

Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets . . . " Holy Qur-an. 33: 40.
"There will be no Prophet after me."—Muhammad.

The

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Founded by the Late AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

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MUHAMMAD

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A partial view of the gathering at the Quadrant Restaurant, London, on the Evening of 12th May, 1938 celebrating under the auspices of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, the Anniversary of the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَجَلَّةٌ مَصْرُوفَةٌ لِنُصْرَةِ أَعْلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدٍ خَلِيمِ النَّبِيِّينَ

THE
ISLAMIC REVIEW

VOL. XXVI.] JAMĀDA' L-UKHRA, 1357 A.H.
AUGUST, 1938 A.C.

[No. 8.]

A DECLARATION

I, Mr. Mervyn Arthur Cole, of East Hamptree, near Bristol, Somerset, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others, and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilaha il-Allah Muhammad-un-Rasul Allah

[There is but one God (Allah) and Muhammad is God's Messenger.]

(Sd.) M. A. COLE.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTHDAY OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

BY MR. ISMAIL DE YORKE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

On behalf of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, I extend to you a hearty welcome to this celebration of the anniversary of the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of God be upon him). Although this celebration is not one of our official festivals, it has, for obvious reasons, come to hold the most important position among our unofficial festivals.

Although we regard the Holy Prophet as in every respect, a human being, his life and example furnish a very illuminating commentary on the teachings of the Qur-án, of which the revelation came through him. So much is this the case, that the records of his utterances and actions have come to be a secondary source of the Islamic Law. From the beginning, his conduct has been regarded as the norm of Islamic conduct. We cite his example in all matters of everyday life. To create, therefore, an occasion out of his Birthday anniversary to discuss the meaning of his life is to us not only natural but appropriate.

His life is also immensely significant to all civilized men and women of to-day, because it was he who really ushered in the modern era of civilization. Only a careless reader of history conceives that modern civilization began with the "Renaissance" in Europe. Strictly speaking, it dates back to the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The various movements for reform in the social, political and economic lives of the different nations and peoples during the last thousand years are

* 1. Being his opening remarks as the Chairman of the Muslim Society in Great Britain at a Reception given by the Society on the occasion of the Anniversary (Ed.—I. R.)

PROPHET MUHAMMAD—THE REDEEMER

distinctly traceable to the principles enunciated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

If the world, in spite of its having learned so much from the Prophet, is still in a state of chaos, it is because it has not understood sufficiently to enable it to stand the stress of the present complications of civilized life. The Prophet's relentless attitude towards unearned profit, towards artificial distinctions of race, colour and class, towards the subtle poison of social vices like drunkenness, gambling and the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, and his plea for the absolute freedom of conscience, are still among the standing rebukes to present-day humanity.

No wonder that the call of his holy name has brought so many of you from both inside and outside the fold of Islam to benefit by the sacred discussion that is to follow.

Praise be to God Who sent this Prophet.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD—THE REDEEMER*

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

MR. CHAIRMAN, BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN ISLAM AND FRIENDS OF OTHER FAITHS,

The cultural life of humanity, like external nature, periodically shrinks back into apparent lifelessness, awaiting the rise of a person pulsating with the urge of a new creation—a storehouse of a huge constructive energy. The view of such a person is not confined to the problems of surface-like politics, economics, race and the like, but goes deep down to the springs of human consciousness, the root of human activities—its passions and emotions. He turns the dissipated flow of man's understanding and thought back to his own self—the

* An address given at the Reception held under the auspices of the Muslim Society in Great Britain in honour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's Birthday Anniversary, at the Quadrant Restaurant, Regent Street, London, on Thursday, the 12th May, 1933.—(Ed. I.R.)

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basis of all cultural creations. Such a person is termed a religious leader, as distinguished from the other and minor leaders of humanity. In Arabic he is called *Nabi*, because he invariably draws from the Invisible Infinite, and transmits the cultural energy to visible humanity. In the world's history, whenever the barren intellect of man has created social and cultural chaos, we find the mercy of God invariably raising such a *Nabi* or Redeemer.

The latest of these Redeemers is Muhammad of Arabia. The 7th century of the Christian era is pre-eminently a century of the death of the old civilizations. All the national and racial civilizations were, as it were, on their death-bed, as if to make room for a new and an international civilization. The Prophet Muhammad was born in the midst of this dying world at a spot most dead of all places. To be exact, he was born at Mekka in the year 571 A.D., on Monday, the 12th of the Arabic month of Rabiul-Awwal, of which we are celebrating the anniversary here to-day.

It is interesting to note that his death in 634 A.D. also took place in the same month, though not on the same day.

He lost his father before his birth, and, at the age of six, lost his mother as well. The hard realities of life thus dawned upon him very early in his life. We find him in his adolescence forming a society for the protection of the weak. In his youth we find him journeying hither and thither on business missions, impressing people with his uprightness. Then he married one of the richest women admirers of the city. By nature charitably disposed, he was then in a position to take practical measures for the alleviation of human suffering; but his serious nature sought deeper remedies for the ailments of humanity existing then. This led him

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to increasing retirement, fasting and meditation in solitude.

At the age of forty he received what is called the Revelation of Prophethood. He appears to have been overwhelmed by this experience, but the timely encouragement of his beloved wife, with whom, by the way, he was to live an ideal monogamous life for 24 years, brought to him the needed relief.

Thus, a woman became the first believer and supporter of his mission—a great compliment indeed to her sex. For the next ten years of his ministry she, along with a small band of devoted followers, was a tower of strength and support to him in the face of the ridicule, opposition and persecution of his enemies. Indeed, from the beginning the spiritual and cultural history of Islam is deeply affected by the contributions of the fair sex.

Disliking to see persecuted followers, the Prophet advised them to leave the city of Mekka for the tolerant, though distant, Christian land of Abyssinia. This, however, increased the fury of his enemies. So, at the end of the twelfth year of his ministry, when the deaths of his beloved wife and of his uncle, Abu Taleb, removed the little social protection he had from the raging fury of the Mekkans, he resolved to remove the centre of his activities from Mekka to another city, 250 miles north, called Medina, where he and his fugitive followers received a cordial reception. This change of centre marks the beginning of the Muslim era, called Hijjri, of which the current year is 1357—by the lunar calculation.

But the enemies of virtue and the moral standards for which the Prophet stood would not allow him a peaceful time even there. Organized invasions were directed against the weak city of the Prophet's refuge, and these the Prophet had to resist with his small following. As

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long as the persecution was individual he and his followers showed an absolute example of non-violence—as this led to the spread of moral influence amongst the witness—and the most atrocious cruelties were suffered with cheerful patience. The organized invasion of one State by another, however, was devoid of such a moral benefit to the wrong-doer, and the Prophet and his followers exhibited the equally admirable quality of putting up a resistance against great odds. Virtue being on their side, they ultimately came out victorious. So much so that, in the end, the city of Mekka fell and the Prophet made almost a bloodless entry into that city. He did not talk of forgiveness so long as the enemies had the upperhand, because that would be meaningless. He, on the contrary, struggled his way through till he got his enemies completely at his mercy, when he forgave them unconditionally. When the Mekkan opponents, who had been the cause of so much suffering to the Prophet, his family and his followers for nearly twenty-two years, came before the Prophet, deserving all the punishment which the laws of hostility would prescribe, he said to them: "There is no reproof against you to-day." Not long after this, when the forces of opposition had practically acknowledged defeat and had bowed before this rising tide of a new moral force in the land of Arabia, the Prophet died of an attack of fever at the age of sixty-three, leaving behind him a revealed incorruptible guidance for his followers, a living faith in the God of virtue, and the seeds of a new international civilization that was to stir the world from its age-long slumber.

