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## News and Notes

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Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

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**Series XXVI.**

**January, 1938.**

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January 1st=27th Shawal (10th mo.) 1356 A.H.

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### **The Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies Move to Landour.**

A RARE OPPORTUNITY.

**A**T a recent emergency meeting the Committee of Management unanimously decided to transfer the head-quarters of H.M.S. from Lahore to Landour. As from 1st April, 1938, the new address will be **Lal Tiba, Landour, Mussoorie, U.P.**

**Courses of Lectures** by the Staff will be delivered at the new Centre during the four months—1st May to 31st August, and will be adapted to individual students, according to the time at their disposal and the subjects they require ;

- e.g.* Christian beliefs in the light of Muslim prejudice.  
The Christian approach to Muslims.  
A critical study of the Foundations of Islam.  
Teaching and practice of Islamic Mysticism  
Sources and development of Islamic doctrine.  
Historical relations of Islam and Christianity.  
The place of woman in Islam.

Since many missionaries go to Landour for their annual holiday it ought to be possible for those who feel the need of such instruction to secure extension of leave from their mission authorities to enable them to spend from 2 to 4 months at the School. It should be noted that the entire, very valuable Library is being transported to Landour.

**Accommodation** is offered at headquarters to missionaries who duly register themselves as students for the Course. The cost of board for these will be about Rs. 80 per mensem. Early application should be made to the Principal.

**Indian Students' Aid Fund**—The Courses are also open to Indian clergy, pastors, and men and women teachers possessing the necessary educational equipment, and the lectures may be given in the vernacular. To enable such to take advantage of this preparation the Committee of the School offer annually three scholarships, that is, enough to cover expenses for board. Free quarters can be provided at the Centre for Indians, but applications this year must be made before 15th February.

**Extension Work in the Plains.** For approximately four months in the cold weather the three members of the staff will be available for lecture courses in English, Urdu, and Bengali, to Indian and European workers at convenient centres Theological Students in Colleges and Seminaries, To assist the Indian Church in her evangelistic work among Muslims.

Invitations to take part in this kind of work should reach the Principal not later than 15th August.

Further particulars will be furnished on application to The Rev. L. Bevan Jones, 9 Masson Road, Lahore.

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### Early Muslim Theology.

(Some notes on the subject when reading the work of Maulana Shibli).

**M**USLIM Theology has very largely taken the form of Apologetic. When the necessity first arose for the formulation of Islamic doctrine, the immediate cause was the contact with Christianity, with its highly developed speculative theology. John of Damascus must have had a great deal to do with the very early clash of opinion and his contribution from the Christian side is evident from his *Disceptatio Christiani et Saraceni*, still extant.

Among Muslims it is not uncommon to find a differentiation between two kinds of dialectic (*Kalam*). There is first that which originated in internal dissension in Islam itself and secondly that which was devised in opposition to Philosophy. It is however not always recognised that the early dissensions within Islam were to a great extent caused by necessity for an apologetic against Christianity. The Muctazila, early rationalists shew in their writings how much their thought was influenced by Greek theology as distinct from Greek Philosophy.

Until the time of Al Ghazali there was no great corpus of dialectic embracing matters in which the sects of Islam differed and the criticisms of the Philosophers. Al Ghazali seems to have laid the foundation for a comprehensive system, Razi gave it further impetus

until finally in Muslim theology we find a blend of Philosophy, Scholasticism and authoritative creedal principles.

While Islam was limited to Arabia, nothing in the way of criticism, debate, analysis and verification was attempted. That was foreign to the Arab genius. So far as *Namaz, Roza, Zakat and Hajj* were concerned and the precepts of *Figh*, the search for precedents and the regulation of the Islamic state, much was done at a very early date. This was in accord with the Arab tendency to base law on custom. In the domain of creed and faith however little was done and a summary statement of fundamental believe was deemed sufficient. But when Islam spread and Persian, Copt and Greek entered the Islamic fold doctrinal disputation began. A Muslim writer says that they left those tenets which were manifestly opposed to Islam but brought with them many beliefs which they had formerly held and which did not seem to conflict with Islam. Thus very early in the Muslim conquest a variety of influences was at work within Islam. There is no overstatement here but perhaps understatement for the more one reads of those early days the more clearly is it seen that an indiscriminating eclecticism was at work.

