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The

Star of Islam

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"Islam Expects Every Muslim To Do His Duty"

Mr. Jinnah's Appeal To Muslim Youth

In a broadcast talk on I'd day from Bombay, Mr. Jinnah said:

We, of the older generation, have had our trials, but I wish to forget them to-night in the company of my friends, particularly the young, and to touch, if I may, the fresher springs of inspiration in their hearts, for it is they who will henceforth have to bear the burden of our aspirations.

The discipline of the Ramzan fast and prayer will culminate to-day into an immortal meekness of heart before God, but it shall not be the meekness of a weak heart, and they who would think so are doing wrong both to God and to the Prophet, for it is the outstanding paradox of all religions that the humble shall be the strong and it is of particular significance in the case of Islam, for Islam, as you all know, really means action. The discipline of Ramzan was designed by our Prophet to give us the necessary strength for action. And action implies society of man. When our Prophet preached action, he did not have in mind only the solitary life of a single human being, the deeds he accomplishes only within himself, the prayer and all it involves spiritually. According to the holy Quran a very real connection exists between prayer and life. You will remember how many and wonderful are the opportunities given to us to meet our fellow beings, to study them, to understand them, and, through understanding, serve them; and you will notice that all these opportunities have been created by laying down the law for prayers. Five times during the day we have to collect in the mosque or our mohalla, then every week on a Friday we have to gather in the biggest mosque in the town, then again once a year we have to congregate in the biggest mosque outside the town on the Id day, and lastly there is the Haj to which Muslims from all parts of the world journey once at least in their life time to commune with God in the House of God.

You will have noticed that this plan of our prayers must necessarily bring us into contact not only with other Muslims but also with members of all communities when we must encounter

on our way. I don't think that these injunctions about our prayers could have been merely a happy accident. I am convinced that they were designed thus to afford men opportunities of fulfilling their social instincts.

A Positive Duty

Man has indeed been called God's Caliph in the Quran; and if that description of man is to be of any significance, it imposes upon us a duty to follow the Quran, to behave towards his mankind. In the widest sense of the word this duty is the duty of love and to forbear. And this, believe me, is not a negative duty but a positive one.

If we have any faith in the love and toleration towards God's children, to whatever community they may belong, we must act upon the faith in the daily round of our simple duties and unobtrusive pieties. On this day of Id, there will be no worthy manifestation of the spirit that kindled in us through fast and prayer than to resolve to bring about a complete harmony within our household, within our community and within our country with all its variety of religion and creeds and to work, whether in private life or public, for no selfish ends but into greater good of all our countrymen and finally, of all human beings.

It is a great ideal, and it will demand effort and sacrifice. Not seldom will your minds be assailed by doubts. There will be conflicts not only material, which you will perhaps be able to resolve with courage, but spiritual also. We shall have to face them; and to day, when our hearts are humble, we do not imbibe that higher courage to do so, we never shall.

All our leaders, both Muslims and Hindus, continue to be pained at communal strife. I shall not enter into the history of its causes, but there will arise moments when the minds of men will be worked up and then differences will assume the character of a conflict. It is at such moments that I shall ask you to remember your Id prayer and to reflect for a while if we could not avoid them in the light of the guidance given to us by our Quran and that mighty spirit which is Islam.

(Continued on page 8)

Lines Written In Dejection

By "DAR-ES-SALAAM"

Within my soul a deadly sense Of anguish, as if world's dread pestilence Had seized and wounded sore This mortal body which of yore Had little cause to weep: As though the body's pain were sent up thence

My soul due company to keep; It aches and aches and seems that never more this beautiful world and all its bounteous store Can happiness impart My aching eye and heart. Lord grant that this my life's brief span Though yet of little good to man And woman, yet may it be consecrate To thy sublime and Holy Plan. Within my soul has sorrow taken stand:

When'er I wake what sorrows start Where'er I sleep what misery's band Did ever wring my heart Full well ye know, Oh Lord, Creator Grand Do grant me, Lord, Even if this life should end midst darkling pall If life of mine can give but little joy To those around, me men my comrades all To those around me, woman's glorious strain Do grant me that I find Thy grace before I die And feel my life not wholly lived in vain. Let me but see, oh, bright and clear, The Truth of Thy blest message dear That Thou hast brought us for a purpose grand To this our earthly, transient strand And that to Thee will be our journey plain For "unto Thee do we return again"

RETIREMENT OF MR. M. M. SALDIN

Mr. M. M. Saldin, Chief Lithographer and Officer-in-Charge, Litho., Dept. Surveyor General's Office, has retired after thirty-five years' service. He joined the Department as a Clerk and D'man and worked in this capacity for many years and was given in charge of the Litho Department on the ground of special merit. He is Facile Princeps in the Art of Lithography and was granted the Diploma by the Department of Technology of the City and Guilds of London Institute as a result of examination. He was in the Special Class of the Service before retirement.

The Secret Of The Beginning

Qualities and their Greatness

By the Sufi Movement of Ceylon, Kandy.

"Bismillah Hirrahmaan-Nirraheem." "I begin this with the name of Allah, He is all Benefactor, He is all Kind." Allah, Rahmaan, Raheem are three qualities or Asmas of God. These in unison are pure and great in the course of the phenomenal World.

THE QUALITY 'ALLAH'

That, which created and showed out the whole world. That, which could destroy and create, and The Creator, That, which is creating and all that which shall ever be created. That, which gathered around It the attributes worthy of worship by all creatures and That, Indefinite That, which stood Itself within Itself is ALLAH.

THE QUALITY 'RAHMAAN'

That, which feeds and nurtures from the tiny ant to the biggest creature. That, which is the love of guard from the evil and ensures a healthy living. That, which is equally upon the purified and purified in this world. That, which benefits all according to what they deserve in the world beyond, the grave in RAHMAAN, a quality of the same ALLAH.

THE QUALITY 'RAHEEM'

That, which fulfilled the promise by extending eternal bliss on those who died before Death. That, which granted the Blessed Meeting (Liqa) to the beloved faithful. That, which rained Its Grace (Arul) on the bosom kindreds. That, which cursed incessant unhappiness on the faithless, is RAHEEM, a quality of the same ALLAH.

These three qualities or Asmas clearly indicate:- 1. The Action, 2. Support of the Action and the Acted, 3. Re-action Hence, came the order to begin with the name of Allah.

In beginning with the name of Allah the qualities of Action, Support and Re-action or benefit are sought for. In this the whole course is embodied. In all our work-whether to read or to write, eat or drink, travel or journey- the desire is-- a good beginning, easy career and a happy end.

Therefore, the secret of reciting the Great Name of Allah at the beginning is to achieve a happy end in all doings. "Pure are they, whose Heart, Word and Deed are in unison."

JAMA-ATHUS SALIHIYA BURDHA MAJLIS

Lecture on Unity

At a meeting of the above Majlis which will be held on Sunday, the 26th inst. at 8-30 a.m. at the Salih Thaikya, 132, New Moor St., Colombo, under the Chairmanship of Mr. S. L. Mahmood Hadjar, J.P., Janab El Haj S. P. Sultan Alim Sahib will deliver a lecture on "Unity".

