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(A CULTURAL WEEKLY)  
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## Musings Of A Pensioner-XII

### The Significance Of The Five Times Daily Prayer

#### Without The True Muslim Salat No One Can Attain To True Mystic Experience

By M. T. AKBAR, K.C., B.A., LL.B., (Cantab),  
 Formerly Senior Puisne Justice of Ceylon.

ANY book by a recognised authority on the philosophical aspects of religion, e. g. William James, Radakrishnan, C. E. M. Joad, Iqbal or P. D. Ouspensky, will show my readers that for a genuine religious experience, not only should there be the highest concentration of thought, not only an integration of all the faculties of man, including his reason, his feelings, his emotions &c, but also that the last stage must be one of pure love for God. The remarkable thing to me is that the Muslim Salat or prayer contains all these requisites, and is the only avenue for genuine mystic experience. It seems to me, and I am prepared to prove it in these articles, that without the Muslim Salat no one can attain to true mystic experience. The first thing to notice is that these set prayers are a direct revelation of God. The Hadith (see Sahih Al Bukhari, Asad's translation Vol. 5, Chapter 52, section 12, paragraph 12) shows, in the first place, that these prayers including the ablutions are, like the Quran, a direct revelation from God through the angel Gabriel.

All the religions, including scientific thought, show that the Ultimate Reality is incomprehensible to man in his present stage of evolution. This scientific aspect is explained in a remarkably lucid manner by the Russian philosopher J. D. Ouspensky in his great work Tertium Organum (translated into English, publishers Alfred A. Knopf, New York).

Man is a three dimensional creature and the Universe contains a manifold of an infinite number of other worlds of higher dimensions. When man cannot even comprehend the world of four dimensions, how can he comprehend the worlds of higher dimensions? Such being his helplessness, how can he comprehend the Almighty God who created these worlds? Islam teaches us, as I have already pointed out, that God created man for a great purpose, namely finally to comprehend Him. Radakrishnan and Mrs. Rhys Davids in the Hibbert Journals have written exhaustively to prove that Lord Buddha taught by silence and emphasis that there was an Ultimate Reality Whom or Which man might comprehend—Buddha did not say so directly—by leading a correct moral life. As I have said repeatedly in pantheistic religions there can be no intimacy, no love, no communion as we understand it in Islam. If this communion can be established between man and the Incomprehensible, it can only be effected by direct Revelation to man from the Incomprehensible. Thus the Muslim Salat is not man-made but a free gift from Almighty God to puny man, thus demonstrating God's infinite love

towards man. We thus start the Salat with this consciousness deeply engraved in our minds, namely that we are following in the footsteps of the greatest Prophet of Allah and the innumerable Muslim saints and martyrs and the myriads of Muslims who have preceded us, under the direct guidance of God.

Is this consciousness present in the case of the man made prayers in other religions? In the second place for mystic consciousness, the effort must be first made by man through his thinking faculties, and the effort must be made persistently, unceasingly with the fullest determination. That is the reason for the rigid discipline and timing of the Islamic prayers.

#### Psychological Effect of Prayers

My readers should read the undying memorable words of Iqbal regarding the psychological effect of prayers, especially congregational prayers, and how the inflexible timing of the Islamic prayers is meant to save man from the mechanising effect of sleep and worldly business occupations.

Only the Muslim man or woman who scrupulously observes these prayers can realise the fresh interest which each moment of his life brings to him or her. Having come into contact with Reality several times during the day, time does not hang heavy on him, he is never bored and there is no necessity to seek distraction artificially in games, amusement and frivolities.

Let me at this stage describe briefly, how the great Sufi scholar—saint Muhayyidin El Arabi explains in the

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## MUSLIM KING FOR ETHIOPIA ?

### MUSSOLINI'S LATEST RUSE

#### Muslim World's Attitude

A. J. Siggins, writes in the *Comet*, Nigeria, that having despaired of ever being able to control Abyssinia effectively, the Italians have been toying with the idea of "appeasement" in the country by bribing the Emperor and leading Ethiopians to return and to rule as their puppets. "The Negus has been actually approached several times by Italians and emissaries of certain "Great" Powers for the purpose but all decent Ethiopians have refused to fall for the bait.

Accordingly, there is now a move to proclaim a Muslim as Emperor. The idea is supposed to be very clever as recent events have made Mussolini's Fascist Rome not very popular with the Muslim world.

But in this plan too there is a snag. Ibn Sa'ud and the Imam of the Yemen, point blankly refused to assist in the rape of Ethiopia. Sudanese and Egyptian Muslims also refused to have anything to do with the filthy business not to mention the rest of the Muslim world which shrieked at the wanton attack on the country of the Negus. There is no indication that the Muslim attitude has undergone any marked change in favour of the "Protector of Islam".

## TURKEY

### MORE DOCTORS

Although Turkey may justly be proud of her physicians, such is the increasing demand for doctors as a consequence of the development of the country, that the shortage of medical help becomes more marked every year.

In order to meet these requirements, new medical schools are being planned both at Ankara and at Brussa, where buildings are already being erected.

Like so many other things in Turkey, medical science owes its first development to the Army. But the latest development undoubtedly owes a great deal to the refugee professors of international standing whom Atatürk encouraged to take positions at Istanbul University.

As regards leprosy, of which there are about 600 registered cases in the whole of the country, there is a lazaret house with 100 beds at Elazig, and another with twenty beds at Kars, near the Russian frontier.

A third lazaret house to accommodate eighty persons will be organised at Istanbul in the course of this year.

## TRIPOLI

### ARAB SHEIKHS ARRESTED

Some prominent Arab Sheikhs have arrived from Tripoli, escorted by Italian gendarmes and kept in the Kala Eritrea confinement. They have been sentenced to penal servitude by the Italian Military Court in Tripoli. It is stated that during the last political crisis in Europe, the arrested defied the compulsory mobilisation order given by General Balbo calling Arab boys and men from the age of 16 to 55, for military training outside Tripoli.