Let us enumerate a few characteristic features of his great life and achievements.

A Prophet of God, preaching and directing from revealed guidance, his personality and activities are not shrouded in any mystery. He is historical in a sense in

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which no other human being, before or since, is historical. He was surrounded and watched by a large number of critical observers. The minutest and the most intimate details of his life were watched, discussed and recorded with the most scientific historicity. No other personality has ever been so exposed to public view, and no other person's behaviour has formed the standard of moral conduct for a whole people in the way he has done. No supernatural element, and no credulity spoils the historical impression of his open personality. The most successful of all religious leaders, he is still not regarded as anything more than a human being. He reminded his overawed followers that he was the son of a humble woman and was subjected to the laws of physical nature as much as was any other man or woman. To be a man was his greatest pride, his exalted position before God notwithstanding.

He preached not merely the Oneness of God, but also His universality. He enunciated God as the Lord of the worlds in his Lord's Prayer. One God meant to him one indivisible humanity that had no room for a chosen people—politically or spiritually. He preached the doctrine of Divine guidance for all peoples, and instructed homage to the founders of all religions.

The brotherhood of humanity in all its different bearings has been a realized fact only among his followers. In spite of the baneful influence of another civilization which has been trying to supplant it, the Muslim civilization is still conspicuous by the absence from it of all kinds of colour bar, race prejudice and national arrogance. Neither has class distinction developed among his followers into a perpetual inter-class hatred. The house of worship in his religion is still free from the curse of reserved seats. Real greatness is still attached among his followers to those who are

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morally great. Worldly greatness, riches and intellectual cleverness are still not worshipped by his followers to the exclusion of all moral and spiritual greatness.

His was a unique example. He combined in himself the position of a Pope and a Cæsar without the pretensions of the one or the arrogance of the other. His diversified life is an inspiration to all in the various conditions of life. An orphan boy, in his adolescence he became concerned with the sufferings of the poor and the weak and ended his life as the temporal and spiritual overlord of a whole nation. A tradesman, a patient preacher, a fugitive, a legislator, a commander, a statesman, a social reformer,—he combines in himself all the various phases of life as a citizen and as a leader. Inexorable in the face of a challenge, he was yet the softest-hearted to the appeals for generosity and mercy. The bravest of soldiers, he was yet the most modest of men, extremely patient with the weak, the ignorant and the uncultured, and a centre of attraction even for children. He was indeed the Prophet of all.

In a special sense he was the redeemer of woman. He redeemed her by giving dignity to the sex life, by supplying a necessary polish to it and by boldly revealing to an insensible humanity the hidden spiritual potentialities of sex. For a world madly abusing and misusing sex, and suffering from its poisonous consequences in its social and spiritual life Muhammad's instructions and example are to-day the only possible refuge. He also redeemed woman by making her independent in that vital aspect of physical existence, *viz.*, the economic, by an elaborate law of inheritance and a rigidly enforced system of dowry. He was not a lip sympathiser with the fair sex—he established them in real dignity and freedom. A deluded world of womanhood should turn to him for a real redemption.

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If an unfailing faith in an Eternal, Ever-resourceful God is the rockbottom of all our adventures, no clearer example of it can be found in the history of mankind than in the Prophet Muhammad. For ten years he suffered insults and persecutions at the hands of his people without any appreciable result for his mission. The hard-heartedness of the Mekkans forced him to turn his attention to the neighbouring city of Taif; but, to his great disappointment, not only did nobody in that city respond to his call to God, but he was even asked to leave the city. As he walked out of the town, the riff-raff of the place, at the instigation of their leaders, lined the road on both sides and began pelting him with stones. When, exhausted with bleeding and pain, he would sit down, a wretch would drag him up by force. "Walk on," he would shout at him, "this is no place for you to rest." This went on for three long miles. Thus, rejected and sorely tried by men from every quarter, he addressed a prayer to God which will ever remain an asset to humanity in its moral and spiritual struggle in this world. He prayed: "O, my God, to Thee do I complain of the feebleness of my strength, of my lack of resourcefulness, and of my insignificance in the eyes of the people. Thou art the most merciful of all the merciful. Thou art the Lord of the weak. To whom art Thou to entrust me—to the unsympathetic foe who would sullenly frown at me, or to a close friend to whom Thou hast given the control of my affairs? Not in the least do I care for anything except that I may have Thy protection. In the Light of Thy Face do I seek shelter—the Light which illumines the heavens and dispels all sorts of darkness, and which controls all affairs in this world as well as in the hereafter. May it never be that I incur Thy wrath, or that Thou shouldst be angry with me! There is no strength, no power, but through Thee."

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A prayer, indeed, which a sensible humanity, apprised of the danger ahead, but lacking courage to give a lead in the right direction, should make its own to get back its lost faith in God and the ultimate victory of virtue over vice.

The last, but not the least, characteristic of the Prophet we may recount on this occasion is the sublimity of his leadership. No other man has so swayed the minds of people as he. Very rightly has Carlyle said that a greater number of God's creatures believe in Muhammad's word to-day than in any other word whatsoever. I should add, "Not only to-day, but at all times since his appearance." Yet he was the most democratic of all leaders of all times. He gave his first followers the epithet of "companions," sounding very like the term "comrade" of our own times; and some of them he called "helpers." He created neither a physical nor a psychological distance between himself and those whom he led. In spite of the temporal and spiritual overlordship of a whole people at the latter part of his life, he used to act as the poorest citizen in his civil life and as the humblest soldier in the field of battle. Indeed, he was the Redeemer of humanity in the most real sense of the term, as he gave, by his lofty example, the highest dignity to man as man. A humanity suffering from all sorts of false, crushing and enslaving leadership would do well to turn to him to-day for the release of human dignity and its restoration to that sublime consciousness of a satisfied ego that alone can create confidence and love and peace in our social atmosphere.

May God shower His choicest Blessings on the memory of Muhammad. May his memory inspire in us a new moral energy in the midst of this morally dead world of ours!

MUHAMMAD MY MASTER

MUHAMMAD MY MASTER

• BY HAMID RAZA, B.A. (ALIG.)

(Continued from Vol. XXVI, Page 275.)

