

„O mankind, surely we have created you from male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may know one another.”
(Quran 49:13)

PROGRESSIVE ISLAM

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

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OUR INTELLECTUAL HORIZON

There is no second power in our modern world which may be compared to that of scientific thought. Ernst Cassirer.⁽¹⁾

It is not necessary for me here to dwell upon the extremely important position of knowledge in human life. There is hardly anyone amongst us who did not realise this. But realizing the importance of a thing does not necessarily mean apprehending our relations towards it. *We, the people of Islam, had since long realized the importance of knowledge in our lives. Our venerated guide, the Holy Quran, in several instances urged us to acquire knowledge for our own human benefit. A society or an individual, that neglected the acquisition of knowledge, not only acted disobediently to its loving Creator but also suppressed the full expression of its highest values and potentialities. This unique and priceless gift of God to man, must be preserved and developed to the extent that it shall ever bring us nearer to the comprehension of our Creator, ourselves and our fellow-beings.*

Conditions of knowledge amongst Muslim thinkers.

Let us now try to discover the relation of Muslim thinkers to the world of knowledge. By Muslim thinkers I mean here that group of people in Islamic society whose fundamental basis of thinking was derived from the Islamic faith, irrespective of their schools of thought and branches of knowledge they affiliated themselves with. Consequently, we shall not include those unhappy products of the age, at least amongst the Muslims, who live under a different name than what they are, or think the thoughts of others. *Such a regrettable product of historical development could not live from his own resources, like a plant which could no more suck the food for its life by its own roots. The danger of such a group of thinkers, as modern social psy-*

chology recognized, is that their thoughts tend to affect a disintegrative influence on their own society. Thus we shall here not consider as a subject of our inquiry, a person who maintains himself to be a Muslim but who thinks and evaluates not in accordance with the principles of Islam. I do not suggest that this group of intellectuals is not important or worthy of consideration. By no means. I only desire to put forward that *for an understanding of Muslim thought one must not refer to those who are not its exponents.*

The three sources of knowledge.

We find that the Muslim thinkers in Islamic society, with a few exceptions, derived whatever knowledge they possessed from the written records of former Muslim thinkers and from their own experiences in life. To cite an instance, whatever they knew about psychology, was derived from either what they learned from the writings of former Muslim authors, or from what they personally observed from their own life-experiences. There is however a third source of knowledge with which they were not acquainted. It is the accumulated wealth of modern knowledge. (We deem it of vital importance for the regeneration of the Islamic Society that this

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live-giving wealth of modern knowledge be acquired and assimilated. As Ibn Khaldun rightly observed, the touch that stirred cultural changes and development in every society was contact with a different culture and civilization. In other words, in order to renew the fertility of our thinking, a new stream of thought has to flow over our world of knowledge. We see in our own history the rise of the Mu'tazilahs as a result of contact with Greek thought, which refreshed the intellectual life of the Muslem thinkers. Men of eminence, like Abu Hassan, Al-Ashari and Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, attained their intellectual heights to the extent of transcending the Mutazilahs, because of the fact that they seriously and earnestly busied themselves with the acquisition and assimilation of the then existing body of knowledge. Their intellectual lives, too, became refreshed and invigorated as a result of contact with alien thought, i.e. Greek science and philosophy. The Renaissance of Europe owed its birth also to contact with a different world of thought, namely that of the Islamic civilization. *It is the inviolable law of historical changes ordained by God, that one society can rejuvenate its life by coming into contact with another, whose objective importance cannot be denied. For us, members of the community of Islam, to give new life to our society, in all its various ramifications, is both a religious duty of the highest order and an unavoidable condition for survival. It is for this reason that the absorption of modern knowledge into the life of our community shall be one of the most powerful determining factors in the future destiny of its historical mission. There can be no regeneration without this absorption of modern thought. It is not for nothing that the Holy Quran stressed man's duty to acquire knowledge as a category of his existence. The first revelations to our Prophet Mohammed centered around God teaching man what he did not know. Are there not many things at present which the people of Islam do not know?*

The necessary caution

We are not unaware that the absorption of modern knowledge in its various branches shall bring within itself some danger pertaining to such process. But we must not be discouraged by this. As Maulana Rumi beautifully prosed it in his „Mathnavi“, a trader who is afraid to take the risk of a loss, must not venture to put his merchandise in the boat. He could better give up his trade in export articles and be content with his lot. *If we do not have the courage to assimilate into the life of our Islamic community the existing body of knowledge which had been painfully accumulated and preserved by successive generations of mankind, the inexorable law of history shall efface our existence as a compact and vital centre of humanizing forces. Confronted*

as we are by no other alternative we have to push our choice through with all the risks that it entails. But we shall certainly try our level best to make the risks as small as possible. The risk we have to take is the risk of the operation room. Either succumb to the malady, or take the risk of the operation, whose chance of success is very reasonable, taking into account also the capacity of the patient to go through it.

The source of danger

The danger that is connected with the assimilation of modern thought does not refer to the exact and physical sciences, like physics, mathematics, chemistry, medicine, etc., etc. Rather it shall come with the non-exact and non-physical sciences, like psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc., etc., and philosophy. *An uncritical and superficial acquaintance with these sciences shall create a disruptive effect in the thinking and valuation of the individual. By including in their objects of study ethical norms and values, these sciences could influence the individual concerned with it in the way of generating in him a feeling that he transcends the objects of his study.* A person who happened to believe in the Freudian psycho-analysis but was superficially acquainted with it, would develop the tendency of permitting his sexual urges to find expression without any consideration for ethical norms.

