

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . ."—
HOLY QUR-AN, 38 : 40. "There will be no prophet after me."— MUHAMMAD.

The **Islamic Review**

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

Vol. XXX]

DHU'L-HIJJA, 1361 A.H.
DECEMBER, 1942 A.C.

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OF

THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(peace be upon him)

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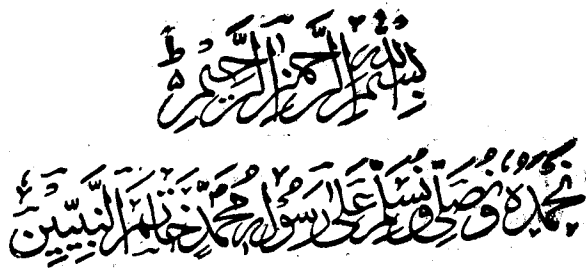
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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol. XXX]

DHU'L-HIJJA, 1361 A.H.
DECEMBER, 1942 A.C.

[No. 12

A DECLARATION

I, WILLIAM WILKINSON BOYD, of MacLean Road, Honor Oak Park, London, S.E. 23, 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.

La ilaha ill-Allah Muhammad-un-Rasul-Allah.

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

Dated 25th March, 1942. W. WILKINSON BOYD.

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MILAD-AL-NABI (A.H. 1361)

The Anniversary of the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was celebrated in London by the members of the Muslim Society in Great Britain and their friends in their house at 18 Eccleston Square, S. W. 1, on Saturday, 28th March, 1942 (A. H. 1361). It was a perfect Spring day with bright sunshine and by 4 p.m. when the proceedings were scheduled to begin about 170 members and friends of the Muslim community of Great Britain had assembled. Extra colour was lent to the event by the attendance of a large party of Indian soldiers of the Indian contingent in this country who were through the courtesy of Colonel R. W. Hills, their Commander, enabled to be present at one of the great Muslim celebrations in England. Many of the guests even came long distances from the country in order to be present on this occasion which is celebrated every year by the Muslim community with great enthusiasm. This occasion was rather unique in the history of Islam in this country as it was the first time that the proceedings were entirely conducted by English Muslims. The Muslim Society in Great Britain had the fortune and honour to have the well-known English Muslim authority on Arabia, Mr. H. St. J. B. Philby, C.I.E., I.C.S. (retired) as the speaker of the afternoon. The proceedings were presided over by Mr. I. V. de Yorke, Chairman of the Muslim Society, and began at 4-15 p.m. Mr. de Yorke first called upon Mr. D. Cowan, M.A., Assistant Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, to open the meeting with a recitation from the Holy Qur-án. Mr. de Yorke then introduced Mr. Philby to the audience with the remark that such a well-known Muslim as he required no introduction to the Muslim community of England. Mr. Philby then delivered an eloquent and learned address in which

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ENTERTAINED

he drew a striking comparison between the world at the time when the Prophet appeared and the world of to-day with all its strife and sorrow and he emphasized the great part that Islam must play in the reconstruction of the post-war world. He called upon the Muslims to show themselves worthy of the great responsibility which is theirs. We have pleasure in printing Mr. Philby's address in full elsewhere in this issue. Mr. de Yorke thanked Mr. Philby for his inspiring talk and expressed the hope that the Muslim Society in Great Britain would have the privilege of hearing him again in the near future. The celebration programme was then brought to a close by Risaldar-Major and Hon. Lieutenant Mohammed Ashraf Khan, I.O.M., I.D.S.M., who led the audience in the recitation of prayers invoking the blessings of God upon His Holy Prophet. With this the proceedings terminated and the audience repaired to other rooms where tea was served in the unique atmosphere of Islamic fraternity and the guests had the opportunity to meet and talk and renew old acquaintances. By 6-30 p.m. most of the guests had departed after a very happy and successful celebration.

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ENTERTAINED AT THE MOSQUE WOKING

On the evening of Saturday, June 13th, 1942, the Imam Sahib of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, had the honour and pleasure of entertaining at dinner Sir Azizul Haque, C.I.E., B.L., D.LIT., the High Commissioner for India who recently arrived in London. It was quite an informal party and in the course of it the members of the small Muslim community in Woking had the opportunity of meeting the distinguished son of Islam whose friendliness and lack of formality charmed all. Among those present were

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Mr. and Mrs. I. V. de Yorke, Risaldar-Major and Hon. Lieut. Mohammad Ashraf Khan Sahib, Mr. and Mrs. Toto, Mr. and Mrs. Howell and Mr. and Mrs. Farmer.* All the guests had a very pleasant evening in the company of such charming gentlemen.

THE ISLAMIC CULTURE—I

BY SYED WIZARAT ALI

Islamic culture reigned supreme for over a thousand years in the then known three continents of the world as no other culture had done before, and yet it is asserted that Islam had no culture of its own and that what culture it had was a borrowed one! Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, LL.D. (Hon. Lond.), Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, has met the objection to some extent in his foreword to the *Mussalman Culture*," translated from Russian by Mr. Shahid Suhrawardy, Professor of Fine Arts, Calcutta University, as follows:

"It has often been contended that there was no Islamic culture, but a culture of the Islamic peoples, that is those who had been converted to Islam brought with them their own cultural luggage and that historians have arbitrarily given a generic name to what were but particularist manifestations. Whilst one cannot doubt the contribution of each ethnological group, nor that all the peoples united under one religious idea from Pyrenees to the Assam Hills contributed in an equal degree to Islamic culture, it is something apart and much greater than the culture of the various bodies of Mussalmans that participated in its creation, even as a corporation has a personality distinct from the members composing it."

This is true to some extent, but it must be remembered that Islamic culture stood on a different

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footing to other cultures inasmuch as its aim was not the cultivation of the individual or a group of individuals, but of the entire human race. "No amount of works of art or works of literature in any land," says Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall, the great English and Arabic scholar, "can be regarded as the justification of Islam so long as wrong, injustice and intolerance remain. No victories of war or peace, however brilliant, can be quoted as the harvest of Islam. Islam has wider objects, grander views. It aims at nothing less than human brotherhood. Still as a religion, it does encourage human effort after self and race improvement more than any other religion, and since it became a power in the world it has produced cultural results which will bear comparison with the results achieved by all the other religions, civilisations and philosophies put together." The same learned writer goes on: "A section—the most vocal section—of the modern world would make objection to Islamic culture on the ground that it is unsuitable to modern thought and conditions, being founded on the principle not of democracy or aristocracy or plutocracy or any other of the systems which had been tried in modern times, and, one may add, have, every one of them, been found wanting—but of pure theocracy. Not a remote ideal of theocracy to be contemplated only at hours of worship and forgotten at all other hours; but an actual, practical, complete theocracy acknowledged and obeyed at all other times."

