

“ Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets . . . ”—Holy Qur-án, 3.
“ There will be no Prophet after me.”—Muhammad.

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

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وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

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A DECLARATION

I, (Miss) Nellie Johnson, of Kensington, 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.) N. JAMILA JOHNSON.

**PEACE AND PROGRESS THROUGH WORLD
FELLOWSHIP IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS
OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS¹**

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

As with every other of its efforts, the attempts of the West to ascertain the actual relationship between the individual and society has led it to extremes. Indeed, the spirit of reconciliation and harmonization has never entered into the solution of social problems in the West, and it is this that is lying at the root of all our present troubles. There was a time in the West when all the emphasis was laid on the individual man in the foolish idea that social life had no existence except as a mathematical summing-up of individual lives. The result was the gradual disruption of social life and the wrecking of social ideals. The evil assumed such dangerous proportions that the thinkers and leaders became alarmed at the situation and, in their perplexity, declared the innate viciousness of individual existence. There is a growing—and almost a sweeping—tendency at the present moment to crush the individuality of man in all its forms. Sharply antagonistic to one another in their policies, the manifestations of this tendency have a fundamental unity, and have permeated the social and the political atmosphere of practically all the countries of the West. Unfortunately for themselves and for humanity, these brilliant thinkers, who have been giving the lead to their respective peoples, do not realise that the individual mind of man is extremely communicative—it is as sensitive to take impression from social surroundings as to influence society by its peculiarities. No doubt, the individual feels differently

¹Text of a lecture given at a public meeting, held at Whitefield's Institute, London, on Saturday, the 10th of July, under the auspices of the World Fellowship of Faiths. Mr. Syed Hussain, of American domicile, was in the Chair.

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when in society and the group-mind has a distinct existence of its own, but the individuality of the man is a factor which not only cannot be ignored, but also is far more powerful than any conceivable development of group-consciousness. If we are not thinking apart from facts, we must admit that the history of mankind is the history of powerful individuals. Even the widespread totalitarian conception of the State is a proof of the influence of individuals over society. This conception has everywhere been demonstrated by the force of personalities. Instead, therefore, of ignoring the force of individualism, we should be wise so to order social environment as to reap the greatest measure of advantage from its different manifestations. Any attempt to suppress it will not only bring loss to society, but will also, by creating a complex, force it to a positively injurious growth. There is a particular aspect of human nature which the West has never cared to understand. It is that a man's feelings react less to an external act than to a general moral attitude. To illustrate my point: Suppose I am very charitably disposed towards a certain man. I help him in all possible ways. But this charitable act of mine will not create any charitable feeling in the object of my charity, unless this charity comes from the centre of my nature. If my nature is not charitable in general, rather cruel or exacting and selfish, it will not inspire the particular object of my charity with any charitable feeling—it may do the reverse. We are too prone to forget that man is a spiritual being and, as such, is more susceptible to the spiritual condition of a person than to his external behaviour. It is blindness to this fact that has made the people of the West make a distinction between what is called private life and that which is called public life. No greater misunderstanding of human nature was ever made. It is this blunder which has made it possible for the West to adore and accept the lead of

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persons who are anything but peaceful in their private life. Indeed, it needs some amount of foolhardiness on the part of a nation to attempt ordering its social life on the instructions of those who have never been able to order their own impulses—who, on the contrary, have been more unruly in their inner nature than is an average man. I am not uncharitable towards these personalities, but I certainly feel commiseration for a whole civilized nation that tries to find leadership in such reckless thinkers. It is the misguided enthusiasm of people that pushes these persons to positions to which, perhaps, they never really aspire. Accepting, as the people do, these persons of undisciplined intellect as the masters of their social behaviour, they quite unconsciously imbibe through their spiritual perceptions the recklessness of these otherwise brilliant personalities. Looking from this angle, we can easily understand why, in the words of Dr. Henry Wilson, Bishop of Chelmsford, “all the decency and chivalry have departed from life, and we are getting hardened to cruelty, and human nature is being brutalized.”

To be frank, I shall not be surprised at any amount of individual and group atrocity when I see how the most undesirable private life and the most exalted public life can go hand in hand in present-day civilized society.

We are talking about world peace, and look to certain persons to give us the lead in securing it. But have these individuals secured peace in their individual lives? Have they even once in their lives enjoyed, in a positive manner, what can really be called peace? Is their personal contact capable of bringing security and calmness to even one person in the world? These are questions we should ask ourselves, if we are honest about this peace talk.

If the answer to these questions is in the negative, it is not the leaders who are responsible. The Qur-án

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says: "Verily God commands you to make over trusts to those worthy of them." (4:58.) It is our wrong choice and the setting of wrong values on things that is responsible for it. We have regarded intellectual brilliance as the only thing necessary for leadership, and have totally disregarded the value of spirituality in this connection. We have never demanded spiritual equipment as a qualification for leadership.

Supporters of the totalitarian conception of the State have frankly, or otherwise, regarded the religious feelings of man with suspicion, as, in their view, its guidance is based merely on an appeal to the individual self of man. Of some religions this may be wholly true, but not of others. Among the latter, Islam is one. As a religion, Islam is very tangibly socialistic. In Islam, salvation of the individual soul is dependent on the performance of social duties and obligations. Faith, unaccompanied by good deeds, cannot procure, according to Islam, any salvation for man. Even its institutions, such as prayer, fasting, poor-rate and pilgrimage to Mecca, are all based on socialistic conceptions of life. Obligatory prayers, which, strictly speaking, are the concern of the individual, have to be said in congregations. By making the poor-rate a religious duty, Islam seems to proclaim that the rendering of material help to others is an essential part of the spiritual struggle of man. The Qur-án deals exhaustively with our social obligations to even the minutest details, such as the necessity of asking permission before entering another's house. It is indeed interesting reading that this book affords. Interspersed with its spiritual instructions and mystical references are found great and small social obligations urged upon the reader. Yet, even this religion, because it is a religion, has ultimately to appeal to, and undertake the ordering of, the individual mind. Thus we find, alongside the ordinance for congregational prayers, an exhortation for

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private prayers. Nay, the ultimate realisation of the self has to come in absolute detachment. The book says: "O you who believe, spend out of what We have given you, before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession." (2:254.) The reason why this ultimate appeal is made by a religion to the individual soul is not difficult to understand after what I have discussed above. If we look a little deeply, we shall find that our civilized existence is only a reflection of our mind, and mind by its very nature is ego-centric. Even when the individual mind is merged into group mind the urge of life still lies in the individual—the satisfaction or otherwise of any achievement reverts to the individual, and the collective life is possible only as long as the individual feels more or less satisfied with it. Religion as a root remedy for social maladies has, for this reason, to address the individual consciousness of man, and here it appeals to the central desire of, and demand for, peace. Peace is, indeed, the foremost want of human consciousness, and it is also the one least satisfied. The need for political peace is felt only at times, and then only by some. But peace in the individual consciousness is in constant demand, and hence universal. The most reckless criminal will admit that he needs peace of mind. The most warlike individual will recognize, in his calm moments, the want of peace in his soul. What he is likely to question is the possibility of securing it. And the personality of a real man of religion, by its very expression, proclaims the possibility of this achievement. As if to clear this point at the very outset, the religion of Muhammad calls itself "Islam," a term connoting Peace. Yes, the very name "Islam" is significant of the need for, and the function of, religion. If any further emphasis were needed to recommend the case of religion, the Prophet Muhammad gives it through his own

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personality. He says: "I am the foremost among those who have acquired peace."

