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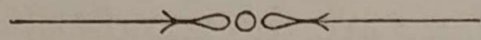
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THE ALLAHABAD REVIEW.

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THE ALLAHABAD REVIEW.



PROGRESSIVE MOHAMMEDANISM.

It seems to me that if there is anything in this life in which man ought to take an active, energetic, soulful interest it is his religion, by means of which he hopes to prepare himself for the spiritual life. We are here but a comparatively few years, while we are led to believe that the future state is eternal. If man really believes this to be true, he cannot with any degree of reason or justice to himself permit himself to fall into a condition of apathy and indifference in religious matters and fold his arms contentedly, waiting for some one else to do what he, himself ought to do.

In the life of Mohammed, (peace be unto him) and his early followers, Mussulmans have a lesson which they cannot fail to understand and which it seems foolish and wicked to ignore or neglect. He gave up voluntarily and willingly all that men hold dear in this life in order to point out to mankind the true way to happiness. He suffered as few men have suffered in this world and stood ready to give up his life, if God so willed, that the true faith might find a place in the hearts of his people and in those of generations yet unborn. His example was followed by thousands upon thousands of noble, earnest souls whose zeal fired the entire Eastern Hemisphere and inspired a religious propaganda, grand and glorious beyond anything of a similar character known in the history of the world. That all the enthusiasm, and zeal, and trials and sufferings of the early Moslems were not in vain is shown by the status of the religion of Islam to-day. Its influence upon human history has been indelibly imprinted there for more than 1,200 years, has penetrated to every part of the East and is slowly but surely making its way into the so-called Christian West. In England it has found a foothold and must surely spread until every city and town in the United Kingdom will have its mosque and its community of Moslems, if the faithful of India will but do their duty to God and themselves. The United States of America, a vast

and eminently liberal and progressive country, with its sixty-five millions of souls has not yet felt, to any appreciable extent, the influence of the true faith, but I feel confident that it is ripe to receive it and that when it has once found its way there the spiritual enlightenment of the world will speedily follow. There are thousands of the best minds of the New World looking toward India as the great centre of true spiritual thought, and are ready and anxious to receive a religion, which will take the place of the erroneous system called Christian. They have eagerly taken hold of the teachings of the Theosophical Society, and Budhism has been most cordially received in some of the American cities. All the indications point to a revival of interest in spiritual things among the intellectual classes of all parts of the world and of the West in particular. What are the Moslims doing at this time when such broad and fertile fields are open to them?

Does any intelligent, thoughtful Mussulman doubt the truth of his religion? Is he uncertain as to the efficacy of the doctrines of Islam or is he selfish and dominated by the idea that he and a few of his friends are the sole heirs to the truth? If the doctrines taught by the Holy Prophet of Arabia are true; if the Holy Koran is the word of the one true God, then it is clearly and unmistakeably the duty of every Mussulman to use his earnest, honest efforts to bring this religion within the reach and under the direct notice of all those who are willing to receive it. The best energies and resources of his life should be turned so as to assist in shedding light into the dark places of the earth.

It is not necessary to quote from the Holy Koran to show the truth of this assertion for every true Mussulman reads this guide of life and encounters, every time he reads it, admonitions which unerringly point out to him his duty in this regard. If he refuses to heed them he will be the sufferer.

India is to-day over-run by energetic, well-meaning misguided people who are actively engaged in teaching a false religion, a creed to which they have wrongly given the name Christianity and which they ignorantly attribute to Jesus of Nazareth. These so-called Christian missionaries are from England and the United States of America, as a rule, and they devote their lives and best energies to a vain, but earnest effort to convert the people of the East from their

own religions to a false one. Of course it is a well established fact that they never convert an intelligent Mussulman, but they try very earnestly to do so.

In the whole vast territory of the American States there is not one single Mohammedan Mosque nor a person, so far as I know, who is engaged in teaching the blessed truths of Islam. In England, which is an exceedingly small country as compared with the United States, there is one small mosque and less than half a dozen active missionaries. Comment is unnecessary.

Do the Mussulmans of India intend to tacitly admit that this so-called Christianity is the true religion and that the doctrines of Islam are too weak, and ineffective and uncertain to give to the West?