But let us once again, not be daunted by the danger that might accompany our assimilation of modern thought, for the benefit that would accrue, shall by far outweigh its negative outcome. We need only to consult our common sense in order to realize that a tremendous gain awaits us if we audaciously widen our intellectual horizon.

The method of assimilation

Modern sociologists and social psychologists had noted that not one aspect of culture can be understood in isolation from its total framework of which that particular aspect is a part. Modern knowledge, which is largely the outcome of a predominantly scientific way of thinking, found its birth place in the Western-European civilization. Since Aristotle propounded his thoughts on the various subjects of knowledge, much changes had taken place. It was this later contribution, in particular since the 19th century, that escaped the attention of the Musulman thinkers and religious leaders. *Just as a study of the heart cannot be properly pursued in isolation from its whole organism, so is the real nature and significance of modern thought, not be understood in separation from the total Western-European civilization and its history.* As the followers of Historicism rightly observed, the nature of a thing can never be truly apprehended without reference to its past. It is because of the truth in such a contention that we suggest the people of Islam to adopt this method because of its cer-

tainly promising result. The same thing could be said about our own society.

There never can be a greater fool, who thinks of reforming his society without knowing its history in all its various branches. A person who imposed upon himself the task of reforming Islamic society without knowing its history, is just like a gardener who attempted to nourish a plant without knowing its seed and the process of its growth. How could he, as such, understand its requirements? Knowledge of Islam and its history, shall thus be regarded as one of the criteria with which we shall judge the effectiveness and reliability of those who pronounced judgements with the aims of reforming the Islamic society.

To return to our main theme, the acquisition of modern thought, it is necessary for us to understand its total background. This is also one of the most effective means in minimizing its danger. The Western world is at the moment undergoing a period of moral and intellectual crisis. Professor Cassirer and many others attributed this state of affairs to the loss of a common unifying principle and to the sectionalism of the various sciences, accompanied by an exaggerated emphasis on facts. „Methaphysics, theology, mathematics, and biology, successfully as-

sumed the guidance for thought on the problem of man and determined the line of investigation. The real crisis of this problem manifested itself when such a central power, capable of directing all individual efforts ceased to exist. The paramount importance of the problem was still felt in all the different branches of knowledge and inquiry. But an established authority to which one might appeal no longer existed. Theologians, scientists, politicians, sociologists, biologists, psychologists, ethnologists, economists, all approached the problem from their own viewpoint.”²⁾

The above is one of the important factors which we have to consider seriously in our attempt to understand as profoundly as possible, the nature and scope of modern thought. There are many other factors which are intricately woven with the general situation of modern thought for which we have to reserve some caution. *It is, therefore, highly commendable that our assimilation of modern knowledge should go hand in hand with a profound study of the Western-European civilization, for, a plant, as we believe, cannot be understood without reference to its soil.* / EDITOR.

1) p. 261 „An essay on man” (Double day Anchor book)

2) Ibid. page 41

ABU HAMID AL GHAZALI

(1058—1111 A.D.)

by Mohd. Natsir

Mr. Mohd. Natsir, is the leader of the Masjumi party and was formerly prime minister of Indonesia. His interest in philosophical, cultural and scientific matters, dated long before he was known as a political leader. Most of Mr. Natsir's writings are educational in nature. It was, and still is, his aim to infuse into the minds of the Muslims, in particular the new generation, the spirit of inquiry and acquisition of knowledge, characteristic of the Islamic religion and its contribution in the history of civilization. For this purpose, he had written several articles on some Muslim thinkers, which we shall publish in Progressive Islam. These articles had been widely read in Indonesia and were printed in several Islamic periodicals. The English translation of them is in preparation.

Al-Ghazali was born in the year 1058 A.D. in Tus, Khorasan. He was in his time, the greatest scholar, belonging to the Shafei school of thought (mazhab) who was well versed in the science of scholasticism.

Following his study of some of the sciences there, Al-Ghazali departed to Nisapur where he began to exhibit signs of exceptional ability in the exercise of his mind. Due to his profound and mature knowledge of philosophy and scholasticism, Al-Ghazali was immediately nominated as professor to the Nizamiyah College in Baghdad.

At the age of 33, Al-Ghazali was already well-known in the circle of such scholars who were his contemporaries. In the year 484 A.H. he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca in the attempt to fulfill his duty towards Islam. After complet-

ing the pilgrimage he journeyed through Damascus, Jerusalem and Alexandria and then delivered lectures in the universities of these towns. From here Al-Ghazali returned to Tus, to commence his life-long career as a thinker and an author; writing several kinds of books, explaining the difference between Islam and other religions, or whatever types of philosophy, and showing wherein lies the superiority of Islam. It is for this reason that he obtained the title of „Hudjatul Islam” (the witness of Islam) and „Zainud-din” (the ornament of the faith).

The treasure bequathed by Al-Ghazali

Is there anyone from amongst the religious people in our country, who does not know Al-Ghazali's books, like the four thick volumes of 'Ihja'-ulumuddin', and his other works?