Mr. Muhammad Asad, another great Orientalist, has given expression to some very interesting and instructive thoughts on the subject under reference in his "Islam at the Cross Roads." After deploring that the remnants of Islamic cultural existence are being everywhere levelled to the ground under the pressure

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of Western ideas and customs, he asks, "What is the matter with Islam? Is it really as our adversaries and defeatists, within our ranks, will make us believe, a spent force? Has it outlived its own usefulness and given the world all it had to give?"

History tells us that all human cultures and civilisations are organic bodies and resemble living beings. They run through all the phases organic life is bound to pass; they are born, they have youth, ripe age, and at the end comes decay. Like plants that wither and fall to dust, the cultures die at the end of their time and give birth to other freshly born ones. Is this the case with Islam? It would appear so at the first superficial look. No doubt, the Islamic culture has had its splendid rise and its blossoming age; it had power to inspire men to deeds and sacrifices; it transformed nations and created new states and then it stood still and became stagnant, and then it became an empty word, and at present, we witness its utter debasement and decay. But is this all? If we believe that Islam is not a mere civilisation among others, not a mere outcome of human thoughts and endeavours, but a law decreed by God Almighty to be followed by humanity at all times and everywhere, then the aspect changes thoroughly. If Islamic culture is or was the result of our following a revealed law, then we can never admit that, like other cultures, it is chained to the lapse of time and limited by the rules of organic life. What appears to be the decay of Islam is in reality nothing but the death and emptiness of our hearts which are too idle and too lazy to hear the central voice.

No sign is visible that mankind in its present stature has outgrown Islam. It has not been able to produce a better system of ethics than that expressed in Islam; it has not been able to put the idea of human

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brotherhood on a practical footing as Islam did in its supernatural conception of "Ummat"; it has not been able to create a social structure in which the conflicts and frictions between the members are as efficiently reduced to a minimum as in the social plan of Islam; it has not been able to enhance the dignity of man, his feeling of security, his spiritual hope and last, but surely not least, his happiness. In all these things the present achievements of the human race fall considerably short of the Islamic programme. Where then is the justification for saying that Islam is "out of date"? Is it only because its foundations are purely religious and religious orientation is out of fashion to-day? But if we see that a system based on religion has been able to evolve a practical programme of life more complete, more concrete and more congenial to the psychological conditions of men than any other thing that mankind has been able to produce by way of reforms and proposals, is not just this a very weighty argument in favour of the religious outlook? The superiority of one culture or civilisation over another does not consist in the possession of greater amount of material knowledge, but in its ethical energy, in its greater possibility to explain and co-ordinate all aspects of human life. And in this respect Islam surpasses every other culture. We have only to follow its rules in order to achieve the utmost human beings are capable of achieving.

The one and only reason for the social and cultural decay of the Muslims consisted in the fact that they gradually ceased to follow the teachings of Islam in spirit. Islam was still there, but it was a body without a soul. The very element which once had stood for the strength of Muslim world was now responsible for its weakness; the Islamic society was built, from the very outset, on religious fundamentals alone, and the

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weakening of the fundamentals necessarily had weakened the "cultural structure." How true this is! Islam enjoined its followers to lead an organised life of great simplicity and purity after the manner of its Great Founder (peace be on him) and this contributed to the amazing successes of Islam in all the fields of human activity." The same learned writer observes in another place :

"The observance of Sunnah is identical with Islamic existence and progress. The neglect of Sunnah is identical with decomposition and decay of Islam. The Sunnah was the iron framework of the house of Islam and if you remove the framework from a building, can you be surprised if it breaks down like a house of cards ?

"One of the main achievements of Islam, the one which distinguishes it from other transcendental systems, is the complete reconciliation between the moral and material sides of human life. This was one of the reasons why Islam in its prime had such a triumphant success wherever it appeared. It brought to mankind the new message that the earth must not be despised in order that the heaven be gained. The growth of Islamic Empire was so rapid as its decay was slow. In contrast to the one century which was needed to destroy the Roman Empire, the Islamic Empire of the Caliphs needed more than 1,200 years of slow decay till its ultimate political breakdown, represented in the extinction of the Ottoman Caliphate was effected. It was the religious teaching of the Qur-án that gave a solid fundament and the life-example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) that became a band of steel around the ground social structure. The Roman Empire had no such spiritual element to keep it together, and therefore it broke down so rapidly.

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"Islam has never been a barrier to progress and science. It appreciates the intellectual activities of man to such a degree as to place him above the angels. History proves beyond any possibility of doubt that no religion has given such a stimulus to scientific progress as Islam did. The encouragement which learning and scientific research received from the Islamic theology resulted in the splendid cultural achievements in the days of the "Umayyads and Abbassides" and the Arab rule in Spain. Europe knows this best, for its own culture owes to Islam nothing less than the Renaissance after centuries of darkness."

There is a quality which one associates with a higher degree of human culture and that is tolerance. Muslim rulers set an example to other nations in this respect. The famous Russian author (V. V. Bartold) writes: "Generally speaking, the Christians were left in possession of their churches. In fact, for a long time, new churches and monasteries were built under Islamic rule without any opposition from the rulers. The so-called treaty of Umar by which the Christians, as it were, bound themselves not to build churches nor to repair old ones was invented by historians much later. Over all the vast area of the Caliphate from St. Vincent in the south-western end of Portugal to Samarkand, we see rich Christian foundations endowed with innumerable property. The Christian subjects of the Caliphate were not hindered from keeping up relations with the rest of the Christian world nor from accepting contributions for their foundations. In the Council of Constantinople, Jerusalem was represented by a Christian delegate. Christians in the different parts of the Caliphate were also in close contact with one another."

In Spain under the Umayyad and in Baghdad under the Abbasid Khalifas, Christians and Jews,

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equally with Muslims, were admitted to the schools and universities—not only that, but were boarded and lodged in hostels at the cost of the State. Further, the Muslim Empire was a refuge for all those who fled from persecution by the Inquisition.

In Egypt, the Copts were on terms of closest friendship with the Muslims in the first centuries of the Muslim conquest, and they are on terms of closest friendship with the Muslims at the present day. In Syria, the various Christian communities lived on terms of closest friendship with the Muslims in the first centuries of the Muslim conquest, and they are on terms of closest friendship with the Muslims at the present day openly preferring Muslim domination to a foreign yoke. Indeed, the condition of the common people throughout the Muslim Empire remained superior to that of any other people in the world in education, sanitation, public security and general liberty. Muslim justice in the hey-day of their power was also proverbial. "There is not one standard and one law for the Muslim and another for the outsider," says the learned Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall. "In the kingdom of Allah, there are no favourites. The sacred law is one for all, and non-Muslims, who conform to it, are more fortunate than professed Muslims who neglect or disobey its principles."

Non-co-operation and mass civil disobedience were unheard of in the great days of Islam, because the subjects were perfectly satisfied with the admirable behaviour of their Muslim rulers. I may be excused, if I give here some more quotations bearing on the subject under reference from the famous book of the great Russian author Mr. V. V. Bartold entitled the "Mussalman Culture." (English translation): "The triumph of the Arabic language was not due to any pressure on the part of the Arab State. It was brought

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about almost against the will of the rulers. The spread of Islam amongst the subject peoples destroyed the entire financial system of the Caliphate. Consequently, it was much less desirable from their point of view to encourage the spread of the official tongue amongst the non-Muslims. The Christians were prohibited from speaking it or from sending their children to Mussalman schools. Notwithstanding these measures, Islam became the religion of a large majority of the population and even that portion which did not embrace Islam adopted the Arab tongue.

