

„Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets”
HOLY QUR-AN, 33 : 40. “There will be no prophet after me.”— MUHAMMAD.

The Islamic Review

FOUNDED BY THE LATE AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

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MARCH-APRIL, 1942 A.C.

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THE
ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol. XXX] SAFAR-RABI'UL AWWAL 1361 A.H. [No. 3-4
MARCH-APRIL, 1942 A.C.

A DECLARATION

I, MRS. MONNIE ESSAK, of 84 Burridge Road, Torquay, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and Only Alláh (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 Alláh.

Lá iláha ill-Alláh Muhammad-un-Rasúl-Alláh.

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

Dated 21st March, 1941.

M. ESSAK.

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“THE GARDEN OF PEACE”

BY W. B. BASHYR-PICKARD, B.A. (CANTAB.)

(Continued from page 8 of the current volume.)

Yet certain things are unlawful and these are to be eschewed. A little lower down upon the same page I read : “ O you who believe ! intoxicants and games of chance and sacrificing to stones set up and divination by arrows are only an uncleanness, the devil’s work. Shun it, therefore, that you may be successful.” (*Qur-án* v : 90.) Wine and gambling and sacrificing to stones and divination by arrows—who indeed that seeketh God, seeketh these ?

IX

This day I rose in the darkness before dawn and, leaving the sleeping household, walked in the night in the garden ; and the Lord of the Night was there ; and very pleasant it was to drink in the fresh night air, though clouds withheld all stars.

And I said within myself : “ This indeed is better than sleep : Of a certainty prayer is better than sleep.”

Now, when I had set out into the world, I descended the hill from my house down the broad winding of the road between the tall pine trees. I crossed the meadows, still heavy with the mists of winter. Many streams murmured across these meadows. So much so that of necessity were five foot-bridges set for the people to pass that way into the town. And when I came to the third bridge, narrow and slenderly built, lo ! the way was barred by a swan sitting in the midst, seemingly sick, but hissing angrily at any approach. Sometimes the swan by great effort would rise up on its feet and attempt to walk forwards, but so enfeebled was it that the mere weight of its own body caused it to sink

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wearily down again. So it remained, twisting its neck as a snake and hissing angrily. Pitying the forlorn creature, I went forward along the narrow bridge. I spoke to it, telling it not to be afraid, and thus managed narrowly to squeeze by it without further alarming it.

Having thus crossed the bridge and proceeded a few paces towards the town, I looked back at the sick or dying swan. It still sat helpless and hissing in the middle of the bridge, but a group of children were now collected, wishing to cross the narrow bridge but afraid to do so because of the swan which seemed not to have strength to move from blocking the bridge with its menacings. Therefore I turned back again and, aided by a passerby, with forceful persuasion helped the bedraggled swan across the bridge to the bank of the stream, when it descended helplessly and uneasily into the shallow flowing stream. And the creatures too are His and He hath regard unto them. Who that hath understanding could fail to show kindness unto the birds of the Air ?

That evening I took up the Qur-án once more, and this is what I read : “ Say : ‘ The provision of this world is short, and the hereafter is better for him who guards against evil : and you shall not be wronged one whit.’ Wherever you are, death will overtake you, though you are in towers, raised high. And if a benefit comes to them, they say : ‘ This is from Allah ; ’ and if a misfortune befalls them, they say : ‘ This is from you.’ Say : ‘ All is from Allah : ’ but what is the matter with these people that they do not make approach to understanding what is told them ?

“ Whatever benefit comes to you (O man!), it is from Allah, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself ; and We have sent you (O Prophet!) to

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mankind as an apostle : and Allah is sufficient as a witness." (*Qur-án* iv : 77—79.)

X

And now the year wears on. The time of great darkness has gone. Already the light strengthens in the morning and the evening. The winter jasmin has long been with us, and now our thoughts turn towards the snowdrops, white stainless hope of spring. Now the meadowlands are marshy ; now the streams hurry along, swirling and turbid, rejoicing with much rain ; and the music of tumbling waters makes glad the countryside, while still the sun hides, gathering his strength daily behind curtains of cloud. So much for nature, obedient to the merciful hand of God and grateful for the gentle rains ; but, on the human plane, red war rages and hate makes hideous the serene air by day and by night. Yet, thinking of all this, conviction glows with ever brighter light that the spirit of mankind cannot be quenched, that freedom of soul cannot be taken from those who still would keep it, though indeed it move amid material destruction outrageous.

So, therefore, often it may prove that the forceful overthrow of the lofty towers and honoured strongholds of age-old civilization will be but the pangs of a wider freedom, of a release from the oppression of things material that already had begun to cramp the ardent spirit. Spirit indestructible, hast thou not wings to fly out above the desolation and to see gleaming in the East the first streaks of light, heralding the brighter day ?

Such was my thought, when, near midnight, I took up the Book of Peace, desiring the refreshment of its gleaming pages before sleep should take me. And I read : " Successful indeed are the believers, who

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are humble in their prayers and who keep aloof from what is vain and who seek purity in action and who guard their secret parts except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess 'for in this surely they are not blamable, but whoever seeks to go beyond this, these are they who exceed the limits;' and who are keepers of their trusts and their covenants, and who keep a guard upon their prayers—these are they who are made heirs, who shall inherit Paradise. They shall abide therein." (*Qur-án* xxiii: 1—11.) Verses depicting a preparation in this life for the Paradise beyond, with a description of the qualities necessary of acquirement—belief, humility before God, avoidance of vanity, an active purity, chastity, the faithful keeping of trusts and promises and the laying hold on prayer.

Surely they who have clothed themselves in these qualities have put on the apparel of Paradise.

XI

This day I went not down into the town but remained at home upon the hill. I walked in the garden, and saw there the first snowdrops of the year, gleaming pure out of the dark earth. Thick clouds have obscured the sun, and a cold east wind blew biting the finger-tips. The household has rejoiced and the howlings of the war wolves from the unquiet heaven have been brought to nought. On such days, when the sun has set, the heart turns gratefully to God, praising His Name for preservation still to enjoy His bounties. In the black darkness of the quiet night, when the straining eye can scarce discern the looming outline of a house-roof against the black sky, the thought of God is very near, and the need of God manifests itself to the heart more than in the brightly lit streets filled with hurrying footsteps as in days gone by. Within the house, there

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is brightness and warmth. Gladly I take up the Qur-án, and I read: "Say to My servants, who believe, that they should keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them secretly and openly before the coming of the day in which there shall be no bartering nor mutual befriending. Allah is He who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you. And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day. And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them; most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful." (*Qur-án* xiv: 31—34.)

FROM THE CROSS TO THE CRESCENT

BY ABDUR RAZZAQUE SELLIAH

(Continued from page 16 of the current volume)

The more I attended the church the more plainly I saw the truth of the declarations of the Muslim critics. Choral masses, beautiful altars, impressive pictures and statues, solemn and gorgeous rituals and other matters connected with Catholic worship soon became repulsive to me. The question always hovering in my mind was: "Where is the necessity of all this fuss?" By and by it was noticed by the priests and certain members of the congregation that I never approached the Confessional or the Holy Communion. Later it became a talk that I had stopped attending the Church. All these things were

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making me very uneasy and I could not—try as I would—be the Catholic I was. I was always rebuked and scoffed at for my indifference to religion and finally I had to hear quite plainly that I was on the road to Hell guided by the signpost “Islam!” This was too much for me to stand. I knew what a good Catholic I was and I saw no reason why I should be treated thus, without even being asked why I was fed up with the Church and enamoured of Islam. Their intolerance was so bigoted that it gave me additional cause to feel sick of the Church that harboured them.

All this time I was seriously thinking that I should do something to be free from the Church and its hold on me. I could never make up my mind to go for confession as I felt that it was the lowest rung of moral stamina that man could stoop to. To confess spiritual crimes to a man, known as a priest, who himself was not immune from such contamination, was never, in the first instance, reasonable to my mind. No doubt the Bible says: “Whosoever sins you (priests) forgive, they shall be forgiven and whosoever sins you retain they shall be retained!” It simply would mean that if the priest chose to forgive me, God too would forgive me, and if the priest chose not to forgive me, then God too would not forgive me. From this verse it was obvious that the Lord God of the entire Universe apparently depended on these priests to forgive a sinner or otherwise and that it was only for Him to endorse their action! Besides this, I could never make up my mind to tell the priest that I committed such and such a sin, the number of times and so on and so forth. It is downright nonsense to believe that these priests could forgive the sinner although I may not deny that the priests may be good themselves. This was one of the things that put a stop to my church-going and a drifting away from the fold.

