

# THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS.

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
نَهْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّیْ عَلٰی رَسُوْلِهِ الْکَرِیْمِ

## Ahmad as a Prophet\*—II.

The present age is an age of wonders, but the greatest wonder of the age is the appearance of Ahmad. He was a person to whom God spoke—yes, God *spoke* to him in the literal sense of the word. He talked with God and God talked with him just as two persons talk with each other. Is this not wonderful? Of all the teeming millions that inhabit our globe he was the only person that enjoyed this unique distinction. Nay, there has not been a single person during the last 1,300 years to whom God spoke as frequently and in as distinct accents as He spoke to Ahmad of Qadian. But a sceptic may ask what proof there is that God really spoke to him. In reply to this, we say that there is a very conclusive proof—as conclusive as can be—of his being a recipient of divine revelation. Though the son of a chief, he was leading the life of a recluse in his native village—an unknown man in an unknown hamlet. But in his solitude, God revealed Himself to him and called him to Himself. He heard the voice of God in his chamber. But it was not an empty voice that he heard. That voice foretold to him things which were yet in the womb of remote futurity and which appeared to him to be so many impossibilities. And this was not all. It was not only deep secrets of the future that God revealed to him during His conver-

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\* The word *prophet* is used here not in the strict terminology of the Muslim Law, the holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, being the last of the prophets in that sense, but in the broad sense of one endowed with the gift of prophecy by Divine inspiration, a gift which is promised to every true Muslim by the holy Quran, and one which was possessed in an eminent degree by the late Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian.

sations with him, but He also promised him His wonderful help. God spoke to him saying : *i.e.*, يا تون من كل فج عميق : People will come to thee from distant places and paths of thy village will become deep on account of visitors. Again God said فحان ان تعان وتعرف "The time has drawn nigh when thou wilt be aided and become famous among men." The first good news which Ahmad received from on high was:— "Is not Allah all-sufficient for His servant." This comprehensive revelation contained a joyful promise. God Himself was to make provision for all his needs. The flocking to him of men from distant places implied a heavy burden, and the first thought which was to occur to him naturally was, how he was to provide for his guests. But his fears were allayed by the assurance that God Himself was all-sufficient for His servant and that he did not need to worry himself about the matter. God spoke to him saying:—

ولا تيئس من روح الله الا ان روح الله قريب الا ان نصر الله قريب  
يا تيف من كل فج عميق . يا تون من كل فج عميق - ينصرك الله من عند - ينصرك  
رجال نوحى اليهم من اسماء - انك يا عيننا بر فع الله ذكرك ربتم نعمته عليك  
في الدنيا والاخرة

"Despair not of the mercy of God ; remember, the mercy of God is near at hand ; remember, the assistance of God is near at hand. The roads by which God will send thee His assistance in various forms will become broken and deepened on account of large traffic. People will come to thee from distant places. God will Himself assist thee. Men whom we will inspire from heavens will assist thee. Thou art before our eyes. God will glorify thy name and will complete His favours on thee both in this world and the next." He was told that numerous would be the people that would come to see him at Qadian and that he should not grow weary of them because of their large numbers. God said

ولا تصعب لخلق الله ولا تسئم من الناس

"Do not turn thy cheek upon the creatures of God and do not be tired of men." God informed him that many would quit their homes and take up their residence with him in order to bask in the sunshine of revelation that shone on him from above.

اصحاب الصفر وما ادران ما اصحاب الصفر ترى اعينهم تفيض من ادمع  
يصلون عليك - ربنا اجنا سمعنا د يا بنا دى لا يمان

*i.e.*, many will emigrate from their homes and will live in thy compartments; they are "the people of the mat." And do you know what dignity they possess in the sight of God and how great is their faith. Thou wilt see tears flowing from their eyes and they will say, O Lord, we have heard the voice of a crier who calls men to faith. Another revelation said:—

اذا جاء نصر الله والفتح را نهى امر الزمان ا ايننا ايس هذا با الحق

*i.e.*, when there will come to thee help from God and victory and the people of the world will turn to us, then it will be said, was not this mission from God? With these revelations Ahmad also received the word of God saying:— "املوا" Write down these revelations." Such was the command which Ahmad of Qadian received when he was leading an obscure life in an out of the way village in an outlying district of the Punjab. These revelations disclosed things which were quite unimaginable and which it was utterly beyond the power of the Qadian Apostle to bring about. He had been brought up as an orthodox Muslim. He held the same views which were taught by the Muslims of the orthodox school, so much so that he expressly stated in his first work the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya* that Jesus son of Mary who was alive in heavens would come back to Earth in person to regenerate the world. The Muslims had been believing that no new prophet could come after the Holy Prophet of Arabia and that the only prophet that was to come after him was Jesus son of Mary who had bodily ascended to heavens and who would come back to Earth in the latter days. The Muslim *ulema* had been teaching that the gift of prophecy was now a thing of the past and that it was now impossible for a person to be honoured with prophethood. Whether God could speak to any person as He spoke to the prophets of yore appeared to be an impossibility and that He could confer on any person the divine gift of prophethood was utterly inconceivable. It was amid such environments that Ahmad was brought up, and it was such ideas that had been instilled into his mind from his boyhood. So the revelations which he received were as much a surprise to him as they could be to others. It could never occur to him that God might speak to him as He spoke to the former prophets. The idea that

he might be raised as a prophet could never cross his mind. But God spoke to him so repeatedly and so distinctly that he was at last convinced that it was the voice of God that he heard. Besides he daily received such revelations as disclosed to him hidden things and when every thing came to pass as it was foretold to him, there remained no doubt in his mind as to the divine origin of his revelations.

Some prophecies related to the distant future and these he was commanded to write down. The object of this command evidently was that the fulfilment of these prophecies might be a sign to the world at large and that the people of the world might know that God does exist, that He still speaks as he spoke in times gone by, that He knows secrets of the future, that He has full control over the affairs of the world and can bring about everything as He pleases and that Ahmad is an apostle of God raised in this age of materialism to regenerate the world. So in accordance with this command he published in a book called the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya* the revelations which had been sent down upon him when he was leading a solitary life in a compartment of his house. The book was published in 1880, *i.e.*, about 34 years ago. He was quite unknown at that time and there was no prospect then of the prophecies coming out true. I have given above a few of the large number of revelations published in the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya* and the reader can see that they embody seven distinct prophecies, and the events predicted were such as it was certainly beyond his power to bring about.

Firstly, there was to be a great opposition to him and every attempt was to be made to prevent men from turning to him, but God was to frustrate all the efforts of the enemy and was to turn the hearts of men towards him. This may be inferred from the words امر الزمان المينا - الميس هذا يا الحق *i.e.*, "The people of the world will turn to us and it will be said, was not this mission from God?"

Secondly, these revelations foretold that assistance would come to Ahmad from distant places, that everything which he needed for the completion of his work was to be supplied to him,

and that so great was to be the traffic on the roads to Qadian that they were to become deepened and broken.

Thirdly, large numbers of men were to flock to him from distant places.

Fourthly, men were to spare no pains to ruin him but God was to be his protector.

Fifthly, his name was to become famous throughout the world.

Sixthly, men were to come to him in such large numbers that he was to be well nigh tired and his patience was to be taxed to the utmost.

Seventhly, many were to leave their homes and take up their residence with him at Qadian. These were to be called the "People of the Mat."

All these prophecies were uttered at a time when there was not the slightest prospect of their fulfilment. Besides it is clear that it did not lie in his power to bring about any of these events. But we witness that everything came to pass exactly as it was predicted in the foregoing words of God. In accordance with these prophecies, the priests and the *maulawees* left no stone unturned in preventing men from turning to him. Not only Ahmad himself was declared to be a *Kafir* but every one who accepted him was announced to be an apostate. But these declarations of the priestly class could not hinder men from accepting Ahmad as the promised Mahdi and Messiah. Every kind of machination was resorted to by the opponents of Ahmad to bring about his ruin, so much so that some of them, like the priests of the days of Jesus, tried to incite the Government against him by giving the Government officials false reports about him. Others tried to inflame against him the fanaticism of the ignorant Muhamadans. But all these stratagems proved of no avail. They tried to nip the movement in the bud. They did all that lay in their power to prevent the new plant from putting forth its shoots, but all their attempts failed and the seed sown by Ahmad at last grew up into a tree. He laid his movement on a firm footing. In spite of the efforts of the fanatical Mullahs, the following of

Ahmad continued to augment until it is now numbered by hundreds of thousands.