“ Christians became acquainted with Greek scholarship at an earlier epoch and in a more thorough manner than the Mussalmans, but they could not give it that forward urge nor create models for scholarly work as was done by Mussalmans. Even the most enlightened of the Christian people, the Syrians, did not produce a single scholar who could compare with Farabi, Ibn-Sina, Biruni, or Ibn Rushd. Shiraz gave to the Mussalman world the great astronomer Kutbuddin and the great architect Keyamuddin, the builder of the Mosque of Gauhar Shah at Mashed.”

To quote a recent European writer :

“ It was the glory of Islam that it gave to other sciences the same footing which it gave to the study of the Qur-án and the Hadis and Fiqh (that is Muslim Jurisprudence)—a place in the mosque. Lectures on Chemistry and Physics, Botany, Medicine and Astronomy were given in the mosque equally with lectures on the above-named subjects, for the mosque was the University of Islam in the great days, and it deserved the name of University since it welcomed to its precincts all the knowledge of the age from every quarter. It was this unity and exaltation of all learning which gave to the

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Muslim writers that peculiar quality which every reader of them must have noticed, the calm serenity of orbéd minds."

To conclude, the culture of Islam aimed not at beautifying and refining the accessories of human life, but it aimed at beautifying and exalting human life itself. In its grandeur and in its decay, Islamic culture—whether we survey it in the field of science or of art or literature, or of social welfare, has an abiding charm of its own, and all lovers of Islamic culture must find time to study the vast literature available in Arabic and other languages on the subject under reference.

THE MUSLIM SOCIETY AT HOME TO THE JAVANESE MINISTER

On the afternoon of Saturday, 5th September, 1942, the Chairman and members of the Muslim Society in Great Britain were at Home in their House at 18 Eccleston Square, London, S. W. 1, to welcome His Excellency Pangeran Ario Soejono, Netherlands Minister without Portfolio. His Excellency is the first Javanese Muslim to become Minister in the Dutch Government and it was to celebrate this happy appointment that the meeting had been arranged. By 4 p.m. when the party began more than a hundred guests had assembled to honour the distinguished guest. After a recitation from the Holy Qur-ân by M. Dawud Cowan with which the proceedings began, Mr. Ismail V. de Yorke, Chairman of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, introduced His Excellency to those assembled and expressed the pleasure and gratification of the Society in having him amongst them. His Excellency replied as follows :

"Ladies and gentlemen, Assalam-u-Alaikum ! I would like to begin by expressing my sincere thanks

THE MUSLIM SOCIETY AT HOME

for your kind invitation to be present here, which gives me the opportunity of meeting my fellow-believers and friends of Islam in this part of the world.

The first Missionaries who brought Islam to the Netherlands, East Indies, about five hundred years ago, came chiefly from India, mostly from Gujrat. Some of them introduced the Islamic Mysticism, Sufism, to the Indonesians.

The people to whom I belong, the Javanese, have for many years formed together with other Indonesians the largest contingent of pilgrims to the Holy City of Makka and founded there the Java Colony.

The greater part of these pilgrims who returned to their native land after the Hajj have become eminent examples to their families and neighbours at home in the Indonesian community. They stimulate and intensify the religious life of their countrymen and, therefore, greatly contribute to the spiritual welfare of their fellow-creatures.

Brothers-in-Islam : from the depth of my heart I assure you that I am exceedingly thankful to Allah, the One God, that I belong to the Brotherhood of Muslims.

Our Religion is the Religion of Peace. In such times as these the longing for peace is particularly strong as a result of this devastating war which rages everywhere. I am convinced that our Religion and its followers will play a very prominent part in the reconstruction of a new and better world.

It is a source of great joy that in Western Europe our Religion is being more and more appreciated as we can see here in England where I am at present enjoying hospitality.

We all have reason to remember with thankfulness the valuable work the late Khwaja Kamaluddin has accomplished with such devotion and energy.

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I would like to finish by saying that I hope that the Islamic life may steadily grow in this part of the world and that with Allah's blessings it may contribute to improve the prosperity of Mankind!"

After a talk by Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah entitled "Is this a Christian War?" tea was served in a delightful atmosphere of friendliness and brotherly good feeling.

THOUGHTS FOR THE MORROW

BY MIZANUR RAHMAN, M.A.

The world is passing through a crisis of the greatest magnitude. It is a veritable catastrophe and a violent cataclysm fraught with far-reaching potentialities for the future. The shape of things to come out of this world-wide convulsion is yet in the womb of future, but this can be said with certainty that the conflagration is bound to bring about revolutionary changes, —social, political, economical and otherwise. This anguished cry, perhaps, constitutes the birth-pangs of newer ideals and a newer angle of vision.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the Western Nationalism has brought the present crisis into being, jeopardising the world's civilisation, moulded as it is on Western ideals and conceptions. This racial and geographical nationalism has proved a bane and a curse for the world. *Lebensraum* is but a pretext for aggressive expansion at the cost of weaker nations, and an insidious attempt at establishing the Rule of Might over Right,—a dangerous principle fundamentally out of tune with the cherished ideals of ordered progress and peace, individual, national and international. This principle has to be curbed, or the world's peace is but a mirage.

THOUGHTS FOR THE MORROW

With all the glammers and vauntings of culture, civilisation and advancement, the West has been the victim of a brutal malady—the malady of might over right, of unbridled racial complex, and of excessive greed for power. The limits of international decencies have been, and are being, ruthlessly exceeded under the force and weight of man-killing armaments scientifically discovered and developed. In other words, the beast in Man, under the guise of culture and refinement, like sugar-coated quinine, has been let loose and allowed to run riot with the man in Man—that innocent, peace-loving, social being whose motto is, as it ought to be, “Live and let live.”

* * *

The present Totalitarian war is the logical end of the aforesaid superiority complex under the camouflage of a so-called NEW ORDER. But this orgy of blood and brute force cannot go on long and eternally. It must end to-day or to-morrow, maybe after mangling the man grievously. But the man shall not be killed outright. Man is, and is designed to be, the Flower of Creation. The demon cannot devour it out of existence. This godless soulless civilisation of the Western brand seems to be nearing its end—its crash. That is, and must remain, the conception and conviction of those who cannot divorce the spirit altogether. This is no fond hope—no self-delusion. Time will show the justice and triumph of the assertion. And be it noted, years—even ages and centuries—are but a drop in the ocean and eternity of Time.