Yes, any one who could have watched his movements for only a day would have admitted the force of his challenge. It is wrong to think that Muhammad, or any other religious personality, for that matter, won adherents to his faith by appeal to people's credulity or superstition. I want people to realise that sinners are sceptical in all ages. They may not be sceptical about happenings in the physical world but, if any one asks them to eschew evil and extravagant ways, with reference to God and the after-life, they are far more sceptical than an intellectual and scientific sceptic can ever be. Had this not been the case, the founders of religions, or their reformers, would never have been persecuted at the hands of their people. So it is by the most scientific demonstration of the realities of the religious life that the teachers of spirituality succeed in founding their religions, and Muhammad, born in the broad day-light of history, revived the traditions of all those teachers of religion that had preceded him in office. "Peace" was writ large on his behaviour and expression, and it was this that compelled homage from the restless and turbulent Bedouins of Arabia. Indeed, personal contact is the most important thing in religious life, as it is only by such a contact that the demonstration of spiritual facts can be effected in a clear and convincing manner. It is for this reason that, unlike the pseudo-religionists, the true leaders of religion are the most open to public gaze. So much so that the Prophet Muhammad had nothing in his life, after the Call, which could be called private. The most secret acts of individual life, such as the intimate affairs of conjugal life, nay, even more private affairs, were meant for public knowledge and examination. This has to be the case, if the

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people are to be satisfied about the possibility of acquiring peace in the central consciousness of human nature.

That peace is the ultimate object of religious life is shown by another feature of religion. All religions agree that the ultimate goal of a disciplined soul is the attainment of peace. It may be variously called in different religions—Salvation, *Mukti*, *Moksha*, *Nirvana* or *Falah*—but the thing is the same, *viz.*, peace. Referring to the life in heaven, the Holy Qur-án, for example, says: “Their greeting in it shall be peace.” (10:10.)

Coming to the question: “What is the method by which this peace can be acquired in the individual mind?”—this again is answered by the very same name, “Islam,” another meaning of which is “submission.” The fact is that the emotions of the human mind, as they are, are egoistic, and hence tending to chaos. Philosophically speaking, satisfaction of the desires of our mind, as they stand, leads to no understandable consequence, and, as such, they tend to create dissatisfaction with life in general. This dissatisfaction often evades detection by our intellectual understanding, but it proves its existence in our general behaviour. It is this that explains the general cynicism in an affluent and secularised society. Coming nearer home, it is significant that the greatest living intellects in England are notoriously cynical. Whether you like it or not, it is desirable for the individual and collective peace to refer your desires and emotions to that mysterious power that lies behind the phenomenon of life and death, because nothing else can absorb the vibrations of our moral efforts and consequent self-gratifications, which are palpably eternal in their nature. The sceptic’s sneer should be ignored, because his testimony is a negative one. His assertion is that, in our attempts to explain the facts and experiences of life, we cannot go further than the human consciousness, and that, whether this satisfies us or not,

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we have to remain content with this much of knowledge. Whereas the testimony of the leaders of faith, whose number is legion, and whose spiritual progeny continues to this day, whether the mechanically-minded West notices it or not, and who always awakened in man all that makes for social reconstruction, is that the self has further and satisfying explanation in the fact called "God," and this is, indeed, a positive testimony. The Prophet Muhammad very admirably voiced the opinion of all leaders when he said :

"One who understands his self, understands God."

In other words, God is discovered only in the course of our attempt to explain the self. Conversely that self can be explained only with reference to God. And here is a warning for idle speculators on the necessity of religion. It is not so much philosophically to explain the existence of the external creation that religion emerges in human society. It is, on the other hand, to enable the individual to understand and explain his own self with all the divergent and conflicting feelings and experiences of life that a religion is preached and accepted in a given society. The God-idea in a living religious movement is, therefore, not a philosophical hypothesis, but a reality verified in the individual consciousness of man, and reflected in his general behaviour. Imbued deeply enough, the God-idea no longer remains an idea, but a reality, in a sense in which nothing else, not even one's own personality, is real, and as such brings that enlightenment and faith with regard to the ultimate destiny of the self which alone can bring abiding peace to the breast of an introspective creature like man. It is this peace, whether of personal acquisition or received through tradition and contact, whether it is vague or clear, that sustains us in our battle of life, and consoles us in the disappointments that invariably outweigh our achievements in life. As we all know, like bad feelings,

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good feelings also have their contagion, and this peacefulness of the individual has a very powerful contagion too. One man having it can influence thousands and millions through generations. The Prophet Muhammad's contagion in this respect has proved itself of an undying nature. First embraced by a primitive and almost a starving people, Islam became, and remained, associated for centuries with the grandest life of opulence and plenty that the world has ever known. After that came the inevitable crash, and the Muslim peoples' temporal fall has proved even more striking than their rise. Many centuries have passed over them in this fallen condition, and they are scattered all over the world, one group of them, at times, knowing scarcely anything about the other group. Yet this spiritual peace, handed down to them from their Prophet, has given them a staying power that has successfully braved all the vicissitudes of fortune and the shame and ignominy of this great fall.

Like individuals, nations have their vicissitudes of fortune. No nation can remain for ever affluent and prosperous. The real merit of a nation, therefore, lies, not in the attainment of a certain height of material prosperity, but in the acquisition of that spiritual bliss that can sustain it in the days of adversity. It is not for me to judge other nations, but I have a right to present an account of my own nation, that is, the Muslim nation. All the efforts of the invincible West, both secular and religious, have failed to disturb the internal peacefulness and complacency of the Muslim mind. The best success of the West has been no more than to touch the fringe. In its despair and arrogant indignance, it has ascribed this complacency to an alleged fatalistic bent of the Muslim mind. It forgets that the facts of history ridicule this explanation. The Prophet Muhammad, the founder and the challenging model of Islamic life, was

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the very opposite of a fatalist. He was the temporal and the spiritual General of the first believers, leading them from national and individual inaction to the hottest activity the world has ever witnessed. Under his leadership, the first believers fought the fiercest battles, not only in the physical plane of human existence, but also in the intellectual and the moral planes. Their victories in all these directions startled a slumbering world, which, taken by surprise, paid them a willing homage for nearly a thousand years, at the end of which it considered itself inspired enough to carry on a similar fight on its own. In face of this, it is only wise to discard this theory of fatalism in explaining the complacency of the Muslim mind. More judicious travellers to Muslim countries, some of whom have embraced the faith within recent times, have, very wisely, gone deeper into the question, and have eventually found its source in the persistent efforts of the nation in the direction of self-realisation, or God-realisation, whichever you may like to call it, a fact made possible by the undying personality and tradition of the valiant Prophet. Any one who wishes to go into the matter would do well to begin with reading "The Desert Encounter" by the famous Danish explorer, Knud Holmboe, and "The Triumphant Pilgrimage," vicariously written by Owen Rutter, the publication of which latter has created quite a flutter in the British Press.

