

«O mankind, surely we have created you from male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may know one another»

[Quran 49:11]

# PROGRESSIVE ISLAM

*A monthly publication dedicated to the promotion of knowledge concerning  
Islam and modern thought.*

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## EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

This monthly, which we have called *Progressive Islam*, is the realization of an attempt to formulate a serious view concerning the nature of Islam and its relation with modern thought. The condition of the Muslim people, the nature of the Islamic religion and the impact of Western thought upon the societies of the East shall be the primary concern of this monthly. Islam, from the dawn of its history, has always been inclined to that particular mode of viewing human history and human thought which we at present call the socio-historical method. The brilliant exponent of this method was, none other than the founder of modern sociology and scientific history, Abdul Rahman Ibn Khaldun who died in the year 1332 A. D. This socio-historical method requires from us that in our study of historical events or the emergence of religious or philosophical systems, we must take into serious consideration the following factors: (1) the culture and civilization in which a particular system was born, (2) the age in which it occurred, (3) the area to which it was related, (4) the group or individual who initiated the system, (5) the situation in which this group or individual found themselves when they commenced advocating that system, (6) the class to which this group or individual belonged, and last but not least, (7) the personality of the founder. The Islamic system of thought and religious life shall attach very great importance to the personality of the founder without thereby minimizing the significance of the other factors worthy of serious consideration. Led by our desire to establish a rational and scientific framework for the Islamic faith to which reason and science were from its very birth inalienable, we have decided to adopt this socio-historical method as the manner of approach of this paper. This socio-historical method, in turn, requested that we divide this paper into four sections. The four sections are Islam, general knowledge, news and eventually, correspondence. Before we discuss further the ideas underlying the four sections, some information/in connection with the publication of this monthly shall be duly given in the following paragraphs.

**THE NAME PROGRESSIVE ISLAM.** The name *Progressive Islam* does not imply any dissection whatsoever as to the nature of the Islamic faith. The idea which we intend to convey is not a kind of abstraction from the totality of the Islamic religion. By calling this paper *Progressive Islam* we do not mean that we have extracted one part of Islam which is progressive and left the other part of Islam which is not progressive. Rather, the name *Progressive Islam* should be regarded as another way of saying that Islam is progressive. Just as you can say that a man is good by saying that he is a good man, in like manner you can say that the religion of Islam is progressive by calling it *progressive Islam*. Islam is from the very beginning essentially progressive. Professor David De Santillana, who lectured on the history of the Islamic political and religious institutions, at the university of Rome, made the following remarks on the progressive nature of Islam: "Having as its scope social utility, Muslim law is essentially progressive, in much the same way as our own. Being the product of language and logic it is a science. It is unchangeable and depending on mere tradition. The great schools of law agree on this point." Professor Santillana also mentioned the practical and human aspects of Islamic law. He wrote, "Islamic law favours every practical activity, and holds in great esteem agriculture, commerce, and every kind of work; it censures all those who burden others with their maintenance, requires every man to keep himself by the produce of his own labour, and does not despise any sort of work whereby man may make himself independent of others. 'L'Islam est une religion d'hommes', says Renan. Con-

sidering its spirit, therefore, we see that the tendency of Islamic law is to allow human action the widest limits, and we may agree with the Muslim jurists, when they teach that the fundamental rule of law is liberty."<sup>1</sup> It shall now be clear to the readers why we have used *Progressive Islam* as the name of this monthly.

**THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THIS MONTHLY.** *Progressive Islam* is mainly supported by the funds collected from various Muslims from all parts of the world. The funds received shall be used strictly for the purpose of publishing this monthly. The editor and the Muslim contributors of *Progressive Islam* shall not be awarded any pecuniary remuneration whatsoever. As to the non-Muslim contributors who sympathize with the aim of *Progressive Islam*, the editor shall make individually an arrangement with each of them as regards the honorarium. The first few numbers of *Progressive Islam* shall be distributed freely amongst the readers. After a few issues have been published, the editor would be in a better position to fix the subscription rate for this paper. Through arrangement with the editor, reduction or even exemption from the subscription fee is possible.

This arrangement is specially made for those readers who are interested to extend their intellectual horizons through *Progressive Islam* but have not enough means to do so. *Progressive Islam* shall be distributed to all parts of the world and to all Muslims and non-Muslims alike who show their sympathy and interest in it.

**PREJUDICES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT ISLAM IN THE WEST.** There is perhaps hardly any better example for a social psychologist in the study of prejudices entertained by one civilization towards another, as that of Europe towards that of Islam. Professor P. K. Hitti of Princeton university could best explain this. "The Europeans," wrote Professor Hitti, "as a rule wanted to study Islam either to convert its followers or to further imperialistic interests. Western chauvinism, religious zeal and sheer ignorance played their part. Long persistence of legends about Muhammad, the founder of Islam, hostile prejudice of Christians toward a rival and aggressive faith, and the unpleasant memories of the crusades, reinforced by the ever present fears of the growing power of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, militated against an objective or dispassionate — not to say sympathetic — study of Islam. Martin Luther held the opinion that the Turks constituted a punishment from God."<sup>2</sup> Apart from the factors mentioned by Professor Hitti enhancing a prejudicial attitude towards Islam, is another important factor which is responsible for a great deal of misunderstanding towards Islam. This factor is that of faulty methodology. Many sincere writers and orientalists were misguided because of this. Muhammad Iqbal, the philosopher-poet of Pakistan, attributed the misunderstanding of some of these writers mainly to a narrow and erroneous conception of causality.<sup>3</sup> The first requirement of a strictly scientific methodology is the clarification of the conception of causality. It is also possible that the choice of a faulty methodology is actuated by the writers' interests. Snouck Hurgronje is a good example for this. His attachment to the Dutch colonial government in Indonesia, his predominating interest in subjugating the Muslim people to colonial rule, and probably his bias towards a positivistic conception of religion, all contributed to his employing a faulty methodology and the distortion of Islam.<sup>4</sup> One of his 'popular distortions' is describing Islam in the form of Christianity. Another good example of a misunderstanding or whatever it is, is that of the celebrated Swiss historian Jakob Burckhardt. Jakob Burckhardt considered the Quran as a

wretched book.<sup>5</sup> One hardly expects from such an eminent figure as Jakob Burckhardt to make such a childish and irresponsible statement unworthy of the slightest attention. But nevertheless such things do happen. Another widespread misunderstanding concerns the Islamic contribution to the Renaissance and the development of thought in Europe. Almost all historians of philosophy cherished the view that the Islamic contribution to the development of thought was not much. What is worse, that little bit offered by the civilization of Islam is not regarded as original. The role of the Muslims were merely as transmitters of the ancient heritage bequeathed to us by the Greeks. For about 700 years in Spain, as these historians would have us believe, the people of Islam were not capable of producing even one original thinker. The view that Islamic contribution to European thought was not original is shared by many philosophers of repute, amongst others: F. Ueberweg, B. Erdmann, W. Windelband, and in our time Bertrand Russell. In this, the historians of philosophy exhibited a remarkable capacity of dogmatic thinking by fully relying on what had been said by their predecessors. The aim of *Progressive Islam* is to deny this and to present convincing proofs of the originality of Muslim contribution to the development of thought. "Never in the course of human culture," wrote Professor E. J. Jurji, "was there so romantic a drift or scientific thought; none so well known in detail; and none more frequently misunderstood by historians of medieval thought. One may consistently trace the typically Arab patterns of scientific thinking to some origin in Hellenistic mentality. Taken alone, that inevitably fails to help the seeker of the truth arrive at a mature understanding of the subject. That method breaks down because Hellenistic culture itself was transmitted to the Arabs in manifold ways. Other ingredients helped to alter radically the quality of the Greek heritage. No interpretation of the whole integral phenomenon is ever complete that leaves Arab spontaneity out of consideration."<sup>6</sup>