* * *

Change is an eternal process. It is the salt of life. The social fabric also is like a machine subject to the wear and tear of time. It needs an overhaul. And the overhaul must come into play and materialise, slowly but surely, whether you like it or not. The

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Divine Wheel grinds on, and must. It is beyond human power to stop it. The Unseen Architect of the world's destinies will work ITS WILL in ITS OWN WAY. The society of the day stands sorely in need of reconstruction. It seems to be on the threshold of revolutionary changes. Who can say the Western Civilisation has not reached its climax, its giddy heights and the next stage—a glide through newer channel? Why not? The world's history records ups and downs, the rise and fall of various civilisations after centuries of domination. The cycle cannot be treated as at end.

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The question is—What is to be the basis of reconstruction? It is a big and difficult question to answer. The answer must necessarily be in the abstract—in outline only, the elaboration needing volumes. The basis, to be effective, must obviously be on the fundamentals of Love, Equality and Fraternity of the different elements of mankind, under the fostering guidance of, and unquestioned submission to, the Supreme Guiding Power of the universe, as advocated by all revealed religions in their pristine purity. These fundamentals must prevail, as also the majesty of Man, the “Vicegerent of God on earth”, as the Holy Qur-ân puts it. But the Divine “vicegerent” is now being hated and killed by the demons on earth in human shape. Will the Creator look on? No, unless the creation itself is to be annihilated root and branch.

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The creation will not and cannot be annihilated. Out of the present crisis may be born a cosmos based on the above fundamentals, looking to Divine Unity for inspiration and guidance. In other words, the new evolution must move round the soul as the pivot,

THOUGHTS FOR THE MORROW

Narrow nationalism and parochial patriotism must needs be supplanted by the loftier ideals of Internationalism, inspiring the nations to regard themselves not as warring but as loving fragments of a composite whole. Racialism must go—lock, stock and barrel. Equity and equality must come into prominent play. This need not look like an idle dream. “God fulfils Himself in many ways.” The apparent absurdity may blossom forth into a full-fledged reality under the magic touch and wonder-working Dispensation of Providence. Even the darkest night hath its dawn. That is Nature’s Law.

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The world needs Peace: Peace with God and Peace with Man. Peace with God is impossible without complete submission to the Divine Will, and Peace with Man can be achieved only through mutual love, tolerance and *entente cordiale*, pervading the whole atmosphere. In other words, the Brotherhood of Mankind under the loving control of One Supreme Divinity must be acknowledged all round, effectively and universally. This is the burden of Islam, as expounded by the Prophet of Arabia, and this was also, and even now is, the message of the past and present Teachers of Mankind endowed with Divine Inspiration. Herein lies the hope and salvation of the world. This is the Message of the Morrow. Lovers of Peace and Mankind need not despair. Let us repeat: Even the darkest night hath its morn of light.

AN APOLOGY

We once more apologise to our subscribers for the inferior type of paper used for these pages. We are prepared to pay any price for good paper. Unfortunately, it is not at all available at the moment.

MANAGER.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(BORN 12TH RABI' AL-AWWAL, 52 B.H.—
29TH AUGUST 570 A.C.)

BY H. ST. J. B. PHILEY, C.I.E., I.C.S. (RETD.)

We are assembled here to-day to celebrate one of the most important events in the history of the world, the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, whose followers comprise about a fifth of the population of the world or, say, 250,000,000 living souls.* Since he proclaimed his divinely-inspired mission to the world at Makka some 50 generations of mankind have passed across the stage of this world into the next and, if you will consider for a moment what that means, you will realize that more than 10,000 millions of human beings have been born and have lived and died in the faith of Islam which he preached. That is surely a stupendous figure !

For me it is a great honour to have been invited by the Muslim Society in Great Britain to deliver an address in celebration of this occasion ; and it is particularly pleasing to me that I have been so honoured because it was actually on the Prophet's birthday 12 years ago that I made my first entry into Makka and performed the rites of Tawaf and Sa'i prescribed by the Prophet himself for what is known as the 'Umra or lesser pilgrimage. It was thus that I became one of those many thousands of millions who have tried to walk in the Prophet's way, however humbly and imperfectly. And I may add that my own introduction into the fold of Islam took place under the auspices of His Majesty King Abdul Aziz ibn Sa'ud of Sa'udi Arabia, whom I regard, as I have often declared, as the greatest Arab since the Prophet himself.† No man that I have

* 600,000,000 according to Muslim computation.—Ed. I.R.

† "For many centuries" would have been a more correct statement—
Ed. I.R.

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ever met has shown himself a more faithful and devoted follower of the Prophet than King Ibn Sa'ud who, as the lawful guardian of Islam's great Haramain, the City of God and the City of the Prophet, seems to me to have a better title than any other Islamic ruler to be regarded to-day as Khalifat al Rasul and Amir al Muminin. He is that in fact, as every pilgrim who visits Makka for the pilgrimage knows full well. But Islam is a democratic institution and King Ibn Sa'ud has often said in my hearing that he would be the very first to offer to serve under any Muslim, however humble he might be or even a slave, who might prove himself capable of defending the rights of Islam against the many dangers which threaten it in an ever more complicated world.

I have referred to my own introduction to Islam but I would like to tell you that when I went to Makka for the first time I had the strange sensation that it was all very familiar to me as if I had seen it all before—the Ka'ba itself and the place of Abraham, the great Mosque and its surrounding hills, so famous in the history of the Prophet. It was all so familiar and it did not seem to me that anything was changed or changing. I was just going back to something that I seemed to know. In fact it was the Prophet himself who said: "Everybody is in fact born in the true religion, and it is only his parents that teach him to profess one religion or another, one schism or another. For all who believe in one God, there can only be one religion." That is but commonsense. People may worship one way or another, or go astray after this idea or that, after this saint or that; but in the end they all come back to the same thing. As King Ibn Sa'ud often used to say to me in the years before I joined Islam: Our Lord is your Lord, God. That is after all the very kernel of the great monotheistic

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religions of the world, which go far back beyond the founders of Islam, Christianity and Jewry to the great forerunner of them all, Abraham the Friend of God. You must always remember that the Prophet Muhammad never claimed to establish a new religion among men but only to lead men back to the old pure religion of Abraham—the Din al Hanifi—which had been changed and perverted by succeeding generations though twice in the interval revived and renewed by the Prophets Moses and Jesus. Similarly, King Ibn Sa'ud and the Wahhabi doctrine, which he champions, seek to lead men back to the pure fountain of Islam as it was in the days of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions before the occurrence of any schisms, against which indeed the Prophet warned his followers in one of his famous Sayings : “ Qad iftaraq al Yahuda fi wahid wa sab'ina firqatan wa sataftariq hadhihi 'l umma fi thalatha wa sab'ina firqatan; kulluhunna lil nar illa wahidatan.” His companions, astonished at a statement so sweeping, asked him : “ Wa ma hiya, ya Rasula'llah ? ” to which he replied : “ Kullu man 'ala ma ana 'alaih wa ashābī ” (anyone who follows the way I follow and my Companions). The warring sects have been as much in evidence in Islam through the succeeding centuries as in Jewry and in Christendom.* But in Arabia to-day and at Makka, the very birth-place of Islam and its Prophet, there is still something of the unity and brotherhood of Islam, which the Prophet himself bequeathed to his followers in the last year of his life, when for the first and only time he performed the rites of the pilgrimage on the famous plain of 'Arafat and when, in the course of his address

*There have been warring groups of people in Islam, but no sects so far. The fundamental beliefs and institutions have never been the subject of difference. The Qur-án, which has only one reading all throughout, the Prophet's personality, which never allowed any difference of opinion, and the Sacred House of Ka'ba, have kept all differences of opinion from crystallising into schisms.

