

# Missionaries to Muslims League.

NEWS AND NOTES, SERIES II, No. 10. February 1914.

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## OUTLINE OF TALK WITH MUSLIMS

### Sakinat.

One of the most beautiful stories related of Muhammad is that telling of his flight to Madina, when with Abu Bakr he was obliged to hide from his enemies in a cave. Abu Bakr was afraid. What were two against those who sought their life. Muhammad then said, "We are two, but there is One in the midst, a Third." The Quran reference is as follows:—"God assisted him (Muhammad) formerly, when the unbelievers drove him forth, in company with a second only, when they two were in the cave; when the Prophet said to his companion, 'Be not distressed; verily God is with us!' And God sent down His tranquillity (Sakinat) upon him, and strengthened him with hosts ye saw not." (ix-40).

[Note: Muslims fail to identify the Sakinat with that Third One whose presence Muhammad claimed to have recognized, with the Shechinah who was constantly manifested to Israel in a similar way. In their confusion over a Hebrew word, Muhammadans interpret 'Sakinat' to mean a sense of peace or security; some say a zephyr, and even an animal like a cat. The Quran says it was a part of the Ark of God (ii-249).]

1. We are on common ground when we say that both the Sakinat of the Quran and the Shechinah were not natural phenomena, but manifestations of the superhuman (Exo. xl. 34-38; Num. x. 34-36). The Quran says the faithful were helped against great odds by the Sakinat (ix-26). Muslims must admit unusual manifestation of power and assistance, therefore enquire into meaning of Sakinat interesting and profitable.

[Note: In Muhammadan tradition it says that when Abraham and Ismail were supposed to repair the demolished Kaaba at Mecca, they were led to the spot by the Sakinat. Further, Muhammad is said to have related that the angels had cleansed his heart with snow-water and hail-water and "then they filled my heart with the Sakinat".]

2. The Children of Israel always understood the Shechinah to be a special manifestation of the visible Glory of Jehovah (Exo. xxxiii. 9-11). It was really "God localized" (Exo. xxxv. 8; xxix. 43, 45). It came in fire and

cloud (Exo. xix. 18; Lev. xvi. 2). The Presence of Jehovah came near and dwelt with the chosen people. Sometimes it came and abode for years; at others it made but a momentary appearance. The Qurān endorses such extraordinary manifestations. In the story of Moses and the burning bush, we read: "When he came up to it, a voice cried to him out of the bush . . . 'O Moses, I truly am God, the Lord of the Worlds'." (xxviii.—30; cf. xx.—11—12 and xix.—53); cf. Exo. iii. 4—6.

[Note: The word Shechinah comes from the Hebrew *Sakan*, meaning to dwell or abide. *Sakin*, the root of *Sakinat*, has often the same meaning in the Qurān (vide ii—33).]

3. *There is nothing more remarkable in the history of the Children of Israel than the events connected with the Shechinah.*

(a) *It was a Testimony to the Divine Unity.*

Atheism, Idolatry and Unbelief could not be maintained in the Presence of the Glory of Jehovah so clearly demonstrated. — Deut. iv. 15—16.

(b) *It was a Testimony to the Divine Sovereignty.*

Declaring God's will (Exo. xxv. 22) and Law (Exo. xxxiv. 1—6). Frightening Enemies (1 Sam iv. 6—8) and overcoming them (1 Sam v). Reproving Sin (Num. xii. 5—10; Deut. xxi. 17; 1 Sam. iv). Giving Blessing (2 Sam. vi. 12). Showing approval of man's sacrifices, offering and worship (Lev. ix. 22—24).

(c) *It was a Testimony to the Divine Faithfulness.*

The many appearances of the Shechinah were proof that Jehovah would fulfil His covenant to redeem His people. The Bible relates the terribly sad story that because of sin, the Shechinah departed from men and communities, and from the Tabernacle and Temple; in consequence, *Ichabod* had to be pronounced, yet God remained faithful (Hag. ii. 4—9).

As the time of deliverance drew near, the Shechinah became increasingly a *Personal* Presence, linked in a special sense with the promised Messiah. (Isa. vi. 1—8; cf. Jno. xii. 39—41; Ezek. i. 27—28; x; xliii. 2, 7; Mal. iii. 1—2).

4. *The Shechinah enshrined in Emmanuel—God with us.* Matt i. 23.

Our Lord, the *Personal* manifestation of the Glory of the Father, came "and dwelt (or Shechinized) with us, and we beheld His glory, etc." Jno. i—14. He was God *manifested* in the flesh." 1 Tim. iii. 16.

The devout Puritan, Richard Watson, says: "The cloud which enveloped Him during His humbled state on earth was dark, but it was the cloud of the Shechinah, and the shrouded Divinity occasionally burst forth with overpowering splendour in His God-like acts; though, like light from a parted cloud, it was quickly veiled again in His humble condition and demeanour."