The second prophecy related to monetary aid. Ahmad was to be supplied with everything he needed. The Post office records will bear witness to the fact that the money which the hermit of Qadian received in accordance with this prophecy amounted to lacs of rupees. The third prophecy said that people were to flock to him in large numbers. This prophecy also was literally fulfilled. Streams of human beings continued to pour in from all quarters, until sometimes there was an assemblage of thousands. The sight of multitudes of men gathered in a small village filled the residents of Qadian and the people of the neighbourhood with wonder. The man who was once leading a solitary life in a small chamber of his house was now surrounded by huge crowds of people that thronged to him from remote places. There was hardly any part of India that was not represented here. A Panjabi *Jat* sat side by side with a Bengali Baboo in the presence of the Mirza of Qadian. A Pathan and a Kashmiri knelt alongside of a Madrasi and a Bombay gentleman before their common Master. If one was heard speaking Urdu in the streets of Qadian, another was talking in Pushto. If one conversed in Arabic, another expressed himself in Persian. Visitors to Qadian included not only the natives of the different parts of India but also the inhabitants of Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Persia, Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and Tripoli and even Englishmen and Americans. These visitors did not always come to pay a flying visit to Qadian but stayed here for days and weeks and even for months and years, so that there was always a very large number of guests at Qadian. These facts can not be only testified to by the villagers of Qadian and the neighbourhood but they can also be verified by reference to the Police Diaries which were kept regularly by the orders of the Police authorities.

The fourth prophecy said that God would protect Ahmad from the attacks of his enemies and that he was before the eyes of God. Many were the attacks that were made on Ahmad, but God invariably came to his assistance and repelled the attacks of his enemies. These enemies were not confined to the ranks of the

Mussalmans, but as he ruthlessly attacked error wherever he found it, advocates of the faiths attacked by him being unable to refute him by arguments, did not hesitate to resort even to the meanest stratagems to put him out of their way. To quote only one instance out of many, certain Christian missionaries of the Punjab made a shameful attempt to get him hanged by bringing against him a false charge of abetment of murder. The judge who tried the case was a noble-minded Englishman and after making a thorough inquiry into the case, he declared it to be a fabricated one. Ahmad was honourably acquitted but the case brought an undying shame to the Gospel preachers who had fabricated it.

Similarly attempts were also made by Muhammadans and Hindoos, but God, in accordance with His promise, always protected him from the mischievous schemes of his enemies. By the by, Jesus was also dragged to the law-courts like Ahmad and just as the opponents of Ahmad tried to get rid of him once for all, similarly the enemies of Jesus plotted against his life and in both cases the plots of the enemy failed. Yet there is one marked difference. Though both Ahmad and Jesus escaped the machinations of their enemies, yet the latter did not do so until he was brought to the very door of death. Ahmad was acquitted with honour, but Jesus was given over to the enemy, who subjected him to a very humiliating treatment. He was even hung on the cross and nails were driven through his hands. He had to experience a very painful torture which threw him into a swoon. His side was pierced with a spear and he was reduced to a condition which resembled death and so he was placed in a tomb. He did escape death but not until he had been brought to the very verge of death. His enemies seemed to have triumphed over him. But such was not the case with Ahmad. God did not suffer him to be subjected to the indignities and the pain to which Jesus was subjected at the hands of his enemies. The enemies of Ahmad were never given an occasion to exult over him as the enemies of Jesus were. This certainly shows that Ahmad of Qadian was dearer to God than the great prophet of Nazareth whom Superstition has identified with the Eternal Being. The Muhammadans, the

Christians and the Hindoos made joint as well as separate efforts to get him hanged or at least thrown into prison but the God of heavens stood by His chosen apostle and fought with those who fought with His beloved prophet.

The fifth prophecy foretold for him great honour and a wide fame. This prophecy was fulfilled too plainly to need any comment.

According to the sixth prophecy, he was to be surrounded by troops of visitors who were almost to tire him and tax his patience to the utmost. The people of Qadian and the whole neighbourhood will bear witness to the truth of this prophecy. I have already said that people congregated to him from all quarters in very large numbers, and had it not been for the injunction not to get tired of the visitors and not to turn the cheek upon them, he might well have become weary of them.

The seventh prophecy said that many would leave their homes to take up their residence with him at Qadian. This prophecy too was literally fulfilled and a very large number of men quitted their homes and settled themselves with their families at the village of their beloved master.

I have already said that all these prophecies (and many more) were published by Ahmad long, long years ago, when he lived like a recluse in a chamber of his house. It was surely beyond the range of human vision to foresee such extraordinary events from such a long distance. Who could say that people from distant places would come in flocks to a small village in an out of the way corner of the Punjab. The village was quite unknown to the outside world and no body could conceive that it was to become a resort for hundreds of thousands of human beings. Nobody could possibly think that people belonging to various nationalities and speaking different tongues would come from remote places and make Qadian their permanent place of residence? Who could say that the hermit who lived day and night in a narrow chamber of his house and had little acquaintance even with the people of his own village would become famous through-

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out the world? Who could say that at Qadian there would spring up a fountain to which thousands of people would hasten to slake their thirst? These things were certainly beyond the power of the saintly Mirza to bring about. And what is still more wonderful, we are still witnessing the truth of his prophecies, though it is full six years since he departed from us. There has been no abatement in any of the things described above. Divine assistance is still maintaining the prepaganda started by him. Both money and men continue to flow in to Qadian as they did in his life-time. The number of visitors is daily increasing and one sees larger and larger concourse of men every year at Qadian. The fulfilment of Ahmad's prophecies in different parts of the earth is making his name more and more famous. His followers flock to Qadian in larger and larger numbers. The number of men that come from remote places to settle at Qadian is increasing. So one can see the truth of his prophecies referred to above even to-day, and we believe that as years roll by, the coming generations will see clearer and clearer fulfilment of the word of God published in the Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya long years ago. These things were certainly not in the power of the Holy Mirza and the prophet who predicted these things years before their fulfilment was certainly a true prophet.

## A Significant Parallelism.

(By M. Yaqub Khan, B.A.)

A retrospective peep into the remote past brings us face to face with a marvellous phenomenon of dramatic uniqueness. A small boy, the youngest of the twelve brothers, falls victim to fraternal jealousy. He shows unmistakable signs of future greatness and thus finding favour with the venerable father, excites the bitter envy of the brothers, who, bent upon depriving the budding youth of the rich blossom which seemed to have been kept in store for him, incite him away from the father, and while innocently enjoying his childish frolics throw him heartlessly into a well. They go home with a concocted tale for old Jacob, the loving father of lovely Joseph, who then lay helpless and alone in a gloomy abyss. The prophetic mind of the old Israelite smelt out elements of fabrication in the story of his sons, and although he was stung to the very quick and found his heart sinking within him, when he heard that little Joseph was eaten by a wolf, yet he did not waver a hair's breadth from the firm conviction that his son was alive. Meanwhile what happened to the puny little thing at the bottom of the well reveals the invisible hand of God working behind the activities of the world. A caravan on its way to Egypt chances to pass by the place. One of them repairs to the well to fetch water. Little Joseph, in his boyish gambols, seats himself in the bucket. He is taken out. Poor fellow, he is sold from hand to hand as a slave, till at last he falls into the hands of the ruler of the land. Here comes the turning point. Indeed the fact is stranger than fiction and the chronicler's faithful pen outdoes the romancer's fanciful brain. In a few years, after repeated tosses of fortune, little Joseph, the same solitary dweller of the abysmal darkness, attains to the highest honour and glory that could ever fall to the lot of anybody in the land.

While Joseph was enjoying kingly prerogatives, old Jacob and his eleven sons were pining in the pangs of penury in a famine-stricken land. The fame of the generosity of the magnanimous ruler of Egypt went far and wide and the family of Jacob as well

felt constrained to apply for relief to him. At last the veil is removed and the truth comes to light in its grim realities. Once again the father and the son come together. Their joy knows no bounds and they lovingly exchange filial affection and parental caresses. The guilty brothers with bitter tears fell repentant at the feet of Joseph who with true magnanimity granted them free pardon.