Women's Section

# THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE

## Contrast Between Muslim Women of Today and Those of the Past

BY MISS LUBNA KHALEEL

If a careful examination is made into the causes which are responsible for the present decadence of the Muslims, particularly in Ceylon, it will be easy to see that ignorance is one of the causes. In the pages of "The Star of Islam", repeated attention has been drawn to the Holy Prophet's devotion to knowledge and science as distinguishing him from all other teachers, and bringing him into the closest affinity with the modern world of thought. Medina the seat of the theocratic commonwealth of Islam, had, after the fall of Mecca, become the centre of attraction, not to the hosts of Arabia only, but also to inquirers from abroad. Here flocked the Persian, the Greek, the Syrian, the Irakian, and African of diverse hues and nationalities from the North and the West.

Our Holy Prophet said "Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety; who speaks of it, praises the Lord; who seeks it, adores God; who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and who imparts it to its fit subjects, performs an act of devotion to God. Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is our ornament in the company of friends; it serves as an armour against our enemies. With knowledge, the servant of God rises to the heights of goodness and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next" (Tradition from the *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 1. chapter on knowledge)

But the acquiring of knowledge was not confined to men only. Ameer Ali says, "the love of learning and arts was by no means confined to one sex. The culture and education of the women proceeded on parallel lines with that of the men, and women were as keen in the pursuit of literature and as devoted to science as men. They had their own colleges; they studied medicine and jurisprudence, lectured on rhetoric, ethics, and belles-lettres, and participated with the stronger sex in the glories of a splendid civilisation. The wives and daughters of magnates and sovereigns spent their substance in founding colleges and endowing universities, in establishing hospitals for the sick, refugees for the homeless, the orphan, and the widow."

How do we Muslim women of modern times compare with our sisters of old? Yet we have the brass to call ourselves progressive. What a mockery!

### FORGET UNPLEASANT THINGS

#### DONT CARRY USELESS BURDENS

By MRS. HASSANA KAREEM

Forget the things that make you unhappy. If you have had an unpleasant experience, forget it. If you have made some mistake in your speech, forget it. If you have been slandered, forget it. It will do you no good to remember them and to brood over them.

A psychologist says: "Let go of the scolding, fretting, and fuming; let go of criticism; let go of fear; let go of the rubbish, the useless, the foolish, the silly; let go of the shams, the shoddy, the false; let go the straining to keep up appearances; let go of the superficial; let go of the vice that cripples, the false thinking that demoralizes; and you will be surprised to see how much lighter and freer and truer you are to run the race, and how much surer of the goal".

This is very wholesome advice which we women should seriously take to heart. We miss much of the good things of life by dwelling on our thoughts on the unpleasant things. The trouble with many of us is that we cling like a foolish housewife who cannot bear to throw away a rag or a scrap of anything, but piles the useless rubbish in the attic. We make our backs ache carrying useless, foolish burdens. If we could only learn to hold on to the things worthwhile and drop the rubbish—let go the useless, the foolish, the silly things that hinder—we should not only make progress, but we should keep happy and harmonious as well.

Children's Corner

## Muslim Refugees In Abyssinia

DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS,

When the Holy Prophet rejected the offers made by the Koraish as I told you last Saturday, their anger became greater and they persecuted him and his followers more bitterly. When he saw the sufferings of his disciples he advised them to seek refuge in the neighbouring kingdom of Abyssinia.

Therefore about fifteen of them went there. This is called the first Exile (*Muhajarat*) in the history of Islam, and occurred in the fifth year of the Holy Prophet's mission. Many others followed them until their number amounted to eighty-three men and eighteen women. But the persecutions of Koraish followed them even there. They were very angry that their victims had escaped, and sent deputies to the Abyssinian King to demand the delivery of these refugees that they might be put to death. Their charges against the refugees were that they had given up their old religion and adopted a new one. The King sent for the exiles and asked them what was the religion for which they had forsaken their former faith. Then Jaafar, son of Abu Talib and brother of Ali, acting as spokesman for the fugitives spoke thus:--

"O King we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols, we lived in unchastity; we ate dead bodies, and we spoke abominations; we disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood; we knew no law save that of the strong, when God raised among us a man of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty, and purity we were aware; and he called us to the unity of God, and taught us not to associate anything with Him; he forbade us the worship of idols; and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be merciful, and to regard the rights of neighbours; he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to fly vices, and to abstain from evil; to offer prayers, to give alms, and to observe the fast. We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship God, and not to associate anything with Him. For this reason our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forego the worship of God and return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us, until finding no safety among them, we have come to thy country, and hope thou wilt protect us from their oppression".

On hearing this, the king refused to hand over the refugees to the deputies who then returned in confusion to Mecca.—Your friend,

THE EDITOR.

5. Q. Does *Wudu* convey any inner meaning besides the outward cleanliness?

A. Yes; the primary object is cleanliness; for physical cleanliness reminds us of spiritual cleanliness i.e. freedom from sins, which is a great object of religion.

(To be continued)

## Simple Lessons In Islam

BY

His Holiness Maulana Mohamed Abdul Aleem Siddiqui

and

M. I. M. Haniffa, B. A. (Lond.) Advocate.

1. Q. Is there any other performance in place of *Wudu*?

A. Yes; when a person is sick or when access cannot be had to water, what is called *Tayammum* is performed in place of *Wudu*.

2. Q. What are the essential requisites for the proper performance of *Tayammum*?

A. The essential requisites for the performance of *Tayammum* are:

- (1) The actual removal of the sand to the limbs.
- (2) An intention to prepare oneself for prayer.
- (3) A rubbing first of the face and then of the hands and forearms up to the elbows.

3. Q. What acts will nullify one's *Wudu*?

A. The acts that will nullify one's *Wudu* are four:

- (1) When any impurity proceeds from one's body.
- (2) When consciousness is lost through insanity, sleep, drowsiness etc.
- (3) When one touches with the palm of the hand the private parts of any human being.
- (4) When one's bare body comes in contact with that of a person of the opposite sex, if that person is within marriageable degree of relationship.

4. Q. What acts are forbidden without the performance of *Wudu*?

A. All persons are forbidden without the performance of *Wudu*.

- (1) to pray,
- (2) to walk round the Holy *Ka'ba* in Mecca,
- (3) to carry the Holy *Quran*.

Note: Children who have not attained the age of discretion (i.e. about seven years) can carry the Holy *Quran* for the purpose of studying.

## PERSIAN POETRY—III.

### Famous Episodes Of The Shah Namah

By ENVER C. AHLIP B. A., [Lond.]

#### TO PERSIA

THE birds do sing in happy consort sweet  
With warm susurras of the livelong breeze  
And fresh and fair as ever before a sheet  
Of spray will burst and flowers adorn the trees.  
Ah list the bulbul sings with loud acclaim  
The coming-on of rain that with it brings  
The green, the bloom, the meadow and the stream  
The sky ablush full rich with heavenly things.

Ah list his song. Can I recall the glory  
Of hearts so pure, so radiant as  
Thine now  
But strive I shall and trust that on  
my story  
Your smile serene, e'en failure will  
atone.  
Of Jellalud din and his soul's quest  
that took him  
Close to the threshold of Eternity  
Of Quasim, Hafiz, Jami—Chembim  
Who sing of Truth, love's im-  
mortality.  
Their thoughts like gleams from  
lonely mountain fanes  
Smiling serene from censers hea-  
venly fair  
The sound of their sweet call, full  
soft as moonbeam strains  
As nightingales in love—  
unraptured air.  
Iran you'll smile upon this work  
beloved  
Falls not the sunset's ray on  
things unmeet  
To catch the wonders of Apollo's eye  
But even after cannot be but  
sweet.  
E'en so from Thee this work shall  
take a lustre  
Shall gather light from Thine own  
splendour old  
For Thou blest soul of Islam's far  
famed splendour  
Hast found the alchemy that turn-  
eth lead to gold.