As for world-fellowship, the spirit of it lies dormant in every individual and group. It is the lack of the proper ordering of the mind that obscures the vision. As we can easily understand, happiness is a social thing, whereas unhappiness tends to make one unsocial and even anti-social. It is the uneasiness of the individual mind that is at the root of all our international tangles. The moment, therefore, that the mind attains spiritual peace through a knowledge of the self with reference

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to God, it expands into universal consciousness. We are busy in solving the problem of mere world-fellowship, whereas the religious history of mankind shows the possibility of attaining what is called cosmic consciousness. Submission to God, according to the Qur-án, did bring to all founders of religion this cosmic consciousness; and, if a modern sceptic does not feel inclined to believe this sweeping statement of the Qur-án, he cannot deny this achievement to Muhammad, who prescribed to his followers a prayer, the opening verse of which reads: "All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds." Evidently Muhammad was so full of cosmic consciousness that he considered its attainment the one object of human life. In fact, the very quest of God must lead one's consciousness to the utmost borders of the cosmos and even beyond. It is a "mighty achievement," as the Qur-án would put it, and would appear to the uninitiated as impossible of attainment.

Like every other matter of spiritual existence, this one is easy and difficult at the same time. Although it evades all intellectual comprehension, its experience lies within the reach of every one who is born a human being.

Before I conclude, I must forestall one misgiving that may arise in this connection. In asking us to lay down our consciousness before God, religion certainly wants us to subordinate the tangible and palpable to the intangible and the mysterious. People in the present-day West talk of mysticism as if it is something abnormal and below the level of the real, whereas the fact is that the mystical part of our existence predominates over what is usually called "real." The phenomena of life and death, of the alternate growth and decay of external nature, of the rise and fall of nations, of the precarious course of individual lives, are all facts

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of the mystical world. Strictly speaking, the part of existence which we call real, being able to comprehend it, is only an infinitesimal part of it. So, if we are asked to apply our minds to that other part that is of overwhelming predominance for an explanation of this minute part, we are in fact wanted to pass from a very, very small reality to an infinitely greater reality.

Therefore, let us not hesitate in the matter of ordering our individual selves in the light of the guidance given by religion. Let us drop all noisy movement towards world peace, and lay its foundations in our individual minds. I know that, to an average man or woman of to-day, who has scarcely any life apart from group life, this is a very difficult thing to demand—but, to use again the words of the Holy Qur-án, “With difficulty is ease.” Through the difficult performance of self-examination and self-realization alone can we give the world that most coveted thing termed “peace.”

As for progress, if it means material progress, in my opinion we have enough of it—at least more than we have proved ourselves capable of digesting. Let us now have some peace.

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ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

BY C. A. SOORMA

(Continued from Vol. XXV, Page 327)

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST MESSAGE

We have already seen that Khadija was the first person to whom the Prophet confided the Call. She was also the first to accept his mission. She gave up idolatry and the polytheistic faith of her people and family. Henceforth, she offered her prayers together with the Prophet to the One and Only God in whom Muhammad believed and in whose existence he wanted humanity to believe.

After Khadija, Ali, the Prophet's beloved cousin, was his next disciple. Ibn Hisham and Ibn Athir have both given us a remarkable description of the conversion of Ali. It is related that once the Prophet and Ali were offering prayers together to Allah and thanking Him for delivering them from ignorance, when Abu Talib came upon them suddenly. Thereupon, he asked the Prophet:

“O son of my brother, what is this religion that thou art following?”

The Prophet replied:

“It is the religion of God, of His angels, of His prophets, and of our ancestor Abraham. God has sent me to be His servant, to direct them towards the truth; and thou, O my uncle, art the most worthy of all. It is meet that I should thus call upon thee, and it is meet that thou shouldst accept the call and help in spreading it.”

Abu Talib was profoundly moved by this simple and yet direct invitation to accept his mission. But,

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born a Quraish and one of the most conservative Meccans of his age, he was not prepared to give up the religion of his forbears. He, however, made the following dignified reply :

“Son of my brother, I cannot abjure the religion of my fathers; but, by the Supreme God, whilst I am alive, none shall dare to injure thee.”

Then Abu Talib asked his son Ali what his religion was, and the great Ali made this reply :

“O father, I believe in God and His Prophet, and go with him.”

When the venerable Abu Talib had heard what both Muhammad and Ali had to say, he made the following significant comment :

“Well, my son, he (*i.e.* Muhammad) will not call thee to aught save what is good, wherefore thou art free to cleave unto him.”

Let me pause here for a moment and make an observation which, in my opinion, ought to be made, and it is this :

The first disciples of Muhammad were persons who had an intimate knowledge of his character. They, more than others, were able to judge the truth or falsity of his claim to prophethood. His wife, his cousin and his old but shrewd uncle never doubted for one moment the Prophet's claim to be a Messenger of God. They not only believed in him, but also encouraged him in his belief. It is submitted that had the claim of the Prophet been false, he could never have succeeded in winning the confidence and adherence of his kinsfolk. In my opinion, this fact, among several others, deserves the special attention which has been given to it in these pages but often lost sight of.