The Christian Church displays from the earliest age a leaning towards excessive asceticism but "apart from the influence of Jesus."⁴³ The literature produced by the successive ages of Christianity reflects the ascetic tendencies peculiar to its nature. E. E. Kellet says that the rise of Christianity meant the suppression of secular literature. (*The Whirlgig of Taste*.) The Church Fathers deprecated, or even anathematised, the study of the classical authors, whom indeed they regarded as being, like the oracle of Delphi, inspired by the devil. The literature of the Middle Ages holds up the mirror to the virtues of monastic orders. It is history without bias, without special pleading. It shows the strength of orthodoxy, the spell of superstition, and the force of prejudice. It is yet the intimate echo of the mediæval life and represents "asceticism" proclaiming a war upon human nature and depreciating extremely the character and position of women. The religious instinct, not rightly ordered by reason, goes astray and degenerates into superstition with "Creeds and precise focusings of the Unsearchable." Islam has liberated thought and widened speculation. It brings a marvellous change in the outlook of the European littérateur through its anti-ascetic ideals. Spain is the cradle of Islamic culture and influences the intellectual history of Europe. Roger Bacon, that "morning star of modernity," receives his scientific training in the Muslim universities of Spain.

⁴³. Vide the article on Asceticism in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica." The thoughtful verdict of the writer of this article was first delivered by the Glorious Qur-an, 57: 27, thirteen centuries ago. The marvellous confirmation of the Qur-anic Ethics and Religion and matters relating thereto by modern scientific researches goes to prove the eternal truth of the Qur-an. Its composition was certainly beyond the ken of an Arab mortal 1,355 years back. Muhammad's source of knowledge was definitely from a Plane where Time is not.

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Lecky detects the influence of Islam on the spirit of modern European literature: "The pagan literature of antiquity and the Mohammodan Schools of Science were the chief agencies in resuscitating the dormant energies of Christendom."⁴⁴ In the light of this observation, it is no longer difficult to understand the slow but steady development of the anti-monastic tendencies in the inner structure of present-day literature. These tendencies manifested themselves at an early stage in Petrarch, Chaucer and Francois Villon.

Petrarch was the first of the humanists and a great opponent of popery and priestcraft. "No man ever used stronger language about the corruption of the Papal Court, which he knew well He belongs to the Renaissance, not to Christianity."⁴⁵

Chaucer was a pure humanist and studied at Oxford and Cambridge "to which the Moorish Culture had penetrated long before."

Francois Villon is the most charmingly poetical of all poets before Shakespeare; and "he is an incarnation of the anti-clerical and anti-ascetic spirit of the Renaissance."⁴⁶

The one powerful source of inspiration of these three literati must be the *humanist* culture of Islam. McCabe says: "Poetry and Art, like culture, Cleanliness, Chivalry and Charity, were reborn in Europe because a *powerful non-Christian* influence entered it"⁴⁷ (The italics are ours.) It is due to this powerful influence of a non-Christian origin that European literature owes its new aspects to Islam. So, if the nineteenth century literature in England offers a reaction

44. W. E. H. Lecky, "History of European Morals," Vol. II, p. 17.

45. Joseph McCabe, "Religion in the Great Poets," p. 22. (Little Blue Book, No. 1224.)

46. Ibid, p. 24.

47. Ibid, p. 20.

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against asceticism, it is mainly the result of Muhammad's anti-ascetic ethics, though modern Science may have a share in it. As for the share of Science, the leading European Orientalists have freely acknowledged the debt of their civilization to Islam. Briffault says: "Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab Civilization to the modern world; but its fruits were slow in ripening. Not until long after Moorish Culture had sunk back into darkness did the giant to which it had given birth rise in his might. It was not Science only which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the Civilization of Islam communicated its first glow to European life."⁴⁸

Thus "there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic Culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the permanent distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme source of its victory—Natural Science and the Scientific spirit."⁴⁹ The Cultural World that has sprung out of the spirit of Muhammad's message holds the key to the domain of Western Science and literature. He leads the European mind "to liberate the imagination from a narrow and oppressive discipline, to make the first breach in the wall of convention."⁵⁰ (Prof. H. A. R. Gibb.) The non-ascetic ideals of Islam "assist us to liberate ourselves from the narrow and oppressive conceptions which would limit all that is significant in literature, thought and history, to our own small segment of the globe."⁵¹

The result of all this purely academic discussion is sufficient to show how the humanist features of Islam

48. Robert Briffault, "The Making of Humanity," p. 202.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

50. "The Legacy of Islam," Ed.—Arnold and Guillaume, p. 208.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

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have affected the inner development of Western literature. Christianity has failed in inspiring poetry in Europe, as McCabe's research goes to prove. Islam, on the other hand, has acted like a leaven on the spirit of the West and released the Creative impulses hitherto dormant in her literature. In an age of revolt, rejections, uncrystallized velleities, Islam helps in modern literature to reinterpret the basic verities of life and gives it a new orientation. The ideological conflicts of Fascism and Bolshevism have seriously affected the free, spontaneous flow of modern literature.

There is in European literature to-day a keen sense of confusion, and "all who write of their fellow-creatures as if they were flies or imposthumes on the carcass of a dead and mindless world ignore in their art the mental and emotional attitude they declare to be true. There must come an end to that." However, the special quality of Islamic literature is its constant mirroring of the soul itself, its constant and instructive attempt to confront ultimate issues. It is a literature set in the framework of a great tradition of a great society. Our age is in truth a psychological age in which each individual, unfettered by tradition and convention, must create his own relations, as the Muslim writers had to do, with society, with nature, and with God. It is therefore no wonder that the most piercing voices that have recently rung out over Western Civilization have been the voices of Islam and its savants.

The literature of Islam deserves the earnest study of mankind, and has reached the stage when literature becomes research into the soul of man and the nature of things. It embodies "a community of soul and spirit, a pervasive and unifying relation, a mutual assimilation and incentive tending towards a single end and a single formative purpose." Neither the ascetic metaphysics of

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Thomas à Kempis nor the Fascist background of modern literature hold any promise for the future. The spirit of Islam is anything but ascetic, and its literature is essentially creative rising in revolt against the tyrannies of mechanism. "The permanent creed of Europe inspired no poets. Even Dante, though he made an epic of a myth, was not moved to it until Saracen influence awakened Italy." 52

The "introduction of Moorish influence" gave Europe her three great poets, Goethe, Schiller and Heine. They were guided in their finest work by the spirit of Islam and were sheer pagans to reject the authority of the Church. Alfieri, Ugo Foscolo, Silvio Pellico, Leopardi and Rossetti were violently anti-papal. Shelly, Keats and Burns were all Rationalists. They did not subscribe to the Orthodox Christian creed, and their inspiration lay in Humanism which is the distinct contribution of Islam to modern thought. By successfully handling the stuff of life, Islam has started an intellectual avalanche in the realm of human thought. The un-ascetic temperament of Islam must serve as an eye-opener to modern philosophy. The quintessential flavour of Meredith's poetry is *Islamic*, when he classes the "pinched ascetic with the red sensualist" as one who has utterly failed to grasp Nature's true message. "He by whom the spirit of Earth is

'misprised

Brainlessly unrecognised'

is certain to fall into the slough of sentimentalism from which spring the foul weeds of cowardice and vain imagining." By rejecting asceticism as a rule of life, Meredith follows Islam: "We do not get to any heaven by renouncing the mother we sprang from, and when

52. Joseph McCabe, "Religion in the Great Poets" Miguel Asín's "Islam and the Divine Comedy" frankly acknowledges the influences of Islam in Dante's work.