History repeats itself. After some thousand years we witness another scene equally melodramatic in character. A posthumous orphan loses his mother soon after his birth. He is brought up by his uncle and grows in the same pagan surroundings, but when his dawning consciousness recoils from the idol worship of his ancestors, he becomes restless and ponders over the state of affairs with all seriousness. At length the light of revelation illumines his heart and to his astonishment he finds the heavy burden of the regeneration of the strayed humanity falling upon his youthful shoulders. He prays to God for help and strength and sets to work. While announcing his mission to his people, he simply brings hornets' nest about his ears. His call to one true God of the universe is met on all sides with severe opposition and bitter persecution. He is subjected to all sorts of tyrannies and cruel barbarities, which, of course, culminate in a diabolical attempt on his life. He flies away and takes shelter in a cave with a faithful friend but the trackers pursue him. Man proposes, God disposes. Just after the entry of the couple into the cavern a spider providentially enough begins to weave its web over the mouth of the cave. The pursuers retraced their steps at the sight of the cobweb. The two quit their dear home and make for Medina. After repeated turns of adverse circumstances the despised and downtrodden orphan like little Joseph enters his original home victorious and triumphant with a large number of devoted followers, and his family who had left no stone unturned to bring him to ruin now come to him miserable and helpless. He lets off all of them in the same magnanimous spirit as Joseph had done before him. This historical parallelism is full of spiritual significance. It affords clear, explicit proof for the existence of God and the truth of the heroes who form the pivot on which the stories turn. Joseph sees all what is yet to take place in a vision while yet a child, and the upshot of the whole series of events turns out to be exactly as it was definitely foreshadowed by the prophetic vision. Mohanmad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, likewise foresees all that was ultimately to come to pass. While friendless and alone he foretells his triumphant entry into Mecca after his expulsion from it. A prophecy fulfilled is the clearest possible evidence for the truth of a prophet and here we have before us the fulfilment of two prophecies backed up with incontrovertible historical evidence.

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## Now or Never.

All the religions of the world predict the advent of a great world-redeemer towards the end of the world. Christians believe in the second coming of Christ, Hindus in the re-appearance of Krishna, the Buddhists in the reincarnation of Buddha and so on. There is no religion extant on the surface of the earth that does not prophesy the appearance of a reformer in the latter days with a world-wide mission. According to each religion the arrival of the great reformer is to be heralded by a good many signs the most conspicuous of them all being the deep-rooted apathy and indifference toward religion and widespread immorality of most revolting character. The prophecy is the common property of all the religions and not the monopoly of any one of them. It was therefore only natural that the universal irreligion which is the order of the day should have set the followers of all the religions expecting the appearance of the Promised one. But they see the smoke and do not search for the fire which they need so badly. It is perhaps on account of the self-same antipathy towards religion that the prophecy is not receiving the attention which it deserves.

An era of science and philosophy has set in and with it a general hatred for religion has overspread the face of the earth. What is the source of all light and the fountain of all guidance and practical wisdom has been the object of disdainful contempt and scornful jests. This was the sign of his advent and the sign itself involves neglect towards his claim and personality which was to form but an integral part of religion. A glance on the state of the world to-day reveals a wonderful phenomenon. While science is making rapid strides, developing human resources with amazing swiftness and while philosophy is becoming a household word giving a rational colour to all human modes of thought, there is a growing tendency to make light of religion. It is a psychological development of human mind. When it is entirely wrapped up in one pursuit, other pursuits unless of course more interesting or attractive must be left in the background. Science is daily widening its sphere of usefulness, and

therefore it touches the most vital interests of mankind. Religion thus replaced by the material allurements offered by the usefulness of scientific lore has become a thing of the past. The only relic of it can be seen in the dull lifeless formalities which are still observed by way of fashion or habit by the adherents of different religions in their own several ways. This deep-seated indifference towards religion can not be removed until the beauties of religion and the practical bearing of it on human life are shown afresh to the world. A movement once dead cannot regain life of itself. The dead depend upon some external agency for resurrection. When once religion has ceased to have a hold on human mind, when once the kingdom of religion has been swept out of existence and other powerful passions have established their sway in the human heart, it is not the task of everybody to restore life to the dead and defunct side of human nature. It is only for the Creator of life and none other to give life. It is in consonance with this very law of nature that God appoints for the regeneration of the world a man who has attained to the blessed state of divine revelation. He receives guidance from on high and hands it over all the same to mankind. Thus guidance emanating direct from the divine source becomes a mighty instrument for the destruction of evil and untoward proclivities.

In short, the whole world is sunk in the grossest imaginable ignorance of religion and the most daring immorality hidden under the veil of fashion. But instead of looking forward to the appearance of the promised one, mankind have exhausted their energies and intellectual resources in the hot pursuit of material advancement.

But if the world could afford to be unmindful of divine promises God cannot. He did send His chosen one at the proper time. He was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the promised Messiah. He announced to the world that God had shown pity to the strayed humanity and had deputed him to the task of bringing back mankind to the track of religion and godliness. He told the people that the worldly gain was full of advantages but the spiritual side was more beneficial. He denounced the

lip-morality of the present day, and laid all the emphasis at his command on the practical side of man. He played his part to the satisfaction of God who had appointed him to this hard task and left behind him a large following which is doing its best to carry to all corners of the Earth the light which he brought to this world.

It is really very sad to note that the generality of mankind, immersed as they are in this worldly business, did not hearken to his blessed voice.

The very conditions of the time show unmistakably that the present was the time for the appearance of the promised one, because indifference to religion had reached its maximum and there was little room for further addition to it.

It will not be out of place to give here in brief a few of the distinguishing marks of a reformer as inferred from the scriptures of the various religions :—

1. He should appear at a time when need be felt very keenly for a reformer and when religion may have become a thing of the past. This is the unchangeable law of nature that every thing comes in time whenever there is need for it. No rain falls when there is no need for it, for in season it is good for crops, whereas out of season it is useless. God has therefore fixed season for every thing so that nothing may go waste. What is true in the physical kingdoms is equally true in the spiritual domain.

A reformer is sent only when the world stands in need of reform. Need is therefore the first and foremost sign of a re-generator. It is the need that calls for a restorer. The present time undoubtedly stood in pressing need of a renovator. The Godless tendency of the scientific world had wrought havoc in the moral and spiritual spheres and unless God Himself out of His unbounded mercy and grace had come to the rescue, the hopeless state of the moral nature of man would have led to utter ruin. God felt the need of his creatures and favoured them with a prophet. He came and the need of the time bore witness to his claim.

2. He must be the recipient of divine revelation so that the guidance which he offers may be beyond the range of faults and failings. It is not for any human being hedged round by so many weaknesses and shortcomings to bring out a sound unerring code for the edification of frail humanity. It is the business of God Himself who is perfect all round.

3. He must be the perfect model of piety and righteousness, combined with resistless sympathy and love for mankind His heart must always be melting with pity for the sake of the people. Unless this is the case, it is not possible for him to continue the struggle ever in the face of severe persecution and bitter opposition which cannot but fall to his lot at the hands of his people.

4. The world must witness a large number of mighty signs and prophecies duly fulfilled through him. The signs and prophecies are not to be within the scope of human forecast and foresight.

5. He must not leave the world until he has placed his propaganda on a firm and sound basis and invested it with possibilities of infinite development.

6. He must stand four squares against all opposition which must be his lot to bear in the faithful discharge of his onerous duty, and despair and disappointment must be quite absent from his mind, his sole trust being in God.

These are a few of the characteristics of a prophet and we see that the aforesaid characteristics are to be met with in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the promised Messiah of God, the centre of all the aforesaid prophecies. He claimed to be the promised one at a time which loudly called for a restorer. The belief in God had become woefully attenuated and godlessness was rife all over the civilised parts of the world, so the skeptic condition of the time welcomed in him a timely rescuer. His piety and righteousness were admitted on all hands. Before his claim to the office of the Promised Messiah he was generally accepted as the recipient of divine revelation. Even some of his bitterest foes testified to the fact. But in keeping with the usual custom his claim to that office was responded to not by general approbation, but by bitter hostilities from all religious quarters. He was undaunted

and set about his work with fearless temerity. He exposed the errors of all the great religions of the world, but Christianity was the central point of his corrective work. His name Promised Messiah demanded that his criticism must be mainly directed against Christian faith. He started a deadly campaign against this religion and crushed the dogmas of Atonement and Trinity, proving to the hilt that unity of God is the simplest form of religion that can safely fit in with human nature. In short, he purged the religions of the world of all the extraneous elements that had crept into them all.

He lived a purely Godly life and invited people to the purity of soul which ultimately leads to connection with God.

He showed a very large number of signs to the world and uttered many prophecies which have already been fulfilled, whereas others yet await fulfilment. To quote one out of so many, the prediction of the outbreak of plague years before it had made its appearance anywhere in India, leaves no room for doubt about the divine character of his mission. Again, he challenged Dr. Dowie of America, who arrogantly enough pretended to be the herald of Christ and foretold the wholesale extermination of the Muslims in the immediate future, to a prayer duel. Dr. Dowie could not make good his preposterous pretensions in the contest and sealed the truth of the Promised Messiah by his sad and miserable death in accordance with the prophecy of the Promised Messiah.