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While on this subject, I crave your indulgence to quote to you a lucid passage from Ameer Ali's "The Spirit of Islam":

"Soon after (*i.e.* after the conversion of Ali) Zaid, the son of Harith, who, notwithstanding his freedom, had cast in his lot with Muhammad, became a convert to the new faith. He was followed by a leading member of the Koreishite community of the name of Abdullah, son of Abu Kuhafa, who afterwards became famous in history as Abu Bakr. A member of the important family of Taym ibn Murra, a wealthy merchant, a man of clear, calm judgment, at the same time energetic, prudent, honest, and amiable, he enjoyed great consideration among his compatriots. He was but two years younger than the Prophet, and his unhesitating adoption of the new faith was of great moral effect. Five notables followed in his footsteps, among them Osman, son of Affan, of the family of Ommeyya, who afterwards became the third Caliph; Abdur Rahman, son of Auf; Sa'd, son of Abi Wakkas, afterwards the conqueror of Persia; Zubair, son of Awwam and nephew of Khadija, presented themselves before the Prophet and accepted Islam at his hands. Several proselytes also came from the humbler walks of life. It is a noble feature in the history of the Prophet of Arabia, and one which strongly attests the sincerity of his character, the purity of his teachings and the intensity of his faith and trust in God, that his nearest relations, his wife, his beloved cousin, and intimate friends, were most thoroughly imbued

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with the truth of his mission and convinced of his inspiration. Those who knew him best, closest relations and dearest friends, people who lived with him and noted all his movements, were his sincere and most devoted followers. If these men and women, noble, intelligent, and certainly not less educated than the fishermen of Galilee, had perceived the slightest sign of earthliness, deception, or want of faith in the Teacher himself, Muhammad's hopes of moral regeneration and social reform would all have crumbled to dust in a moment. They braved for him persecution and dangers; they bore up against physical tortures and mental agony, caused by social excommunication, even unto death. Would this have been so had they perceived the least backsliding in their master?"—(Ameer Ali, *op. cit.* pp. 21-22).

Let us now listen to the great Message which the Prophet delivered to his people and to humanity. One day, he ascended one of the hills near Mecca and in a clear resonant voice he called on his people to come and listen to him. When the Arabs, who had already been much disturbed by his teachings and by the conversion of so many men and women of rank and culture, had gathered in sufficient numbers to hear what he had to say, Muhammad started his address as follows:

"O people of the Quraish! If I were to tell you that behind this mountain there was lying hidden a large army, would you believe in me?"

All of them said: "Yes. Certainly; only because, within our knowledge, you have never told a lie."

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Then the Prophet delivered the following Message :

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful: (all) Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds; the Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the day of Requit. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path—the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours. *Not* those upon whom wrath is brought down, not those who go astray”—*(Holy Qur-án: Chap. 1, verses 1—7.)*

“I am Allah, the Best Knower. This Book (*i.e.* the Holy Qur-án), there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil). Those who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them. And who believe in that which has been revealed to *you and that which was revealed before you*, and they are sure of the hereafter. These are on a right course from their Lord, and these it is that shall be successful”—*(Holy Qur-án: Chap. II, verses 1—5).*

After reciting the above verses, the Prophet asked those present to take the following pledge :

“We will not associate anything with God, we will not steal, nor commit adultery, nor fornication; we will not kill our children; we will abstain from calumny and slander; we will obey the Prophet in everything that is right; and we will be faithful to him in weal and sorrow.”

One would have expected every rational, human being, when he or she heard the above message—simple, clear and wholesome—would welcome it, embrace it and propagate it. But it is regrettable to have to admit

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that we can never accept good advice promptly when it is given to us, with the result that humanity is obliged to suffer in diverse ways. So with the Arabs. Instead of accepting the message and thanking the master for it, the Arabs of those days became very annoyed. They began to abuse, insult and even assault the Prophet. How miserable they made his life and the lives of his devoted followers is given as follows:

(*To be continued*)

EXOTERIC AND ESOTERIC SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAYER IN ISLAM

BY KHAN BAHADUR HAJI B. M. K. LODI

(*Continued from Vol. XXV, Page 339*)

PART II

SALAT-NAMAZ

Having dealt with, in Part I, the general principles of prayer—its origin and significance, its nature and effect, and “prayer” in Islam—let us next proceed with the study of that particular prayer, that “canonical” prayer which, in the Qur-án and Traditions, goes by the name of *Salát*, and which is popularly known in Persian-speaking countries as *Namáz*. *Salát* originally meant with the Arabs “supplication” or “prayer,” while *Namáz* (a Persian word) indicates primarily “humility,” “devotion,” “service,” “worship,” and in Islam, the canonical *Salát*—five times a day and incumbent on every Muslim, male or female, who has attained the age of discretion. The rule is relaxed in certain exceptional circumstances. *Salát* is one of the five fundamental institutions of Islamic faith, one of the five pillars of Islamic religious structure. It is, unlike the practices of many other religions, methodical, uniform, regular and

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punctual throughout the Muslim World. That "its (Islam's) third source of strength has been the meticulous prescription of methods of prayer and worship" is the appreciation of a modern critical writer, H. G. Wells.

We do not propose, however, to draw, in this article, a descriptive or detailed sketch of the structure of *Salát*. That is too well known to Muslims to need to be recapitulated here. Nor is it beyond the inquiring minds of non-Muslims. Our present purpose is to examine, exoterically and esoterically, the preliminary requirements of *Salát*, as well as some of its general aspects, which distinguish it, both in form and effect, from the systems in vogue in other religions, and render it unique in the religious practices of the world, such as—

- (1) *Azán*, a call to prayer.
- (2) *Ablution*, a canonical preliminary to prayer.
- (3) Place of worship, unrestricted.
- (4) Direction, restricted, *viz.*, *Ka'ba*.
- (5) To pray five times a day.
- (6) To assume certain postures and genuflections while in prayer.
- (7) In form, a conversation between the worshipper and the worshipped.

Let us deal with each of the above aspects and in order:

Azán is a "call to prayer," a call in a sufficiently loud voice, as in mosques and other public places of worship, so as to attract the attention of people in the neighbourhood, and to remind them of the time of prayer and of the prayer itself. They are reminded, because they are prone to forget it in the midst of their worldly occupations. *Azán* is said as many times as there are prayers, that is, five times a day. There is some history about the origin of *Azán* and its organization in its present peculiar form, but it is irrelevant for our present purpose. Mainly it is conceived as a

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substitute for the music and music-drumming in Hindu temples, or the ringing of bells in Christian churches, or other diverse symbols which are employed to make service known to the people concerned, and which are repugnant to the Islamic ideals. The idea is original and unique, and to Islam goes the credit.

