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News and Notes

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The Religion of Muhammad

(What can we best call it?)

IN olden days, during the middle of last century, in India, Civil and Military Officers alike, interested in the subject, as well as Missionary Clergy, almost invariably called it Muhammadanism, or the Religion of Muhammad; but during the last half century, since Muhammadans have been waking up to the fact that their religion has been losing ground, they have published many books on the value (as they consider) of Islam, and this word has increasingly been used by Christians, as being more euphonious and easier to write, than "Muhammadanism," without realising the meaning of the word or its etymology.

All Muhammadans and many Christians argue in favour of "Islam," that it is the word Muhammad himself used, as the name of his religion, and it is a very strong argument: but on analysis, it will not hold good. The word is used in the Quran (Surah iii., 78, 79, and in other places). It says (Rodwell's Translation):—

"Say: we believe in God, and in what hath been sent down to us, and what hath been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in what was given to Moses and to Jesus and to the Prophets from their Lord.— We make no difference between them.— And to Him are we resigned (Muslim) And whoso desireth any other religion than Islam, it shall by no means therefore be accepted from him, and in the next world he shall be among the lost."

Which proves that the Religions of Abraham, Moses and Jesus was *Islam*, and throughout the Quran Muhammad states that Islam was his religion. But the teaching of Muhammad was diametrically opposed to the teaching of the Holy Jesus and of the Prophets, on the

subject of our Lord's Divinity, His Divine Sonship, His death, His expiation for the sins of the World, the Fatherhood of God, the Blessed Trinity, etc. In fact his explanation of Bible truths and facts, both of the Old and New Testaments, is but a garbled account, a parody, of what is taught in the Bible, so that what he says about Islam being the religion of Jesus, as well as of himself, *cannot be true.*

Islam, according to Muhammadans, is *Submission to the Will of God.* We have a most perfect example of the Submission of Jesus to the Will of God, and the religion of the latter might well be called *True Islam.*

The root of the word Islam is very much used in the Hebrew Bible for *Peace, the Peace of God, Peace in the heart of man,* but what are we to say about the Islam of Muhammad, who rejected the Divinity of Jesus?

I deny most emphatically that there is that submission to the Will of God in Muhammadanism such as we read of as accomplished in the Life of Jesus. If the word *Allah* be substituted for *God,* we might then state that Muhammadanism was a *submission to the Will of Allah,* for the word Allah connotes quite a different set of ideas, to which we ascribe to God.

Other religions, such as *Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism,* etc., are *correct terms* for describing these forms of religion, why then, not call the Religion of Muhammad, Muhammadanism, which would be absolutely true, or else call it the religion of Allah?

The same argument holds good, with reference to the use of Muslim or Moslem, or Musalman, which all mean the same; it is derived from the same word, translated Peace.

Muhammadans may be exponents of the Will of Allah, but Christians should not credit them, as they do every time the latter use that word, that they are the true exponents of the Will of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

I have been myself, for many years, a Missionary among the Afghans, and know well the value of what I have written.

WORTHINGTON JUKES

(late Rector of Shobrooke)

9th October, 1926.

2, Execliff,
Exmouth.

In sending us the above statement Mr. Jukes says: '*Islam, is too good a word to be wasted on Muhammadanism, for never has it risen or can it, rise to the deep meaning of submission to the will of God. Every time we Christians use that word, we are unconsciously bolstering up the religion of Muhammad with one hand whilst we are trying to break it down with the other.*'

This is pretty plain speaking, isn't it? One's mind becomes dizzy in contemplating all the writers who come under this castigation. Much of what Mr. Jukes says is unquestionably correct, but we are left with a very practical question—can we, should we, dispense with these terms at this stage? It would be helpful if friends in various Moslem lands would contribute their views on the subject.

Ed. NEWS & NOTES.

Behind the Purdah

(In India)

ACCORDING to the census of 1921, the percentage of literacy among the Moslem women of the United Provinces was '72, *i.e.* barely one woman in a hundred can read and write. Literacy here meaning one who can write a letter and read the answer.

A great deal is said at the present time of the social activities and the new movements happening in the Islamic world of to-day.

Echoes of the emancipation of Turkish women from the thralldom of purdah have reached India, and the news is having more or less influence on the very few of the Muslim women of the United Provinces who have had a little education, that '72 per cent.

Generally speaking, however, for the women of Oudh, whether Muslim or Hindu, politics has as yet no meaning, and consequently no appeal. There is talk of a new life for the Muslim woman, a different outlook, a freedom, hitherto unknown, for them, opportunities to be of a social and friendly intercourse with other women, which will open minds now limited in thought and outlook, and give to such a new vision.

