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News and Notes

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1939.

September 1st = 16th Rajab (7th mo.) 1358 A.H.

Islamic Conceptions of Revelation.

IN theory it is believed that God reveals His truth in two main ways, as will become evident from a consideration of the usages of the term *wahy*.

This term literally means "sending" or "writing" a message, and is used in the two phrases *wahy matlu*, and *wahy ghair matlu*, i.e., revelation recited, and revelation without a recital.

Wahy matlu is reserved for the superior form of communication between God and the prophets, and is the recital, in their hearing, of the words of the message itself. It may be through a voice that is heard, or an actual messenger, usually the angel Gabriel. A feature of this mode of revelation is that the angel messenger may be seen by the prophet, though this need not always be the case.

Moreover, the message so conveyed to the prophet must, of necessity, be communicated by him to men. Reference is made to this type of revelation in the Qur'an, viz: "It is not for any mortal that God should speak to him except by *wahy*, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He will"—42 (Shura) 50-1.

A modified and inferior mode of revelation is that known as *wahy ghair matlu*—revelation conveyed, not as a message recited, but in the form of knowledge which is "cast", as it were, into men's minds by God. It is for the most part suddenly communicated—the recipient does not know how, why, or whence. It is a pure gift from God and unlike the message audibly recited to the Prophet, is granted for the enlightenment of the particular individual receiving it. This is the form of revelation that commonly goes by the name of *ilham*, lit. "causing to swallow, or gulp down"—cp. 91 (Shams) 8.

It is the type of revelation associated with the Islamic doctrine of saints, and, because their hearts are supposed to be pure, it is to

them chiefly that such knowledge is imparted.* It is, however, to be distinguished from '*ilm 'aqli*, intellectual knowledge, in that it cannot be gained by the process of human deduction, nor yet through meditation.

Before or After?

A COMMON defence advanced in these days, especially by the Ahmadis, for the greater number of the wives of Muhammad over the strictly limited *four* allowed to his followers, is that he had taken these to himself before the injunction fixing the limit. It seems very plausible, and there are liberal-minded non-Muslims who have accepted that explanation. But certain facts deduced by Muslim writers themselves serve to throw doubt on such an assertion.

The two outstanding verses that concern this issue are: "And if ye fear that ye cannot deal fairly between orphans, then marry what seems good to you of women, two, and three and four; and if ye fear that ye cannot do justice (*i.e.*, between these wives) then only one," etc.—4 (Nisa) 3. and,

"It is not permitted thee (Muhammad) to take other wives hereafter, nor to change thy present wives for other women, even though their beauty please thee," etc.—33 (Ahzab) 52.

It is to be noted that even Muslim authorities agree that, at the time of the pronouncement in the latter verse, Muhammad had nine wives. The question is, which is the earlier pronouncement—4: 3 or 33: 52? If we can determine that point, it will become clear whether an exception, "a special privilege", was claimed for Muhammad.

Muslim commentators themselves supply us with the information we require; and since it is the Ahmadis in particular who say (when it suits their purpose) that 33: 52 preceded the command in 4: 3, we may content ourselves by quoting from the commentary of Maulana Muhammad Ali, the President of the Lahore section of this community.

In his note on 4: 3, he says, "It is admitted that this chapter was revealed to guide the Muslims under the conditions which followed the battle of Uhud . . . in that battle 70 men out of 700 Muslims had been slain, and this decimation had largely decreased the number of males . . . the natural guardians and supporters of the females . . ." Now the battle of Uhud took place in the year 3 A.H.

In seemingly sublime unconsciousness of the contention of some Ahmadi apologists Maulana Muhammad Ali in his note on 33: 52 gives the case completely away, for he says: "Abdulla, son of Jahsh, fell a martyr at Uhud, and his widow Zainab, daughter of Khuzaima,

(*) Among the Sufis the term in common use for this is *kashf*.

was taken in marriage by the Prophet in the same year. In the next year. Abu Salma died, and his widow Umm-i-Salma, was taken to wife by the Prophet." Then he married Zainab, the divorced wife of Zaid, "in the fifth year of Hejira." Again, Umm-i-Habiba, widow of 'Ubaidulla, "was taken as a wife by the Holy Prophet in the seventh year of Hejira." Three more, "Juwairiya, Maimoona and Safiyya, he married in the years six and seven of Hejira."

So that this writer makes it clear that Muhammad actually married *seven* of his wives *after* the battle of Uhud, that is, *after* the pronouncement in 4:3. Four of these he married "within the short space of five years" *i.e.*, *after* the battle (cp. *The Light*, Lahore, 16 August, 1932). Before the battle he already possessed three wives—Sauda, 'A' isha, and Hafsa.

Q. E. D.

A Forward Movement in Java.