To a non-Muslim, however, the cry of *Azán* may ring strange in his ears, somewhat disquieting to some temperaments, but to a calm and inquiring mind, to a student of religion, it is full of meaning. It is not a meaningless institution, it is not a purposeless edict. There is a purpose, and it is twofold. Primarily, it reminds a Muslim of the time of prayer, nay, the prayer itself. As soon as he hears the *Azán*, he is prompted to suspend his business, whatever it be and however urgent, and to prepare himself for the prayer. It is not only a reminder of the time of prayer or of the prayer itself; there is something more for him to ponder over, something to elevate his soul. What is it? It is the "words" that he hears. What are the words? That God is One, Great, Glorious, that He alone be worshipped and none else, and that Muhammad, the exponent of these truths and the latest exponent, is His apostle. These grand and sublime words give the hearer another reminder of God's supreme, unrivalled and adorable nature, and of His universal mercy in sending apostles for the "guidance" of people from time to time, which became perfected in the advent of Muhammad (peace be on him). What a far-seeing thought it is that has entered into the mind of the author of *Azán*! After glorifying God and His apostle, a formal call to prayer is made, and with a stress on the fact that prayer is the source of man's happiness and prosperity both in this and in the next world. To hear these mighty words daily, and so often in a day, as if coming from the "great invisible mystical void" (*Hatif* in Persian, *Akashvani* in

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Sanskrit), because the hearer does not actually see the crier, means to him not a little stirring of his soul, not an ordinary remedy to empty his mind of worldly contents, not an inconsiderable stimulant to refresh the heart with the thought of God. In short, the frequency of hearing the words of the *Azán* keeps the heart immune from the inroads of Satan. "Drops hollow a stone not by their force but by their frequency" is a familiar saying. Similar is the nature of the effect of frequent remembrance of God; it tends to check the human tendency, or rather the human evil propensity, to go astray—to become indifferent towards God or to forget Him. Somebody asked of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi, the greatest mystic poet in Islam, as to what is "worldliness." He defined it: "To be unmindful of God" (*Mathnavi*). This is what they call "religious amnesia," or the Hindu "Adharna," or in modern British terminology, "materialism." Apparently a simple preliminary to prayer, *Azán* acts as a primary antidote to counteract the materialism of modern days. Is it not then a divine antiseptic for cleansing the soul?

The next purifier, and of far more importance and consequence, is "ablution" (*wadu*). This is also called "lustration," the root-meaning of which is "to wash," "to purify," and thereby "to render bright." As a preliminary and preparatory to prayer, it is an ancient custom that is traced to the Romans ("The Ten Great Religions of the World," by Rev. Dr. Freeman Clerke). It is in vogue in some form or other in almost all the great religions of the world, including Islam, where, however, it is not a formal ritual to go through, not a disorderly mass of washings, but a prescribed, regulated and highly-developed system carrying with it immense significance. In the performance of "ablution," a Muslim cleanses those parts of his body which are generally exposed, and which become unclean in the

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course of his day's work, such as, hands up to the wrists, arms up to the elbows, feet up to the ankles, face, nostrils and ears and the head (wiped over with wet hands). The order in which the several parts of the body are washed, the number of times they are washed, and the graceful, rhythmical and regulated washing itself are noteworthy; and the ablution on the whole would offer a practical substitute for a bath, and there are five such baths in a day. The Prophet of Islam used to brush his teeth every time he performed ablution. What a sovereign remedy for the much-dreaded ailment of "pyorrhoea!" What a far-seeing preventive measure is the Islamic ablution as a whole against the dust-tuberculosis of modern days! The Prophet, an unlettered Arab of the 6th century A.D., was neither a qualified physician, nor a specialised dentist. Can it be denied that his was an inspired knowledge, and it was shown to him that "cleanliness" is next to "godliness?" To a Muslim therefore cleanliness is a "moiety of faith." To quote Lane: "The salutary doctrine that cleanliness is an essential part of godliness, was impressed by Muhammad on his followers, so that the scrupulous cleanliness of Muhammadanism contrasts so favourably with the unsavoury state of Easterners of other creeds." (P. 83, Introduction, Selections from the Qur-án.)

This is the *material* side of ablution. An "ablution" is not intended to stop short of cleansing the exterior parts of the body. Deeper is its implication. It suggests the cleansing of the *heart* too. The Word of God is: "He wishes to purify you" (Qur-án 5:6), to purify not only the outer but the inner self—the heart, as is indicated in the meaning of the word "Purification." Besides, the very act of external purification by "ablution" suggests that if one is to be clean outwardly, how much more clean must one be inwardly. The

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inward purification consists in making the heart sinless, sincere and loving. Otherwise the ablution will remain imperfect, shadowy, and meaningless. For instance, suppose you invite a big dignitary, or even a friend, to dinner. Will you clean only the outward entrance of your house, and leave the dining-room untidy? Rather you will decorate the interior (the dining-room) and make it appear more attractive and more delightful to the guest.

The purification is thus twofold—of both the body and mind—and it is the twofold nature of purification that befits the purified to appear before God—the Holy—and thereby fulfils the purpose of ablution. It is the realization of this exalted purpose that used to make Hazrat Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), tremble whenever he would prepare for *Salât*. Likewise used to be the condition of the mind and body of his grandson, Imam Zain-ul-abedin; his face would turn pale both before and during “ablution.” When asked the cause of all this, they would say: “Do you know how august and Holy is our Lord before Whom we are going to appear (in prayer)?”

The institution of “ablution” in Islam is thus not merely a purification with water; it reveals, when studied closely, an implication deeper than appears on the surface.

Next follows the matter of the place of worship, but a Muslim is not handicapped in this respect. There is no restriction in choosing the place though the mosques set apart and dedicated for the purpose are, for obvious reasons, given preference in all possible circumstances. To a Muslim, the whole of the earth serves as a mosque. When it is time to pray, he may say his prayers anywhere and everywhere, on land or at sea (but never to miss it), except the Friday and the two annual *'Id* prayers which must be performed only in congregation. A Muslim

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realizes the truth that every inch of this earth-expanse, every atom of the universe is a sublime temple of God.

This Temple is beyond the vision of "mortal glasses." It may, perhaps, be perceptible to a few inquiring, observing and contemplating minds. An ostensible symbol of a universal nature, fully representing the Temple Divine and capable of concentrating the mind thereon is, therefore, a *desideratum*, and a Muslim finds it embodied in the Holy *Ka'ba* in Mecca. On account of the inestimable veneration and sanctity attached to it from time immemorial, it is also called *Qiblah* in Islamic terminology. It is an "Ancient House," as ancient as the pre-Abraham days. Abraham and his son, Ishmael, had freed it from idols, purified it of idol-worship, relaid its foundations, and rebuilt it (Qur-án 2:125, 127). It is also the belief of the Muslims that it is "the first House made on earth for the worship of God." (Qur-án 3:96); and it has, therefore, earned an honourable title of "His House"—*Bait-Allah* (Qur-án 2:125), indicating thereby that monotheism must reign there in place of polytheism or idol-worship. In these and other circumstances, both ecclesiastically and historically valid, *Ka'ba* became an "inviolable place of worship," a Sacred Temple, a Sanctuary similar to those that existed in mediæval Europe. It was held sacred even during pre-Islamic days when no fighting, no game, was allowed within its limits on certain occasions. It was "a city of refuge," like those under the Mosaic dispensation.