Surely the sinless character and miracles of Christ admitted by Islam, and the unique titles given to him in the Qurān, namely, *Al-masih* — the Messiah, *Kalimatullah* — the Word of God, and *Ruhu'llah* — the Spirit of God, carefully weighed, must endorse the Christian claim that He is the *Personal* Shechinah.

The Shechinah in our Lord Jesus Christ put an end to all temporary manifestations, for according to our Lord's own promise, the Glory abides, manifested in the Church and in the individual believer by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

May the Glory become more and more manifest!

## PRAISE AND PRAYER.

"These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer." Acts i. 14.

*Praise God for—*

Open doors everywhere in India, China and Egypt with thousands of Muhammadans willing to listen to the ambassadors of the King of Kings.

*Pray for—*

- (1) more Missionaries thoroughly equipped to enter the open doors ;
- (2) the churches established in India, China and Egypt that they may become powerful witnesses for Christ to the Muslim communities.

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**Rangoon, Burma:** I have just returned from one of our upcountry villages, every one seems to welcome the Gospel, though doubtless the motives are mixed. Still the Gospel does its own work if it can get a hearing, and of this we are glad. A Moulvie there with a large Muhammadan school (50 boys) offered me his school if I would give him a Christian teacher who could teach English also, and offered to teach the Bible himself if I wished, as he had studied it in a Ludhiana Mission School. Pray for the work in Burma, there is a readiness to hear everywhere, they need the enlightening and quickening power of the Holy Spirit to bring them to the feet of Jesus as their Saviour and King. H. M. N. A.

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**Brahmanbaria, Bengal:** On Christmas Day we had the great joy of baptizing an educated young Muhammadan, who came to us with his wife some months ago for Christian instruction. His young wife has been placed in a boarding-school for regular teaching. We ask prayer that she may be led into the light. J. T.

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**Bengal:** The following is culled from *The Indian Witness*:—"Mr. Fazlur Rahaman of Jamalpur, Mymensingh, was baptized by the Rev. Herbert Anderson on Thursday, January 1st, 1914, upon the profession of his faith in Christ. He desires to take the name of John Rahaman."

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The Rev. W. Goldsack has been giving a series of lectures in Bengali on "*Islam*" to the Indian workers of East Bengal, assembled in conference in Backergunj.

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**Alfahabad:** I leave India in February for an indefinite period, but my love and interest for and in the work will never cease, and I trust that I may be enabled to wield the power of prayer even in America in such a way as to bring blessing and strength to many. Please pray that I may be so used, and be allowed to return in His good time. Also pray that more workers may be raised up to teach the Muslim women of this city.

A. E. WISHART.

**Hyderabad, Deccan:** Pray for the workers among Muslims in Hyderabad that they may enter upon this new year's work with courage, expectancy and faith, and that the Holy Spirit may work changes in the lives and hearts of those who read and hear the Word of God. C. W.

**Bareilly:** My Mussulman Moulvie had just given me my daily Persian lesson and was proceeding home. It was about midday. He was walking through our Christian premises on a path beset with many little pitfalls and roots of overhanging trees. Not being particularly careful to watch his steps he stumbled and fell. Two Christian women were near. Though a fairly old man he quickly scrambled to his feet and looked round him to see the effect of his fall on the faces of the two onlookers. He fancied one of them smiled. The other very kindly and gently suggested to him the need of being more watchful. She had not smiled. He related the incident to me a day or two afterwards and wished to know if there was anything in Christianity that accounted for her behaviour. Nothing in Muhammadanism could have prompted this thoughtfulness on her part. I told him that it was the privilege of all Christians, who were true followers, in such matters to be a copy of the Christ who was anxious to "lift up the fallen." Her simple act called Christianity to his attention more forcibly than a lengthy sermon or discussion. May we all as Christians be equally impressive as we live out the details of our lives. C. D. R.

## THE CENSUS OF INDIA, 1911.

### 3. ASSAM.

Hindus	...	...	3,838,769
Muhammadans	...	...	1,901,032
Animists	..	...	1,289,280
Christians	...	...	66,562

Islam has increased in the whole Province of Assam by 20·2 per cent, largely due to immigration of Muhammadans from Bengal to Goalpara. "It is doubtful if any appreciable part of the increase is due to conversion." Christianity increased by 85 per cent.

## THE MUHAMMADAN YEAR.

The important festival this month is the *Fatiha Duwasdahan*, which takes place on February 9th, but if the moon be visible on January 27th then the festival will take place on Sunday, February 8th. In India it is a Gazetted holiday. This festival, which invariably takes place on the 12th of the Arabic lunar month *Rabi'l Awwal*, commemorates the birth of Muhammad. It is said that the Prophet died on the same day of the

month as that which commemorated his birth. Therefore this date should be the most important in the Muhammadan Calendar, but we gather that it is scarcely known to the average villager. Perhaps the death being remembered at the same time as the birth, prevents what otherwise might be a kind of Muslim 'Christmas.'