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I had decided that I must soon settle this question of remaining within or without the Church and, one day on a very cold and gloomy evening, in a worried state of mind, and by arrangement, I went to see a priest again. I felt that an irritation had infected me and I was like a man who was worried as to a way of ridding it. I was greatly perturbed in mind with the thought that I was now in no religion at all. I was neither a Catholic nor a Muslim ; neither flesh nor bone. And this gave me added trouble. Thoroughly exhausted from this state of mind, I pressed the electric bell of the Jesuit Mission House and waited. Meanwhile I had taken such a dislike to priests in general for their manner in treating me that I was not inclined to be very soft at this meeting and always had a certain amount of caution in dealing with them. I became aware that they were well-trained people for their jobs and that I should not be hasty in my thoughts. While I was in such a state of mind, I was greeted by the Reverend Father who answered my call. He was apparently happy to see me and asked me into the parlour. We were very comfortably seated and, between cups of tea and cigarettes, I began telling him the cause of my uneasiness and my desire to leave the Church. After having heard me for some time, he asked me about my education. This question, I thought, was not necessary to answer ; especially, if he was going to apply school education as a measure to understand religion. So I asked why the understanding of a religion should be gauged by academical qualifications. I knew he was a theologian and an M.A., yet religion ought to be simple and comprehensible, so that the appreciation of its beauty should not be the sole privilege of those holding worldly qualifications. Every sort of mind must be able to grasp it according to the intellect it possesses

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and so I was seeking to understand religion from the knowledge I had of it. Was there any harm, or was it unreasonable? Every man cannot expect to rise to the level of the highest education but every man must have the chance to understand what religion is from his own store of knowledge. If it be true that the interpretation of the clergy should alone be accepted, because they are more educated, then one may as well suppose that religion should be best left to them only. Anyway, we discussed certain matters and I asked for some explanations regarding the points that I found difficult to accept: but, to my great disappointment, I found that I was not getting what I wanted. What I heard was that Islam is an immoral religion and that the Prophet was a mad man. I failed to notice that all this was said to discourage me and persuade me to keep off Islam. But this did not deter me for, by now, I found more than one reason, nay, every reason, why I should become a Muslim. A lot of opposition was put up against me and, thank God, I came off quite safe through them all. All my past friends and others now became my bitter enemies, and the respect and affection I commanded from them was no more. But I may now tell them that I was all the better for it, as, with all the loss I had from them, I was nevertheless lucky to gain what they cannot have unless they are Muslims too.

THE TRINITY

These were some of the questions I asked myself before I turned my face towards Islam: Is God one?—Yes. Then why have a Trinity? To me there was always something incongruous in believing that there were three gods or that there were three persons in God; and, believing at the same time that although these three persons were three distinct beings, yet they

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were all one and the same. Perhaps a Chinese cross-word would be easier for an Eskimo to solve than this mystery of the Trinity for a man of reason. There certainly must be mysteries ; in fact the whole world is a mystery, but there must be some reason for these mysteries to exist. If there be no reason, then why try to mystify the existence of the Unity of God ? This mystery business, I know, has sent out many an ardent Catholic from the Church. It is a plain fact that to-day there are very few people who believe in this and the other mysteries of the Catholic Church. To divide the Creator into a Father, a Son and a Holy Ghost is very suspicious and, to say the least, pagan. If he reads the "Sources of Christianity" by the late Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din and the "Pagan Christs" by J. M. Robertson, a seeker after Truth will be able to understand how these mysteries came to exist. In fact it would be amusing to read that where the Church fails to give some satisfaction in the matter the authors of these books have cleared the mystery once and for all. We must understand, as the late Khwaja Sahib once wrote, that "reason is a God-given gift and has its use." If we do not apply reason in accepting the teachings, or if reason is counted as an unnecessary factor in matters of religion or anything else, where, then, is the purpose of God having given reason at all ? There must have been some reason on the part of God to have given man the faculty of reason and if reason is not applied as it ought to be, then the object of God having given it fails. Could failure be attributed to God ? Certainly not. There is one thing which I should like to point out in view of the contention that the Trinity is Indivisible. St. Mark narrates that immediately after Christ was baptised, the Holy Ghost was seen descending on Him, and at the same time the voice of the Father from

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above was heard to say: "This is my well-beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." But mark you. The teaching is: "One God in Three Persons," and yet these three persons are undivided. If so, and holding for the moment that Christ was God himself, how is it that the Holy Spirit (God) was seen descending and the voice of the Father (God) also heard? When we clearly see the three persons manifesting themselves in three different ways, it surpasses my understanding as to how the Unity of God could be reconciled. One of the things that disgusted me most was that the teachings of the Church were perfectly void of reason and, to me, it is a very lamentable thing. The truth of it all is that these mysteries were in vogue among the ancient pagans and they later on found their way into the simple teachings of Christ.

UNITY OF GOD IN ISLAM

Take, on the other hand, what Islam says: "Your God is One." What a gulf of difference you meet! There is nothing perplexing in accepting this, for it is the Absolute Truth and all men do really feel and admit it to be so. This belief is the first thing demanded of a Muslim when he says: "There is no God but Alláh." Also, "Say, 'He, Alláh, is One, Alláh is He on Whom all depend; He begets not nor is He begotten, and none is like unto Him.'" This is not only the Absolute Truth but it shatters the Trinity of Christianity to pieces. "The God of Islam is One because the Divine Nature of God admits of no participation or manifoldness. He is one and has no partner or co-sharer. He has neither begotten sons nor daughters. He is free from passions and is indivisible and impersonal." On further observation we find that, amidst all the Diversity, there is perfect Unity. The solar system, its organic and inorganic worlds, plants and animal life,

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the solid earth, the seas, the rivers, the great mountains, all point to their unity in their diversity. We find men different from each other in colour and tongue but they are a single people. We have the testimony of the Prophets of old who proclaimed the Oneness of God. This Oneness of God is very clearly proclaimed in Exodus, 20 : 3, which says : “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Further : “The Lord our God, is one Lord :” (Deut., VI : 4) and yet : “There is none other god but One.” (I Cor., VIII : 4.) It would be a sheer waste of time to attempt to prove this truth otherwise. To confess the truth as I did when I became a Muslim I always held that God could be One and only One. I have often seen Buddhists, who hold atheistic tendencies, utter “Oh my God !” when in utter dangers and distresses. They believe in the non-existence of God and yet unconsciously feel and call upon God in one form or the other in difficult circumstances. I have touched on the Unity of God for this is the fundamental basis of religion. There cannot be any religion unless there is belief in the Oneness of God, and it is to affirm this belief that the Muslims are obliged to repeat the *Kalima*, i.e., the formula *La Iláha il-Alláh, Muhammad-un-Rasul Alláh*.

BAPTISM

It appeared to me that the Baptismal ceremony adopted in the Church to initiate a member within its fold was not only meaningless but also originated from pagan rites. The contention is that everyone born into this world must be baptised if he is to have salvation, and this is based on the words “Go ye . . . baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.” Any departure from this is supposed to seal one’s damnation. “Can this be true ?” was the first question that entered my mind. If it be so, what about

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the millions who have left this world without ever being baptised? Is it reasonable to suppose that those good and God-fearing yet unbaptised souls would have been condemned to Hell for all Eternity, in spite of the good lives they led? I thought it might possibly be so but, on the other hand, why cannot it be the other way also? What about the infant who is only a few days old and dies without the sacrament? Mind you, it has not a single stain on its soul and yet according to the Church it cannot, or will not, be admitted into Heaven, just because the child was not baptised! Surely what an awful thing it must be on the part of God to plunge these innocents into the burning fire of Hell or to a place called "Limbo!" It is impossible to believe that God could be so cruel. For has not Christ said: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"? And—what is more surprising—the Church says that the sacrament of Baptism was instituted by Christ, whereas we find that Christ was baptised by John according to the Scriptures. And yet Christ himself did not baptise anyone himself, nor was baptism prevalent during the time of Christ. How then was I to accept that this was established by him? This sacrament was practised among the pagans of old, and I am sure that this efficacy of grace was taken on by the Church for more reasons than one. To put a mild question, would any parent believe that his little child is damned to eternal perdition because a few drops of water had not been poured over its tiny head? As a matter of fact, having been a Catholic myself, I had the opportunity of attending many funerals. Wherever I had been I never heard that the person who had recently died would surely be in Hell. On the contrary, what I always heard was that the person would be in Heaven. If Christians could console

