

Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets . . . " HOLY QUR-AN 35:  
"There will be no Prophet after me."—MUHAMMAD.

*The*

# *Islamic Review*

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[No. 2

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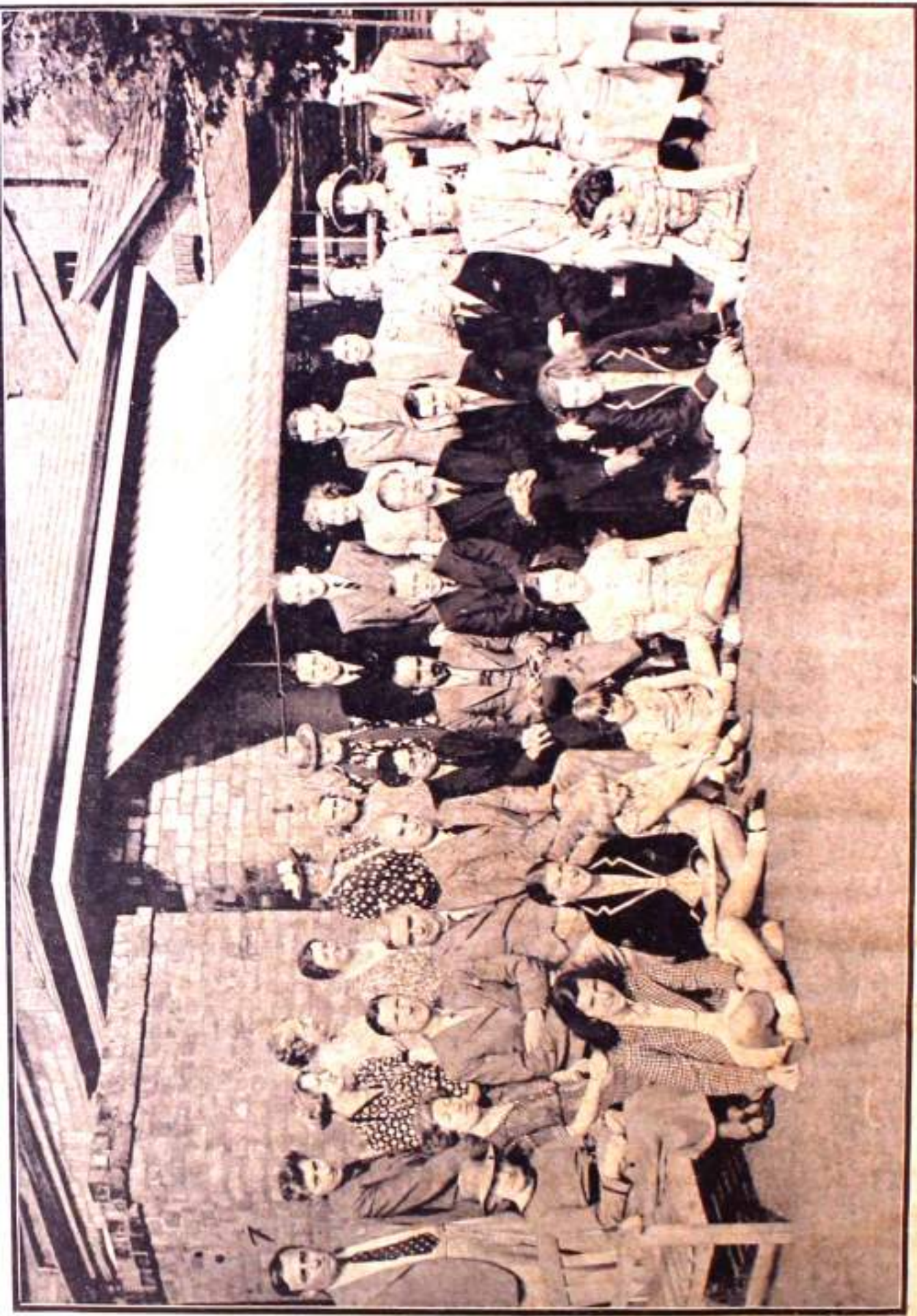
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A group of the various speakers at the Convention of Religions held at Southport (Aug. 21-27, 1939) at which Islam was represented by the Imam of the Mosque (X) Woking. The text of his address "The Message of Islam" appears elsewhere in this issue. Dr. W. Stede of the London University is seated in the front row.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
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THE  
**ISLAMIC REVIEW**

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FEBRUARY 1940 A.C.

[No. 2

**A DECLARATION**

I, Joseph William Adamson of Winson Green, Birmingham, 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 ill-Allah Muhammad-un-Rasul Allah.*

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

(Sd.) WALI AHMAD ADAMSON.



**ID-UL-FITR (1358 A.H.) AT THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE**

By S. A. Toto

The Muslim festival of Id-ul-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan, was celebrated at the Shah Jehan Mosque on Monday, 13th November 1939.

Many things combined to make this Id different from those of preceding years. On account of the War Emergency, and the subsequent departure of many Muslim residents from this country, it was anticipated that, comparatively, fewer people would take part in the celebration. Travel facilities were meagre. The special cheap day travel tickets issued to participants on all previous occasions were no longer obtainable. In fact, prior to the event none but an incurable optimist would have expected that on this occasion the attendance would approximate to the figure of former years. Last minute surprises were, however, in store for us. No sooner had the invitation cards been issued, than applications for more came from numerous new friends—Muslim and non-Muslim. The number of the visitors was in the neighbourhood of 600.

Nature was benevolent that day; the rains which had become a regular feature for the past fortnight stopped; the sun which was peeping from behind the clouds reappeared.

One giant marquee was used in place of the usual two. Inside it on the walls were hung the flags of five different Muslim nations—a new feature which greatly enhanced the importance of the occasion and also served as a symbol of the unity of Islamic nations. In the rear of the tent, at its far-end side, were placed tables for serving refreshments. Thick carpets on the floor and stoves scattered about the arena made the atmosphere inside the tent cosy and warm, and provided a reasonable safeguard against the exigencies of the English climate.



## ID-UL-FITR (1358 A.H.) AT THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE

One early arrival was none other than Sir Firoz Khan Noon, the High Commissioner for India, who was accompanied by his entourage. By 10-30 a.m. other visitors had begun to arrive. The gathering in front of the marquee was gradually increasing, as, although all the arrivals were ushered into the sheltered atmosphere of the tent, the majority preferred to remain outside walking about the grounds or standing in groups gaily chatting with one another till the appointed time for prayers.

A medley of all Muslim nations on terms of perfect equality and distinguishable from one another only by the different costumes worn, is a heartening sight. And, if it were not for the presence of some members of His Majesty's Forces, one would have almost forgotten that there was a war on.

Just before prayers a large number of Indian seamen arrived in buses—a solid phalanx in blue uniforms. Their hastily wrapped headgears alone indicated that, for the moment, they were not on their daily nautical duties. When it was announced that prayers were going to be said, the problem of space inside the tent became acute, so much so, that even the uncarpeted passage on the bare ground was utilised.

After the prayers, a very interesting Id sermon was delivered by the Imam.\* At the end of the lecture his statement reflecting the attitude of Muslims in this war aroused much interest—and comment. The guests were then entertained to an appetising luncheon consisting of Oriental dishes.

So ended a very successful Id day.