## IRAN

### MINERAL RESOURCES

#### HUGE UNTAPPED WEALTH

It is believed that Iran possesses untapped resources of lead, silver, copper, iron and sulphur, and the interesting announcement is now forthcoming that the Iranian Government has granted a long term contract to the General Exploration Company, of The Hague, for the exploration of areas totalling 236,000 square kilometres in the north and south of the country. If the exploration work is successful concessions will be granted to the company, a new company being formed for each concession. Obviously, any important mineral discoveries would greatly improve the economic position of Iran.

## NUWARA ELIYA MUSLIM LEAGUE

### Open Air Prayer On Festival Day

The monthly Committee meeting of the Nuwara Eliya Muslim League was held on Saturday the 21st, instant, with Mr. M. J. Dain in the chair.

After the minutes of the last Committee meeting were read and adopted by the house, Mr. N. S. S. Abbas read the amended rules of the League as submitted by the Sub-Committee and it was resolved to bring it before the special General meeting for adoption.

Further it was resolved by the House to have open air prayers at the race course on the Ramadan Festival Day. All the Muslims are to congregate at the mosque and proceed to the prayer ground in a procession at 9-30 a.m. sharp.

With a vote of thanks to the chair the meeting terminated late.

Women's Section

# The Causes That Led To The Degeneration Of The Muslims

Regeneration Of A Nation Depends On Its Women

## Uneducated Mothers---An Obstacle To Progress

By MRS. IQBALUNNISA HUSSAIN, B.A.,  
*Diploma In Education, (Leeds)*  
*(Of The Mysore Educational Service)*

THE disparity between the real Islamic theory about womanhood, and the actual practice has been one of the causes that led to the degeneration of the Muslims. The Quran gave the name of Mohsina to woman which means she is a "rocky fortress against Satan, a light house of virtue and continence that alone can save man from shipwreck while tossing among the strong waves of passion". Mohamed (on whom be peace) says woman has like rights with those of man—the same is due to her as is due from her". This means she is not inferior to man. She possesses the same faculties of mind, same tendencies and aptitudes. The deficiency in one is supplemented and complemented by the other. But what is her real position in life? What are her social, economical, physical and intellectual conditions?

Except a few educated and a lucky few who are the wives of high officials the social condition of the rest is most deplorable. It is a well known fact that the Muslims have no society but a section of men and that of women. The secluded life has made them uncivilised. The problem of conveyance and of purdah arrangements have imprisoned them in the four walls of their homes. Their information and the knowledge of the world affairs are next to nothing. They are the strict followers of old customs and traditions. These have to be followed in certain ways and on particular dates and months. No change in them is permissible. They have created an atmosphere at home that a woman following the customs in some other way is not called a true Muslim. False religious principles permeate their life. Their daily activities are intimately connected with those principles. Many ceremonies are performed with real devotion unaware of their significance. In the absence of real religious principles their belief in the unity of one God is dual. In theory they believe in the sovereignty of God but in practice they venerate many deities and saints, they suppose the worship of 'Alams' during the days of Moharam is quite different from worshipping idola. Craving of desires from other sources than God is against the real principles of Islam.

### Causes of Disease

The physical condition of the average woman is equally deplorable. The school medical examination and the number of patients in various hospitals reveal the fact that at least seventy per cent of them suffer from some disease or other. Out of ten women patients suffering from consumption in hospitals one finds six of them are Muslims. *Lack of exercise, fresh air and nourishment have been the chief causes for such a condition of health. An unhealthy person is an unfit nurse and unsuitable queen of a house. The ignorance of the laws of the hygienic way of living has made them fall an easy prey to infectious diseases. Help from medical sources is often sought too late. Often the unlucky sufferers are left crippled, deformed or unfit to do any strenuous work at home.*

The chronic poverty of the Muslims is proverbial. Their backwardness in social, physical and intellectual fields is chiefly due to it. Poverty is not only

the cause of backwardness but also of misery and evils. The chief cause of the miserable economic condition is due to the seclusion of womanhood. Man is made responsible to earn single handed and to supply all the needs of the parasites at home. Social ceremonies have to be performed. Big gatherings of relations and friends have to be fed. Certain customs and ceremonies in marriages have to be strictly followed. Costly jewellery and clothes have to be bought. Presents have to be made. Often one finds in a family (of 10 to 15 members) only one earning member and the rest of them have a birth right to sit and eat. Manual occupation is degraded. A false sense of social status prevails at home which prevents even the male members to take to any kind of work to earn their living. Earning a living



The Writer.

by ladies in the society is abhorred and it is beneath the dignity of man to allow her to work.

### Killing Woman's Individuality

Man is a lover of domination and acquisition. He is an autocratic ruler with unlimited powers at home. His instincts of leadership and that of command find a satisfactory outlet among his refugees. His position out side home being often very low, satisfaction of these instincts is not possible. His authoritative attitude or commanding influence at home creates an atmosphere of repression which kills the individuality and initiative among his woman folk. Lack of confidence in their thought and deeds is often found. They say that they

(Continued on page 7)

Children's Corner

# Essays of The First Prize Winners

Dear Girls and Boys,

Last week I published the names of the winners in competition No. 1. Today I reproduce the answers given to the first question by the girl and boy who won the two first prizes. For want of space I have held over this week The Simple Lessons in Islam.

From next Saturday I shall resume the Holy Prophet's Life. On the suggestion of Mr. M. I. M. Haniffa, B. A. (London), Advocate, who was the Judge in competition No. 1, I am classifying the next competition into the following groups:—(1) Girls up to 12 years of age (2) Girls over 12 and below 18 years. (3) Boys up to 12 years of age, and (4) Boys over 12 and below 18 years. There will be two prizes for each group. Unless you carefully follow what appears in the Children's Corner every week you cannot hope to win one of the prizes.

Your friend,  
THE EDITOR.

He usually went alone and sometimes with his family. He was very fond of being alone:—

"Alone, alone all, all alone.  
Alone in the wide, wide-sea."

The desert was as vast as the sea. He used to spend whole nights in the cave of Mt Hira communing with God. Everything around him seemed to him to speak of God. He yearned:—

"To see the world in a grain of sand,  
And heaven in a wild flower;  
Hold infinity in the palm of his hand,  
And eternity in an hour;"

It was in such a moment that God spoke to him and the first revelation was given in these words:—

"Read in the name of thy Lord who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most honourable. Who taught to write with a pen. Taught man what he knew not. Nay: man is most surely inordinate"

## Prophet Muhammad

By Miss Maas Dharamani  
Amath (1st Prize Winner  
Among Girls)

A few days after the death of his father, the Prophet of Islam was born on 29th August 570 A. D., and was named Muhammad, in the prosperous city of Mecca. His mother's name was Amina who was the daughter of the chief of the family of Zuhri.