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themselves so comfortably, I see no reason why a non-Christian cannot be of the same opinion. This is not uttered by the bereaved party as a matter of consolation. My close study was that they really believed in what they said. And, if this be a fact, what about innocents who die unbaptised? And if these go to Heaven, what about those good adults who die unbaptised? Think awhile before you come to a conclusion, and believe me that my experience in such matters has always led me as will yours do you to seriously doubt the correctness of the Christian position. When a certain young man approached Christ and asked, "Good Master! what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Christ did not tell him, "Go thou and be baptised" but, He said unto him, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but *One*, that *God*; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the *Commandments*," and "Come follow me." (Math. XIX: 16, 17 and 21.) And that was all, and that was really what was necessary, *viz.*, to follow the model of Love and Virtue as embodied in Christ. This much said, I could not believe that baptism was any more necessary for salvation than a piece of straw would be for a drowning man!

KALIMA

On the other hand, let us see what Islam has to offer as a prerequisite for salvation. It imposes on us the belief that every child born into this world is pure from all sin, which means that the child is at the time of birth a Muslim (Pure), and a thing that is pure needs no purification through baptism or anything akin to it. We are to believe that whatever comes from God is good and pure, and that it is we who make it bad. If a child is stamped with sin at its very birth, how could that child be expected to bear the responsibility of sin?

(To be continued.)

THE CAMEL DRIVER

BY ALAN EMLEY, F.M.B.

Perhaps as unpromising a situation as ever confronted a teacher was that of the inhabitants of Arabia and Africa fourteen hundred years ago. Neither Christianity nor the Jewish religion had affected these wild tribes. Their philosophy was of the jungle; their ideals were a cipher. Their religion consisted of the worship of female idols, and of the sun, moon and stars.

Slavery flourished in its worst form. Marriage was at the level of the most primitive people to-day. A man could have as many wives, concubines and slaves as he could buy. Punishment of these chattels frequently took the form of death by torture. Burying babies alive was a common religious practice.

All this was changed by Muhammad, the last of the seven Masters. The date of his birth is uncertain,¹ but so great a stir did he make in the world that we know the exact date of his death—June 7th, 632 A.D.

Illumination came to him when still a young man, and he learned that his mission was to reform his people, a task so great that the twelve labours of Hercules seem small beside it.

Forming a secret society, Muhammad began teaching the Law that had been revealed to him. He taught the Unity of God, and life after death, forced into the open by enthusiastic followers he began preaching the new doctrine in public. The idols began to lose prestige. The power of the priesthood was threatened.

Naturally, the most cruel persecutions were practised upon the followers of the new faith. In spite of a doctrine of religion providing that no blood should be shed in the holy city of Makka, the assassination of

¹He was born on Monday, the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal (April, 571 A.C.)—Ed.
I. R.

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Muhammad was decided upon. The Master learned of the plot and escaped. This was the famous flight from Makka.

After converting some of the desert tribes, Muhammad accepted the challenge of the priesthood in a series of small battles. During the first skirmish it is said that the Prophet fainted at the sight of blood. In all, the casualties probably did not exceed two hundred people.

Finally, Muhammad overcame opposition by converting the leaders of the army of Makka. Then he compromised with the priests and gave them a place in the new religion. Triumphantly he entered Makka, bringing a new dispensation to his people. He broke down most of their superstitions and barbaric practices, ended blood-feuds, abolished the killing of infants, destroyed drunkenness, and moulded the people into temperate, law-abiding citizens. In fact, the Prophet had a greater influence upon those accepting his doctrines than did the Christ upon the people professing to accept his teachings.

Fortunately, we have the actual writings of Muhammad. The Qur-án was written by him² with a sublime dignity, clarity and power that is not lost even in translation. Here is an example: "Ye people, ye have rights demandable of your wives, and they have rights demandable of you. Treat your women well. And your slaves, see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear. And if they commit a fault which ye are not willing to forgive, then sell them, for they are servants of the Lord and are not to be tortured. Know that every Muslim is the brother of

²This is what the sceptics say. In actual fact the words of the Qur-án came to the Prophet as revelation from God, and were dictated by him to the amanuenses, as he himself did not know any reading or writing—Ed. J. R.

ISLAM AND CIVILISATION

every other Muslim. All of you are on the same equality: ye are of one brotherhood.”

Even in the light of modern understanding, Muhammad must be considered as being gentle and compassionate. Yet he is so misunderstood by most Christian people. Years after the death of the Prophet, a conquering army invaded and plundered a vast territory in his name, but Muhammad was no more responsible for it than Jesus was responsible for the bloody conquest of Mexico and Peru.—*The Mystic Messenger*, (Tampa), U.S.A.

ISLAM AND CIVILISATION

BY ABDUL LATIF KHAN

(Continued from page 233 of Vol. XXIX.)

Our object in making a long discussion on the early history of Christianity and the growth of its theology by quoting several passages from Mr. Wells, is to prove from the pen of a non-Muslim writer that Christianity ceased to be Christianity as soon as it was transplanted from the place where it was born. The moment Christianity came under the influence of Paul it underwent a wonderful change and ceased to be the religion of Christ. In this connection it is worth while to remark that Christianity did nothing to further the cultivation of learning. In course of time Christianity established itself on the imperial throne of the Cæsars but it absolutely failed to regenerate mankind. From the fourth to the twelfth century of the Christian era the gloom of ignorance and superstition that prevailed in Europe began to grow deeper and deeper. During this time Christianity placed learning and science under the ban of persecution and freedom of judgment and liberty of thought were crushed out from the minds

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of human beings. Thousands of human beings were consigned to the flames for mere aberration of reason.

It was Christianity that brought Greek philosophy in Alexandria to an end. Lest it be thought that we are biassed in our opinion we quote below the remarks of the well known authority Draper on the subject:—
“The bishopric thus held by Theophilus was in due time occupied by his nephew St. Cyril, who had commended himself to the approval of the Alexandrian congregations as a successful and fashionable preacher. It was he who had so much to do with the introduction of the Virgin Mary. His hold upon the audiences of the giddy city was, however, much weakened by Hypatia, the daughter of Theon, the mathematician, who not only distinguished herself by her exposition of the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle but also by her comments on the writings of Appolonius and other geometers. Each day before her academy stood a long train of chariots, her lecture-hall was crowded with the wealth and fashion of Alexandria. They came to listen to her discourses on those questions which men in all ages have asked, but which never yet have been answered. What am I? Where am I? What can I know?

“Hypatia and Cyril; Philosophy and bigotry. These cannot exist together. So Cyril felt, and on that feeling he acted. As Hypatia repaired to her academy, she was assaulted by Cyril’s mob—a mob of many monks. Stripped naked in the street, she was dragged into a church, and there killed by the club of Peter the Reader. The corpse was cut to pieces, the flesh was scraped from the bones with shells, and the remnants cast into a fire. For this frightful crime Cyril was never called to account. It seemed to be admitted that the end sanctified the means.

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“So ended Greek philosophy in Alexandria. So came to an untimely close the learning that the Ptolemies had done so much to promote. The “daughter Library,” that of the Serapion, had been dispersed. The fate of Hypatia was a warning to all who would cultivate profane knowledge. Henceforth there was to be no freedom for human thought. Everyone must think as the ecclesiastical authority ordered him. In Athens itself philosophy awaited its doom. Justinian at length prohibited its teaching, and caused all its schools in that city to be closed.”

As to the decision of the Pelagian controversy the same learned authority says :—

“A consequence of great importance issued from the Pelagian controversy. The Book of Genesis had been made the basis of Christianity. If, in a theological point of view, to its account of the sin in the garden of Eden, and the transgression and punishment of Adam, so much weight has been attached, it also in a philosophical point of view became the grand authority of Patristic Science. Astronomy, Biology, Geography, Anthropology, Chronology, and indeed all the various departments of human knowledge were made to conform to it.”