The court of Ghazna was a nest of  
singing birds. Of them all Asjadi,  
Unsuri and Farrukhi were acclaimed  
the sweetest singers and they were  
justly proud of their attainments. To  
them one day at Ghazna while they  
were carousing and conversing free a  
stranger approached, making as though  
to join them. Unsuri little liking the  
interruption addressed him. "O brother  
we are the King's poets and none  
but poets may enter our company.  
Each one of us will, therefore, compose  
a verse in the same rhyme, and if thou  
canst in thy turn supply the fourth  
verse of the quartette, then we will  
admit thee into our society. The  
obscure provincial from Nishapur-  
Quasim consented and Unsuri began  
choosing a sound on which three rhy-  
mes could be found.

Thine eyes are clean and blue as  
sunlight ocean  
Asjadi continued  
Their glance bewitches like a magic  
portion  
Farrukhi proceeded  
The wounds they cause no balm can  
heal no lotion  
Quasim concluded  
Deadly as those Giv's spears dealt out  
at Poshen,  
Referring to a little known  
incident in legendary history of  
Persia. His explanation so pleased  
and impressed the other poets that  
they promptly embraced him. What  
new star has arisen to shed its  
sovereign lustre on the court of  
Ghazna, already bright and fine?  
What man was this that moved with  
the ease and grace of Apollo in the  
midst of the muse's henchman? The  
future was to show when Persia con-  
ferred on him his nom-de-guerre—  
evidance in recognition of the hea-  
venly sweetness of his voice, the  
heavenly splendour of his thought.

That is the account given of first  
entry into Ghazna by Dawlat Shah.  
It is in all probability apocryphal, a  
fable which later ages had got up and  
embellished out of due respect for the  
man of their choice. Of Firdausi  
little is known for certain. In brief it  
appears that he was born about 920  
A.D. the son of a dihan or squire of  
Tus, and that a study of the prose  
Bustan Namah engendered and fostered  
a love for Persian folk lore and anti-  
quarian research. The Bustan Namah  
had been compiled by Al Mansur Al-  
Mu'arrari for Abu Mansur B.  
'Abdur' Razzak, the then Governor of  
Tus, and Firdausi was led to under-  
take the versification of the national  
epic. The first "edition" he finished  
in A. D. 999 which he dedicated to  
Ahmad B Muhammad. The 2nd  
edition was completed in 1010 and de-  
dicated to the Sultan Mahmud. Over  
the failure of Sultan Mahmud to live  
up to his promise re-remuneration he  
quarrelled with Mahmud and fled from  
Ghazna in a rage. He stayed some  
time with Bah'ud Dowla or Sultanud  
Dowla one of the Princes of the House  
of Buw Wayh for whom he wrote his  
other great poem "Yusuf and Zulay-  
Kha."

Firdausi's name is for ever linked  
with the Shah Namah. As at mention  
of Milton's name arises to the listeners'  
mind the thought of "Paradise Lost",  
as when Vergil's name is spoken  
memories dim and bright of the  
"Aeneid" throng to the mind, so it is  
with Firdausi and Shah Namah.  
Persian poetry is considered by some  
to have reached its apogee in this  
mighty epic, the prototype of all epics of  
moslem lands, conceived, as it is, in a  
mighty sweep of vision, executed with  
a verve and daring never wanting for  
for grace and lyrical sweetness. So  
great is the poem and so profound the  
influence it has exerted from the mo-  
ment of its conception that what the  
poet said of it seems at this distance  
of time the flash of genius, the pro-  
phetic vision that, rises above the  
limitations of time and space

"What no tide  
Shall ever wash away, what men  
Unborn shall read o'er ocean  
wide."

#### The Translation

The inordinate length of the "Shah  
Namah" precludes a satisfactory study  
of the epic as a whole. Nor is it  
wholly advisable in view of the res-  
tricted scope of this article. None of  
translations in English is at all beau-  
tiful, the monotony of Atkinson's deca-  
syllabic couplets being almost unen-  
durable, and the alliterative render-  
ing of Browne most cacophonous.  
Even Nicholson's representation of  
parts of the Shah Namah in English  
forms generally used for the conve-  
yance of those particular classes of  
pleas—Scott's Ballad metre for nar-  
rative, decasyllabic couplets and quar-  
trains for apostrophes, irregular  
metres for erotic passages—fails to  
deaden the monotony. The reader  
feels as a boat load of travellers in  
the middle of the embouchure of the  
mighty amazon. They see not the  
land on either hand, but watch with  
delight the fishes that dart up and sink  
again in myriads of splashes, hear and  
see birds singing as they wing their

way to the distant, invisible banks,  
gaze with wonder at the wonder at the  
water seething around, burning, as it  
were, in blue and green and saffron,  
but the travellers make no new per-  
manent contacts, it is the same river  
and there's more than a touch of  
monotony in the singing of the birds,  
and in repetition of eddies of colour  
in the water. So the reader is treated  
to a succession of dissolving views, of  
varying melodies, but one view fades  
away and one musical bar dies off only  
to appear perhaps in a modified form,  
but often with hardly a change. Thus  
the Shah Namah in translation appears  
as an altogether unequal work, and  
the present writer can do no more  
than deal with the most famous epi-  
sodes of the Shah Namah as fully as  
he may, rather than attempt a survey  
of the Shah Namah a task for which  
he is but indifferently equipped.

#### The Story of Sohrab—Rustum and Taminah

"Oh ye, who dwell in youth's invit-  
ing bowg  
Waste not in useless joys, your  
fleeting hours,  
But rather let the tears of sorrow  
roll,  
And sad reflection fill the cons-  
cious soul."

For many a happy spring has  
passed away,  
And many a flower has blossomed  
to decay"

Thus opens the story of Sohrab and  
Rustum. Rustum of Iran sets out  
alone for the chase and after a trying  
time slew a wild ass of which he made  
a hearty meal. He lay down to rest  
and fell asleep, and while he was sleep-  
ing his horse Raksh "by him valued  
most" wandered away and was cap-  
tured by some horsemen of Turan.  
When he awoke he missed Raksh and  
followed the trail to the capital where  
he was honourably received by the  
King, who promised to restore the  
horse. After the banquet he slept.  
Suddenly he was aroused from his  
sleep and he saw a vision wondrous  
fair.

The glorious deeds of Rustum had  
far preceded him and had gained a  
lustre in the telling Taminah, the prin-  
cess of Turan long before she ever set  
eyes upon the mighty warrior had  
come to conceive an affection for him  
enamoured of the hero from the tales  
she heard of his splendid deeds as had  
the celebrity of Aeneas ensnared the  
affections of Dido, as the lovely Des-  
demona, had, for the dangers through  
which Othello had passed, had loved

(Continued on page 4)

## "Three Lions" is a first-rate Swadeshi product.

A. R. A. RAZIK, M.S.C., M.M.C.

Read the opinion of Ceylon  
Celebrities about "Three Lions".

"Hajara Villa,"

Fareed Place,

Bambalapitiya South.

22nd May, 1939

I will always appeal to all those who smoke or sell  
cigarettes to pay special attention to "Three Lions" as a  
first-rate Swadeshi product produced by 100% Ceylonese  
Labour.

Messrs. Rothmans must have the support of Ceylon  
for their admirable ideals.

(Sgd.) A. R. A. RAZIK

Rothmans hold similar recommendations from Sir  
Solomon Dias Bandaranaike, K.C.M.G., Sir J. C.  
Ratwatte, Chief Adigar, The Hon. Mr. S. W. R. D.  
Bandaranaike, Mr. D. S. de Fonseka, Deputy Speaker,  
etc., etc.