Amongst those present were: His Excellency Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, Lt.-Col. Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, Sir Firoz Khan Noon, The Rt. Rev. Bishop J.

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\* The Sermon will appear in our next issue—*Ed. I. R.*



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Wedgwood, Rev. S. R. Bawtree, Rev. P. L. Quitlet, Afifi Fakhouri, Secretary, Arab Centre, London, Dr. H. G. Patel, Captain Rashid, Mr. Ikramullah, I.C.S., Mian M. Nasir, P.C.S., Prof. Dr. A.M. Deen, Mr. Omar Flight, Mr. Lewis Parker, Mr. Dawood Cowan, and Mr. Ibrahim Arif.

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### THE HOPE THAT IS WOKING

By A. O. R. RAHMAN.

History, to me, is nothing if not a source of inspiration and strength. It is nothing short of a positive science and can be helpful to us, human beings, in reaching decisions and solutions for all the ailments, multifarious and diverse as they are, that distress the modern world and make it a veritable hell on earth. The deductions which an historical, analytical study makes possible, can be utilised as a fruitful source of practical wisdom in our future plans and actions. We can observe the consequences of the folly and wisdom of our forefathers and learn to benefit by their experiences and achievements. Thus it can be possible for us to avoid mistakes, overcome obstacles and march along the path of progress, of rational and harmonious development, provided we take care to study the past history of mankind with this utilitarian motive in view.

It is not my intention here to recapitulate in a selective or eclectic fashion the various features of human history that point morals for our guidance. Nor is it within the pale of this brief dissertation to enter into an examination of the factors that have made the history of Islam so phenomenal or the causes that have brought about the change in its position as a world force. All that I want to emphasise here is the need of Islam to-day, and, for the matter of that, of the whole world, and how the situation is to be met, by a reference to the past history of the all-comprehensive creed of Islam, whose importance is now being



## THE HOPE THAT IS WOKING

realised more and more throughout the world and particularly in the West, where the democratic and social principles of the faith are beginning to exercise a wider and profounder appeal than anywhere else. Faced as it is to-day with complex, intricate and baffling problems of social and political importance, of national and international significance, that threaten the very structure of civilisation, with warring ideologies and dictatorial whims that work havoc at no inconsiderable speed, the world in general and Europe in particular, searches in vain amidst narrow, dogmatic and crabbed theories, statistics, and dialectics, for a solution of the ills and misfortunes of the modern world. Far be it from me, a Muslim—a realist by virtue of my faith—to suggest that a pure and absolute moral regeneration is enough to bring about the millenium. I do not believe in utopias and shangrillas. I do not believe in moving in a fool's paradise, giving lessons in virtue and piety to gangsters and criminals, delivering homilies to thieves and swindlers, or teaching contentment and resignation to people living in abject poverty and degradation. That would be incongruous in the extreme. I believe that economic adjustments and administrative measures are an essential part of any plan for world reformation and rejuvenation. This view is borne out by the teachings of the Holy Qur-án and the Hadith and the examples set up by the Holy Prophet and his successors, into the details of which I do not propose to enter, but for which I would refer my readers to my article entitled the "Social and Economic Laws of Islam" appearing in the *Islamic Review* for December 1938 and to another which will subsequently appear in these pages. Suffice it to say that Islam was the first ethical, social and political code which (1) made charity a social obligation; (2) raised the status of women and emancipated



them socially, politically and economically (a position which they have not yet been able to secure in most of the advanced countries of the world, where, besides being economically not on the same footing on which Islam would place them, their modesty and honour have been exposed to the gravest risks and dangers on account of the fundamental misconception of Christians); (3) gave a code of civil rights and individual liberty; (4) abolished the obnoxious institution of slavery (a practice whose living examples are the disfranchised and outcast negroes of America); and (5) allowed absolute and full rights to the minorities in the commonwealth of Islam, and established the most perfect equality between man and man, unobtainable even in Bolshevist Russia where the Habeas Corpus Act does not exist and where party dictatorship is maintained at the point of the bayonet.

But compared with all these teachings and universal and immutable laws what do we witness to-day? Whither is the world going and what rôle is Islam playing? Do we not witness, throughout the world to-day, acute economic distress and social disharmony and a lamentable moral bankruptcy among individuals and nations? We are justified in bearing out Shaikh Mushir Hussain Qidwai, when he says that "Europe must give up the callous sweating of its own poor workers to provide champagne and dinners for its rich. Europe must give up its superior airs and the bloodsucking of the weak nations of the East to indulge in nude, all-night dances. If it does not give up this and a score of other vices, it must be crushed at once, when it delays in destroying itself." Do we not seem to be heading for a fall—a miserable fall—with the entire social and economic machinery ever in danger of a collapse on account of the depredations of the ferocious monsters of money-power and parasitic capitalists?



## THE HOPE THAT IS WOKING

If Germany must be saved from a war economy even during years of peace, inflicting on the people the dangers of malnutrition arising from the undesirable regulation of the national diet based on national hatred and prejudice against other strong powers like Great Britain and France and against the suicidal step of challenging again and again with an unrelenting fury these mighty powers of the west; if the defenceless Arabs of Palestine must be freed from the influx of the powerful money-bags—the international Jewry—that count so much with our British statesmen; if America must be saved from the moral depravity to which its top-heavy civilisation has reduced it; if the negroes of America are to be placed on an equal social status with the white-skinned races that inhabit the continent; if the sixty million so-called depressed classes have to be freed from the thralldom of Brahmanical domination and the iron-heels of Caste-Hindus; and lastly, if the Muslims of the world have to be raised to a higher sense of duty and responsibility as torch-bearers of light and learning, civilisation and culture, social democracy and world brotherhood, the dynamic features of the creed of Islam stand in greater need of being expounded before the world.

Islamic laws and principles have, on various occasions, stood the test of time and emerged triumphant, and even hostile peoples and races have gradually come to adopt some of them, having been compelled to do so by force of circumstances and painful experiences. But certainly the involuntary labour and pain have not been worth the candle. Prevention, as the old adage goes, is better than cure. And the supreme lesson history teaches us is the efficacy of the Islamic code, its adaptability to changing conditions and circumstances, and its inherent capacity for evolution and progress.



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

A study of the past history of Islam would convince every thoughtful student that its present transitory eclipse has been due, not so much to Christian and other anti-Islamic forces, as to the negligence and lethargy of the Muslim nations themselves and their contravention of the teachings of Islam, resulting from the chaos of the grab for power indulged in by individuals and factions. This means that even Muslims have to be made to realise the potentialities of their own religion, which, besides being a code of moral precepts, is a synthesis of life, wherein bliss can be procured. The following frank exposition by the late Justice Ameer Ali would suffice to reveal the seriousness of the extent to which Islamic laws have been disregarded by those who profess to be Muslims :

“The time is now arrived when humanity at large should raise its voice against the practice of servitude in whatsoever shape or under whatever denomination it may be disguised. The Muslims, specially for the honour of their great Prophet, should try to efface that dark page from their history—a page which would never have been written but for their contravention of the spirit of his laws, however bright it may appear by the side of the ghastly scrolls on which the deeds of the professors of the rival creeds are recorded. The day is come when the voice that proclaimed liberty, equality, and universal brotherhood among mankind should be heard with the fresh vigour acquired from the spiritual pervasion of fourteen centuries. It remains for the Muslims to show the falseness of the aspersions cast on the memory of the great and noble Prophet by proclaiming in explicit terms that slavery is reprobated by their faith and discountenanced by their creed.”



