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Foreword

The monthly English magazine the "Peace Maker", published from Madras, had a vast circulation. It was read by many in India and also abroad. Its articles were greatly appreciated by many great religionists.

It was this magazine that successfully answered Dr. Zwemer's mischievous article in the journal "Me Muslim World" attacking the Holy Qur'an as the `Word of Man' and glorifying the Bible as the `Word of God'. The reply to Dr. Zwemer, given by this Muslim magazine from Madras, led many dispassionate scholars of the Christian religion into the Islamic fold.

One Mr. T. Swaminathan, a Christian missionary at Trichinopoly in South India, who regularly followed the treatment of different religious topics in the "Peace Maker", had embraced Islam and had adopted the Muslim name Muhammad `Ali.

When this Mr. Muhammad `Ali embraced Islam he was thrown out of his church, and Mr. Anwaru 'd-Din Khan, who was then an agent of some Oil Company at Trichy, kindly financed him to start the manufacture of aerated waters so that he could make an independent living for himself and his family.

Having joined the Muslim ranks Mr. Muhammad `Ali arranged through the Young Men's Muslim Association of Trichinopoly a few talks on Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny.

I myself had to go to Trichinopoly in this connection and deliver a few talks on this topic. It was at this time that I came in contact with Mr. Joseph and his teacher Professor Viswanathan, a mathematics lecturer.

The mathematician, who requested me to keep his name unknown, and Mr. Joseph his student both had very frank talks with me about the basic doctrines of Christianity as well as about Islam. At the end of our talk Mr. Joseph brought detailed minutes of our talks and had them signed by me.

I also took a copy of the minutes signed by Mr. Joseph and his mathematics teacher, and preserved it in my file along with the declarations I had received from others who had embraced Islam after discussing at length their own doubts.

A few weeks ago some Christian friends of mine had a long discussion with me about certain basic doctrines of their faith. I handed over the copy of the minutes drawn up by Mr. Joseph which served very useful purpose of sparing me the labor of once again repeating my arguments about the points to convince them of the Islamic point of view in these matters.

A few days ago it was brought to my notice that attempts had been made upon some Muslim students in a Christian institution to mislead them against their religion and some of these young men even came over to me to clear up some doubts, and I gave them the same minutes of my discourse with my friends at Trichy.

After going through the matter the young men copied down some of the arguments and the very next day they came to report to me that they had successfully convinced the critics against Islam and desired the matter in the minutes to be published for the benefit of our own young men who very often had to meet unreasonable criticism against Islam and the Holy Prophet. I had to agree to their reasonable proposal.

One thing I would like to be made clear is that the sole object of this publication is to arm young Muslim minds with the truth, and nothing else. If anyone does not want to read or hear anything against his own personal views, he need not pursue this matter or hear it pursued by anyone.

I wish it to be known that what is said in this small booklet is exclusively for those who are sincerely interested in knowing the truth irrespective of the source or the quarter from which it comes. By this I mean only those sincere seekers after truths who are tempera- mentally and purposefully earnest in seeking to know the various points of view about one and the same problem.

It is a universally acknowledged fact that, except for those who have been divinely inspired to guide humanity towards the truth, no mortal can ever be sensibly deemed to be perfect in his knowledge. It is according to this native want in man that Islam ordains man to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.

It needs also to be known that Islam never accepts any belief which is professed in the blind following of someone else's views or any hereditary concepts, no matter from whose parents they are inherited.

Islam invites each sincere adherent to reflect, to think, to ponder, and then to judge independently for himself. Nothing which is not one's own is ever acceptable in Islam, even one's own faith in God. Every Muslim is ordained by the Holy Qur'an to profess his faith by his own personal and individual scrutiny of his own belief.

To know or to acknowledge the truth or the reasonableness in arguments advanced by the opposite side is a task which never appeals to the ordinary slavish mentality of the blind followers of a crowd. It needs an intellectual independence opposed to the mental congestion in ordinary minds to establish and assert one's own views against the views of a crowd; it needs a tempered individuality in an

integrated personality. The essence or the spirit of such unique individuality is the latent native capability of the individual for leadership against the common slavish tendency of following the crowd.