# THREE LIONS

For Quality, Purity  
and Flavour!

The Star of Islam  
A CULTURAL WEEKLY

COLOMBO: NOVEMBER 25, 1939.



Dowry in Islam

IN last week's issue of "The Star of Islam," a lady-correspondent drew our attention to the pernicious dowry system obtaining among the Ceylon Muslims, and appealed to us to wield our pen "continuously in advising the local Muslims to stop this barbarous custom." Advice, however often repeated, to a people among whom this custom has been for nearly a century an important social institution which has wrongly been given a halo of sanctity, can hardly produce any beneficial result. We can, however, educate the people on this subject by telling them of the Islamic conception of dowry. The leaders of the community can do a deal in this matter, and, if practicable and feasible, introduce legislation to penalise the giving and taking of dowry as now practised in Ceylon.

The system of dowry obtaining among the Muslims in Ceylon is contrary to the teachings of Islam. It is an instance of the foreign accretions that a religion gathers in some countries in its passage through the centuries. A necessary condition in a Muslim marriage is an ante-nuptial settlement by the husband in favour of the wife. But in Ceylon this is reversed "in practice" and the husband insists on such a settlement being made in his favour by the wife's parents. A great deal of bargaining occurs in this respect, and the man virtually, if not really, sells himself to the highest bidder. This departure from the correct Islamic injunctions has been fruitful of untold misery. The position of parents with a large number of daughters is indeed very sad, unless they are blessed with a comfortable fortune. Pedigree, beauty and education count but little, if at all. Only a disendowed nurse—not to speak of houses with attractive monthly rentals and other landed properties—will satisfy the mercenary mentality.

The hardship is particularly acute among the poorer families. Even a peon, a constable, or a thapon, has to be offered a cash dowry of a few hundred rupees before he consents to a marriage. The plight of the parent whose earnings are hardly sufficient to make ends meet may well be imagined. Many fathers faced with this problem are often obliged to give their daughters in marriage to those who are more or less "birds of passage." These

men of the floating population—mostly Indians—avail themselves of the poverty of the people to marry respectable girls without any dowry. But they often abandon them when their business in Ceylon is over. Even in the higher circles, though the conditions are so not so grave, this un-Islamic custom has brought evil in its train. Girls who would adorn any home are passed over because they are not able to out-bid the offers of their less deserving sisters. The result is unhappy marriages. Good and intelligent men often become the husbands of women who are wanting in qualities that go to the making of good wives and mothers. And girls who are the best specimens of all that is bright and noble in womanhood are mated to buffoons. Above all, when a girl realises that she has been sought after not for herself but for her money, can she be reasonably expected to have love and devotion towards her husband.

How this alien custom has been incorporated in the life of the local Muslim community is not very clear.

It is interesting to note that the Malays of Ceylon also observe the custom, although their brethren in Malaya adhere to the Islamic teachings on the subject. J. F. Augustin, writing of "Malay Marriage Ceremonies" in "Sluyter's Monthly," states that "the man's side bestows the dowry which is regulated in value by the station in life to which the parties belong." But the Ceylon Malays may have been influenced by their association with the other Muslims here. It seems a paradox that the Ceylon Muslims should persist in practising the present dowry custom, despite its severe drawbacks and inconsistency with the religious teachings. But it is admittedly no easy task to get out of the groove in which they have remained so long. All is not lost, however, if they are resolved to wipe out this blot on their social life. So much depends on eligible young men contemplating matrimony.

There is a misconception among the local Muslims that the Purdah and the seclusion of women have necessitated the dowry system as practised today. It is argued that when one is denied the opportunity of making the choice of a bride by seeing her, it is but fair to demand a monetary and property consideration to make amends for any disappointment that may arise later. But it is overlooked that Islam permits the seeing of the girl before one agrees to marry her. No less an authority than Nawawi states "the Sunna has introduced the practice of seeing a woman one proposes to marry—even several times before demanding her in marriage."

From The Mimbar

SERVE GOD THROUGH ACTION

Dedicate Thyself To His Service

Translation of A Sermon Delivered by Seyedona Shaikh Abdul Cader Jilani (O.W.B.P.) In Baghulad In 545 A.H.

THOU hast read enough. Begin to act. Act, and act with sincerity, for herein lies thy salvation.

Thy duty is not merely to read and acquire knowledge. Thy duty towards God is to serve Him through action. But thou hast ceased to pay Him heed. Thou hast lost thy sense of shame, and thou dost not realise that He is the Almighty.

Act, and in thine actions, be not selfish. Give and receive, but in the name of God. Realise His presence in all thy deeds. Do as He bids. Follow His will in all thy actions, and His knowledge will be thine.

But we are still asleep. Lord, wake us up! If thy actions are sinful, thou shalt be punished. But if thou dost repent and ask for forgiveness and help from God, thou shalt be safe.

Troubles do come. But pray to God for patience. Pray to Him for guidance. Pray, until thou couldst bear to leave thy affairs entirely in His hands. There shall be no fear then for thy soul, though thy body may be in danger. There shall be no fear then for thy inner self, though thy form may suffer. Thy property may be in risk, but never thy faith. Suffering shall prove a boon to thee and never a misfortune.

Sayest thou that thy contentment lies in serving God and His prophet? But thy deeds do not show it. Thou art a liar therefore, and as such, thou art an alien here in this world, and shalt be so after thy death and shalt be no less detestable than others who sin.

My learned friend, do not let thy learning be soiled when thou dealest with men of this world. Lose not thy valuable treasure for cheap material gain. For none can give thee what thy lot does not contain. If thou dost get anything, it was but in store for thee. Wait with patience. And through their very hands, shalt thou get thy honourable due.

Alas, that thou shouldst think that he who is himself in want could give thee bread. He who begs of others could give thee charity. Nay, my friend, dedicate thyself to the service of God. Ask not a reward of Him. He does not need thy want to be explained, says He.

But thy very heart should be occupied with His thought. It is no use if

merely the lips utter His name. The truest remembrance of God is the remembrance which engrosses the mind. And this thou shouldst attain, says the Almighty.

Concentrate thy thoughts on Him until He turns His attention to thee, and then shalt thou be rendered free from all thy sins, and shalt thy devotion be pure. Thou shalt no more depend upon others, nor shalt thou beg of them. One, and only one will be thy object. Others shall vanish from thy mind and thou shalt have the keys of Heaven in thy hands.

Thou wilt be His friend. He who is the friend of God is His and His alone. Once His friend, no more wouldst thou crave for the friendship of others. His affection, none can replace in thy heart. His love will fill every atom of thy body, and thou shalt be engrossed in His love heart and soul. Thou shalt be free from the shackles of custom and society. And when thou reachest this stage, thou shalt be His beloved servant.

Does thy wisdom enable thee to see and know Him? Thou hast never been to Him before. But soon shall thy turn come. And death shall part thee from thy friends and take thee into His presence. Strive therefore, to be of those who would not hate to go before Him. Try to send something in advance. Welcome death. For thou wouldst find with God what thou hast never found on earth.

Translated by a Qadir.

Persian Poetry-III

(Continued from page 3)

the swarthy moor, dark as Ethiop's night. Firdausi lingers lovingly on Taminah's beauty.