## THE HOPE THAT IS WOKING

If truth must be told and realities faced, I cannot have the slightest hesitation in declaring that a considerable number of us, not being aware of the life-giving forces of the message of the Holy Prophet, are Muslims by inheritance and not by conviction. For this we must thank our pseudo-theologians who have for several centuries past been endeavouring to establish some sort of a priesthood in Islam—an institution altogether alien to its democratic principles. It is a sad commentary on the religious enthusiasm of some of our "Ulema" that they should find, in quarrels of a political nature, that divided the believers into hostile groups 1,300 years ago over the question of the Caliphate, a fruitful source of bickerings, recriminations and self-aggrandisement, little realising that the question of the Caliphate has once for all been settled, and that it matters little to the present generation who was and who ought to have been the Caliph, if they stick to the ideals and principles laid down in the Holy Qur-án and the Hadith. In fact, some of these irresponsible people have recently been bolstering up conflicts which only belittle these adherents of Islam in the eyes of non-believers. True it is, as Mr. Durrani has stated in his splendid little book, "Muhammad the Prophet," that, "the religious teacher, who ought to have been our leader and guide in life, eats the bread of dishonour and obtains his sustenance by means which no self-respecting man will care to adopt." It is also on account of the sinister influence of these people that un-Islamic customs and ceremonies have found their way into our social life.

In the midst of these depressing features we perceive a silver lining in the clouds. The result of the efforts of that bold and clear-sighted servant of humanity, the late Khwaja Kamaluddin, the Woking Muslim Mission is the hope of Islam and, for the matter



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of that, of the whole world. It has done considerable spade-work not only towards revolutionising the religious ideals of the West, but also towards raising the Muslim world, and specially the Indian Muslims, to a higher sense of understanding of their own religion. With its scientific and critical approach towards all important questions, the West has responded splendidly to the call of the *Islamic Review* and its founder, who was the first man to take up the work of dispersing the mist of lies and distortions in which the personality of the Prophet and his teachings were shrouded in the West. The Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, which incorporates the *Islamic Review*, the *Ishā'at-i-Islam* and the Bashir Muslim Library, stands out as the greatest title to immortality of a selfless servant of humanity who understood that the deliverance of the world lay not in the Christian dogmas of the Trinity and Evil, but in the all-comprehensive code of Islam, unimpaired by artificial twistings and meaningless differences of details or by fantastic theorising. If anything, it represents the dawn of Islam from the West, demonstrating to the world the wonderful unity of Islamic Brotherhood as it existed in the days of the Holy Prophet himself. The hope that the intellects of the West who occupy the key positions to-day can, if they are once convinced, become the strongest pillars of the noble creed of Islam, is slowly and gradually being realised.

Naturally, Woking has a twofold mission to carry out. To the war-weary nations of the West, it stands out as the exponent of a moral and social doctrine, under which none can have preference over another except by virtue of his deeds; while to the Muslims of the East, it is the symbol of action and unity for the achievement of a nobler life, neither exclusively mundane nor exclusively other-worldly like the



## ISLAM AND CIVILISATION

teachings of the Vedas and other dualistic faiths. Let the Muslims of India, who form one of the largest single units of Muslims in the world, throw in their lot with Woking and witness the wonderful revival which is already manifesting itself there.

Let us hope they will learn to depend on their own national characteristics and dynamic forces and not get involved in the Bergsonian bog of metaphysics, as have the followers of other creeds. And success *Inshallah* shall be theirs!

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## ISLAM AND CIVILISATION

BY ABDUL LATIF KHAN

(Continued from Vol. XXVII, page 226.)

First of all, what is the literal meaning of Islam, the religion of a Muslim?

. . . Salm, the root of Islam, means, in the first instance, to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, to have paid up, to be at perfect peace, and, finally, to hand oneself over to Him with whom peace is made. The noun derived from it means peace, greeting, safety, salvation.

. . . The word thus implies absolute submission to God's will—as generally assumed—neither in the first instance, nor exclusively, but means, on the contrary, one who strives after righteousness with his own strength. Closely connected with the misapprehension of this part of Muhammad's original doctrine is also the popular notion on that supposed bane of Islam, Fatalism; but we must content ourselves here with the observation that, as far as Muhammad and the Qur-án are concerned, Fatalism is an utter and absolute invention. Not once, but repeatedly, and as if to guard against such an assumption, Muhammad denies it as distinctly as he can, and gives injunctions



which show as indisputably as can be that nothing was further from his mind than that pious state of idle and hopeless inanity and stagnation. But to return to Islam. The real sum and substance of it is contained in the Qur-ánic words: "We have spoken unto thee by revelation: Follow the religion of Abraham."

What did Muhammad and his contemporaries understand by this religion of Abraham? "Abraham," says the Qur-án, pointedly and pregnantly, "was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was pious and righteous and no idolater." Have we not here the briefest and the most rationalistic doctrine ever preached? . . .

And this, our exordium, we will sum up with the beginning of the Surah, called the Assembly, revealed at Medina:

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Whatsoever is in heaven and on earth praises God, The King, The Holy One, The Almighty, The All-wise. It is He Who, out of the midst of the illiterate Arabs, has raised an Apostle to show unto them His signs, and to sanctify them, and to teach them the Scripture and the Wisdom, they who before had been in great darkness. . . . This is God's free Grace, which He giveth unto whomsoever He wills. God is of great Mercy."

H. G. Wells says:

"Islam prevailed because it was the best social and political order the times could offer. It prevailed because everywhere it found politically apathetic peoples robbed, oppressed, bullied, uneducated and unorganised, and it found selfish and unsound governments out of touch with any people at all. It was the broadest, freshest and cleanest political idea



that had yet come into actual activity in the world and it offered better terms than any other to the mass of mankind. The capitalistic and slave-holding system of the Roman Empire and the literature and culture and social tradition of Europe had altogether decayed and broken down before Islam arose ; it was only when mankind lost faith in the sincerity of its representatives that Islam, too, began to decay." (*The Outline of History*, page 316).

The learned authority, the late Annie Besant, the President of the Theosophical Society, says :

“Muhammad, the Prophet, was an unlearned man, as the world counts learning. Over and over again, he calls himself the Illiterate Prophet and his followers regard Al-Qur-án as a standing miracle, vindicating his claim as a Divine Messenger, since it is written in the most perfect Arabic. Yet, unlearned himself, he places learning in the first rank of the things to be desired. He says : “Acquire knowledge ; for he, who acquires it in the way of the Lord, performs an act of piety ; who speaks of knowledge, praises God ; who seeks it adores God ; who dispenses instruction in it bestows alms and who imparts it to its fitting objects performs an act of devotion to God. Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not ; it lights the way to heaven, it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends ; it guides us to happiness, it sustains us in misery, it is our ornament in the company of friends, it serves as an armour against our enemies. With knowledge the



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servant of God rises to the height of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in the world, and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next."

So, again, with a just discrimination of values, this Great Teacher, for whom so many died, declares :

"The ink of the scholar is more precious than the blood of the martyr."

This sentence should be emblazoned in letters of gold on the wall of every school established by Muslims for the children of Islam have ever rushed joyously to martyrdom, but in late centuries—things are rapidly changing now—they have honoured scholars but little.

