

The Prayer of a Moslem Wife

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This inside view of Moslem home life is an effective call to Christian work among Mohammedans. It is written by a missionary of the Reformed Church in America, and appeared in the quarterly "Neglected Arabia."

SOME time ago we spent two weeks in a town on the mainland as guests in an Arab home. These two weeks taught me more of real Arab home life than the rest of the time I have spent in Arabia. There is nothing in my experience of the last five years that has left a deeper impression. I only wish I could procure some such opportunity to the writers who want to give the world the impression that there is as much happiness in Moslem homes as in Christian.

Our host was a Moslem enjoying an exceptionally good reputation. Hospitable, popular, just, generous, are some of the adjectives used when he was spoken of. A real Arab lady was our hostess. She was refined, sweet-mannered, loving and lovable, sympathetic, attractive in every sense of the word. Her children loved her. She loved them and was proud of them. She loved her husband and was proud of him. That sounds like the story of a happy home, does it not? But—!!!

We arrived at the house late at night, so we did not see much of our hostess till the next day. As soon as the regular salutations were over and the usual questions answered, such as: "How long have you been married? How many children have you? Will your husband take another wife?" the faces relaxed and that typical *sád* expression appeared,—that expression so familiar to us women missionaries to Islam. The preliminary conversation ended, with a deep sigh, by the hostess saying: "Your religion and your ways are so much better than ours. 'There is no God, but God,' etc. What can we do? Misery, grief and all sorts of troubles have been written over the heads of the Arab women by God. Liberty, joy,

and happiness is your portion. You are different from us. We are like beasts and our men treat us as such—no better. God is merciful. Praise be to God, and Peace on his prophet."

The next day preparations were made for the feast of El Kassam. The husband sent home his purchases of rice, dates, peanuts, sweets, etc., more than ten times the amount needed. The younger members of the family prepared their prettiest garments and jewelry. I have never before noticed this feast in Bahrein. It falls two weeks before the first day of Ramadhan. The Shiah Moslems say that on that day God sits on a special throne arranging and planning the affairs of the world for the ensuing year. Who is to die and who is to be born, who is to go on pilgrimage, who is to become rich, who is to become poor, all the joys and griefs of life are assigned to mortals that day. People have the privilege to appeal to God at that time, and the most frequently repeated petition is the one God answers. Women are admitted to the mosque in the evening. We were invited to join with the family in their petition so that theirs might be the one most often repeated and consequently answered by God. What do you think they pleaded for?

The previous year the husband took unto himself a second wife and built for her a nice house. She was a pretty, young and amiable girl and was soon to become a mother. The plea that went up to God was for the death of this young woman and her child. The whole family, mother, children, servants and even friends, all joined to plead from sunset to sunset for the death of this unfortunate second wife in the new home. "Is she not taking my husband away from us half the time? Did he not send to her just as many bags of

rice, and peanuts and sweets? All of the gifts I receive from him now give me pain because I know she gets exactly the same. Have I not reared his children and been the best wife to him for eighteen years? Had he not always said he would never marry again?" Sobbing she continued: "Do pray with us for her death; oh, I want to die myself. I take no pleasure in my clothes and jewelry. I always dress in old clothes even on feast days. The food I eat chokes me. Inside of my heart is a continuous pain which is eating me up like a fire. Whenever he sends a bag of rice or a pound of coffee here, he sends the same to her. He fears she might be jealous. Yes, he is afraid of hurting *her*. Me! he does not think of me any more; he does not even know how I suffer. Were I to complain I am sure

he would whip me to silence. Why? Don't you know? Because I am old, nearly thirty and not pretty any more, and my health is gone." Her sobbing and her daily complaints were enough to soften the stoniest heart. Here was a picture of sadness impossible to find in a Christian home, but there are many such in Moslem homes. Jealousy, hatred, envy and murder in their hearts, and no weapons to fight these enemies!

What golden opportunities we had to tell of Christ and His love! And what an intense listener she proved to be! She drank in every word eagerly. Much comfort she received in these two weeks and we hope it will be a lasting joy to her, to know that Jesus is her Saviour and comforter.

A Moslem Imam Discovers Christ*

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THE story of the spiritual experience of an educated Mohammedan young man in connection with one of the Christian educational institutions in a Mohammedan country is full of human interest. Moreover, it is of religious interest to those who are following closely the movement of Christianity among Mohammedans and its influence over their thinking as well as over their life. For reasons which will be obvious to all readers, it is necessary that the name, college, and place in which this experience occurred must for the present remain a secret within a small circle. It must be sufficient for our readers to know that it is an actual experience which at every point can be verified.