"Clear as the moon, in glowing charms arrayed,

Her winning eyes the light of heaven displayed;

Her eyebrows like the archer's banded bow,

Her ringlets, snares; her cheek, the roses glow,

Mixed with the Hiy..... pearls the while

Sparkled within a mouth formed to bequile

Her presence dimmed the stars and breathing round

Fragrance and joy, she scarcely touched the ground,

So light her step, so fragrant—every part

Perfect, and suited to her spotless heart".

There the art of Firdausi stands revealed though darkly as through a glass. Like Tennyson, he can enlarge upon every feature until the person

moves before our eyes, like Homer and Shakespeare he can in a word, in a sentence pregnant heavy with thought, reach the very perfection of description suggest to us what others would require long, long sentences to explain.

"The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne

Burned on the water; the poop was beaten gold,

Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that

The winds were love sick with them;..... for her own person

It begged All Description

This description of the barge in such lyrical terms leads to the central figure, who, if she is above description must be transcendent in her beauty; one with Venus herself.

When Homer speaks of Helen he suddenly checks himself and makes the reader picture for himself the magnetism of Helen's face, figure and personality by the immediate and unilateral reaction on the part of the observers.

"Helen they saw, as to the towers

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# Musings Of A Pensioner-XVI

## Further Exposition Of The Doctrine of Tauhid In Islam

### Its Contrast With Indian Pantheism

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

THE doctrine of *Tauhid* is of immense importance in Islam, for a Muslim's outlook on life depends on a correct conception of it. In fact it is no exaggeration to state that a wrong conception of this doctrine has been the main cause of Muslim decadence for the past six or five hundred years. As Iqbal points out the "trust" referred to in Chapter 33, verse 72 of the Quran which man undertook to bear, is the trust of man's free personality. Man in his journey through this life and the hereafter has to develop a personality which would enable him to meet God without being shattered.

As Professor Elias Burney (of Osmania University, Hyderabad) says: "Islam is very positive about life after death, and gives any amount of detail about the features of the next life. In brief, it would be much more magnified in pain and pleasure, and in Divine association, and it would be progressively perpetual." No truer words were said than these words "progressively perpetual" about Islam's conception of Heaven. God being infinite, the approach to Him will take infinite time. Possession means satisfaction, satiety. If the pleasures of Heaven are to be perpetual, they cannot end in satisfaction or satiety. If they are to last for eternity—as the Quran emphasises—the pleasures must be "progressively perpetual."

If any of my readers wish to pursue this aspect of *Tauhid* further they should carefully read Iqbal's lectures on Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam over and over again until they completely understand him. A supreme personality can only be developed in a resisting medium, such as this world is, and in a life of endeavour, not in a life of lotus-eating, segregated from the rest of humanity high on a mountain-top or in the bosom of a cave. My readers will now realise that the Islamic ideal is diametrically opposed to that of pantheism. The world-picture of pantheism is one of "universalism, pessimism, asceticism and cosmism," whilst that of Islam is "individualistic, theistic, optimistic and anthropocentric."

In pantheistic religions "this world is a valley of tears and sin-laden; this life is not worth while living and futile. It is illusion, *maya*, and not reality. It is full of false dreams and chasty errors and must be overcome, and the price of the conquest is 'salvation,' God, dead being, *Nirvana*," (Spinoza and Buddha by S.L. Meisner). Whereas in Islam as Professor Burney remarks: "Islam does not in the least underestimate or discount the present life, but when it is compared with the next in magnitude, it does sink into insignificance by contrast. Still, it is the present life which prepares us for the next; so it has an importance of its own, which cannot be too much emphasised."

The Quran says in chapter 17 verse 86 and whoever is blind, let an

believer) here, he will be (also) blind hereafter and yet further astray from the path."

Owing to the stupendous sublimity of God, man can only win a personality sufficiently strong enough to withstand the shock of the meeting with Allah, by the sternest and severest endeavour and discipline in just such a world, as ours.

#### Iqbal's Views

The point I am trying to expound has been so lucidly stated by Iqbal that I cannot resist quoting from him.

"The main purpose of the Quran is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the universe. It is in view of this essential aspect of the Quranic teaching that Goethe, while making a general review of Islam as an educational force, said to Eckermann: "You see this teaching never fails; with all our systems, we cannot go, and generally speaking no man can go, further than that." The problem of Islam was really suggested by the mutual conflict, and at the same time mutual attraction, presented by the two forces of religion and civilization. The same problem confronted early Christianity. The great point in Christianity is the search for an independent content for spiritual life which, according to the insight of its founder, could be elevated, not by the forces of a world external to the soul of man, but by the revelation of a new world within his soul. Islam fully agrees with this insight and supplements it by the further insight that the illumination of the new world thus revealed is not something foreign to the world of matter but permeates it through and through. Thus the affirmation of spirit sought by Christianity would come not by the renunciation of external forces, which are already permeated by the illumination of spirit, but by a proper adjustment of man's relation to these forces in view of the light received from the world within. It is the mysterious touch of the ideal that animates and sustains the real, and through it alone we can discover and affirm the ideal. With Islam the ideal and the real are not two opposing forces, which cannot be reconciled. The life of the ideal consists, not in a total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions, but in the perpetual endeavour of the ideal to

appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being. It is the sharp opposition between the subject and the object, the mathematical without and the biological within, that impressed Christianity. Islam, however, faces the opposition with a view to overcome it. This essential difference in looking at a fundamental relation determines the respective attitudes of these great religions towards the problem of human life in its present surroundings. Both demand the affirmation of the spiritual self in man, with this difference only that Islam, recognising the contact of the ideal with the real, says 'yes' to the world of matter and points the way to master it, with a view to discover a basis for a realistic regulation of life."

The pessimistic view of life which later invaded Islam; with its theory of predestination and meek acceptance of the blows of fate, are all opposed to Islam and have been borrowed from pantheism.

Iqbal in one of his poems advises man to ask God to change his fate, if man is dissatisfied with it, for God has power over all things. In another place he sings as follows:—

"What sweetness is there in life  
O God!

The heart of every atom burns for  
growth and development;  
When the budding flower tears  
asunder the bough

It smiles with the love of  
existence."

In another place he says:—

"The Faithful does not rest  
contented with attributes,

The Prophet did not rest in peace  
until he had seen the *Corpus*.

*Miraj* is nothing but an outcome  
of the desire to see the  
Beloved."

It is the trial of one's mettle in  
the very presence of the  
Beloved.

#### Indian Pantheism

In contrast to this doctrine of Islam, let me quote from an article on Indian Pantheism by Dr. Urquhart (formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta) to show what the Indian pantheistic ideal is:—