In our attempt to prove the Islamic contribution, we shall of course prevent ourselves from falling into the error of amplifying the merits of Islam. But neither shall we consent ourselves to the contrary process of diminishing the achievements of Islam. As to the originality of the Muslim thinkers, let us conclude this subject by hearing what the famous German historian of materialism, F. A. Lange, had to say. According to Lange, Islam was the first monotheistic religion which developed "a free philosophical spirit, which exercised a powerful influence primarily upon the Jews of the middle ages, and so indirectly upon the Christians of the West." This spirit of inquiry had nothing to do with the influence of Greek thought on the Muslims. "Even before the communication of Greek philosophy to the Arabians, Islam had produced numerous sects and theological schools, some of which entertained so abstract a notion of God that no philosophical speculation could proceed further in this direction, whilst others believed nothing but what could be understood and demonstrated; others, again, combined fanaticism and incredulity into fantastic systems. In the high school at Basra there arose, under the protection of the Abbasides, a school of rationalists which sought to reconcile reason and faith."<sup>7</sup>

**THE SECTION ON ISLAM.** In this section of *Progressive Islam* shall be published various articles on any possible aspect of Islam, laying a great emphasis on its rational and philosophical foundation. Apart from answering the necessity of the age, it is also an endeavour to conform to the true spirit of Islam. As Professor Moutet observed, Islam is an essentially rationalistic religion in the broadest sense of the word.<sup>8</sup> The rationality of Islam had not escaped the eye of Edward Gibbon who said that a philosophic theist could subscribe to the creed of Islam.<sup>9</sup> Apart from this, as Muhammad Iqbal said, "The Islamic faith had from the very beginning tried to foster a rationalistic and empirical attitude in the minds of its followers." The pages of the Quran are full of appeals to the reason and understanding of man. Because of this rationality and empirical character of Islam, some of the Christian writers, failing to understand it, re-

garded Islam as a kind of naturalistic religion. The Islamic reception of the human ratio must not be confused with its excessive exaggeration as was the case with the philosophies of the Enlightenment. Besides the Islamic faith as such, this section shall also be devoted to presenting the thoughts of Muslim thinkers and writers on various subjects.

**THE SECTION ON GENERAL KNOWLEDGE.** This section on general knowledge aims to assist in the dissemination of knowledge among the Muslim people. Apart from this, it is also meant to wipe out misunderstandings among the Muslim people, this time, toward the West. The people of Islam, at present with a few exceptions, have taken a rather superficial view on Western history and Western thought. We fervently believe in the fact that if the Muslims would assume a more serious attitude and probe deeper into the meaning of Western thought, it would assist the Muslims to understand better the implication of their own religion. Apart from this, the benefit that would accrue is bound to be tremendous. In this matter we are completely in line with Muhammad Iqbal who advised the Muslims to watch the development of thought with an open mind and a critical attitude. Iqbal also warned us about the dazzling exterior of Western civilization.<sup>10</sup> But this does not prevent us from separating the wheat from the chaff. The people of Islam had been and always shall be preserving that universal and tolerant outlook which would make them receptive to all sorts of beneficial influence. Neither national pride nor religious enthusiasm shall be a hindrance to the expression of our universal outlook and all its manifestations. For this very reason *Progressive Islam* welcomes all contributions from Western writers who sympathize with its aim. Our duty to bring the proper understanding toward the West among Muslims is as great a religious obligation as if it is the other way round. As the Quran teaches, God makes variety amongst the people of the earth that the one may understand the other. It would be sheer hypocrisy on our part if we only strive to bring about a good understanding towards Islam among the Westerners but not the other way round. In the coming issues of *Progressive Islam*, we shall adequately deal with the points which we have so far mentioned.

**THE SECTION ON THE NEWS.** In this section we shall provide some information and news concerning what is going on among the Muslim people and also concerning occurrences which in one way or the other have something to do with Islam or the Muslims. We shall also publish news gathered from the West which we think shall interest the Muslims. Thus both of our Muslim and non-Muslim readers shall find the news section profitable to them.

**THE SECTION ON CORRESPONDENCE.** This section shall offer the opportunity to those who are interested in the aims of *Progressive Islam* to let known their views or questions about the several subjects which we have mentioned above. All letters to the editor are welcome, be they in the form of criticism or approval. Before we conclude this announcement, permit me to express my gratitude to those who have been generous enough as to contribute some articles in this first publication of *Progressive Islam*. In particular we should like to thank Mr. Muhammad Natsir who had been so kind enough as to give us the honour of publishing for the first time a translated version of his article in a European language.

<sup>1</sup>In *Legacy of Islam* Ed. T. W. Arnold.

<sup>2</sup>In *The Arab Heritage*, Ed. N. A. Faris.

<sup>3</sup>*The Development of metaphysics in Persia* by S. M. Iqbal.

<sup>4</sup>See his *Mohammedanism and Nederland en Islam*.

<sup>5</sup>In his *Reflection on world history*.

<sup>6</sup>F. A. Lange, *History of materialism*.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted in T. W. Arnold's *Preaching of Islam*.

<sup>8</sup>E. Gibbon, *The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*.

<sup>9</sup>S. M. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of religious*

# THE TOLERANCE OF ISLAM

by M. A. KOPPE

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The right motive for toleration is the recognition that all religions are quests in search of a common spiritual goal and that, even though some of these quests may be more advanced and more on the right lines than others, the persecution of a 'wrong' religion by a so-called 'right' religion is of its very nature a contradiction in terms, since, by indulging in persecution, the 'right' religion puts itself in the wrong and denies its own credentials. — In at least one noteworthy case such tolerance was enjoined by a prophet upon his followers on this high ground. Muhammad prescribed the religious toleration of Jews and Christians who had made political submission to the secular arm of Islam, and he gave this ruling expressly on the ground that these two non-Muslim religious communities, like the Muslims themselves, were 'People of the Book'. A. J. Toynbee.<sup>1</sup>

Islam, which is a religion of the deed, requires from its followers more than any other religious systems, not only to practise but also to understand its rules and injunctions.

The non-Islamic world since centuries has wrongly been taught that one of the precepts of Islam is that it has to be spread by force. Even in our days this is still believed not only by the western part of the Western public but also by those who could know better. On the other hand, we must state, there are also those who know better but still are going on misrepresenting the Islamic religion. Fear or hatred are certainly the roots of these misrepresentations. Let us not forget that in the minds of many people, the dusty and narrow-minded spirit of the Crusades is still a living reality, in spite of the fact that since long impartial Western historians and Orientalists have given the lie to the distortions which intentionally have been spread among the Christian nations. The Muslims have all the reasons to be thankful to persons such as Gibb, Arnold, Hitti, Santillana, Germanus and others. Let us now see what Islam's attitude is toward other creeds and other peoples. Against the accusation that Islam is aggressive and that it has to be enforced upon the whole world by means of the sword, we only want to refer to the Holy Quran when it says, "There is no compulsion in religion for the right way makes itself distinct from error" (Quran 2: 256) And again, permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made or those who are oppressed (Quran 22: 39). The first part of the Quran we mentioned shows that the Muslim is not allowed to enforce upon any one his religion. The second one clearly proves that the Muslim is only permitted to fight in self defence. Thus the wars of Islam are merely defensive.