Mr Mohd. Natsir

The „Ihja” is a standard work, in particular with regards to human character and ethics. It attracted a great attention in Europe and has been translated into several modern languages. In this respect Al-Ghazali's position amongst the Muslims could be compared to that of Thomas à Kempis amongst his fellow-Christians. ¹⁾ Thomas à Kempis became famous because of his work „The imitation of Christ”. The nature of this work approached that of the „Ihja” with the only difference that it was viewed from the angle of Christian education.

Two of Al-Ghazali's books that are not very known in Indonesia but well known in the West and also which let loose a storm of controversies between philosophers, were „Maqasidul-falasifah” (The aims of the philosophers) and „Tahafutul-falasifah” (The error of the philosophers). The first book contained a summary of the knowledge concerning various philosophies, logic, metaphysics and physics. The book was translated into Latin by Dominicus Gundissalvus in the end of the 12th century.

The second book offers a sharp criticism on the various philosophical systems which he summarized and explained in the first one. It appeared that Al-Ghazali himself stated in his second book that his intention in writing the first one was to present to the readers the materials which he should later criticise, one by one, in his second book the „Tahafutul-falasifah”. Sometime later Ibn Rushd refuted the opinions of Al-Gha-

zali on philosophy, by writing a book which he called the „Tahafut-tahafutul-falasifah”.

Al-Ghazali and David Hume

As a philosopher Al-Ghazali subscribed to that trend of philosophy which showed striking similarity with that released by David Hume. Just as David Hume (1711—1776 A.D.), the English philosopher, put forward the primacy of passions in the process of philosophical thinking, when he reacted against the rationalism of the 18th century, which based itself merely on the senses or on reason, so did Al-Ghazali react to the trend of philosophy which exerted itself in his time.

David Hume ²⁾ suggested that all our beliefs and convictions ultimately rested on desires and emotions (passion). In reality reason was not the basis of true conviction in anyway whatsoever. ³⁾

700 years before this Al-Ghazali expressed a similar opinion as that of Hume. Al-Ghazali admitted that passion also could be erroneous, but neither did reason fare better. Reason also was not free from error. Neither could it achieve the perfect truth without any aid. It could not either be left to act without any restrain. Al-Ghazali finally returned to what he called as the axiom that judges emotion and reason, and also to the guidance that came from God. If by this Al-Ghazali could not be called a philosopher of reason, it does not mean that he utilized his reason less than other philosophers.

Not a little did Al-Ghazali analyze in his two books, mentioned above, the philosophy of Socrates and Aristotles, discussing various difficult subjects in a sharp and penetrating manner. Not a little did he outline the science of logic and not a little did he develop a body of scholastic knowledge that is more formidable than the works of other philosophers. This denoted the subtlety of his reasoning and the fact that to employ one's reason is a happy blessing endowed by God on man. But despite this, Al-Ghazali did not forget that this very reason *could only make itself useful and valid up to a certain limit which could not be transcended by it*. When the other philosophers persisted to follow the dictates of their reason into an area in which it is no more valid, and made reason the judge that gives the verdict on all affairs, it is then that Al-Ghazali without any hesitation would say „God knows better” and return to the book (The Holy Quran) that is verily the guide for those who have trust in God.

Al-Ghazali's conception of causality

That which is meant by the law of causality is the nature of the relation between cause and effect. To understand the nature of this relation we must answer the question: If two things came

into existence, what are the conditions which allow us to infer that the one is the cause of the other?

It is the generally accepted opinion amongst the thinkers of the West that it was David Hume who first unravelled this problem. Hume began by denying that if there existed two things, A and B, A is the cause of B. We cannot just infer that A is the cause of B.

It is not our intention to minimize the merit of David Hume as the one who discovered the principle of the causality. But it is nevertheless necessary for us to remember that a Muslim philosopher in the East had suggested this very principle 700 years ahead of David Hume.

It is strange that people seemed not to be desirous of remembering this. And if we recollect that a Western philosopher like Immanuel Kant recognized that it was David Hume who woke him up from his dogmatic slumber, then could we estimate how great was the calibre of Al-Ghazali's mind compared to those of the famous philosophers in the West.

It must at least be admitted that the first step towards the discovery of this conception of causality had been achieved. As an example, let us learn what the Imam Hudjatul-Islam had to say about this: „If two things came into being in succession of one another, it does not yet imply that we could infer that the one is caused by the other. What the philosophers called the laws of nature, or the law of causality, are in reality happenings that occurred through the will of God which we accepted as something true and positive. The reason for this is that God, in his knowledge preceded all things, knows the events connected with them and later teaches them to us. There is thus no such thing as a law binding upon the will of God, the Most High and Almighty.” That was thus the explanation given to us by Al-Ghazali.

Tasawwuf and Fiqh

In the time of Al-Ghazali the strife between the followers of Tassawwuf (mysticism) and those of Fiqh (jurisprudence) was still intense. One of Al-Ghazali's efforts was to eliminate the strife and bring the two antagonistic groups closer together. Al-Ghazali obtained friends that agreed with his views and also opponents that differed with him. This was when he still lived and also after his death in 1111 A.D. Amongst those who did not agree with Al-Ghazali in some respects, were Ibn Rushd, Ibn Tamiyah, Ibn Qayim and others from amongst the fuqaha (scholars of jurisprudence).

Al-Ghazali attracted a great attention in Europe. The French philosopher Renan was an example of those who valued Al-Ghazali. So

were the scholars Cassanova, Carra de Vaux and others.

Dr. Zwemer had included Al-Ghazali as one of the four greatest personalities in the history of Islam. They were the Prophet Muhammad, Imam Al-Bukhari, Imam Al-Ashari and Al-Ghazali.

