church remained for a considerable long time under the Pope who exercised his unlimited autocratic power on the adherents of the Church of Rome, and had enchained them in the fetters of superstition and ignorance. The Cardinals and Bishops squandered large sums of money which was regarded an effective means of redemption and salvation. They inflicted punishment on whomsoever they wanted. They pretended to be the masters of Good and Evil, flinging one into Hell and sending the other to Heaven. To put it in a nutshell, the ecclesiastical demoralization had reached its zenith and the followers of Christ were suffering at the hands of the church dignitaries. A wave of religious enthusiasm swept over the whole of Christendom, and the religious frenzy

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<sup>(1)</sup> *Historians' History of the World*, Vol. 8, p. 275.

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fanned by the Ecclesiasts drove the Crusaders to the Holy Land, to 'wage war against the simple, homogeneous clearness of Mohammadanism (Islam—ED. *I. R.*).<sup>(1)</sup> They failed to rescue the Church of Resurrection from the Muslim hands but they themselves became resurrected in many ways from the depth of degradation and medieval barbarity.'

Christianity, especially in her paganised form, demolished all the land-marks of Roman and Greek civilization and brought forth the Dark Age of the medieval days. Every evil in human nature came to surface in the West. Under Papal ordinances and Jesuistic principles Christendom was exhibiting the worst type of ignorance and barbarity, when the humanising influence of Islam came to work upon the European mind in the days of the Crusades which had shaken the faith of all the Christians and the close contact of the Muslims opened the eyes of these blind followers of the Church. But it was not an easy task for them to throw the yoke of a life-long servile obedience off their shoulders, nor had they any moral courage to change their creed, yet the lesson they thus assimilated from Islam was so great that they were engaged in a long series of deadly struggles and mutual dissensions and 'gradually these were the causes of that religious upheaval out of which arose the Protestant faith.'<sup>(2)</sup>

For centuries the Pope had ruled the destinies of the Christian people and it was not easy to demolish his power at a single stroke. Martin Luther was the first man to attempt vigorously the Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church. This Martin Luther, who was the founder of Protestantism, received his education at the Italian Universities where Arabian

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<sup>(1)</sup> Hegel's Philosophy of History, p. 241 (New York 1894).

<sup>(2)</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

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philosophy was taught. It is also important to note that he visited Cordova and Toledo which were then great centres of Muslim civilization and culture in Spain. Therefore it will not be unreasonable to hold that the idea of Reformation entered into the head of Luther by studying the rationalistic principles of Islam.<sup>(1)</sup>

However, it is admitted on all hands by European writers that the first awakening of the critical and inquiring spirit, that has, in great measure, rescued Europe from lethargy of monkish ignorance and ecclesiastical bigotry, is solely due to the followers of Islam.<sup>(2)</sup>

There can be no gainsaying the fact that the struggle of the crusaders with the Muslims brought to Europe an unimaginable gain of inestimable value in every sphere of life. It widened their vision and broadened their moral and intellectual outlook. In this connection the German Philosopher observes :

“ In the struggle with the Saracens, Europe had idealised itself to a fair and noble chivalry. Science and knowledge, especially that of Philosophy, came from the Arabs into the West. A noble poetry and free imagination was kindled among the Germans by the East, a fact which directed Goethe’s attention to the Orient and occasioned the composition of a string of lyric pearls, in his ‘ Divan ’, which in warmth and felicity of fancy cannot be surpassed.”

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(1) Luther also studied the Quran and translated into Latin, copies of which are still available.

(2) Encyc. Brit. Vol. II. p. 265, 9th Ed.

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In this respect a great French Sociologist has aptly observed :—

“ When we cast a glance over those commercial relations and artistic and industrial development which resulted from the Crusaders' proceeding to East, we can say that these Crusades which cleared away the mass of pagan accretions and uncivilized manners from Europe, aroused a great passion for scientific and literary achievements promulgated through the colleges of Europe ; and exercised a grand effect which manifested itself one day in the form of Renaissance ”<sup>(1)</sup>

To support our contention further we cannot do better than to quote here the French historian F. Guizot, who has judiciously expressed his opinion regarding the Islamic influence on the mediæval Europe.

“ They therefore,” says Guizot, “ continued to rush to the Crusades, and attempted their revival.” Such, in my opinion, are the great and true effects of the Crusades ; on one side, the extension of ideas, the enfranchisement of mind ; on the other, the aggrandisement of existence, and a large sphere opened to activity of all kind : they produced at once a great degree of individual liberty and of political unity. They aided the independence of man and the centralization of society. Much has been asked as to the kind of civilization which was directly imported from the East ; it has been said that the chief portion of the great discoveries which, in the 14th and 15th centuries, called forth the development of European

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<sup>(1)</sup> The original work of Dr. Le Bon., in French being inaccessible, I have used here its Urdu translation by late Sayyid Ali Bilgrami of Hyderabad,