The following extracts from the same learned authority's criticism on St. Augustine are very interesting :—“As the doctrines of St. Augustine have had the effect of thus placing theology in antagonism with science, it may be interesting to examine briefly some of the more purely philosophical views of that great man. For this purpose, we may appropriately select portions of the study of the first chapter of Genesis, as contained in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth book of his “Confessions.”

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“These consist of philosophical discussions largely interspersed with rhapsodies. He prays that God will give him to understand the scriptures, and will open their meanings to him; he declares that in them there is nothing superfluous, but that the words have a manifold meaning.

“Considering the eminent authority which has been attributed to the writing of St. Augustine by the religious world for nearly fifteen centuries, it is proper to speak of them with respect. And indeed it is not necessary to do otherwise. No one did more than this father to bring science and religion into antagonism; it was mainly he who diverted the Bible from its true office—a guide to purity of life, and placed it in the perilous position of being the arbiter of human knowledge, an audacious tyranny over the mind of man. The example once set, there was no want of followers, the works of the great Greek philosophers were stigmatised as profane; the transcendently glorious achievement of the Museum of Alexandria were hidden from sight by a cloud of ignorance, mysticism, and unintelligible jargon, out of which there too often flashed the destroying lightnings of ecclesiastical vengeance.”

The same learned authority's remarks on the Patristic philosophy are also very interesting: “A divine revelation of science admits of no improvement, no change, no advance. It discourages as needless, and indeed as presumptuous, all new discovery, considering it as an unlawful prying into things which it was the intention of God to conceal. What then is that sacred that revealed science, declared by the fathers to be the sun of all knowledge! It likened all phenomenon, natural and spiritual, to human acts. It saw in the Almighty, the Eternal, only a gigantic man.

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“As to the earth, it affirmed that it is a flat surface, over which the sky is spread like a dome, or, as St. Augustine tells us, is stretched like a skin. In this the sun and moon and stars move, so that they may give light by day and by night to man. The earth was made of matter created by God out of nothing, and with all the tribes of animals and plants inhabiting it, was finished in six days. Above the sky or firmament is heaven, in the dark and fiery space beneath the earth is hell. The earth is the central and most important body of the universe, all other things being intended for and subservient to it.

“As to man, he was made out of the dust of the earth. At first he was alone, but subsequently woman was formed from one of his ribs. He is the greatest and choicest of the works of God. He was placed in a paradise near the banks of the Euphrates, and was very wise and very pure, but, having tasted of the forbidden fruit, and thereby broken the commandment given to him, he was condemned to labour and to death.

“Let us listen to what some of these authorities say in support of their assertions. Thus Lactantius, referring to the heretical doctrine of the globular form of the earth, remarks: ‘Is it possible that men can be so absurd as to believe that the crops and the trees on the other side of the earth hang downward, and that men have their feet higher than their heads? If you ask them how they defend those monstrosities, how things do not fall away from the earth on that side, they reply that the nature of things is such that heavy bodies tend towards the centre, like the spokes of a wheel, while light bodies as clouds, smell, fire, tend from the centre to the heavens on all sides. Now I am really at a loss what to say of those who, when they have once gone wrong, steadily persevere in their folly and defend one absurd opinion

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by another.' On the question of the antipodes, St. Augustine asserts that 'it is impossible there should be inhabitants on the opposite side of the earth, since no such race is recorded by scripture among the descendants of Adam.' Perhaps, however, the most unanswerable argument against the sphericity of the earth was this that 'on the day of judgment, men in the other side of a globe could not see the Lord descending through the air.'

"It is not necessary for me to say anything respecting the introduction of death into the world, the tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues, the dispersion of mankind, the interpretation of natural phenomena, as eclipses, the rainbow, etc. Above all, I abstain from commenting on the Patristic conceptions of the Almighty, they are too anthropomorphic and wanting in sublimity.

"Perhaps, however, I may quote from *Cosmos Indicopleustes* the views that were entertained in the sixth century. He wrote a work entitled "Christian Topography," the chief intent of which was to confute the globular form of the earth and the pagan assertion that there is a temperate zone on the southern side of the torrid. He affirms that according to the true orthodox system of geography, the earth is a quadrangular plane, extending four hundred days' journey east and west, and exactly half as much north and south that it is enclosed by mountains, on which the sky rests, that one on the north side, huger than the others, by intercepting the rays of the sun, produces night, and that the plane of the earth is not set exactly horizontally but with a little inclination from the north, hence the Euphrates, Tigris and other rivers running southward are rapid, but the Nile having to run uphill, has necessarily very slow current.

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“The Venerable Bede, writing in the seventh century, tells us that ‘the creation was accomplished in six days, and that the earth is its centre and its primary object. The heaven is of a fiery and subtle nature, round, and equidistant in every part, as a canopy from the centre of the earth. It turns round every day with ineffable rapidity, only moderated by the resistance of the seven planets, three above the sun—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars—then the sun, three below—Venus, Mercury, the Moon. The stars go round in three fixed courses, the northern perform the shortest circle. The highest heaven has its proper limit, it contains the angelic virtues who descend upon earth, assume ethereal bodies, perform human functions, and return. The heaven is tempered with glacial waters, lest it should be set on fire. The inferior heaven is called the firmament, because it separates the superincumbent waters from the waters below. The firmamental waters are lower than the spiritual heaven, higher than all corporeal beings, reserved, some say, for a second deluge, others, more truly, to temper the fire of the stars.’

“Was it for this preposterous scheme—the product of ignorance and audacity—that the works of the Greek philosophers were to be given up? It was none too soon that the great critics who appeared at the Reformation, by comparing the works of these writers with one another, brought them to their proper level, and taught us to look upon them all with contempt.

“Of this presumptuous system, the strangest part was its logic, the nature of its proofs. It relied upon miracle evidence. A fact was supposed to be demonstrated by an astounding illustration of something else. An Arabian writer referring to this, says: If a

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conjuror should say to me, 'three are more than ten, and in proof of it, I will change this stick into a serpent' I might be surprised at his legerdemain, but I certainly should not admit this assertion. Yet, for more than a thousand years, such was the accepted logic, and all over Europe propositions equally absurd were accepted on equally ridiculous proof.

“ Since the party that had become dominant in the empire could not furnish works capable of intellectual competition with those of the great pagan authors, and since it was impossible for it to accept a position of inferiority, there arose a political necessity for the discouragement, and even persecution, of profane learning. The persecution of the Platonists under Valentinians was one to that necessity. They were accused of magic, and many of them were put to death. The profession of philosophy had become dangerous—it was a state crime. In its stead there arose a passion for the marvellous, a spirit of superstition. Egypt exchanged the great men, who had made her Museum immortal, for bands of solitary monks and sequestered virgins with which she was overrun.”

—*History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science.*

(*To be continued.*)

ISLAM AND THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

BY MAULVI MIZANUR RAHMAN, M.A.

Knowledge is undoubtedly a power, a privilege and an asset both for individuals and nations. It is the *sine qua non* for all progress—social, national and spiritual. The pursuit of knowledge, therefore, is emphasised in all religions and by all guides and teachers of mankind.

Of all the religions, Islam claims to be the most perfect and the most practical. That is no vain-glorious claim. The holy Qur-án itself, the Revealed Word of Allah, puts it beyond the pale of doubt in the following words: “Al-Yawma Akmaltu Lakum Dinakum wa Atmamtu ‘Alaikum Ni‘mati”—“This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favours upon you.” (Al-Qur-án 5 : 3).

The reference is to the gift of Islam as revealed and perfected through Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) who was the last and latest exponent of Divine Dispensation known as Islam fundamentally based on monotheistic conception of Godhead and universal brotherhood of mankind. Let us now see what Islam, as preached by the outwardly unlettered but Divinely-inspired and spiritually-enlightened Prophet of Arabia, has to say about the acquisition of knowledge.

It will require pages, nay, volumes, to discuss in detail all that the Prophet of Islam has said and emphasised on this all-important aspect of human activities. We propose merely to touch upon the basic principle enunciated by the Prophet of Arabia.

The principle of compulsory education for men and women has evoked a wide range of discussions, both academic and legislative, all over the modern world. But these discussions do not date as far back as the advent of the Arabian Prophet, much less before his time. In one short but pregnant sentence, Prophet

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Muhammad (peace be on him) put the matter, or rather codified the principle, most beautifully. We refer to his well-known and authenticated saying—*Talabul ‘Ilmi Faridzaton ‘ala Kulli Muslimin wa Muslimátin*—Acquisition of knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim male and every Muslim female.