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to the assembled pilgrims, he was inspired to utter the Divine message which forms a famous verse in the Qur-án: "To-day I have perfected unto you your faith." That was in the year 10 of the Hijra, corresponding with the year 632 A.C., during which the Prophet Muhammad, having completed his mission on earth, died at the age of 62, or 64 according to the lunar reckoning which is the basis of the Muslim calendar. But we are here to-day to celebrate not the day of the Prophet's death but that of his birth, which is generally accepted as having taken place at Makka on August 29th, 570 A.C., or the 12th of the lunar month of Rabi' al Awwal of that year. It may be of interest to note that the last occasion when the 12th of Rabi' al Awwal fell on the 29th of August, it was in the year 1928, 14 years ago.

When you come to think of it the world into which the Prophet Muhammad was born and in which he lived bears a remarkable resemblance to our world of to-day. It was a world of war and rumours of war. It was a world in which two great empires were in conflict with each other: in which two very different ideologies were striving for mastery, sometimes under the conditions of an uneasy peace and at other times in actual battle. And, to pursue the parallel still further, Arabia, though almost surrounded by warring nations, held aloof from the actual conflict, watching the two great giants locked in strife and totally unaware of the destiny which awaited her in due course when she would arise from her long sleep and shatter both those great empires to their very foundations. No Arab living in the latter part of the 6th century A.C. could possibly have imagined that he or some of his contemporaries might live to see the first stages, of the fall of the Roman Empire and of the Persian Empire of those days. Such thoughts were indeed unthinkable.

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Arabia was a weak and divided nation, whose population was for the most part pagan with important Jewish and Christian elements. And like all weak nations Arabia found her territories encroached upon by her more powerful neighbours. There was Persian encroachment in Iraq and Byzantine encroachment in Syria and Palestine. But from the Arab point of view the greatest danger lay in S. W. Arabia—the Yaman—which had been in foreign occupation for about half a century. And then the occupying power was an ally of the Roman Emperor. Curious as it may now seem, that ally was Abyssinia; which sent viceroys and armies across the Red Sea to rule and garrison the country. Naturally in these circumstances the general tendency of feeling in Arabia was in the direction of hostility towards the Roman Empire as an actual and potential aggressor and it was Persia which sent help to the Arabs. And this cause of friction was enhanced by economic circumstances for, as long as the Arabs controlled the famous spice road from S. Arabia to Palestine and Syria, it could not be safely used by the Romans and their Abyssinian allies. To change this unfavourable position the Abyssinian general, Abraha, led an expedition against Makka, the political and commercial capital of pagan Arabia, in the year 570 A.C. and it was in that year in a city threatened with invasion and destruction by superior military forces that the Prophet Muhammad was born. The situation was well nigh desperate, for the ill-armed Arabs of Quraish and the other tribes could not expect to hold out against, much less to defeat, the Abyssinian army which was not only large and well-disciplined but had the advantage of using a new weapon calculated to fill the Arabs with alarm and despondency. This new weapon was a phalanx of elephants used in very much the same way as the tanks of modern warfare, and it

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is of considerable interest to note that in the present war the Japanese are using elephants in their operations in the mountainous parts of Burma where tanks and armoured cars cannot easily operate. It is, however, a remarkable fact that the route by which Abraha's army with its elephants came up from the Yaman against Makka happens to be the only practicable route through those lofty and rugged mountains for motor-traffic to-day. I have travelled the whole of its length from Makka to the Yaman frontier by car, and it is still known to the Arabs of that country as the Darb al Fil or the route of the elephant. Abraha's formidable army seems to have reached a point within sight of the low hills of Makka itself; and it must have seemed to the inhabitants of the city that nothing but a miracle could save them from defeat and enslavement. It was at this last moment that a miracle actually occurred. It took the form of an aerial bombardment of the huge Abyssinian army, which broke and fled owing to the stampeding of the elephants in their midst. So their new weapon broke, as it were, in their hands and Makka was saved. And naturally, as you may imagine, the miracle that had saved it was the talk of the town for years afterwards. The boy, Muhammad, as he grew up, must have heard the story again and again from his elders; and it fell to him in due course to perpetuate the memory of this act of divine intervention for the benefit of generations upon generations of Muslims in the famous and beautiful chapter of the Qur-án known as the Chapter of the Elephant (سورة الفيل).

Many times he must have pondered during his long wanderings in the mountains of Makka tending his sheep and later during his caravan journeys to Damascus and other places on the fringe of the Roman Empire—many times he must have pondered how

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military might alone is not the final arbiter of human destinies and how virtue and right may triumph over evil if it be the will of God. And in his journeys, as he grew older, he must often have heard rumours of the coming war between the Roman and Persian Empires. In Arabia news travels fast and doubtless often in the bazaars of Damascus or Bosra or Philadelphia ('Amman) he must have listened with bated breath to the latest news from the front. He must have been impressed by the great show of wealth and strength in the Roman provinces of those days, but he may also have heard guarded suggestions that the great Roman Empire was no longer what it used to be in the good old days. The local governors and officials and military chiefs had become slack and inefficient and perhaps a little proud and overbearing in their attitude towards the local populations. After all the Roman Empire was the Roman Empire, and any Roman was as good as ten men of any other nationality—and that was good enough for anybody. Yet the Arabs had their commercial and other contacts with Iraq where the Persian Empire was piling up its armaments for a show down with Rome. And some of them may well have wondered whether the Romans were taking things seriously enough to meet the threat that was developing against them. And then at last came the actual clash, followed by the unbelievable news that the Roman army had suffered a severe defeat and was in retreat. During the years 608 to 619 A.C. the Persian armies overran the whole of the Far Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire—Anatolia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. It is on record that the peoples of these countries viewed the events with indifference. The news was of course a great shock to everybody, but still there was a general inclination among people to believe that the Roman Empire would wake up before it was too late, in which

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case it was generally thought that its economic and military resources were so much greater than those of the enemy that, if it could hold out until it was ready to launch a counter-offensive, it was bound to win in the long run. And in fact it took the Emperor Heraclius 13 years after his accession to create the nucleus of a new military power with which to take the offensive in 623, though things went well enough after that and the eventual peace restored the old Roman frontiers about 8 or 9 years later. Well, ladies and gentlemen, you will have realized by now how close a parallel there is between the situation of that time and the situation through which we are living at the present moment. And you may even be thinking that I have been romancing or painting a highly fanciful picture of the position in those far off distant days—say about 1,320 years ago. Fortunately, I am able to show you that my description is exactly accurate, for the Prophet Muhammad, who was the greatest thinker of his time, was a close and interested observer of these events and has left a record for the benefit of all posterity of the impression left upon him and his contemporaries by the tragedy of this great defeat of the Roman legions. It is again contained in one of the most famous chapters of the Qur-án, entitled the Chapter of the Romans (سورة الروم), from which I take the liberty of quoting the opening verses :