What is needed is an infusion into the Moslems of the East of some of that glorious spirit of earnestness, self-sacrifice and zealous devotion which animated the souls of the early Mohammedans; a truly progressive Mohammedanism which will arouse itself to earnest persistent action and carry the light of Islam to the remotest limits of the earth. A broad, liberal, systematic and well-directed movement with this purpose in view will surely be blessed by God, and will ultimately make Islam, what it should be, the religion of the world.

Is there no grand soul among the Moslems of India who will devote himself with his whole heart to this grand work?

ALEXANDER RUSSEL WEBB.

MANILLA,
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URDU POETS.

IV.

In the second period the language was much purified of those in-elegant expressions which marked the earlier writings. A number of words which were freely used by Wali and others of the first period were discarded, although many of questionable usage were still retained. The nobility still called a *Paratha*, *Parotha* (a cake made of wheat flour with a large admixture of clarified butter); *Dhira* (slow) was still used in place of *Ahista* and *Bhichak*

- (4) "Bahr Mujtas" (مجتث), as:—
صلاح کار کتجا و من خراب کتجا * بیدین تفاوت وه از کتجاست تا بکتجا
- (5) "Bahr Khafif" (خفیف), as:—
میدمد صبح و کله بسته سحاب * الص—بوح الصبوح یا اصحاب
- (6) "Bahr Rajaz" (رجز), as:—
سور چمان من چرامیل چمن نمیکند * همدم گل نمیشود یاد سمن نمیکند
- (7) "Bahr Sari'a" (سریع), as:—
هاتفی از گوشه میخانه دوش * گفت به بخشند گفتم مے بفوش
- (8) "Bahr Muzahf" (مزاحف), as:—
هرکس که ندارد بجهاں مهر تو در دل * حقا که بود طاعت او ضایع و باطل
- (9) "Bahr Munsareh" (منسرح), as:—
مرغ دلم طایر بیست قدسی عرش اشان * از نفس تن ملول سیونده از جهاں
- (10) "Bahr Basit" (بسیط), as:—
دلبرے جانان من بود دل و جانان من * بود دل و جانان من دلبر جانان من
- (11) "Bahr Mutakarib" (مستقارب), as:—
بیا ساقی آن می که حور بهشت * عبیر ملایک در آن می سرشت

In conclusion we may say that praising Hafiz will be a useless task, Sa'di has said عطار بگوید نه آنکه عطار بگوید and the only praise we will here lavish on our poet is, that one can never get tired of reading him. Like other great names in the sphere of poetry his will be for ever held in esteem and his odes will give delight to the scholars of the Persian tongue. No one realised the fact better than our poet himself when he wrote the following.

ز شعر دلکش حافظ کسے شود آگاہ * که لطف طبع و سخن گفتن دری داند

M. HAMEED-ULLAH.

SECTARIAN EXCLUSIVENESS.

ONE of the most unaccountable and illogical ideas to be found among some of the religious beliefs of the world is that only a certain class of people are to be saved; that is, to enjoy a life of happiness beyond the grave, while every one else is to be consigned to oblivion or an eternal condition of misery. For instance one cannot become a Parsee or a Hindu; he must be born so. Hence he must suffer for an act which was not his own and for which, under all modern notions of justice he should be held clearly

innocent. There are some Christian sects also, which believe that God has elected certain souls to inherit salvation, and that those who have not been so elected will surely be lost, no matter how earnestly they may strive to walk in the paths of moral rectitude and righteousness. In fact one may observe among the Christian sects in all parts of the world about all the vagaries and absurdities ever evolved from the fertile brain of man.

It seems only reasonable to believe that the very essence of the true religion is its adaptability to the spiritual needs of mankind as a whole, and that if it is not universal and impartial in its operation it cannot be the true religion. When we accept the doctrine of exclusiveness we must necessarily lay aside the belief that man is a free agent and responsible for all his acts and thoughts. If he is not a free agent then it does not make the slightest difference in the world what religion he follows or whether he has any at all. For if he is a mere automaton and cannot be held accountable for his deeds and mental action the salvation of his own soul becomes a matter in which he can have little or no interest.