This talk, though, has as yet only been heard outside the walls of the zanana. The voices telling of a new liberty for women have not reached them, not penetrated those doors which shut them in. They have not heard the good news.

How remarkable it is, that an ordinary door of mango wood, can effect such a barrier to progress, and keep two worlds apart!

On the outside of that door, a world of progress, and new thought, and on the inside, a world of superstition and intrigue, due to ignorance.

What a lot there is to be accomplished, to educate and enlighten these dark minds, living on the other side of that door.

A kindly interest shown in them and in their lives, together with interesting news brought to them of the world about which they know practically nothing, will perhaps provide the incentive to know more about it, and a desire to come in touch with it and realise its beauties. The heaven will permeate. It may be hidden away in these dark minds for a time, but it will eventually make itself felt and seen.

During the Mutiny strange things happened. This woman's story is an echo of the mutiny days. Her mother was a Christian, but

how far she was permitted to live according to what she believed in the Mohammedan home to which she was taken, is not known.

Her daughter could read, had read the New Testament, and had a copy given to her, but doubts as to her faithfulness to the religion of Islam had caused the book to be taken from her and destroyed.

Her mother was now dead, and she herself a widow with no children, when I first met her, but she was a keen listener when we talked to her about the message of the Book.

She came to accept the Truth, and remembering that her mother had died in the Christian faith, she expressed a wish that she too should become a follower of Christ. Being surrounded by those who would hinder her, she quickly found that circumstances were very much against her.

She made an effort to leave her home, in order to be free from all that would prevent her from hearing more of the Gospel, but that attempt was frustrated, and she was taken away, and for some months was lost to us. By chance we came across her in another home, but a change had been effected in her. She recognized us but there was no opportunity to speak to her, there never is any opportunity, and she looked at us in an imploring manner, not to insist in making the opportunity.

What has happened behind the purdah? Shall we ever know?

One wonders if she still has the desire she once had, or if in some manner unknown to us, she has been obliged to relinquish any hopes of accomplishing her wish. We leave the matter there and remember her in prayer. There are many others who arrive at a certain point, and then the seed sown seems to suffer a set-back.

The seed sown was beginning to show itself, and seed-like, persisted in being recognized. Here was the difficulty.

On subsequent visits to her home, what were we told?

"She is not here to-day, she has left to visit a friend in another town".

Has she really gone away we wonder, and if so will she ever return?

The question often arises in our mind. Is it good to go on sowing the seed, knowing full well that having taken root in good ground it will in all probability be trampled on by methods which we are powerless to frustrate. In such cases it appears as if our sowing were in vain.

Indeed the work of bringing the Light to these darkened minds would be a hopeless task, did we believe that where our efforts failed nothing further was possible. There would be but one conclusion to come to, and that would be to leave the work undone, for "who is sufficient for these things?"

The seed is sown. We leave it there in the knowledge and sure hope that God will perfect and accomplish that which He hath begun, until the day of Jesus Christ.

Fyzabad, U. P.

E. M. MITCHELL.

Submitted for the Consideration of Workers Amongst Women

(By one of our members)

As we visit women in their homes and seek to instruct them, and draw them to the Saviour, it is important that we do not seek to weaken or break the marriage tie, or encourage them to take any step which means for them a disregard of any moral obligations which they at present recognise. To become a Christian must mean a step onward in every sense.

We may be weakening instead of strengthening the Church of Christ in India if we prepare the way for women to enter the visible Church before they have living faith.

Do we not delay the progress of the Gospel by helping to remove from their homes women of whose faith we have assurance, because we believe they are in danger, thus depriving them of the privilege of suffering for the sake of Christ, and also depriving non-Christian homes and communities of witnesses for Christ through whom others might be drawn to Him?

In receiving or assisting women it is important that we count the cost, and consider in each case whether or not we are able to carry on the work we so gladly begin, and to undertake all that is needful in order to fit them for leading useful Christian lives.

We do well to take warning from the fact that too many who have come out hastily have drifted, some of them back into their old religion, some into lives of sin, others into an irresponsible and unprofitable type of outward Christianity.

It is right for us to avoid anything that might *needlessly* embarrass Government officials, European or Indian, as has been done in cases where women have unjustifiably left their homes.

It is well to carefully consider the teaching of Scripture on this subject.

We may take encouragement from the fact, that there are Christian families who look back on the Christian life and influence of a mother who remained in her home and won the members of her family for Christ.

Nevertheless we should never cease to keep before us the fact that when God opens the door for a believing woman to come out and forsake all for Christ, it is of the utmost importance for her not to hold back, and for us to be ever ready to recognise and receive such.