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there is an eternal secret for us, it is best to believe that Earth knows, to keep near her even in our utmost aspiration."

Nothing more is needed to elaborate the thesis that the current of modern thought in its relation to asceticism is steadily drifting into the channel of Islam. Tennyson, Swinburne, Tolstoy and Israel Zangwill are thoroughly un-ascetic in their notions of life and letters. Browning, though acclaimed as a Christian poet, plainly states in his later poetry ("La Saisiaz," etc.) that he had surrendered every Christian dogma, and held only to the belief in God and immortality—the two basic principles of Islam. He reaches the vision of the future in the earnest spirit of Islam:

"One who never turned his back but marched
breast forward.

Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

MUHAMMAD IN THE ANCIENT SCRIPTURES

BY MIRZA MASUM BEG, B.A.

(Continued from Vol. XXVI, page 264.)

The sacred scriptures of the Hindus have been divided into three parts—the Vedás, the Upanishads and the Puránas. All these books, together with the Bráhma Granth which are commentaries explaining the text of the Vedás, have been taken to be the *Srutis*, i.e., the Revealed Books. The Vedás, as we have them now, are four in number—The Rig, the Yajur, the Sáman and the Atharvan. Of these, the Rig is the oldest, and the Atharvan, comparatively late addition. This Veda

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has derived its name, not from the nature of its contents, but from a personage of infinitely remote antiquity, named Atharvan, who is spoken of in the Rig Veda as the first priest who produced fire by attrition. The Vedás are written in a stiff and stark language, and make very tough reading indeed. Those who can be regarded as authorities on the subject, as the people of Gurukul (Hardwar), are of opinion that only an incessant and exclusive labour of not less than 30 years can enable a man to appreciate the beauties of the Holy Vedás. But there is no gainsaying the fact that the Vedás are the most authenticated books of the Hindus, and form the very foundation of their religious belief.

The Upanishads propound the ancient philosophy of the Hindus which seeks to inquire into the nature of the human soul. They speculate about both the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, called the Brahmá, and the relation that subsists between them. In the estimation of some very learned Pandits, Raja Ram Mohan Rai for instance, the Upanishads occupy an even higher position than the Vedás.

The Puránás come next in significance and sanctity. Unlike the Vedás, they make easy and interesting reading. These books are very popular with the Hindus who read them with much pleasure and profit. They tell us about the creation and dissolution of the universe, about the early Aryan tribes, and the heroes and holy divinities of the Hindus. The famous saint and seer, Maha Rishi Vyása, compiled this vast bulk of sacred literature into 18 big volumes—the Brahma Purána, the Bhágavad Purána, the Bhavishyà Purána, etc. etc. The Puránas—it is a point of faith with a large majority of the Hindus—are at least contemporaneous with, if not older than, the Vedás, and have ever since been co-existent with them. This fact the Holy Vedás themselves

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vouch for and acknowledge. Turn over Atharva Veda, Book 11, Hymn 7, verse 24:

“Verses, and Songs, and magic hymns, Puránas, sacrificial text, all the celestial gods whose home is heaven sprang from the Residue.”

Further on in Book 15, Hymn 7, verse 12, is written:

“He (the student) went away to the great region. Itihasa and Puránas and Gathas and Narasansis followed him.”

The Rig Veda also makes mention of the Purána which was recited at the time of sacrifice. (See Book 10, Hymn 30, verse 6.)

The Maha Rishi Vyása, it cannot be gainsaid, was a Rishi of no small acumen. The Hindus look upon him with sentiments of reverence and adoration. He was also a savant of very sound scholarship. The Vedás, as we have them now, arranged and classified subject-wise, are the result of his long labour of love. The Mahábhárat and the Gitá are the fruits of his formidable pen. Vyása also wrote a voluminous treatise on Vedánta, *i.e.*, the Hindu Philosophy; but his greatest work, as has been stated above, was the compilation of the huge bulk of the Puránas into 18 volumes. The Bhavishya Purána, which is one of these volumes, contains the happy tidings of the coming of the World-Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of God be upon him). In this article, we propose to deal with these, the Puránic prophecies.

The literal meaning of the term Bhavishya Purána is “the news of the future.” It has been so called, for it contains an astounding statement of the Maha Rishi in respect of the events that were still to come. According to the Hindu belief, this book, like the Holy Vedás, is also a revelation of Brahma; the Maha Rishi was merely its compiler, whereas its author is the Divine Being himself. Now turn to Book 3, Chapter 3, Hymn

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3, verses 5 to 8. (A free English rendering is given below):

“A spiritual teacher (अचार्य्येण समचित) from a foreign (म्लच्छ) country shall come with his companions. Muhammad shall be his name (महामद् इतिख्यात). The raja, bathing this Arab of an angelic disposition (महादेवं मरुस्थलनिवासनम्) with the sacred water of the Ganges, and five other purifying liquids (पञ्चगव्य) adored him with full faith and devotion, and said, I bow before thee, O thou Pride of the Human race (गिरजानाथ), thou dweller of the desert, who bestows plentiful power for slaying Satan; who has been protected and preserved from thy wicked enemies. O thou manifestation of the Supreme Being, accept me as thy slave, as one fallen at thy feet.”

The Holy Prophet's eulogium, as sung by the Maha Rishi Vyása, may briefly be summed up thus:

1. Muhammad shall be his name.
2. He shall be a dweller of the desert.
3. Shall have devoted companions.
4. Angelic in disposition and purified of all sins.
5. The Indian raja shall believe in him.
6. This *Mahamad* shall be protected from his foes in an extraordinary way.
7. Satan he shall slay, *i.e.*, stamp out evil of all kinds.
8. A perfect manifestation of the Most High.
9. The Pride of the human race.
10. The Maha Rishi bows before this *Mahamad*, and falls at his feet.

What a clear and distinct prophecy which leaves not a shred of doubt behind. An objection, however, has been urged by some incredulous people. The

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raja alluded to in the prophecy, they say, was Raja Bhoj who appeared in the tenth generation* after Raja Shaliwahan. He lived in the 11th century of the Christian era, that is to say, 500 years after the Holy Prophet of Arabia. Hence its inapplicability. Bhoj, let it be understood very clearly, was not a proper noun, that is, the name of a particular individual. It was the title of the rajas of Hindustan much in the same way as Pharaoh was the title of the kings of Egypt and Cæsar those of Rome. Before the time of the famous Raja Bhoj, there had been many "Bhojes" in India. "Aitarya Brahman" which is admittedly a book of remote antiquity, tells us of a Bhoj in 8:12 and 14:17. Pánani, the celebrated Sanskrit grammarian who lived long before Islam, also speaks of a Bhoj, his successors and his capital (1:75).