In the year 1111 A. D. Imam Al-Ghazali, with the blessings of God, passed away from his earthly abode, leaving behind him a treasure which can never be forgotten by the Muslim community. He also left behind him the cause of a difference of opinion between those who shared his views and those who differed with him. This is usually the case with those who became pioneers of a new way, convinced by the whisper of their inner voice echoing from their hearts, and determined not to trim their sails to every passing wind.

1) Thomas Hemerken van Kempen (1380—1471) was a famous Dutch Christian mystic who is believed to have attained a high spiritual development. His book 'The imitation of Christ' is one of the most famous and most used books in spiritual meditations amongst Christians. He received his early education in music in a monastery at Deventer. ED.

2) David Hume. Hume was a wellknown Scottish philosopher, born in Edinburgh in 1776. He was the author of several books of which 'A Treatise of Human Nature' and 'Enquiry concerning human understanding' are two of the most important. His main contribution to philosophy was his attempt to prove that all knowledge was a combination between ideas derived from sensations. The ideas were no more than what they resembled.

Apart from the general tendency of his philosophy to base knowledge on ideas derived from sensations, Hume was wellknown for his penetrating criticism of causality. He did not believe that there is such a thing as causality. What existed, according to Hume, was the recurring experience of a phenomenon whose effects were felt to have been the same as before. Thus if we said that fire warms us, we only mean by that, that in our previous experiences with fire, it had always been so. The impression created on our minds by our experience with fire in the past, developed in us the habit to associate fire with warmth. Thus we were inclined to conceive fire as the cause of warmth. But Hume considered this belief in fire as being the cause of warmth as not founded on the true objective condition of the world of nature but merely a product of the subjective mental activity of the individual. Thus the belief in causality was purely the creative imagination of the thinking individual.

Another distinctive contribution made by Hume to philosophy is his claim that all beliefs, thinking, conviction and action were in the ultimate analysis, based on desires and emotions. He used the word 'passion' to substitute for all possible sorts of psychological states which contained affective elements. Thus, according to Hume, a person who claimed to base his philosophy strictly on reason, did actually come to that stage, because his feelings pulled him there. The victory of reason over blind belief, was as Hume suggested, actually the victory of one passion over another. This extreme subjectivism of Hume led to relativism in the sphere of morals, religion and ethics. ED.

3) Rudolf Euchen: Lebensanschauungen der grossen Denker.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

by S. A. Rozemond

The Russian Revolution came about in two phases, a liberal revolution which took place in the spring of 1917, and a Bolshevik revolution which followed soon afterwards in the autumn of the same year.

We shall first deal with the sociological causes of the revolution and then give a historical account of the events in the spring of 1917, which led to the revolt in the autumn.

Generally speaking we can say that a social revolution is the consequence of two causes. Firstly, economic injustice and social disorganisation, and secondly a wide-spread notion, that the old institutions could no longer cope with the needs of the social situation regarded as inhuman and intolerable conditions of life, and the idea that the leading group prevents the necessary reforms. The same can be said about the causes, which brought about the Russian revolution.

The country

In order to obtain a clear picture concerning the origin of the revolutionary movement of 1917, it is necessary to go back to the year 1861. In that year serfdom was abolished. This measure did not alleviate the difficulties of the farmers, nor assure them their sought for independence, because at the same time it was stipulated that the land should belong to the nobility. For historical reasons this decision was not right because the farmers had always regarded the land to be their property. They were deprived of their primary rights. In this way their discontent was not banished. The conditions in the country were very bad. The farmers suffered from hunger every year because when the harvest of the previous year had been consumed, the products of the new year were not yet available. They had got a little piece of land, but this was insufficient to provide them the necessities of life. Moreover, the burden of taxation weighed too heavy upon them. The agricultural techniques were primi-

tive; bad manuring and simple implements. The greater part of the farmers could not live from the products of their land. They were constrained to rent land from the landowners so that they remained completely dependent on the noblemen. The term of the rent was often very short. This led the farmers to the excessive cultivation of the soil, which diminished its quality considerably, producing bad growth which caused famine. In short, the masses in the country hankered for improvement of their living conditions and for redress of their land rights.

The cities

Misery prevailed in the cities, just like in the country. Life in the industrial centres was characterised by all those bad conditions such as low wages, long working-time, bad housing, and no proper insurance-laws, which were (also) present in the 19th century cities of Western Europe. These circumstances undoubtedly provided the breeding ground for revolutionary and other opposing movements.

Hatred and dissatisfaction was stimulated by the discrimination of the national minorities and by the notorious corruption of the Russian bureaucracy. In 1905 a general revolt burst out which was, however, suppressed. The result was a few reforms, but these reforms were never properly executed.