As to the inner working of Homes for new converts—

While we put the highest standard of spiritual attainment before converts, we do well to remember that spiritual development is generally slow, and that the experience which enables one to lay hold of God's grace for every condition in life cannot, as a rule, be gained quickly. Hence, arises an incapacity to cope with the new conditions into which we enable women to enter. Instead of the natural life of a home where the presence of relatives, male as well as female, makes many claims, and where the softening influence of little children does its work, they find themselves among women only, (though children may also be included among the inmates) and under conditions which however comfortable, are by no means natural. Daily life, with the irritability caused by sensitiveness, jealousy, pride, etc., becomes more difficult than they expected it to be, and they begin to realise, specially as an outlook towards the future asserts itself, that the first step was not the only difficult part of the new life.

The only thing which can *continue* to support a woman under such new and unnatural conditions is *devotion to the Saviour*, and unless there has been a genuine Christian experience, before she leaves her home, the risk is too great to run.

Those who have made a definite and open break from their past life are in a better position for making spiritual progress than such as are haunted by dread, or by a feeling of uncertainty as to whether they have done right in leaving home and duty secretly.

Unsuitable women in a Home for converts are great disturbers of peace, and time and strength which have to be spent on them are taken away from the real work of the Home.

Deductions—

We should use great care in investigating the cases of women who wish to leave their homes, *seeking wisdom to detect* such as have only a desire to get out of unhappy conditions, and advise believers to remain, unless there is very clear evidence against it, to witness for Christ and to seek to bring others to Him.

That in cases where secret action seems right and imperative, information be given as soon as possible to near relatives when such have been left, as to the reason for leaving.

That we seek, through prayerful fellowship, to help one another to right decision and action in each case that may arise.

Converts from Islam: Evangelists of the Outcastes

WE hear so much of the sparseness of results among the Moslems of the Near East (except Persia) that we may be liable to overlook the work done in India since Henry Martyn translated the New Testament into Urdu. I have recently come across an instance of this in connection with the Boarding High School, Batala. This was founded in 1878 by the Rev. F. H. Baring, himself a missionary to Moslems, and among the earliest pupils were several converts from Islam, one afterwards Archdeacon of Dehli, another deputy conservator of forests, and so on. A recent careful examination of the school roll for the last ten years shows that one third of an average of 80 boys are of Moslem parentage or extraction. I have no doubt that the roll of the Ludhiana Boys' Boarding School would show a similar result. This means that in the Central Panjab one-third of the middle class Christian community is the fruit of work among Moslems, and these men whom we know are leading useful lives as Christian citizens, with here and there a distinguished name.

That work among Moslems had of late years slackened, largely owing to the great stress of the village work among outcastes, is a matter of regret, but we should not forget who have been the chief Indian reapers of this harvest in the villages. The ex-Muslim goes more readily to the outcaste than the ex-Hindu, and in the Panjab the bulk of the mass movement work has been done by converts of Muslim origin. One such was the versifier of the Panjabi Psalter which has become the hymn-book of the villages. God can do greater things through these our brothers than He has done in the past.

H. U. W. S.

Book Review

FRANK, Bishop of Zanzibar:—Life of Frank Weston, D.D., 1871-1924 by H. Maynard Smith, D.D., Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, pp. 326, 7s 6d.

A great biography of a great man who lived much in the public eye but hated praise and lived his whole life for God and His African children. A man of strong will, deep emotions and keen intellect, equally eager to fight the battle against modernism and against forced labor. First, last and always an Anglo-Catholic Churchman devoted to the rites and ceremonies of the Community of the Sacred Passion. One who had knowledge of the spiritual forces from above and beneath engaged in warfare for the soul of Africa. Here is a book to study and ponder over. The chapter on Mohammedanism and witchcraft in East Africa is illuminating; not less the one that tells of Bishop Weston's fight with modernism. "I do not hesitate to say", he wrote "that a church which has two views in its highest ranks about the trustworthiness of the Bible, the authority of the Church and the infallibility of the Christ has surrendered its chance of winning the Moslem; for his dependence on his book, his tradition and his prophet will not be taken by a debating society but by the living speaking church of the Infallible Word incarnate", and again, "Save our converts in Africa from reading in books by Christians at home all those things which are calculated to make them doubt whether there be a God at all and such things as a Catholic Revelation."

The characterization given of Francis of Assisi by Sabatier, "Catholic evangelical and apostolic", would apply to the late Bishop of Zanzibar, and one rises from the perusal of this biography with a resolve to live as Bishop Weston expressed it in a sermon on Isaiah 63; 5, conquering and to conquer and to care for the lovely Christ in Africa. "Lift your arms with His arms in prayer that salvation may come in Africa; and let your hearts burn with fury against Satan so that with the lovely Christ you may consume all that can keep God from any of the least of the souls whom He has created for Himself."