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civilization—the compass Printing, Gun powder—were known in the East and that the Crusaders may have brought them thence. This, to a certain point, is true. But some of the assertions are disputable. That which is not disputable is the influence, this general effect of the Crusades upon the mind on one hand, and upon the society on the other. They drew European society from a very straitened track and left it into new and infinitely more extensive paths. THEY COMMENCED THAT TRANSPORTATION OF THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF EUROPEAN SOCIETY INTO GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE, WHICH IS THE CHARACTER OF MODERN CIVILIZATION.(1)

### MORAL INFLUENCE OF ISLAM.

It is quite natural that the conquered nations are deeply affected, morally, socially and even religiously, by their conquerors, and so it happened that when the Muslims, in the wake of their victorious advent, overcame the Western people, they exerted deep influence in every branch of their life. The many thousand Christian warriors, who had returned from the Muslim lands, did not hesitate to declare that they had found their antagonists not such as had been pictured by the Church but valiant, courteous, just.(2)

“The Islamic Civilization,” says Le Bon, “held a mighty sway over the world at large. Their moral hold over Europe made men of those semi-barbarous people of Europe who brought about the decline and fall of the Roman Empire on the one hand, while on the other their intellectual ascendancy opened for Europe the

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(1) History of Civilization, by F. Guizot, Vol. I, p. 160.

(2) Conflict Between Religion and Science.

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gate of the acquisition of Art, Literature, Science and Philosophy, with which the Europeans were unacquainted.”

The conclusion arrived at by Dr. Le Bon in respect of the moral effect produced by Muslims on Europe—and he is supported in this by a learned and eminent French theologian Barthelme Saint Hillaine in his work on Qur-án, is as follows :

‘ The rude and inelegant manners of our mediaeval Barons were refined by their following the Arabs in their social life, and without being stunted in their martial spirits, they imbibed such lofty morals which are the most admirable qualities in man. It is doubtful whether Christianity, however beneficial it might have been, could have produced such a high morality in them.’

### POSITION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM : ITS INFLUENCE ON EUROPE.

Many a Christian missionary of to-day is inclined to indulge in virulent vituperations against the Islamic tenets on the baseless charge that they have assigned to women a most degraded position in society. They are prone to take delight in such unfounded assertions and to declare that the Christian religion has placed women on a higher footing of equality and freedom with men. Would any sane person call it a wisdom to make women conform to that abominable ideal of womanhood which has, since long, been producing disastrous social and political movements vigorously carried out by the members of the fair sex in Europe. There is not a single instance that women of Islam had ever to assume such flagrant attitude towards men as to deserve the sinister appellations of ‘ Wild Women ’ and ‘ Suffragettes ’.

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From a deep study of the constitution of the mediæval European society it will be evident that the fair sex was submerged into a spiteful state of wretchedness and degradation; they were deprived of their legal rights. They could not enjoy the right of inheritance, nor were they allowed to buy or sell anything out of their own property. The Christian religion could not restrain such an ignominious treatment meted out to them. It was for Islam to give a new turn to the social and matrimonial life of the opposite sex and to bring home the sublime idea of real freedom and perfect equality between Men and Women. The holy Qur-án lays down for both the sexes their mutual rights and obligations :

‘ And they (Women) have rights similar to those against them in a just manner. (Md. Ali’s Trans. Ch. 2, Secs. 30, 31).

‘ And treat them kindly.’ (Ibid., Ch. 4, Sec. 3).

‘ The good amongst you,’ said the Prophet, are those who are good unto their wives.’ The Prophet ordained his followers, “ Be very careful in handling the glass-bottles (*i.e.* Fair Sex).”

The illustrious Prophet of Islam again pays a glowing tribute to women saying :—

“ Paradise lies at the feet of Mothers.”

How sacred and noble is the idea which inculcates on minds the dignity of womanhood !

Students of European history are perhaps aware that the age of chivalry in Europe almost synchronizes with the Saracenic rule in Spain, whence this ‘ gentle and gallant idea of Chivalry ’ and with it the noble sentiment of ‘ Personal honour ’ was destined, in course of time, to give a code of its own to Europe. But it is not generally admitted how much this idealization of woman was the result of the contact of the West

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with the civilization and culture of the East. According to M. Viardot 'Chivalry' with all its institutions, such as came later into existence among the Christian nations of the West, flourished in Spain among the Saracens. Certainly the Prophet of Islam, who in an age when no country, no system, no community gave any right to woman, maiden or married, mother or wife, who, in a country where the birth of a daughter was considered a calamity, secured to the sex rights, which are only unwillingly and under pressure, being conceded to them by the civilized nations, in the twentieth century deserves the gratitude of humanity. <sup>(1)</sup>

With respect to the freedom Islam has granted to the fair sex, it will be interesting to quote here a European writer. Blackstone speaking of the Law of England observes :--

"The very being or legal existence of the wife is suspended during marriage or at least is incorporated in that of her husband. No such rule is known to Islam. There the Muslim wife, so far as her property is concerned, is as free as a bird. The law permits her to do with her assets whatever she pleases without consulting her husband who in such matters has no greater rights than a perfect stranger. <sup>(2)</sup>

### EXTERMINATION OF SLAVERY IN ISLAM

One of the dirtiest calumnies flung at Islam by Christian writers is in respect of the so-called institution of slavery, which has been portrayed as the vilest tyranny ever inflicted upon humanity. This vexed topic has always been a subject for heated discussion and no effort is spared by Christian writers to recall it over and over again whenever anything relating to Islam is talked of.