In Medina, however, the Prophet of Islam and his followers were praying with face towards Jerusalem to which the Jews and Christians looked as their central place, though the Christians (of the Byzantine Empire) were not entirely agreed upon it as their *Qiblah* (Sir William Muir). They "oriented their Churches to the

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East." In turning their face towards Jerusalem, the Muslims found themselves situated in an awkward predicament, because they had to turn their back on Mecca, as Medina is situated between Mecca and Jerusalem. The new infant community of Islam felt the need of a distinctive and organized law and ordinance for themselves. The difficulty was solved soon after by a revelation from the High to turn their face towards *Ka'ba* itself (Qur-án 2:144), a place which had from time immemorial acquired a general reputation, among friends and foes alike, for its antiquity, premier-ship and sanctity, a fact which even a critic like Sir William Muir had to acknowledge (*vide* Introduction, "Life of Muhammad"). When the Muslims were permitted to turn towards *Ka'ba* and pray, they found their ambition fulfilled and became delighted. Since then, the whole Muslim world is praying with its face towards *Ka'ba*.

It has often been questioned by non-Muslims as to why the Muslims should turn, for purposes of worship, towards a particular place as if God is there only. Is it not another form of idolatry? Far from it. In fact, one direction or another, whether east or west, does not matter to God, for He is everywhere, He is independent of space or time. "Unto Allah belong the east and the west and whithersoever ye turn, there is Allah's countenance," are the Qur-ánic words. (Qur-án 2:115). This is a truth which is applicable at all times, whether before or after *Ka'ba* was fixed. This is again emphasised in Verse No. 142, and, after emphasising the general truth more than once, Verse No. 144 was revealed, fixing *Ka'ba* as the *Qiblah*, so that this particular ordinance cannot be supposed to, nor can it ever, displace the general truth, lest it insult commonsense. What was aimed at was a symbol of discipline and unity in prayer as in all other fundamentals of Islam, for

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which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him!) stood throughout his mission.

There is another purpose, far-reaching indeed in consequence, in God's asking the Muslims to turn towards *Ka'ba*, and that is, primarily, to maintain its material utility and spiritual sanctity, and not to destroy it, lest it not only hurt the feelings and sentiments of the people, but dislocate society, business and worship. With people focussing their attention in one place for all to worship, an "ostensible sign of unity of purpose." The divine purpose is "to bring all men together" (Qur-án 2:148) on a common basis on which the brotherhood of Islam can rest. In no small measure has the *Qiblah* contributed to the suitability and solidarity of Islam. Universality is the real purpose, and never the worship of the edifice of *Ka'ba* itself, nor to continue it as "a remnant of pre-Islamic polytheism and idolatry" as is wrongly supposed by some of the critics of Islam. Islam's is only a consummation of a time-honoured custom. It is evident from the Book of Daniel (VI:10) that there was an old practice in the matter of *Qiblah* among the Jews too and, in the words of Yusuf Ali, an erudite scholar in Arabic and English, and the latest translator and commentator of the Qur-án, "the glimmerings of such a *Qiblah* were already foreshadowed in Jewish and Christian practices, but its universality was perfected only in Islam."

MARRIAGE IN ISLAM

By SAYYID GHULAM SHAH S. KARIMI, B.A. (HONS.)

Islam is a practical religion with the moral, physical and social uplift of man as its object. The topic we are dealing with is the problem of marriage.

As is well known, polygamy is permitted in Islam, but let us stress the word permitted. Polygamy is not *enforced* by Islam; it does not say "Thou shalt marry more than one wife." It simply provides that a man *may* marry more than one wife, but under limited and restricted conditions. Just therein lies its wisdom.

Marriage has a twofold function; first, a personal function, and second, a national one. In both these functions, it has to wrestle with certain difficulties and face certain problems. The success of marriage rests on the solution which religion offers for those problems. Let us consider a few of the common marriage problems, and see how far Islam has solved them for mankind.

Recently, I came across the following in the pages of "Tit-Bits":

"My wife . . . has been a mental patient for ten years. Doctors say she can never leave the asylum. I am a quiet fellow, who longs for a home if free to marry. Please give me advice."

Here indeed is a pathetic situation, pathetic because the writer is a Christian, and this is the answer that Christianity gives him:

"If insanity was in your wife's make-up before marriage, and the fact was concealed from you, freedom is possible. If not, 'the Law unhappily gives no release.'"

In other words, the man cannot marry as long as his wife lives. This means that he is either to become a celibate, or live in adultery! This problem which

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appears so difficult to Christianity is solved very easily by Islam; polygamy comes to the rescue.

In another instance, there is a married man, hale and hearty, with a good income and a comfortable home but, unfortunately, after years of marriage, he has had no issue from his wife; probably he can never have a child from her; adopting another man's child is perhaps not to his taste, or not possible. Moreover, he does love his wife, so it is out of question for him to divorce her in order to marry another wife. What can he do then? Monogamous religions have no solution to offer; he must turn to Islam to find a way out of his difficulty.

So far we have considered some of the problems that arise in the personal function of marriage. Now we shall deal with a few of those problems that face marriage in its national function.

After a nation or country has concluded a war, it always finds itself short of its male members. Many are the young widows and girls of marriageable age left husbandless; some find work to do, but many do not. How are these destitutes to keep body and soul together? Who is to look after them? They cannot all be admitted into orphanages and widows' homes; service is not to be had for the asking, and a home is what they pine for. In the monogamous countries of Europe, these poor destitutes are left between two unwelcome alternatives. An honest life would mean poverty, starvation, drudgery, calumny and death. On the other hand is the gilded life of immorality, with wealth, days of ease and luxury. This problem is solved quite differently and humanely by Islam. It opens for them chances of respectable life, chances of making a home; it extends to them the offer of respectable citizenship, of holy motherhood. In short, it saves the morality of the whole nation.

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Just when Islam was taking root, there were skirmishes and battles between the faithful and the alien. This resulted in a wholesale destruction of males. The Prophet of Islam, Law-giver of the World, envisaged the pernicious results, and asked his followers to marry the widows of those who fell for the cause of his faith. He himself took the lead. Hence, out of the twelve wives that he took in his life-time, as many as eight were the widows of his soldiers. This belies the stock arguments against the Prophet that he was a lustful man. Had he been so, he would, in the first instance, have married a virgin, but he married a widow of forty years when he was himself 25, and, what is more, he took no other wife during the life-time of his first wife. He lived with her for 25 years. Indeed, he was the teacher for the world, and as such practised what he preached!

It may offend the ears of patriotic Occidentals, but, nevertheless, it stands to reason that polygamy is a more patriotic institution than monogamy. The latter is selfish in as far as it caters for the needs of an individual; the former is patriotic as it looks to the needs of the nation. I do not mean to say that the greater the number of wives a man has, the more patriotic he is, but I do say that the more a man's interest is centred in himself, the less patriotic he becomes. A country or a nation lives by its soldiers; in the struggle for preservation, it is the duty of every home to contribute its share of recruits to the national army, and as such, a polygamous home can provide more recruits than a monogamous one. Limited family and birth control are anti-patriotic, as Russia and, very lately, Germany have found out.