Ali, the beloved son-in-law of the Prophet, gave a noble definition of science :

"The essence of Science is the enlightenment of the heart, truth is its principal object, inspiration its guide, reason its accepter, God its inspirer, the words of man its utterer."

It was these lofty views of the value of learning which led to the philosophy of the Saracens and the science of the Moors. When it is said against Islam that it is not progressive, that its people lay behind the nations in the value set on learning and in Science, its assailants, unless they ignore history, should surely look for some other reason than the religion itself to account for the stagnation of the later days. For it was Ali, building on the foundation laid by the Prophet himself, who began the definite teaching which, after a hundred years of quiet growth, burst upon Europe as a splendid light and, reared by the Moors in Spain, made possible the rebirth of learning in Christendom.

It was Islam which, in Arabia and Egypt, in the colleges of Baghdad and Cairo, took up the Neoplatonic heritage, despised and rejected by Christendom as



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pagan, after the slaying of Hypatia, and saved its priceless riches to hand them on for European use. It was the value set on knowledge in obedience to the Prophet's teaching, which led one branch of his followers to devote themselves to study in Arabia, while the other set out to the East and the West to deliver peoples from abject slaveries of mind and body, thus paving the way for Islam's mighty Empire. The students laboured unweariedly in philosophy and science while the warriors hewed their way to power, so that behind the victorious sword there ever followed the lamp of knowledge. Philosophy and Science trod in the footprints left by the Conqueror. First along the north of Africa the hosts of Islam fought their way and planted their banner; then from Africa into Spain, formed there the Moorish Empire. Universities arose, and students flocked to them from all parts of Europe, for in Christendom Science was unknown, Astronomy and Mathematics had vanished, Chemistry had not risen from its 'Egyptian Tomb.' Knowledge was brought by the conquering Moors, and Pope Sylvester II, in his youth, was a student in the University of Cordova, learning the elements of Geometry and Mathematics, which aroused later the horror of his ignorant priesthood. I have summed up elsewhere—in speaking on this subject—something of the Science brought into Europe by the Moors; they discovered equations of the second degree, then binomial theorem, they discovered the sine and cosine in trigonometry, they made the first telescope, they studied the stars, they measured the size of the earth, they evolved a new type of architecture, they discovered a new music, they taught scientific agriculture, they brought manufactures to the highest pitch of excellence.

Nor was all this brought to Europe only. India knows the splendid architecture of the Moghals, of



whom it was justly said :

“ They built like giants, and finished like jewellers.”

Some of the most wonderful architectural triumphs of India are the work of the Muslims, and India has been enriched by these treasures, poured into her lap by her Muslim children. Their influence may be traced also in Hindu architecture, for no art can be imprisoned within the limits of a creed or race.

It is an interesting side-issue that much of the incurable suspicion with which official Christianity has regarded Science is due to the fact that Science returned to Europe under the banner of the Arabian Prophet, and was, therefore, regarded as a heresy. Science to the orthodox was anti-Christian, and they looked on it with hatred and with horror. Anyone who cares to read the epithets hurled by the Christians against the Prophet of Islam will understand that anything brought to Christendom in his name would inevitably fall under the ban of the Church. During these early centuries of the life of Islam, the truths of Science were spoken out at the risk of life, limb and liberty. The cruel expulsion of the Moors from Spain ended the long struggle and was one of the causes of the downfall of Spain from her place of pride. During these centuries also there were born into Islam some of the acutest Metaphysicians and the profoundest Philosophers that the world has known. They revived and carried further in Europe the philosophy which was the life of Greece.

And here may I utter a few words of gentle reproach to my brethren of Islam ? This Metaphysics is yours, but it is of value for the world ; why do you not translate it for the benefit of India and of the West ?” When I wanted to study it, I found it in Arabic, or in the monkish Latin of the Middle Ages ; finally, I



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discovered some fragmentary translations in French—the French apparently valuing these treasures of Islam more than the legitimate owners—and found myself on familiar ground. Europe will recognise and honour the Muslim learning of the East, and we shall hear no more of the reproach that Islam favours ignorance.

Next to the Holy Qur-án, the sayings of the Prophet of Islam recorded in the six canonical books of Tradition called “Sihah Sitta” gave a new and very powerful impetus to the awakened energies of the newly converted Arabs. The great Prophet was never weary of impressing upon his followers the most urgent necessity of acquiring learning, heart and soul. Traditions emphasising the supreme importance of learning and exhorting the acquisition and cultivation of knowledge may be counted by hundreds, some of which will be found in our above quotation from the learned authority—the late Annie Besant. It is a very remarkable fact that the Holy Prophet’s most ardent devotion to learning and culture distinguished him from all the religious teachers and brought him into the closest affinity with the modern world of thought.

Professor Browne, a celebrated authority on Islam, says of the Arabs :

“ . . . . It was undoubtedly to Islam—that simple, yet majestic creed, of which no unprejudiced student can ignore the grandeur, that they owed the splendid part which they were destined to play in the history of civilisation.”

Another celebrated authority, Leckey, says :

“ Not till the education of Europe passed from the monasteries to the universities, not till Mohamedan Science and Classical freethought and industrial independence broke the sceptre of the Church did the intellectual revival of Europe begin.” (*History of Rationalism*, Vol. II, page 206.)

(To be continued.)



## ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

BY C. A. SOORMA

*(Continued from Vol. XXVII, page 388.)*CHAPTER XIV—*continued.*\*

## D.—DOWER OR MAHR

Another fact which has to be considered is the question of Dower. Under Islamic Law, payment of dower is obligatory. It is known as *Mahr*, and has been defined as the payment of a sum of money or other property which the wife is entitled to receive from the husband in consideration of the marriage. It must, however, be noted that a marriage contracted without the specification of dower is valid, because the law presumes a consideration in favour of the wife which is estimated on a recognised basis. The *Mahr* of Islamic Law is analogous to the *donatio propter nuptias* of the Roman Law. It is a settlement in favour of the wife made prior to the completion of the marriage contract, in consideration of marriage. The only distinction which exists between the Roman *donatio propter nuptias* and the *Mahr* of the Muslim is that whereas the former is purely voluntary on the part of the husband, the latter is obligatory. So great an importance is attached to this that a stipulation on the part of the woman before marriage to abandon all her right to dower is invalid and inoperative under the Islamic Law, and in all such cases, the wife could repudiate the stipulation and sue the husband for customary dower.

The Dower in Islam is of two kinds, viz., Prompt Dower and Deferred Dower.

Prompt Dower is payable on demand ; and Deferred Dower is payable on dissolution of marriage by death

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\* We are sorry the chapter which appeared in our December 1939 issue as Chapter XIV should actually be Chapter XV, and the present instalment should intervene between this and the instalment that was published in our October 1939 issue.—*Ed., I. R.*



or by divorce. Dower is a debt and as such it is enforceable at law as any other debt. The widow's claim for dower is a debt payable out of the estate of her husband, and it must, like other debts, be paid before legacies and distribution of inheritance. When the widow is in possession of the property of her deceased husband, having obtained such possession lawfully and without force or fraud, and her dower or any part of it is due and unpaid, she is entitled, as against the other heirs of her deceased husband, to retain that possession until her dower is paid. This has been recognised by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 14 *Moore's Indian Appeals*, p. 377 ; see also 52 *Indian Appeals*, pp. 145 and 150.