Without stopping to produce evidence to show that the religion of Mohammed is based upon sound reason, and must therefore, be the true faith, let me ask the thoughtful Mussalman if he can find in the Koran or any of the authentic Hadeeses any warrant for exclusiveness among Mohammedans? And yet there are Mohammedans all over India who seem to have clothed themselves with the idea that no one can inherit Paradise unless he was born a Mohammedan; that it is not only useless to attempt to make converts* but that it is their duty to treat with coldness and contempt those who are unfortunate enough to have been born of parents who followed some other religion. This is the extreme manifestation of the spirit of exclusiveness, it is true, but is it any more to be condemned than its milder form which we charitably call apathy or indifference? The Mussulman who is so thoroughly and completely immersed in his own affairs, that he has no kindly thoughts for those who are outside the fold of Islam is just as culpable as the one who hates and despises the follower of another faith, who has never had an opportunity to know what Mohammed taught. The animating spirit of early Mohamme-

* We fear Mr. Webb, in his zeal for Islám, has been rather hard upon the Indian Moslems.—ED.

danism was its rigorous, earnest, self-sacrificing propaganda and its arms were thrown open to embrace the whole world. Those to whom the light of truth had come, stood ready to give everything they had and their lives too, if need be, in order that all mankind, Jew, Gentile or Christian might know the true faith and join the Moslem Brotherhood. The records show that Mohammed laid great stress upon the fraternal principle of Islam and advocates the doctrine of universal brotherhood without regard to race, colour, social conditions or previous religious belief and there seems no good reason to believe, that it is any the less the duty of Mussulmans to-day to carry out this idea than it was a thousand years ago. If Mohammedanism is good for the Asiatic it is also good for the Anglo-Saxon and both have an equal right to its blessings and privileges if they are disposed to claim it. One very rarely, if ever, finds an Asiatic who believes in the peculiar Christian fallacy of predestination; but by their exclusiveness some of them convey the impression that they do.

I am aware of the fact that this exclusiveness is due largely to the attitude of the European Christians, who visit India toward the native races. The Indian Mussulman finds the English-speaking Christian, with whom he comes in contact, wearing an air of self-satisfied superiority and given to customs and habits which repel, not to say disgust, any true follower of Islam. His manner of life and thought is the very antipodes of that of the better class of Asiatics and his ill-concealed, only half-disguised contempt for the native and all his belongings tends to drive the latter into his own exclusive environments and keep him there. The idea that any white faced, civilized (?) Christian can learn anything true concerning religion from an Asiatic strikes these self-contented people as the very acme of absurdity.

But there are abundant indications that these conditions are about to pass away, at least partially, and that the eyes of the Western World are slowly turning toward the East in search of a religion to take the place of that absurd and erroneous system mis-named Christianity. There are to-day in the United States of America and England, thousands of honest, earnest truth-seekers who would eagerly embrace Islam if they knew what kind of a doctrine it really was. It is almost entirely unknown among the millions of the English-speaking people of the West, who have ac-

quired false and extremely erroneous ideas concerning it from the meagre literature in English from the pens of ignorant and prejudiced Christians. Broadly speaking the average American and Englishman believes firmly, that the Holy Prophet of Islam was a wicked imposter and a cold-blooded, grasping tyrant and that the Modern Mohammedan is a deluded, superstitious, treacherous creature whose fondest hope is that he may cut at least one Christian throat before he dies. Such nonsensical ideas can and should be dispelled ; but this cannot be done without the earnest and liberal efforts of the Eastern Mussulmans who have faith enough in their religion to work for its propagation.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan Bahadur, K. C. S. I., has set a noble example for his fellow-Moslems by writing and printing in the English language works which will do more to dispel the ignorance, concerning Mohammed and his teachings, which prevails among the Anglo-Saxons than any effort put forth by a Mohammedan during the present century. His " Mohammedan Commentary on the Holy Bible " and his series of essays on " The Life of Mohammed " must carry to the mind of the truth-seeker the conviction, at the very least, that there is much more truth and food for serious thought, in the doctrines of Islam than the Western World has even dreamed of.

What is needed for the propagation of the true faith among the Anglo-Saxons is an ample English literature and an intelligent, accurate translation of the Holy Koran with the order of prayers, fasts &c., clearly and logically explained. This will lay the foundation for the work of the English-speaking Moulvi and the firm establishment of the faith in all corners of the earth. The disposition to exclusiveness among the Asiatics should be rooted out and the barriers that divide them from the English-speaking truth-seeker should be broken down. Until this is done we can never hope for a realization of that grand ideal of the universal brotherhood of humanity which was so prominent in the teachings of Mohammed, (Peace be unto him).

Manilla,
Philippine Islands. } ALEXANDER RUSSELL WEBB.