The saying is simple but emphatic. It leaves no room for doubt or dissertation. It is very pithily and pointedly put. There are some who seek to fence about the meaning or connotation of the word “*Ilm*” or knowledge as used by the Prophet. We should not make the mistake of dogmatising that “*Ilm*” means religious knowledge only. This is narrowing down the scope and connotation of a broad and all-embracing word. The Prophet’s own words in another authentic saying of his—*Utlubul ‘Ilma wa law kána bis-Sín*—“Seek for knowledge even in China”—clearly cut the ground from beneath the narrow interpretation aforesaid. During the Prophet’s time, China was no seat for religious learning. Neither is it even now. The Prophet clearly meant and emphasised that all sorts of knowledge, be it secular or religious, have to be learnt by Muslims, both male and female, at all sacrifice, even at the trouble of going abroad to such distant places as China, *compulsorily*, that is to say, as a matter of the highest duty imposed on the Muslims.

According to Islamic Shari‘a (Religious Code), the highest form of Muslims’ duties is termed “*Fardz*” —duty obligatory, which cannot be sacrificed without penance. That is the term used *vis-a-vis* the acquisition of knowledge by Muslims of both sexes. It is to be noted that this obligatory duty is imposed on *every* Muslim, both male and female. The Prophet’s saying under discussion clearly and unequivocally enunciates

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the principle of compulsory education for all Muslims, rich and poor, male and female.

The Muslims, however, have cast the Prophet's saying aside to their eternal shame, though the other nations have codified it and reaped the benefits out of it. For the Muslims worth their names no further codification or legislative enactment is necessary. The Prophet's saying is a self-sufficient, nay, eternal, inflexible and immutable, law for his followers for all climes and ages. The Muslims should realise it. The immediate followers of the Prophet realised it, and therefore lit up the torch of learning even in the West. The Universities of Cordova, Granada, etc., in Spain were the earliest universities in the West of the modern science and civilisation. But by a cruel irony of fate, the torch-bearers of knowledge are now grovelling in the darkness of ignorance.

It is time the Muslims took to the practice of the Prophet's saying in right earnest, and thereby gave a lead to the world of science and civilisation. It is not merely poor consolation but self-deception to dream of the dead past and ancestral exploits without taking proper stock of the living present. It is time the "Companions of the Cave" rose from their age-long slumber, lit the torch of light and started anew the journey of life with inspiration from the past but hope and courage and determination and optimism for the future.

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JIZYAH AND SHARI'A (ISLAMIC LAW)

BY M. Y. KHAN

Jizyah, as it appears in the Holy Qur-án, had been a long-standing impost before the advent of Islam. The Athenians levied it in 5 B.C. on the inhabitants of Asia Minor. The Romans imposed it on their people. The Persians, in their turn, levied it on their subjects. The Muslims followed the old precedent, but modified it considerably by removing its rigour and made it more acceptable than it was before. It came to be recognised as one of the best means of establishing genuine international relations. The verse on which the opponents of Islam have based their erroneous judgment runs thus:—

“Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Latter Day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Apostles have prohibited, nor do they follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of inferiority and that they are in the state of subjection.”

The last word on the wars with the idolaters of Arabia having been said, this verse introduces the subject of fighting with the followers of the Book. Though the Jews had for a long time assisted the idolaters of Arabia in their struggle to uproot Islam, the great Christian power of the Roman Empire had only just mobilised its forces for the subjugation of the New Religion and the Tabuk expedition followed. As the object of this Christian power was simply the subjugation of the Muslims, the words in which their final vanquishment by the Muslims is spoken of, are different from those dealing with the final vanquishment of the idolatrous Arabs. The Qur-án neither required the

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idolaters to be compelled to accept Islam nor was it in any way its object to bring the Christians into subjection—as is described by Gibbon in his work, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. 2, p. 523: “The disciples of Abraham and of Moses were solemnly invited to accept the more perfect revelation of Muhammad, but, if they preferred the payment of a moderate tribute, they were entitled to the freedom of conscience and religious worship.” They, on the other hand, had determined to compel the Muslims to renounce their faith, and to bring them under subjection. The fate of each was, therefore, according to how it proposed to treat the Muslims. The word *Jizyah* is derived from *Jaza* meaning “he gave satisfaction” and means according to Lane’s Lexicon the tax that is taken from the free non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim Government whereby they ratify the compact that ensures their protection. According to Sudi it is a compensation which is guaranteed to them, the non-Muslim subjects being free from military service. The phrase “*An Yad*” has been explained variously. The word “*Yad*” literally (hand) stands for power or superiority, the use of the hand being the real source of the superiority of man over all other animals, and the apparent meaning of the phrase is in acknowledgment of your superiority in protecting the lives, etc. Other explanations are: “for favour received in ready money, obediently, etc.” (Abu Hayyan) The followers of the Book are described here as not believing in Allah and the Latter Day so long as they do not ascribe to Allah the perfect attributes which belong to Him and do not understand the real nature of the life after death. It may also be added that the permission to fight, as given to the Muslims, is subject to the condition that the enemy should first take up

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the sword. "Fight in the name of Allah against those who fight with you." (2:190). The Holy Prophet never outstripped this limit. He fought against the Arabs when they took up the sword to destroy the Muslims, and he led an expedition against the Christians when the Roman Empire first mobilised its forces with the object of subjugating the Muslims. So scrupulous was he that when he found that the enemy had not taken the lead (initiative) he did not attack the Roman Empire, but returned without fighting.

Maulana Muhammad Ali has very clearly explained and illustrated the above verse in the following notes of his illustrious commentary of the Holy Qur-án :

1030. "Further, this verse is to be read along with that which follows. The fourth verse makes it clear that the people meant are those with whom the Muslims made an agreement but they broke it ; because those who did not fail in their agreement are clearly excepted in the fourth verse. It is a fact that the idolatrous tribes of Arabia broke their agreements with the Muslims again and again (8 : 56). Yet the Muslims were enjoined to accept peace, if the unbelievers consented to it, even after repeated violations (8 : 61). But this state of things could not long continue for it was soon found that it was impossible to trust such neighbours. This repudiation of agreements took place in particular when the Muslims were absent on the Tabuk expedition (Razi ; Abu Hayyan). The first thirteen verses of this chapter were publicly proclaimed by 'Ali on the occasion of the pilgrimage in the ninth year of the Hijra, and the following announcements were made as the result :—(1) that no idolater shall approach the Sacred House after this year ; (2) that no one shall go naked round the Ka'ba ; and (3) that all agreements shall be fulfilled. The first and the last of these

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announcements are plainly contained in these verses. The attitude of the tribes to whom this ultimatum was given through 'Ali is well indicated in their reply : " O 'Ali ! deliver this message to your cousin (*i.e.*, the Prophet) that we have thrown the agreements behind our backs and there is no agreement between him and us except smiting with spears and striking with swords. (Rz).

1031. " By the day of the Greater Pilgrimage is meant the ninth or the tenth of Zulhijja, being the day of the great assemblage of the pilgrimage in the plains of Arafat and Mina " (Rz).

1032. " Only two tribes, the Bani Damra and the Bani Kanana, are related to have adhered to their treaties (A.H. ; Rz).

One wonders why honest criticism of Islam is so rare amongst Christian authors. The exception given here makes it as clear as anything could be that the Muslims were not fighting with the idolaters on account of their religion, but on account of their having been untrue to their engagements. Yet the comment of a Christian critic on these verses is that " they are to be converted to Islam by the sword." (Wherry.) If the Muslims had been fighting with the idolaters on account of their religion, why should there be an exception in favour of those idolaters who had been true to their engagements ? The cause of the renewed fighting was political, *i.e.*, the violation of treaties, and hence only those tribes were fought against who had broken their engagements. If idolatry had been the cause, the fighting would have been against all idolaters."

1033. " The clear exception of the last verse shows that by the idolaters here are meant not all idolaters or polytheists of Arabia but only those idolatrous tribes of Arabia assembled at the pilgrimage

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who had first made agreements with the Muslims and then violated them.”