The Islamia College, Calcutta

DURING the Christmas Vacation His Excellency, Lord Lytton, the Governor of Bengal, formally opened the new Islamia College, in Wellesley Street, Calcutta. This institution owes its existence to a determined effort on the part of the leading Muslims of the Province to secure a more purely Muslim centre of learning for the higher education of their young men. They describe it as "another Aligarh." The Nizam of Hyderabad and other notable Muslims have made generous donations to the scheme. There are some 183 students at present on the roll, all of whom are Muslims. Of the staff of 20, four are at present Hindus, but these, we understand, are likely to be replaced by Muslims as soon as suitable men can be found.

Correspondence

United Provinces, India.—A lady member, who had previously sent in a request for prayer on behalf of a young man in a Muslim home, now writes to say: 'You will be interested to know that he was baptized in our Church to-day at the week-evening service. I think his confession will mean much in his home where I visit, for two women there are needing all the help they can get. I hope they too will be able some time to become Christians. I should like to ask prayer on behalf of the two women in that home and for the young man that he may be remembered in our prayers.' He is only 21 years of age, but seems very much in earnest and unafraid.

* * * * *

West Khandesh, Bombay Presidency.—'I would like to put before the members a few subjects for prayer. There is a Muhammadan here who seems to be an earnest seeker after Christ. May God give him power to come out wholly for Him. There are two others, also Moslems—we need to pray that God by His Holy Spirit may work in their hearts so that they may come out for Christ. The first above-mentioned applied for baptism long ago. But do you know any place where I can send him after baptism? I don't think he can be kept here. He has studied up to the *Matriculation*, if he has not passed. He speaks English and has studied Urdu and Persian.'

'I am very thankful to God for the worker He has given me to spread the Gospel among the Moslems. May we remember him also in prayer.'

[One friend advertised his need for an Urdu-speaking worker in our pages. We rejoice that such a helper has been found. Ed.]

* * * * *

A fellow-member in retirement writes:—

"My heart is in India though I am here in England and my earnest prayers are for all who are working among the Mahomedans, as it's so wonderful to read how many are seeking for the true Light. I do pray that many may be won for Christ and that special missionaries may be sent to work among the Mahomedans.

The Muslim Year

Ramdhan.

The excellence of this month is extolled by Muhammad who stated that during this period the gates of Paradise are open while those of Hell remain shut. (*Mishkat*—VII. I. I.)

In particular, one of its nights, *lailatu'l-qadr* (the night of power), is held in high esteem. This is the night on which the Quran is said to have descended upon Muhammad (see Sura, XC VII.). The precise date, however, was never disclosed by Muhammad and his companions to his followers. It is now variously said to be the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th or 29th.

Prayer on this night is equal in merit to the devotional exercises of a thousand other nights. It is also believed that during its hours the whole animal and vegetable creation bow in humble adoration to the Almighty.

The month owes its fame, however, to the fact that it is incumbent on all believers (except such as are expressly exempted) to observe the

strictest possible fast from dawn to sunset on each day of the month. Those who so keep the fast are promised pardon for all their past venial sins. It is this institution that constitutes one of the five pillars of their religion.

For Praise and Prayer

- PRAISE** for the steady sale of Gospel portions among Moslems. (Bengal)
- PRAISE** for the confession of faith by baptism of a Moslem young man and prayer that his example may lead the women in his home to give their hearts to Christ. (United Provinces)
- PRAYER** for three seekers after truth in West Khandesh that under the influence of God's Spirit they may declare themselves followers of Christ.
- PRAYER** for God's blessing to attend the labours of the Indian helper in work among Moslems (West Khandesh).
- PRAYER** is requested for a Christian woman and her two children whose husband, now turned Moslem, ill-treats her in his endeavour to make her deny Christ. (Bengal)
- PRAYER** is asked for a young man and woman who, surrounded as they are by Moslems, are subjected to great danger—"that their faith fail not and they may soon be free to serve their Master openly." (Bengal)

NEW MEMBERS

105.	Rev. B. N. Eade	Aus. B.M.S.	Brahmanbaria, Bengal.
254.	Miss A. J. Nethercote	C.M.S.	Agra, U. P.
280.	Rev. S. Geleff	Dan. Miss.	Yabroud, Syria.
301.	Miss E. I. Dodson, M.D.	C.M.S.	Multan, Punjab.

The annual subscription to the League is only Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s.). The Secretary will be glad to send spare copies of this issue to addresses mentioned by members, with a view to securing new subscribers. News and requests for prayer will always be welcome and should be sent early in the month to the Hon. Secretary :—

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