The war

In 1914 the first World War broke out. It can be considered as one of the most important causes of the revolution. At any rate it had accelerated the revolutionnary process. The war was a catastrophe for Russia. Concerning industry, for instance, Russia was in many respects dependent on Germany. Economic isolation set in as a result of the war and caused a breakdown in the Russian industry. The means of conveyance worked very imperfectly. The war production went along coupled with corruption. High officials and members of the court were involved in un-

derhand dealings. In agriculture the harvests diminished considerably. The farmers were in want of artificial manures which could no longer be imported from abroad. Besides this, there was a shortage of implements of husbandry, for the materials which had become obsolete could not be replaced. The power of labour was paralyzed because the war demanded men and horses. The consequence of these conditions in agriculture was that there was a wide-spread shortage of food in the cities. The conditions in the army were also bad. In Russia many considered the army as a means to suppress the people. As such it was often used in the past. Therefore the army was never an object of veneration. The discipline was strict and ruthless. The officers were unqualified and the soldiers had no fighting-spirit. In the beginning of the war the Russian army had much success, but in the summer of '14 when engaged in a battle against the Germans the army experienced a staggering defeat. Then the shortcomings came to light in the form of desertion, fraternization with the enemy, (this also happened in the second world-war) and the refusal to fight.

The war crippled Russia by the breakdown of industry, transport and agriculture, the three main arteries of a nation at war. The bad conditions in the country and in the industrial centres caused the revolt of March 1917. The discontent was general. Everybody understood that a revolution was inevitable. This notion even prevailed in the highest circles, although their idea of revolution was restricted in the sense that it was to be a revolt to overthrow the then existing authority, but that they would continue to maintain the social structure. This was the idea of a palace revolution. However, it never took place because of continual hesitation and postponement.

The revolt

A revolt of the people broke out on the 23rd of February 1917 in Petrograd, the capital of Russia. There was famine, and as a consequence of a serious shortage of food, demonstrations took place. In the beginning the outlook was not dangerous but soon these riots grew into a menacing general strike. The government endeavoured to suppress the revolt by resorting to military means, but the soldiers were unreliable and refused to shoot at the demonstrators. Bloody

conflicts took place between the rebels and the police. The soldiers often openly sided with the demonstrators. Then a rumour was spread that the Duma (parliament) had been adjourned by the Czar. The soldiers rose in mutiny and provided the labourers with arms and ammunition. The revolt spread quickly. Many public buildings were set on fire, houses and shops plundered, the prisoners of the Peter and Paul fortresses were liberated. The Czar and the government ministers were caused to be arrested. The revolt began in Petrograd and soon the issues decided in favour of the rebels. The rest of Russia followed gradually the example of the capital. The revolution did not cost much blood. In Petrograd 400 persons were killed and about a thousand wounded.

The Provisional Government

The Duma, after some hesitation, accepted the revolution as an inevitable fact. The representatives elected a committee from amongst them which received the order to communicate with the revolutionary leaders and groups. On the same day the Soviet of labourers and military representatives was constituted. The committee of the Duma took the initiative in creating a Provisional Government. The socialist party refused to participate in this bourgeois government. Nevertheless they were ready to support this government under certain conditions, one of which was the speedy creation of a Parliament which had to be chosen by a general right of election. This Parliament would determine the new form of government.

The provisional Government was a liberal one. Only one of the ministers had a more radical view. His name was Kerenski, the Minister of Justice. (Some years ago his name was again in the news. The 20th of August 1951 a Council for the Liberation of the Russian People was constituted after a secret conference in Stuttgart, Germany. Kerenski took a leading part in this conference.)

In the beginning of the revolution of 1917 there were thus two powerful organisations; the Soviet of Labourers and Military Representatives in Petrograd, and the Provisional Government. Great differences soon arose between them.

The Soviet relied on the lower classes and the Provisional Government represented the bourgeoisie. The Soviet distrusted the liberal go-

vernment which came more or less fortunately into power. The Provisional Government understood the situation that it could not execute real authority without the support of the Soviet. In fact the Provisional Government was to a degree dependent on the caprices of the Soviet. The division of authority determined the events of the following months. The revolution had been brought about by the enthusiasm of the labourers and the soldiers. They begun the revolution and felt themselves to be its leaders and entertained high hopes of satisfying their own demands. The eight-hour working day was enforced and the wages raised, sometimes to 500%, because the prices had also been very much raised. The labourers elected from among themselves joint-committees which often discharged their own foremen and meddled in the affairs of the management. The Soviet appeared everywhere in the country and took over the power. The farmers were in an excited mood, they decided to get back the land on which they thought they could exercise their original rights.

They often encroached arbitrarily on lands whose owners were driven away and divided it between themselves. This provoked desertions in the army because the farmers in the frontline were afraid to miss the opportunity of obtaining a share of the divided land. The Provisional Government had the difficult task of establishing law and order in this chaos. Surrounded by distrust, nurtured by the provocative propaganda of the left-wing parties, its position was from the very beginning desperate. But in accepting these circumstances we must say that the Provisional Government had made serious mistakes. In its programme it promised among others the speedy creation of a constituent assembly. In this it failed completely. Time and again the preparations for the elections were postponed. This stimulated the restlessness in the country and enlarged the already prevailing distrust, more so because the solution to every important problem was left to the constituent assembly. This meant for instance, that meanwhile landlords could continue to sell their possessions to foreigners. The farmers feared that in this way they would lose their opportunity. By the passive attitude of the Provisional Government the Soviets got their big chance for propaganda.

The Soviet

The Soviet resembled an assembly more than an administrative board. It consisted of representatives of the labourers and the soldiers. Every thousand labourers delegated one man and every company was represented by one deputy. There were often a great many members. The Soviet of Petrograd once counted 2500 representatives. The social-democrats had a great majority there but this did not mean that a firm poli-

cy could be carried out because time and again the composition of the Soviet was renewed so that it happened sometimes when on the one day a resolution had been taken, on the following day the same resolution was rejected.