The light is yet in its infancy, but the time is not far when the light will pierce even the darkest regions of the universe.

The promised reformer has come and it is Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. Let those who have ears to hear, hear, and a mind to think think over it.

ABDUL HAQUE.

## Azan or Call to Prayer.

Every commandment of Islam is edifying and instructive. Take any commandment and you will find a good deal to learn and to think in it. Why should it not be so? This religion was not invented by man but was given by the all-wise, all-knowing Providence for the perfection of man. Let other matters aside, see how the believers are called to prayer. Every religion has its own way of calling to prayer or worship. The Christians ring the bell, the Hindus blow the conch, ring the bell or beat the drum, and other religions have other ways, but the way in which Islam gives the Azan or call to prayer is most reasonable and attractive. Any one who understands Azan and thinks over it cannot but be filled with awe and reverence when he hears it. The call to prayer in other religions is like the inexpressive sound of a dumb man but the Azan in Islam gives the fundamental doctrines of the religion in a way which appears the more wonderful the more one thinks over it. This method of calling to prayer was not revealed to the prophet all of a sudden. Its history is very interesting. In the earliest days of Islam there used to be no calls to prayers. The believers met at the stated times, and performed their prayer. This gave rise to many difficulties. So a consultation was held and it was thought advisable that there should be some method of calling to prayer. But they could not agree in what it exactly should be. Some companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (peace and blessings of God be on him) suggested that a bell should be rung, some came with the proposal that a fire should be lit, others said a conch should be blown, but none of these proposals met with the approval of the Holy Prophet. So the meeting dispersed without arriving at any definite method of calling to prayer. That very night one of the companions of the blessed Prophet, Abdullah-bin-Zaid by name, saw in a dream that a man was selling bells. Abdulah wanted a bell, at which the man said "Why do you want it?" "I want it to ring at the time of prayer so that the believers may know that it is now the time for offering prayer." The man said "You need not take it. I will teach you a much better method of calling to prayer." So he taught him

the words of Azan. As soon as he got up from sleep he ran to the Prophet and told him what he saw in the dream. Lord Muhammed (may peace and blessings of God be on him) asked him to teach those words of Azan to Belal, whose voice was very loud. When Hazrat Belal cried the Azan and Hazrat Omar heard it, he came to the Prophet and told him that he also learnt the same words in dream. The Prophet of God replied "That is very good, now it has got an additional support."

So Azan was taught in dreams to two righteous men at the same time. There can be no doubt that the dreams were from God. In these days of scepticism dreams are generally taken to be of no account and looked upon as "meaningless workings of the brain during sleep," but it is a fact that dreams are the shadows of working life. Those people whose hearts are perfectly pure and far from all distracting thoughts often see dreams regarding the future or distant places which come to be true. True dreams are the beginning of spiritual life. Modern psychology has not yet been able to find out the true significance of dreams. Now if we think over the wisdom in the arrangement of the words of Azan it will become quite clear to us that the dreams of Abdullah-bin-Zaid and Omar were true and from God.

Let us now turn to the words of Azan. The words **الله اكبر** are repeated four times. They literally mean, God is the greatest. The word **اكبر** is not used in a limited sense, so it indicates that God is greatest in every respect and not in any particular respect. In fact the crier tells the people that God is greater than whatever you may be occupied with, whether it be business, service, conversation, play, or even acts of benevolence, justice and mercy. He is greater than any man, be he the mightiest ruler of the world, greater than any natural object, mountain, sea, sun, moon or stars. He is also greatest in wisdom, mercy, and power. But all religions admit that God is greatest. So the next words are—

اشهد ان لا اله الا الله

which are repeated twice, meaning "I testify that there is no god but God." Here perfect monotheism is indicated, there is no other God but Allah. He is God alone—No trinity, no three in one and one in three. He is the creator, the nourisher and destroyer

of the worlds. He is the final cause, the efficient cause as well as the material cause. He alone ought to be worshipped. But there are religions which are perfectly monotheistic. So to differentiate them from Islam the crier twice shouts—

اشهد ان محمدا رسول الله

meaning that I have learnt the above truths from Muhammad the prophet of God, and I follow his religion, his mode of worship. Then the crier says why he is giving this cry. He shouts *حي على الصلوة* twice, meaning, Hasten to prayer, run to worship. Now it is time that you should leave every thing and come to offer prayers to God who is greatest in power, wisdom and mercy. Then he gives the reason why man should pray to God. He shouts twice—

حي على الفلاح

These words literally mean, Come to success. Human nature wants success, happiness, victory over difficulties. God is all-powerful and all-merciful; if you worship Him you will be happy for ever. Then the Azan is concluded with the first two cries expressing the unity and glory of God. The call to prayer is given five times every day and in these few words the fundamental doctrines of Islam are given in a way that leaves nothing to be desired. Early in the morning when the first streaks of light are just visible in the eastern horizon, when the world is about to awake from sleep and a perfect calm prevails, the Muslim gives the call to prayer from the minaret of his mosque at the top of his voice. What a feeling of awe and love possesses the heart of the believer when these words catch his ears. The words go through the ears to the core of the heart. Even those who do not understand the meaning of these words are filled with an inexpressible sentiment of awe and reverence when they hear the sweet and sonorous sound of the Azan from a distance in the stillness of the early dawn.

MUBARAK ALI.

## Hindus and Muslims in the Census Reports.

It is gratifying to learn that in almost all parts of India, the Census Reports show that Mussalmans have increased during the decade at a greater rate than the Hindoos. But one thing which has particularly puzzled the Census Commissioners everywhere was the definition of Hindooism. Some time ago the question was discussed in these pages and it was shown on the authority of learned Indians that it is impossible to name even a single belief or a single rule of practice which might be said to be essential for a Hindoo. So in preparing their returns, the Census Superintendents have had to face great difficulty in determining the meaning of the term Hindu. Rev. W. J. Wilkins (*Modern Hinduism*, 2nd Edition, p. 310) says :

“Those who have carefully studied the question, find it difficult to define clearly what Hinduism is. No answer, in fact, exists, for the term, in its modern acceptance, denotes neither a creed nor a people, but a general term devoid of precision, and embracing alike the most punctilious disciples of pure Vedantism, the Agnostic youth who is the product of Western education, and the semi-barbarous hillman who eats without scruple anything he can procure, and is as ignorant of Hindu Mythology as the stone he worships in times of sickness and danger.” The term Hindoo is now so vague that the late Sir Denzil Ibbetson had to remark in the Punjab Census Report, 1881, page 101, paragraph 196 :—

“Every native who was unable to define his creed or describe his creed by any other name than that of some recognised religion, or a sect of some such religion, was held to be and classed as a Hindu.”

But the term has become still vaguer on account of the further complications of the past thirty years. In fact, so utterly vague is the term Hindoo nowadays that during the census operations the Hindoo Pundits of a Hindoo State had to discuss the question of the definition of a Hindu and being unable to decide on any doctrine or rule of conduct which might be said to

be essential for a Hindoo tried to solve the difficulty by stating that every person calling himself a Hindoo who did not profess some definite faith other than Hindooism in its widest sense, was a Hindoo. The tests proposed by the Census Commissioner to distinguish a Hindoo from an Animist were rejected by the Sabha of the Pundits as inapplicable. These facts go far to prove that there is not a single doctrine or practice which may be set down as a test to distinguish a Hindoo from a non-Hindoo. Pundit Hari Kishen Kaul, R.B., C.I.E., Superintendent of Census operations, Punjab, very truly remarks :—

“The word Hindu, as now understood, is based upon no principle. The term is neither geographical, social, religious, nor racial. It is applied to the remnants of a great religion and civilization, as much as to sinners against the most essential rules laid down by the codes of religion and social law and to the reformers who profess to belong to that body merely in name. Such a body corporate can have no adhesive force and cannot be called a living organism. Unless, therefore, there is a re-action, the process of disintegration does not appear to augur a promising future for the religious aspect of the Hindoos.”

The chapter upon Religion in Mr. Gait's Census Report contains an interesting dissertation on Hinduism. His remarks on Hinduism run as follows :—

“With the exception of exotic religions, such as Christianity and Muhammadanism, there is no such thing as a definite creed. The Hindu word *Dharma*, which corresponds most closely with our word ‘religion,’ connotes conduct more than creed. In India the line of cleavage is social rather than religious, and the tendency of the people themselves is to classify their neighbours, not according to their beliefs, but according to their social status and manner of living. No one is interested in what his neighbour believes, but he is very much interested in knowing whether he can eat with him or take water from his hands.” This is unquestionably so among the Hindu population. An attempt was made to differentiate Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and also the primitive beliefs of the aboriginal tribes from Hinduism, but the Hindus raised a cry against this course and so a new name “Indo-

Aryan" had to be invented for the four religions, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Hindooism.