"The identity-relation between the soul and God is the ultimate distillation of the Indian doctrine of immanence, and it is the practical implications of this which are important. The identification of the human soul with God may be preceded, as we have seen by a more positive identification of God with the universe, in which case the soul is absorbed in God through the universe; or it may take place more negatively and more directly, the soul emptying itself of all other interests and becoming immersed in the immediate reality of God. But whether it expresses itself in affirmation of the world or negation of it, involves in both cases, as a practical implication, a diminution of the value of the individual and a sacrifice of him to the whole. To a certain extent this encourages unselfishness, but all down through the ages there has been, we think, a certain disregard for the individual life and an excessive dominance of society over the individual and a sacrifice to a greater extent than is necessary of personal freedom. The tyranny of caste, though weakening, is still often a grim reality, and in the welter of modern politics the terrorists owe something of their strength to the possibility of inducing a mood of utter self-abandonment in the interests of a cause and a reckless disregard of individual human life, whether of the accomplice or of his victim. Similarly we think that if ever, for other reasons, copanishment got a foothold in India, it would find that this mood, supplied it

with an abundance of adaptable materials

"The prevalence and persistence of polytheism in India may have puzzled many who may have been impressed by the elevation and purity of much Indian religious thinking, but it is just in the positively pantheistic character of that thought that we find an explanation. If all is God then everything or any thing may be God. There is no criterion of value, and from the divinity of the whole there is an easy transition to the divinity of the part. My wife, in her book on the *Women of Bengal*, tells of an Indian woman who said: "He is everywhere"; and then, striking the doorpost, added: "Even if I say He is in this doorpost, verily it is He, and I must worship it." Pantheism, even when it is an elevated philosophical doctrine, is an encouragement and not a corrective of polytheism, and when further we remember that the higher thought of India is so intellectualised as to be the possible possession of only the few, we realise that the forces which may be marshalled against the more debased forms of popular polytheism are not numerous, and that even they, not being furnished by their philosophic thought with a true criterion of the higher, are but half-hearted in their opposition to the lower. We may add to this the fatalism and conservatism which are engendered by a naturalistic pantheism. If natural process is the object of our worship, we have no deliverance from it, and must simply submit. If everything is divine, then even the *status quo* may be deified. If we turn our attention on the other hand to the negative aspect of immanence, to identification with God through negation of the world and emptying of the self, the immediate practical implication of this is distrust of the world process and evacuation of interest in life. If all is a dream, there can be no increasing purpose in history with which purpose we may identify ourselves and for which we may labour. This may explain the readiness of Indians to undertake new enterprises, but their want of persistence in the pursuit of them. Further, if the identification which is to be reached is that of an emptied or characterless self with a characterless God, the ethical struggle is divorced from its natural religious basis, and becomes not a fruitful endeavour to establish good, but only a moral gymnastic, a discipline for the liberation of the soul. It is grossly unfair to accuse Indian thought of antinomianism on the ground of the claim that the enlightened man may "live as he pleases", but it is true that ethical perfection is not regarded as the final state of the soul. Good as well as evil is transcended in the highest religious state, for ethical perfection is not a characteristic of the Absolute, and so ethical attainment is not ultimately received and preserved by God as a persisting character of the soul that has won salvation."

#### Persian Poetry—III

(Continued from page 6)

Will eyes soar upon triumphant wings,  
All who have listened to its  
various love  
Rejoice the wise grows wiser than  
before  
Of him Shelley's words from plists  
are just  
Thou wert the morning star among  
the living  
Ere thy fair light was spad:  
But now as Hesperus thou art  
giving  
New splendour to the dead.

## Persian Poetry--III

(Continued from page 4)

And "tis no marvel" one to another said,  
The valiant Trojans and the well-greaved Greeks  
For beauty such as this should long endure  
The toils of war for goddess like she seems

Between that and Firdausi's is a matter of choice. They were but translations both from a comparative to accentual measures, one the product of an ancient civilisation—Persian, the other from the precursors of Western civilisation—the Greeks, and the co-efficient of loss if not equal in both cases must, certainly, be greater in the case of the translation from Firdausi.

"Her presence dimmed the stars"  
Rustum's surprised addresses the "fair vision" and bade her speak what she was seeking "amidst the gloom."

"How often have I listened with amaze  
To thy great deeds, enamoured of thy praise,  
Enchanted by the stories of thy fame  
My fluttering heart responded to thy name"  
Hers was no "summer love", no empty infatuation. It had the depth and the fire of first love.

And fervent vowed, thus powerful glory charms,  
"No other spouse should bless my longing arms"  
Nor was she brought up in aught save the highest tradition of the land  
No curious eye has yet these fea ured seen,  
My voice unheard, beyond the sacred screen,

**The Betrothal and the Parting**  
Rustum was overjoyed as was the King of Turan when the joyful tidings were conveyed to him. The marriage of a strong hand and beauty was consummated without delay amidst pomp and revelry. Heaven smiled and it all seemed a glorious dream. But, too soon, the pleasure hours sped away; the hope of joy stern that fired, Tamimah's eye and heart with life anew, that gave a fullness of being and a harmony almos divine began, to fade and will when Rustum heard his call—o arms. And he was to depart. And he called the new-wed bride to his side and conveyed the sad tidings. He must obey, for duty bade him.

"For her, too soon the winged moments flew,  
To soon, alas, the parting hour she knew;  
Clasped in his arms, with many a parting tear,  
She tried in vain his deafened ear,  
Still tried, ah fruitless struggle! to impart

The swelling anguish of her bursting heart,  
If parting he gives her a bracelet. If a baby girl we born should she adorn her with it; but if a baby boy were hers he bade her fasten it to his hand, set him in training for battle and onward move towards war's renown. He departs to Sistan. But in lonely moments when mind's free from battle's alarms, and martial preparations, he felt with a pang the joys he had surrendered, and longed for the wife he had left behind.

Still fond remembrance with endearing thought,  
Of to his mind the score of rapture brought

### The Birth of Sohrab

While in a distant theatre Rustum was winning further laurels, here, in Turan, a child was born—a wondrous boy; Tamimah's tears burst.

"And lull'd the sorrows of her heart to rest  
She named him Sohrab, and then her fears grew.  
She had lost her husband whose soul was dedicated to the God of war, and fears throve with the thought. What if her only son,

her only joy in life should also be reft from her bosom to wander through the world in the dangerous trade of arms. What misery would be hers then." She made a decision, a decision fraught with dreadful consequences, woes innumerable, that would send her son to a terrible death, would wring her husband's heart with pain and grief, and bring her own prematurely to the grave. She sent word that the baby was a girl. Rustum was disappointed. Oh for the eyes of mortals that are blind, that fail to see through the darkling mists that enshroud the future the bright face of humanity shining radiantly through! What spectre her fears and action were to rise she knew not, as at a later date Rustum knew not what his lies would have in store for them all, misery, gloom and stark despair. The future? It was the present that mattered to them both. With that they threw away their only chance of ultimate happiness.

### The Quest

The boy grew. Not for long could he be debarred from military exploits, not for long could his parentage be hidden from him. This wonder boy soon tired of the cooped up, cramped space and went out in search of adventure and his father, with a numerous array of Tartars. His aim was high. He hoped to find his father, and drive the tyrant Kaus from Iran's glorious throne.

Through an irony of fate Rustum consented to serve in the army of the Persians, and the Persian and Tartar hosts confronted each other. Rustum knew not who Sohrab was, nor did he in his turn learn of Rustum's presence in the Persian army. For when he questioned a captive Persian, he terrified by Sohrab's apparently invincible vigour swore that Rustum was not in the Persian camp, for he feared for Rustum.

Before the death of Dido (Virgil's Aeneas Book 10) all nature seemed to be conscious of coming doom the omens are gloomy and forbidding. "She saw as she lay her offerings on the incense breathing altar—Oh sight too dire to tell—she saw the flames blacken and the wine out poured turning to loathsome gore, and alone on the gables the owl would oft the complain prolonging his doleful note into a long-drawn wail." "She heard voices and had dreams of wandering a lonesome path on and over on seeking her Tyrians in a land forlorn." Even so the premonition of coming doom hung over both Sohrab and Rustum as a cloud thick and a dark compounded of the noisome vapours of the night. They awoke not to the song of birds singing in happy cadence sweet, but to the ululating howl of the bird of ill-omen making morn hideous with its strick unconsolate.

