

Reason and Freedom: Comment in The Light. The Article on *Forces now Moulding Islam* by Prof. W. Montgomery Watt, published in our issue of July, 1953, was reprinted in *Al-Islam*, fortnightly paper of the Holy Qurʾān Society, Lahore, on November 1 and December 1, 1953. *The Muslim Sunrise*, of Chicago, also reprinted without acknowledgement part of Professor Shafaq's paper on *Al-Ghazālī*, of January last, in its issue of 1954, first Quarter (Vol. xxvi, No. 1.) The article on *Pakistan and the Islamic State*, by A. K. Nazmul Karīm which appeared in October, 1953, was reprinted in *The Light*, the journal of the Lahore Ahmadiyyah, on December 8, 1953. Commenting on the author's observation that "Every word of the Qurʾān must be accepted by every Muslim as unalterable" the Editor of *The Light* writes as follows: "The question needs a reply. Stated clearly it is whether it is permissible for a man within the fold of Islam to question the validity of a certain, clearly stated principle of the Qurʾān or at least to examine its validity in the flashlight of free reasoning, by way of experiment and intellectual confirmation. In other words, when one has accepted, in the main, the Qurʾān as the word of God, is it still open to him to test the intellectual validity of the details? Or must he take everything on faith, that is, with a closed mind? As a matter of principle and logic none need accept the Qurʾān as the Book of God unless he is satisfied that it is wholly so in the main as well as in detail. The case of a born Muslim of course presents a difficulty. He receives Islam as a matter of tradition and not of verified truth. Such a person should put the Quranic principles to a fresh intellectual test to be able to make them truths for himself. Acceptance of Islam should be a voluntary act, speaking both physically and intellectually. It must be accompanied by an intellectual assent. The principle: 'There is no compulsion in religion' makes this quite clear. The process of intellectual re-examination may be short or long according to the force of determination and clarity of thinking, which must vary from man to man." The Editor adds: "The principle of *ijtihād* or research embodies not only the application of Islamic principles to new circumstances but also this kind of intellectual re-examination of those principles in the light of new experiences in a new age. Islam has nothing to lose but everything to gain by such a re-examination."

This lucid comment itself raises certain further questions. How many in Islam would recognise as valid this interpretation of *ijtihād* as applicable to the Qurʾān itself? What also in the event of such a re-examination leading, not to the satisfaction of what the writer calls "the sceptic section," but to the persistence of their scepticism? Is the individual then fully free to follow the dictates of his mind even into unfaith? Or is investigation approved on the condition, or the assumption, that it will lead to confirmation? This is not to say that it *will* not so lead, but that it *may* not. But what then? This insistence in *The Light* on the right of the born Muslim as well as the outsider to investigate before commitment to faith would seem to widen the historic Muslim concept of freedom for communities to remain what they are into the larger freedom for individuals to move where conviction takes them.

"The Muslim World" Indexed. Readers may be interested to learn that the Quarterly is included in a new religious periodicals Index, details of which follow.

American Theological Library Association: *Index to Religious Periodical Literature*, an Author and Subject Index to Periodical Literature, 1949-1952, Including an Author Index to Book Reviews. Prepared by Libraries of the American Theological Library Association and Compiled and Edited by J. Stillson Judah with the Assistance of Leslie Joan Ziegler. American Theological Library Association, 1953. (Distributed by The American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago 11, Illinois.) pp. ix, 220. \$ 5.00 paper, \$ 6.00 cloth.

An index by author and subject, with cross references, to thirty-one scholarly periodicals not included in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, or the *International Index to Periodicals*, in the fields of Bible, Theology, Church History, and related disciplines, covering the years 1949-1952, together with an index to book reviews appearing in these periodicals. The resources indexed may be suggested by the following: 83 entries found under Dead Sea Scrolls, 41 under Church and State, 27 under Lord's Supper, 15 under Karl Barth, 27 under Reinhold Niebuhr, 55 under Communism, 32 under the World Council of Churches, and 15 under Missions (plus 19 cross references to related topics). The *Index* locates critical reviews for approximately 2,000 books, *viz.*, nine titles by Oscar Cullmann are covered by 21 reviews, and seven titles by H. H. Rowley are covered by 30 reviews, etc. It is expected that succeeding volumes of the *Index* will be issued in the future.

Miscellanea. Turkish newspapers in Cyprus have expressed opposition to the British readiness to grant constitutional reforms to the people of the island. They insist that such changes would be as unsatisfactory to the Turkish elements in Cyprus as would unity between the island and Greece. The Turkish minority is strongly opposed to any plan for the island's self-government.

One outcome of the World Islamic Conference held in Jerusalem in December, 1953, was a collection in Kuwait for Arab refugees. In January, 1954, a delegation of leading Kuwaiti men brought five thousand dinars to 'Ammān, to be applied to refugee relief, through the *Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* of Jordan.

A Swedish company is constructing hospitals for the Saudi Arabian Government. The first is at Ṭāʾif, the town that figured in a bitter pre-Hijrah rejection of the Prophet and subsequently clung to idolatry with unusual persistence. The hospital is to have 400 beds and will cost six million dollars. Nine other hospitals are planned to follow.

A Royal decree of December, 1953, in Saudi Arabia establishes a Ministry of Education, to which a brother of the King was appointed, Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. A new Ministry of Agriculture has also been set up.

Agreement has been reached between Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan on the repair and maintenance of the pilgrim railroad through

the Hijāz to Mecca, which is to be considered as *Waqf*. The three states will appoint representatives to a Board of Directors and the railroad will be exempt from dues.

A sum of 50,000 rupees has been contributed by the Government of Pakistan for the rebuilding of the Jordanian village of Qibya, devastated by Israel forces in October, 1953.

According to Radio Near East, Cyprus, the distribution of land to Egyptian fallāḥīn between February and July, 1954, totals 55,300 feddans. It is reported that three have been demonstrations of peasants in Al-Diwāniyyah district of Irāq demanding better conditions and a 50-50 sharing of the produce with their landlords.

When a Constituent Assembly was projected in Egypt in the spring several leaders of the Feminist movement, including Madame Doria Shafīq, went on hunger strike, in an endeavor to secure admission to the Assembly for women. A medical team was deputed to watch over their health.

Some weeks prior to the interlude of indecision as to continuance or non-continuance of the Council of the Revolution that body issued a Revolution charter, which may be regarded as the first formal statement of the movement's economic and political credo. It called on entrepreneurs (capitalists), workers, peasants, technicians and others to do their work co-operatively, and declared that the régime was neither fascist nor communist. The state is not conceived as a law unto itself but as a means to economic justice. Those described as men of science and social philosophy are invited to contribute to the general good, within a true economic order.

Rapid expansion is reported by *The African Challenge*, a Christian weekly circulating in Nigeria and beyond. New offices and print shop have been set up in Lagos in a ceremony attended by Muslim as well as Christian officials.

There is a proposal to prepare an edition of the letters of the late PROFESSOR DUNCAN BLACK MACDONALD, former Professor of Arabic and Islamics at the Hartford Seminary Foundation and an Associate Editor of this Quarterly. He maintained an intimate and kindly contact with his students in many parts of the world. His scholarly and gracious concern for their problems is no small part in the affection with which they hold his memory. Any who have letters or post cards to lend for purposes of publication are invited to write to

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