There is yet another expression which deserves a word in passing: the bathing of *Mahamad* with the Ganges water and "Panch-gauva." The Rishi, we must remember, is describing in these verses not any actual event but a vision that he had seen in respect of a future event. The vision denotes that *Mahamad* shall be sinless and pure. These things—the water of the Ganges and "Panch-gauva" are, according to the Hindu belief, "purifiers of sins," much in the same manner as the water of the river Jordan with the Christians.

We now pass on to verses 10—27, where the Maha Rishi is sounding a still clearer note:

"The famous land of Arabia has been despoiled and defiled by the wicked people (मलेच्छ) and there is no Arya Dharm there (10). Erstwhile too an abandoned devil had appeared there who had been burnt to ashes by Me; he has come again, sent by the formidable foe (11). But he who has received the title of Brahma from Me

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for the reformation of these enemies, is the celebrated Mahamad (महामद); he is now busy, heart and soul, in reclaiming those human derelicts (12). To that fallen country, shouldst not go, O Raja, for thy purification with my favour shall be wrought even here (13)”

One night, the same human angel appeared to Raja Bhoj, assuming the vesture of a 'pshach,' and said unto him:

“Thy Arya Dharm, O Raja, has been exalted over other creeds, but I shall, as commanded by the Most High God, preach and promulgate the firm faith of the meat-eaters (24). My follower shall be circumcised (लिङ्गच्छेदी); shall keep no tuft of hair on his head (शिखाहीन); shall wear a beard on his chin (शमभ्रधारी); he shall be a revolutionary; shall call aloud the people to prayer (उच्चारणी); shall eat all good and lawful things (25). Excepting swine, all other animals shall he take for food; shall work out his purification by means of war rather than by grass (कुशा) (26). They shall be called Mussalmans, (मुसलमन्) for they shall fight against the nations that corrupt religion. From Me shall be the religion of these meat-eating people” (27).

In this prophecy, the Maha Rishi has mentioned a number of signs of the Promised Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of God be upon him)! A brief résumé is given here:

1. Arabia defiled and devastated by a wicked people.
2. No Arya Dharm there.
3. These opponents of Truth shall be, like Abraha of old, discomfited and destroyed.

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4. Muhammad has been granted, by the Most High, the title of Brahma in order to rectify and reform these bad people, and he is now busy in the construction of that nation.
5. The Indian Raja is not safe in visiting that land; his purification, however, shall be wrought when the Mussalmans come over to India.
6. He shall endorse the Aryan Faith, and reclaim and restore this nation, as commanded by God, unto the Right Path wherefrom they had strayed.
7. The followers of Muhammad shall observe circumcision, wear a beard on their chins, no tuft of hair on their heads, and work out a mighty revolution in the world of religion.
8. His faith shall not be a concealed affair, but it shall be proclaimed aloud from the minaret of every mosque.
9. Excepting swine, they shall eat all other good and lawful animals.
10. The Hindus use grass (कुशा) in sacrifice as a factor of purification but these people shall purify themselves by means of war.
11. They shall be called Mussalmans, for the reason that they shall fight against those who corrupt and contaminate religion.
12. From Me shall be this religion of the meat-eaters; *i.e.* it shall be a Divinely-inspired faith.

We are here reminded of another objection which the detractors of Islam have urged in this connection. When Arya Dharm, they contend, has been exalted over all other creeds, what need is there, what necessity, for the faith of Islam! Arya Dharm, we do not deny the

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fact, when it was first revealed to the people, must have been, in view of the exigencies of the times, the best and most suitable of all the then existing religions. But what had become of it at the time of which we are speaking here, we shall learn from the Maha Rishi again. Turn over Bhavishyá Purána, Book 3, Chapter 1, Hymn 4, verses 21 to 23 and peruse these lines: "In the seven sacred cities, Káshi, etc., tyranny and oppression are the order of the day. India has been peopled by Rákshas, Bhils and other uncouth tribes. But in the land of the 'malechchas,' the followers of the Malechch Dharm (Islam) are brave, wise and sagacious. They have been adorned with all the good qualities, whereas enormities of the deepest dye stalk through the land of the Aryás. Islam shall rule over India and her islands. Knowing all this, worship the Most High God, O thou good man, and adore Him."

The terms "Arya" and "Malechch" have very often been used in the verses quoted above. We have learned enough about the Arya but the other term still remains to be defined. "Malechch" has commonly been used in a bad sense to connote "uncouth and unclean people," but, in the opinion of the Maha Rishi Vyása, "a Malechch is one who is chaste of action, sharp of intellect, spiritually elegant, and who respects and reveres the gods."

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ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

BY C. A. SOORMA

(Continued from Vol. XXVI, Page 268.)

CHAPTER VIII

THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHET'S MISSION

I shall now take you with me to the closing years of the Prophet's mission and how he fulfilled it.

On the 25th of *Zul-kada* or on the 23rd February 632 A.D., the Prophet left Medina with an immense concourse of Muslims, estimated at nearly 1,50,000, to perform the *Hajj* in Mecca. This *Hajj* is called the *Hajjat-al-Balagh* or the *Great Hajj*.

In the Holy Qur-án, we have the following significant verses about people accepting Islam in large numbers:

- (a) "When there come the help of Allah and the victory. . . ."
- (b) "And you see men entering the religion of Allah *in companies*. . . ."
- (c) "Then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness, surely He is oft returning (to mercy). *Chapter CX, verses 1—3.*"

This was the last *Hajj* which the Prophet performed and the verses quoted above are regarded as the final Qur-ánic revelations vouchsafed to him.

Thus, we see that this man Muhammad, who had been driven out of the city of his birth a fugitive, whose life was not worth a straw, returning once more to the same city, at the head of an immense concourse of people, in triumph, a virtual King; and yet withal so humble, so meek, so patient, ready to perform the last pilgrimage and to utter for the last time that sermon which has been enshrined in the heart of every Muslim.

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Listen to this:

"Ye people! listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you at this place. . . .

"Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until ye appear before the Lord, as this day and this month is sacred for all; and (remember) ye shall have to appear before your Lord, Who shall demand from you an account of your actions. . . . Ye people, ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you. . . . Treat your wives with kindness and love. Verily ye have taken them on the security of God, and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God. . . . Keep always faithful to the trust reposed in you, and avoid sins. . . . Usury is forbidden. The debtor shall return only the principal; and the beginning will be made with (the loans of) my uncle Abbas, son of Abd-ul-Muttalib. . . . Henceforth the vengeance of blood practised in the days of paganism (*jahaliyat*) is prohibited; and all blood-feuds abolished, commencing with the murder of Ibn Rabia, son of Harith, son of Abd-ul-Muttalib. . . . And your slaves! see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear; and if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then part from them, for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be harshly treated. . . . Ye people! listen to my words and understand the same. Know that all Muslims are brothers unto one another. Ye are one

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brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to his brother is lawful unto his brother, unless freely given out of goodwill. Guard yourselves from committing injustice. . . . Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent. Happily he that shall be told may remember better than he who hath heard it. . . ."