There are two kinds of mentality in a human being. The one is the individual's endeavor to stand on his own and the other is being content to be controlled by someone else.

One who wants to stand on his own, in his faith has the genuinely independent mind, and the goodness possessed by such individuals really deserves its reward, according to personal or individual merits. The treasuries of goodness and virtues presented by anyone can never reasonably or justly claim the least appreciation, if they are not his own.

Let everyone of us dispassionately and impartially analyze our own views, testing them from various points of view or reasoning, and let us accept only those views which successfully stand up to cross-examination by the side opposed to us.

One thing which every sincere seeker of truth should know and must remember is that he should first remove any colored spectacles. He must view everything without the least pride or prejudice for or against anything, and must readily acknowledge and own for himself whatever he finds to be genuinely true and reasonable.

Without this essential condition first fulfilled nothing profitable can ever be gained by any amount of endeavor. One who sits to judge should not, and must not, belong or even be the slightest bit inclined towards any one of the contesting sides, for it is only then the verdict will be just, truly a reliable and acceptable.

Correctness in religious belief and the faithful translation of belief into proper action must be the first concern of every sensible man and woman. The aim of a true religion is nothing but the disciplining of the human self to prepare it to have as much divinity as possible reflected into it or to manifest divinity through it. Discipline varies a great deal.

Unless it is complete discipline will do more harm than good, both to the individual as well as to the society to which the individual belongs. The quality or usefulness of a discipline is to be judged by the degree of perfection and integration of the human personality, and its awakening or enlightening through the consciousness of commitment or its responsibility to its self and beyond its self.

The first and the foremost fundamental of a true or the true faith or religion is the belief in God. Belief in the One God, the only Lord, of the Universe can never be equal to that in several imaginary partner lords of the world who derive their existence through the straying of human minds in their bewildered search for a protector which the native will to live seeks.

The faith in the One True Lord of the Universe as a whole will naturally have all the godly qualities integrated in it and the belief in the several partner gods will necessarily be the collection of distracted

component parts of variant qualities opposing or contrasting each other according to the varying nature of the different partners.

Besides the degree of the merit of the faithfulness in the service exclusively to one supreme, Lord will naturally differ from the service to many masters of variant authorities. There are many other points which demand serious consideration in this regard.

It is another separate question by itself, whether there can be the One Supreme Lord of the universe Who with the manifest ownership, integrity of his authority and the perfection of his control, runs the successful working of the whole universe since its coming into being or there can ever be more than one owner of the world.

Falsehood is not easily swallowed by everyone. The cleaner the inside of a human body the more repulsive will be every dirty thing to it. A cleanly maintained stomach will immediately vomit the least dirty thing trying to enter even its threshold, that is, the throat.

Similarly a clear conscience of any human being with the quality of wholesomeness in it, will never at all relish the least falsehood. It is this latent factor in the human personality that makes a human being content with falsehood or makes it restless to put it in the search for truth.

Therefore, the seekers after truth are only those who have the native cleanliness in them which longs to reflect in it or to manifest through it the goodness of the All–good Creator, Lord, but the ego in man completely over–shadowed by the devilish spirit makes one content or enjoy himself with delusion of falsehood.

Man, a creature along with other creatures of the Creator Lord, left to himself could by himself never have gathered anything to be correctly called knowledge about anything in the universe, and more so about his knowing the Creator Lord of the universe unless the Lord Himself mercifully arrange for his education and training.

Hence the Lord's mercy in this regard manifested in the long line of the divinely inspired guides called the apostles or the prophets, the last of whom was the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, to abide in his guidance for ever:

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever. (John, 14:16)

And even with the conclusion of the apostleship the infinite mercy of the All-merciful did not leave man to stray, deluded by the false guides and the selfish leaders of the world, but started the line of the divinely conditioned minds, the Twelve Holy Imams to immediately succeed the conclusion of the apostleship in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, to keep humanity duly guided upon the royal road to salvation shown by Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, the

last Apostle of God through the last or final heavenly word, that is, the Holy Qur'an and declared:

There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error (2:256)

Let anyone now know the Truth and accept it thankfully or unthankfully (76:3).

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