The young man under consideration was born about the year 1890, in one of the large cities of the Turkish empire. The father was a Moslem Turk who had come from Russia at the time of the war. His mother was also a Moslem Turk.

The young man, whom we will call, for

the sake of having a name, Mahmud, although that was not his name, grew up in Moslem surroundings and attended Turkish elementary schools. At the age of sixteen he began his religious studies in schools established for the training of *imams*. He desired of his own initiative to be an *imam*. When but eleven years of age he saw a *hafiz* repeating the Koran, and so began himself to learn it, and became, while still a boy, a *hafiz*, knowing the entire Koran by heart. His longings for religion and for spiritual things had been so ardent that in his younger years he even cried out, "I want to be a *hafiz*."

Until the age of sixteen Mahmud loved Islam, although he was ignorant of its philosophy or its theology. By nature he was deeply spiritual and longed for spiritual truth. In his younger theological days he prayed daily that his nation might be made perfect. For himself, his deepest desire was to know God. At the *medresse* he began to have serious doubts as to the efficiency of the teachings he was

* From the *Missionary Herald*.

learning. He alone of the students in the theological school revolted from the massacres, although it was openly held among the *imams* that it was a virtue to kill a Christian. He continued the forms and prayers, but inwardly he was losing faith.

With the restoration of the Constitution in 1908 and the sudden new impulse for liberty that swept over the Turkish empire, he determined to take Truth for his standard, wherever Truth might be found. At that time he met a Mohammedan judge from Crete, who was of a very liberal turn of mind. This judge told him a great deal about the English people, their ways and their religion. It seems that he had for sixteen years served under the English, and so entertained very kindly feelings toward them. Not only did he tell Mahmud about their Christian ways and customs; he also told him things about Mohammedanism which the young man had not before thought of. He pointed out that Mohammed's life was not perfect; in fact, that it had serious moral blemishes. From that time Mahmud resolved to learn all he could about the religion of the English people.

In 1913 Mahmud went to a Christian educational institution. His appearance made an excellent impression. He had a winning smile upon his face whenever he greeted his teachers, although he knew no English. The first English he began to read was the Psalms. When he came to the Twenty-third Psalm he said to his teacher, "Ah, I love that psalm!"

Mahmud's liberal thinking in matters of religion, viewed from the Mohammedan standpoint, had attracted the attention of the Moslem students in the institution where he was studying to such an extent that persecution began to appear. He was at that time the head of a mosque in his native city, and the fanatical element connected with the mosque went so far as to follow him to his school and watch to see whether or not he attended chapel exercises. When they found that he did attend the religious exercises, he was warned that unless he gave them up he would lose his place as an *imam*. So he gave up attending chapel.

A year later he sought English lessons from a Christian teacher, coming each day from the city for this purpose. The rela-

tionship between this young seeker after truth and his Christian teacher ripened into a beautiful friendship. He was asked if he was willing to study the teachings of Jesus, and his reply was that that was what he wanted to study most of all. And so, with the Turkish Testament side by side with the English, his studies began. The Beatitudes were first taken up. His teacher reported that he should never forget the radiance upon the young man's face when he came to "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." His own heart was ready to receive that spiritual truth.

Another Christian teacher joined in the circle, and in November the three knelt together, in the privacy of the teacher's study, in earnest prayer. The studies were continued, comparing side by side the teachings of Mohammed with the teachings of Jesus: the Fatherhood of God was set over against the impersonal power and force of Islam; the moral basis for society and the gospel of Jesus for the home over against the plurality of wives and the loose moral system permitted by the Koran. This study was accompanied by repeated times of prayer together for guidance and light, and it was under these conditions that Mahmud became a true follower of Jesus Christ.

But persecution was rife. It was not the purpose of his associates and friends in his own city to allow this change to take place without a protest. The attack culminated in his being betrayed to the government officials, so as to have him arrested and sent to the battle front at the Dardanelles. He had been deprived of his position in the mosque long before this, and the vilest stories were concocted and circulated about him in the coffee shops and on the streets. These were carefully investigated and found to be wholly without foundation, mere fabrications of fanatical persecutors.

One day soldiers came for Mahmud, and after many vicissitudes he was taken before the court where the decision was to be rendered as to whether he should be sent to the front as a soldier. The court room was crowded. There were some of the highest military men and officials present; the leading religious *khadi* (judge) presided. Mahmud had many friends

among the crowd in the court room, because he had already shown himself to be a man of influence, with a friendly spirit that tended to break down opposition. The *khadi* at the opening of the trial, with friendly tones, whispered to him: "Why have you taken the white off your fez? Why have you ceased being an *imam*?" Mahmud replied, "Because I am a Christian."

