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## News and Notes

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### Divine Personality.

TWO difficulties arise when the missionary seeks to ascribe personality to God. The first is, that he is in a quandary as to the terms he should use. Nicholson in his *Idea of Personality in Sufism* gives us some valuable information on this point. He says, "I would remark in the first place that the expression 'Divine Personality' cannot be translated adequately into any Muhammadan language. The dictionaries render 'personality' by *shakhsiyyat*; but the word *shakhs*, meaning 'a person,' is really not applicable to Allah, though it occurs with reference to Him in the Tradition *La shakhsa aghyaru min Allah*. 'There is no person more jealous than Allah.'" There can be no doubt that the word *shakhs* is used in common speech with reference to God in Urdu, but that there is also some feeling of impropriety in using it, will at once be admitted by those who have discussed the matter with Muslims. This is partly due to the pious hesitation to go beyond the words used in the Quran, aptly illustrated for us by Macdonald in his *Muslim Theology* p. 211, where he tells us of Ibn Hazm's reluctance to form any more than the ninety-nine names of God even though these should be full of praise. God "has called Himself *al-Wahib*, the Giver, and so we may use that term of Him. But He has not called Himself *al-Wahhab*, the Bountiful Giver, so we may not use that term of Him, though it is one of praise." This is, of course, more properly applicable to the literalists, but it is interesting to find that reluctance in many who would repudiate Hanbali or Wahhabi affiliation. Now with regard to the word *shakhs*, if we turn to a popular dictionary published in Lucknow *Lugat-i-Kishori*, we find that the meaning of the word is given as "*Jism, badan, khwah insān ka ho khwah haiwan ka,*" i.e., Body, whether of man or of animal. The word *shakhsiyyat* we do not find there. Here we come on the track of a very good reason for the repudiation of such a word as applied to God. With reference to the

Tradition quoted above by Nicholson, Lane says the *Taj-ul-arus* explains that the word *shakhs* is used metaphorically for essence. The Christian use of the term 'personality' with reference to God can hardly be said to be metaphorical. So, at the outset we are compelled by the exigences of language to use a metaphorical term for one which is more than metaphorical and so we find ourselves involved in the second difficulty.

This second difficulty is that we are considered by our Muslim friends to be using a gross anthropomorphism when we speak of God's *shakhsiyat*. We are using a term which can be applied to man and animals but to apply it to the Incorporeal is blasphemous. Here we are faced, in a cruder form, with the fundamental objection that our ascription of personality to God is derogatory to the Supreme Being.

In approaching the subject in conversation with Muslims it is therefore necessary, as we found it necessary in the case of the Christian conception of God as Spirit, to clear away misconceptions and misinterpretations of the words we use, and to point out that here we are using a technical term which needs explanation. We are using the term 'personality' *in sensu eminentiori*. But we are declaring that God is a self-conscious, thinking, willing and feeling Being.

This will be at once admitted by our Muslim friends. Among the ninety-nine beautiful names are *Al-'Alim*, the Knower and *Al-Hayy*, the Living. *Irada* (Will) is included in the '*Hatt sifat*,' the Seven Attributes, with the two former, as also *Sam*, hearing, and *Basar*, seeing, which imply feeling. So while our term may be rejected, it is quite possible that an exposition of what we mean by personality may very readily find acceptance. This has been the writer's experience but with one very important qualification, namely, the obstinate refusal to see anything in these terms analogous to the content of human personality. We have already said that we use the term personality in a special sense, and we would not be disinclined to say that with regard to the mode of God's willing, knowing and feeling we are ignorant. We know that our exercise of the powers of personality is on the whole of a receptive character and that God's is rather active and creative. An illustration of what is meant by this can be found in the words used by Kelvin. "O God we are thinking Thy thoughts after Thee." The movement of God towards his creatures is in manifestation and the response of the creature is in perception. If we regard the will as the executive faculty there is no difficulty in ascribing this to God. So while we would attribute personality to God in a more excellent sense than that in which we would attribute it to man we would claim that there is something analogous in the human and the divine.

