

—a fitting reception to a month with which is so closely bound up the spiritual purification and elevation of man. When however we are in for it, with so many of us, its charm wears away day by day. Instead of the joy that it should be to our hearts it is looked upon as more of a burden. When ten days of fasting are over, there is a sigh of relief. One leg of Ramazan is broken, they say. With 15 the other leg also gets broken. With 20, it is the back that breaks and so forth till at last it is considered, like a war or some other calamity, to be on its last legs. All this popular attitude smacks as if Ramazan is a positive burden, imposed upon us by an exterior authority which we have, willy-nilly, to bear. This is an erroneous attitude altogether and the sooner it is dispelled the better.

Ramazan is the greatest joy of life. It is the greatest boon that God has vouchsafed to man. There is no joy greater than the joy of self-assertion in a righteous cause. Ramazan brings us that great opportunity. The greatest obstacle that stands between us and a glimpse of Truth and Reality is our own self—the cravings of the flesh in us. Ramazan tramples upon that obstacle. Our intellectual and mental senses shed their coarseness. They get dematerialized or astralized, we might say. We find the rays of Reality, of Truth, of God, call it whatever you will, gently play upon our being. The more astralized this state of mind, the fuller and warmer and brighter this glow of Reality. And what could be a greater joy than to fathom the depths of existence and through the baffling and confusing mysteries of life, land upon the bed-rock of Reality where there are no doubts and no worries and no fears, where all is clear dawn and calm and serenity.

Ramazan is the narrow pathway to that light for which the poet's soul yearns. It is a soul-pathway. The Head of man is good enough to enable him to go about the world, to look to the requirements of his animal nature. But the finer paths that lead to those inner recesses of existence where man stands face to face with Reality, where all doubts are resolved, where man finds a safe anchorage in the midst of the bewildering storms that rage around him in this world of phenomena—those finer paths can be treaded only by the soul of man. Joad is right when he has hit upon the discovery that like the arguments of the Head, there are the arguments of the Heart. One might go a step further and say that the argument of the Heart is the only sure argument, leading us to light and peace and harmony.

The Near East or Middle East

In his address at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, the President, Sir George Clerk, alluded to a confusion in the use of these terms and proposed a solution. We quote with approval:

“In the lecture which he gave to the Society a year ago Sir Percy Loraine called attention to the confusion which now exists in the use of the terms Near and Middle East, and deliberately used the words Near East in his title to insist that the Balkan States, Egypt, and the coastal areas on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea are by customary use the Near East, whereas the Middle East he would describe as including Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Arabian Peninsula. In a note written for the *Geographical Review*, Colonel Lawrence Martin, Chief of the Division of Maps in the

Library of Congress, has expressed his 'enthusiastic' agreement with Sir Percy Loraine. He would consider that the Near East comprises the Balkans, Turkey, Rhodes and the Dodecanese, Cyprus, Syria and the Lebanon, Palestine, and sometimes Egypt, and limits the Middle East to 'Iraq, Persia, Afghanistan, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, and the other countries of the Arabian Peninsula. Africa west of Egypt has never, he thinks, been called either Middle East or Near East by informed Americans, who for Mediterranean Africa usually revert to the old designation of Barbary States.

"The confusion of the last few years has of course arisen from the fact that when at the beginning of the war a British Command-in-Chief was established in Cairo, its interests were at first eastward and southward rather than along the Mediterranean coast to Libya and Tunisia, and it was the eventual triumphant conclusion of the North African campaign that brought British armies from the Middle East Command to the Pillars of Hercules. Thus arose a very natural but regrettable misuse of the term Middle East that it may be difficult to avoid in the official histories of the war. But I think that we, who are not tied down to an official nomenclature, would do well to agree with our American friends and among ourselves that we should use always the classification upon which Sir Percy Loraine and Colonel Lawrence Martin are agreed, and come to a working arrangement upon any points of difference. We might well agree that no part of Africa excepting Egypt belongs either to the Near or the Middle East. This has been for many years the view and practice of the Society, and I hope that we shall make a point of maintaining the practice with especial care in anything that we publish."

Islam and Buddhism in London

In Islam a sheikh is not a bronzed warrior who steals blond young women from caravans in the dead of night, but a learned scholar and teacher of the Mohammedan faith. Typical example of the true sheikh is 40-year old, erudite Ali Hassan Abdel Kader, who arrived recently in London to take up his duties as Secretary of the newly formed Islamic Culture Center in Regent's Park.