Alas! the so-called 'Dijhad' or holy war, is a war with defensive character. A war is called dijhad if the Muslim community takes up weapon when attacked because of their religion. The true and original meaning of that word, so often wrongly understood, is 'to strive for something'. It can mean war, in the above mentioned sense, but it has also a different significance originally. Had the Prophet Muhammad, on whom be the peace and blessing of God, not said that the greatest dijhad is the conquest of self? In this saying we can clearly understand the true meaning of the word dijhad.

The history of Islam may record a number of wars. However, we challenge anyone to prove that any of those wars had the object of enforcing upon others our creed. From the early days of the conquest of Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, by the Arab Muslims, until to-day in these countries, various Christian sects and the followers of the Mosaic religion are existing. Suppose the theory of the spread of Islam by the sword were true, there would not be there any other creed than Islam. It is true that those territories have been conquered by the Muslims as a result of warfare. But it was purely a political matter caused by the murder of a Muslim envoy at Bosra in the time of Heraclius. This started the hostility between the Arab Muslims and the Roman Empire.

The attitude of the Arab Muslims in all the territories they conquered could be approved by any modern standard of wisdom. The non-Muslims were completely left free in following their own religions. They only had to pay the poll tax. But in return for this they need not join the Muslim army. The genuine rules of Islam executed by the wise regime of the Muslim government, and the simplicity of the Muslims' way of living, attracted the non-Muslims of those territories to embrace the Islamic faith. After the conquest of Egypt the Christian priests were granted from the Muslim government the same salaries they obtained from their former rulers.

The charter granted by the Prophet to the Christians of Nejjran and to the monks of Mount Catharine (Sina) are the finest monuments of Islamic ismāniyyah (humanity) and tolerance. In the time of the Caliph Othman, the Christian patriarch of Merw mentioned in a letter to the bishop of Fars the following words: "The Arabs whom God has given the kingdom of the world, do not attack the Christian faith; on the contrary, they helped us in our religion, they respect our monks and Saints and they endow our churches and monasteries." And so we could go on proving how Islamic rules and injunctions were put into practice.

We are believing in the prophets sent before our Prophet to the other nations, and we are even taught that there is no nation without a prophet having been with them. Since we are believing in Moses, Aaron, Jacob and other Old Testament prophets, and also in Jesus, in the same way as we believe in the Prophet Muhammad,

may the peace and blessing of God be upon him, it is clear that our attitude towards those who are following the prophets before our Prophet, can only be a tolerant one. Islamic history has

## RELIGION AND SCIENCE

by HUSSEIN ALATAS

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If we were to cast a retrospective glance at the development of human history, we would find that two factors had been most deeply rooted in the nature of man. One was the innate desire to explain his life and his confrontation with nature. The other was the necessity to adjust himself to the physical conditions around him in order to preserve and lead his life, in the way he thought appropriate. Religion had its root in the former while science developed from the latter. Like religion, science experienced several stages of development and also several re-organizations of its ways and means. Like religion, science also changed in meaning and value as it progressed further in human evolution. That we may properly apprehend the relation between religion and science, let us learn something about the origin, function and nature of both religion and science respectively. We shall also attempt to discern their respective boundaries and the point they overlap one another. Science, as defined by its well-known historian Sir W. C. Dampier, is regarded as the 'ordered knowledge of natural phenomena and of the relations between them'.<sup>1</sup> The method of science to understand this knowledge is restricted to the rational faculty of man and the sense-organs. The subject matter of science is the facts given through the sense-organs which were then organized by the rational faculty (Reason) into systems and classifications. It is, however, not sufficient to understand science without first knowing the meaning of the word phenomena. The singular of phenomena is phenomenon. Let us take a very simple example such as our awareness of a table. Our awareness of a table depends on three things, to begin with (a) the table, (b) our sense-organs, and (c) our minds. That which produces the characteristics such as to enable our minds to perceive the object as a table, are given through our sense-organs. By our eyes we know the shape of the table, by our ears we know how it sounds if we knock on it, by our hands we know how it feels, by our tongues we know its taste, compared to for instance, a block of salt, and by our noses we know how the wood smells or not compared to for instance a block of dried mud. The shape, the sound, the feeling, the taste and the smell produced by the table are called sense-data. Through the inner peculiarity of the mind, these sense-data are organized into a picture we believe to be the table. This picture of the table is what we called the perception of the table. Thus perception depends on the mind, object and the sense-data. There is however another thing about the table. If we imagine ourselves to possess no sense-organs at all, is there such a thing as a table? If we can not see, we cannot feel, we cannot hear, we cannot smell, we cannot taste, what happened to our perception of a table? Are its characteristics all gone? Does this also mean that the table is gone? Modern philosophy believes that something is left. This introduces us to the distinction between appearance and reality. In other words what appears to us as the table is our mental creation whereas the real table is hidden from us. But then how could we know that there is such thing as the real table? Two things answered this question. In the first place, without any external stimulant our sense-organs could not give us any sense-data. In the second place the perceptions of different objects are not identical to one another. Since the sense-organs and the perceiving mind are the same, the difference is then caused by the objects perceived. To illustrate this point, take the table and a cat. If we imagine ourselves not having any sense-organs, the hidden thing that makes a cat what it is, different from other objects, is not the same as the hidden thing that makes a table what it is, different from other objects. In other words, the hidden reality of a cat is not the same as that of a table. This hidden reality of an object is, what the celebrated Ger-

man philosopher Immanuel Kant, called, "Ding an sich" (thing in itself). Now, every object we perceive, from the sun to the dust, from the elephant to the ant, in short every material object we know in the universe, possesses its own peculiar "thing in itself". Everything we know about an object as it appears to us through our sense-organs and mental faculty, it called the phenomenon of that object. What we can not perceive of the object, i.e. all about the "thing in itself" is called the noumenon of the object. Thus we have made a separation between appearance and reality, phenomenon and noumenon. Kant and many others believe that the noumena (plural of noumenon) of every day experience are not to be attained by our knowledge. It is now clear to us what we mean by the word "phenomena" used by Sir W. C. Dampier to define science. Thus to clarify the definition we could say, "Science is the ordered knowledge of natural objects as they appear to us and of the relations between them".

After this slight digression, let us return to our theme, first about the origin of science. The exact time and place of science origin shall remain a mystery for ever. But one thing is certain, science originated in an already late period of social evolution. We owe this discovery to Ibn Khaldun (1332 - 1406), the founder of modern sociology and the first scientific historian.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Khaldun pointed out that the birth of science and culture could only occur under a certain condition. This condition, as he astutely observed in his study of human society, was the type of society in which people live. A nomadic society, he said, could never be able to give birth to science and culture because in the life of these nomads there was no permanence and stability, together with the absence of contact with other people. Science and culture, he remarked, originated only in an agricultural society. In this society there was permanence and stability. This made commerce possible. Through commerce people came into contact with other cultures. Through commerce urbanization took place and when this had happened, the social condition required to produce men of science and learning was fulfilled. Historical evidences corroborated this discovery of Ibn Khaldun. The Sumerians in Mesopotamia provided one of the earliest records of the birth of science. As early as 5000 B.C., they already had some good irrigation systems. The potter's wheels were also used to make fine potteries. In Egypt they already knew how to use a calendar of 365 days in the year. This development in engineering and astronomy was however, conditioned by an agricultural type of life and urbanization of its main centres.