The two great evils of the West are divorce and prostitution. It is but natural that matters should come to such a crisis. Monogamy is fundamentally wrong. It is very pleasing to say that one man and one woman

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shall together tread the path of life and be mates in weal and woe, but is it the absolute truth? Does it lead to the happiness of the whole of society? It does not. Monogamy for all men is possible and just, only in an Utopian world, where cosmopolitanism replaces national patriotism, where no wars are waged, where men live in peace with themselves and with their God, and where every man finds his ideal mate. In this world of ours, where such ideal conditions do not exist, inflexible monogamy is, and must be, an unsound institution of marriage.

Most of the domestic troubles of the West would disappear if polygamy in a restricted form were to be legalised there. The white slave traffic would be checked and, in the course of time, would considerably decrease. Divorces would be fewer, and suicides less frequent. Once more man would find his rightful place in society. False morality and materialism would give place to true chivalry. Woman would once more rise from the dust to take her stand on the pedestal as the mother of the race and the idol of man. Just now, a European writer complains, "Our idols have come off their pedestals . . . we cannot worship that with which we compete."

Islam does not make woman the slave of man; rather, it is the first religion that gives woman the same rights and status as those of man, but that is a matter for another discourse (God willing, it will be the next discourse). Suffice it to say that Islam has distinguished between the functions of man and of woman, thus providing for harmony at home and peace abroad.

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE IMAM,
SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE,
WOKING.

BIRMINGHAM, 9.
Dated 11th February 1937.

DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your letter of 7th December, and must apologise for this belated reply, but I have been very busy owing to the flu' epidemic.

Your suggestion that Baptism is a continuance of pagan custom, and similar suggestions of the author of the "Sources of Christianity" respecting other beliefs and practices in Christianity are somewhat surprising to me. If it be true, then it follows that, if the Biblical writings are of Divine inspiration, as I believe them to be, then they must at some period have been deliberately altered and added to. If such be the case, then the main support of my beliefs vanishes. Thus, at the moment, I am seeking evidence of a pagan origin for Christianity.

Of course, I have external support for my beliefs in the return of the Jews to Palestine as prophesied in the Bible (Deut. XXX, vs. 1—9 and many other prophecies). In this connection, I am interested to note a reference to Gog and Magog in Suras 18:94 and 21:96 of the Qur-án with a reference by the commentator to Ezekiel, Chapter 38. I quite agree that the rule of Russia is the Gog, having thought so for some three years. There are no other references to Gog in the Qur-án, so I wondered if there are any Islamic traditions on this point? I should like to know.

There is one point you raise in your letter (your answer to my fifth point) which I tend to believe as it does not conflict with reason, which I admit my belief on this point does. As a matter of fact, though it does definitely appear to me to be the Bible teaching on this matter, I have had misgivings about it for some time, as I too find it hard to believe that a Merciful God would eternally damn a man to death because he had not been fortunate enough to know the truth in this life. Thus I am giving this matter further thought. There is also one other point in your letter (that on the mediation) which seems to me reasonable, though I had never considered it in that light before. Meanwhile, I have read the Qur-án once, and I am re-reading and studying it more slowly. There is one point of Islamic belief on which I am still not quite sure. That is: Is the Day of Judgment or Resurrection in the future and the same day for all the dead, or is the time of Qiyamat different for each individual? I will put the question in another form, so that you may understand me perhaps better: Are all the dead still in the Barzakh stage, awaiting the heavenly life, or are some in the Barzakh stage and some in the heavenly life (or, if necessary in the hell life) according to the state wherein they died? From the Qur-án I think the Day of Judgment is future, but would like your guidance in the matter.

Thanking you once again for your many kindnesses towards me,

Yours sincerely,
K. S. R.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE REPLY OF THE IMAM

16th February, 1937.

DEAR MR. K. S. R.

Yours of the 11th instant. May God guide us all aright! Indeed, all true knowledge, particularly the knowledge of spiritual things, is fraught with numerous simulations and distortions. In fact, like water that comes from Heaven, the knowledge Divine is only too apt to be defiled by human handling. The earthly feelings and inclinations of man are too apt to encircle a shower of Divine knowledge as soon as it is left to the earth. This is true of all spiritual showers, including the one that came to the great Prophet Jesus. The adoption of Christianity by the pagan Emperor Constantine is a historical fact, and it is the duty of a seeker after truth to find out what was Christianity before that incident, and what it came to be after that event. It is also pertinent to enquire whether the preachings of St. Paul to the pagan Greeks did not betray an over-anxiety to win over the Gentiles to the faith of Christianity, even at the cost of the purity of the faith itself. Is it not a fact that the first followers of Jesus had none of the doctrines that are set forth later in the Athanasian Creed, and that they had not broken away from Jewish Laws and Traditions, as was done by the followers of St. Paul? It is also necessary in this connection to go into the history of the compilation of the Bible as it is in our hands to-day—both the New and the Old Testaments.

The Old Testament must have been originally in Hebrew, and it is up to you to find out if the original Hebrew Old Testament, of which the current Old Testaments in different languages are supposed to be translations, is at all traceable to-day. As for the New Testament, as you know well, it ought to be either in Hebrew or in Aramaic, as Jesus and his disciples spoke only those two languages. It is again up to you to find out in what language are its original manuscripts. As for the authorship of these Gospels, again, it is pleasing to suppose that they were written by contemporary witnesses, but is it a fact that their writers were actually contemporaries of Jesus? There are many more pertinent questions, but I refrain from raising them just now. If you want any relevant literature, I should recommend to you—"The Sources of Christianity" by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din and "Are the Gospels Inspired?" by Mr. Sadruddin.

Coming to your question regarding Qiyamat, I must tell you that, according to Muslim belief, all the dead are waiting for that day or point of time, and this is reasonable, as the action of a man has a long chain of action and re-action that will go on till the end of the world. So, if the spiritual raising of a soul has to be accompanied by the complete effect of its action, external as well as internal, it is necessary that the resurrection should wait till the external effects have run their complete course. Incidentally, according to the Qur-án, the souls in Barzakh will have no sense of the length of time. Being cut off from all positive life, the whole duration of time in Barzakh

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will appear very short to all. We are also told that the feeling in Barzakh will be different to different persons, according to the condition of their souls. The heavenly souls will have a foretaste of the heavenly life whereas the hellish souls will have a foretaste of a hellish life. All this will, however, be very vague and will be just a kind of anticipation. I hope I have made this point clear to you.

I shall always be pleased to receive your interesting letters.

