

THE THREE GREAT
PROPHETS OF THE WORLD

MOSES, JESUS

AND

MUHAMMAD

BY

LORD HEADLEY

AUTHOR OF "A WESTERN AWAKENING TO ISLAM," ETC. ETC.

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

THE MOSQUE, WOKING

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PROPHETS OF THE WORLD**

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&
MUHAMMAD**

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OF THE WORLD

FIRST PUBLISHED IN JANUARY 1923

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THIS LITTLE WORK IS DEDICATED
WITH EVERY MARK OF REGARD AND
FRIENDSHIP TO MY VERY DEAR BROTHER
IN ISLAM

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, IMAM OF THE MOSQUE
WOKING

WHO HAS BEEN MY FAITHFUL FRIEND AND MENTOR
FOR MANY YEARS PAST

EL FAROOQ
(HEADLEY)

FOREWORD

THE spirit of adventure, that seeking for improvement and advancement, which has for generations marked the British race and spread our language and our flag in all parts of the world might well now be turned in a direction leading towards increased prosperity and a sounder code of ethics.

When a country shows itself to be thoroughly bored by its religion from which it turns away with relief to secular amusements such as dances, picture shows, golf etc. there must be something wrong. Now it is an indisputable fact that for some years past the attendances at Christian Churches have been slowly but surely going down: in some cases the congregations are so small that it seems almost a farce to hold a service at all.

I do not think this falling off is due to any craving for atheism, as some people have suggested, it is far more likely that educated people, guided by reason as well as high principles, do not like having their intelligences outraged by being told in parrot-like phrases that they cannot be saved if they do not subscribe to this or that dogma which consigns them to perdition if they dare to question its truth. It is well known that the dogmas of Christianity were started by Monks and

Priests some 300 years after Christ's time. The Trinity, The Atonement, The Divinity of Christ, The Immaculate Conception, and the necessity of the Sacraments are all dogmatic, and yet solemn faced men will tell one seriously that it is impossible to be saved without believing in them all! My earliest recollections of religion are unpleasant, being associated with the idea of an angry God who had created me, "a sinful child of wrath", and was ever looking out for an excuse for burning me in a hot fire, and that it was only by killing his only Son that my "wrathfulness" could be blotted out and that I could hope to sit on the same cloud with my dear relatives singing and playing the harp for all eternity. The alternatives were not attractive, and my belief in God's fairness and goodness was rudely shaken but not destroyed when I was a child of tender years.

It does not astonish me at all to hear so many questions asked every day concerning Islam. On every side earnest enquirers come to me or write with most pertinent enquiries, and it is wonderful how many there are really and truly Muslims without knowing it themselves. This is the time when a simple and pure faith is wanted and I feel that it needs but a little more publicity to bring into the fold tens of thousands of Britishers who have privately discarded the narrow bigotry of the creeds they have been brought up in.

Only ten years ago, the founder of the Muslim Mis-

sion, Woking, came to this land and commenced his activities by starting the "Islamic Review". He could hardly imagine the fruitful harvest that his labours, indefatigable and persevering as they were, would bring so soon. For years, no one took any notice of him, but his voice, feeble but sweet, began to grow strong, and to-day his words command an appreciative audience in many quarters. The force of his pen, which he wields with facility and rapidity, is felt by his readers. I wish he could devote more of his time to the production of some standard works on different aspects of Islam, as it is satisfactory to know that much good work has been done by him and other workers of the Muslim Mission at Woking, to correct the misleading representations which were spread about concerning the Faith. The spade work is nearly finished and the era of advancement approaches. The Western world needs a more extensive spread of Muslim literature, especially when people on all sides are making such pressing enquiries about Islam.

Many of these, while thoroughly in accord with Islamic teaching, cannot face the comments of their friends and relations. Only a few years ago, I myself was not quite free from vindictive remarks—I had—"deserted the religion of my fathers". "I was apostate". "I could not be saved" etc. So I pointed out that I could hardly have deserted a faith which had never meant anything

to me, but which I openly professed in order to obey my parents and please them.

What we want now is a living religion to comfort the souls of those who *might* slide from Christianity into idolatry or atheism. Followers of Islam do not attempt to force their opinions on others and anything like compulsion is entirely forbidden by the Qur-án. The absolute fairness of Islam is what has struck most of the people to whom I have explained various points. It cannot be right to be without any religion—though what are called religious people are often so disagreeable and uncharitable—but do let us choose that faith *which is least hampered by improbabilities or absurdities.*

I feel sure that if the people of England fully grasped what Islam really is, common sense, and the natural desire we all have to use our reasoning faculties as well as our emotions, would do much to remove the misunderstandings which exist. It is I think much to the discredit of certain persons that they have wilfully spread abroad incorrect accounts of Muhammad's work and teaching and have generally misrepresented Islam to Western nations. To show that Islam stands on a firm foundation and is a religion appealing strongly to the intellect as well as to the natural sentiments engrafted in human nature, should now be our closest duty.

There are many customs in the East which are different from our own and which have wrongly taken a

part of religion whereas they are not so. The Spirit of Islam is exactly the same to-day as it was thirteen hundred years ago; the charity and love inculcated differs not from those sweet attributes as applied by the Holy Prophet when he freely forgave all his deadly enemies.

THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM.

When war and pestilence were rife, and dear ones passed away,
Sublimest Faith supported us, enabling us to pray
For hearts most thoroughly purified, for minds like saints of old,
And souls attuned to those whom Thou hast garnered in Thy Fold.