Mr. Gait describes Hinduism as "a complex congeries of creeds and doctrines." He says: "It shelters within its portals monotheists, polytheists, and pantheists; worshippers of the great gods of Siva and Vishnu, or their female counterparts, as well as the worshippers of the divine mothers, of the spirits of trees, rocks and streams and of the tutelary village deities, of persons who propitiate their deity by all manner of bloody sacrifices, and persons who will not only kill no living creature but who must not even use the word 'cut'; those whose ritual consists mainly of prayers and hymns, and those who indulge in unspeakable orgies in the name of religion; and a host of more or less unspeakable sectaries many of whom deny the supremacy of Brahmanical religious leaders."

Mr. Gait informs us that when Provincial Superintendents were asked to suggest criteria to distinguish a Hindoo from a non-Hindu, the result was bewildering, and it was found to be impracticable to lay down a uniform standard. To add to the confusion, there are certain Hindus whom it is difficult to distinguish from Muhammadans. Such for instance are the members of the Panchpiria cult who worship five Muhammadan saints, of uncertain name and identity, and sacrifice cocks to them, calling in Muhammadan Dafali fakirs for this ceremony. Again there are many Hindus who make pilgrimages to Muhammadan shrines such as the Sakhi Sarwar in the Punjab. In Gujrat we have the Matrea Kunbis who call in Brahmans for their principal ceremonies but are followers of the Saint Iman Shah and his successors, and the Shaikhadas who employ both a Hindu and a Muhammadan priest at weddings. The Bombay Census Superintendent invented a new term "Hindu-Muhammadan" for these non-descripts, but this only makes confusion worse confounded.

Muhammadans numbered 67 millions in the last census, an increase of 6·7 per cent as compared with only 5 per cent in the case of the Hindus. This increase has been attributed to two causes, firstly, a small, but continuous accession of converts from Hinduism and other creeds; secondly, their social customs being more favourable to a high birth rate. Child-marriage and perpetual widowhood, which exercise such a deleterious effect upon the Hindoos, are not to be found among the Muslims. The proportion which the Mussalmans now bear to the total population of India is 213 per 1,000 against 197 in 1881. There seems little doubt, says the *Pioneer*, that Muhammadans wherever they are found in India will increase in numbers.

## Christians and the Census.

The Christians have increased during the last decade, but the facts revealed in the Census Report do little credit to Christianity as a religion. They make it perfectly clear that the progress of Christianity in India is not due to any truth in it, but to other causes. Christianity has proved a signal failure so far as such sections of the Indian community are concerned as could be converted by appeal to reason only, hence the Christian missionaries have been compelled to turn their attention to the community of the outcast, who embrace Christianity not for the sake of truth but for other considerations. The following remarks in the Census Report make startling disclosures about the impotency of Christianity and the failure of missionaries to convert the followers of alien religions by appeal to reason. In Chota Nagpur a missionary frankly wrote to Mr. Gait that as regards the inducements to conversion, "as a general rule, religious motives are out of the question. They (the outcast) want protection against Zamindari and police extortions, and assistance in the endless litigation forced on them by Zamindars." This missionary adds:—"Personally I know some cases where individuals came from religious motives, *but these cases are rare.*" It is obvious that in these conditions the converts are far from genuine Christians, yet in the Mission Reports they are boastfully spoken of as men who have borne testimony to the truth of Christ, and to the people at home who are labouring under the delusion that Christianity is conquering India by force of truth the above confessions of a well-known missionary will be a rude awakening. He frankly tells us that in the conversions that are taking place in India, religious motives are out of the question.

The so-called converts cannot be called Christians in the religious sense of the word and the Census Commissioner very properly emphasises the fact.

Why the low caste Indians go over to Christianity may be gathered from the following words of Mr. Gait:—

"The low caste convert has much less to lose, while he gains materially in the facilities for education, assistance in getting

employment, and the like, and he can drop his despised caste designation. The great majority of the converts from Hinduism belong to the lowest caste, such as the *Chuhras* of the Punjab, the *Mahars* of the Central Provinces and Berar and the *Shanans* of Madras to whom conversion means an accession of respectability."

The Bishop of Calcutta is reported to have said in a speech in Rangoon that hundreds of thousands could be admitted as converts if the Church had the necessary workers. I think he would have been more right if he had substituted the word "funds" for "workers," for it is only the money of the Christians backed by certain other privileges and not any inherent power in Christianity that is drawing the dregs of the Indian society to the Christian faith. And what is true of India is true of other countries also. Nothing is more obvious than the fact that Christianity has failed to convert those who accept a religion from religious motives. It is the political power of the Christians combined with their wealth and not any truth in Christianity that is really at the bottom of the conversions to their creed. But for these two auxiliary forces, Christianity would have been a miserable failure. The impotence of Christianity can be judged from the circumstances that in spite of its numerous advantages it has failed to make any headway among the Muslims or the Hindus. But what a contrast Islam makes with Christianity in this respect. Though the political power of Islam has been dashed to the pieces and though there is no such organised missionary propaganda among the Muslims as there is among the Christians, yet Islam is progressing merely through its potency, and though labouring under many disadvantages, it is outstripping Christianity in many parts of the world.

Mr Gait though a Christian, has a word of advice for the Muslims also. After paying a tribute to Islam for the wholesome influence it is exercising on the natives of Africa, he wishes the Muslims to send missionaries to the Animistic tribes of India so that they may benefit by Islam in the same way in which the natives of Africa have done. He holds up these classes as a field where Muslim workers may reap a good harvest. The Christians are already working among these people, but it appears that he wishes them to turn Muslims rather than Christians. This is not because he has any prejudice against Christians but probably because he thinks Islam would do those people more real good than Christianity. Whatever may be the reason, he exhorts the Muslims to send workers among the aboriginal tribes of India. Will the Muslims listen to the disinterested advice of this liberal minded Englishman?

## A Christian Champion of "Pardah."

In the *Truth Seeker* of New York, Mr. Jenkin Lloyd Jones tries to do justice to a neglected hero whom he describes as the pioneer of religious liberty in America. There is no other name in American annals, says Mr. Jones, who is so neglected as that of Roger Jones. He appears to have been a Welshman who received his early education in the Charter House School in the estate of the Earl of Suffolk. On the walls of this Charter House School, placed there by an American citizen, is now to be seen a white marble tablet framed in yellow marble, bearing this inscription:—

### ROGER WILLIAMS,

The Founder of Rhode Island, the man who tolerated all religious faith, in an intolerable age, studied here.

After graduation he took up the study of Theology. The spirit of protest was upon him from the start. On December 1, 1630, he sailed for the New World.

Soon after his landing at Boston, he became 'Assistant teacher' in Salem. A few months later he removed to Plymouth where he laboured for two years, supporting himself by manual toil during the week and teaching the Pilgrim Fathers on Sunday. He was a champion of soul-liberty and insisted that women should wear veils in churches. These doctrines filled the Elders with anxiety and they began to warn the whole church against the danger of his spirit.

Things grew rapidly worse. When he was only 28 years old he was summoned to Boston to answer charges before the General Court. As is generally the case with ecclesiastical trials, the trial seemed to go all one way. A Rev. Mr. Hooker was selected to argue with him, but, to quote Governor Winthrop, "he could not reduce him from any of his errors, so that next morning, the Court sentenced him to depart out of our jurisdiction within six weeks now next ensuing, which, if he neglects to perform, it shall be lawful for the Governor and two of the magistrates to send him

to some place out of this jurisdiction not to return any more without license from the Court."

The Magistrates grew so impatient that they could not wait even for six weeks. So they sent a sloop to Salem, ordering the Captain to arrest Williams and carry him on board a ship that was about to sail for England. The Captain found the wife and children, but Williams had departed three days before. It was in mid-winter, January, 1636, that this apostle of religious liberty and advocate of *Purdah* secretly departed from Salem, thanks to the persecuting intolerance of his co-religionists and countrymen. He sailed away to the Indiana on Narragausett Bay, where he was beyond English claims and patents. The voyage was performed in winter snow, and when it was ended, he had the bitterness of exposure on land; "fourteen weeks in bitter winter season without knowing what bread or bed did mean." He found his only shelter at the hands of the Indians, heathen Indians.

He landed on Rhode Island, to which he says, "in gratitude to God's merciful providence to me in my distress, I gave the name of Providence."

