

What's in a Name?

BY

TRACEY CROMWELL DUDLEY



MUSEUM SOCIETY

OF

U. S. A.

519, GRANT BUILDING
MARKET & 7TH

SAN FRANCISCO,

CALIFORNIA

The writer of this beautiful article is an American young Muslim, Mr. Tracey Cromwell Dudley, who acknowledged Islam and joined the Ahmad-iyya Movement in 1947. With the help of Mr. Dean Abdullah Reitzal, another American Muslim, who bore the entire expenses of its publication, this article was printed by the Muslim Society of U.S.A. in 1948. Since then it has been Reproduced in the Light Weekly Lahore, and the Islamic Review, Woking, Surrey, England.

It is reprinted in its present form for the benefit of general readers who may feel interested in Islam, the religion of the prophets of the world whose last exponent was the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

S. M. Tufail.

“WHAT’S IN A NAME?”

BY

Tracey Cromwell Dudley

What’s in a name? That depends.

Let’s take the name **Muhammadan**, for example.

You have probably often used that word and never thought anything about it—but Muslims themselves do not call themselves Muhammadans!

Obviously an important story is involved. It is not just a case of somebody’s desiring to be different or fancy or fussy.

Muhammadan refers to the Arabian Prophet, Muhammad. As applied to the man himself, the adjective is correct and acceptable. The trouble, however, is that most of us do not stop there. We go on to apply the term to the religion taught by this man!

In other words, did Muhammad teach Muhammadanism? As shocking as it may seem the answer is **not** a simple, clear “Yes.” What scholar might, for technical purposes, term **Muhammadanism**, could represent but a small part of the Message of Muhammad! If

Muhammad had been the first to teach his faith, then it might be half-way correct to call it Muhammadanism. But, as the Hebrew Scriptures ("The Old Testament") bear witness, this religion goes back far beyond the days of Muhammad himself who was the last of the whole long line of great Prophets to flourish among the Hebrews and their Arabian cousins.

The only word that is rich, full, and broad enough to describe the ancient faith is the Arabic term, **Islam**. Moreover, whereas **Muhammadanism** only names something (and is rarely used altogether correctly), **Islam** not only names but also describes this Religion of the Prophets.

Islam summarizes this whole religion in three ways. First, it refers to the spiritual experience underlying the faith, for **Islam** is the Arabic word that describes the process or, way of approach to God taught by it. Secondly it describes the way of life, the whole body of truths upon which his faith and practice are based. Thirdly, it has the meaning of "peace" — "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" that all-inclusive blessing that is the most precious gift of God to men.

Let us consider each of these meanings of the name **Islam** more fully to see how it repr s-

ents so appropriate a description of the Scriptural teachings attributed to Moses, Jesus and the host of lesser Prophets to appear in ancient Israel.

The Way and the Truth and the Life

The name **Islam** is derived from an Arabic root, literally meaning "to feel perfectly safe, to be absolutely tranquil", thus, by implication, "to be at perfect peace with oneself and the rest of the world by having done one's duty, by having paid up one's dues." By extension, the following meanings are derived.

First, **Islam** as a **way of approach to Deity**. This is the process by which one "pays up ones dues" and approaches a sense of well being. This is the spiritual experience through which one comes into proper relationship with God—free, spontaneous and whole resignation of one's self to the will and judgement of God. This is the process by which one achieves that state of harmony with the Divine that is displayed all about one in the world of nature—it is getting the self into tune with Creation itself. It is the acceptance of the Divine will and judgement for the individual and for humanity. "Not my will, but Thine, be done."

This is the experience described as becoming spiritual "as a little child" in order that one may "enter the Kingdom of God." It is

“the second birth”—the birth of the **spiritual** man.

It is not a fatalistic acceptance of what is, but an active, vital, creative resignation to that which is to be. It is the merging of the individual with the Divine purposiveness. It is the submission of the spirit that enables the God-disciplined person to strive in the path of Allah—to live and work in accordance with the very nature of the world and the purposes of human life, as these truths are disclosed to us through revelation, nature, and history.

Secondly, **Islam** as a **body of truth** Divinely revealed. As the name of the faith that has these teachings as its heart, **Islam** describes the whole body of belief and practice to which its followers give allegiance.