At the time of his birth there were miraculous manifestations to indicate that the Saviour of humanity had appeared.

In his early infancy, he was given to a Bedouin woman to be nursed by her. Later on his mother Amina took him back, and brought him up with great care and affection. But when he was six years old his mother Amina died, leaving the care of the orphan child to his grand-father Abdul Muthalib. He loved the little boy very much. But a few years later he too died, leaving the boy in charge of his uncle Abu Thalib.

The boy was of a very loving disposition and felt very sorry when he saw others suffer. He was fond of going out to the desert and gazing at the scenery around him. He had often to take care of his uncle's flocks.

During the Prophet's childhood war broke out between the Koreish and the Bani Kanana on one side, and the Kais-Ay-lan on the other. During this time the people used to drink, and gamble and quarrel and behave immodestly. All this grieved Our Holy Prophet.

The boy grew up to be a very good, virtuous, and truthful young man. The people loved and trusted him so much that they called him Al-Amin (the trusty). He was well-known for his chivalrous acts, too numerous to mention here.

When he was a young man, he was entrusted with the care of the trading caravan, of a rich lady by the name of Khadija. He performed his duties so faithfully and so well, that he completely won the confidence of lady Khadija. She was so impressed by his wonderful personality that she desired to marry him. He accepted the proposal and married her. This marriage proved to be singularly happy, and the tenderest devotion existed on both sides to the very end.

For several years after his marriage the Holy Prophet used to go for meditation and prayer to a cave on Mt Hira.

## Our Holy Prophet Muhammad and His Prophethood

By Tuan Zainudeen Kitchii  
(1st Prize Winner Among Boys)

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

In the olden days Arabia was a land uncivilised, barbarous and tyrannic. Then, it was the tribal Government, and one tribe was ever at war and bloody quarrel with another. Amidst this sad and unhappy and bloody regime, there was born on the 29th August 570 a babe to one of the noblest families in Mecca, and it was named Muhammad. Abdulla, the father of this child unfortunately died a few days before its birth while he was going to Yathrib. His aggrieved widow, Amina mother of the child, was proud of her baby. This child was the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The birth of the Holy Prophet was not without those ominous signs from which peoples of the earth could know that the Prophet had appeared.

The infant Muhammad was according to Arab customs nursed by a Bedouin woman of the tribe of Bani-saad; afterwards he was brought up with the loving care of his mother Amina. When he was six years old he lost his mother, and the poor boy was left an orphan. His grandfather, Abdul Muthalib, took care of him, but three or four years later he too died, leaving the boy to the care of his uncle Abu Talib.

This boy gradually grew up in the midst of war and all sorts of human sufferings and frequent quarrels in which blood was shed. This state of affairs deeply impressed on his mind and caused in him feelings of sorrow and disgust.

Muhammad grew up to man-hood and was employed under a trading-caravan belonging to a noble and rich Koraisite Lady by the name of Khadija, who was also a relative of his. This lady took a great liking to him for she found him faithful and hard working in his work, and wished to marry him. The Holy Prophet was at his twenty-fifth year then. She was much older than he. The marriage was arranged in the usual Arab custom and it took place with the tribal splendour

(Continued on page 6)

Letters To The Editor

Musings of A Pensioner

Sir,—I have sent you some advance copies of my articles entitled "Musings of a Pensioner," of which you have been good enough to publish eleven. I must however ask you, in view of a letter published in your paper today kindly to return to me the articles that have not been published yet. The writer says that some of the articles published are beyond the understanding of your average reader and that in the rest, that are understandable, anything in the nature of witticism or literary satire should be eschewed. Otherwise these articles will scare social reformers among the Muslims off the field, and far from inducing Muslims to pray and fast, such satire, although of the lightest variety as any unbiased critic can see for himself, will have the opposite effect.

In commenting on the present deplorable state of us Muslims I cannot avoid treading, consciously or unconsciously, on the corns of some of these reformers. Social reform is a public duty and reformers must realise that it cannot be undertaken by thin-skinned reformers who must be handled tenderly. But until this is realised it is best that I should cease to contribute. I have not been merely denouncing vehemently people for not praying five times a day &c but giving chapter and verse to prove that any reform which is not based on the Quran and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet will end in disaster. If many of my readers, as the letter indicates, will only try to focus their attention on so much in my articles as reflects their own selves and will ignore the rest, it is useless for me to encumber your pages further. Moreover I realise now that I have unconsciously monopolised too much of your space and trespassed unduly on your kindness.

You cannot blame me for the outcome as I have repeatedly warned you of what will happen from a publication of my articles in Ceylon.

With salams and wishing you further success.

I am,  
Yours truly  
M. T. AKBAR

(Note by the Editor:—On the receipt of the above letter the Editor called on Mr. M. T. Akbar and persuaded him to continue the service he was rendering by his great series of articles, as in every sphere of life the best of things and the best of people have been criticised—often very unjustly. But this has not deterred great reformers from the performance of their humanitarian work, and in this there is the great example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be Peace and Blessings). Mr. Akbar has kindly consented to continue his great series, the twelfth article of which is published in this issue.)

Explanation Wanted

The Editor,  
"Star of Islam"  
Colombo.

Sir,—Will any of your readers kindly enlighten me as to the exact meaning of the following lines of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi in his *Masnavi*:—

"Dying from the inorganic we developed into the vegetable kingdom. Dying from the vegetable we rose to the animal. And leaving the animal we became men. Then what fear that death will lower us? That next transition will make us Angels. From angels we shall rise and become what no mind can conceive; we shall merge in Infinity as in the beginning. Have we not been told "All of us will return unto Him" and also the meaning of the following words in Sufi phraseology: "Hulul and Ithihad."

Thanking you in anticipation and wishing your journal success.

Yours etc.,  
STUDENT.