For the benefit of those who have not been able to understand the meaning of those beautiful and significant verses I venture upon a free translation as follows :

“The Romans have been defeated not far away from here but after their defeat they will yet defeat their enemies in a few years’ time, for to God is the ordaining of the past and the future. And on that day shall the faithful

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rejoice in the victory, for God gives victory to whom He wills, and He is the Mighty, the Merciful. God has promised and God does not gainsay His promise; but most people do not understand; they understand the outward form of this worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are ignorant. Or, perhaps, they do not reflect in their hearts that God did not create the heavens and the earth and all that there is between them except in justice and with appointed end. Yet many people deny the certainty of their meeting with their Lord. Or, perhaps, they do not travel about in the world or study the fate of those that were before them—greater than themselves in power, people who developed the world and cultivated it more than they themselves have done. Yet when their prophets came to them with clear signs—verily it was not God that oppressed them, but it was they that oppressed themselves. Then regard the fate of those who did evil and denied the signs of God and even made fun of them ”

As you see, these verses contain not only a comprehensive comment on the military situation—indeed very much the same sort of comment as we often hear to-day in the optimistic speeches of our statesmen and in the bulletins of the B. B. C.—but they contain also a warning, a very serious warning, against the easy-going complacency which was so prominent a feature of those days as it is of our own times now. In those days no one could conceive of the possibility of the collapse of the Roman Empire which, for all its faults, was a great and benevolent institution, any more than anyone can nowadays envisage the mere possibility of a similar fate overtaking the British Empire. Yet

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in fact we know that the Roman Empire was at that time past its zenith and on the way to its decline and fall. And now in our time the disasters we have suffered in the Far East should be a warning to us to mend our ways before it is too late. It is generally admitted now that there have been serious flaws in our Eastern policy during the past few decades. And it is now recognized that what has been wrong must be put right if we want the British Empire to survive. I do not wish to press the parallel between the Roman and British Empires too far, but I would ask you to realize that a very large part of the Islamic world is involved in what is happening now. The result of the present war is of very great concern to all Muslims. And to-day's great anniversary of Islam, the birthday of its Prophet, falls to be celebrated in a time of great trouble, which must indeed force the peoples of Islam to wonder what is in store for them in the future. It is important for you to realize that all the independent States of Islam to-day are maintaining an attitude of neutrality towards the war—Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Persia, Afghanistan, Sa'udi Arabia and the Yaman. Other Islamic countries like Syria, Palestine, Trans-Jordan, the Sudan and the Persian Gulf principalities are involved in the war as vassals of the Great Powers. And many Muslim soldiers, as you know, are fighting bravely by the side of soldiers of other religions in this war as subjects of the Great Powers—Great Britain, France, Italy and Russia. And millions of Muslims have recently passed, as a result of the war, under the domination of Japan. In a word, the position of Islam to-day is not a very happy one. Islam is surrounded by grave dangers. It almost seems as if Islam were confronted by the disagreeable alternatives of remaining, for the most part, under the domination of

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one group of Great Powers or passing under the domination of another group. And it may be stated as a fact that, neither of these alternatives being attractive, the main aim of all the Islamic communities of the world is to achieve effectively that status of real independence, which has by implication been declared to be their right in the Atlantic Charter of last August.

That, I think you will agree, is the aim of Islam as a whole. And, if you will go back in your thoughts to the time of the Prophet and particularly to that last pilgrimage of the tenth year of the Hijra, when he realized that the days of his mission were drawing to a close for he had only three months of life left to him at the time and he had a presentiment that the end was near, you will understand that his last public act, his last service to his people, was the promulgation of an Islamic Charter—a charter of freedom for all time under the blessing of God. He had actually sent out the first of the great Muslim armies which were destined to vindicate that freedom against the two strongest Powers of the world, but he was not spared to see the astonishing results they achieved.

For many centuries after that Islam flourished as an imperial power on the solid foundation of a great ideal of service to God and man. But the schisms and divisions of Islam in later days became a source of great weakness, which in the end disrupted the whole community and placed many sections of it under the domination of more vigorous foreign powers. In our own time we have seen the decline and fall of the once great Turkish Empire, and with its fall many may have felt that Islam as a political force in the world was dead. Yet it was not so. Out of the ashes of the Turkish Empire arose a new spirit in Islam, manifested in the rise of a number of new Islamic States and in the rejuvenation of old ones. To-day such States as

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Turkey and Persia, Egypt and Afghanistan, Sa'udi Arabia and the Yaman—and, perhaps, we can soon include the Islamic State of India, known as Pakistan stand forth as young but vigorous nations of whose future one need not despair. None of them can yet be regarded as potential Great Powers, but with 250 millions of Muslims in the world there is no reason to suppose that some day a Great Power will not rise out of them to give Islam as a whole its popular place in the political and social counsels of the world.* But the first thing necessary is that Islam should concentrate on the difficult task of achieving unity of purpose, as it in fact concentrates on the unswerving belief in the unity of God. With unity Islam has nothing to fear, but the Prophet, whose birthday we celebrate to-day, warned Islam of the dangers of dispersion and its consequences.

That to my mind is always the supreme factor, the supreme lesson of Islam—the paramount necessity of unity as a source of strength. It is all the more necessary in these dangerous times through which we are passing. And as we are assembled here in London to celebrate the Prophet's birthday and I am speaking to a small part of the Muslim community in Great Britain, I would ask you to look round and ask yourselves whether this very small community of Muslims in this country is really as united in the aims and attitude as it should be. I think you will find that it is not the case and I put it to you for consideration that, if the few hundreds of Muslims of Great Britain are lacking in the unity preached by the Prophet Muhammad, we cannot reasonably expect such unity to be achieved by the 250 millions of Muslims scattered

* And in this second rise, it is resolved to take in its loving embrace the sensible section of Christendom thus terminating the age-long feud between the Cross and the Crescent.—ED. J. R.

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all over the world. That then is the problem which I would ask you particularly to consider in connection with our celebrations of the birthday of the great Prophet of Islam. To those of you here who are not Muslims I would say this that it is absolutely contrary to the principles and precepts of Islam that any Muslim should want to live under foreign rule. I would ask you, therefore, to realize the simple fact that every Islamic community or State desires independence and is still far from convinced that its independence is included in the war-aims of any warring Powers. At the same time I would say to the Muslims here, and indeed to Muslims all over the world, that unless they can achieve unity among themselves they will neither be worthy of such independence nor able to use such independence for the benefit of Islam or of the world in general.