Thirdly, **Islam** as a **way of God-integrated life**. In the sense of “peace,” **Islam** describes the sense of happiness, security, and well-being that results from a harmonious relationship with God. One feels confident that one is working with the forces underlying the world and life itself, that one is moving with the future as it is being unfolded in the present. This is more than self-integration: this is the integration of the individual with whole stream of life of which he is a part. Only the word “peace” can describe this state: it is the peace of Allah.

Thus we see that the word **Islam** describes the religion taught by Muhammad in a rich, full way. In fact, we have already made clear the monumental simplicity of this faith, as it is revealed in its structure, which we have just analysed. The secret of the power—like the greatness—of the Religion of the Prophets lies in its simplicity, directness, clarity. It moves men because it speaks to their condition and gives results.

In short, what is in the name **Islam**? A description of a faith? Yes, but much more than just that. The name **Islam** is more correctly a programme of action—a guide to vital spiritual life. For the true seeker, it can become a simple, clear chart of the way to true happiness and peace.

The message and the man.

How did **Muhammadanism** come to be used as an equivalent term for **Islam**? Clearly it is a coined word, composed, like such names as Confucianism and Zoroastrianism, from the proper name of the reputed founder of the religion.

Nevertheless, the term **Muhammadanism** is objectionable not so much for essential meaninglessness and flatness as for its incompatibility with two very important teachings of Muhammad himself.

In the first place, Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him!) would have been the first to object to such a term, for it refers to, and emphasizes, the man rather than his message; and, as highly as they respect his memory, Muslims do not ascribe divinity to the Prophet. In fact, one of the cardinal principles of their faith is that God must not be dishonoured by the attributing of Divine qualities to any human being, any more than the stature of a great man ought to be lessened through a belief that he was not subject to the same trials and temptations as other mortals . . . For Muslims the greatest honour is bestowed upon Muhammad's memory when a person truly believes that he was, **par excellence**, the Messenger and Prophet of Allah . . . Muhammad himself indicated the term by which he should be known when he referred to himself as a **Muslim**

(A) **Muslim**—more correctly, **Muslim**—is "one who submits himself entirely to Allah." The term is parallel to the word **Islam** in derivation, meaning, and usage.

In the second place, by calling himself a Muslim, Muhammad was able to emphasize the historical background of Islam as the Religion of the Prophets. Muhammad was not the founder of Islam. He re-established it, on the one hand. He made it complete in its fundamental

teachings, on the other hand.

Islam is the soul-stirring Primitive Semitic Revelation described in the book of Genesis. It antedates Judaism—the Mosaic Revelation—the founding of which, through the work of Moses, is described in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Islam was the religion of Abraham, Prophet-Patriarch and common ancestor of both the main Semitic peoples, the Hebrews and the Arabs.

The Primitive Semitic and the Jewish Dispensations, however, were neither final nor complete in themselves. They were not meant to be: this is everywhere the testimony of the sacred writings of the Jews. The Primitive Semitic (or Islamic) Dispensation (Manifestation, Revelation) was carried to a higher plane of spirituality in the Mosaic, which followed it; but the latter was intended, not for mankind, but for one nation. And, as we shall see, both Moses and Jesus warned their hearers that another great Prophet would follow them....

The third and last of this series of Semitic Dispensations was given through the instrumentality of Muhammad. It finds its expression in Scripture in the Holy Qur'án, the so-called Bible of the Muslims. (Detailed supplementary material is also to be found in the collections of authentic Traditions concerning the sayings and doings of Muhammad himself.)

The Holy Qur'ân (Koran) is the collection of the revelations given through Muhammad. It is the fundamental source of, and final authority for, Muslim belief and practice. It relates this third, Muhammadan, Revelation to the Primitive Semitic and to the Jewish, which preceded it. Its teachings represent the natural completion of those of the two earlier Dispensations.

If we are to understand the Hebrew Scriptures and the Holy Qur'ân we must distinguish carefully between these three stages or Dispensations in the history of the Religion of the Prophets. We must learn the purpose and the function of each for the Semitic peoples themselves. We must see each in relation to the whole of humanity—for these were given to the Semites both as mercies from God and as trusts for all of mankind.