Wisdom of the Holy Quran

Sir,—I send you herein some beautiful quotations from the Quran. Verses of the Quran are of two kinds, viz: Ayat-i-Bayyinat. i.e., plain verses or verses with positive proofs, and Ayat-i-Mutashi-bat. i.e., verses involving metaphorical, spiritual, or doubtful sense which can be interpreted in as many as seven different ways, or more. In the absence of Arabic characters, the transliterations are done to the best of my ability. But, however, the verses can be easily referred to in the Quran by the aid of the names of the Suras by the beauty of the Arabic expressions.

(1) 'Ial khairi waya-muruna bilma roof' (Sura Al-i-Imran) Do what is good and what is right. (2) 'Fala uksumu bima tubsirun' (Sura Haqq) I do call to witness what you see and what you see not. The quintessence of the Real Truth must be found out through our highest spiritual faculties. (3) 'Lakad khalaknal-insana fikabab' (Sura Balad) We have created man into toil and struggle. Man is born to

strive and struggle. If he suffers hardship, he must have patience for Allah will make difficulties easy. (4) 'Wal akhira tu khairun wa-abqa' (Sura A'la) The future world is better and more lasting. 'Al moutu jasrun byan-ul habib wal habib' Death is a bridge between the Lover and the beloved. So says a Hadith. (5) 'Fa-inna ma'al usri yusura' (Sura Alam Nashrah) verily with every difficulty there is relief. God provides a solution if we only follow His path and show our faith by patience and well doing. (6) 'Fathd-kuruni athd-kurkum' (Sura Baqara) Ye remember Me I will remember you. This refers to Spiritual Zikr. (7) 'La Tou-khudu-hu sinatun wala noum' (Sura Baqara) Nor slumber can seize Him, nor sleep. He is ever the same, full of activities. (8) 'Fakana kaba kousaini auw adna' (Sura Najam) And was at a distance of but two bow lengths, or even nearer to the Supreme Being. Some commentators are of opinion that this refers to the two arches of the eyebrows, and the bridge of the nose. (9) 'Fa-innallaha laghani-

yun hamid' (Sura Ibrahim) God Self Sufficient, or free from all wants. If all rational beings on this earth joined together in denying God. It would make no difference to God, for He is surely Self Sufficient, full of Goodness. (10) 'Man a'mila shalihan fa-li-nafsihi-wa-man-asa falaihi' (Sura Jathiya) If any one does a righteous deed, it is to the advantage of his own soul. If he does an evil deed, it works against his own soul. Truly that good and evil actions are from God. But, these actions are the consequences of one's own actions.—Assalam Alaikum.

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## Notice To Readers

The usual weekly sermon has been held over from the issue for want of space.

Mr. Enver C. Ahlip, B. A. (London) will begin next Saturday a series of articles on *Persian Poetry*.

## The Star of Islam

A CULTURAL WEEKLY

COLOMBO: OCTOBER 28, 1939



## The Reformer's Task

THE path of a reformer is not an easy one. It is strewn with thorns and thistles in the form of opposition and criticism from those who are used to sinful ways. They become enraged when their faults are pointed out. They become hysterical when they are told that they are leading un-Islamic lives. They heap abuses on the man who sincerely seeks their reformation, and attribute unworthy motives to him. But the true reformer is undaunted by such things. While pitying these abject slaves of materialism he continues to perform his noble mission. He knows he is performing a duty which is expected of him. He also knows that the result of his efforts is entirely in the hands of ALLAH.

The position of the Ceylon Muslims is such as to make reformation seem impossible. Very many of them are Muslims only in name. Their ways of living make them the worst possible advertisements of Islam. The very foundations on which the grand edifice of Islam stands are pooh-pooed and relegated to the realm of out-of-date things. The Muslim institution of prayer is allowed to be superseded by the Christian, Hindu, or Buddhist modes of worship, resulting in the increase of arm-chair devotees. But if any sincere Muslim, who is terribly grieved at this sorry state of affairs and out of the bitterness of his heart engendered by his love of Islam, should repeatedly and vehemently denounce these

modern lip-professors of this great religion for their infidelity to ALLAH and His Messenger, MUHAMMAD (on whom be Peace and Blessings), he is at once criticised as one obsessed with personal prejudices. But this should cause no surprise because it is a case of history repeating itself.

ALLAH works in mysterious ways. Out of His infinite compassion, He chooses in every age and in every country someone to bring the lost sheep back into the fold. Prophets have been sent for such a purpose, but not prophets alone. Even ordinary men and women whose hearts have been illumined by His Grace have from time to time by their ways of living, by their utterances, and by their writings brought about the regeneration or salvation of their people. These reformers have often been abused, insulted, and badly handled, but they have continued their great humanitarian work irrespective of all these. So if in our own time and among our own people similar treatment is meted out to the few solitary individuals who seek to serve their fellow-beings in the highest sense of the word service, it is no wonder and it no way dims their moral and spiritual lustre.

We have already said that the position of the Ceylon Muslims is such as to make reformation seem impossible. But we are not without hope. Signs are not wanting that the local Muslims are now taking a keener interest in the reconstruction of their communal life. "The Star of Islam" within an incredibly short time has succeeded, even in a small measure, in making them think of their future in the light of social, moral, and spiritual values. The increasing number of contributors both men and women, to this paper, its rapidly increasing circulation, and its ever-widening popularity, are all healthy signs, which show that the local Muslims have at last begun to take an interest in religious matters. Hitherto the apathy of the people towards religion has allowed them to be easy victims of un-Islamic ideas and influences. But the awakening caused by "The Star of Islam" gives us reason to hope that before long, *inshah Allah*, the local Muslims will be able to recover much lost ground.

## The Significance of Ramazan

### The Purposes of The Fast

By Mrs. Muzeena Hassim nee Ahlip

"READ in the name of the Lord who created". To an unlettered Arab more than one thousand three hundred years ago came that voice big with the design of the future, and that was why on the 13th or 14th of October there was presented a curious sight to the wayfarer passing by the Galle Face Promenade. There he saw not only the usual habitues but also a vast concourse of Moors, Malays, Malayalees, Afghans and Borahs, a motley array assembled together in the gathering dusk peering into the twilight sky. What was there that they should gaze so? Did they hope to resolve the mystery of lovely Hesperus, flaming Mars or Jupiter serene? No! They were but waiting for a glimpse, only a glimpse of Diana that should proclaim the birth of Ramazan, the sacred month, when would begin a twenty nine days' fast, from the moment the silver of the moon mingles with the black of night, to the moment the sun's rim dips beneath the horizon's edge.