Roger Williams is the first Christian who planted on the Rhode Island a commonwealth into the fundamental constitution of which was incorporated an unequivocal guarantee of religious liberty. It has been said that the Puritans sought the western shore with the object of establishing religious liberty in the new land. But nothing is further from the truth. It is true that they emigrated to the great double continent of America in order to enjoy liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, but it is also equally true that they wanted others also to worship God in the same way in which they themselves worshipped Him. This is amply clear from the following words which John Fiske puts in the mouth of Governor Winthrop, one of the most liberal of the Massachusetts men:—

"If people who have come here with us hold different views, they have made a great mistake and had better go back to England.....We do not wish to quarrel with them but we will tell them plainly that they cannot stay here."

And this was not merely a verbal threat. It was actually carried into practice. Roger Williams' banishment was but one instance out of many. The brilliant, noble Harry Vane who had arrived at Boston only three months before and was made Governor of Massachusetts had to fly.

Then came Anne Hutchinson who preached transcendentalism and had a growing following. She also and her band of followers had to go and they turned their faces towards the Rhode Island.

When Anne Austin and Mary Fisher, who belonged to the fellowship of Quakers, landed from Barbadoes in 1656, they were locked up in jail, lest they might proclaim their heresies to the people. Their doctrines were pronounced by a Council to be blasphemous and their books were consigned to flames. Later, says John Fiske, these Quaker Missionaries found the Muhammadans of Turkey more tolerant than the Puritans of Massachusetts.

These two women were followed by eight other Quakers from London. They were promptly arrested and laws were passed against them. The penalties prescribed by these laws were as follows:—

Penalty for the first offence, flogging and imprisonment at hard labour; for a second offence, cutting off the ears; and for a third offence the tongue bored with a hot iron. The series of penalties finally culminated in capital punishment. In 1659, three men and one woman were hung. Even in England the Quakers had never experienced such persecution.

These persecuted Quakers, however, found a friend in Roger Williams who welcomed them to the Rhode Island notwithstanding their teachings. He not only refused to join the New England confederacy in a movement to keep out the Quakers, but he also sheltered them in spite of his being bitterly opposed to the Quaker doctrine.

Another persecuted people who found a friend in Roger Williams were the Jews of England. Williams pleaded their cause with the authorities at home and the hunted children of Israel found refuge in Newport, Rhode Island.

It was the sight of the lonely graves of this exiled community that centuries later caused an American poet to burst forth into the following pathetic lines :—

“ How strange it seems ! These Hebrews in their graves,  
Close by the street of this fair seaport town,  
Silent beside the never-silent waves,  
At rest in all this moving up and down !  
How came they here ? What burst of Christian hate,  
What persecution, merciless and blind,  
Drove o'er the sea—that desert desolate—  
These Ishmaels and Hagers of mankind ?  
Pride and humiliation hand in hand  
Walked with them through the world wher'er they  
went ;  
Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,  
And yet unshaken as the continent.”

It is a mercy that Roger Williams has not yet been sufficiently honoured. But though he has been neglected by the Christians, his sympathy for the hunted children of Israel has not gone unrewarded. The life of this man has attracted a scholarly Jew, Oscar Straus by name, who though a busy man of affairs, has been able to spare a portion of his precious time and has given us an account of the life of this benefactor of his race. We wish that the Christians also should duly appreciate the work of this noble Welshman and give him a place in the Hall of Fame that is being reared on the banks of the Hudson.

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## A Special Feature of Islam.\*

There can be no doubt about the fact, that the real object of all religions is to teach mankind obedience to God, and to make them lead such lives of piety and submission that all the activities and respites in their lives may be entirely in accordance with the Divine will and wholly subject to the commands of the Omnipotent. Therefore only that religion can justly claim to be perfect which succeeds in this object most effectively, *i.e.*, which can engender in mankind a spirit of devotion and adoration and adopts such methods to ensure this result, that mankind may, willingly or unwillingly, be made to prostrate themselves before their God, to resign themselves to His will, to bow to His authority, to sacrifice their desires and interests for His sake, to identify their pleasure and happiness with His, and to leave all their intentions for His pleasure.

The study of human nature tells us that it is always either for love or fear that one person obeys another. Some persons submit to other people because of their love for them, while there are others who do so simply out of fear. Some persons can not bear harsh treatment at all, and if ever they are dealt with harshly and roughly for any fault of theirs in the execution of a task, they feel outraged, and can never be reconciled to the task in hand. On the other hand, there are also persons whom favour and gentle-handling spoils, whereas a strong hand will get out of them as much work as desired.

The parents at first mildly admonish their children for their faults, but if they find their loving remonstrance to be ineffective they resort to punishment as the last remedy. If there are parents who use the rod where a kind word will do, or adopt the latter course where only punishment can succeed, they are sure to spoil their children.

Exactly the same holds good in the case of religions. The creed which lays stress only on love and mercy to the exclusion of every thing else, is not fitted to be a universal religion, because

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\*Translated from an Urdu original by Mirza Aziz Ahmad, M.A.

such natures as can be corrected only through punishment will easily slip out of its gentle grip, nor the creed which goes to the other extreme and tries to carry everything at the bayonet's point, for those of us who lend themselves to mild treatment only will prove refractory and rebellious if they are in any way dealt with harshly. We see therefore that both these creeds fall short of the ultimate object of religion as stated in the beginning, by erring, one on the side of love and mercy and the other on the side of harshness. Therefore only that religion can lay claim to universality, the teachings of which being in perfect accord with human nature, lead to the reform of both natures, or in other words combine love and harshness into an harmonious whole.

The Christian doctrine that God is Love indeed sounds well and pleasant to the ear. But can we ask whether this formula will solve the problem, that is to say, whether it will be of any earthly use to a rebellious nature which is manageable by the rod only? Can we hope that such natures will ever again turn to virtue and piety after they have come to believe in the doctrine of atonement and the Love theory of God? The experience of the world gives the lie to such a supposition.

A Christian says that God is *love*, but an Arya Samajist represents Him as anything but love by declaring that when once a sin has been committed it can be forgiven under no circumstances. There is no way out of it for the sinner. He can not escape its punishment and his soul must pass through an almost interminable series of transmigration courses. There is no hope at all of his obtaining a free pardon for his sin. Finding God's Law to be so rigid and severe many will revolt against it and will refuse to obey and submit to such an exacting Lord, while others, having once sinned and finding no way to escape the ordained punishment will like to go deeper into the pit of sin by indulging freely in the pleasures of this world.

It is Islam alone which follows the happy mean. It takes into account both kinds of human nature and pays due regard to each of them. This special feature of Islamic teachings proves beyond a shadow of doubt that Islam has emanated from the Creator of that nature Himself. This character of the Islamic

teachings is apparent in the very first verse of the opening surah of the Holy Quran. In Surah Fatiha we find Him handling both kinds of human nature in ways respectively adapted to each of them. As at first it is always love and mildness which are brought into play for reforming purposes, He, too, begins by recounting His own beauties and His numerous blessings and favours that He has bestowed upon us so as to make us entirely submissive to His will. He begins by saying الحمد لله رب العالمين *i.e.*, all praises are due to God who is free from fault and who possesses all excellence and virtue in Himself. This is a description of His personal attributes and charms. Next He refers to His numerous favours and blessings on mankind by describing Himself as رب العالمين *i.e.*, Lord and nourisher of all the worlds. He is the nourisher of the whole creation whether animal, mineral or vegetable. It is He who supports all—kings, biggars, believers and non-believers—and makes them grow up from such an insignificant thing as a seed into manhood and helps them to rise gradually to the highest point of perfection. There is nothing in this world which receives its life from other than God's hands. From the biggest down to the smallest entity in the world every thing is subject to His nourishing hand.

Seeing what He has done for our corporal existence and what provisions He has made for our bodily well-being, our thoughts naturally turn to our souls to see how He has provided for their welfare. Accordingly, the Almighty understanding human nature full well says that He is الرحمن *i.e.*, He has also the attribute of mercy.

Elsewhere in the Holy Quran we have الرحمن علم القرآن which shows that the revelation of the Quran is subject to the attribute of mercy in God *i.e.*, His mercy has been the cause of the revelation of the Holy Quran. By telling us that He is رحمن *i.e.*, the merciful supporter, He has signified that He has provided for the guidance and welfare of our souls also as He has made provision for our physical welfare. To reach this goal He has given us the Holiest of Books *i.e.*, the Holy Quran to guide us in the spiritual walks of life. At this point one will naturally ask whether the acting upon the teachings of the Quran and obeying its holy command-

ments will do us any good. Having full knowledge of our nature He anticipates our question by describing Himself as *الرحيم* *i.e.*, the Gracious God who gives us a good reward for every good deed and does not waste our labour.