### The Meeting

There are skirmishes between the two armies and Sohrab goes Berserk. Through the ranks he cuts his way as knife through yielding cheese. Interror the Persians fall back, as minnows before a whale, and Rustum comes to save the day. They agree to a single combat. Rustum deals at length with his adventures, boasts of his prowess and then concludes.

"But soft compassion melts my soul to save,  
A youth so bloming with a mind so brave,  
And his generous gesture prompted Sohrab to ask

"Art thou not Rustum, whose exploits sublime through every distant clime!  
The hand of fate seemed to laid on both for Rustum ponders.  
If I but tell him who I am, he would fear me  
And dare fight me not. And so  
No off spring I of Mirum's glorious line.

And then they fight. Such a fight, it seems as never before since the world began was fought so fiercely, so tribly. Each seemed an army possessed of boundless energy.  
At once they rushed

Together, as two eagles on one prey  
Come rushing down together from the clouds  
One from the east, one from the west, their skulls  
Dashed with a daring together, and a din  
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters  
Make often at the forests heart at morn  
Of hewing acres, crashing trees,—such blows  
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hurled

Sohrab is young and strong Rustum past his prime, two days they fight, and Rustum only escapes by a stratagem, on the day in a desperate, final effort he yelled out his warcy "Rustum" and leaped upon the foe. The beloved name unnerved Sohrab. He was hurled down and in the twinkling of an eye his body was transfixed by Rustum's javelin.

### Ave Atque Vale

Sohrab sinks. He addresses his father whom he believes many miles away  
My glorious father! life will soon be o'er  
And thy great deeds exchant mine ear no more  
The truth comes out, the gloom in Rustum's heart is nigh insufferable.

"By my unnatural hand my son, my son is, slain and from the land uprooted" frantic in the dust his hair, he rends in agony, and deep despair. Firdausi treats of filial love in such wise as never to meet rival nor master. Even in translation his gentle tones read deep affection, boundless love. The closing words of Sohrab are magnificent in their love for all mankind. It seems as if Firdaus has triumphed over the limitations of language, and is conveying his belief in a flood of melody suggestive of his thoughts, nay, forming the very thoughts themselves.

My light of life now fluttering sinks in shade,  
Let vengeance sleep, and peaceful vows be made.

I led them on  
In search of thee, the world before mine eyes  
War, war's my choice, add thou the sacred prize  
With thee, my sire, in virtuous league combined  
No tyrant king shall persecute mankind.  
Then let no vengeance on my comrades fall  
Mine was the guilt, and mine the sorrow all oh still o'er thee  
My soul impassioned hung  
Still to my father my fond affection clung

### The Tidings

A long procession winds into Turan. Tamimah sees it coming, and a nameless dread seizes upon her heart. She then learns about it, and the world once bright and steadfast, reels before her blinded sight. Tamimah was inconsolable. It would be a sacrilege to paraphrase her words.

So comfort of my life  
Doomed the sad victim of unnatural strife,  
Where art thou now with dust and blood defiled,  
Thou daring boy, my lost, my murdered child?  
When thou wert gone—how, night and lingering day,  
Did thy fond mother watch the night away;  
For hope still pictured all I wished to see  
Thy father found, and thou returned to me  
Shut was the day that gave to me delight  
Soon, soon, succeeds a long and dismal night  
Whom shall I take to fill thy vacant place!  
To whom extend a mother's soft embrace?  
She seeks despairing the things Sohrab has left behind, sweet-

ened for her, Tamimah, by the association they have.  
Day after day she thus indulged her grief  
Night after night disdaining all relief  
At length worn out from earthly anguish riven  
The mother's spirit joined her child in heaven.

### The Lyrics

Of his lyrical works little is known. They have been much undervalued. They have an ease and freedom of movement that is found only in Shakespeare and Shelly, but while the former is little melodious, while Shelley loses himself in bravuras of pure sound and colour almost "signifying nothing," Firdausi, on the other hand, has the strength and grace and dignity of Shakespeare and the passionate and colourful pleading of Shelley. These lyrics will speak for themselves.

"Were it mine to repose for a night on thy losom,  
My head, thus exalted, would reach to the skies;  
In mercury's fingers the pen I would shatter;  
The crown of the sun I would grasp as my prize.  
O'er the ninth sphere of heaven my soul would be flying  
And Saturn's proud head neath my feet would be lying,  
Yet I'd pity poor lovers so wounded and dying,  
Were thy beauty mine own, or thy lips, or thine eyes.

II  
"Much toil did I suffer, much writing I pondered,  
Book wit in Arabian and Persian of old;  
For sixty two years many arts did I study;  
What gain did they bring me in glory or gold;  
Save regret for the past and remorse for thy failings  
Of the days of my youth every token has fled,  
And I mourn for it now, with sore weepings and wallings,  
In the wonds Khusrami Bu Thahir has said;  
"My youth as a vision of childhood in sooth I remember; also, and also for my youth!"

### Ye Patient Reader

Firdausi's pen in the shah Namah reached its acme of perfection. Not one harsh line is there. (So says Nicholson) and the magnificent roll and cadence of the verse are but the words the thoughts themselves would play. Beauty there is in thought, in sound, in colour. The dedicate treatment of the love scenes, the heart breath of the quarrel, the phases through which the world weary soul of Tamimah passes and the close harmony of man and nature have been achieved by wonderful sureness and delicacy of touch. His was a heart responsive to every nuance of thought and feeling in humanity, overflowing as it was, with sympathy rich and varied. His worth is but the record of his heart's deep thought. The shah Namah abounds in such rare poetical merit that, all one's attention is drawn willy nilly to experience the thrill of combat, the painful joys of love, the pleasures of the imagination, the intellect and the hopes and vision of a world to be.

Firdausi died in the nineties of his life in Tus. His broad minded appreciation of zoroastrianism had prejudiced the minds of many influential Persians against him. He lived and died a true Muslim, and as a Muslim was ever ready to recognise the merits of others. Religion was a deep influence, felt as a well spring that's hidden from sight.

Seek in this world of religion a share;  
That alone will support thee when thou shalt fare  
The Shah Namah speaks for itself.  
Now mark Firdausi's strain, his Book of Kings

(Continued on page 5)

# Islam—A Universal Religion of Peace And Progress

## It Brought About A Moral Revolution

By Maulavi Abdul Karim, B.A., M.L.C.

(Continued from the issue of the 11th November, 1939.)

DRUNKENNESS and sexual immorality were the two vices that disgraced humanity in pre-Islamic times. Drunkenness has all along been the curse of countries where Islam has not been adopted. Unrestricted indulgence in intoxicating liquors was one of the chief features of Arab society. The prevailing religions did nothing to put a stop to it. Islam strictly prohibited its use. "O you who believe! intoxicants and games of chance are unclean—the devil's work: shun it therefore that you may be successful. The devil only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer: will you then desist". Hardly had these words come out of the Prophet's lips when the very jars in which liquors were made and stored, were broken to pieces and the streets of Medina flowed with streams of wine.

Since then during these fourteen hundred years Muslim brotherhood has been the most notable total abstinence association in the globe, and the "dryness" of Muslim countries and the sobriety of the bulk of their population have been the wonder of the world. History cannot present another instance of so wonderful a transformation brought about so easily, yet so thoroughly, so effectively and so permanently. America and some other Christian countries, where the pernicious effect of alcoholic liquors on health has been realised, have fallen in their efforts to put a stop to their use.