The Egyptians, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Phoenicians, in short, all the people who manifested scientific signs of life, they all derived their livelihood on trade and agriculture. In this period, however, science was merely the observation of natural phenomena. Its custodians were usually priests. This not only showed the relation of science to religion and mythology, but also the fact that the typical life of the priests favoured the pursuit of scientific observation. Thus we shall agree with Ibn Khaldun, that the birth of science was conditioned by social factors. Between 600 - 320 B.C., Ionia, a region of Greece, became the centre of science. This period coincided with Greek intellectual greatness and, commerce with the Oriental countries. Although the science of the Oriental countries of Persia, India, Egypt, and Babylonia entered Ionia as result of maritime trade between Greece and these countries, the Ionians did not simply react to it in a passive way. They made many original contributions to science and started one of the most important turnings in the history of scientific thought. Historians believe that science started its growth in Ionia. It is true that the collection of scientific data was initiated much

earlier by the Sumerians, the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Chinese and the Indians, but the efforts of these people were merely of observation of natural phenomena in astronomy, agronomy and the floods of rivers. In Ionia, science developed its first speculative character. Its object was no more the mere observation of phenomena, but the laws underlying these phenomena. The question was no more restricted to the time of an event. They did not only ask when there was an eclipse, but also how and why there was an eclipse. There were many socio-historical factors related to this emergence of the speculative character of science, but for the sake of brevity we need not mention them. The astro-theory which later dominated the world was born in Ionia. The whole world was reduced into 4 indestructible solid elements of water, fire, air, and earth. (Empedocles).

We shall now jump over to the middle ages (500 - 1500 A.D.). The link of scientific development was lost in the Middle Ages. It was retrieved by the Arabs and brought back to Europe via Spain. The Arabs ruled Spain for about 700 years (700 - 1400 A.D.). Under the hands of the Arab Muslims in Spain, science not only became enriched by some important contributions but also underwent an additional change of its character. Let us now hear what the eminent scientist Sir James Jeans wrote about it. "If we try to sum up the advantage which had accrued to science from its stay in Islam, we think first of its new notation for numbers, and its new methods of manipulating numbers. For the rest, a knowledge of algebra, had been gained which was almost identical with our present knowledge of elementary algebra. Geometry still stood where it had at the end of the fourth century B.C., and there was little need for it to advance now, since algebra and trigonometry could do all that was wanted."<sup>3</sup> Jeans also mentioned the valuable contributions of the Arabs in optical science. But these were not the factor that added a new character to science. To quote Jeans again, "physics had freed itself from the speculative atmosphere which had enveloped it in Greek times, and had become experimental instead of contemplative — an enormous step in the right direction".

What did Jeans mean by saying that science had reached the experimental from the speculative stage. By this he meant that the principles governing scientific phenomena together with our observation of them and the accumulation of data, were not merely thought of, or speculated, by the scientists, but were tested by means of experiments. Thus scientific knowledge was not only obtained by the observation of uncontrollable forces of nature, but also by the observation of forces controlled in the laboratory. For instance, the Greek materialist Democritus (470 - 400 B.C.) speculated on his theory of atoms without experimenting on it. Nowadays scientists experiment in laboratories on the atoms themselves. Thus it is now clear to us what we mean by the term 'experimental stage of science'. There are, however, also many important discoveries that affect the character of scientific thought. But it is not absolutely necessary or relevant to mention them here. So far, we have traced the growth of science and social changes that took place in the course of its development. But there is something else in the nature of science which is not effected by anything at all. We can conceive it as the permanent nature of science. This is what we called the sectional character of science. By this we mean that every branch of science is a section of the whole object. To be more correct, it is a sectional abstraction of the object as a whole. Let us try to understand what we mean by this. Take the example of the atom. The atom is merely interested in her activity of buying, selling, or producing. The physician is interested in the condition of her physical health, the psychologist is interested in her mental and emotional health, the population statistician is interested in her birth-giving, the sociologist in her social behaviour, and so we go on. Thus from that single person, the science of economics, medicine, psychology, statistics, sociology, and all other sciences related to the human being which are not mentioned above, such as biology, chemistry, physics, etc. etc. are derived the materials and subject matters of the various sciences. Since each branch of science deals with one aspect of the human individual, we therefore conclude that none of the sciences individually explains the life of that human being. Each of the sciences abstracts from its object what it wants to know. Thus we see the sectional nature of science. For that reason it is not possible for us to give a scientifically true picture of an atom, a stick, or an elephant. The philosopher expressed that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. To take a simple example, if a glass is broken into four parts and we then put it together again, it shall not be the same glass. The same thing, the sum of all the sciences dealing with man, is not the same as the real man which is an organic whole. Let us attempt to understand what Sir W. C. Dampier has to say on the subject. He wrote, "The difficulty of making a scientific picture of the ultimate nature of reality may be illustrated by an example. The scientific conception of an atom, as stated in the idea of a certain elongated form of smoothness, of hardness, of weight, of a certain brown colour. Perhaps of some amount of elasticity. A microscope reveals a structure much more detailed than we imagined, and our mental model of the stick ceases to be smooth. It becomes co-ordinated with those of a number of other bodies which we know to be parts of the

# MUHAMMAD AND CHARLEMAGNE

being some remarks on the view  
of Prof. Henri Pirenne

by MOHD. NATSIR

Mr. Natsir is an ex-premier of Indonesia and at present chairman of Indonesia's most powerful political party, the Masjumi whose aim is the realization of the Islamic ideals in the life of the state, the individual and the society. In our next issue we shall include another of Mr. Natsir's articles which shows his many sided interests and serious concern for Islam.

Amidst various kinds of disgracing criticisms and accusations hurled against Islam and its prophet Muhammad by those who cherished a fanatical and narrow minded view on Islam and the prophet Muhammad, we heard a different voice from an unexpected quarter. Not only was the voice different but it was totally in opposition to what the Muslims usually heard of late from Christians and those who advocated the so called neutral religion. The voice that we mentioned above did not spring from a heart infected by jealousy and hatred, nor influenced by religious fanaticism; but from the results of a long, careful and just investigation, accompanied by the courage to oppose or to uphold any opinion which is held by the majority as being scientifically founded and of which no comparison is needed. This voice came from a person who was entitled to call himself an expert, and furthermore, was recognized as such. This person was Professor Henri Pirenne, formerly professor at the university of Gent, and member of the Royal Academy of Belgium. He expressed his opinion in his book, "Mohamet et Charlemagne". With adequate historical proofs and a courage to present the truth, Professor Pirenne compared the lives of two heroes whose existence had engraved a lasting imprint on the history of the world. These two heroes were Muhammad and Charlemagne.

**The Beginning of the Middle Age.** The beginning of the Middle Age is a matter of controversy. As we all know, it is the general opinion that the Middle Age started when the Roman Empire fell into the hands of the Germans in the 5th century A.D. The consensus of all historians, together with what we learned in school, all established the same above view.

Henri Pirenne updated this very view that the Middle Age started with the fall of the Roman Empire. He began his attack by asking the following questions: What exactly is the criterion by which we can decide the beginning of the Middle Age and the end of antiquity? He outlined clearly that the fall of the Roman Empire in the West into the hands of the Germans, did not cause any important changes. It was true that the Germans replaced the rulers of Rome, but there was nothing more than this change of persons sitting on the throne. Trade and economic life, art, culture, religion, all these were not affected. They remained the same as before.