1034. “The exception here has given rise to much misconception, and it has been made the basis of attack upon Islam, it being supposed that it offers to the unbelievers the alternative of the sword or the Qur-án. Nothing is farther from the truth. The injunction contained in the first part of the verse establishes the fact that the whole verse relates to certain idolatrous Arab tribes who had broken their engagements with the Muslims, and who had now been apprised of a similar repudiation by the Muslims. The essential fact to be borne in mind is that all Polytheists of the world, even all idolaters of Arabia, are not spoken of in the verse. The persons spoken of are those who had repeatedly violated their agreements and inflicted severe losses upon the Muslims. They, therefore, deserved to be killed or besieged or taken prisoners. This punishment was a direct consequence of their previous actions. They had so often broken their words that they could not any more be trusted, but must now receive their punishment. Yet, if they joined the brotherhood of Islam, there was an absolute change in their condition, and hence the punishment, which otherwise they deserved, could be remitted. It was a case of forgiving a criminal who had entirely repented and regenerated. Hence it is that the verse concludes with the words: ‘Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.’ It should also be noted that mere confession of the Faith was not required, because such a confession might be made to deceive, as were their treaties. What is required is an absolute change, so that the old criminal no longer remains but is an entirely changed man. Therefore, along with the confession of the Faith, it is required that they should keep up prayer

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and pay the poor-rate. The subject is further clarified in the next verse and the following section."

1035. "This verse leaves no doubt that the idolaters and the non-Muslims were not to be slain merely on account of their religion. Even Sale explains the meaning of this to be, 'You shall give him a safe conduct that he may return home again securely in case he shall not think fit to embrace Muhammadanism.' It is stated on the authority of Ibn Abbas that after the proclamation by 'Ali an idolater asked him whether they would be killed if they went to the Prophet to get information about the religion of Islam or on some other business. The reply was in the negative, in support of which 'Ali quoted this verse. (Rz)."

1036. "Reason is given here why the Muslims were compelled to repudiate their treaty obligations. This reason, which is here alluded to by drawing attention to the exception, is made plainer in the next verse; for, when it is pointed out that the Muslims must remain true to their engagements as regards tribes that remained true to their compact, it is made obvious that treaty obligations were repudiated only in the case of tribes that had not remained true. The verse that follows throws full light on the subject."

1037. "Note the repeated assertion of the Qur-án that the unbelievers who are to be fought against are those who, in the case of a believer on whom they can lay hands, pay no regard either to ties of relationship or to treaty obligations. No remedy was left for the covert mischief of these people except that agreements should be overtly repudiated and a period put to all their mischief."

1038. "Note, again, that those leaders of unbelief are to be fought against who break their oaths after their agreements and, further than that, openly revile

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the religion of Islam. Even among these, it is the leaders who are to be particularly punished in fighting. The subject has been made so clear that one doubts whether lack of honesty or lack of brains is the real defect of those who seem to think that the Qur-án is here offering the sword or Islam as alternatives."

1039. "It is said to refer to the Khuzaat, who, having become Muslims, suffered severely at the hands of the Bani Bakr, assisted by the Quraish. But the reference may as well be to the Muslims in general, who had suffered the severest persecutions at the hands of the unbelievers. The rage was probably due to persecution and the ultimate punishment of the persecutors would no doubt relieve their hearts."

The *Shari'a* of Islam imposed *Jizyah* on non-Muslims with a view to make their position clear under a Muslim Government. Islam strictly forbade the insulting of the Zimmis (non-Muslims) or ill-treating them in any way. The acceptance of *Jizyah*, on the other hand, offered them a decided blessing and made their lives and properties as secure as those of the Muslims, who are enjoined to extend kindness and show benevolence towards the unbelievers. This has been proved conclusively from the Holy Qur-án, the sayings of the Holy Prophet and the theories and practices of his well-known Associates as well as the verdicts of renowned Muslim theologians.

The points to be discussed in this connection are :

1. The correct version of the verse "*hatta-yu't-ul-Jizyata 'an yadin wa hum saghirun*" (until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of their inferiority and that they are in a state of subjection).
2. It is strictly against the theory and practice of Islam to collect *Jizyah* with a view to insulting the Zimmis.

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3. The imposition of *Jizyah* makes the rights and privileges of the ruled equal with those of the rulers.
4. The Muslims were equally responsible for the payment of compensation in respect of the lives and properties of the Zimmis as they were bound to observe such regulations among themselves.
5. *Jizyah* was returned to the Zimmis in cases where the Muslims were unable to protect them.
6. Those who were unable to pay the tax were exempted.
7. The Zimmis were not to be molested.

(*To be continued.*)

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Etymology and Denomination

BY KAZI AHMAD MIAN AKHTAR

[*Continued from page 78 of volume XXX.*]

But Rev. Forster, the author of the Geography of Arabia, has vehemently repudiated the assertion of Gibbon. How zealously and with what intense religious fervour the reverend gentleman has pounced upon Gibbon in refuting his so-called sceptic views contained in his "insidious note," will be seen from the following quotation :

"The information and inference compressed into his note, Mr. Gibbon borrows chiefly from Pocock (Spec. pp. 33—35) and, I am sorry to add, in this instance is able to shield his scepticism under the shelter of a great name : "Explosaest merito eorum sententia (in the language of the author of the Specimen), qui

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a Sarah nomen traxisse autumant." When a sentence like this is pronounced *ex cathedra*, we are entitled surely to know its grounds. It is my fortune to concur in the exploded opinion : but I shall give (what neither Dr. Pocock nor Mr. Gibbon has given) my reasons for doing so.

"The tone of this insidious note betrays the mind of the writer, the phrase, 'derived ridiculously, from Sarah, the wife of Abraham,' breathes, as usual, that spirit of restless and rancorous hostility with which the author of the 'Decline and Fall' has been pleased to pursue everything connected in the remotest degree, with the credit, or credibility, of revealed religion."

The reverend gentleman does not rest content with hurling insinuations against Gibbon, but has gone even further to implicate Asseman, the librarian of the Vatican, who has supported Gibbon while pronouncing his following opinion on this moot question :

"Authors are not agreed as to the derivation of the name Saracens ; some refer this name to Sarah, the wife of the Patriarch Abraham. But none of the Arabs claim descent from Sarah, but from Hagar and Ishmael. Neither will Saracen come from Sarah, but Sarean or Sarite. But the Saritai are Arab people whom Ptolemy places in Arabia Felix, and are named, not after Sarah, but from Sarech (the Saraca of Ptolemy) : The elements of the two words being altogether different." (1)

After showing how perfunctorily the learned Asseman has disposed of, to his own satisfaction, the derivation of the term from Sarah, Forster proceeds to

(1) Geography of Arabia, 11, p. 10.

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dwell on his gratuitous assumption which may be summed up as follows :

- (1) That the people of Saraca were expressly denominated Saracens, by Stephanus of Byzantium, and,
- (2) that the denomination is, in accordance with the universal Arab usage, to name, alternately to place, after its inhabitants.

2. Forster, while refuting the views of Gibbon and Asseman, has dwelt on this subject devoting some 30 pages of his book. In this lengthy controversy, for which he is not prepared to offer an apology, the reverend gentleman has endeavoured to prove that the Saracens were indisputably the same descendants of Sarah, whom the Romans and Greeks have named Saracens and that *Saraca*, *Sarite* (as-Sarat?) and *Saraceni* all retrace the name and posterity of Sarah. While summing up his arguments Forster observes :

“The origin of the name of Saracens has now been traced to Sarah, the wife of Abraham, through a series of closely connected evidences, in which history, profane and sacred, geography ancient and modern, and etymology classical and oriental, combine their lights. The names, ‘ mountains of Sarah ’ and ‘ country of Sarah ’ by which the northern seats of the Edomites were familiarly known to the Jews, in the age of the Maccabees, are re-echoed from the extreme south by the Arabs of Yemen at the present day, in those of al-Saraut, and Ayal Sarah. While these wholly independent authorities, again, reciprocate their evidences with those furnished by the classic writers, whose *Saraca*, *Saritæ* and *Saracene* they at once identify and interpret.