Our concern to apply the term 'person' to God is that we may avoid reducing the Divinity to a vague and nebulous force or entity. It is of the essence of our religion that we should have personal relationships with God. With blind force we can have no such

relationships. With some entity which is unregarding in the way suggested by the "I care not" of the Muslim tradition, we cannot have adequate relationship. With one who always stands over and above and legislates as it were from a distance, without that personal relationship which results in the law written in our own hearts, we shall always be at a loss, and meaning will be difficult to see in the world, in human existence, and in moral consciousness. We feel that there must be something in our thought which answers to Divine Thought, something in our discrimination between right and wrong which answers to a like discrimination in the Divine Nature. Otherwise this universe is chaos and not cosmos.

This is not to imagine that God is such an one as ourselves. We repudiate the charge that this is an anthropomorphic conception of God and claim that it is rather a theomorphic view of man, based on the fact that man is created in the image of God. God has in perfection what man has in a limited degree by God's gift. The observed limitations in human thought, *e.g.*, that it is discursive; in feeling, that it is response to sense impressions; in will, that it accepts an end external to itself and is bound to seek means, and that all three, and self-consciousness too, are dependent and therefore not to be ascribed to the Infinite, are most probably attributable to human personality *only* and not to all personality *per se*. What is possible of personality is given to creatures subject to their creaturely existence.

To turn once more to the conception of *Ruh* about which we had something to say last month, there is in the teaching of Al Ghazali something which is greatly different from the ordinary views with which we dealt. His view is associated with the words of Gen. i: 27 which have now become a tradition of the Prophet, "God made man in the image of the Merciful," and Surahs xv: 26, vii: 10, and xxxii: 8 of the Quran. "The *Ruh* is not a body located in the body as a vessel, nor is it an accident located in the heart and brain as knowledge in one who knows, but it is a substance (*jawhar*) because it knows itself and its Creator and perceives intelligible things." Man is thus spiritual substance (*jawhar-i-ruhani*). "This is not a case of comparison (*tashbih*) of man to Allah, for the specific difference of Allah is that he is *qaiyum*, that is "Self-subsisting," and everything besides him subsists by him." (Macdonald in *Moslem World* Vol. xxii., p. 154). This idea was further developed by Ibn 'Arabi and Al-Jili with reference to the doctrine of the Perfect Man (*Insan-i-Kamil*). For further information on this subject Macdonald's articles in the above volume of the *Moslem World* and the long chapter in Nicholson's *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* should be studied. Sufism eagerly seized on what Al-Ghazali had written because in this doctrine, the possibility of some kinship between the *Ruh* of Allah and the *Ruh* of man, was plain to be seen. In Al-Ghazali's conception surely we have the nearest approach to a Christian doctrine of man ever made in Islam. There are striking similarities between his view and that of the

Lotze whose manner of dealing with the question of the personality of God is one that specially appeals to us. Not all theologians were so quick to follow Al-Ghazali as the Sufis have shown themselves to be. Even a fellow Ash'arite, Ash-Shabrastani, passes him over here when in the chapter on the refutation of anthropomorphism in his *Kitab un-nihayat ul-iqdam ti 'imi-l-kalam*, he has occasion to refer to the same tradition about God's creation of Adam, making out that this is the foundation on which the anthropomorphists build. The opinion of the generality, most unfortunately, seems to agree with the latter theologian, and the conception of the utter transcendence of God, which is more suited to the genius of Islam, everywhere asserts itself. It is only among the mystically minded that any emphasis is placed on the alleged tradition and the Quranic texts above cited.

If, therefore, the contention of our former paper on this subject holds good, namely, that spirit can best be interpreted in terms of personality, it is quite possible that we may prevail upon our Muslim friend to admit that, accepting Al-Ghazali's view, we may say that God is Spirit and hold also that His is the prototype of personality of which man has that which is appropriate to his creaturely condition, a gift of the Divine Grace when He created man in His own image.