#### E.—MAINTENANCE OF WIVES

Let us now examine the Islamic Law with regard to treatment of wives and their maintenance. Marriage legalises connubial relationship. It imposes on the husband the obligation of satisfying the antenuptial settlements and of fulfilling all the antenuptial agreements made in consideration of marriage. It establishes on both sides the prohibition of affinity and the rights of inheritance. It obliges the husband to be just towards his wife, to treat her with respect and affection, and exacts from her in return obedience and faithfulness to him.

“ Under Islamic Law, a wife is entitled to pledge the credit of her husband for the maintenance of herself and her children. She is able, even if holding a different creed from that of her husband, to claim the free and unfettered exercise of her own religious observances. If the husband is possessed of means, he is bound to place at his non-Muslim wife's disposal some conveyance to take her to her usual place of worship. He is debarred



from molesting her in the smallest degree in the exercise of her faith or from depriving her of the custody of her children without valid reason, such as misconduct or tampering with their religion."

"Her claim for her antenuptial settlement on the estate of her husband has priority over all unsecured debts and she ranks in *pari passu* with secured creditors."

I should also like to tell you that the Muslim wife is not merely entitled to maintenance in the English sense of the word but has a right to claim a habitation of her own for her own exclusive use to be provided for her, consistent with the husband's means.

Under the Islamic Law, a wife is bound to live with her husband and to follow him wherever he may go, except to a country which is at war with her own. On her refusal to do so without sufficient or valid reason, courts of justice, on a suit for restitution of conjugal rights by the husband, could order her to live with her husband.

The obligation of the wife, however, to live with her husband is not absolute. The law recognises circumstances to justify her refusal to live with him. For instance, if he has habitually ill-treated her; if he has deserted her for a long time; or if he has directed her to leave his house or even connived at her doing so, he cannot require her to re-enter the conjugal domicile or ask the assistance of a court of justice to compel her to live with him. The bad conduct or gross neglect of the husband is, under Muslim Law, a good defence to a suit brought by him for restitution of conjugal rights.

I shall now deal with the maintenance of children under Islamic Law.

The Islamic Civil Law imposes on parents the duty of maintaining their children and of educating



## ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

them properly. This obligation rests naturally upon the father. A father is bound to maintain his female children until they are married, if they have no independent means of their own. He cannot send them out to work or send them into service in any circumstances. Marriage does not necessarily absolve the father from the obligation of maintaining his daughters.

A father is bound to maintain his son's wife when such son is young, infirm or engaged in study.

A mere plea of poverty under Islamic Law does not absolve the husband from the obligation of maintaining his wife and children. If the man is able to work for his livelihood, if he be not a cripple or so infirm that he cannot do anything to earn a living, he is bound to provide for their maintenance.

### F.—POLYGAMY IN ISLAM

We have seen that polygamy was prevalent among all the nations of antiquity, and is even now unrestricted among the Hindus and the Buddhists. We have also observed the state of Arabia before the advent of Islam—its gross licentiousness and depravity. Let me give you the law of the Qur-án on this subject :

- (a) " And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you—two, three and four—but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them) then (marry) only one or what your right hands possess; this is more proper, that you may not deviate from the right course." (IV : 3.)

This is one of the most important verses of the Qur-án. I give below the views of several eminent authorities on this subject. To begin with Muhammad Ali :

- (1) " This passage permits polygamy in certain circumstances ; it does not enjoin it, nor



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even permit it unconditionally. . . . It is admitted that this Chapter (entitled *Al-Nisa* or 'Women') was revealed to guide the Muslims under the conditions which followed the battle of *Uhud*, and the last portion of the last Chapter deals with the battle. Now in that battle seventy men out of seven hundred Muslims had been slain, and this decimation had largely decreased the number of males who, being the breadwinners, were the natural guardians and supporters of the females. The number was likely to suffer a still greater diminution in the battles which had yet to be fought, while the number of women would be increased by the addition of prisoners of war. Thus, many orphans would be left in the charge of widows, who would find it difficult to procure the necessary means of support. Hence, in the first verse of this Chapter, the Muslims are enjoined to respect the ties of relationship, inasmuch as they are told that they are all in fact related to one another. In the second verse, the care of orphans is particularly enjoined. In the third verse (quoted above), we are told that if they could not do justice to the orphans they might marry the widows, whose children would thus become their own children, and as the number of women was then much greater than the number of men, they were permitted to marry even two or three or four women. It would, thus, be clear that the permission to have more than one wife was given in the peculiar circum-



## ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

stances of the Muslim Society then existing, and the Prophet's action in marrying widows, as well as the example of many of his companions, corroborates this statement. Marriage with orphan girls is also sanctioned in this passage, for there were the same difficulties in the case of orphan girls as in the case of widows, and the words are general. It may be added here that polygamy in Islam is both in theory and in practice an exception, not a rule, and as an exception it is a remedy for many of the evils especially prevalent in European society. It is not only the preponderance of females over males that necessitates polygamy in certain cases, but there is a variety of other circumstances, which require polygamy to be adopted in exceptional circumstances, not only for the moral but also for the physical welfare of society. Prostitution, the great evil of civilisation, which is a real canker, with its concomitant increase of bastardy, is practically unknown to countries where polygamy is allowed as a remedial measure. . . . By 'what your right hands possess' is meant the females who were taken prisoners in war, and such marriages are legalised, as we have noticed above. (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-200.)

Take the above verse in conjunction with the following :

- (b) " And you have it not in your own power to do justice between your wives, even though you may covet (it), but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination, so



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that you leave her, as it were, in suspense ; and if you effect a reconciliation and guard (against evil), then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful " (IV : 129).

The resulting view of the Qur-án on polygamy is as follows :

- (i) That marriage with more than one woman is merely permissive. It was sanctioned after the battle of Uhud.
  - (ii) That the number of wives a man can have at the same time is limited to four (Islam thus restricting polygamy).
  - (iii) That where the husband fears that he cannot do justice to more than one wife, he must not marry more than one woman at the same time (all the above is clear from Chapter IV : 3).
  - (iv) That it is beyond human power to do justice between all the wives, although man may be anxious to do so (clear from Chapter IV : 129).
  - (v) That, in spite of this human failing, one ought to do one's best in treating them impartially.
  - (vi) That it is " more proper that a man have one wife, so that he may not deviate from the right course "—(Chapter IV : 3)—the course of impartiality and equity. Thus we see that Islam, indirectly, but in unequivocal language, deprecates polygamy.
  - (vii) That the permission of polygamy is an abnormal law, for an abnormal state of society, and though the permission is there, it is not generally followed as is clear from Howard cited below :
- (2) " Where polygamy exists, it is sometimes the chiefs alone who are permitted to have a



plurality of wives. Besides, just as in the case of polyandry, almost everywhere it is confined to a very small part of the people, the majority being monogamous. It is so 'among all Muhammadan peoples, in Asia and Europe, as well as in Africa.' 'Ninety-five per cent. of the Muhammadans of India, for instance, are said to be monogamists;' and, in Persia, it is reported only 'two per cent. of the population enjoy the questionable luxury of a plurality of wives.'" (Howard, *History of Matrimonial Institutions*, Vol. I, p. 142; and Ameer Ali, *Mahomedan Law*, Vol. II, pp. 24-25.)