Rev. J. Van De Weg, of the Dutch Mission, working at Djoentikebon, in Java, wrote recently to say that he is finding *The People of the Mosque* and *Christianity Explained to Muslims*, of great use in his work. "I am using them," he says, "in our monthly meetings with our workers. It is not only increasing their knowledge, but also gives them courage. Understanding these things they see that they have not to fear. But the Christian view and spiritual explication are strengthening them."

He then goes on to describe how he works with, and through, a group of workers, called *Tukang Kurant*, or News-men, who distribute a monthly paper. As this method may interest our readers we produce here a portion of a statement our correspondent has prepared for wider use.

He says the method has been tried for two years; "it gives us great joy and God opens many doors to bring the Gospel. People who receive our paper are often discussing it, and then they receive some small booklets to give them deeper insight." After the News-men have opened up the way, the evangelists go in and continue the work.

These News-men "are members of the local congregation, belonging to the ordinary peasant-class, who distribute a paper containing a Gospel message for some weeks every month in the district assigned to them.

"They have had a six weeks' training, in which they have learnt something about Islam, some deeper knowledge concerning Christianity, and in which their work has been dealt with more in particular. They travel from one village to another, go and see the isolated Christians, hold Bible-lectures for them, distribute their papers and try to get into touch with many people who are revisited every

month. If greater interest is shown, the evangelist holds Bible-classes for the people they reach.

"This method of work is highly satisfactory, whereas the costs are lower than in the case of an evangelist. Their work has greater success in some respects because, at the beginning especially, they are nearer their own people and surroundings.

Meetings with the "Tukang Kurant." Every month these *Tukang Kurant* come together at the head-station for a two-days' meeting with the evangelists, clergy and some others who help distribute the papers. Their written reports, already discussed orally with the evangelist or clergyman of their district, are gone into deeper now. In this way they are helped to solve difficulties and questions that may have arisen. A second fixed item of the agenda is a Bible-lecture on a subject connected with their work. As they often talk about the stories of the "prophets" (Abraham, David, etc.) these stories are amply treated in a Bible-lecture, with a view to the edification of their own spiritual lives as well as to a better understanding and explanation of these stories.

"At these meetings considerable attention is given to the discussion of the contents of the paper. The object of this is not only that they may understand them, but also to help the workers to explain the paper to smaller groups of people. This implies not only practice in public speaking but also they must make written addresses about some of these subjects, which are corrected and discussed personally. After this meeting there follows a meeting with evangelists and clergy to deal further with the results of this discussion with special regard to the work to be done. At the same time the subject of the next number is fixed upon in consultation with the "*Tukang Kurant*".

Card index system. Of the written reports extracts are made in card-index system so that one is always abreast of the interest shown by a certain village and knows the addresses of those interested.

Special occasions. On special occasions such as *Maulud* and *Lebaran*, *Idu'l-Fitr*, etc., an extra-number or tract is published and distributed on a large scale.

As many workers as possible take part in this.

Book Reviews.

THE PEOPLE OF THE MOSQUE. L. Bevan Jones, B.A., B.D., Principal of the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies, Landour, India, Author of *Christianity Explained to Muslims*, etc. The Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, Calcutta, pp. xviii—355. Prices: paper Rs. 3; full cloth, Rs. 4 *Second Revised Edition*.

When the Rev. L. Bevan Jones first brought out his *People of the Mosque* in 1932 there was great rejoicing in the ranks of those Christian workers in India who not only wanted to know the rudiments of the Islamic religion, but also desired to know it with special reference to the problems of India. But even beyond the bounds of this country the book received a most cordial welcome. The *Times Literary Supplement* said of it, "Both the temper and the substance of the book are to be very highly commended.....The author deserves all praise for the scrupulous impartiality with which he writes and the good feeling towards Islam and Muslims which he consistently displays and inculcates." These words are every bit true, and it is a pleasure to note that since the first edition of this valuable book has been exhausted we now have a second and revised edition.

The revision is not extensive in the sense that much if any new material has been introduced, but rather that it has been made more accurate, particularly in the section dealing with the Ahmadis, pages 291-306.

For the benefit of those who are reading this book for the first time it is proper to note that the book deals not merely with Islam as a religion, and with special reference to Islam in India, but also considers Christianity in relation to Islam in India. Four sections deal with the Religion of Islam, and the fifth section with Christianity and Islam in India. Section One gives a clear picture of the Rise and Expansion of Islam: Arabia and its people; Muhammad the Prophet of Islam; The First Four Khalifas; and the subsequent Expansion of Islam. Section II treats of The Foundations of Islam, namely: The Qur'an; The Traditions; Muslim Canon Law. Section III presents The Faith and Practice of Islam as follows: The Creed; Religious Duties; Muslim Festivals; The Sects of Islam; Sufism; The Mystic Path and Religious Orders. Section IV brings Islam up to date by a survey of Islam in the Modern World: Islam in the Near East; Islam in India since the Tenth Century; Reform Movements in Indian Islam; and the New Apologetic for Islam. The Fifth Section tells us of Christianity and Islam in India since the Sixteenth Century; about the Sources of the Strength of Islam; The Inadequacy of Islam from the Christian point of view; Christian Doctrines in the Light of Muslim Prejudices (enlarged into a most helpful book, *Christianity Explained to Muslims*); the New Polemic against Christianity; a Candid Enquiry into Our missionary Methods; and an evangelistic appeal under the title, *Our Supreme Task*.