Mohammedanism is not so old in Britain as Buddhism, for London's Buddhist Society held its twentieth anniversary services only last month. Back in 1881 a Buddhist mission was opened in England by a converted-to-Buddhism Roman Catholic, who returned from the East in that year. It apparently disintegrated; then in 1925, Lawyer Christmas Humphreys organized the Buddhist Society of Britain. But only sixty people attended the widely advertised anniversary service.

Mohammedanism claims 250,000,000 adherents all told, and the job of the new Secretary, Sheikh Ali, is "to contradict wrong impressions about Islam, and to show that the Arabs have a profound and ancient culture." The Islamic Culture Center was formed in 1940. The following, not yet very large, numbers in the thousands perhaps—but the importance that Britain attaches to the good will of Islam was clearly demonstrated when King George VI visited the Mosque at the close of the year, with India Secretary Amery. The site for the Mosque, by the way, was presented by the British Government.

—*Our Hope* (New York)

Moslems and the Soviet Union

C. L. Sulzberger writes in *The New York Times* of the interesting developments in Soviet-Moslem relations because of the new attitude in Moscow to religion:

"It is often forgotten that the Soviet Union, in addition to being the seat and heart of Christian Orthodoxy, is also one of the great Moslem powers in the world, with large Islamic communities in the Caucasus and Turkestan, which includes some of the most famous and most historic mosques in Samarkand and Bokhara.

"These repercussions are commencing to be felt now. This year, for the first time in Soviet history, Moslem citizens are participating in the annual pilgrimages to Mecca, facilitated by special transport arrangements made in Moscow. This indicates an increasingly important status of Islam in the Soviet Union.

"The Mufti, Abdul Rahman Ibn Sheikh Zainulla Rassuli, spiritual leader of the Soviet Moslems, has said, according to the Arab News Agency, that new centers of the Islamic faith have been created in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics during the last few years. He added:

"Moslems gave more than 10,000,000 rubles to build columns of tanks and sent several trainloads of gifts to the Red Army at the front. Moslems have lost several of their spiritual leaders in the War—killed by the Nazis.

"During their occupation of the Caucasus, for example, the Germans shot Mullah Hamid Debaleff for refusing to obey an order not to wear his national costume. Wherever the Germans were they forbade Moslems to hold divine service, destroyed holy books and ordered all new-born children to be given German names."

"Such statements have great importance in the predominantly Islamic Middle East, where German propaganda was strongly concentrated and where such odd ideas were propounded by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels and his Moslem aides, such as Jerusalem's Grand Mufti, that Adolph Hitler was a direct descendant of the prophet.

"The views of the Soviet Union's Moslem citizens are spreading fairly rapidly throughout the Middle East and coincide with the apparent growth in Moscow's interest in this area, accentuated by the unconfirmed reports that the Kremlin intends to appoint a Vice Commissar for Foreign Affairs as Resident Minister in Teheran to deal with Middle Eastern affairs."

Anti-Locust Campaign in Arabia

The Arabian expeditions for 1943-4 were divided in three. The Egyptian Government equipped and sent out a complete expedition led by Egyptian entomologists to the Hejaz. This expedition has carried out magnificent work. The full report of its doings is not yet available. The second expedition, divided into Eastern and Western parties, was mainly British.

Two R.A.S.C. transport companies and two platoons of a tank transporter company from the British Army with the addition of Arab drivers from Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Syria and the Lebanon,

formed the bulk of the personnel, with British and American entomologists directing operations under the Chief Locust Officer, Mr. Maxwell Darling.

To reach their objective, one company had a 700 mile trek over almost trackless country of mountains, boulder-strewn desert, soft sands and treacherous salt pans, to reach its base of operations in the little port of Yenbo, on the Red Sea. Soon the expedition was spread out far over the enormous deserts of the Arabian Peninsula which is itself a sub-continent almost as large as India.

The locusts were exterminated in a simple way. The poisoned bait—bran mixed with sodium arsenite and moistened—is spread in a line before the advancing army of hoppers which may extend for more than a mile across the open waste of the desert. The locusts make for the moisture, eat greedily, and die.