I am convinced that a great future awaits Islam in the new world, which will come into being after this war and which will be very different from the bad old world which we have now almost forgotten. But everything depends on the efforts we ourselves make to create such a new world. We must not forget that during the last World War we were freely promised that everything would be changed for the better after it. But we now know that those promises were never realized. During the last twenty years there has been nothing but discontent and restlessness and frustration, worse than anything the world has ever known since the dark ages. And it has all ended in another catastrophe more frightful than the last. And it can truly be said that "the last state of the world has become worse than the first." So it is our business to see that that sort of setback does not happen again when the present period of tribulation is ended. And Islam, if it is true to the principles and precepts of its Prophet,

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has a great part to play in bringing the world back to sanity some day.

In conclusion I would just like to say a few words about the basic idea of Islam. The word Islam is generally understood as signifying "peace" or "resignation to the will of God." In my opinion, however, if I may venture to express it in the presence of many better qualified to express an opinion than I am, those meanings are secondary or derivative meanings of the word. After all the word is, as you all know, an Arabic word derived from the root SLM, the basic idea of which seems to me to be safety or salvation—in the strictest ecclesiastical sense, salvation from hell-fire, but in general, salvation from danger or misfortune. And you must remember that in the strictest Muslim sense such salvation depends entirely on the will of God. In trying to understand such words one must consider their significance in the countries where they still form part of the common language. In ordinary conversation or in an exchange of greetings the Arab will say "Allah yasallimuk," meaning not "God give you peace," but "God save you." In this case either meaning would of course be possible and many people think that "Assalam alaikum" means "Peace be upon you." Here the derivative meaning is clear, for obviously one's peace depends on one's safety. But when an Arab stumbles against a stone, for instance, his companion will instinctively cry out "Islim" meaning "May you be safe!" and obviously not "May you be at peace." Then again, if a man comes to see you on business or pleasure and you start off by asking him what he wants, he won't say just "Nothing, thank you," as we do in England, but "Salamatak" which in this context clearly means "Your safety or salvation" and not "Your peace." Finally, if you ask an Arab if he is

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a Muslim he will not answer simply "Yes," but he will say "Insha-Allah" meaning "Yes, I am saved if God wills." Such an answer obviously can have no reference to the idea of peace. I put it to you therefore that the prime idea of Islam is salvation. And I put it to you also that, great as may be the world's need of peace in these troubled times, it is much more in need of salvation from the consequences of its folly and wickedness. And to achieve that it must to a great extent turn away from the material implications of Western (so-called) civilization and go back to something like the old codes of morality and humanity which, as we are rather inclined to forget, came to us originally from "the wise men of the East." In the East they are still observed to a considerable extent in spite of the corrupting influences of the West. We people of the West are rather inclined to regard the peoples of the East as simple-minded and primitive folk because they take their religion seriously. But that is surely very far from being the case, and the West has a great deal to learn from countries like Arabia in the matter of reconciling the activities of our daily life with the requirements of the moral codes we profess to follow. Islam at any rate uncompromisingly demands adherence to its moral code in spite of any inconvenience it may entail. At the same time its code is based on a recognition of the frailty of human nature and none of its demands are excessive. That is probably due to the fact that, although divinely inspired, the Prophet Muhammad himself never claimed to be anything but a human being like the rest of mankind. "Ana basharun mithlukum," he declared. ("I am a human being like yourselves"). On that note I will close. We celebrate to-day the anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest men in all history. He left a message which has made a great appeal to a

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very large section of humanity through the ages. And the burden, the outstanding motif of that message, is Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men—peace through salvation. And when I say that I would ask you to realize that the Prophet Muhammad was not a pacifist. As I have told you almost his last act was to send out an army to fight for peace and freedom.

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THE CLANGING BELLS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

BY ABDUR RAZZAQUE SELLIAH

(Continued from page 388 of the last issue.)

Humanity has generally two ways of responding to certain actions; either individually or collectively. When a man undertakes anything, he does so in accordance with the nature of the "call" that summons him to that particular action. Aggression by one country against another is met by resistance collectively, because the call for such an action has been imperative and could not be ignored. It is therefore the kind of "call" to any action that demands consideration. A "call" must bear certain importance which makes the respondent realize the gravity of the situation, and the sheer necessity of answering it for his protection and salvation. It should stir the man to thinking, and make him understand that unless he answers it, he alone would have to face the consequences of his own negligence. As far as I was concerned I could not find anything in the Catholic Church that could summon me to the worship of God in this manner. It only

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offered to make me "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day." But there was nothing to make me deeply think as to why it is essential for me to observe this. Besides, how many of the Christians are keeping the "Sabbath holy" nowadays? For them the Sabbath day is the select day, for motoring, golfing, picnicing, dancing, merry-making, cinema-going, etc., and the lamentable sight of the "vacant pews and empty benches" as the answer to this call of prayer and worship. Looking at it from another point of view, one could hear the clanging of the church bells from their belfries telling the faithful that the time for worship has come. But what real "urge" could these bells convey to the minds of the faithful to hasten to prayer? Practically nothing. I have known many a man and woman grumble when they hear the ringing of the bells on a Sunday morning. To them it is a day of rest which they wish to spend in perfect independence and to follow their own programmes, unhampered by anybody. They would desire to have a longer sleep, and do things in their own sweet way; but the clanging of these bells only makes them more exasperated, to say, "What a nuisance! even on a Sunday we can't do what we like, and have to attend Mass, and postpone our own likings!" What is the use of attending a worship, much less offering it, when you feel that it is a task imposed upon you, and that you are dragging yourself to the church, simply for the sake of pleasing your priests, or to keep the company of people you are bound to accompany to the church? This half-heartedness to attend the service on a Sabbath day is due to the fact that the poor fellow does not find anything that tells him that he has to go for worship for more reasons than one. He is expected to come at least on a Sunday, and this one-day-worship business has no effect on him and does

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not convey to him the importance of prayer and worship. He gets used to his negligence and indifference to church matters, and naturally the idea of getting up on a Sunday morning is, to say the least, "most disgusting and hence worship to him is a matter of secondary importance." He has to meet a number of friends, perhaps to go for an enjoyable sea-bath, or a more romantic ramble with some "friend," or betake himself to a club for a game of cards, and so many other things which he finds nearer to his heart than answering the ringing of the church bells. This is all due to the "Call to Prayer" having no significance in it, having nothing to make him realize his obligations to his Creator, and to the failure to understand the sense, if there be any, in the chiming of the church bells.

THE AZAN, OR THE MUSLIM CALL TO PRAYER

Now contrast this with the Muslim Call to Prayer. Consider the words that are echoing from the Muezzin, or summoner to prayer, which is resounded five times a day from the minarets of the mosques all the world over. Each and every word that he utters bears some food for thought, and the listener feels that he must respond to it. When the world is yet in its morning slumbers, and the dark sky is being gently flooded with the morning light, the Muezzin after performing his ablution, proclaims in a resounding voice the Unity of God, and the necessity of prayer for the salvation of our souls. This is called the Azan or Call to Prayer.