What a glorious sermon on the mount!

It is said that towards the conclusion of the sermon, the Prophet, overcome by the sight of the intense enthusiasm of the people as they eagerly and thankfully drank in his words, exclaimed:

"O Lord! I have delivered my message and accomplished my work. . . . O Lord! I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness unto it."

In the history of the human race, you will not find an address, a sermon, so practical, so full of common sense, so wholesome and apposite! Not a single unnecessary word, not a phrase the meaning of which even the lowest intelligence cannot grasp, nothing mystical or poetical about it, but a plain, straightforward message which because of its truth, clarity and innate goodness, made an instantaneous appeal to men's hearts and their minds. Even at this distance of time, and under such changed conditions, the Prophet's last sermon has lost none of its appeal or wisdom. The only regret is that we Muslims are apt to forget it! And so the Holy Qur-án clearly states:

"This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion.* . . ." (Chapter V, verse 3.)

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• BY FAZL-UL-KARIM SAUNDERS

The Christian Missionaries in North Africa

The Catholic Missionaries (French) in North Africa are the White Fathers (Pères Blancs) and the White Sisters (Nuns). They teach weaving, etc., to girls; they visit the villages and tend the sick, give away clothing to the poor and so on; but they make no attempt to teach Catholicism. Instead they actually distribute to the Arab boys little booklets printed in Arabic and illustrated with pictures of the Muslim ablutions before Salat. These booklets are published by a Muslim firm. This is at least the case at Tadjemont. The idea seems to be that, as it is useless to attempt to convert Muslims, they should try to strengthen the Muslims' belief in Ilm (knowledge) as the "next best thing." These priests speak Arabic fluently.

Muslim Electoral Reform in Algeria—(Arab representation at Paris)

In 1880, the French Republic made elementary education compulsory in France and her colonies, and, after a certain amount of opposition, this measure was extended to include Arab children. To-day, the whole of North Africa, as far south as the Sahara Oases of Ghasdaia and El-Golca, is served by Franco-Arab schools where a real European type of education is given to both European and Arab children, by French and native teachers. Within recent years, the Arabs started to send their daughters also to school. The girls learn, under the best possible conditions, such handicrafts as carpet-weaving, embroidery and needlework. The boys are trained to work on the land, and in wood or iron. Some specialize in the Muslim industrial arts—working in copper, pottery and dyeing. All learn to speak, read and write the Arabic language, while no attempt is made to propagate Christianity. In addition to this,

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there are numerous High Schools and Colleges throughout the country which admit both French and Arab students. To-day, the Arabs mix easily with the French population. Four or five hundred thousand work on the farms, in the yards and in the European workshops of Algeria. A hundred and fifty thousand are in France, working in the factories. Thus, in Algeria, an Arab bourgeoisie has come into being within the last fifty years, which tends to participate more and more in French social and political life.

Algeria is represented at Paris by three senators and six deputies; one senator and two deputies for each of the three departments—Oran, Algiers and Constantine—all French, and elected by French voters. Hitherto, the great grievance of the Muslim population is that they have had no representative of their own in the French Parliament—a state of affairs which has given rise, in recent years, to what has been termed by politicians "Le malaise Franco-Mussulman" ("The Franco-Mussulman uneasiness") constituting a powerful factor in present-day Algerian politics.

In each of the three departments of Algeria, as in France, there is a General Council, which votes the departmental budget and which sits twice a year. Both French and Arab members are elected by French and Arab voters, the native electorate consisting of a comparatively small number of "naturalized" Arabs, living in the large towns and the cities of the North, particularly in the coastal plain, shopkeepers and commercial men, lawyers, doctors and students. According to the law on the subject, such native electors must be at least twenty-five years of age, have served in the army or in the navy, or be landowners, farmers, merchants or employees in the public service, or have, at least, a certificate of elementary education, or have been awarded some form of Government decoration, or a prize in

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some agricultural or industrial contest. This law, however, is applicable only to Arabs residing in civil territory, *i.e.*, roughly speaking, territory north of the Sahara Atlas. It does not include those living in the vast stretches of desert under military rule, some 1,200,000 square miles in extent, known as the Southern territories. In these regions are scattered numerous oases, containing a native population of 10,000 to 20,000, while on the open desert are millions of nomads—shepherds and camel drivers—all tent-dwellers. Many of these Arabs are also ex-soldiers, some with war service, fairly well educated and intelligent, and with a firm belief that they should be accorded the same political rights as those enjoyed by their French comrades by whose side they fought to preserve the peace of the world.

Arab members are also elected as financial delegates to the *Délégationes Financières*—a section of the main Algerian Government—and to the Municipal Councils. Up to the present, the number of Arab Municipal Councillors is limited to one-third of the total membership, and no Arab Councillor may be elected Mayor. Thus the few thousand "naturalized" Arabs who have the Algerian vote, a mere handful in the present native population of six and a quarter million, elect only in respect of Algerian assemblies.

The vexed subject of French citizenship is rather a complicated one. At present, an Arab can obtain the rights and privileges of French citizenship, including the vote for senators and deputies at Paris, only by naturalization. This entails the abandonment of his "personal and successional status" as a Muslim. He may not marry more than one wife, and he comes under French Civil Law with regard to such matters as the marriage ceremony, divorce and the inheritance of property, instead of under the Islamic Law, which is at

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one and the same time a religious, social, legal and political system. Instead of a marriage performed before a Cadi, there is a declaration before a French magistrate, and for divorce he must have recourse to the French Divorce Court. The same applies to the inheritance of property. Thus a naturalized Arab in Algeria becomes virtually an apostate from Islam, and is regarded more or less as an outcast by his co-religionists. "Naturalization" has never been regarded with favour by the Arabs, and very few have applied for French citizenship under these conditions. From the administrative point of view, the naturalization scheme may be regarded as a failure, for the Arabs as a body will never be persuaded to desert their religion. Thus political tension, growing more dangerous each month, had led to an *impasse*—the persistent demands of the Arabs for the right to vote and to be represented at Paris, which, under the system in vogue, can be obtained only through a scheme of "naturalization" contrary to the laws of Islam and, as such, is out of the question from the Muslim point of view.

Curiously enough, the much-needed palliative seems to have come from France, in the triumph, last year, of the People's Front at the General Elections, following a similar victory for the People's Front in Spain. Incidentally, nearly all careful and unbiased observers are of the opinion that these triumphs are but the first stages of the progress of France and Spain, at a more or less early date, to a complete Soviet Communism. The coming to power of the "Front Populaire" government, under the leadership of M. Leon Blum (described by hostile critics as the "tool of Soviet Russia"), has given a powerful impetus to the political aspirations of the Muslims of Algeria. The effect produced in France itself was phenomenal. No sooner was the new Government elected than tens of

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thousands of workers throughout the country "downed tools" and went on strike for better conditions—an increase of wages, the forty-hour week, paid holidays and the collective labour contract. How they succeeded in their demands and, practically speaking, dictated to their employers, is common knowledge. There were numerous repercussions, both industrial and political, in North Africa.