- (3) "He (Muhammad) restrained polygamy by limiting the maximum number of contemporaneous marriages and by making absolute equity towards all obligatory in the man. It is worthy of note that the clause in the Qur-án (IV : 3) which contains the permission to contract four contemporaneous marriages is immediately followed by a sentence which cuts down the significance of the preceding passage to its normal and legitimate dimensions. The former passage says : 'You may marry two, three or four wives, but no more.' The subsequent lines declare : 'But if you cannot deal equitably and justly with all, you shall marry only one.' The extreme importance of this proviso, bearing especially in mind the meaning which is attached to the word equity (*adl*) in the Qur-ánic teachings, has not been lost sight of by the great thinkers of the Muslim world."—(Ameer Ali, *Mahomedan Law*, Vol. II, p. 42.)



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- (4) "The Muhammadan Law undoubtedly contemplates monogamy as the ideal to be aimed at, but concedes to a man the right to have more than one wife—not exceeding four—at one and the same time, provided he is able to deal with them on a footing of equality and justice. This is in accord with the scheme of Islamic legislation which sets up certain moral ideals to be gradually realised by the community, positively forbidding only such acts as must clearly be injurious to social and individual life at all times." (Abdur Rahim, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-8.)

It is suggested that the above Qur-ánic texts, supplemented by the views of certain well-known authorities, clearly destroy the charge that is so often made by the ignorant that Islam enjoins polygamy or that it sanctions unrestricted polygamy. No religion, in my submission, has achieved the betterment of society with greater success than Islam. Why? Because the laws of Islam are *practical*; they have been framed with a view to meet both the *normal* and the *abnormal* needs of human society. They are applicable to all states of society, from the purely primitive to the highly civilised. Their very elasticity has been the chief cause of the success of Islam.

Islam also forbids polyandry. It never existed in Islamic countries; the prohibition is contained in the following verse (note that the preceding verse—IV : 23—enumerated the classes of women forbidden in marriage. This verse is a continuation of such prohibition):

"And all married women except those whom your right hands possess (this is) Allah's ordinance to you . . . ." (IV : 24.)



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“According to the rendering adopted generally, the meaning is that even as it is unlawful for a man to marry a woman within certain degrees of relationship, it is also unlawful for him to take in marriage one who is already married to another person. An exception is made, however, regarding ‘those whom your right hands possess,’ by which is meant female captives of war. The Qur-án legalises marriage with such women as we have noticed above, even though they may be married to non-Muslims at the time of their capture, provided they become Muslims.” (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 207.)

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### THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM TO THE MODERN WORLD\*

BY MAULVI ABDUL MAJID

The subject chosen for me is “The Message of Islam to the Modern World.” I am inclined to believe that a subject couched in these words will appear to be pretentious and arrogant to many friends present in this audience. Now I have no desire to give a message of Islam to the world merely as an addition to the existing stock of platitudes, of which—you will agree with me—there is no dearth at all. What passes my understanding is that nowadays men and women seem to delight in using vague and nebulous phrases, such as “love of one’s neighbour,” “intensity of religious conviction,” “true Christian,” “human fellowship” and a score of others expressive of their pious wishes by the mere use and constant repetition of which they fondly imagine they can bring about a change in the troubled world of to-day. I have often wondered whether such people think that these phrases

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\* Being the text of a lecture delivered before the Convention of Religions held at Southport (20—27th August 1939) under the chairmanship of Dr. W. Stede of London University.



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have the inherent power of a magic wand or are an "open sesame," so that the gates of the millenium would be flung open by them. Nothing is more clearly disproved by history than the frustration of this human desire, which in itself is sincere and lofty. Now Islam does not believe that mere words can accomplish all this. Therefore, it studies human nature, and finds suitable methods by which our desires can be expressed in palpable form and not remain confined to the realm of pious but empty wishes.

*En passant* I should like to say a few words about the word "Islam." In this country our religion is frequently styled "Mohamedanism." This is incorrect; for it leads the unwary to think that we are the worshippers of Muhammad. We do not worship any one but God, the One, the Merciful, the Beneficent. The word "Islam" in its primary sense means "to make peace," and in its secondary sense "to submit oneself to the will of God." Thus a Muslim (which word is the active participle form of the infinitive "Islam,") is "a peacemaker, one who makes peace with his fellow beings."

Now, then, what exactly is the message of Islam, if there is any at all? The message of Islam is PEACE. Peace is embodied in its very nomenclature. Throughout the teaching of the Qur-án the word "Peace" runs like a red thread. "As-Salam," meaning "Peace" is one of the attributes of God through which a Muslim conceives God. We are told in the Qur-án that the talk of the people of Paradise will be "Peace" and nothing but "Peace" (56:26). When we Muslims greet each other we say "As-salamu 'alaikum!"—"Peace be upon you!" The very mention of the word "Peace" along with the word "Islam" in one and the same breath might in some quarters arouse ridicule and scorn. But let me hope that as I proceed,



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I shall show that Islam has an efficacious method of helping the cause of peace.

The catchword of "Peace" is on the lips of everyone; yet peace itself eludes all. Islam diagnoses the causes of this elusiveness. According to Islam, it is in the obstacles which prevent the realisation of this lofty ideal that the root of the trouble lies. What are those obstacles? According to the Qur-án—the religious, political and social history supports it in its diagnosis—they lie in the lack of devising ways and means and institutions which could implement the spirit of understanding into an actuality, and in the crushing burden of all those shackles which enslave man spiritually and materially. There could be no greater proof of the desire for understanding in the minds of men and women than the convening of this Convention of Religions. It is wrong to think, as some people do, that the trouble is in men's minds. Islam believes that men's minds are sound to the core. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "Every child is born a Muslim" (*i.e.*, one who submits to the Divine Will) and God has granted him faculties to be devoted to the love, obedience and worship of God. Thus if men's minds fail to express themselves rightly, then it is due to their environment and external influences. Thus the duty of religion, according to Islam, is to combat effectively all those pernicious influences which warp and atrophy the right expression of men's minds along right channels of human conduct. What men lack is such institutions and such ways and means as may enable them to achieve the ideals with which they are pulsating. The existing religious and educational organisations in the West do not provide them with any suitable institution to express their vision of a world brotherhood of man or the dream of peace. The cause of the trouble is the lack of



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guidance for men's minds, the lack of direction as to the right way to tread. We must not blame men's minds or man's nature. If we have to blame anything at all, we must blame our lack of understanding how to canalise men's minds into right channels. An individual can be moulded so as to co-operate in fulfilling social needs, not only by tradition and other forms of education but by institutions and laws. Man, it is easy to understand, is an educated animal, socially controlled.

The desire for an understanding does exist and has been greatly heightened by the shrinkage of space brought about by aviation and wireless. But, side by side with this profound change introduced by the abolition of distance, we also find that man lives with increasing restlessness cheek by jowl with all the rest of mankind. The conquest of distance has made him more than ever dangerous to his neighbours. His conquest of the forces of nature has placed at his disposal an unimaginable increase of power, by which his very existence and that of his fellow beings is threatened. Thus man is dangerously out of harmony with his surroundings. A readjustment is imperative. To begin with, it should be a mental readjustment. The truth of the "community of mankind" should be brought home to man with a greater vigour than ever before. For in this truth alone lies hope for the salvation of mankind. A world brotherhood of mankind cannot be conceived without a preliminary corresponding mental cosmopolis. To give expression to this mental cosmopolis, for which we have the sanction and support of all the religions of the world, we must buttress it with suitable and proper institutions.