For more than an hour and a half they questioned him. The answers came, clear, modest, gentle, unequivocal. "You may kill me," said he; "you may slay me in any way you please; you may make me a slave; but my heart is free. I see in Islam many plants not of God's planting, and by the grace of God I want to do all that I can to root them all up. I see a great building, very high, very glorious, built by force, but with no heart or soul in it; some day it will fall down and destroy those who occupy it."

These are some of the things Mahmud

said to his prosecutors; but with the exception of the *khadi's* question at the opening, no one asked him if he was a Christian. Several voluntarily spoke in his behalf. One colonel put his hand upon Mahmud's shoulder and said, "May you become a great and good teacher in the college where you have been studying." Another one addressed him in a most friendly way as "our Protestant *imam*." The *khadi* spoke long and kindly with him, and offered to let Mahmud address a crowd in a mosque in the city. However, some of the *imams* who were present in court room were very angry. It was decided to take the regular exemption tax in lieu of his service as a soldier.

So Mahmud was set free. He returned to his school, and a service of rejoicing was held there that night that the new disciple whom they had counted as lost had been found—almost as given back to them from the dead.

STATISTICS OF THE INDIAN MISSIONS OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES, 1915

Boards and Societies**	Tribes	Churches	Stations*	Or-dained Minis- ters		Help- ers †		Communi- cants Native	Estimated ‡Adherents	Sunday Schools	Enrolment	Mission Schools	Teachers and Helpers	Enrolment
				White	Native	White	Native							
Baptist, North.....	23	118	5	13	99	12	3	5,408	13,582	29	1,220	5	22	245
Baptist, South.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	4	..
Christian Reformed.....	2	2	5	5	..	11	7	90	600	5	300	2	4	90
Congregational.....	8	23	11	8	4	1	13	1,331	3,000	11	463	4	23	270
Friends.....	10	..	10	14	..	8	..	550	1,200	10	769	..	..	..
Ind. Evang. Mission.....	4	2	6	3	..	8	..	50	200	4	81	1	1	9
Lutheran.....	1	2	2	4	..	6	4	120	900	4	500	4	4	92
Mennonite.....	4	6	11	12	..	2	4	250	560	7	388	..	..	..
Methodist Episcopal.....	25	45	47	25	10	7	15	2,500	6,000	45	1,750	6	20	..
Methodist Episcopal, South.....	9	95	15	5	32	..	..	2,875	7,187	38	766	..	..	..
Moravian.....	3	..	36	8	..	2	10	875	1,688	6	514	..	..	..
National Indian Association.....	10	..	11	..	..	18	7	..	250	4	100	..	..	..
Norwegian Lutheran.....	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Norwegian Evang. Lutheran Society.....	..	1	..	1	..	2	..	100	200	..	..	..	..	..
Presbyterian, North.....	57	134	115	53	42	26	73	8,955	18,319	143	7,915	13	57	1,174
Presbyterian, South.....	2	20	..	5	7	..	..	500	1,200	12	600	1	15	..
Protestant Episcopal.....	20	1	126	44	25	34	67	6,982	10,000	84	1,500	18	22	138
Reformed Church in America.....	7	6	7	5	1	10	6	800	1,500	7	500	..	..	..
Reformed Church in U. S. (German).....	1	1	1	1	..	..	..	9	40	1	30	..	..	..
Reformed Presbyterian.....	3	1	3	1	..	2	..	74	400	3	175	1	5	45
Swedish Evang. Mis. Covenant of America..	..	1	1	1	..	..	..	44	150	1	..	..	..	..
United Presbyterian.....	2	2	3	2	1	1	..	152	200	4	200	..	..	..
Y. M. C. A.....	..	..	115	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Y. W. C. A.....	..	..	14	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Totals.....	191	460	545	212	221	153	211	31,665	67,176	418	17,771	56	177	2,063

* Stations are places where services are held or missions established, but no churches organized.

† Helpers are all unordained mission employes except those reported under heading of schools.

‡ Adherents include all communicants, children or church and Sunday-school, and regular attendants at services.

** In addition, the Norwegian Lutherans have one church and one station, with four missionaries, and 100 members. The Swedish Evangelical Mission has one church with a minister and 44 members. The Y. M. C. A. has 115 stations and four workers; and the Y. W. C. A. has 14 stations and two workers. These are included in the totals given above.