This volume as the former edition, has a useful glossary and a most helpful index. Unfortunately there is no bibliography. The book has already been translated into Urdu, Bengali and Hindi.

MURRAY T. TITUS.

THE BEST FRIEND. By the same author: C.L.S., Madras, Third Edition, Revised throughout, pp. 67, 2 As.

This little book by the author of *The People of the Mosque*, and *Christianity Explained to Muslims* has been honoured by having passed through three editions in English since its first publication in 1925; and by being translated and published in Assamese, Bengali, Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Oriya, Sindhi, Malayalam and Pashtu, and I know not what other languages of the Muslim world outside India. A Marathi version is in course of preparation. I do not know how many thousands have been issued, but I do know that it is one of the best books available for introducing the Muslim mind and heart to Jesus Christ. It was prepared with that end in view, and seeks to remove unnecessary obstacles in this initial process. It is based largely on the words of the Gospels themselves, but uses simple modern English.

It is a book that is easily used; and is readily accepted and highly commended by Muslims themselves.

M. T. T.

Islam for Beginners. News has come to hand that the translation of this most useful primer of 50 pages, by Dr. Titus, into the Bengali language has now been completed and sent to the press. This makes the fifth vernacular in which it is available.

Notes.

H.M.S. Tracts for Women. A correspondent writes concerning the series of tracts for women issued by The Henry Martyn School. "Those special tracts for Muslim women have been put in the hands of our Bible women. They think they are fine, and have been zealously putting them into the hands of the Muslim pupils, often asking them to return them when read so that they can pass them on to others. They have been well received and have opened the way for clear testimony to the teaching of the Word of God, also the opportunity to answer some of their questions. We have been using them in the hospital too, and last Sunday in our special services in the Medical and Surgical wards two of our nurses used the tract on "Baqr-Id" in the form of a dialogue, and the patients were greatly interested. We plan to use one each week in our Sunday morning meetings." (India.)

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Khush-Khabar. A member of long-standing in the League, Rev. D. A. Chowdhury, Church of Scotland Mission, Budge Budge, Bengal, has recently revived his Bengali monthly magazine for Muslim readers under the new title of *Khush-Khabar*. He now finds it necessary to print 750 copies per month. Dr. Zwemer is a generous patron and a recent gift from him has made this increase possible. Among the subscribers are a number of Muslims.

It is a paper that should be widely used by mission workers in North and East Bengal and we trust that, as before, it will be procured in quantities and freely distributed. The annual subscription is eight annas only. It has 8 pages in a coloured cover.

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Tabarra. This term, now commonly used of the Shi'a people's 'abuse' of the first three Khalifas is from a root having the initial meaning of 'to be free,' and is directly connected with a form of that root having the sense of 'to assert one's self to be free from.' It is explained in a Shi'a book to be equivalent to *disgust*; to keep one's self separate from all evil things and people; enemies of the faith, rebels and rebellion. "But it never means abuse and cursing."

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Hindu Women's Right of Divorce. Two Bills, both aiming at ameliorating the position of Hindu married women, have recently been discussed in legislative councils. Among Hindu women the indissoluble marriage has been for long centuries a most sacred feature of domestic life. Now it is a question that has been "dragged into the open arena" of public discussion.

One of these Bills, Seth Govind Lal's *Hindu Monogamous Bill* did not reach the Select Committee stage, but was lost without a division in the Council of State. The strange thing was that it was opposed, not by the Hindu members, but by the Muslims, "whom this Bill," as a Hindu woman remarks, "does not affect in the least."

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See News and Notes, July, page 51. The brave "Muslim Youth," mentioned in Mr. Subhan's account of his meeting which the Muslims as a body boycotted, "has been coming twice a week regularly for Christian teaching, and to all the Church services. He gives every evidence of a genuine conversion, and also shows growth in grace and knowledge. His witness is fearless. He is now bringing along his brother, who at first was very bitter . . . He has a regular job in his trade. He is to stand for examination of his faith and experience before the Church on 20th August, and on a true confession of his faith is to be baptized the following Sunday. This will be a real treat to us . . . We'll appreciate prayers on his behalf." Praise God for this glad news!

For Praise and Prayer.

PRAYSE for the forward movement in Java—pray that much fruit may result for this concentrated effort.

PRAYER for a Muslim young man who with his wife, is receiving instruction with a view to baptism—"that they may be led rightly by the Holy Spirit"—(Bengal.)

NOTICE.

The Muslim Literature Committee meeting will be held in Delhi on the 15th November, 1939.

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 :—

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Lal Tiba,
Landour, Mussoorie,
N. India.