Now although the mind of man, according to Islam, is sound to the core, it is equally true to say that it is sluggish by nature. It takes sometimes a shock,



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sometimes institutions, practices and religious formalities to awaken man to the need of revising his pre-conceived ideas. For instance, man had grown accustomed to living separated from, and independent of, others for centuries. He had developed a narrow tribal mentality, which has continued to persist even in our own times. Man, although distance has been annihilated and the world has, so to speak, shrunk, was not prepared easily to shake off his age-old, hereditary outlook on life simply because the world and its distances were fast disappearing. Philosophers and thinkers set themselves busy to preach to their folk that they all were the children of God and that they should love their neighbours. But the result of those pious preachings was nil. Mere catchwords and phrases and high-sounding ideology, which looked very promising on paper and sounded well on lips, did not lead them and their listeners very far. Here is a case in point. For two thousand years, from a hundred thousand pulpits, in a million sermons, human beings have been exhorted to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ; they have been told that they ought to be gentle, meek and kind and that they ought to think more of their neighbours than of themselves, that they ought to believe in the "Fatherhood of God," and that they all are the children of God. But the result is that, after two thousand years of the reiteration of these high-sounding ideals, the behaviour of Christian crowds is indistinguishable from that of the crowds that believed in the virtues of clanism and tribalism before the days of Jesus. Therefore, it is correct to say that moral exhortations, even backed by religious authority, are not efficacious. There is something else which is wanted. There is still something that is missing. The diagnosis of Islam is that it is the lack of formalism and of institutions, through which



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man can get an opportunity to express his noble ideals, that is responsible for this discrepancy, this anomaly, between the behaviour of man and the high ideals he entertains and wishes to materialise. Now then how does Islam try to solve this difficulty which has been the bane of its predecessors, which, notwithstanding their high ideals, were unable to make those ideals part and parcel of the lives of their adherents? How does Islam try to remove the discrepancy existing between the sublime ideals of man and his behaviour?

The first thing Islam does is that it creates the suitable frame of mind by stressing in common with all other religious thinkers and sages of the world, the essential brotherhood of man. For instance, we read in Malachi: "Have we not all one Father?" St. Paul gives expression to the same thought in the following words: "He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." In the Qur-án the same idea is couched in these words: "O you-men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families so that you may distinguish each other. Surely the most honourable of you in the eyes of God is he who is most careful (of his duty)" (Chapter 49, verse 13). The recent phrase used by the King in his Canadian tour, "Over them all is humanity," emphasises the same truth. Such words and phrases do indeed create a desire in men's minds for a better world-order; they create, also, a fundamental change in men's minds, but they definitely do not suggest how to express that change in practice.

As I said above, if words had been enough and efficacious in themselves, we should not have floundered in the quagmire of racialism, nor have suffered from class distinctions and clannishness. We should have been saved the horrors ensuing from the enunciation of



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the Nordic race and Aryan race theories. Thus Islam, unlike its predecessors, very boldly takes a step to put into practice the ideal of the fellowship of mankind (an ideal which has appealed to teachers in all ages), by devising institutions which enable every one to practise effectively and to learn visually that we are in fact "the children of God."

In this connexion Islam and the followers of Islam are more favourably placed than other religions and their followers, because the life of the promulgator of Islam is historical, not shrouded in mysteries and myths as is invariably the case with the founders of its sister religions. Thus a Muslim is never at sixes and sevens how to decide upon the line of action that is the best for him and also the best for the general good of mankind. For he finds ready for him to follow a path chalked out by the Qur-án and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, whose actions and life-history are the exposition of the verses of the Qur-án. Perhaps it will interest you to know that 13,000 men and women have reported the words and the actions of Muhammad. All these 13,000 men and women had seen, and talked to Muhammad. Further, the biographies of these 13,000 reporters have also been handed down to us, so that we can judge whose narration to accept and whose to reject. From this you can perhaps picture to yourself the flood of light that such a record of the events of the life of the Prophet Muhammad throws for the clear determination of actions and their motives in the life of a Muslim. Thus a Muslim is never left to drift without anchor on the uncharted seas of all the modern complex contingencies of life. He always finds a substratum of code and creed which he can take for granted and on which he can rest. He derives his guidance from these finger-posts from the life of the Prophet (so comprehensive and rich); these finger-posts



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which are fixed on his path to his ultimate goal, which is, to use the words of the Qur-án, "to serve God."

All eminent scholars and thinkers now realize the necessity of having a detailed and comprehensive, accessible and understandable system of laws and rules of life for the guidance of the individual; for he has not enough time at his disposal to decide for himself each time an unforeseen event crops up in his life.

I need hardly emphasise that Islam, like other religions, teaches us to be humble, charitable, to love our neighbour and to be righteous. But never does it forget that mere phrases and commandments have not solved human problems. All religions, as pointed out above, have taught us the concept of the "Children of God," yet we behave as enemies towards one another. Islam, however, devises a system of life which controls the threefold aspects of the life of a Muslim. It deals exhaustively with the physical, moral and spiritual life of the individual. To some this detailed control of the life of the individual by the religion of Islam comes as an infringement of the sanctuary of the life of the individual. But such people forget that the regulation of the physical aspects of life is essential for the building up of the moral life, upon which, in turn, is based the spiritual life of the Muslim. Such objections betray an ignorance of the interrelation existing amongst these three aspects of life.

It is thus that Islam evolves out of the individual a harmonious whole, a complete being, in whom all the capacities have been regularly proportioned and developed. It is therefore clear that, according to Islam, any system that develops one aspect of the individual at the expense of another, the physical to the detriment of the spiritual or *vice versa*, is failing in its function; and to this lack of equilibrium and of harmony between the three aspects of the life of the



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individual it is that all the troubles in the world are to be traced. But, after having dealt with the individual as an individual, Islam is equally anxious to link him up to society, to the world. How Islam has done this, I shall explain later. To achieve the individual's own evolution, unaccompanied by a knowledge of how to accommodate himself to the world-order, will but be leaving the problem in hand unsolved; perhaps it will be courting trouble. The individual's own life and the life of the society in which he may live have both been taken into consideration and fully dealt with by Islam. Thus the individual easily dovetails into his social group.

Islam tries to spiritualise the physical side of our life, or, in other words, intertwines the worldly with the religious. It is thus that every act of a Muslim is religious, no matter however worldly it may be from the point of view of a non-Muslim. In Islam there exists no distinction between religious and mundane life. Each action of a Muslim is motivated by the desire to seek the pleasure of God. It is this motive which spiritualises the actions of a Muslim.

In mere word-making Islam does not differ from the other religions. It is on a par with, if not superior to, its sister religion in theoretical enunciation. For instance, you have listened to the eloquent, philosophical and erudite lectures of the various speakers from this platform. I am sure that you must have been struck by the remarkable resemblance existing between them, causing you to wonder at the futile multifariousness of religions in the world. As a matter of fact, the similarity was so close that some of the speeches could have easily come from the mouth and pen of a Muslim. All that he would have had to do would be to substitute some Muslim names. And what is more, he would not be guilty of plagiarism and literary trespass.