Yours sincerely,
AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD,
Imam.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

"The Sword of Islam"

The Christian lack of truthfulness is nowhere more marked than in its treatment of Islamic subjects. A presentation of the sword as a reward for meritorious military acts is a recognised custom in all countries. Even the worshippers of the "Prince of Peace" recognize this custom. As a matter of fact, this presentation of the sword is throughout its history more a feature of Christianity than of any other religious community. Yet we have never heard of such a phrase as "the Sword of Christianity." The slightest incentive, however, such as that of Mussolini being presented with a sword by the Libyan Muslims, would at once make our Christian journalists of England, including such a sober daily as the *Daily Telegraph* (*vide* its issue of 19th March) exclaim with a thrill "the Sword of Islam." These pious Christians would not stop to understand that the sword is as little a part of Islam as it is of Christianity. The climax is reached when a Northern paper, like the *Sheffield Telegraph*, suggests, with an air of authority, that the term "the Sword of Islam" cannot be applied to the sword presented to the Duce, as that is reserved for the sword carried by the Prophet Muhammad, and probably to be found now in

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Constantinople. Muslims, reading this interesting piece of news, will certainly open their eyes with amazement at Christian omniscience, but they should not forget the Christian principle: "If the Truth of God through my lie abounded unto His glory, why am I still judged as a sinner, and why not let us do evil that good may come?" (Romans 3: 7 & 8.)

Great Britain and the New Italian Policy

"Fascist Italy means to ensure to the Muslim population of Libya, peace, justice, well-being and respect to the laws of the Prophet, and wishes, besides, to show sympathy with Islam and with the Muslims of the whole world."

So runs the assurance of Mussolini to the Muslims of Libya. We have already discussed how much value should be attached to such promises of Western diplomats; but even if, as a stroke of policy aimed at Great Britain, the Duce gives to the Libyan Muslims all that he promises, it is high time that the British Government confirmed the loyalty of 110 millions of Muslim subjects of the British Empire, and the goodwill of the rest of the Muslim world by a timely counter move, for we have reason to believe that, of late, its policy has been swayed more by economical considerations of a passing character than by political considerations of a far-reaching nature. Of the many glaring instances of this present mistaken policy, the handling of the Palestinian question is one. Indeed, it is bad diplomacy for the British politicians not to understand the value of Muslim goodwill, in view of the growing confusion in the political affairs of Europe. Apart from this needed change in the policy of the British Government, the British public also can do much towards winning the hearts of the Muslim world, if it changes its impolitic attitude towards the Muslims as a religious community.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

It cannot be unknown to the British people that, unlike Christians, Muslims value their religion even more than they do their political interests. Yet, in spite of this, the British public, we say it with regret, has always shown the morbid tendency to play into the hands of the Church in reviling Islam and its Founder, both at home and abroad. It is high time that this bad diplomacy is realised by the British public, both here and abroad.

Woman in Christendom

It seems necessary to remind the Muslims and the non-Muslims alike that Soviet Russia, with all its sweeping changes, is, for all that, an integral part of Christendom. Christianity, with all its merits and demerits, does undoubtedly sway the minds of millions that live in that country despite their outward fury against it. Indeed, they can cease to be Christians only when they transfer their spiritual allegiance to some other organized religion, for example, Islam. No secular movement, or even a religious movement of a sectarian character, can ever alter this patent fact. With this aspect of the matter in their minds, it will certainly interest our readers to read the following piece of news published by the *Daily Mail* in its issue of the 29th April 1937:

“Marshal Voroshilov had issued orders dissolving women’s battalions of the Soviet Army on the ground that they were spreading corruption and corrupting the morals of the red soldiers.”

This will undoubtedly give some food for thought to the upholders of the absurd theories about equality of the sexes, and if duly taken to heart, will check the tide of mad efforts in the direction of blending the sexes in an indistinguishable mass.

Arrogant Christian writers of the type of Dean Inge have accused us of adopting Western standards in

NOTES AND COMMENTS

reforming our socio-religious life. Incidents like this ought to open the eyes of these critics to the fact that, far from our following the Western standards of life, actually the Western Christians, lashed by the bitter consequences of their mad rush towards so-called freedom, are gradually approaching the Muslim standards.

Female Emancipation in Christian France

The *Evening News* of March 22nd publishes the following item of news: "Under a new law, married French women may plead in courts, make a contract, and open a bank account."

Poor Christian women of the West! From how many legal disabilities have they been suffering! Yet it is announced on their behalf that they are models of free women. I wish those legions of their Missionaries who are labouring year in and year out to bring "emancipation" to the Muslim women of the East had given some of their time to these emancipated at Home. These enthusiasts do not seem to understand that the freedom to be exploited by the brute in man is no freedom for womanhood; it is, on the contrary, a subtle and a more dangerous form of slavery.

Unfortunately, the whole of Western womanhood is more or less groaning under this slavery. The real freedom of women lies in their legal and economic protection from brutal exploitation by men. This freedom has always been enjoyed by the Muslim women, although the spiritual bankruptcy of Christendom prevents it from appreciating the fact. God only knows when the scales will fall from the eyes of the Christian men of the West, so that they will give the Western womanhood real emancipation instead of the false freedom that has been a fruitful source of untold misery.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

BOOK REVIEWS

Muhammad—A Mercy to all the Nations. By Al-Hajj Qassim Ali Jairazbhoy, with a Foreword by H. H. The Aga Khan (Luzac & Co., London, 1937), pp. 389. Price 7s. 6d.

If this "doctrine will have a universality that can be accepted as long as man is man and as long as intelligence as we understand it survives on Earth," as H. H. the Aga Khan says in his foreword, it is necessary for us, from time to time, to interpret the suitability of the religion and of its founder in terms of current thought and action. Mr. Jairazbhoy has supplied the need of the moment in his critical survey of the life and teachings of Muhammad.

The early chapters contain a description of Arabia before Muhammad, his birth, Divine Call with all these the author has dealt ingeniously: not spending too long on details, but giving just enough emphasis to the historical incidents as preliminaries to the clearer understanding of Islam and of its Founder.

It is when he comes to the hey-day of Islam that the author is most interesting. Here he compares and contrasts the ideals preached and unswervingly acted upon by Muhammad with those of the modern social order and personalities. He gives his comments bluntly, incisively and uncompromisingly, revealing that, in spite of his numerous sacrifices for his co-religionists and in spite of the multiplicity of his interests, the zeal to serve Islam remains undiminished in him.

This biography seeks to add fresh facts to the existing books on Muhammad in English. Facsimile MSS. from original Persian, Parsi, Hebrew, Greek and Sanskrit, foretelling the advent of the Prophet, are made to speak for themselves, after a brief introduction and a few explanatory notes.

It is a great and enviable achievement to have completed a compendium comprising so much material, and the book is as much a pleasure to read as it is to recommend.

S. A. T.

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

ISLAM: THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission, as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-AN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book. Inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim believes in neither Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Pre-measurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and in the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Almsgiving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All

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the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead-letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is to sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real moment. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

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