Shortly afterwards, in the French Senate, a Minister of State, M. Maurice Violette, a former Governor-General of Algeria for some years and a warm friend of the Arabs, seized the opportunity of again bringing forward his "Violette Plan"—a scheme for establishing a universal Arab Electoral, with Arab senators and deputies at Paris. In spite of fierce opposition from what may be termed the "old school," this measure is now being discussed by the French parliament. The Bill has already (in accordance with French procedure) received the signature of the President of the Republic, the President of the Council (M. Leon Blum), the Minister of the Interior, and of three Ministers of State. With possibly some minor amendments, the Bill is fully expected to receive a safe passage through the Chamber and the Senate.

The ultimate aim of the "Violette Plan" is universal suffrage for the Muslim population, whereby every Arab intelligent enough to understand the meaning of the vote—whether shepherd or camel driver, a student at the University, a merchant, doctor, lawyer, or factory worker—will be able to play his part in the government of the country, *without abandoning any of the Qur-anic edicts*. For the present, however, only certain categories are to be eligible—those who by intellectual abilities, or through meritorious service to the State are deemed qualified and entitled to go to the poll. The scheme is progressive. Each year, as and

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when the intellectual progress of the vast Arab population permits, new names will be inscribed on the roll of voters.

It is estimated that, by this wide-sweeping reform, many thousands of names may be added to the voting lists, and that at least four new deputies probably, though not necessarily, Arab deputies will sit at Paris and represent Muslim interests.

Thus the new law will do away with the necessity for the abandonment of Islam, a necessity which has been the stumbling-block for many years in Algerian politics. Whilst travelling in the wastes of the Algerian Sahara, I got into conversation with an influential Khalifa, an Arab ruler over a large area of territory, and responsible to the French Military for good order and discipline in his particular district. During the war, he had served as an officer in the Spahis (Arab cavalry), and had been a prisoner of war at Berlin and at other places. I asked his opinion on the "Violette Plan." "It is only just," he replied. "In Algeria, there are six million Arabs to only a million Europeans and, in Morocco, Algeria and Tunis combined, the proportion is eighteen millions to about three millions. I think we need some sort of representation in Paris. Thousands of us fought by the side of the Allies in the Great War, and we left many dead on the battlefield. We pay the same taxes as do the Europeans, and our children go to the same schools. I think you will agree with me that it is an injustice when a European employer can, with impunity, pay an Arab labourer two francs (about $4\frac{1}{2}d.$) for a full day's work. Our political opponents shout about polygamy and ill-treatment of women. As a matter of fact, nine Arabs out of every ten are not rich enough to marry more than one wife. Further, contrary to the general belief, our womenfolk are quite happy. If I were to ask my wife to walk with

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me through the streets unveiled, she would think I was mad, though doubtless, if we lived in Stamboul, she would do as the Turkish women were doing. We are proud of our French nationality, and we shall be all the better citizens for remaining loyal to our religion."

The new project has caused much bitterness and opposition among certain classes of the administrative functionaries who fear loss of power and prestige. Certain counter-projects are being put forward. One of these demands two separate electoral colleges—French and Arab—voted for separately by French and Arab voters respectively, so that, in the event of a close tussle at election time, where a French pro-Arab candidate is fighting another Frenchman, he will be made to rely on a small Arab majority in order to win his seat. There are various other schemes.

On the 16th of January last, the Federation of Mayors of Algeria met in Congress at Algiers to protest against the new measure. Three hundred mayors were present or represented from all the departments. Among the numerous telegrams of protest read by the President of the Meeting was one from M. Morinaud—the Paris Deputy for the Department of Constantine.

(Translation):

"The 'Violette Plan' would soon give a voting majority to the Arabs, would hand over to them all financial and legislative power, would make pariahs of us, would lead rapidly to the loss of Algeria to France, and would be a crime against our mother-country. The solution is special representation for the natives. As to those who wish to become French citizens, with French (*i.e.* Christian) status, the laws now in force give them this opportunity."

The chief points raised during this Congress were polygamy and the position of women in Islam (the

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favourite weapons of the enemies of Islam) and the supposed "backwardness" of the Arab and his unfitnes to vote. To the impartial observer, the speeches made and the resolutions passed at this Meeting gave a good idea of the apprehensions felt by influential individual members of municipal bodies and representatives of the vested interests of the prosperous, well-to-do colonists who have been able in the past to grow rich on exploited Arab labour, free grants of land, long-term financial loans from the State, and other facilities, while the Arab merchant, farmer or sheep-owner was left to fend for himself, often unsuccessfully. Complaints were raised that the Arabs and "Arabophiles" had access to whole columns in the *Paris Temps* in which to air their views, while their opponents were allowed only a few short paragraphs.

Let us look at the other side of the picture. At a Meeting of the Constantine Branch of the National Union of School Teachers (French and Arab), held on the same day, the following motion was passed, and is typical of many such:

(Translation):

Resolution addressed to the Government

"The Constantine Branch of the National Union of School Teachers, at a Meeting held at the Bourse du Travail, 14th January 1937, addresses to the Blum Government its warmest congratulations on the launching of the scheme for political reform in favour of the Arabs of Algeria. Mindful of the national sovereignty and the glory of the motherland in Africa, it considers the recognition of responsible Muslims as French citizens as an act of political justice, and of the highest wisdom on the part of the Government, crowning the work of instruction and education undertaken by the teaching profession amongst the natives of Algeria. It passes a vote of confidence in the Republican Parliament for assuring

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through the auspicious reform promised to the native population many years ago, renewed progress towards French fraternity in a more closely-knit national unity."

At a Meeting held at Perrégaux, the following telegram was addressed to M. Dubois, the Paris Deputy for the Department of Oran:

• (Translation):

"At a Meeting held yesterday, the 12th of January, at Perrégaux by the local Muslim Community, two thousand Arabs, Jews and Europeans express to you their sympathy and appreciation for your work in the Franco-Mussulman cause. They have confidence that you will uphold and amend, where necessary, the Blum-Violette Scheme, representative, above all others, of the spirit of the Algerian Muslim Congress, the faithful spokesman of the native population of Algeria. Fraternal greetings."

Fear has been expressed in some circles that, under the new system, the two races of Algeria—Muslim and Christian—instead of being united, will be divided into hostile political camps, and that there will be a separation of the two civilizations. Some have been hinted at Civil War—an exaggeration—for, hitherto, naturalized Arabs have voted for municipal councillors, general councillors and financial delegates, and there has never been any danger of Civil War. Doubtless there will be, amongst the new Arab electorate, various sects and parties as in France—reactionary, radical, socialist, members of Leagues, and supporters of the "People's Front," but the general civilizing and humanizing influence of the French in North Africa is too well known and appreciated by the Arab population for there to be any danger of rebellion. The average native would much prefer to be humanly governed by the French than to be the slave of some ambitious European dictators, whose spies and agents provocateurs

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have been particularly busy in North Africa, especially in Morocco, in unsuccessful attempts to preach their respective national cults to the peace-loving Arab population.