"Oh ye who believe fasting is prescribed for you as for those that came before you that you may guard against evil."

Unique it is: this fast, unique among the religious systems of the world. All great teachers, Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ, Moses, and the Holy Prophet Mohammed all passed through the stage of fast and lonely vigils, but no religious system incorporated the fast into its body of observances, save Islam. Islam specifically lays down fasting as a religious observance and left not to commentators and improvisators to develop the system of fast as prevails in some other religions. In Islam the purpose of the fast underwent a change, for it is not an expression of penance or penitence. Rather it is a purposive institution to fight evil.

"Repel evil by what is best"—Koran and surely fasting is an antidote to evil for it elevates the soul of man transporting it from dwelling on material needs to a wider and more expansive aether where the soul roams freely on pastures no eyes have seen.

#### Purpose of The Fast

"Oh, ye who believe fasting is prescribed for you, as for those that come before you, that you may guard against evil."

In that quotation from the Koran the purpose of the fast is indicated. Islam is both a philosophy and a way of life. As a philosophy Islam seeks to discover ultimate values, and as a way of life it indicates the faith whereby the soul of man reaches his greatest stature not only in the realisation of his own spirituality, but in the conscious effort to be a service to humanity as well. The Muslim is not one who tries to cultivate the garden of his soul regardless of the currents of life that may seethe and surge around him, but he is a Muslim, who, while keeping his soul pure and undefiled, realises his duty to mankind. He is one who loves his fellow men, and, through that love, realises the proximity of his soul to the spirit of the universe. The light of the way is Islam. Its injunctions, its observances serve to lead the soul to a clearer, a purer day and to another region.

All that is most beautiful imagined there.

In happier beauty, more pellucid streams,

An ampler ether, a diviner air,

And fields invested with purple gleams,

Climes which the sun who sheds the brightest ray,

Earth knows is all unworthy to survey.

Religion is the avenue by which all the lower passions of man are sublimated, the close relationship between man and god realised and the individual brought in to such close union with his fellow creatures that sympathy for all is engendered in the heart of the devotee. Islam realises all these ends, and of the four pillars of Islam Prayer, Zakat, Fasting and Hadj!—Fasting perhaps is the most potent in binding man to man, and along with Prayer, in elevating the soul to that blest abode.

The purposes of the fast are many. A doctor would recommend fasting from the point of view of health. It is a frequent observation of the medical profession that the man who diets and who lives frugally is more immune from disease than the rich. Fasting produces no ill effects. The first days of the fast are difficult, but soon the system responds and is toned up most wonderfully. But abstention from food is not the only end in view. During this month the devout Muslim gives up voluntarily what he well may legally enjoy. Its logical corollary is the jettisoning of all evil thoughts and evil actions, for he who for a noble cause gives up what is his, should be the last, indeed, to desire what is not his, or work to circumvent the effect of his generous gesture.

#### Realisation of The Needs of The Poor

Fasting makes the rich realise the needs of the poor. Fasting makes the rich realise what suffering is most effectively, thereby awakening in their hearts an active desire to help relieve the sufferings of the poor, not merely as an abstract duty, but as a craving of their own hearts to ameliorate the condition of the unfortunates around them. It is not every man who has passed through the vale of tears—Some there are who have been rich and on whom the good things of the world have been showered: others have had few ill moments, finding, as they do, food and raiment with little difficulty, but millions and millions the world over have ever been dogged by that spectre of stagnation, and whose dream of a world of beauty had for ever eluded them. Millions there are whose meals would be the scantiest, the most wretched, and the rich, living in luxury,

(Continued on page 5)

# Islam—A Universal Religion of Peace And Progress

## Islam Enlarged The Scope of Religion By Scientific Research

(Continued from previous issue)

By **Maulavi Abdul Karim, B. A.**

*Retired Inspector of Schools, Bengal*

By putting an end to all conflicts between religion and science, Islam immeasurably enlarged the scope of religion, which had till then been regarded only as a means of man's future salvation, but now, for the first time, came to be looked upon also as an effective factor in his present material advancement. Besides, by making the first principle of scientific progress—the subservience of Nature to man—an article of faith, Islam revolutionised human thought, imparted immense initiative and energy to it and greatly impelled it to investigate the marvels of creation. Thus every branch of learning conducive to human weal and progress came within the purview of Islam. Some undreamt-of discoveries and inventions were made and these immensely contributed to the welfare of mankind and progress of civilisation. The Muslims created Chemistry, made most important discoveries in Astronomy, added much to the knowledge of Mathematics and Medicine and made valuable researches in Botany, Geology, Zoology and other branches of Natural Philosophy, and, the last but not the least, saved the Grecian lore from destruction by neglect. The foundation of Physical science was thus laid and the gates of investigation into the marvels of creation were flung wide open.

Before the advent of the Prophet of Islam learning was confined to the few. No messenger of God, from Noah to Jesus, did anything worth mentioning for the dissemination of knowledge. The Prophet of Islam, though unread himself, was the first to move in the matter. Convinced that the ignorant cannot properly know God and are unable to realise adequately His goodness and greatness, he made the acquisition of knowledge incumbent upon all his followers, irrespective of sex and rank: "Talabul-Ilme Farizatun Ala Kulle Muslimin Wa Muslimatin": "Seeking of knowledge is imperative for all Muslims, males and females." The Prophet enjoined the Muslims "to study from the cradle to the grave", "the ink of the scholar" being, in his estimation, "holier than the blood of the martyr", and "an hour's contemplation and study of God's creation" being "better than a year's adoration." He urged them to "seek knowledge though it be available in China", as "he who leaves home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God.