The words uttered are as follows :

1. Allah (God) is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest.
2. I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped but Allah.
3. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah.

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4. Come to Prayer. Come to Prayer.
5. Come to Success. Come to Success.
6. Prayer is better than sleep.
7. Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest.
8. There is no God but Allah.

Being roused by the Muezzin's call to prayer the pious Muslim awakes and hears that God is the Greatest. He is immediately brought to attention by these true and solemn words and ponders on Him that protected him overnight, and granted him life to see the dawn of another day. Refreshed from his sleep he thanks God for His mercies, and affirms that Allah is One and the Holy Prophet His Messenger. In this frame of mind he hears the words, "Come to Prayer, Come to Success." These words convince him that to gain success in this world and the next, he must approach prayer and worship. It also tells him that Prayer is better than sleep, and so he has to worship his Creator if he is to get His blessings. This is further emphasised by the words that there is no God but Allah. Further, he knows that it is not the muezzin who is really calling him to prayer and worship, but it is God Himself who summons him in His great Mercy to the Path of Salvation. How can a true and sincere Muslim refuse to obey this loving invitation of his Creator? Very sad indeed it is to notice the perfect indifference the Catholic shows to the bells that summon him to worship, and it is difficult to find even one in fifty who stands to a solemn respect and answers the noon or evening "Angelus." On the other hand, you will see that the smallest child, or even a rogue in Islam, silences himself, and pays the respect due to the Muslim Call to Prayer. In this, one could note the true significance of the Azan. The whole fact is that the man or the woman in Islam realizes when the Azan is said that the time has come for them to

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leave aside for the moment the cares of the world and betake themselves to the worship of God Who has been Merciful and Kind to give them the life to enjoy His blessings on earth ; and as a token of their gratitude they offer the worship due unto Him by answering His Call to Prayer and worship five times a day. Such a spontaneous response to worship, in my experience, is nowhere else to be found, let alone the Roman Catholic Church. Man being as forgetful a creature as most things in the world, the Loving Creator in His great Mercy reminds him and recalls him to a duty through the medium of the Azan and thus helps him on to attain the goal of Salvation which is prepared for him. Personally speaking, this loving invitation reminds me of the sweet words of Christ who said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you," meaning thereby that those who would come unto him, to them would he show the path whereby they should attain success through prayer and worship, which is no other than that which the Azan proclaims in Islam. To unburden our woes and sorrows, our cares and troubles of this world, there must be the confidence that one could approach God, with boldness and humility,—boldness because He has invited us, and humility because He, the Creator and Lord of all the worlds, has deigned to call His creature before Him.

JESUS CHRIST

Coming to the life of Jesus Christ, I must say that there are many incidents in it which go against the Church in their attempts to establish the Sonship and God-head of Christ. The temptation of Jesus by Satan, for instance, is a matter having far-reaching effects on my mind and the one beyond my capacity to understand in the light of reason. The story, as we read it, runs thus: After his baptism Jesus

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betook himself to the wilderness where he was tempted by the devil at the end of a forty-days fast. To quote the text: "And immediately (after his baptism) the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan." (Mark. 1. 12. 13.) This teaching of the Church that Jesus was subjected to the machinations and temptations of Satan was indeed a strange revelation to me. I was taught that Jesus was the Son of God, nay the very Living God Himself, who for the sake of humanity incarnated himself, and came into this world to redeem mankind from Sin. How it was ever possible for Satan to have an access to His precincts at all, whatever shape God may have assumed, has also been a matter of perplexity to me. When we speak of God, and when we speak of Satan we must understand that a great and eternal gulf separates the one from the other God, as we know, is the perfection of everything that is Holy and Divine; Satan, on the other hand, is a combination of all the evils that exist. This distinction is, so to say, the hallmark of a religion. It must also be borne in mind that Satan was banished from His Holy Presence for ever and never permitted to come within His pale, much less converse or lead Him about. But what have we instead: "And being full of the Holy Ghost (Jesus) returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered." (Luke. iv. 1. 2.) This last verse of St. Luke also supports the statement that Jesus was driven into the wilderness and having hungered after a long fast, the devil approaches him with a stone and tempts him thus: "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." (Luke. iv. 3.) Imagine Jesus, who is held to be God by the Church,

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being thus tempted by Satan to change a piece of stone into bread! Is it not the height of absurdity, when the Church tries to convince us of the possibility of an approach by Satan unto God? In what conceivable position of holiness and power do they esteem his Divinity? It may be argued that God would have suffered it to be so. But why in the light of rational understanding should He put Himself in such an inexplicable position? If this is suggested to be one of the mysteries, where is the possibility for its existence? It is evident that such an incident can never be permissible, if we are to hold that Divinity is above temptation. These are not matters to be just painted off, as we would wish. On the contrary there is a different paint for everything; and it is best to put a round man into a round hole, and a square man into a square hole, and not to make a mess of them by trying to change one into the other, for then it would give all the trouble to the world. To put it briefly I would only say that it was impossible to accept this as true. Reading a few passages further on, we find Satan whispering to him: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence." (Luke. iv. 9.) "For it is written that He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Luke. iv. 10.) But Jesus answers, saying, "... thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (Luke. iv. 12.) This last sentence is construed by the Church to mean that here Jesus referred himself as God, and as such Satan should not tempt him. This is far from the truth. Jesus could have very well acceded to this Satanic suggestion. But he did not do it because that would amount to his (Jesus) lack of faith in God. He was perfectly confident that he was protected by God and therefore it would be a sin to put his faith in God to the test. Such an attitude

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could only be the outcome of his relation to God as an earthly mortal.

Prior to the foregone incident, we see that the devil taking him to a high mountain and showing him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, says to him: “. . . All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them. . . . If thou wilt therefore worship me, all shall be thine.” (Luke. iv. 5. 6. 7.) This is undoubtedly the peak of Satan’s temptation. I could not believe my own eyes when these words encountered my sight. I was aghast to think that God could ever be subject to the humiliation of being carried hither and thither by Satan and finally being asked to worship him (Satan). God, the Supreme Being, the Creator, the most Holy of holies of everything that there is in this world, is supposed to have been asked by Satan to worship him, for the paltry present of the whole world with its kingdoms, which He Himself brought into existence, along with this vile creature, Satan. It is the Jesus of such like incidents that the Catholic Church makes bold to present to the world as the Living God of all humanity. I could have swallowed anything but this ‘diabolical’ suggestion of the Church, nay of whole Christendom. The Master of the Universe being demanded by the cursed devil to fall down and worship him, the vilest and the most sinful of all creatures. The most sacred God being tempted to pay homage to unhallowed unholiness. I wonder why the Heavens did not rend in two, the Sun and the other Heavenly bodies fall and the Earth swallow up this unholy and hellish creature who dared to utter such words of blasphemy. Surely, the vengeance of God would have visited him; but for the fact that Jesus was not God Himself, but just a Mortal Man.

(To be continued.)

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