Provisional Government and Soviet

The connection between the Provisional Government and the Soviet was constituted by a special committee. The purpose of this committee was to negotiate and get desirable agreements. But the Provisional Government as well as the Soviet did not stand to their words. The arbitrary policy of the Soviet concerning the military service for instance had become known by the promulgation of the so-called order No. 1. In this order the soldiers were told amongst others that they had only to obey the officers in the frontline and that due obedience must ultimately be to none but the Soviet. The military salute was abrogated. The soldiers were advised to constitute committees which could settle disputes between officers and soldiers. This order No. 1 had fatal consequences. The soldiers assumed an insubordinate attitude towards their officers because they had thought themselves equal to their superiors. They had often gone to the extent of dismissing their own officers and interfering in strategic problems.

The executive committee of the Soviet was compelled to proclaim immediately an order No. II, as antidote to the first one, in which it was determined that the committee of the soldiers can only exercise power in political and internal affairs. However, this counter-order came too late to prevent the undermining of discipline.

Also differences of opinion arose between the Soviet and the Provisional Government about the Russian foreign policy. On the 27th of March the Soviet despatched a message to „the peoples of the whole world“. The German and Austrian brethren proletariat were invited to follow the Russian example by overthrowing the leading class and then to make peace without annexations and the payment of war-damages. In the committee which connected the Soviet and the Provisional Government, the Soviet delegates urged that the Provisional Government should declare its approval with the conditions of peace in the message stated above.

Miljukov, the Foreign Minister, vehemently opposed this proposal because he feared that it would lead to loss of international prestige, especially with the allied nations upon whom Russia was in some respects dependent. He also had the conviction that the reaction of the foreign socialists would be contrary to what their Russian comrades had expected. And as it appeared later on he was right. Finally there came, after much trouble a compromise between the viewpoint of the Provisional Government and the

Soviet. On April the 10th the Provisional Government published „A declaration about its reason for war”. This declaration was of a very doubtful nature so that the conflict about the foreign policy continued to exist.

Lenin

With the help of the Germans Lenin had returned on the 3rd of April from Switzerland where he stayed in exile. His programme caused intense agitation. He demanded that the government should make peace as soon as possible. He propagated publicly the overthrow of the Provisional Government. The proletariat had to wield power in the state. On the other hand, the Mensheviks (right wing socialists) and also many Bolsheviks (left wing socialists) thought this programme absurd. They blamed Lenin in that he was not conversant with the real conditions because of his long exile. The moderate socialists thought that Russia was not ready for a socialist society. In the Bolshevik party Lenin gained victory and he soon influenced a greater part of the Russian people by means of simple and suggestive slogans. Because Lenin's propaganda for peace had some success, the other socialist parties began to demand more resolutely for peace-negotiations. By this the Provisional Government found themselves in great difficulties.

At first the government denied the authenticity of the information circulated by the press in which it was stated that the government prepared a memorandum concerning its reasons for continuing the war. But some days later, on the 1st of May, the government issued a proclamation stating its firm will and that of the whole Russian people to continue the war until victory. This declaration of the government caused great indignation among the labourers and the soldiers. They demanded the immediate resignation of the Foreign Minister and the Minister of War. In this way the Provisional Government was dissolved.

The Coalition Government

The Soviet decided to cooperate with the liberals to form a coalition government. In this way the socialists were represented in the government. (But the Bolsheviks and the left wing Mensheviks voted against this policy). Yet this cooperation did not bring harmony between the Soviet and the government.

Impotence and irresolution characterized this coalition government. The foreign policy was continued in the same way as the war. By great speeches Lenin tried to regain the fighting spirit of the army. The Bolsheviks propagated immediate peace. They were indeed a little group but they were very active and they had influence in the army.

Taking into consideration the bad conditions in the army it cannot be understood how Ke-

renski and the government could have decided to act on the offensive against the Germans. It is probable that they had given way to the repeated pressure of the Allies, or that they had hoped to secure sooner in this way a tolerable peace.

The offensive began on the 13th of July and failed. This disaster certainly served as a dangerous propaganda weapon in the hands of the Bolsheviks. This event also crippled those socialists, who wanted to support the government. Because of the competition to win the favour of the masses, the moderates could no longer support the government. Another serious fault was that the government restricted its reforms to the preparation and drawing up of laws, which had to be confirmed by a constituent assembly, which in reality did not exist and the creation of which was continuously postponed. The authority of the coalition-government declined considerably. The demands of the labourers became continuously higher, instigated by the Bolshevik propaganda and encouraged by the fact that a social-democrat became minister of labour.

The old suppression-policy of the Czar against the national minorities had avenged itself now. Under the general weakening of authority the national minorities came with demands for autonomy. Finland, Ukraine and the Baltic countries went very far in their demands, and Georgia, the Crimea-Tartars and the people in Siberia wanted a form of self-government.

Meanwhile Lenin continued to be active. His influence increased especially among the labourers of Petrograd and the marines of the navy in the Baltic.

On the 16th of July during a government-crisis the labourers began clamouring again. The Bolsheviks immediately took the lead. Some days riots occurred in Petrograd, but by the help of the army the government was again master of the city on the 18th of July.

The revolt of July put the Bolsheviks temporarily out of action, but they had learned from it and as such it was for them a general repetition of a revolution, which gave them the experience to prepare for a decisive revolution, which was to take place in November of the same year.

It was then that the Bolsheviks succeeded to seize power.