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“The preliminary analogies of Hagar from Hagar, and Ketureans from Keturah, which so prominently suggest the antecedent probability of the parallel derivation, from Sarah, of Saritæ, and Saraceni, thus amply borne out, by such a host of witnesses, and such an accumulation of facts, I may unpresumptuously anticipate the judgment of others and consider the question to be set at rest.”⁽¹⁾

Notwithstanding this subtle controversial discussion and argumentation, one does not find an answer to the question raised by Asseman that the Arabs claim their descent from Hagar and not from Sarah, and that had the word been derived from the latter, it should have been *Sarite* or *Saracan* and not *Saracen*, for which neither any reason has been given nor any explanation suggested so far as its meaning is concerned.

3. The eminent Orientalist, Dr. Pocock makes the following observation in his history of the Arabs (*Specimen Historia Arabum*):

“The opinion of such as derive the name from Sarah has been very properly rejected, it now being generally thought that they are so called from سارق *Sarak* (to thief), a word by which a ferocious and robber race is evidently designated. But to whom were they indebted for this name? Certainly not to themselves, who would have been more tender of their own reputation, but to the language of some other tribes rather than that of Arabs, to whom such a word would be most offensive, as conveying with it an idea of reproach and degradation. It remains then for the learned to inquire whether a name by which are indicated men

(1) Geography of Arabia, II, pp. 28-29.

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infamous for public and open robbery can properly be derived from سرق *Sarak*, a word meaning to *steal privily*. Now should anyone be inclined to take me as his guide in investigating who the Saracens were, *let him direct his eyes towards the east*. For, indeed, what difference of sound can there be between Saracenus and Saracenis and Saraceni, than between شرقى *Saraki*, and in the plural شرقون *Sharkiun* and Sharkiin, that is, أهل الشرق *Ahlul-Shark*, eastern inhabitants.”

“The word Saracenis,” the learned Doctor adds, “may also be derived from another source, namely شرك *Sharak*, Idolaters, Associates, so called from their assigning associates to God.”⁽¹⁾

4. The renowned German Orientalist, the late Professor Nöldeke, writes :

“Ptolemy (V, 16) mentions Σαρακηνη as a district in the Sinaitic peninsula. The inhabitants of this district, who are unknown to Arab tradition, must have made themselves notorious in the Roman Provinces in their vicinity ; we can hardly suppose by other means the predatory incursions by hindering the march of caravans or levying heavy tolls upon them. Thus in that region all Beduins came to be called Saraceni in Aramaic Sarkja, usually with no very favourable meaning.”

While tracing the origin of Saraceni from the Aramaic language, the learned Orientalist has not taken the trouble of explaining its meaning which probably may not have been so indecent as to need avoiding its mention.

⁽¹⁾ Sir Syed Ahmad, *Essays on the Life of Muhammad* (Historical Geography of Arabia), pp. 114-115 and 117-118.

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5. The writer of the article "Saracen" in the Encyclopædia Britannica says :

"It is most natural to suppose that they adopted some name of a tribe or confederation and used it in an extended sense, just as the Syrians called all those Northern nomads by the name of the tribe of Tayy.' The common derivation from the Arabic Sharki ('Eastern') is quite untenable. Sprenger suggests that the word may be simply Shoraka', 'allies'." (1)

6. Thomas Hughes in his Dictionary of Islam writes :

"There is much uncertainty as to the origin of this word. The word *Σαρακηνος* was used by Ptolemy and Pliny and also by Ammianus and Procopius, for certain Oriental tribes, long before the death of Mahomed (see Gibbon). Some Etymologists derive it from the Arabic سراق (see Wedgwood's Dictionary), others from Sahra (see Webster). Gibbon thinks it may be from the Arabic 'Saraq' whilst some have even thought it may be derived from Sarah." (2)

7. Nelson in his Encyclopædia opines :

"The origin of the term is not known ; a derivation from the Arabic word Sharki (Eastern) is rejected by Arabic scholars such as W. Robertson Smith." (3)

8. The late Syed Ameer Ali, on the authority of Renaud, observes :

"The people who inhabited this vast region, especially those who wandered in the desert which lay to the west of the Euphrates, were called by the Greeks and Romans, Saraceni,

(1) Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol. XXI, p. 304.

(2) Dictionary of Islam, pp. 564-565.

(3) Nelson's Encyclopædia, Vol. 20, p. 144.

THE SARACENS

and this is the name by which they were known in the West when they issued from their homes to conquer the world.

“The word Saraceni is supposed to be derived either from Sahra=desert, and nishin=dwellers; or from Sharkiin, (Eastern)—Shark in Arabic meaning East.”⁽¹⁾

This after all is the result of the inquiry and research of the Western scholars most of whom have supposed the term to have been derived from شرق و سرق and شرق, سرك, and صحرا; while some of them are inclined to believe it to have originated from some name of person or place to which the Arabs belonged, namely Saraca, al 'Saraut and Sarah.

Notwithstanding all these efforts on the part of the European writers to find out the derivation of the term, the origin of the Saracens is still shrouded in mystery. Rev. Forster's theory, however it may appear nearer home, does not lift the veil entirely from its face.

ARABIC AUTHORITIES

Now let us turn to the Arab writers. Almost all the Arab historians are silent regarding this denomination, except one, who not only makes mention of the name but gives its derivation and meaning to our best satisfaction, thus solving once and for all this intricate question which had hitherto remained unsolved for centuries together and down to our own times. In one of his standard historical works, the eminent Arab historian al-Mas'ūdi has devoted a special chapter to the Roman Kings from the beginning of the Hijrah era up to A.H. 345, in which, while dwelling on the reforms introduced in his empire by Nicephorus

(1) History of the Saracens, p. 4 (1899).

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the son of Istibraq (A.H. 193) the 38th King of Rome, al-Mas'ūdi states :

”واكد على الروم تسميتهم العرب
 سارا قديوسا . وذلك عبيد سارة
 طعنا منهم على هاجروا ابنه اسمعيل
 ان كانت امه لسارة وقال تسميتهم
 عبيد سارة كذب والروم الى
 هذا الوقت لسمى العرب
 سارا قديوسا”

And he (Nicephorus) prohibited denomination of the Arabs by Romans as Saracenus, which means the slaves of Sarah, a sneer at Hagar and her son Ishmael, the former believed to be the maid-servant of Sarah. And he also declared that to call the Arabs “slaves of Sarah” is wrong.

And the Romans up to this time call the Arabs Saracenus.⁽¹⁾

Al-Mas'ūdi has been most probably followed by Ibn ul-Athir, an Arab historian of the 7th century A.H., who has copied only half of the above quotation, reducing سارا قديوسا to سارقديوسا (probably a typographical or a scribe's mistake) in his chronicle :

”وكانت الروم تسمى العرب
 سارا قديوسا . يعنى عبيد سارة بسبب
 هاجروا ام اسمعيل فذما هم عن
 ذلك”

And the Romans used to call the Arabs Saracenus, *i.e.*, “slaves of Sarah,” on account of Hagar the mother of Ishmael, he (Nicephorus) forbade them to do so.⁽²⁾

The fact is that the Jews did not believe in the purity of the Arab race as they thought the latter to be the descendants of Hagar, the so-called “maid-servant of Sarah,” hence the name “Saracen,” a term which reminds of that ignominious accusation betraying the racial prejudice and religious rancour of the “lost sheep of Israel” against the Arabs. The Jews had always looked down with contempt and hatred upon the descendants of Ishmael and attributed to them such appellations with a view to lower them down in comparison with the Israelites and with this object in view

(1) At-Tanbih wal-Ishraf, p. 168, De Goerge's edition.

(2) Tarikh al-Kamil, i, p. 117.

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they have invidiously endeavoured to prove on the authority of the Old Testament which is entirely based on misconstruction and misinterpretation when they wrongly assume that Hagar, the second wife of the Patriarch Abraham, was a slave girl and maid-servant of his first wife, Sarah. The learned divines of Islam have already refuted this charge in their polemical works on the subject.

A European writer breaks a new ground when he says that "the blood of the Saracens was less pure since they were only descended from Sarah—in what way it is not mentioned; but she probably had them by another marriage; or maybe as the fruit of an Egyptian intrigue."⁽¹⁾

It is quite probable that the Romans and Greeks have borrowed this term, either in form or sense, from the Jews and it reached the Western countries through the Crusaders.