In North Africa, the rule of the French is firm, but not oppressive, and the Arabs seek only peaceful co-operation and progress along constitutional lines, with the opportunity of self-expression under the new electoral system. This co-operation will be the easier, and the rate of progress will not be retarded, as hostile critics contend.

It is not generally known that the sciences of Political Economy and Sociology were unknown until the Muslims brought them to light. Political Economy was known as "Management of Capital" and "Civil Politics," while Sociology was called the "Science of Society."

An enlightened, contented Muslim community comprises some of the best elements of modern civilized society.

CORRESPONDENCE

EAST HEMPTREE,
NR. BRISTOL,
SOMERSET.

DEAR SIR,

Kindly accept my grateful thanks for your very interesting letter and literature.

There is no compulsion in religion. In my opinion Islam is the most complete, righteous and original.

Thank you for the advice—the study of the Holy Qur-án. I am desirous of having a translated copy, and would be very grateful if you would kindly recommend one to me.

I am,
Sir,
Yours obediently,
M. K. COLE

WHAT THEY THINK OF US

COLUMBUS, OHIO.

THE IMAM,
THE SHAH, JEHAN MOSQUE,
WOKING, SURREY, ENGLAND.

DEAR SIR,

In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful, I would like to get full information on such literature as would help me to study Arabic, and also to learn more about Islam, which I have accepted, and in the principles of which and in whose lofty ideas for the good of the human family I believe.

There is one particular book I would like to have, and that is the Arabic Grammar Mark without a teacher. There may be some other books that I may want to have for the study of the Islamic religion, regarding which I desire to know all I possibly can.

It seems very difficult to carry on a successful propaganda for the spread of Islam in this country. Yet, by the help of Allah I hope we shall be having a good propagandist before long. We have many men and women who have an idea of its principles.

I am very anxious to have the books that I have mentioned. If you send them by post I will pay at this end as that will save time.

Your friend and Believer in Islam,

RUKN DEEN.

P.S.—I am very glad to have filled up the declaration for Islam, and I am glad to send it to you.

WHAT THEY THINK OF US

• MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANITY

Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad, Imam of the Muslim Mosque at Woking, writes:

"I read with great interest the letter of the Rev. W. Machin but, as the 'Mohammedan gentleman' referred to, cannot but offer some corrections to the statements made in the letter (incidentally, the official name of our community is not 'Mohammedan' but 'Muslim' as the most casual student of the religion knows).

"When I spoke of the Muslim attitude towards Christ, I assure your correspondent that I spoke on behalf of all Muslims—Sunnis, Shiahs, and every other school of thought in Islam, as all of them believe in the Qur-án, of which there is but one version. Mr. Machin, living far away in India, seems not to know that the Mosque at Woking, of which I happen to be the Imam, represents all the different so-called sects of Islam.

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“But the more important point of Mr. Machin's letter was that the Muslim reference to Jesus is of no consequence, as this does not include the acceptance of the 'Divinity of Our Lord and His Saviourhood.' I still think that this simple fact is known to all of the Free Church Ministers whom I addressed. We Muslims give Jesus the same position as we give to our own Prophet, the Holy Prophet Muhammad. 'We make no distinction between any of His prophets' (Qur-án 2:136). If this does not satisfy some of our Christian friends as being of no use to 'spiritual life' we are indeed sorry, but we cannot go any further. I confess there is in some Muslim quarters an anti-Christian feeling, and I hinted at that in my speech under discussion. But this is not because of the Muslim's associating Christ with Christians, but because they find Christians so different from Christ. They have bitter experiences of the 'Christian' conduct of many a diplomat and missionary.

“Mr. Machin refers to the Turkish cruelties towards the Armenians—a fact highly exaggerated; but he forgets that the Turks were never religious fanatics. Cruelty by an imperial nation towards a subject people is far more characteristic of Christian history, I am afraid, than of Muslim: and in this matter the Christians of the twentieth century have beaten all records. As for religious tolerance, the Christian record cannot bear any comparison with the Muslim. The Crusades, the Inquisitions and the total extinction of the Moors in Spain (who, during their occupation of Spain, had treated the Christians as belonging to a sister religion to their own) are facts of which no parallel can be found in the history of Islam, even in its darkest days. Rivalry there should always be, not only between two religions, but even between two sects and institutions

WHAT THEY THINK OF US

of the same religion. No one can eliminate that. But whether or not we are inclined to be courteous and civil, if not charitable, towards one another—that is the whole point.

"The Muslims extend the courtesy of reverencing the founder of Christianity. The Qur-án, the Muslim Scripture, is replete with the praises of this great Teacher of Nazareth, and requires of its followers a faith in his mission as part of their faith. Are the Christians prepared to reciprocate this feeling, even in part, by showing some respect towards the Founder of Islam, to make a workable friendship possible between these two great communities of the world? That is the question I asked the Free Church Ministers in my address to them; and that is my standing question to the Christian community at this most critical of all periods in the history of civilization. If Christians, following the thought of Mr. Machin as expressed in his letter, say "No," I am sure human destiny will only feel sorry for such an unwise attitude on their part. But I am confident this will not be the case. Let bold and far-sighted Christian leaders rise above the weakness for popularity, and openly come forward to reassure me in this confidence in the great Christian community."—*The Methodist Recorder*, London, 31st March, 1938.

In the March number of the *Islamic Review* there is an article entitled "The Status of Woman in Islam," in which the following interesting paragraph appears:

The preliminary step taken in this direction (the improvement of the position of woman) was to remove the stigma of responsibility that had hitherto been put upon woman with regard to original sin and the fall of man. The Islamic theory about this incident is

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that both Adam and Eve were simultaneously and equally deceived, and that the blame attaches not to Eve alone, but to Adam also in like proportion. The Qur-án does not say, as said St. Paul, who had a strong antipathy against the female sex, that "Adam was deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." In the Qur-án, Adam bravely confesses: "Our Lord, we have done wrong to ourselves," and he does not say that it was Eve who deceived him. The Qur-ánic text is: "*Wa Azallahumash Shaitan,*" which means Satan made them fall.

The legends of other religious systems further improve the story, and make Adam take the entire responsibility; and, as Ingersell said: "That's the kind of man to start the world with."—*The "Freethinker,"* April 17th, 1938.

[On reading this comment, the following letter was sent to the Editor of the *Freethinker* by the Imam, to which no reply has been forthcoming.—ED., I. R.]

THE EDITOR,
THE "FREETHINKER,"
L O N D O N .

DEAR SIR,

I read with interest the comment in the "Sugar Plums" column of your esteemed journal (27th April, 1938) on a paragraph in an article entitled "The Status of Woman in Islam" that had appeared in the March 1938 issue of our monthly, the *Islamic Review*. I was, however, struck at the assertion that the legends of other religious systems further improve the Qur-ánic version of the Fall of Adam, and make Adam take the entire responsibility. May I enquire to what legends of what religious systems the writer of that column referred?

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours faithfully,
AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD (ISLAM).

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