It is this universal significance of each of them that gives, for mankind at large, a more-than-historical interest and value to the Hebrew and the Arabic Scriptures. Such knowledge, moreover, is basic for an insight into the Divine Plan for mankind as it is revealed in human history.

From Abraham Through Moses to Muhammad.

The outstanding prophet of the first, or

Primitive Semitic, Revelation is Abraham (Peace be on him). A remarkably clear picture of this man, so well described as "the Friend of God," may be obtained from the details about his personality and his time given in the Hebrew Scriptures and Holy Qur'an... As the reward for his faithfulness, Abraham was allowed to become the founder of two great peoples dedicated to the trust of spiritual leadership of humanity. From his son Isaac are descended the Hebrews; from Ishmael, his firstborn, the Arabs Abraham is both the model of his Dispensation and the common ancestor of the two nations through whom the knowledge of the One God was given to the world.

The founder of the second, or Hebrew, Revelation is Moses (Peace be on him). He it was who formed the tribes descended from Abraham through his son Isaac into a nation and who brought this new people into a covenant relationship with the Lord . . . This new nation, Israel, was designed to be a source of many outstanding spiritual pioneers, unto God "a Kingdom of priests and a Holy Nation." (Exodus 19:6). Its purpose was to preserve the knowledge of the True God and to be His witness on earth. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, And My servant whom I have chosen . . . I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no saviour . .

Therefor ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and I am God" (Isaiah 43:10-12) . . . The Hebrew (or Mosaic) Law was designed to supplement the Covenant of Sinai between God and the children of Israel. It ordered their life in conformity with Godly practices, separated them from foreign peoples, and gave scope to their own strong psychological distinctiveness. It was never intended for Non-Israelites. Its basis did not lie in a natural relationship between God and Man but in the covenant relationship between God and Israel. **Israel was set apart to be God's witness, not His missionary.**

The Prophet of the final Revelation is Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him.) He it was who brought the knowledge of Allah to the descendants of Abraham through his firstborn son, Ishmael.

. . . Almost twenty centuries previously, Moses had announced that a Prophet of his own stature would arise among the Arabs, the brethren of Israel, and had instructed the Hebrews to hearken to him "A prophet will the Lord thy God raise up unto thee, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him you shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15). In order to emphasize the prophecy, Moses at once gives a direct quotation of the words of the Lord: "I will raise them up a

Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto thee; and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (18:18). And, as the Jews proclaim in the Seventh Article of the "Thirteen Principles of the Faith" formulated by Maimonides—"I believe with perfect faith that . . . Moses, our teacher . . . was chief of the Prophets, both of those that preceded and of those that followed him" —this prophecy has never been applied by the Jews to one of their own nation.

. . . As Moses, in opening the Hebrew Dispensation, had proclaimed the advent of a prophet among the Arabs; so Jesus, at the close of this Dispensation, announced the coming of a Prophet who was to seal the Prophetic line by guiding men into all truth. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (John 14:16). "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (16:12-14) Indeed, in agreement with the resemblance between the meaning of the Greek word "Paraclete" and that of the

Abrabic name "Ahmad" (which is a form of the name "Muhammad"), we read the following in the Holy Qur'an: "... Jesus, the son of Mary, said: O children of Israel, surely I am the messenger of Allah to you, confirming that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of a messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad..." (16:16).

Thus we see that the name **Islam** carries with it deep, rich historical associations. It recalls the long history of Semitic prophecy and suggests the continuity in fundamental teachings represented in this long story. It associates the Prophet of Arabia with his many illustrious predecessors, to their honour and to his. It emphasizes the great antiquity of the religion of which Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was the last and the greatest teacher.

In its simple way, it stresses the teachings of the Holy Qur'an as a continuation of those of the early Semitic prophets and as a development of those of the spiritual leaders of the ancient Hebrews.

Giving the Jews' Treasure to the World

How, then, did the Holy Prophet develop the teachings of the Jews?

First, he presented the heart and core of Judaism—the underlying essentials—apart from later accretions and emphases. He rediscovered the original purity and simplicity of Judaism, the timeless essentials that Moses had attempted to preserve through his leadership in the establishment of the Hebrew religion.

Secondly, he universalized the content of the teachings of the Jews by cutting out those that are particularistic—of value, meaning, and significance for the Jews only—and by highlighting those of universal significance.