Thus far we have a description of His own beauties and excellences and a mention of His blessings and favours upon us. If any body, having a full knowledge of all His blessings and favours upon us, be still so wanting in gratitude as to defy His commands and challenge His august authority, then God says that He is *مالك يوم الدين* also *i.e.*, the sole Judge of the day of Judgment, who has not given to any one else the right to judge His creatures. This signifies that if in spite of His love and mercy we fail to show Him due gratitude and obedience for His innumerable favours and gifts, by following His commandments, He will then have to bring into action His attribute of *ما اكيت* (sole Judgeship) of the day of Judgment in order to correct us. Accordingly we find that even in this world He has appointed numerous kinds of punishments and tortures for the miscreant and evil-doers. Having read the above verses, every person whether he be amenable to mild or harsh treatment cannot help crying out *يا اياك نستعين* *i.e.*, (O thou to whom all the praises are due) of thee alone do we seek help in all matters.

This is the only kind of teaching which can claim to be a universal guidance for all natures. This is the only creed which can take us to the presence of God the Omnipotent. This is what is called ISLAM.

All other religions fall short of this high ideal. With the happy exception of Islam all creeds are defective and wanting in universality. Their teachings take into account one side of human nature only. It is Islam alone that takes into account every side of human nature. Islam alone coincides with human nature, and therefore no other religion but Islam can lay claim to universality.

## The Criterion of true religion.

Mankind seem to have got wide awake to the necessity of true religion. There is scarcely a nationality that does not identify itself with some religion or other thinking it to be the sole repository of truth to the entire exclusion of all other faiths. Quite recently there has been a super-abundance of pessimistic growth about religious ideals and what ought to have been a meeting ground with a unifying force and a welding power has been made a cock-pit for spiritual demagogues for controversial bickering and wordy warfare. The result, of course, is not a wholesome influence, but an awful deterioration of true religious spirit. While there is so much fuss and noise about religion, there is certainly very little which can be laid down as a determining factor in estimating the respective moral efficacy of the contending faiths. It is therefore high time that a criterion may be found for the test of a religion to the satisfaction of all reasonable thinkers. The criterion must be comprehensive enough to cover all the different forms of religion and must as a matter of course, be potent enough to declare distinctly for the truth against all the dazzling forms of falsehood.

When every one claims superiority and unquestionable supremacy for his own faith it becomes an extremely uphill task to decide what faith is a true one. The on-looker outside the pale of a religion must be furnished with a clear unmistakable criterion for the recognition of truth wherever it is met with and in whatever aspect it appears.

Sometimes high morality is advanced as the only test of a true religion. A religion which inculcates lofty ideals and noble principles is often considered to be a divine religion. But there seems to be little or no force in the argument. There is no religion extant on the surface of the earth which does not lay down a number of good working principles, even Atheists often preach high sounding maxims full of moral sense. All faiths enjoin virtue and inhibit vice: a lofty and high ideal of moral philosophy is not therefore the exclusive monopoly of any one faith. All faiths more or less share this. To judge the divine character of a religion

by the high standard of morality—is to open the floodgates of endless discussion. There should be a single definite stroke to cut the Gordian knot.

We the followers of the Prophet of Arabia do not solely rely upon our moral code for the dominating superiority we claim for our religion. Our claim, of course, finds strength in the pre-eminent character of our ethical code, but it is not the only mainstay of our faith, we have by far the strongest palladium for our religion in practical quarters.

Before attempting to discover a criterion for the truth of a religion, I should like to point out that religion in the true sense of the word should not be an institution conducted and controlled by human agency. Religion comprises perfect truth and cannot therefore be the output of human brain which is handicapped by quite a world of faults and failings. Perfect truth must be sought no where except in a perfect region. But humanity with all its ever expanding treasure-house of scientific realities cannot get rid of limitations which fall to its lot at every turn and go to retard its progress in every sphere. If, therefore, religion, which is the source of all guidance and the director of our purpose in life is in the interests of social and individual purity required to be free from error, it must proceed from none other than God Himself and human hand must not be allowed to have anything to do with the formulation of a religious system. Religion is purely a divine dispensation. The only part which man has to play in the establishment of a religious system is to follow it without question and to subject himself to its yoke with an unflinching will. Religion will be handed down to him in a cut and dried form, he has simply to have it and act upon it. When it is clear that religion springs forth from the divine fountain-head, all morality as sanctioned by a true divine religion must be looked upon as resignation to divine will. So far, I hope, no religionist will afford to disagree with me. But the criterion for a true religion is yet to be found out.

Without beating about any more about the point at issue I proceed to establish the criterion which may enable us to distinguish at a glance how true religion differs from a false one. There can be no gainsaying the fact that a divine pur-

pose pervades human life. Religion is only a set of laws meant for the guidance of man for the fulfilment of that purpose running through human life. Connection with God is the ultimate goal of our life. If a religion can succeed in bringing mankind into right relations with God, it is a sound religion and deserves universal acceptance.

All religions will be found to parade their moral principles in highly coloured fashions, but it will be all moonshine if man does not feel for himself that he in consequence of the acceptance of a certain religion now stands in closer relations to God than ever before he did. In the absence of this, it is impossible to set the religious struggle finally at rest. This single test brings the true religion in bold relief on the land mark of spirituality. This connection with God which should be the aim of every true faith to establish must have some concomitant effects, otherwise lip-profession can not carry a conviction into human mind.

Perfect obedience to God's commandments is the first step which when carried out completely secures one admittance to spiritual realm. He is spoken to by God and is at times endowed with prophetic vision and can therefore by the loving help of God penetrate the fathomless future. This is a matter of practice. Every one can find for his own self whether he can, by acting upon the tenets of Islam, attain to the spiritual ideal set up for man.

Thus the criterion should be a clear matter of fact principle which when carried into practice must bear a definitely distinguishable fruit. This is clearly a matter of action and not a point of theoretical controversy. In a word, it is the clear promise of spiritual life attended with specific signs and tokens of divine favour rather than a world of plausible theories that matters.

It is not only a mere assertion having no proof behind it. There has never been an age when the world did not witness a large number of such godly personages as acted upon the tenets of true religion and in consequence enjoyed the fruit promised. Even the present age is not lacking in this respect. A man appeared and he proclaimed to have grasped and practised religion in its full natural sense and as a result was the recipient of divine favour in the shape of divine revelation embodying mighty prophecies the fulfilment of which has made his truth as clear as the light of the noonday sun. He, out of sympathy invited people to the mode of life he lived so that they might also bask like him in the sunshine of divine favour and escape the blighting influence of the chills of materialism. A pretty large number of human beings flocked to his spiritual standard from the four quarters of the globe and some even enjoyed personal communion with God Himself finding in themselves the fulfilment of the promise held up by him to the righteous liver of the earth.

A. H. AHMADI.

## Notes and Comments.

### L' ISLAMISME.

*L. Islamisme* is a valuable Muslim organ published by the Ikhwat-ul-Islam Society, Port Louis, Mauritius. It is written in French though occasionally it contains short articles in English too. The paper is doing a useful work for the intellectual, moral, social and religious advancement of the Mussalmans. It is published every week and contains useful information about things Islamic throughout the world. We congratulate the Ikhwat-ul-Islam Society on their noble work and hope the Muslim public in India and elsewhere will not grudge the Society the encouragement and patronage which it so greatly merits. The organ of the Society deserves a wide circulation and is a good medium for advertisement. Annual Subscription for foreign countries R 4.20 or 7 francs.

### AN UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT.

*L' Islamisme* gives the following very interesting quotation from the *Weekly Times* :—

“ In a paper read at the Church Congress, Miss Melen Strut said a very small section of women to-day is being severely criticised and condemned by the people in general, by the Church and the leaders of the Church. She spoke as one of those women and claimed that it was hardly consistent that a Church, teaching that all human beings were equal in the sight of God, should condemn women for actions which it did not condemn in men. Jesus Christ, the founder of the Church, at times saw fit to pay scant respect to property and even destroyed it for the benefit of humanity, but she did not know him any occasion on which he paid scant respect to human life, as our armies did, countenanced by the Church of the country.”