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THE HUMANISM OF MOHAMMAD ABDUH

(continued from Volume I, No. 9)

by Dr. Osman Amin

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Mohd. Abduh's thought

a.) Logic:

The importance of logic in the study of modern philosophy and theology is indisputable. In the development of these two sciences, logic in particular, has played an important role; it has served as an introduction, as a preliminary discipline for every speculation; it has furnished for the different sciences not only the vocabulary, but the method and the criteria of evaluation.

Mohammad Abduh's theory of logic takes its sources from (a), Aristotle's logic as explained by Ibn Rushd, (b) the traditional logic of the Moslem school of philosophy which had a great representative in Ibn Sina, whose influence on the logic of Mohammad Abduh seems to have been considerable, (c) Perhaps we must also note — though to a less degree — the modern influence of certain Western authors, notably French authors.

For Mohammad Abduh, as formerly for Al-Farabi and most of the Moslem philosophers, philosophy is properly the search for the true and the good, not only in beliefs but also in action and conduct. But it is precisely logic which is the science capable of assuring the human spirit of the means to attain truth and certainty, that is, the state of mind which believes itself to be in possession of the truth. But the certainty which one obtains through logic is not a *subjective* certainty which depends on circumstances peculiar to any one person, but an *objective* certainty, since it can be conveyed by the same arguments to any mind. In agreement with Al-Farabi, Mohammad Abduh considers logical laws as universal laws common to all people. A research instrument fit to lead us to certainty, logic has more than one incontestable use; it is to point out „the error in the reasoning of ourselves and others” or, to use the language of Post-Royal, to „expose the faults in certain twisted arguments”.

While for Ibn Sina the aim of logic „is to give man a canonical rule the observation of which will prevent errors in his reasoning” and logic thus seems to have a negative value, Mohammad Abduh assigned to this science one of the most important constructive tasks: that of the search for and discovery of truth.

According to our philosopher, one profits no more from logic than from any other science if one does not try to put it into practice. It has been rightly said that the essence of culture is precisely what remains after one has forgotten what one has learnt. „To use it and put it to the test”, declares Mohammad Abduh, „are the best means of conserving the knowledge acquired and rendering it, in consequence, more real and more effective”. For Mohammad Abduh, as for most of the logicians of Islam, logic must not remain a purely theoretical study. It is at the same time a science and an art or, according to the formula of Ibn Sina, an instrumental science. (Ilm Ali).

Let us note an important trait which characterises the whole attitude of Mohammad Abduh. In the eyes of the Egyptian philosopher logic and in general the scientific spirit must assume a highly moral character. Sheikh Abduh repeatedly expressed the conviction that, to liberate oneself from prejudices and vulgar idols, to be able to cultivate a science, in brief, to be able to seek the true and the good, the force of the intellect is not sufficient: in addition, and above all, are required moral qualities, principally courage, a taste for action, integrity and the love of truth. The emphasizing by Mohammad Abduh of this point curiously recalls the words of Spinoza in his „De Emendatione intellectus” (On the Improvement of the Mind).

Mohammad Abduh declares that only those will be fit to profit from the „science of thought” who really have a thought, that is to say, those who wish to fulfil completely their function as

human beings. A thought which lives in the chains of habit and develops in the slavery of *Taklid* (imitation) is a dead thought and of no value. But the thought is not worthy of the name and does not really exist unless it is free and independent, that is to say when it can, without fetters, follow its natural course to its intended goal.

Certainly, it is our duty to proceed in our present existence in guiding ourselves by the light of the experience of our predecessors. Yet we must not accept without examination the traditions they have transmitted to us. We must, on the contrary, reflect upon them: if we find them sound — which here means undoubtedly conforming to reason — we shall accept them: otherwise, we should have to reject them. It is this free examination, this critical sense which, according to Abduh, distinguishes the reasoning animal from the pure animal.

„It is by his courage”, he says, „that man liberates himself from the slavery of *Taklid*, of all blind submission to whatever authority. Those of weak moral character, those who lack audacity and firmness, will not obtain a single benefit from the study of logic: not being worthy of reasoning, they will never be real scholars capable of formulating, in their spheres of competence, impartial and independent judgments.”

But with Mohammad Abduh courage does not, any more than freedom, signify anarchy or arbitrariness. Courage is, in reality, of two kinds, one is negative and consists in breaking the chains of *Taklid*, of conformity, of blind imitation and routine. The other is positive and consists in laying down other principles, those of good sense and sound reason. In brief, it is the act of submitting to the rules of logic, which is the true balance on which one must weigh every thought, every judgment, before adopting it. Such is the real courage which, while freeing man from prejudice and from submission to others, submits him to truth alone. A rationalism in which are admitted humanistic and extra-intellectual elements, calling in particular for moral qualities. Such seems to be, in sum, the dominant character of Mohammad Abduh's views on logic.

b.) *Criticism of Moslem Society:*

Our sociologist reproached intelligent men for attempting nothing for the reform of a state of which they know the defects. They seem, he said, to wait till reform comes to them. Their eyes are constantly turned towards the government from which they expect nearly every initiative. Mohammad Abduh also exhorted his compatriots to test the ground themselves, to coordinate their efforts. The rich must learn to spend their money for the common good. In a word, he invited the practice of effective cooperation in works spiritual as well as material.