Thirdly, he preached a universal teaching of his message. He was not only the last of the Semitic prophets: he was also the first and only one to proclaim a message for Non-Semitic peoples, for all mankind. (Thus it is that contemptuous references to Non-Semites are so noticeably absent in the Holy Qur'ân. Compare with Matthew 7:6: 15:24 and Mark 7:25=30.)

Whereas the Hebrews had considered themselves “the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13) and “the light of the world” (5:14), the Arabs were given the message of Islam **as a Missionary trust** as well **as a Mercy from Allah**. (“And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save as a mercy to (all) the nations” (21:107). This, and similar Quranic statements, should be compared with the attitude of Jesus as expressed,

for example, in the Sermon on the Mount. The Jewish attitude toward missionary activities finds an excellent expression, as well as a complete endorsement on the part of Jesus in Matthew 5:15-16. Similarly, the Jewish attitude toward the Mosaic Law is treated in a Jewish Orthodox fashion in Matthew 5:17-19. In fact, the condemnation of the Pharisees in the next verse is especially interesting in view of the fact that this school was marked by its missionary zeal.

As Moses had predicted, a Prophet "like unto him" arose among the Arabs almost twenty centuries after his own day. To this Prophet was given the task of preaching the heart-teachings of the Hebrew religion to humanity—of giving the Jews' treasure to all men—as a result of this process of **simplification** and **universalization**. As Moses had saved the message of Islam for mankind by giving it a national (Hebrew) form, so Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him) made it the common property of humankind by entrusting it to his fellow Arabs. Thus was Moses vindicated by the Prophet 'like unto him', from the midst of the 'brethren' of the children of Israel.

Re establishing the Original Religion of Mankind.

How then, did the Holy Prophet continue the Islam of ancient days?

First, he re-established it. He became its most recent teacher as well as its foremost exponent. His own spiritual experience reproduced that of his people: there can be no other explanation of the close relationship between his teachings and the Semitic type of spiritual experience. Equally profound is the psychological fact that his experience was complete in its pattern: thus was he able to avoid the over and under-emphases of the Jewish teachings of his day. This is the explanation of the fact that Islam, as expounded in the Holy Qur'an, is a full, complete faith—which is not usually true of a religion. As we have seen above in our analysis of the name **Islam** as a summary of the whole religion, the structure of this faith is complete while at the same time monumentally simple and clear. In all three categories—as way, as truth, and as life—it impresses ordinary mortals with its helpful simplicity as much as it does profound thinkers with its phenomenal intuitions.

The completeness of the religion of the Holy Qur'an must be recognized as the counterpart of the completeness of the spiritual experience of the Holy Prophet himself. It was thus inevitable that he should reconstruct the Islam of antiquity to be witnessed both in the ancient writings of the Jews and in the traditions and the subconscious mind of the

Arabian nation. A person who has had the experience himself will readily recognize the authenticity of the historical narratives embodied in the Qur'án. Their psychological truthfulness supports the validity of the ancient form of Islam described in both the Hebrew and the Arabic Scriptures. Moreover, the Prophet who could thus reconstruct this partial revelation of antiquity would alone be able to make this faith complete and perfect in its principles.

Secondly, he made it complete in its fundamental teachings. He made it suitable for a complex society, as Primitive Islam had been essentially a religion designed for a nomadic one and was, in fact, a reaction historically to the evils of wealth and power civilization far to the east of Arabia. In this way, the Holy Prophet laid the foundation for the magnificent Arabic civilization that captivated the minds and the hearts, as well as the souls, of cultivated peoples in the centuries immediately following his own lifetime. One of the primary causes of this flowering of human genius lies in the fact that the religion of the Holy Qur'án teaches a simple, yet complete, view of life that lends itself readily to systematic, scientific, disciplined cultural expression. It is no exaggeration to say that the Holy Prophet was a great philosopher or a brilliant lawyer in the sense that his work laid the foundation of the

whole cultural pattern that emerged in the Muslim world and that provided the bridge between the Ancient Grecian civilization and that of the modern period in the North and West of Europe. Moreover, the scientific research of our own day has not shaken the fundamental beliefs and basic tenets of the pure Quranic Islam, and it alone of all the ancient religions and philosophies has that understanding of, and emphasis on, the twin principles of unity and of universality in nature and in life upon the basis of which the world culture of the future can alone be successfully established. To the degree that our age is groping for world-mindedness, it is recongnizing, even though unconsciously, that spirit of unity-universality that permeates the Islam of the Holy Qur'án.