Professor Pirenne aptly compared the rise of the Germans with that of the Arabs. After the Germans had seated themselves on the throne of Rome, and following the end of conflict and warfare, the German conquerors exchanged their culture and characteristics for those of the vanquished Romans. They gradually lost their traits as a people as though they were engulfed by Roman society. It resulted in their continuing and furthering the culture of Rome.

"The Germans," wrote Professor Pirenne, "became Romans from the moment they entered Rome. In contradiction to this, the Romans became Arabs from the moment they were conquered by Islam." (Le German se romanise des qu'il entre dans La Romanie. Le Romain au contraire s'arabise des qu'il est conquis par l'Islam).

Thus was the brief but to the point comparison made by a scholar of history concerning the nature of the two conquests.

Professor Pirenne further wrote that with the coming of Islam, a new world was created around the Mediterranean sea, a world which formerly looked upon the city of Rome as its source of civilization and culture. Up to the present, the break which was caused by the coming of Islam into southern Europe, still existed. It was from that moment that the Mediterranean sea became the meeting ground of two different and opposing civilizations, like the confrontation of two conflicting garrisons on the battle-field. Such was the view of Professor Pirenne.

**Religion and Faith as a Fortress.** There is yet another aspect concerning this that deserves a more thorough investigation from us. The Germans who invaded Rome, despite their superiority in manpower and other material sources as compared to those of the Muslims who conquered

Rome later, did not succeed in subjugating the spirit of Rome. But on the contrary, as we have mentioned just now, it was the German conquerors that were culturally subdued by the vanquished Romans.

In the case of the Arabs who came with the Islamic religion and were confronted by the might of Rome, why did they not suffer the same fate as that of the Germans? There is, however, only one answer to this question, that is, that the Germans conquered Rome merely with the point of the sword and the power of material forces, whereas the followers of Islam conquered Rome with the strength of the spirit as well as physical power. For the followers of Islam, the holy struggle for the dissemination of the faith begins when the conflicts for material power end. The war of the spirit (dijihad ruhani) has its own special weapon, its own method, and its own tactics and strategy.

A people who do not possess this weapon of the spirit are not a conqueror even if they are already seated on the thrones of their enemies. Professor Pirenne wrote that the Germans had not a single weapon to counteract the blow inflicted upon them by the Christianity of Rome, but the Arabs had a burning spirit inflamed by a new faith. For the people of the East it is this spiritual weapon that prevented them from being culturally destroyed by the domination of the West, powerful though it may be.

But the people of the West, possessed also both the physical as well as the spiritual weapon, the latter in the form of religion. A

trees, the growth and structure of which we study with the help of botany. From the results of observation and experiment, physics teaches us that the molecules of the stick are made up of still smaller parts or atoms, which separate from each other when for instance, the stick is turned, and afterwards can arrange themselves into new molecules. When we pursue our inquiries into the nature of these atoms, we find that they can be dissolved, partly at any rate, into much smaller particles or corpuscles in continued motion within the atom. These corpuscles, themselves have been identified with isolated units of negative electricity or electrons, the vibration of which within the atom sort out the blue electromagnetic radiation which falls on them and allow to reach our eyes those waves only which gives us the sensation of brown colour. At present pioneers are attempting to look beyond the electron into still more intimate details of structure. But we travelled far from our original conception of the nature of the stick, and, should the problem last stated be solved, we should only find ourselves faced by the next one, the nature of the units at which, for the time being, we have arrived. But what constitutes reality? Where in the endless chains of explanations discovered or to be discovered can we stop and say, "Here is the true picture of what the stick is". But this impossibility does not prevent us from getting the full use of each conception in turn when used for its particular purpose. To the school boy, the effective and deterrent concept of the stick is that of a hard, elastic, long-shaped solid. The botanist regards it as built up by the action of vegetable cells, which he refers to a particular kind of tree. To the chemist the stick is made up of atoms of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, each with definite properties and arranged in certain combinations. The physicist sees these atoms composed of whirling electrons, each an ultimate electric unit not yet capable of further explanation. Each idea is useful in turn. Since science is analytic it tends to regard the physical concepts, such as space, time, mass, atom, electron, as the most fundamental. They may, or may not correspond with something in ultimate reality: with that science is not concerned.<sup>1</sup>

We are now in a better position to see the limitation of science. We are also more capable to sympathise and to appreciate the way profound and serious thinkers who are concerned with the welfare of mankind, regard science. They regard it however, not without unwarranted caution. Muhammad Iqbal, the Muslim philosopher and reformer was an example. He wrote, "Natural science deals with Matter, with Life and with Mind; but the moment you ask the question how Matter, Life and Mind are mutually related, you begin to see the sectional character of the various sciences that deal with them and the inability of these sciences, taken singly, to furnish a complete answer to your question. In fact we never see natural sciences like so many Vultures falling on the dead body of Nature, and each running away with a piece of its flesh. Nature as the subject of science is a highly artificial affair, and this artificiality is the result of that

nation without already physical power shall suffer a greater annihilation if it loses also the strength of spiritual resistance, as was the case with the absorption of the Germans by the Romans.

With a bit of humour we could express ourselves in the same way as Professor Snouck Hurgronje did towards in his book "The Netherlands and Islam". We shall say to them: Christianity has the slogan, "Preach the faith to all the nations". But that only is not enough for them. What they really hoped for was that after the teaching had been spread comes the real domination. It is not necessary for us to look at Rome. Look at what happened at central Sulawesi. Amongst the missionaries (Protestant) the name of Mrs. Hofman-Stolk is well known. She is regarded as a very active worker, together with her husband, in spreading the Christian faith and not less for "pacification of these areas". This is a reflection of history which is real and immediate.

**Charlemagne.** Wherein lies the greatness of Charlemagne? The greatness of Charlemagne lies in the fact that this great monarch understood that a spiritual weapon can not be conquered by the sword which is drawn out of its scabbard, but ought to be fought also with a spiritual one. With his troops he defended Europe against Islam. But this defence against Islam was not only in the battle fields but also in his own domain. He established Christian missionary organizations and educational institutions. He commanded his subjects to embrace Christianity immediately and if necessary even with compulsion.

Ever since that moment we could say that there existed in the European world a great change, and it is from that instant that Pirenne believed the Middle Age to have begun. He concludes his views by stating the following: "Thus it is absolutely right to say that without Mahomet Charlemagne is inconceivable". (Il est donc rigoureux vraiment de dire que sans Mahomet Charlemagne est inconcevable).

A view which is based on honest research and sufficient courage, such as the one advocated by a historian like Henri Pirenne, is quite different from those we heard until now from other historians.

\* This article was written in 1938.