Shibli says that Jewish anthropomorphisms such as God grieving, his wrestling with Jacob (!) and suffering injury would be likely to have their echo in the Muslim literalists' insistence on the literal interpretation of the Quranic verses which speak of God's hands, His face, etc. It is true that there were some grossly anthropomorphic Rabbinical schools but it is very doubtful whether these were responsible for the corresponding school in Islam. It is far more likely that the crude concreteness of the Arab mind had far more to do with it.

In the early days the burning question was whether or not predestination should be held. The Muctazila for the most part held that man was free. They here shew the influence of Greek thought. The majority of Muslims, however, took the opposite view. This has been described as due to the Semitic tendency to ascribe all to Divine action. When God is regarded as a dominant power, he is not subject to the action of any other. No one can question his commands. "It is in his power to forgive sinners and punish well-doers." If one would magnify His power to the utmost it would be necessary to contemplate the possibility of his changing a pebble into a mountain in the twinkling of an eye, to make night day, and heat cold. In the eyes of a man of this opinion, the things we interpret as causes are no causes, and man does not even control his own deeds. Whatever he does God is doing. Shibli says that this involves many things. God's ordination is not based on benevolence or goodwill, there is nothing in the world which is the cause of anything else and there are no properties or qualities or causality inherent in things. It means also that if God should without reason punish the good this is not injustice, that man has no power over his own acts and that God causes man to do both good and evil. It was against such tenets that the Muctazila protested.

They said that all God's acts are founded on goodwill and that there is not the tiniest atom which is devoid of His wisdom. They asserted that God had established the order of the universe in a regular and constant process which is never broken, that He has set properties in the nature of things which are inseparable from them, that He has made man responsible for his own deeds and that His Nature is Equity and Justice and there can never be any injustice shewn by him. Though we find that Shibli is inclined very often to read into ancient tenets the ideas of later days, particularly of an evolutionary character, the description of the Muctazila which he places before us is fairly accurate. We would point out however that the Muctazila was never accepted as the true exponent of Islamic doctrine but was regarded as heretical.

The really important debate between rival schools at an early date and even to some extent down to the present day is with regard to the province of reason in theology. Reason and authority are the two protagonists. It is interesting to note a similar antagonism in other religions. Shibli says "Nature has formed two sorts of temperament in man, one which allows reason to enter into everything and which does not credit anything till it comes into reason and the other which has no taste for this sort of enquiry or investigation. When this type of person hears anything from an authority or person worthy of belief he does not dispute it at all but bows his head in agreement and says 'Yea, verily'."

In illustration the following examples are given. "Abu Huraira said that the Prophet said that the grief and lamentation of the living was an affliction to the dead (for whom they sorrowed). Ayesha said: 'This cannot be because one man cannot be held accountable for another's sins.'" "A companion said that Muhammad said the dead hear. Ayesha said 'The dead cannot hear because God himself says; Thou canst not make the dead to hear.'" (Sur xxvii. 82.) "Abu Huraira said that Muhammad said that the eating of a thing cooked by fire spoiled *wazu*'. Abdullah b. Mas 'ud replied, 'If that is so then to perform *wazu*' with hot water is not lawful.'" "Now it is certain that there was no intention of denying the words of the prophet but they must have thought that those things which are contrary to reason could never have been said by the prophet."

Shibli gives as another reason for the neglect of the use of reason in theology in early Islam something which can hardly be said to be fully substantiated from what we know of early Muslim history. He says "It was the custom of Traditionalists and Legists, *Muhaddithin* and *Fuqaha*, to mix with none but co-religionists because they had no leisure from their work and because they deemed it unfitting to have anything to do with people of other religions. Thus the voice of disagreement never reached their ears and they had absolutely no knowledge of the objections being urged against Islam. All the people they met looked up to them for their opinion and accepted what they

said without question." No doubt they had great authority but they could not have been so ignorant of the opinions held by the adherents of other religions. When we remember how much Christian scribes were used in the early days of Islam and how much the law of Islam was influenced by the Roman Law in which the Syrians were most proficient, it is difficult to assume that Muslim Jurisprudence grew up in such absolute seclusion as suggested above.