But again we shall find that not all will be ready to concede so much but will prefer to regard spirit as an impersonal emanation from the divine, adopting rather a pantheistic view than a theistic. The Sole Unity is the Universal Spirit of which human spirits are just phases of existence in a world of illusion. Such an idea is more akin to Hinduism than to Islam but we find it in the latter none the less. To us, to whom there is given the revelation of God in Christ, there is neither the temptation to over emphasis of transcendence nor to blur personal distinctions with the corresponding loss of sense of moral responsibility. Von Hugel's words are very important in this connection. "It is in Christianity, after noble preludings in Judaism, that we get the full deliberate proclamation, in the great Life and Teaching, of the profound fact,—the Self-Manifestation of the Loving God, the Spirit-God moving out to the spirit-man and spirit-man only thus capable of a return movement to the Spirit-God. As Schelling says, 'God can only give Himself to His creatures, as He gives a self to them, and with it, the capacity of participating in His life.' We thus get a relation begun and rendered possible by God's utterly prevenient, pure *ecstatic* love of man, a relation which, in its essence spiritual, personal and libertarian, leaves behind it, as but vain travesties of such ultimate Realities, all Emanational or Parallelistic Pantheism." There is a mutuality of relationship which is impossible in Pantheism. "God is here the Source as well as the Object of all love; hence *He Himself possesses the supreme equivalent for this our noblest emotion*. . . . 'God is Love'; 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son'; 'Let us love God for God hath first loved us'; 'If any man will do the will of God, He shall know of the

doctrine if it be from God': God's infinity is here not the negation of the relatively independent life of His creatures, but the very reason and source of their freedom."

J. W. S.

## The Muslim Population of the World.

**I**N *The Light* of Lahore, dated March 16th, 1935, we find the following:—

"Mr. Hatim Alvi, a member of the Karachi Corporation has issued the following statement to the Press: For the last 50 years we have been led to think that the total population of the Muslim World is only 400 millions. In the absence of any authentic figures we accepted the above numbers of the Muslim population as almost correct. The League of Nations has just published its census report which gives the latest figures for the total population of the followers of different religions. This report estimates the total population of the Islamic World at about 603 millions.

The following table gives the census of Muslims in various parts of the Globe.

North Africa	294,680,000
Middle and South Africa	9,280,000
East Africa	9,257,000
Eastern Europe	7,102,000
Soviet Russia	13,225,000
Middle and East Asia	31,830,000
India (including tribal area)	89,118,504
Malaya	3,034,092
China	49,800,000
Java and the neighbouring islands	95,985,000
Other countries	10,803
	603,322,399

Thus one-third of the whole human race professes Islam."

We have not the League of Nations figures before us and so we cannot say whether the above figures have been accurately copied. There is however one very obvious thing which stands out in the above list, the figures for North Africa. One suspects that here there has been a slight error of two hundred and sixty-five millions or so due to the addition of a cipher making the Muslim population of North Africa exactly ten times what it actually is. The reasons for this suspicion are as follows. The full total for the French Colonial Empire in Africa which included of course parts of Equatorial and East and West Africa was, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica about 36,000,000 in 1921. In 1925 the total population of Egypt was given

the same authority as 14,000,000. In 1921 the total population of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was 5,000,000. This makes a total of 55,000,000 from which great numbers must be subtracted for areas not in North Africa, and for non-Muslims. Dr. Zwemer says in his book *Across the World of Islam* that the figures for Muslims in the whole of Africa are about 49,000,000. The Encyclopaedia Britannica (thirteenth edition) gives the total population of Africa in 1920 as 132,000,000. The following figures given by Dr. Zwemer based on Professor Louis Massignon's figures in the *Annuaire du Monde Musulman*, 1925 are very interesting.