## RELIGION AND SCIENCE

selective process to which science must subject her in the interests of precision. The moment you put the subject of science in the total of human experience it begins to disclose a different character".<sup>2</sup>

Apart from its sectional character and its limitation, science has other qualities which belong to the permanent element of its nature. These are its essentially neutral character and its inability to decide even the proper methods which ought to be adopted in the course of its inquiries. Let us understand what we mean by the essentially neutral character of science. Take for instance the atomic energy. Whether it shall be used to destroy mankind, or to promote human welfare, science could not tell us. Science is just like a knife, it could be used for surgical purposes, for preparing food or also for murder. Thus the value of the knife depends on how it is utilized. The same applies to science, which itself could not tell us what good and bad are. Medical science, for instance, is engaged to save human life and to promote human health. But why life is so valuable and as such, ought to be saved and to be cared for, medical science does not know. This question is simply beyond the precinct of scientific activity. If however, we believe that life ought to be destroyed, then the whole activity of medical science could be made to do so by means of bacteriological dissemination, weakening our physiological resistance, etc. etc. The belief that life is sacred, that it ought to be maintained and prolonged, is what we call our valuation of life. Instead of saying science is essentially neutral, we could also say science is devoid of value judgement. From this we infer that scientific knowledge is quite a different thing than the knowledge of what is good and what is bad. To put it briefly, science is not identical to wisdom. It is for this reason that we are continuously warned not to confuse scientific progress with moral achievement. Considering the merit of scientific civilization, the English philosopher Bertrand Russell wrote the following: "If, therefore, a scientific civilization is to be a good civilization, it is necessary that increase in knowledge should be accompanied by increase of wisdom. I mean by wisdom a right conception of the ends of life. This is something which science in itself does not provide. Increase of science by itself, therefore, is not enough to guarantee any genuine progress, though it provides one of the ingredients which progress requires".<sup>3</sup>

We shall now investigate the inability of science to decide for itself which methods it has to adopt. Take for instance the facts about biological evolution. From the same data, several conclusions were inferred. A biologist who does not believe in progressive evolution, could employ the same data to disprove his colleague who does believe in it. Gaylord Simpson, the American biologist had given a very lucid and interesting description with it in his book. Considering the fact that a picture of the biological evolution, much depends on which method we adopt. The adoption of a particular method depends in turn on our respective bent of mind and conception of life. Those who believe in vitalism in evolution

would, for example, adopt a different method of approach than those who do not. This in turn is very much influenced by our bent of mind and conception of life. The same confusion of methods occur in psychology<sup>4</sup> and in the social and historical sciences<sup>5</sup>. This does not involve only the methods but even more the subject matter of the sciences. Science deals with facts. It is perhaps sufficient for us now to understand science properly although the above description is relatively brief and restricted. Before we go over to start our next subject, that is, religion, let us first make a summary of what we have so far learned about science. Then we shall follow the same procedure to learn something about religion.

We have seen how science originated and developed as a result of the changes in the social structure and of man's attempt to adjust himself towards his environments. We also learn about its sectional nature and the fact that it could not explain human life as a whole, together with it being devoid of value judgement and its essentially neutral character. Then comes its incapacity to solve its own methodological problems, as well as its liability to be subjectively influenced by individual scientists. Apart from this is also the fact that science only deals with the material world of the senses. Following the same method and discussing the same points, we shall now compare religion with science. Unlike science, religion appeared simultaneously and inseparably with man in the scale of evolution. So universal and deep rooted was this event, that there had never been any society in human history which had not a sort of religious institution. In fact religion was man's first original and creative impulse to search for the truth. It is true that its manifestation is not alike in all time and place, but its essence remains the same. For instance, at a certain time and place, religion was associated with magic or superstition, but its mainspring which is the desire to go beyond the phenomenal into the noumenal world together with its characteristic aim of interpreting human life as a unified whole, has always remained the same. For this reason human life has been defined as the sum total of human nature, human activity, human acting and human feeling. Why man desires to go beyond the phenomenal world is because in him is endowed the worshipping instinct. This worshipping instinct is a kind of recognition and gratitude of the power that created him and the universe, coupled with the expectation of help and protection from that power, as a result of man's intrinsic dependency on his surroundings.

There is birth and also death, and an end. There is birth and also death. Then came the question, is human existence only limited to the period between birth and death? In other words, is there no life before birth and after death? That the attention of mankind had been focused upon this problem was due to the fact that the manner in which was answered was then adopted as the basis of human life on this earth. Thus while science only provides the means to understand his experience on earth and only in the phenomenal world, religion seeks to understand everything of life, death, of the universe, of the whole creation. It is for this very reason that religion unlike science stirs the whole man in movement. We may agree with Prof. A. C. Bradley when he wrote: "Religion is not a mere state of activity of the intellect; it is worship—inward if not also outward. It implies and includes, no doubt, an intellectual activity, some idea, belief, theory, science or logos, concerning the object of worship. But this is very far from all that religion is: it is a movement of the whole soul".<sup>6</sup>

It is then comprehensible that, as Windelband pointed out, both science and philosophy found their common cradle in religion<sup>7</sup>. For the ends which science could not produce, but which it could not separate itself from, were first created by religion. Thus we see that religion encompasses science as well. What then is the relation between religion and science?

We have seen that science provides us with sectional knowledge of the phenomenal world of experience. Although science is not all embracing like religion, yet it is also a source of truth. Since truth is one and indivisible, both religion and science respectively reveal an aspect of the ultimate truth. Not only that, the subject of religion and science to whom the truth is referred, is not completely the same. Truth, however, means the same things. They are God, man and the universe. Whereas science deals only the phenomenal aspect of man and the universe, religion deals with all the 3 from all aspects. Thus science, in reality is only useful when it does not stand alone, that is, when it is part of a wider and more profound outlook on life. Science, as we have seen, helps us to understand truth in quite a different stage in religion. But each stage in the upward climb, each truth, is as important as the last. For this reason the famous philosopher and mystic Al-Ghazali (d. 1111) considered it necessary to understand science before attempting to deal with the noumenal world. He believed the sense-data as the lowest form of knowledge, then came scientific and rational knowledge and after this the knowledge of the noumenal world<sup>8</sup>. Thus religion considers science as part of itself whereas science does not do so towards religion.

We have found out just how that science is devoid of value judgement. Religion however is not devoid of value judgement. The ends which it set up are positively stated and there is no crises in its method or subject matter, unlike science. Ever since its birth the aim of religion was to fight against evil and create stability in human

# Increasing interest for Islam in Holland

The Royal Institute for the Tropics opened a new section dedicated to Islam

Considering the growing importance of Islam and the rising interest of the public towards it, the Royal Institute for the Tropics established a new section on behalf of Islam. The official opening of the section was performed by H. E. Syed Lalshah Bokhari, Chargé d'Affaires of Pakistan in the Netherlands. The opening ceremony was attended by about 150 persons including the Chargé d'Affaires of Iran and Yugoslavia, representative of the Indonesian High Commissioner, representative of the ministry of education, the Association of Islamic Students, The Ahmadiyah Muslim Mission, The Sheikh Mian Mohd. Trust, and scholars in tropical affairs as Prof. W. F. Wertheim and Prof. Tj. Bertling. Some of the Muslims had also given their contributions to the set up of the whole section. One of them is a Malay officer-cadet of the Royal Military Academy in Sandakan who has written in calligraphy of the Holy Quran written in calligraphy. The official opening of the section held at the Institute on July 1954, at 3.30 p.m. was commenced by a speech of Dr H.P.J. van Lier, general secretary of the Institute. Dr van Lier said the following amongst others: "In the past few years we have already enlarged our Museum with permanent expositions of Africa, South America, India, Pakistan and Ceylon and the South-east Pacific territories. We of our Institute think that it is of the utmost importance that the young Dutch people, who are going to the tropics for a longer or a shorter stay shall take with them not only an idea of the economical and hygienic situation in the country they are visiting, but also some knowledge of the language, the social circumstances and the culture, therefore also of the religions. One of the most important religions is the Islam, which is shared by about four hundred million inhabitants of the earth, by far the most important religion of the tropical areas." The plan to establish this section was first conceived by Prof. C. Tj. Bertling.