Shibli proceeds? "People asked these collectors of Hadith. 'When God is incorporeal how can he be settled on the Throne?' They replied 'The manner is not known and to ask is heresy.' Their adherents received this answer in silence and so the Traditionalists had no need to clear up the doubt. In contrast, the Schoolmen (*Mutakallimin*) and especially the Muctazilites had dealings with people of all faiths and sects and were engaged in debate with them. An *ex aethera* pronouncement would not be acceptable to such people and so the fundamental reality had to be made manifest and the knot of doubt untied."

Shibli here proceeds to outline the stages of growth of doctrine with the Divine Nature as an illustration.

**FIRST STAGE.** God is held to be corporeal, settled on the Throne, has hands, feet, face. God set His hand on the shoulder of Muhammad and Muhammad felt that it was cold.

**SECOND STAGE.** God is corporeal, He has hands and face and leg but all these are not such as ours.

**THIRD STAGE.** God has neither body, hands nor face. Such words in the Quran have not the real meaning at all but are metaphorical and allegorical. God is Hearer, Seer, Knower and all these attributes are additional to His Quiddity (*mahiyat*).

**FOURTH STAGE.** God's attributes are not identical with His Essence and not external to it.

**FIFTH STAGE.** God's Essence is Absolutely One. In it there is no sort of multiplicity whatever. His Essence does the work of all His attributes. His Essence is Knowing, Seeing, Hearing, Powerful etc.

**SIXTH STAGE.** God is Absolute Existence *i.e.* Existence is His very Quiddity. This takes the form of the Oneness of Existence (*Wahdat ul Wujud*) where we arrive at the point where philosophy and Sufism meet.

At last we come to the Ash'ariya. This school denied the body, hands and face of Allah. They adopted the *via remotiois* and gradually their school triumphed over every school in Islam. A difficulty presented itself. If the Attributes were identical with the Essence, then the Attributes have no separate existence and if the Attributes are other than the Essence, then multiplicity of eternal is implied. Therefore resort was had to the formula *La 'ayn wa la ghayr i.e.*, the attributes were said to be neither identical with the Essence nor different from the Essence. From this it appears that

the undifferentiated unity of God presented some metaphysical problems and that the Trinitarian is not the only one who is faced with them. Such a negative statement could not satisfy for long and so it began to be said that God is extended existence and as such is the ground of the manifestation of all attributes.

It must not be assumed that this last-mentioned view ousted all the others. The stages described could be found side by side and still are.

In addition to this discussion of the Being and Attributes of God the question of predestination came early to the fore. During the period of the Umayyads, war seemed always to be in the air even if actually not proceeding. The Umayyads exhibited some recklessness of spirit and from time to time what could hardly be described as piety. When complaint came about wine-drinking and licentiousness, those who complained were silenced with "What is, is by God's will. We believe in the predestination of good and evil." Macbad asked the mystic Hasan Basri how far this defence of themselves by the doctrine of predestination on the part of the Umayyads was correct. He replied "These enemies of God are liars." Opponents of this convenient doctrine of predestination were persecuted by the Umayyads. Ghailan Dimashqi who opposed 'Umar b.'Abd ul 'Aziz, was mutilated by Hisham Abdu'l Malik shortly after he came to the throne and finally put to death. "Jahm b.Safwan suffered in the same way." It is noteworthy that here Shibli gives the impression that Jahm was killed for holding the doctrine of the freedom of the will whereas though he was reckoned as a Muctazilite, he was a most extreme predestinarian and believed that no action of man was voluntary.

A Quranic verse which was used in this controversy was Sur. XXXI. 16. "Be steadfast in prayer, and bid what is reasonable." The Mu'tazila became known as the "People of the Justice and the Unity." There is no doubt that the sect as a whole was strongly anti-Umayyad and when the 'Abbasid Empire was founded they began the heyday of their influence. "In 125 A.H. when Walid came to the throne they numbered thousands and even Yazid b. al Walid embraced the sect." After his accession Walid became a wine-bibber and licentious man and did not hide it. Yazid on the grounds of Surah XXXI. 16 raised the standard of rebellion. Walid was killed. Yazid came to the throne of the Khilafat. It is noteworthy that one of Yazid's helpers was Umar b. Ubayd, a leader of the Mu'tazila. Thus when for political reasons attention had been drawn to doctrine although at first only this special doctrine of Predestination, nevertheless the movement in thought had become an actuality and before the end of the Umayyad Dynasty, such doctrines as the creation of the Quran, Assimilation, (likening of God's attributes to human attributes), Exalting (purifying the attributes of God from human defect) and in general the relation of the attributes to the Divine Essence, were all subjects of debate. And the legacy of those early days remains with Islam to the present day.