„The Moslems”, declared Mohammad Abduh, have equally badly understood the meaning of obedience to authority; they have left everything to be dealt with by the government, — matters, administrative as well as political, — believing that they have no other contribution to make than the payment of taxes.” When one sees to what extent parents are grieved to see their sons depart to do their military service, and the efforts they make in order to exempt them from it, one then judges the absurdity of the conception which such Moslems have of the state; one would know also that their confidence in the authorities is such that they would believe them capable of doing everything without them. This excessive confidence leads to a dangerous neglect: the Moslems have completely lost interest in public affairs and have thus lost, with the political sense, that of judging and that of right and wrong”.

In sum, Mohammad Abduh had not ceased to criticize the false ideas and the corrupt beliefs of a society in which according to him, religion is misconstrued, only the outward signs of it remaining: where passions are unbridled and where there is no longer any other desire to urge men to work than that which concerns nourishment, ornament and honours; where people are attached to false glory, where each one wants the credit for what he has not done and where, to push themselves forward, the incompetent belittle the competent.

c.) *Reform of Education:*

„Those who really desire good for the country”, wrote Abduh, „must turn their attention essentially to education. For it is by reforming education that one will most easily realize all other reforms. **But those who imagine that in mere transplanting to their country the ideas and customs of other European peoples they will in a short time achieve the same degree of civilisation, deceive themselves grossly. They take as their point of departure what is in reality the end of a long evolution, for the great States of Europe did not arrive at their actual degree of civilization but at the price of enormous suffering and sacrifice.**”

d.) *Human community:*

Mohammad Abduh's, general view of humanity was very close to that of Socrates and the Stoics of antiquity, and to that of Rousseau in modern times. He believed that man is not wicked, and he has a nature inclined towards good and the love of peace. „How can it be otherwise”, he said, „when God has given man a nature superior to that of the animals and has endowed him with reason by which he has made himself master of the earthly world and has

been able to glimpse the secret of the celestial.” Moreover, God has not arranged that evil should be more desirable for our soul than good. Good is so innate to man that one only needs a simple hint or reminder to realize this good in action.”

To emphasize this instinct for good in man, Mohammad Abduh went as far as to profess this same human universalism of the stoics, a universalism which tends to establish a community among men in spite of the diversity of countries, religions, languages and races. For, he said, they are all equal by reason and by origin. This explains why men tend to associate, to unite and to live in harmony. If one regards men thus, one will find that all humanity is like a single family living on the surface of the same earth and joined by the same morals, relations and habits. „This state of affairs has so influenced the majority of reasonable men”, he adds, „that they have tried to serve humanity without attaching themselves fanatically to a race, a religion or a doctrine.”

Defence of Islam

In 1902. Mohammad Abduh was engaged in a controversy with Gabriel Hanotaux, then French Minister of Foreign Affairs, following the publication by the latter of an article entitled: „Confronting Islam and the Moslim question”. The Grand Mufti pointed out to the French historian how false was the idea held in France of Islam.

In another polemic on the subject of Ibn Rushd, Mohammad Abduh defended a thesis dear to him, **that the fatalism with which Islam is reproached is only a distortion of the Moslem religion, a distortion due to misunderstanding of the very principles of this religion.**

It is necessary to return to the sources to extricate the Koran from the jumble of biased commentaries which falsified it and superstitions which distorted it. In this, Mohammad Abduh allies himself with Martin Luther. He has to break down resistances, avowed or concealed, to attain the triumph of his point of view. In this struggle, he showed a clear sightedness, a wisdom and a penetration of mind which equal only the greatness of his soul, his tolerance and his goodness.

Conclusion:

Mohammad Abduh was well aware that philosophical reflection cannot always remain speculative or contemplative. To endow our existence with complete consciousness and full experience, it must engage us in the activities of the world, command us to take all our responsibilities, and urge us not to seek a form of refuge in solitary meditation.

The task which this great reformer set himself can be summarized in his appeal to understand the true Islam, that is to say, Islam rid of distortions and superstitions; to acquire the courage to think and to see things as they are; to realize liberty of the mind in rejecting prejudices and preconceived ideas; to keep the intelligence far from passions and submit it only to the truth; and finally, to distinguish between the government's right to the people's obbedience and the people's right to justice from the government.

Mohammad Abduh's influence is clearly evident in our country. (He has contributed more than anyone else to modify the social environment, the mentality and the spiritual life of Egypt.) An imperial observer would not fail to notice that our best thinkers from Kassim Amin and Saad Zaghloul to Loutfi el-Sayed, Mustapha Abdel Razek, Farid Wagdi and El-Akkad are nourished by his ideas and impregnated by his work. Even outside Egypt the doctrine of Mohammad Abduh does not cease to exercise an increasingly profound influence and his action of reform is still felt in the domains of religion, morals and education.

By the spreading of his teaching, Mohammad Abduh is one of those who have greatly raised spiritual values. **He has affirmed in face of manifestations of force, the rights and demands of the moral conscience. By his constant concern not to separate thought from action, nor reason from religion, he has brought back philosophy to its best traditions and opened before it, in the East, infinite perspectives.**

If one adds to his personal contribution to philosophy in general, his part in the reform of Moslem society, his inspiration rising from the love of the true and the good and of his compassion for suffering humanity, one will acknowledge that Mohammad Abduh is worthy to be proposed as a model and guide and that his work is worthy of the meditation of following generations. This great and noble thinker could inspire them and effectively sustain them in the work of reconstructing the world, in which they are called upon to participate.

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