The Chargé d'Affaires of Pakistan Mr. S. Lalshah Bokhari, praised the Institute for its noteworthy attempt to increase the knowledge concerning Islam amongst the Dutch people. Mr. Bokhari explained, amongst others the following facts to the gathering: "Looking at the map will show you the Muslim world, a great continent both of the stretching across three continents, from Morocco on the Atlantic coast of Africa, through Turkey and Albania in Europe to Indonesia and beyond in the Pacific — a veritable sixth continent as some people have called it. Maps of course show only territorial frontiers and impressive as these are, they are not the true frontiers, for a system of religious and moral beliefs cannot be neatly circumscribed within longitudes and latitudes. The true frontiers lie in the minds and the thought of those who believe in it. We live to-day in the world torn by hate and conflict and the fiercest battles are not fought for this piece of land or that remnant of empire. The crucial battle is the one that rages control of the minds of men. The Royal Tropical Institute has set itself the noble and necessary task in its attempt to enlarge the understanding of an ideology, a religious and moral system, which had the dynamism to spread in a few brief years from one corner to the other of the then known world, and today after 13 centuries can claim the allegiance of over 400,000,000 people. It is very unfortunate that in the distant past historical developments should have made Islam an antagonist and the rival of Christianity. For, if we look beyond the conflicts and wars chronicled in history books and beyond the apparent divergence of form and observance, we shall find that in the basic, fundamental things our beliefs and approach are not so far apart. Islam, like Christianity, believes in the dignity and worth of the individual, in his equality in the eyes of God, and, therefore in the eyes of law, in the possibility of human progress, not only in the material and transient, but in the moral and permanent sense also. Similarly you will find that to us democracy is no alien concept, learnt out of text books. It has been woven into the ideological and cultural fibre of our life by Islam. A religion which places no intermediary between man and his God cannot interpose one between man and his rulers. So no wonder that you will find Islamic history replete with instances of kings being called to account by

commoners, nay slaves, rising by dint of ability and merit to be kings." Mr. Bokhari then mentioned the process of constitution making in Pakistan based on the principles of Islam which he believes shall meet the exigencies and complexity of modern life. He continued by mentioning the misunderstandings that had grown around Islam in the course of time. "Whether it was due to a political conflict or to genuine ignorance, it is a fact that a veritable mythology of misconception has grown up around the name of Islam. We hear of the fatalism of Islam, we learn that it is spread by the sword, we are told that it is a narrowbigoted theology, discouraging freethought and intolerant of other religions and other beliefs. In this din of partisan controversy and name-calling, the names of Avicenna and Averroes are easily overlooked. The contribution of Islam to every field of human knowledge and endeavour, the brilliant achievements of the Moors in Spain and the Moghuls in India are forgotten, and we are presented with the picture of the Muslim as a bigoted warrior-priest brandishing his sword offering you death or submission. It will be the worthy task of the Islamic department of this institute to remove these cobwebs of misunderstandings and prejudices, and to make possible a dispassionate study of the true teachings of Islam, and of its contributions to human civilization." Following the opening speech of Mr. Bokhari, the guests were escorted to the new Islamic section to see it and to receive some entertainment. Mr. Muzaffar, a Muslim missionary in Spain, melodiously recited the opening chapter of the Holy Quran in Arabic just to give the non-Muslim guests an idea of how the Quran is recited.

## IDUL FITR CELEBRATION 1373 A.H. (4th June 1954).

The Muslim Council of the Netherlands, together with the High Commissioner for Indonesia, had organized the Id celebration which took place at the residence of the High Commissioner in the Hague. The Id prayer was held at 10.30 a.m. led by the chairman of the Association of Islamic Students, Mr. Hussein Alatas. Besides the several hundreds Indonesian Muslims attending the celebration, were also present Muslims from Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, India and the Netherlands. Alaghari, the diplomatic representatives present were Mr. Susanto Tirtoipodjo, High Commissioner for Indonesia and Mr. S. Lalshah Bokhari, Chargé d'Affaires of Pakistan in the Netherlands. We reproduce below the translation of the speech held by Mr. Hussein Alatas in the Indonesian language.

"The day which we are celebrating to-day is Idul Fitr or what is in Indonesia called Lebaran. This day is generally associated with two fundamental pillars of Islam. One is fasting for about a month, and the other is the payment of zakat. This khutbah shall be centered around these two points. Besides that I shall also say something about the meaning of the word 'Idul Fitr'. The word Id means something that always recurs. The word 'fitr' means the true nature of a thing. The religion of Islam is called by the Quran, the fitrah, or nature created by God wherein He has created all men. For this reason the Prophet Muhammad said that every child was born in the religion of Islam because Islam is none other than the true ideal nature of man. That which made him a Jew, or a Christian according to the Prophet, was the education he received from his parents. To return to the word 'Idul Fitr' — the day of clearing up the sins of our true nature after one month of fasting, for the true nature of man does not imply continuous fasting forever.

Apart from this, Idul Fitr is associated with the payment of a certain amount of money or property. It is then clear to us Muslims that the true nature of man, contained in the meaning of the word fitrah, includes, to a very great extent, the endeavour to decrease the sufferings of fellow human beings. For this very reason, the payment of zakat is associated with Idul Fitr, that is, the recurring state of returning to the true nature of man, because this true human nature, as we mentioned just now, includes the attempt to diminish the burden of others. He who does not think of this, and who does not want to part from his wealth for the good of his brothers, is not considered as a Muslim by the Holy Quran. It does not only concern wealth, but everything else which we possess must be for others, ought to be utilised for the benefit of humanity. A person who has knowledge sins against God if he does not impart his knowledge to the one who needs it. So is it in the various departments of life and action. It was these broad and liberal teachings of Islam, which had their roots in an ideal concept of humanity, that caused a mighty upheaval in Arab society in the 6th century A.D., so much so that it overflowed onto the whole world. We can agree with Edward Gibbon, a distinguished English historian, when he said that the rise of Islam was a memorable event — which had cast a lasting imprint on the face of the nations of the globe. Besides this, as the Belgian historian Professor Henri Pirenne said, the spread of Islam around the Mediterranean exerted a powerful influence in the history of Europe

such that a new period could be said to have been started. This was all caused by the dynamic spirit of Islam which had given birth to a progressive social order designated as a socialistic democracy by Professor Gustav Dierks. The strong influence of Islam during the Middle Ages in Europe, was verified by the results of research done by European scholars in this direction. I shall give here some of the views of certain Western scholars. Mosheim, a Christian German historian wrote in his well-known book, that the father of European enlightenment at the end of the 10th century, Pope Sylvester II (died 1003), had obtained most of his knowledge from the Muslims in Spain. Many Christians studied there and translated a lot of Arabic works into Latin. Mosheim then continued in the following words: "And truth requires us to say that the Saracens or Arabs, particularly of Spain, were the principle and fountain of whatever knowledge of medicine, philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics that flourished in Europe from the 10th century onwards." 1)

Here in the Netherlands, a scholar of history and philosophy, Professor P. Sassen, said that those who were sent to the Netherlands by the Crusades (1096—1291) during the 11th and 12th century, brought new cultural influences when they returned to Europe from the Islamic East. According to Professor Sassen they derived these influential cultural elements from the Muslims whose culture and civilization were then superior to that of Europe. All these cultural influences, including scientific knowledge, were disseminated through all parts of Europe. 2)

It is now time for us to say something about fasting and zakat. Concerning the idea of fasting, it is not necessary for us to give a further explanation about it. The idea behind fasting is generally known to us, that it fortifies us psychically to increase our power of enduring hardships and strengthens our capacity to sacrifice, together with the aim of impressing upon us the realization of how the poor and needy feel in the absence of sufficient food.