As in early age the bulk of mankind could not think in the abstract, they did not realise the utility of the forces of Nature. These were looked upon as sacred objects possessing supernatural powers and were worshipped as gods and goddesses. It was Islam that brought down the elements of Nature from the high pedestal of divinity to that of servants of mankind. For the first time the Holy Quran declared that the main purpose for which different objects, from the mightiest sun to the insignificant atom, were created, is to minister to the needs of mankind, who were commanded to investigate their properties and to harness them for human service.—in other words, to cultivate every branch of science for the good of humanity. Thus did the Quran by declaring man to be the lord of the universe and everything in it subservient to him, give a tremendous impetus to the development of scientific research. The initiation of the conquest of Nature and the utilisation of its forces for the service of man is, indeed, one of the greatest blessings Islam has conferred on the world.

The Quran clearly indicating how to reduce Nature to human service by contemplation and observation, placed in the hands of man the key with which the treasure-house of Nature

could be opened. Besides, the Muslims were enjoined to look upon the universe as an expression of God's attributes and to glorify Him not by mere expression of lip-gratitude, but by discovering and utilising the properties and potentialities of the things He has created for supplying the needs of His creatures. Realisation of the scattered bounties of God was to be the realisation of God Himself. A Muslim was to spiritualise, as it were, his whole material surroundings by seeing and feeling the evidence of God's power and love in every blade of grass and in every breath of air. In fact man knows nothing of God except through His work in Nature. Islam thus gave to scientific research a religious aspect unknown and unthought-of before. It was this religious stimulus that particularly impelled the early Muslims zealously to exert themselves for the advancement of science. There was hardly any scientific subject which they did not strive to explore. Even aviation, the latest achievement of Europe and wonder of the twentieth century was not left untired. Abul Qasim Abbas Bin Firmas, an Arab scientist of Cordova, invented a flying machine in the ninth century. By attaching a couple of wings to his body and getting on an eminence he flew to a considerable distance, but while alighting he was hurt, because he was not aware that birds when they alight come down upon their tails. Subsequently he was successful as an aviator and used to fly to great distance at a considerable speed.

History bears incontestable testimony to the fact that modern science owes its origin to Islam and progress in scientific knowledge is the outcome of freedom of thought and spirit of enquiry prescribed for the Muslims by the Holy Quran. These are not, as is generally believed, a product of Christianity, which for a long time relentlessly proscribed all free thinking and liberal reasoning and horribly persecuted all inquisitive people, such as Vanini, Hypatia, Copernicus, Galileo, who made scientific researches. The impression prevalent in Christian countries that Christianity advanced science and civilisation is, therefore, as erroneous as the idea that Islam is an unprogressive religion that hampered their progress.

(To be continued)

### The Significance of Ramazan

(Continued from page 4)

secluded from the contaminating influence of the world, the stunts, realise not the abjectness, the misery of their position. They throw a few coppers, or cast a handful of silver recking little of the sufferings of the poor. To such as has not passed through the vale of tears, but had been reared in the lap of luxury, the Muslim fast is most salutary. By the pain in their stomach, by the growing pangs of hunger can they know what the poor have to bear as their lot in daily life. But what of their pain, voluntarily borne and eased by their zeal for their religion. Is it comparable to the hunger the poor have to bear through sheer necessity, the hunger in their hearts that they, should be destitute unable to feed for themselves or those who lean on them or are dear to them? They suffer, but Islam lays it down that their pangs be shared by their richer brethren. That in the hearts of the richer brethren will arise a compassion for the unfriended which will issue forth in action in helping the needy, providing for those not only of one religion but of all mankind for the call of Religion is the call of humanity and offering makes the whole world kin.

But the fast is purposed for the development of the spiritual stature of man as well. There is a tradition of

the Holy Prophet which says "Fasting is a shield against the devil's wickedness in the world and from hell fire in the world to come." The Persian Sufi Yazid al Bistami declared "I have not found the true knowledge of God except in a hungry stomach and a naked body." In Islamic mysticism fasting is considered one of the means of purifying the soul and preparing it for the vision splendid, by which time the soul, purified by self mortification fasting and prayers, could come face to face with its maker. The fast is like a fire. Even as the fire clears the gold of dross so does the fast. It clears the soul of evil. Inasmuch as the fast involves, as it does, abstinence from that which is normally lawful, the end in view is not the purification of the body but the discipline of body in the interest of the soul, when discipline has proceeded as far as ability to withstand the savages of hunger, when the soul realises that this is only a step towards awakening in itself a religious consciousness, it ceases to take much delight in material things, more so when the Koran frequently touches upon the necessity of night prayers along with the fast tarawih. The body thus abstains from food whereby the soul may be benefited and the body counts for less. Thus the soul is enabled to wing its way to the heavenly choirs above.

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## Our Holy Prophet Muhammad and His Prophethood

(Continued from page 2)

and gaiety. The marriage was a very happy one. There were three sons and four daughters born by this marriage. The sons died in their infancy, and the daughters survived to see the great flaming victory of Islam into the wider world. Khadija was the first to believe in him. She stood by him to soothe and to console and gave him hope and encouragement.

The Holy Prophet after his marriage for fifteen years prepared himself for his holy struggle. He prayed and meditated. He was kind towards everybody. He was truthful and honest and led an honourable and pure life. These qualities earned him respect from the people and made them call him alamin, the Trusty.

By his marriage to Khadija our Holy Prophet was one of the richest men in Mecca. With this resource he helped the wanting poor and was always kindly towards them. His acts of humanity were great and an example of greatness of man's love to man. He loved men, women and children; he loved humanity, and he lived for the upliftment of humanity. He helped the weak; he respected women and lifted them to the level of men. For these qualities all people loved him and many went to him for advice and help. He intervened in disputes and quarrels and found them a peaceful solution. When the great Kaaba was built there was a quarrel but Muhammad's wisdom saved a bloody war.

After this marriage it was a habit of our Holy Prophet to go to a cave on the Mount of Hira for prayer and medita-

tion. He was fond of solitude. He often remained there overnight communing with his creator. It was whilst in prayer and meditation in the cave one night that the Holy Prophet was conferred his Prophethood. The message, a voice from the stillness of the night, in the following words spoke to him. "Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most Honourable. Who taught to write with the pen. Taught man what he knew not. Nay: man is most surely inordinate." He was much excited and in a trance hurried home and reclined on his bed and Khadija watched besides him. When he recovered he told his wife of his experience in the cave. Khadija soothed him, dispelled his doubts and fears. She believed in him and helped him to his great venture. She was confident that her husband was the chosen deliverer. That was how our Holy Prophet received his first revelation from Allah. It was a spark later kindled into a great flame that swept across the arid desert sand and the farther worlds beyond and illuminated the heart of man and lifted him from darkness to light.