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<sup>(1)</sup> "Spirit of Islam," p. 256.

<sup>(2)</sup> Clavel, "Driot Musulman," Vol., Sec. 217 *et seq.*

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The leaders of the anti-slavery movement who took an active part in eradicating this evil, have unjustly put the blame on the followers of Islam. What is supposed to have been allowed by Islam is, in reality, opposed to the principles of that faith, and surely what it provided for was utterly unlike the slavery which was till recently tolerated by Christianity or that American slavery which was brought to an end by the sacred war of 1865.

Although Islam did not grant absolute freedom to slaves all at once yet it introduced, from humanitarian standpoint, such a healthy change in the system as secured for them human rights and strengthened their position in the society.

The following extract will show the lamentable condition of slaves in Europe :—

“By the original Roman law the master was clothed with absolute dominion over the slave, extending to the power of life and death. The slave could not possess property of any kind ; whatever he acquired was his master's. . . . For entering the military service or taking on him any State office a slave was punished with death. He could not in general be examined as a witness except by torture. . . . The penalties of the law of crime were specially severe on slaves. (1)

We have quoted the above passage in order to show that Roman civilization marks an epoch in the history of Europe, and even in such a civilized state Europe treated the slaves with atrocious and ruthless disparagement. Therefore it will not be any exaggeration to say that until a comparatively recent period the institution of slavery in its worst form was in its full swing in Europe.

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(1) *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. 25, p. 337, 9th ed.

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But the rights of slaves in Islam are the same as that of a common human being. In Islam a slave of to-day becomes the vizier of tomorrow. There is nothing to prevent him from marrying the daughter of his master and to become a protege of his family. It is a well-known fact that Fazl bin Rabi the slave of Harun-al-Rashid became his vizier. The students of Islamic history are well aware that slaves have founded Empires and have ruled for a long period in India and Egypt. Subuktagin—the father of the zealous Iconoclast Mahmud of Ghazni—was a slave, and became the founder of Ghaznavid dynasty. Qutbuddin, the first Emperor of Delhi, who was himself a slave, founded the Slave Dynasty in India. Can Christian Europe cite any parallel instances of religious democracy and social equality from the pages of its history ?

Let us quote here the opinion of an adverse critic of Islam, Prof. Margoliouth. He says :—

“ But what is more remarkable is that in Islam very little degradation is attached to the condition of slaves. Slave dynasties ruled for a considerable period in both Egypt and India. Slavery was in the former country almost a necessary preliminary to advancement, and we do not find that the origin of their Sovereigns was felt as a disgrace by their subjects. The abolition of slavery was the object of the Prophet, but he meant it to be done by degrees so as to avoid the evils which have sometimes been experienced, for instance, in the United States—by the sudden execution of so sweeping a reform.”<sup>(1)</sup>

The practicability of the Islamic ordinances with regard to the abolition of slavery has throughout the ages impressed unbiased Europeans who have excited

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(1) “Encyclopædia Britannica”, Vol. 25, p. 337, 9th ed.

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themselves for the amelioration of the condition of this unfortunate class. So much so that Mr. Richardson while moving the bill for the abolition of Slavery in British India before the India Council in 1810, said:—

“For the emancipation of Slaves it is necessary that Hindu Shastras should be replaced by the Qur-án.”

### DEMOCRATIC INFLUENCE OF ISLAM

It is an undeniable fact that Islam has laid much stress on democracy and has invariably repudiated the horrid idea of autocracy and despotism. Although autocratic governments have been in vogue in the Islamic countries for a considerably long time, but it does not, in any way, affect the Islamic principles of democracy. The stress laid by Islam on democratic government is obvious from the fact that the Holy Prophet was ordained by God to hold consultations with the Muslims, and in order to set an example of his teaching he did not nominate any one to become his successor after him. From religious point of view Christianity sanctions the system of Nomination, while Islam has laid down the noble principle of Election. “The most distinctive characteristic,” says the “Encyclopædia Britannica,” “of the Roman Catholic Church is its vigorous insistence on the principles of ecclesiastical authority.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Europe is no less indebted to Islam for her system of administration. How much Europe owes to the influence of Islam, for the establishment of her Parliamentary Administration and Republican Government, deserves our careful consideration. “Europe is indebted to Mahomedanism,” says Davenport, “for not to mention that to the struggles during Crusades, we mainly owe the abolition of the onerous parts of the

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(1) Margoliouth's ‘Mahomedani m’, p. 89.

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*We hope to supply later.*

Islam makes charity obligatory and binding upon all its followers. But the month of Ramadan is pre-eminently a month of spontaneous charity. Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to spend lavishly in optional extra charity during this holy month. There must be something in this. The fact is that there is a deep relation between the self-abnegation of Ramadan Fasts and spending in charity. May we hope that while disbursing your charity in this sacred month in the way of Allah, you will not forget the Woking Muslim Mission? Your charity will be spent in the propagation of the religion of Islam and in meeting the objections advanced against it.

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