How is it then with zakat? Zakat is a system of wealth distribution in Islamic society, whose aim and principles are very sociological. The meaning of the word zakat is derived from a word which means purification. It appears here that Islam from the very beginning viewed the acquisition of wealth as involving certain infringements of social justice, be it consciously done or not. To face this reality, Islam made it compulsory that the Muslims pay their zakat once a year. We therefore understand why zakat contains the meaning of purification. Apart from this, as Abdul Rahman Ibn Khaldun stated, the value of our wealth as property is conditioned by social situations. 3) For instance, if I build a house and afterwards sell it, thereby acquiring an amount of money, I must not unhesitatingly conclude by saying that the amount of money which I thus procured was the fruit of my own labour. The house which I sold was, for instance, situated on a street much favoured by the public. If the house was isolated from public life, the price would certainly have been less. Because of this fact that the value of property is conditioned by social situations, it is therefore comprehensible that if a man becomes rich, he becomes so with the help of his society, and therefore it is reasonable that he returns part of his wealth to his society for the general good.

The amount of zakat due from every person above a certain standard of wealth, is one fortieth of his wealth. This part of his wealth, which is the line dividing those who have to pay zakat and those who have not to do so, is called in the Shariah 'nisab'. The nisab is always fixed on the criterion of sufficiency in meeting the requirements of a satisfactory life, in different times and places. In fixing the line of the nisab, due and primary consideration is always given to the public weal. Islamic laws, as Professor Saegert has said, are not primarily laid the emphasis on public utility. "Having as its scope social utility, Muslim law is essentially progressive, in much the same way as our own. Being a product of language and logic it is a science. It is not unchangeable and depending on mere tradition. The great schools of law agree on this point." 4)

Thus Professor Santillana. 5) If the amount of zakat collected is not sufficient to meet the demands of the situation, the Islamic state could ask more assistance from those who can afford it.

This zakat wealth collected for the public weal, is meant for the sustenance of the poor and the needy, for paying the salary of the officials employed, for the support of those who are engaged in scientific research or inclined to the pursuit of truth, for the emancipation of slaves and captives, for assisting those who desire to strengthen their defence, for helping the travellers who suffer from difficulties, and for anything that moves on the path of God. All these are mentioned in the Quran. It is thus plain to us that the conception of social justice is nothing new to us Muslims. Apart from what was mentioned above, the zakat funds were also employed for relieving the non-Muslims who are in need of help. The Caliph Omar himself utilized the zakat funds for assisting some Christians in Palestine who suffered from leprosy. There are numerous other examples in connection with this case. All these events, such as Caliph Omar helping the Christians, were not more and not less the expression of an attitude deeply rooted in the Islamic conception of humanity, which not only embraces all mankind but even dumb animals 6) and inanimate nature 6). The Quran

(Continuation from page 3)

life. It is true that the manner of fighting against evil and particularly the good which differed, according to time and place, but the main about values and guiding principles remain the same. Any conflict between religion and science is a natural. For this presumes a dualistic belief the nature of truth. Rather, as we have seen, religion and science complement one another. TI in its own area science must be regarded as important source of truth. To condemn science merely because of its limitation is the great injustice that could be done. Rather, we have to seek our evidences on science if we seek knowledge of the phenomenal world. But at the same time to distrust everything beyond the phenomenal world is also injurious to the cause of truth for by the fact of our denying the phenomenal world, we impose a limitation on truth. He who imposes a limitation must himself be above a limitation and for this reason, being limited himself, man must be content only to know the partial truth that is continuously revealed to him.

7) Charles Issawi, "An Arab philosophy of history. The progenitor of Ibn Khaldun."

8) Enc. Britannica. Art. Science.

9) Sir James Jeans, "The growth of the physical sciences."

10) Ibid.

11) Muhammad Iqbal, "The reconstruction of religious thoughts."

12) Bertrand Russell, "Scientific Outlook."

13) Gaylord Simpson, "The meaning of evolution."

14) Edua Heidebreder, "Seven Psychologies."

15) Gerth and Mills, "Essays from Max Weber."

16) A. C. Bradley, "Ideals of religion."

17) W. Windelband, "History of philosophy."

18) Al-Ghazali, "Confessions," Trans. Claud Fie

Other books referred:

12) Bertrand Russell, "Problems of Philosophy."

13) John Dewey, "Reconstruction of Philosophy."

14) Karl Mannheim, "Ideology and Utopia."

15) Sir James Jeans, "The new background of science."

16) Lincoln Barnett, "The universe and Dr. I. Stein."

17) De Andrade, "The Atom."

18) Maurice Maeterlinck, "The magic of the star."

19) W. F. Hocking, "Types of philosophy."

20) W. N. Sullivan, "The limitation of science."

gives a lucid explanation to all these things. Bearing this in mind, let us all strive for Islamic ideals of humanity, wherever we be, and in whatever situation we are."

1) In *Institutes of ecclesiastical history*. Eng by J. Murdock

2) F. Sassen in *Europese Geest* ed. Bierenas IIaan

3) Charles Issawi, *An Arab philosophy of history* Selections from Ibn Khaldun

4) In *Legacy of Islam*, ed. T. W. Arnold.

5) Quran 5:103, 6:32

6) Quran 33:72.

## Catholic Church issued serio Prohibitions in the Netherlands

The Roman Catholic Church of the Netherlands issued an Authoritative Statement in the form of a pamphlet entitled "The Catholic in the public life of this time." This pamphlet, signed by arch-bishops and bishops of Utrecht, Roermond, Haarlem, etc., etc., was distributed in the churches throughout the Netherlands on Sunday, 30th May, 1954. All members of the Catholic Church are not allowed to be members or lend their support to socialistic organizations and its labour unions, the communist party and its labour unions, the Human Union and the Union For Sexual Reform. The reason given by the Church is that the active role of these organizations is undermining the Church and that they are not in conformity with the teachings of Christianity. This prohibition also includes listening to the socialist broadcast (VARA), attending its meetings, and asking votes from the Union For Sexual Reform. "creasing neglect of the church, non-religious followed by the weakening and decline of norms, we also fear from the socialistic labour unions, newspapers and radio." As a result, this series of statements continues, "We therefore have the opinion, that for a Catholic it is forbidden to become a member of socialistic organizations, such as the NVV and the organization affiliated to it, or to attend socialistic meetings regularly, or to read socialistic newspapers regularly, or to listen to the VARA regularly. The punishment for not acting upon the prohibition shall be the withdrawal by the Church of sacraments, and the burial ceremony." "We maintain the decision that the holy Sacraments be refused — and, if he dies without repentance, also the church burial — to a Catholic, of whom it is known, that he is a member of a social organization, or without becoming a member regularly reads socialistic writings or periodicals, or attending regularly socialistic meetings. This statement of the Catholic Church was of the most staggering news in the political social life of the country since recent years has sharpened the existing tension between Catholics and the non-Catholic groups such as the English, the communists, and the Protestants, those who feared the unity of church and state under the Catholics. As a single party the Catholic People's Party (KVP) is the big in the Netherlands. Through the strict prohibition against birth control, the Catholic Church gradually increased its members in Holland

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