The term was in vogue among the Romans up to the 4th century (A.H.), as we learn from al-Mas'ūdi. Nay, it was retained up to the middle of the 8th century and was generally used for Muslims, as we are informed by the famous Spanish traveller Ibn Batutah, who furnishes us with the following information in his travels:

“*وإما وعلا الباب الأول من ابواب قصر الملك وجدنا بمائة رجل معهم قائد لهم فوق دكانه وسمعتهم يقولون سرا! سرا! سرا!*” “When we reached the first gate of the King's Palace, we found there one hundred soldiers with their Commanding Officer in the verandah of the Palace. I heard them calling us by the name of 'Saraceno,' which means Musalmans.”⁽²⁾

(1) T. Buckle, History of Civilization, i, p. 312.

(2) 'Ajaibul-Asfar, i, p. 266, Cairo.

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CORRESPONDENCE

VICTORIA,
CANADA,
4th June, 1941.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER-IN-ISLAM,

I was very much impressed to read in your issue of the *Review* Vol. XXIX No. 2 that some of my friends in Canada called to see you and I hope many more will do so. I can assure you that many are interested in this part of the world, more so when I pass round the *Review*; many look forward to reading the same.

If they feel as happy as I have been in the embracement of the Faith I am sure it would help to do something towards a better understanding between the people of this distressed world to-day.

Yours very faithfully-in-Islam,
E. B. UNDERWOOD.

ERDINGTON.

DEAR SIR,

Ever so many thanks for your letter and enclosed literature which is greatly appreciated.

For many years now I have been a student of Oriental philosophy in my spare time and naturally enough found the teachings of Islam provided solutions for nearly all the problems which confronted me. Since joining the army, however, it has become almost imperative for me to declare my beliefs and to join the only true brotherhood which exists in this unhappy world of ours. Therefore I am enclosing the required form which you sent me and which represents my convictions and for which I am prepared to make whatever sacrifices may be demanded of me.

I must conclude thanking you again for your kindly interest in me. My first leave (Allah willing) will see me in Woking when it will give me great pleasure to meet you personally.

Your brother-in-Islam,
C. J. TOZER.

ASHCHURCH,
20th May, 1941.

DEAR SIR,

I hope you will excuse me writing to you. I was very pleased to see your letter in the *Mirror*. I wrote to this newspaper myself quoting chapters III and IV of the Qur-án. This silly belief that women are excluded from Paradise is widely held among Christians. I am greatly interested in the Muslim faith and have been so for a number of years. But it is only just recently that I have been able to get a copy of the Qur-án. I would be very grateful to you if you would kindly give me advice on this matter. The Qur-án I have is published as George Sale's Qur-án. The preliminary discourse and the notes and commentary are written by Sale who in the first few words of his preface speaks of Muhammad's writing as a manifest forgery. Now I do not think this fair to the reader and certainly not fair to the Muslim faith. After carefully reading the Qur-án I am thinking of taking Islam as my religion as I have become disgusted with the Christian faith and its many branches all against one another. This is not a quick fancy on my part. I have given

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the matter a great deal of thought and was wondering if you could give me any help. I should like to have some writings and if possible a copy of the Qur-án translated by a Muslim. I am 29 years of age and quite realise what I am about to do. I should be very pleased to hear from you.

Yours faithfully,
L. SKUSE.

FALMOUTH,
CORNWALL,
5th June, 1941.

DEAR ABDUL MAJID,

I am a member of His Majesty's forces serving in the Royal Artillery at present stationed in Falmouth. I am 25 years of age and have nearly completed three years' service. For a number of years I have been in pursuit of a religion in which I could put unbounded trust and implicit faith. I have always had in my mind certain set principles which I considered to be absolutely indivisible from a true religion. Until last June my search proved fruitless, then while on coastal defence in a small Cornish village I had the good fortune to come into possession of the Rev. Rodwell's translation of the Qur-án. This I read with great interest and the more I read the more my interest was aroused. Had I at last found that which I had sought so long? For the first time I saw the principles to which I attached so much importance propagated in a religion. This then was that which I sought and on enquiry I found out that this religion is called Islam.

However, until recently, I have not had any opportunity of obtaining any further guidance apart from that which I myself drew from the Qur-án. It seemed that I was to be cut off from any further knowledge until just recently when exactly twelve months after my first introduction to Islam destiny finally brought me into contact with two followers of Islam, Messrs. Denys Gray and John Duffin, both of Falmouth. I have enjoyed numerous talks with them and have read some books they have kindly loaned me. I am definitely convinced that I have in fact always been in sympathy with the Islamic principles without actually being aware of the religion I was endeavouring to follow. Now that I am aware of Islam and all it stands for I would like to be accepted as a follower of Islam and to publicly acknowledge Islam as the only true religion for the West as well as the East.

Yours most sincerely,
A. VIREL.

PRUDHOE:
June 27, 1941.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER-IN-ISLAM,

Assalam Alaikum!

In my last letters I mentioned my letters to "Everybody's Weekly" and to the Catholic organisation about their booklet on "heathen missions." I have had no reply to either letter and although I sent stamped addressed envelopes, I must presume that there is no answer to my perfectly reasonable queries. I wrote

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a letter to a Mr. McDermott of Chipping Norton telling him among other things how Christianity incorporated Pagan Mithraism and also how I have come to accept Muhammad (peace be upon him) as God's last-sent Messenger. I received a most friendly reply but declaring me to be mistaking "development" of Jesus's simple faith for distortion and making some more observations. He says he made an enquiry into Islam and found it "interesting and even impressive" but found certain "inconsistencies" in the life of Muhammad which seem to belie his claim to Prophethood. He claims also that the "varied and authentic interpretations of the Prophet's doctrines found among modern Muslims hardly encourage an intellectual assent" and furthermore "the effect of modern critical examination of the sources of Muslim thought and practice will probably be felt increasingly and *ancient Islam will have to fight hard if it is to persist.*" These are his main assertions in his letter. I at once replied thanking him for an interesting letter and saying that I am curious to learn some of those "inconsistencies" in the Holy Prophet's life because I personally find his life to be one of flawless *consistency*. He may reply again to my letter. My own opinion is that he is a Catholic who wants to believe that his church is above and beyond criticism except that of an unsound and negative kind. I *do* hope to learn more from him about these so-called inconsistencies and varied interpretations of Muhammad's doctrine.

I will close this letter to you here hoping that it will not be long before I hear from you again. Meanwhile I continue humbly striving to become worthier of the wonderful blessings I have received.

Yours sincerely-in-Islam,
OSMAN SMITH.

BOOK REVIEW

Panj Sura Sharif (Five Chapters of the Holy Quran) in three languages, Arabic, English and Urdu. By Maulvi Mustafa Khan B.A. Published 1941, by the Islamic Literary Mission, Lahore. Pp. 194. Price Rs. 3/-/- or 5s. Postage extra.

The word "Panj Sura" enjoys a household familiarity in the Persian speaking countries of the world, which no other small book does. The present work, however, differs, for the better, from the book in current use in its consisting of the following Chapters of the Holy Quran alone :

(1). Al-Fatihah. (2). Ya Sin. (3). Al-Fath, (4). Al-Rahman. (5). Al-Ikhlās (6). Al-Falaq. So in fact it

BOOK REVIEW

contains six chapters and not five. Each chapter is preceded by a short and instructive introduction. The book proper is prefaced by a short sketch of the Holy Prophet's life and one article each on the Qurán and on the contributions of Islam to Science and Civilisation. At the end there is an Appendix entitled "Islam, the natural religion of man."

Thus the book while fulfilling the daily need of a Muslim household, in so far as it contains the six most popular Chapters of the Quran, also furnishes very valuable information to an enquirer that may show a casual interest in the religion. Containing, as it does, the Urdu translation of the chapters, it can be used by such members in a family as are not conversant with the English language. In this way it offers a proposition of economy as well.

Neatly bound in green cloth, it is a handy book for presentation.

Birth of Jesus. (In the light of the Quran and the Gospels.) by Dr. Basharat Ahmad, published by Darul Kutub Islamia, Lahore. Second Edition, August 1941. Pp. 52. Price As. -/8/- or 9d. Postage extra.

The book tries to prove the birth of Jesus from a human father. As such it runs counter to the prevailing belief. Its most salient feature, however, that will appeal readily to a believing mind, is that its approach to the subject is not free and rationalistic as it is called and as is the fashion of the day; it is religious. It argues not from the theories of Science but from the texts of the Scriptures. The book may or may not convince the reader but it will certainly appear to him as presenting an altogether new point of view and possessing a force of persuasion that compels admiration.

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