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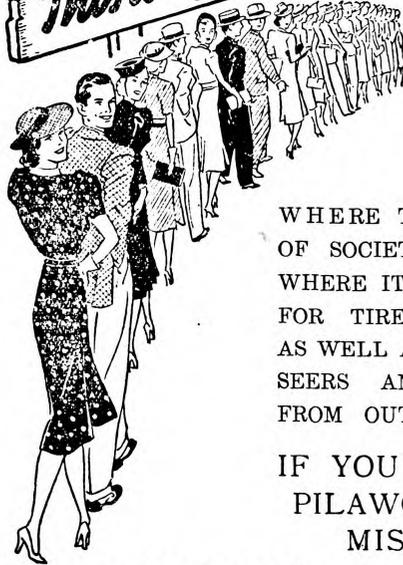
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## The Prophet of Islam

### The Story Of The Birds' Nest And The Cobweb

BY MISS RAHEEMA MANTARA

The event took place about one thousand three hundred and fifty-six years ago, just at the outset of the prophetic career of the founder of Islam.

At the out-set of his announcing to the Meccans that he was a Prophet of Allah, the several Arabian tribes selected a representative who took their oath to murder the Prophet and set out in search of him. He was then concealed in a barren rock within a few miles from Mecca and the persecutors tracing by footsteps and other evidences of recent travelling came to the very cave inside which the Prophet was in hiding.

Just opposite to the cave there was a nest in the shrubs in which a species of small birds was found, the parent birds feeding the younger ones and the mouth of the cave was so thickly cobwebbed that the persecutors were led to believe that no person could be found in the cave and went away to search other places, and the life of the Holy-Prophet was saved and the Islamic Faith was firmly planted in the world to be the greatest blessing to all mankind.

The Holy Prophet lost his father in infancy and his mother when he was six years of age. The lonely orphan boy had some very kind uncles, his father's brothers. He was by nature grave and earnest. In his younger days he would prefer to think earnestly about the stern facts of life. For forty years he was devotedly looking into the hearts of things and brushing away trifles and frivolities from his life.

#### Degeneration of Christianity

With regard to religion the Arabs had three hundred and sixty idols or images as their objects of worship, even the stars Venus, the dog star and other stars had representative images. Blood offerings, even the sacrifice of human lives to some of these idols were offered. The various tribes were often in war with each other. Life in Arabia was in a very chaotic state. His object was not only to bring the whole of Arabia into a unified state but through his teaching to revolutionize the whole world into an orderly peaceful state under the Worship of Allah, the Creator of the universe, and to ban the worship of idols created by the hands of man.

Five hundred years before his birth the founder of the Christian Faith Jesus taught as his first teaching the worship of the Father in Heaven with all one's heart, mind and power. Unfortunately the primary teachings were disfigured, images and statues were introduced into the Churches and the idea of back again to idolatry was impressed on the mind of the people and culminated in the Nicean council.

So that the new Faith of Islam had not only to carry on its business by putting down the worship of idols and also in a way to suppress this new confirmation of the Nicean decision.

We are all aware as to how far the Islamic faith had succeeded. According to the Geneva statistics, one third of the human race profess Islam. In accordance with another authority one fifth of the human race are Muslims. In Islam there is no colour bar, no untouchables, and every man and woman stand in equal footing before Allah and man. The blessings which this faith has bestowed on mankind is incalculable. Our religion inculcates the preservation of mankind in an orderly and humane manner always never forgetting that we are under the guidance of the compassionate merciful Allah.

I trust my readers will agree with me that the trifles, the birds' nest, and cob-web being there just at the nick of time saved the world from the greatest calamity that otherwise would have happened to the world.

## The Causes that Led to the Degeneration of the Muslims

(Continued from page 2)

are unfit to follow intellectual activities which are reserved for men. A great veneration to manhood, the consciousness of one's own deficiencies, the lack of experiments and experiences, lack of information and knowledge of the world have been the chief causes for the backward condition of Muslim woman. Their depressing conditions have a direct effect on the future generation who have been trained by women.

### The Mother as Teacher

Intellectually they are dwarfs. Their faculties of mind, aptitudes and tendencies have had no chance to develop. In their actual life they are called reasonless beings and incapable of holding a responsible position. How could they be wise? They are shut up from the modern world, and its civilisation. They have no opportunity for creative thought and action. Expression of thought is taken for a great sin. They are made to live a hypocritical life. Naturally a dual life has made them cunning and shy. Their outlook on life is narrow and degrading. A woman's education means the education of the whole family she is the teacher of her little ones. Their training up to the school going age depends upon her considerate and sympathetic treatment of them: She lays the foundation of education, character development and creates an educational atmosphere at home. In schools individual attention is not paid and a child's interest, feeling and aptitude which need a sympathetic understanding are not cared for. Home is a place where the school education is supplemented: And his needs are satisfied. A mother is a teacher whose teaching is accompanied by love and sympathy. The illiterate mothers have been the chief cause for the degeneration of the Muslims. They instead of making the children brave, intellectual, healthy and helpful taught them idleness, superstition, fatalism, and carelessness.

### Goal of a Girl's Life

Emancipation of womanhood is the cry of the day. It is not only professed but also practised in actual life by the people of other communities. It is high time for our men, in view of the degeneration of the nation, to put their best efforts forward to achieve it and to be more generous and liberal in allowing their womanfolk to take active part in the educated social and economical activities of their community. No nation can be called strong and progressive unless its woman folk are so. Regeneration of the Muslim nation is possible only when its women are educated, and are made efficient and independent. The goal of the young girls' life should not be only marriage but also efficiency and culture. The contemptuous attitude of superiority of man and inferiority of woman should be replaced by equality. Real and good education on certain fundamental principles should be given to them to enable them to realise self and its duty to home and society. Any woman educated on such line will not stoop to silly and useless social customs. Any effective change in the conditions of women is bound to effect in those of men. The regeneration of our nation is possible only when our women are made efficient, intelligent, and brave.