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But where Islam excels other religions is in its laying down specific institutions and detailed rules to control, regulate and canalise the human instincts so that an individual can give expression to his innate desire of "human fellowship." It is, therefore, my proud privilege to state that Islam has endeavoured to implement that desire for living with our fellow beings as brothers into an actuality. In order to illustrate this I would now say a few words on the race or colour problems, and show how Islam adopts ways and means to materialise a brotherhood in which the phrase "children of God" becomes a reality. It goes without saying that in Islam there is no room for any caste system, because the polity of Islam is based on the concept of the absolute unity of the Godhead, which means that all members of the human species are necessarily of the same order in regard to God. It is truth and nothing but truth, when I say that no other religious system or organisation offers anything like that concept, nor does any other religion establish the necessary conceptions of right conduct that arise from it. In all religions the concept of the absolute unity of the Godhead has been dimmed, even in Judaism. To quote an example, Christianity lays stress on the value of human individuality and upon the dignity of the human soul, but, although it says that every human being can join the ministry for the service of God, and that every one can become a priest, yet the very fact that it allows sacerdotalism has dimmed the glory of that concept with which it started its career for the redemption of mankind. Christianity, in other words, instituted distinctions in the spiritual plane of the life of mankind. In one form or another, the same could be said of other religions.

*(To be continued)*



## CORRESPONDENCE

BIRKDALE,  
SOUTHPORT.  
31-8-39

IMAM ABDUL MAJID,  
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

SIR,

This is to acknowledge the receipt of the books which you were kind enough to send me. I have commenced to read "Muhammad—A Mercy to All the Nations," and have been considerably enlightened with regard to the conceptions held by those who live by the Law as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

When I have had sufficient time to read and digest the contents of these books, I will write further.

Thanking you,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
W. H. W.

---

STRATFORD-ON-AVON.  
30-8-39

DEAR IMAM ABDUL MAJID,

I am much obliged to you for sending me the *Islamic Review* and "What is Islam?" and I look forward to reading them for I am eager to find out about the teachings of Muhammad, of which, up to the present, I am almost totally ignorant.

As I shall probably have to read this literature at my leisure, I hope you will excuse me if I seem to be rather slow in returning it.

I hope we shall meet again. The acquaintance we made at Southport so pleased me that I shall want to follow it up. Woking is not far from London. Perhaps one day I shall be able to call on you there.

Yours sincerely,  
B. IDEN PAYNE.

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THE EDITOR,  
"THE SUNDAY EXPRESS,"  
LONDON, E.C.

3-10-39

SIR,

In your issue for October 1, 1939, under the caption of "Believe it or Not" by Ripley, there is a very serious misrepresentation of the teachings of the religion of Islam. I shall be grateful to you if you would be good enough to take steps to contradict it. Ripley says that "according to Moslem doctrine, women, as such, have no souls." The belief that women have no souls according to the Qur-án, is almost general in these countries. Probably it took hold of the mind of Europe at a time when it had no access to the Qur-án. There is not one word in the whole of the Islamic Literature to warrant this statement. Read the Qur-án and you find good and righteous women being given the same position as good and righteous men. Both sexes are spoken of in the same terms. The Qur-án makes no difference between man and woman in the bestowal of reward for the good he or she does (*cf.* chapters : 3. 194 ;



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

4. 124; 18.97). And in chapter 33: 35, speaking of good women alongside of good men, it enumerates every good quality as being possessed by women, exactly as it is possessed by men and ends with the words, "God has prepared for them forgiveness and mighty reward." With God, therefore, according to the Qur-án, there is no difference between men and women; morally and spiritually they can rise to the same eminence.

Yours faithfully,  
ABDUL MAJID  
IMAM, SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE, WOKING.

ORPINGTON,  
KENT.  
8-9-39

TO THE IMAM,  
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

REVEREND SIR,

I was present at one of the Sunday lectures given in the Woking Mosque, the subject being "Islam and Capitalism." Since then I have become very interested in Islam, and should therefore be greatly obliged to you if you would send me pamphlet entitled "What is Islam?"

I enclose a stamped and addressed envelope, and eagerly await your reply.

Yours respectfully,  
J. WAGON.

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GENTLEMEN,

For a number of years I have been a Muslim at heart but have had little guidance or literature regarding my chosen faith. *Several times in the Public Library I have seen the Islamic Review and am writing to you for advice and guidance.*

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Please also include a price list of those books and pamphlets you can supply on Islam. Also, instruction as to how to proceed to make my Declaration of Faith and be received and recognised as a Muslim.

Mail to address above.

Sincerely,  
F. D. TUBBS.



## BOOK REVIEW

### THE SAYINGS OF MUHAMMAD

Translated and Edited by

Sir Abdullah-al-Mamun-al-Suhrawardy

[SECOND EDITION, 1938, PP. XXXVII+155]

*With an Introduction by Mahatma Gandhi.*

We have before us a collection of the Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, translated and edited by the late Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy, which has long been out of print. The translator's brother, Al-Hajj Colonel Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, has done a great service to Islam in making this compendium available to the admirers of Islam.

It is common knowledge that to understand Islam and the Qur-án, an exhaustive study of the *obiter dicta* of the Prophet Muhammad is essential. But it is to be regretted that there is no complete translation into English of even one of the Six Collections of his Sayings, known as *As-Sihah As-Sitta*, although there does exist a translation in French of one of them, namely, that of Al-Bukhari. Thus, till such translations are available, every endeavour to reveal the mind of the Prophet Muhammad as shown in his sayings must be more than welcome.

This compendium was first published in 1905, and did much to remove the gross misconception which was rampant in Europe in those days. The book brought the light of Islam to many. An interesting testimony to its success was the correspondence, which ensued upon its publication, between the late Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy and Leo Tolstoy. It was through this book that Tolstoy had come to appreciate the personality of the Prophet Muhammad; and that a copy of this book was found in the large overcoat in which Tolstoy had wrapped himself before setting out on his last walk to die in the fields he used to till, is proof enough of its intrinsic value.



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Sir Abdullah's collection of the Sayings of the Holy Prophet has the distinction of ranking among the earliest books on Islam written in the English language. As a matter of fact, he is one of the earliest missionaries of Islam to England. In this compendium there is a photograph of Sir Abdullah in which he is seen leading the Eid-ul-Adka prayers at the Mosque, Woking, in 1906. Sir Abdullah founded the Pan-Islamic Society in London and worked for the furtherance of Islam in the West in conjunction with the late Mushir Hussain Kidwai.

Mahatma Gandhi has contributed a short preface to this valuable compendium. He says: "I am a believer in the truth of all the great religions of the world. There will be no lasting peace on earth unless we learn, not merely to tolerate, but even to respect the other faiths as our own. A reverent study of the sayings of the different teachers of mankind is a step in the direction of such mutual respect." One would in vain try to find any teacher other than Muhammad who expressly inculcates "this mutual respect."

We have an especial pleasure in recommending this book on account of the personal relations existing between Sir Abdullah and the workers of the Woking Mosque. The late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din referred to the pioneer work of Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy as a Muslim missionary, and to Sir Abdullah's work for the Woking Mosque.

It is gratifying to note that Al-Hajj Colonel Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, the brother of Sir Abdullah, is at present the Chairman of the Woking Mosque Trust, and that for nearly three quarters of a century, the Arabic Grammar and Primers—*Tadribut-Tulaba*, *Dirayati 'l-Adab*, by the father of the Suhrawardy Brothers have been amongst the recognised text-books in the Punjab.

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