At this festival, special "*Darûds*" are said at the time of prayer to invoke blessings upon the Prophet, which act is meritorious. They pray fervently, "O God! have mercy on Muhammad. Bless Muhammad, etc." Educated men invite people to their homes for "The meeting of *Maulid* (Birth)," where passages from the life of the Prophet are read or recited.

In a festival like this, one cannot but notice the strong contrast between Christ and Muhammad. Christians in commemorating the birth of the Saviour place emphasis on the fact that God became flesh to save us. We crave His constant presence and blessing. Muslims in commemorating the birth of Muhammad emphasize the need to pray God for blessings on his departed soul.

## "THE FAITH OF THE CRESCENT."

The articles on Islam written by the Rev. J. Takle of Brahmanbaria E. Bengal, and printed serially in *The Young Men of India*, have been made available for a wider circle of readers by the Publication Department of the Y.M.C.A.'s of India and Ceylon. For nearly two decades Mr. Takle has been a close student of Islamic literature, and at the same time has come into daily touch with the Muhammadanism that prevails among the more backward sections of the faithful in East Bengal. Some of the fruit of this long study and first-hand investigation is embodied in a compact and comprehensive book bearing the title "The Faith of the Crescent."

Mr. Takle's book is not large, but it is wonderfully comprehensive. The ten chapters into which it is divided deal with all the salient points of Islam. At the same time the arrangement of the book is admirable. The subject is set out systematically, and the contents of each chapter can be readily summarized. The style throughout is straightforward and lucid. In all he writes Mr. Takle is in closest contact with the Qurán, and with the standard authorities on Islam. The illustrations are interesting and instructive. The notes appended to the chapters and the addenda at the end of the book, including a bibliography, supplement the general treatment of the subject.

For these reasons "The Faith of the Crescent" will serve as a valuable introduction to the study of Islam. To study the book is to find that the ground has been more than broken up. It is to be furnished with facts and stimulated by suggestions that will enable the student to expose the plausible arguments of Islam's champions, while it will stir him to work and pray that Christ may attain to His rightful place throughout the Muhammadan world.

Mr. Takle begins with "The Fact of Islam." He portrays the "phenomenal success" that it achieved, and finds a partial explanation in "its attractiveness," "its aggressiveness," and "its solidarity." The perennial problem of "The Founder of Islam" is discussed in three sections bearing the titles "Muhammad the Man," "the Seeker," "the Prophet." In considering his early sincerity and allowing some resemblance

to such giants as Moses and David, Mr. Takle has probably gone as far as Christian charity need go.

A study of "The Roots of Islam" pulverises the theory that Islam is "the eternal religion decreed by the Almighty." Many streams of influence—Pagan, Jewish, Christian, Sabian—have blended in the murky waters of Islam. The chapter raises the interesting question whether Muhammad was misled by the debased Christianity of his day, or whether he shunned the light that some hold to have been available for him.

The deadening influence of "The Belief of Islam" and the false and ruinous conception of God's service exemplified in "The Religious Duties of Islam" are forcefully exhibited. The dead hand of "Certain Laws of Islam" is disclosed, and the genesis, arrangement and inspiration of "The Book of Islam" are all discussed in such a way as to destroy the Quran's claim to be the Word of God.

"The Sects of Islam" give the lie to the claim that Islam is an unbroken unity. Mr. Takle shows that these sects have arisen for "political, pietistic, and puritanical" reasons, and finds in them a true *preparatio evangelica*. The points of contact and of conflict between "Islam and Christianity" are sharply defined. In the last chapter Mr. Takle glances at "The Future of Islam," concluding with an earnest plea that "for their sakes" the Christian Church should renew the Crusades in the strength of God's promises, Christ's presence and the power of the Holy Spirit.

To the Indian Christian who would know, as he should know, something of the non-Christian forces at work in his native land: to the young Missionary who desires a comprehensive and stimulating survey of Islam; to the member of a Mission Study Circle anywhere we confidently commend Mr. Takle's book.

"The Faith of the Crescent" may be had at the Y.M.C.A. office. The price is Re. 1-12-0 in cloth: Re. 0-12-0 in paper.

HEDLEY SUTTON.

*Mymensingh.*

## NEW MEMBERS.

117	Miss Atkinson	...	...	...	Jessore.
118	Rev. Prof. J. F. Smith...	...	...	...	Rangoon, Burma.

*Members are requested to help in keeping up the interest by sending to the Secretary requests for prayer and items of news for our League Magazine.*

*Brahmanbaria,  
E. Bengal.*

J. TAKLE,  
*Hon. Sec., M.M. League.*