(To be continued)

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## Musings Of A Pensioner--XII

(Continued from page 1)

"Futhubathul Makkiya" the significance of the daily prayers in strengthening the faith of man until it attains perfection. In every *Rakaat* we repeat the *Fathiha* beginning with the invocation that we seek refuge in Allah from the machinations of Satan the accursed. This invocation really means that we seek refuge in the essence of Allah from any evil which may accrue to us from one of Allah's attributes, embodied in *Iblis*, for Allah's attributes include not only those that lead aright (Al Hadi) but also those which lead astray (Al Mudillu). We next follow with the formula that we begin in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. The attribute of *Rahmaniyyah* opens up a whole vista of God's benevolences and munificence towards His creatures. The intelligent man is lost in the depths of this attribute. Then Allah is Raheem; He rewards more than man deserves; every good action is rewarded twice over, not seventy times over. Chapter IV, verse 40 is as follows:—

"God is never unjust in the least degree;

If there is any good (done),

He doubleth it,

And giveth from His own Presence a great reward."

### The Fathiha

The words "His own Presence" show that the reward is beyond all the merits of the act and that it is an act of condescension on Allah's part. The *Fathiha* after the opening invocation begins with the praising of Allah as every prayer should. As Mr. Yusuf Ali remarks if the praise is from our in—most being, it brings us into contact with God. Such praise can only be complete if it is aided by knowledge. That is why the Quran lays emphasis on the use of the intellect in the contemplation of the marvels of the universe for an adequate idea of the omnipotence and omniscience of Allah, His transcendence and His Immanence. It is no wonder that the cheeks of the Holy Prophet were drenched in tears whenever he read the incomparable magical lines recorded in verse 189—191 of Chapter III. The way to intuitive or mystical knowledge is through reflective knowledge. According to Plato the steps are dialectic, rational inquiry and then a vision of reality. The Platonic forms can only be apprehended after a preliminary training in the exact sciences and abstract studies (See Radhakrishnan "An Idealist View of Life"). The *Fathiha* starts with the statement that all praise is due to Allah and that is so. Whenever we praise a created being or thing it is because of an attribute or quality which that created being or thing possesses, which attribute is an attribute of God. So that whenever any one praises any person or thing the praise ultimately reaches to Allah. Then we have the four great attributes of Allah, Rabb, Rahman, Raheem and King of the day of judgment. The late Al Hajj Khwaja Kamaluddin has written extensively on these four attributes and nothing need be said further. Malik or king of the day of judgment does not only mean that Allah is the King on the last day. He is the King at every instant of time, because His rules and laws operate and have full validity at every point instant. I wonder if any of my readers have ever watched the onset of a long line of waves towards the shore. Have they noticed how a straight line of waves gradually assumes the contour of the shore as it approaches it? As Sir William Bragg explains it is due to the effect of friction from the shelving shore on each atom of the sea water. The same phenomenon can be observed when a line of soldiers marches over rough ground. The friction causes each molecule to incline in the same direction as the shore till at last the whole wave adopts the contour of the

shore. It is thus that Allah's laws work in every little incident or event at every instant in this universe. This illustration will serve to indicate how knowledge helps the human personality to reach God. Allah says in Chapter II, verse 152 "Remember me and I will remember you." Allah's remembrance of the suppliant is in generous proportion to the amount of knowledge and intensity of feeling and emotion the person praying puts into his remembrance of Allah. This promise of Allah to remember a tiny puny creature like man is an act of grace from Allah and it is for this reason that the suppliant assumes the position of Rukuh or bowing and repeats three times "Glory be to God, the greatest of all" meaning Allah is greater than man can see with his sight, imagine with his fancy or think with his intellect. The Rukuh is to make man conscious of the infinite act of grace of the Lord of the worlds in remembering His slave—the Maker, Creator and Nourisher of the infinite number of astronomical universes and the worlds of each created being with their separate codes of laws, obligations and duties.

### Mystic Stage of Prayer

After the soul's praise of Allah, the suppliant asserts that he serves Allah alone and that it is from Allah only that he beseeches for assistance. The sentence is put in the plural, because the assurance is made by the suppliant with the fullest integration and concentration of all his powers. He makes the declaration with all the will, emotion and strength, in his power including the strength of each of his limbs, members, veins, nerves and bones of his body. This is the mystic stage of the prayer, for God says in His infinite mercy that He is a partner with His slave in the latter's prayer (see Hadith). Can my reader understand the significance of God's condescension to man in thus descending from His Exalted position to that of mere man. A Muslim's spirituality depends on the intensity of his apprehension of this act of grace on the part of Allah. This is the manner in which a Muslim is led to the straight path which is spelt in Arabic with the same letter as the first letter in the word Quran. It will be noticed that this letter "Q" only occurs in one place in the *Fathiha*; the straight path is the path indicated in the Quran, which according to lady Ayesha is the character of the Holy Prophet. The straight path is therefore the straight line joining man's essence with that of God. When the suppliant assumes the standing posture from the Rukuh he makes a daring and presumptuous declaration, namely that Allah responds to the prayer of one who praises Him. It is to correct this presumption in man that the suppliant then assumes the lowest and humblest position of all, the *Sajdah* (see XCVI—19) and he glorifies Allah three times as the Most High and that Allah is above all defects even when he has taught man to pray to Him thus. It is no wonder then that a Muslim's prayer is called by Sufis as his *Mehraj* or ascent, being a copy of the Prophet's ascent to God on the night of the *Mehraj*. And that is why the last prayer uttered by the Muslim at the end of his Salat is in the form of the dialogue between the Prophet and Allah on the *Mehraj*. On his approach to God the Holy Prophet greeted God with his salutations and blessings and God greeted the Prophet by saying "Peace be on you, oh Prophet" to which the Prophet replied "Peace be with us and with the virtuous servants of God." If we keep in mind the fact that the Muslim's motions in prayer are an exact copy of the motions taught to the Prophet by the Angel Gabriel and that the words uttered are the identical words revealed by Allah Himself and taught by Him to His slave, our Holy Prophet, can any form of mystical prayer be more perfect than the Muslim Salat?

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