Even in the striving of secular-minded modern-minded persons seeking to save themselves from the punishments of their own narrow and self-mindedness by grasping at rays of insubstantial "one-world" dreams, the Muslim sees a tribute to the work of the Holy Prophet in completing and perfecting Islam. "This day have I made perfect for you your religion, and completed My blessing upon you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (Holy Qur'án 5:3.)

By restoring and completing Islam, Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) became "the seal of the prophets" in **history** as well as in theology. By re-establishing the original religion of mankind, he established the final religion of mankind.

And so the ancient promise to Abraham was fulfilled: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed . . ." (Genesis 22:18).

It Depends On You

The only word that is rich, full, and broad enough to describe the Religion of the Prophets is the Arabic term, **Islam**. Fortunate, indeed, is the faith to have such a deeply significant name, for all the truths of Islam have been derived from the experience of highly spiritual men who have found life more abundant through "Islam" (that is, through the resignation of their own wills to the will and judgment of God).

Islam is a prophet's cry, challenging each one of us to submit himself to the Absolute and to strive in His path—the way leading to the joy, happiness, and peace with which Allah blesses those who live in conformity with the beauty of life itself. It defies the short-sighted and the self-seeking by insisting that that alone is constructive, lasting, fully satisfying, and truly meaningful which is in harmony with purposeful, law-regulated character of nature and with

the nature, needs, and necessities of man.

“The nature made by Allah in which He had made all men—that is the right religion” (The Holy Qur’an 30:30).

Islam satisfies the need of the creature for integration in the larger pattern of life itself: it knows that the personality can find the fullest development and the richest expression only through God integration. It recognises the physical, intellectual, and spiritual longings of mankind as superbly beautiful and supremely meaningful as they lead to legitimate individual and social development and expression; but it warns and rewarns that they are the source of the greatest danger to mankind if they are allowed to be turned to unnatural, perverted ends by rebellious persons or organizations. It avoids the false position, the blind end, of all those who try to persuade themselves that humanity alone is a sufficient interest and that “humanism” is a satisfying faith, for it knows that humanity is integrally a part of nature herself and cannot be viewed reasonably apart from the rest of God’s creation. It does not join in the hunt of all sorts of “liberals” and “cultists” for cure-alls and “easy ways out.” It knows that the path is as difficult as the goal is sure.

“The good life”—the life of self-discovery and self-fulfilment—is not cheap. It is very costly, indeed, in terms of those habits and

attitudes so dear to the natural man.

Only those who are willing to pay the price are allowed to travel the pathway of resignation leading to peace. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13.14).

He who resigns himself to Allah and strives in His way follows in the footsteps of the Prophets who went before him along the path to true happiness and peace.

For the Muslim, all this, and much more, is in the name **Islam**.

What's in the name **Islam** for you? . . .
That depends on you.

A—C Rs. As.

THE HOLY QURAN

Commentary with English translation, introduction and Index. "No other translation or Commentary to compete with Maulvi Muhammad Ali's"

(H. G. Sarwar, Translator of the Holy Quran)

"The arrangement of the book is praiseworthy and the method adopted scholarly".

(The East and West, England) pages 1400.

10—x 25 0

The Holy Quran (without Arabic text

1st Quality 5—x 15 0

2nd Quality 4—x 12 0

A MANUAL OF HADITH

(Sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad)

A faithful picture of the culture of Islam 4—x 12 0

MUHAMMAD IN WORLD SCRIPTURES

Prophecies about the Holy Prophet 2—x 4 0

(A Great Research Work)

THE NEW WORLD ORDER

No student of current politics and no well wisher of humanity can afford to be without a copy 1—x 0 8

THE RELIGION OF ISLAM

(A Comprehensive discussion of its sources, principles and practices.)

(The present Volume is his finest work — in perfect English.)

Marmaduke Pickthal) Pages 800

8—x 15 10