Country	Total Population	Moslem Population
Algeria	5,802,464	4,971,424
Tunisia	2,095,000	1,891,000
Morocco	5,400,000	5,215,000
Rio de Oro	50,000	50,000
Egypt	12,750,918	11,658,148
Anglo-Egypt, Sudan	5,852,000	2,800,000
Tripoli	569,093	553,081
Barqa	225,000	224,000
Senussi Emirat	20,000	20,000
Mauretania	261,000	254,000
Senegal	1,225,000	915,000
Sudan (French)	2,475,000	930,000
	<hr/> 36,725,475	<hr/> 29,481,653

It is remarkable that these figures should be very nearly one-tenth of the total given by our Muslim friend and thus our suspicion is confirmed that a naught has been added to his figures. If we can procure the figures which have been published by the League of Nations we shall place them before readers of these notes and if any of our readers have the figures we should be glad to hear from him. If the figures published in *The Light* are even approximately correct they are most extraordinary and one wonders what earlier statisticians have been doing.

J. W. S.

### Items of News

**I**N the report of the Arabian Mission it is interesting to read of the changes that are taking place in Iraq. Young Iraqis who have received a secondary or higher education are adopting western dress and habits. They react variously to modern influences, some object to the rapid westernization at the expense of Arab culture, but know that they themselves are the agents of the changes. The *conservative* among them talk of reducing the hours of prayer to three

times a day. The radical desires the complete secularizing of society. He has his objections to offer to Christianity based on the un-Christlike behaviour of nominally Christian individuals and nations. "You say Christians are brothers, but are not the greatest wars between Christians? You speak of Christian morality but what do we see in the products of Hollywood sent to us. The Christ was humble but Christians often deny our friendship for the sake of their pride."

Basra it seems is changing very much for the better. There is now a regular system of education. There is far greater freedom for women. Even Muhammadan women veil less strictly. "Now that Iraq has attained nationhood and all foreign direction is rapidly being withdrawn, many are beginning to realise that liberty is not enough, that character is also required to keep liberty from becoming license, a liability rather than an asset." The Christian schools of the Mission are helping to produce character.

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Good news comes from Orissa of the translation of two more Tracts for Women, 'Aqiqa and 'Id-ul-Azha into Oriya; and there is a further demand for the English originals of the Henry Martyn School Tracts for Women for North Africa. The Henry Martyn School Papers, now nine in all, are available for translation and large numbers of the English originals for distribution among English-speaking Muslims can be had from the Christian Literature Society, Madras.

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The second edition of the Hindi Quran has been published, price Rs. 4-12-0 including packing and postage. This can be procured from the Pratap Press, Cawnpore. There is a growing demand and as only five hundred are been issued, orders should be sent promptly. Dr. Ahmad Shah has lost the address of the lady or gentleman who ordered one from Egypt, sending four shillings and sixpence. If this should be one of our readers, will he or she please communicate with Dr. Ahmad Shah.

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### **Praise and Prayer.**

**PRAISE** God for a young Muslim in Orissa who has declared himself a Christian and will be coming forward for baptism.

**PRAISE** God for the joy He gives us in tasks that try our strength, but show He counts on us.

**PRAY** for all the missionaries in North China and especially for the newly established stations of Kucheng, Manass and the older centre of Tihua which are threatened by changed political circumstances.

**PRAY** for the Arabian Mission in its pioneer work.

**PRAY** for a young educated Muslim who is sincerely enquiring the way of life from a Christian friend and for the friend that he may have divine guidance in his labour of love.

PRAY for the East Turkestan Field Conference of the Swedish Mission, that they may be aided in pioneer work at Kashgar and Yarkhand and that the young Turks they have sent abroad for training may become a great blessing to their fellow-countrymen.

LET us confide in the Love that will not let *us* go and so will never let the most unlikely go.

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### Notice.

Dr. Murray T. Titus will be leaving for furlough early in April and all the work of the C.L.M.C. in regard to literature is being taken care of by the new Secretary-Treasurer, Rev. B. M. Mow, Bulsar, District Surat. We wish Dr. Titus Godspeed, a happy furlough, and a return in due time.

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscription, etc., should be sent to the Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India, and *not* to the Secretary of the League. The annual subscription to the League, is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.)

Matters of interest to members of the League, items of news and requests for prayer should be sent (if possible, early in the month) to the Hony. Secretary:—

Rev. J. W. Sweetman,  
Bowscar,  
Dalhousie,  
Panjab, India.