J.W.S.

## **“Religious Week” Inaugurated by Muslim Ladies.**

Under the auspices of the Madras Presidency Muslim Ladies Association, a “Religious week” was inaugurated on Nov. 4 at the Government Hobart Secondary and Training School, Royapettah, by Janab Autiah the Nawab Begam Sahiba of Arcot.

Inaugurating the “Religious week,” the Begam Sahiba said that the truer and deeper springs of all great and glorious actions lay in religion and it behoved them therefore to constantly remind themselves and others of the fundamental principles of their religion with a view to alleviating the distresses of the people around them contributing to their welfare. Ideals of self-control to be gained by fasting and prayers and of charity to others have always been great ideals with us. We should follow them always and not give them up in the pursuit of worldly ends. The observances of the Religious week, she hoped, would refresh their ideas and ideals to stimulate their moral and spiritual activities and help to make them lead happier and more useful lives.

Speeches on the occasion were also made by a number of ladies on varied subjects of religious interests.

Mrs. Syed Abdul Wahab Bukari, Saheb spoke on “The Ramzan and the importance of its observance” Mrs. Tassaduk Hussain Lahori, spoke on “Ramzan Charity” (Zakat) Mrs. Nazir Hussain spoke on “Fasting and Prayers”.

*From Madras Guardian Nov. 18. 37*

### **Extra Copies of *The Moslem World*.**

I have the following extra copies of the Moslem World which I shall be glad to dispose of at the nominal price of Rs. 1 per copy or Fifty Cents plus postage. Anyone desiring copies please correspond with the undersigned at M. E. Mission, Budaun, India.

M. T. TITUS.

- 1911—January number ; and also one complete bound volume.
- 1912—1 January ; 3 July, and 3 October numbers.
- 1913—1 July and 1 October numbers.
- 1914—1 April number.
- 1915—1 October number.
- 1916—1 January, and 1 April numbers.
- 1917—1 July and 2 October numbers.
- 1919—1 April, 1 July, and 2 October numbers.
- 1920—1 January number.
- 1922—1 January and 1 October numbers.
- 1923—1 April number.



1924—1 April number.  
 1925—1 April number.  
 1926—1 October number.  
 1927—1 July number.  
 1928—1 January number.  
 1929—1 July number.  
 1932—1 October number.  
 1935—1 April number.

The *January 1919* number is required to complete my files.

If any one has such an extra number please correspond with the above address. Payment or exchange will be arranged as desired.

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### PRAYER AND PRAISE.

“When faith is of the kind that God awakens and creates within the heart, then a man trusts in Christ. He is then so securely founded on Christ that he can hurl defiance at sin, death, hell the devil and all God’s enemies. He fears no ill however hard and cruel it may prove to be. Such is the nature of true faith, which is utterly different from the faith of the Scholastics, Jews and Turks. Their faith, produced by their thoughts, simply lights on a thing, accepts it, believes it to be this or that. God has nothing to do with such a delusion; it is the work of man and comes from nature. . . But what the real faith is and how powerful it is, of this they know nothing. . . . Wherefore, beware of that faith which is manufactured or imagined; for the true faith is not the work of man. . . The true faith is the heart’s utter trust in Christ, and God alone awakens this in us. He who has it is blessed, he who has it not is cursed.”

MARTIN LUTHER.

PRAYER is asked for a group of enquirers and recent converts at Lahore that God may impart that living faith which is not mere assent to a different creed.

LET US PRAY for all the evangelistic agencies in India and throughout the world that they may be endued with power from on high.

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### NOTICE.

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscriptions 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 Honorary Secretary:—

Rev. J. W. Sweetman,  
 30, Mozang Road,  
 Lahore.