O grant us that in simple Faith—surrender to Thy Will
We may show love to Thee and Thine, nor doubt Thy power to fill
With joy our lives, as on we pass, and sorrows leave behind,
Looking to Thee, our only Guide, the Light of all Mankind.

These lines give a faint idea of the feelings of the true Muslim—he who has resigned his will to God's Will and who looks to the time when he may return to his Maker.

In the following pages I have tried to show that between the three Prophets, Moses, Christ and Muhammad there is the strange difference that both Moses and Christ left the world full of sorrow at the miserable state of humanity, but that Muhammad was able to leave a world which was in a far better state than when He came into it. Then there was the question of credence; of course 600 years makes a difference in the probability of historic narrative and from this and other circumstances I gather that if we accept the history of Moses

and Christ as correct, we must, a fortiori, accept the record of Muhammad. There were four points to be considered:—

1. The condition of the world when they appeared.
2. Their personal influence on those around them.
3. How they expressed their feelings as to their success when they left the world.
4. The world after; what was the immediate result of their influence?

Of course Muhammad is more a historic character than either Moses or Christ; the Qur-án was compiled in his lifetime and what else we know of him was at any rate actual history written very soon after his death; but the records of the others were probably put together at least some centuries after their death.

I have also given a very brief sketch of the life of the Prophet.

In these pages I confined my remarks to the records of these three great men as accepted by their respective followers. A Muslim must accept all of them as true prophets, but I wonder how a Jew or a Christian can deny the same respect and allegiance to Muhammad, which they reserve for Moses and Jesus, in the face of the work which he did in the furtherance of humanity. Invidious comparisons are not desirable, but if the facts recorded in the Bible are sufficient in the eye of a Jew or a Christian to accept Moses or Jesus as Messengers

from the Most high, Muhammad is, a fortiori, more entitled to claim such a position.

There is one matter which I should touch on as it has been so often pushed to the front and used as a sort of bugbear to frighten women. I refer to polygamy. Very few Muslims have more than one wife, and no one in this country need to be in the least alarmed lest the introduction of Islam as a recognized religion should alter the laws of a Western nation.

Polygamy, practiced in the East, from the earliest times, is pointed out by over-zealous but unscrupulous traducers, as a "Muhammadan institution". As we know, and as the Christian missionaries also know, it is nothing of the kind.

Polygamy existed in the House of Jacob and was practiced unscrupulously. Jesus belonged to the same tribe. His own family was not free from it. He neither abolished it nor made any reform in the institution. It continued in Christendom for more than fourteen centuries. The civil law based on the institution of Justinian came to abolish it recently.

Muhammad broke up the idols and effected innumerable improvements in the midst of heathenish surroundings in a country sunk in all the darkness of pagan idolatry. Amongst his good works, he placed restrictions on the existing polygamy. He limited the number of wives a man might have and subjected the practice to

such strict conditions as to make it impracticable in the average case. By regulating the marriage customs which then existed, in the whole world, the Prophet paved the way to higher ideals respecting morality.

Polygamy is not a substantial law in Islam. It is only an adjective or a remedial law, which comes into operation when some evil is to be remedied, in the absence of which, such practice in Islam does not fall far short of sin.

It is possible that some of my readers will ridicule my suggestion that Islam is a better religion than the curious medley of antiquated improbabilities which stand for modern Christianity. They will point to the great charitable institutions, hospitals, schools and homes for suffering humanity run on Christian lines. But one fails to see why these charitable institutions should be ascribed to a religion which could not give birth to them for more than 1,700 years. They are the growth of modern culture and owe their origin to quite different external causes—the greatest among them being Islam in Spain. Islam highly speaks of these charities in its teaching and brought them into existence in all Muslim countries within two centuries after its birth. Islam can claim superiority to modern culture in one respect—Muslim Universities opened their doors in Baghdad in the days of Nizam-ul-Mulk and in Granada in the days of Abdul Rahaman to students without distinction of caste, colour

or creed, where they were looked after, boarded and lodged at the public expense.

Besides hospitals, libraries and other institutions, there were public baths in every town in Moorish Spain, which were demolished in the time of Ferdinand, because cleanliness was strange to Christian piety in those days. Besides it is no proof that these institutions could not be run every bit as well—perhaps better—under the aegis of some other simpler and less contentious religion. Such a religion is Islam, which is in very truth, Christianity shorn of the man-made dogmas. In Islam there is complete freedom of the soul. There are no priests, or saints or virgins to invoke. No tolls to pay on the road to Heaven. No need of candles or masses. Each human being has an equal right to the Keys of Heaven which can be used by any man, woman or child without any external aid of any kind from prophet, priest or king.

The strongest and most convincing argument we can bring forward to support our claims and win Western sympathy is that *no idea of atheism or idolatry can possibly exist in the mind of the true believer*; and this fact should go far to mark Islam as the great Religion or Faith of the future. We cannot fail to observe in Christianity a lack of cohesion and uniformity, but in Islam we find all that should satisfy the created in the desire to be at one with and to return to, the Creator,

the Ever-Present and Omnipotent Protector of all creatures.

1. 1. 1923.

EL-FAROOQ
(HEADLEY)

P. S.

Many of our friends have helped in the good work of spreading the Truth as found in our simple and Blessed Faith and amongst the last to assist is Dr. Muhammad Ghous, of Taiping, Perak, who has contributed to the publication of the present volume.

H.

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