Before the promulgation of reformed Islam hardly anywhere in the world was there what is now understood by sexual morality. Although polygamy had originated in the early stage of society when there was dearth of males and preponderance of females on account of tribal wars, clannish quarrels and tragedies of hunting and barbaric life, it came to be regarded as a recognised institution in course of time even when the necessity of saving women from destitution and starvation had ceased. Prophets and patriarchs gave it a religious sanction by their personal examples. The Bible did not prohibit polygamy and the advocacy of monogamy by the Nicene Council of 320 A.D. did not produce the desired effect. Polygamy was permitted in ancient Greece and Rome, and it was defended by Plutarch, Plato and others and practised by Maro Antony, Charlemagne and people of their status. By the time Islam was promulgated, polygamy had attained such an enormous universality that there was no limit to the number of wives and concubines an Arab, or for the matter of that, most ancient people, might have. In fact the Arabs knew not what sexual morality was. Even the guardians sometimes outraged their wards and the son of a deceased man included in his hatred his step-mothers. In such a horrible state of things it might not have been possible to put down polygamy all at once by an injunction for total prohibition. The Quran prescribed monogamy as the rule and polygamy as an exception to be contracted only in certain abnormal circumstances, such as dearth of males due to war, barrenness, wreck of health. But the conditional permission was coupled with such restric-

tions that in effect it amounted almost to a prohibition. The number of contemporaneous marriages was limited and absolute equity towards all co-wives was made obligatory on the husband. This equality of treatment was not merely in the matter of domestic requirements, such as diet, lodging and clothing, but also complete equity in affection and treatment. If you feel you cannot do justice between them, then marry only one." (Al-Quran). Thus it was an indirect prohibition, absolute justice in matters of sentiment and conjugal dealings being next to impossible. Besides, the deterrent punishment of stoning to death, prescribed for fornication and adultery, produced the desired effect in improving the moral atmosphere. Canon Isaac Taylor truly observed in the course of an address to the Church Congress, "The strictly-regulated polygamy of Muslim lands is infinitely less degrading to women and less injurious to men than the promiscuous polyandry which is the curse of Christian cities and which is absolutely unknown in Islam."

### Universality of Islam

Islam laid the foundation of universalism in religion. This is in fact its most distinctive feature. Islam is as wide in its conception as humanity. It is not meant for one people, or for one age, or for one country. The very first verse of the Quran proclaims the openness of all people. There God has been described as "Rabbul Alamin," the Creator, the Nourisher and the Guide of all, and not of any particular people. Nowhere has it been stated that God is Rabbul-Muslimin, the Lord of the Muslims only. "Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve." (Al-Quran). Thus according to Islam the goal of all true religions is invariably the same, though the means of its attainment might be different. In this respect the Bhagawat Gita is in agreement with the Quran. "Mankind comes to Me along many roads and on whatever road man approaches Me on that road do I welcome him, for all roads are Mine." (Bhagawat Gita).

(Continued on page 8)

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## Islam-A Universal Religion of Peace and Progress.

(Continued from page 7)  
Simplicity of Islam

Another distinctive feature of Islam is its simplicity. Its teaching is not extant in parables and myths. There is nothing mysterious, nothing irrational, nothing impractical; nothing unattainable in it. It strongly appeals to the intellect as well as to the natural sentiments of human beings. It is in perfect harmony with science and may be said to have been writ large on the face of Nature, from the gigantic sun to the tiniest blade of grass. According to Islam every atom in the universe, while maintaining the general equilibrium, is incessantly busy proclaiming that submission to the Will of Almighty God is the only religion throughout the universe. What scientists call Laws of Nature is, in religious phraseology, the Will of the Lord, which may be read in His Book of Nature.

"Foremost among the causes that contributed to the success of Islam," writes Arnold, "was the simplicity of the Muslim creed. There is no God but God; Muhammad is the apostle of God. Assent to these two simple doctrines is all that is demanded of the convert. This simple creed demands no great trial of faith and is within the compass of the meanest intelligence. Unencumbered by theological subtleties it may be expounded by any, even the most unversed in theological expression." "A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding," observes Professor Montel, "might be expected to possess, and does indeed possess, a marvellous power of winning its way into the consciences of men."

### Catholicity of Islam

In its catholicity Islam stands altogether unrivalled. It looks upon all people as members of one family and holds that all religions lead to the same goal. It aims at creating amity and good understanding among the followers of various persuasions. It prohibits its followers from taking pride in race, colour or country. The Muslims all the world over are knit together by common bond of brotherhood. Slaves become kings and kings condescend to stand in prayer shoulder to shoulder with beggars in rags.

Islam is not mere prayer, or fasting or observance of so many other rites and rituals. It is in fact playing the game of life as Hazrat Muhammad played it, attending to the duties towards God and man and leading a virtuous life. "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east and the west, but righteousness is this that one shall believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the way-farers and the beggars and for the emancipation of the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor rate, and the performers of their promise when they make a promise and the patient in distress and affliction... these are they who are true and these are they who are pious."

Thus according to the Quran, a non-Muslim, be he a Jew or a Christian, a Hindu or a Buddhist, who lives an Islamic life of truth, of piety, of honesty, maintains a family, takes care of the orphan and the widow, helps the poor and the destitute, is a practical follower of the Prophet, whereas one bearing a Muslim name, but leading a vicious life and acting contrary to Quranic injunctions, is not a true Muslim, rather a walking libel on the good name of Islam and its holy Prophet. In fact one cannot be a true Muslim unless one is a good man. There are many true Muslims without knowing it themselves.

## "Islam Expects Every Muslim To Do His Duty"

(Continued from page 1)

I would ask you to remember in these moments that no injunction is considered by our Holy Prophet more imperative or more divinely binding than the devout but supreme realisation towards all other human beings-

### Need For Self-Discipline

All social regeneration and political freedom must finally depend on something that has a deeper meaning in life. And that, if you will allow me to say so, is Islam and Islamic spirit. It is not great speeches and big conferences only that make politics. Several young men have been coming to me to know how they could serve their country. Well, young friends if I touch upon politics to-night, it is only to tell you, as a word of advice that we have our rights and our claims in a future India. But we shall not be obstinate about them, for obstinacy will be the negation of that spirit of love and toleration, which should fall upon us on this I'd day and whose blessings the Prophet commands us to communicate to others. But each one of us can serve our country by disciplining himself and discipline is the essence of this holy period.

Is one regular in one's habits? Does one sleep at the proper time, get up at the proper time and have one's meals at the proper time? Does one keep to the left of the road or abstain from throwing litter on the road? Is one honest and sincere in one's work? Does one render such help as one can to others? Is one tolerant? These may seem small matters, but in them is the nucleus of a self-discipline which will be of immense value in the combined effort of all communities and all creeds towards a greater India. This will be a service to our country which may not bring you into the limelight of politics, but it will assure you a lasting peace in your heart in the knowledge that you have contributed your share to making the politician's task easier.

### Translate Truth Into Practice

I am coming to the end of my brief talk. As I do so, I remember John Morley's book on "Compromise." I usually dislike recommending books to young people, but I think you all ought to read that book, not only once but over and over again. There is a good chapter in it on the limits of compromise, and the lesson it teaches regarding the pursuit of truth and the limitations on our actions in practice are worth pondering over. In the pursuit of truth and the cultivation of beliefs, we should be guided by our actual interpretation of the Quran: and if our devotion to truth is single-minded, we shall, in our own measure, achieve our goal. In the translation of this truth into practice, however, we shall be content with so much and so much only, as we can achieve without encroaching on the rights of others, while at the same time not ceasing our efforts always to achieve more.

Finally I would urge you never to forget that Islam expects every Muslim to do his duty by his people.

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