Two Martyrs in Morocco

We learn with profound shock and the deepest regret, from the *North Africa Mission News Letter*, of the death under tragic circumstances of Mr. Cuthbert Nairn of Marrakech, Field Superintendent of the Southern Morocco Mission. He was for many years an earnest evangelist in a very difficult field and kept in close touch, through *THE MOSLEM WORLD*, with other fields and workers. It is sad to learn that at the age of eighty he was murdered by one of the nation he sought to serve.

On the 9th of November, when Mr. Nairn crossed the street from his house to the dispensary, he was stabbed in the back by a young fellow of some nineteen years. Mr. Nairn just managed to walk into the dispensary and say, "I have been struck in the back." He collapsed and died very shortly afterwards.

He was an administrator of ability. In all the common things of life one saw how practical and helpful he could be. On one occasion, for example, when several new workers were expected at Mogador, an extra room was required. The Moorish Governor, a bigoted Moslem, would not allow native workers to undertake the work. Mr. Nairn solved the difficulty by building the room himself.

His name will always be associated with the great Dispensary work which he carried on at Marrakech. For many years, between three and four hundred people received treatment daily in his Dispensary. This work, which was so far-reaching in its influence, made a marked impression on the native mind, and prepared many a heart for receiving the Word. What devotion was called for in this service can readily be imagined. In times of great heat, when the temperature rose, on occasion, to 112° in the shade, it was no easy task attending to these ailing folk and dressing long-neglected wounds. Thus he commended the Gospel by deed as well as by word.

News comes of another who met death at hostile hands, also in Morocco. Mrs. Simpson writes, in *North Africa Notes*, of the home-call of a native evangelist, Si Ali, through death by poison:

"Since his second poisoning, eighteen months ago, and by a neighboring tribe (*not his own folk*, most of whom had grown to respect and even love him, in spite of his 'infidelity'), I have felt that he could

not come through, as was the case in 1906, when Dr. Vardon said, 'the amount of mercury administered actually saved him, as it could not be retained.' But that meant years of suffering and 'nursing sympathy.'

"The poison given in April, 1943, has entailed even greater suffering, though development was slower. It matters little concerning his mortal remains. . . . For years he has been threatened with non-burial—to be thrown on the rubbish-heap and eaten by the dogs.' He has gone Home with wondrously filled hands! Would that each of us might be similarly honoured! The very last night in Guercif saw the ingathering of two whom we had coveted for our Lord. Years of teaching and prayer had preceded. That evening, whilst our train was delayed some five hours, hands were clasped and broken voices confessed faith in Christ. They were married men, and soldiers of the Great War, so knew the step they took."

The Moslems of Cyprus

In a Historical Retrospect of Cyprus, Sir Harry Luke tells how the population of this island has always been a mixture of races and faiths.

The conquest of 1571 introduced into Cyprus, the bulk of whose inhabitants had hitherto been Greek in religion and language, an important element of Ottoman Turks. The first Turkish settlers were principally drawn from Lala Mustafa's soldiers, who were given fiefs in the island by the Sultan Selim, and these were reinforced from time to time by Turkish immigration from Asia Minor and Turkey in Europe. The first Muslim invaders of Cyprus, the Arabs, although their raids continued intermittently from the seventh to the tenth centuries, had long since faded away; but the Turks were to become a solid and permanent factor in the island's population. It has sometimes been assumed erroneously that the Turks of Cyprus are Greek-speaking Greeks converted to Islam, as are the Muslims of Crete. On the contrary, the Muslims of Cyprus are pure Turks, and nowhere in the Turcophone world was the Turkish language spoken in a purer form than by the Cypriote Turks until the Atatürk and his Government purified the language of Turkey itself and freed it of those heavy layers of Arabic and Persian which had almost succeeded in stifling the original Turanian speech. The Turks of Cyprus have refrained from intermarriage with their Orthodox compatriots; the two communities meet but do not mingle. On the other hand, the relations between them, if not intimate, have generally been, on the whole, quite amicable. Under Ottoman rule the Turkish peasant of Cyprus was subject to the same trials and tribulations at the hands of the Government as was his Christian neighbour; when the power of the Archbishops was at its height, he felt the effects of their supremacy no less than the Orthodox peasant, with whom he was quite capable of combining against the common oppressor, be he Turkish Pasha or Orthodox prelate. . . . The population of Cyprus according to the census of 1931 was 347,959, of whom 283,562 were Christians, mainly members of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, and 64,238 were Turks. The estimated total population in 1940 was 383,967.