- This is a strange argument in favour of the violent methods adopted by the militant suffragettes in order to secure for women the right of voting. But if the argument is strange, it appears to be also strong so far as the Christians are concerned. The

readers of the Gospel know well to what acts of Jesus she was referring when she said that Jesus Christ at times saw fit to pay scant respect to property and even destroyed it for the benefit of humanity. It was really very bold on her part to say before the Church Congress that it was highly unjust for the Church and the leaders of the Church to condemn the militant suffragettes for destroying the property of others, because in doing so they were only imitating the example set by Jesus Christ himself. She seems to have had full confidence in the strength of her argument, and her courage to speak it out in the presence of high dignitaries of the Church is really praiseworthy. To us the argument appears to be irrefutable and we are anxious to know how Christians will be able to answer it.

But she is not quite right when she says that Jesus was opposed to fighting. We find him ordering his disciples to buy swords and to sell even their garments if they did not possess money enough to buy arms. This shows that he thought war to be permissible. So at least that part of Miss Melen Strut's argument which referred to the illegality of war could have been easily answered by the Church dignitaries assembled at the Congress if they had thought fit to do so, for if Jesus had thought war to be illegal, he would not have ordered his disciples to buy swords. Besides, the Church dignitaries could also silence her by quoting those sayings of Jesus in which he had represented himself as the bringer, not of peace, but of sword. If the Christian armies paid scant respect to human life and their doings were countenanced by the Church, we could blame neither the Christian armies nor the Church, for they were acting in exact accordance with the words of Jesus.

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## A HUGE SUCCESS.

The Editor of *L' Islamisme* says:—

We have often in this paper written of the Ahmadi movement which has been in existence in India for more than twenty, five years. The number of the disciples of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who is considered as the Messiah exceeds four hundred thousands.

Amongst them are to be found the most capable men of India. The chief of this movement has, it cannot be contradicted, given a most strong impetus to the faith. He has, in the twentieth century, accomplished miracles in convincing the whole world of his divine mission. After his death Maulvi Mohammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., whose writings are so much admired throughout the whole of India, succeeded to the Khilafat.

The Ahmadi Association itself is on a most solid and modern basis, its fervent Mussulmans have been able, in a very short time to open up schools, and seminaries with a view to training its sons into dignified sons of Islam and to instruct its Imams in different languages. The priests have and will become missionaries and are preaching the true faith to the whole universe. Maulvi Kamal-ud-din, B.A., LL.B., editor of the "Islamic Review" published in London; is a remarkable Ahmadi.

With infinite pains he has explained his religion at Conferences. It is now only two months ago that he was in France taking part in the Congress of Religions. In his absence, his Review was edited by two of his assistants who are also Ahmadi. There is no doubt that Lord Headley's conversion to Islamism, was due to his conferences. Many other independent English Gentlemen give him their best wishes and support and we feel sure that before long the British Mussulmans, who now number seven to eight hundred, will augment to large numbers.

### A CORRECTION.

We thank the Editor of *L' Islamisme* for the appreciative terms in which he speaks of the Ahmadiyya movement. He however errs in naming the successor of the late Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The man who succeeded to the Promised Messiah as the head of the movement was Hazrat Hakim Haji Hafiz Maulawee Noor-ud-Din and not Maulawee Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., The whole of the Ahmadiyya community looks upon Hazrat Maulawee Noor-ud-Din as their leader and all the activities of the community are being carried on under his direction.

## A GERMAN SCHOLAR ON THE HOLY PROPHET.

The *Modern Review* for February, 1914, contains a small article on the Holy Prophet's call to prophethood translated from the German of Prof. De Goeje in the first volume of Noldeke-Festschrift, pp. 1—5. Speaking of the condition of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) at the time of his receiving revelation from God, the Professor says :—

“Certain it is that the attacks with which Muhammad suffered were not of the nature of epilepsy, (cf. Muller, *Der Islam*, p. 56 note 1). It is also very much to be doubted whether he had these attacks before his prophetic mission. I cannot accept Sprenger's assertion that Muhammad was hysterical. The picture of the Prophet, such as we know it, with his more than twenty years of unresting activity, is certainly not a picture which corresponds to that of one suffering from neurasthenia.

“We find in him that sober understanding which distinguished his fellow-tribesmen : dignity, tact, and equilibrium ; qualities which are seldom found in people of morbid constitution : self-control in no small degree. Circumstances changed him from a Prophet to a Legislator and a Ruler, but for himself he sought nothing beyond the acknowledgment that he was Allah's Apostle since this acknowledgment includes the whole of Islam. He was excitable, like every true Arab, and in the spiritual struggle which preceded his call this quality was stimulated to an extent that alarmed even himself ; but that does not make him a visionary. He defends himself, by the most solemn asseveration, against the charge that what he had seen\* was an illusion of the senses. Why should we not believe him ?”

### ISLAM IN ENGLAND.

Our brother Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din writes in his *Muslim India* for January, 1914 :—

Our many readers in the different parts of the Muslim world will be highly pleased to hear of our Jooma (Friday) prayers

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\* The reference is to the vision of the angel Gabriel at the cave of Hira.

which we have been holding for the past few weeks in Lindsey Hall Notting Hill Gate, London. We have to thank the Right Hon. Sayyed Ameer Ali of the Privy Council, who, upon our writing, has kindly suggested to the trustees of the London Mosque Fund that they should place at the disposal of Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din £100 a year to secure the permanency of these Friday prayer arrangements. We give Mr. Ameer Ali's letter below. Friday is the Sabbath of the Muslims and a sermon from the pulpit is an essential element of the service. We have been requested to preserve some of the sermons already given on these occasions and we propose to do it for the future. It is interesting to know that the service is usually concluded in English and Arabic *Dua* (prayer) respectively by Lord Headley and Qazi Haer-ud-Din, Imam of the Ottoman Embassy.

2, CADOGAN PLACE, S. W.,

December 12, 1913.

Dear Khwaja Sahib,

I am in receipt of your letter of 7th inst., in which you draw my attention to the necessity for a permanent room in London for the performance of Friday prayers, and for a yearly contribution from the London Mosque Fund to that end.

I am in entire accord with your idea, and shall be glad to recommend to my co-trustees to sanction a grant out of the income of the amount on deposit for the erection of a mosque in London befitting the glory of Islam, to enable you to rent a proper place and to maintain it for the performance of the Friday Nimaz, until we are able to carry out our original project.

I propose to recommend to the trustees of the London Mosque Fund to grant you £100 a year out of the income aforesaid for the renting and maintaining a room or place of the kind you suggest, subject to the conditions that you should furnish to the honorary treasurer of the fund a quarterly statement of the accounts, with vouchers whenever possible, regarding the disbursement, and that should you return to India it will be open to the trustees to reconsider the subject.

Yours sincerely,  
AMEER ALI.

# THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM.

Is an English translation of the paper written by the late Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, for the Great Religious Conference held at Lahore in December 1896. It contains two hundred pages of learned disquisitions on the following five subjects from a Muslim's point of view, *viz.*, (1) the physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man; (2) the state of man in the life after death; (3) the real object of man's existence and the means of its attainment; (4) the effect of action in the present life and the life to come; and (5) the sources of Divine knowledge.

The paper contains an exposition of Islam, such as is not met with in any book hitherto published on Islam in any language. Even among the books written by the Promised Messiah, "The Teachings of Islam" occupies a unique position. It is in fact a comprehensive commentary of the Holy Quran, throwing on its teachings and doctrines a light such as was never shed before. Late Count Tolstoy expressed the following opinion on one of its parts:—"I approved very much two articles, How to get rid of 'Sin' and 'the Life to come.' The idea is very profound and very true." No English knowing Mussalman should be without a copy of this valuable book. The price of the book is Re. 1-4 or 1s. 6d. net, and it can be had from the Manager, "*Review of Religions*," Qadian, India, or Messrs. Luzac and Co., 46, Great Russel Street, London, W. C.

THE MANAGER, *Review of Religions, Qadian.*

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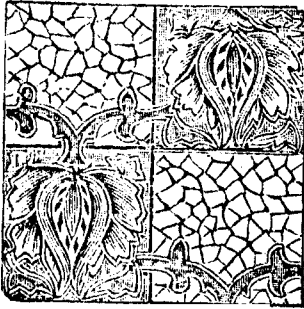
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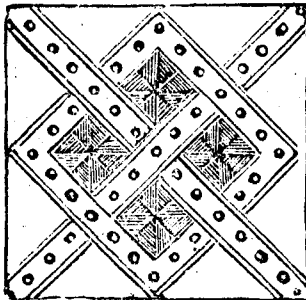


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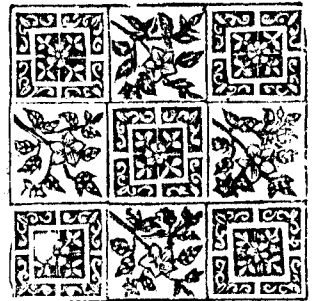
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