(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful).

THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM
TO THE
MODERN WORLD

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The Message of Islam to the Modern World*

The subject chosen for me is "The Message of Islam to the Modern World." Now I have no desire to give a message of Islam to the world merely as an addition to the existing stock of platitude, of which—you will agree with me—there is no dearth at all. What passes my understanding is that nowadays men and women seem to delight in using vague and nebulous phrases, such as "love of one's neighbour," "intensity of religious conviction," "true Christian," "human fellowship" and a score of others expressive of their pious wishes, by the mere use and constant repetition of which they fondly imagine they can bring about a change in the troubled world of to-day. I have often wondered whether such people think that these phrases have the inherent power of a magic wand or are an "open sesame," so that the gates of the millennium would be flung open by them. Nothing is more clearly disproved by history than the frustration of this human desire, which in itself is sincere and lofty. Now Islam does not believe that mere words can accomplish all this. Therefore, it studies human nature, and finds suitable methods by which our desires can be expressed in palpable form and not remain confined to the realm of pious but empty wishes.

En passant I should like to say a few words about the word "Islam." In this country our religion is frequently styled "Mohamedanism." This is incorrect; for it leads the unwary to think that we are the worshippers of Muhammad. We do not worship any one but God, the One, the Merciful, the

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* A lecture delivered before the Convention of Religions held at Southport in August 1939.—Publishers.
Beneficent. The word “Islam” in its primary sense means “to make peace,” and in its secondary sense “to submit oneself to the will of God.” Thus a Muslim (which word is the active participle form of the infinitive “Islam,”) is “a peacemaker, one who makes peace with is fellow-beings.”

Now, then, what exactly is the message of Islam, if there is any at all? The message of Islam is PEACE. Peace is embodied in its very nomenclature. Throughout the teaching of the Qur-án the word “Peace” runs like a red thread. “As-Salam” meaning “Peace,” is one of the attributes of God through which a Muslim conceives God. We are told in the Qur-án that the talk of the people of Paradise will be “Peace” and nothing but “Peace” (56 : 26). When we Muslims greet each other we say “As-salamu ‘alaikum!”—“Peace be upon you!” The very mention of the word “Peace” along with the word “Islam” in one and the same breath might in some quarters arouse ridicule and scorn. But let me hope that, as I proceed, I shall show that Islam has an efficacious method of helping the cause of peace.

The catchword of “Peace” is on the lips of everyone; yet peace itself eludes all. Islam diagnoses the causes of this elusiveness. According to Islam, it is in the obstacles which prevent the realisation of this lofty ideal that the root of the trouble lies. What are those obstacles? According to the Qur-án—the religious, political and social history supports it in its diagnosis—they lie in the lack of devising ways and means and institutions which could implement the spirit of understanding into an actuality, and in the crushing burden of all those shackles which enslave man spiritually and materially. There could be no greater proof of the desire for understanding in the minds of men and women than the convening of this Convention of Religions. It is wrong to think, as some people do, that the trouble is in men’s minds. Islam believes that men’s minds are sound to the core. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: “Every child
is born a Muslim” (i.e., one who submits to the Divine Will) and God has granted him faculties to be devoted to the love, obedience and worship of God. Thus if men’s minds fail to express themselves rightly, then it is due to their environment and external influences. Thus the duty of religion, according to Islam, is to combat effectively all those pernicious influences which warp and atrophy the right expression of men’s minds along right channels of human conduct. What men lack is such institutions and such ways and means as may enable them to achieve the ideals with which they are pulsating. The existing religious and educational organisations in the West do not provide them with any suitable institution to express their vision of a world brotherhood of man or the dream of peace. The cause of the trouble is the lack of guidance for men’s minds, the lack of direction as to the right way to tread. We must not blame men’s minds or man’s nature. If we have to blame anything at all, we must blame our lack of understanding how to canalise men’s minds into right channels. An individual can be moulded so as to co-operate in fulfilling social needs, not only by tradition and other forms of education but by institutions and laws. Man, it is easy to understand, is an educated animal, socially controlled.

The desire for an understanding does exist and has been greatly heightened by the shrinkage of space brought about by aviation and wireless. But, side by side with this profound change introduced by the abolition of distance, we also find that man lives with increasing restlessness cheek by jowl with all the rest of mankind. The conquest of distance has made him more than ever dangerous to his neighbours. His conquest of the forces of nature has placed at his disposal an unimaginable increase of power, by which his very existence and that of his fellow beings is threatened. Thus man is dangerously out of harmony with his surroundings. A
readjustment is imperative. To begin with, it should be a mental readjustment. The truth of the “community of mankind” should be brought home to man with a greater vigour than ever before. For in this truth alone lies hope for the salvation of mankind. A world brotherhood of mankind cannot be conceived without a preliminary corresponding mental cosmopolis. To give expression to this mental cosmopolis, for which we have the sanction and support of all the religions of the world, we must buttress it with suitable and proper institutions.

Now, although the mind of man, according to Islam, is sound to the core, it is equally true to say that it is sluggish by nature. It takes sometimes a shock, sometimes institutions, practices and religious formalities to awaken man to the need of revising his preconceived ideas. For instance, man had grown accustomed to living separated from, and independent of, others for centuries. He had developed a narrow tribal mentality, which has continued to persist even in our own times. Man, although distance has been annihilated and the world has, so to speak, shrunk, was not prepared easily to shake off his age-old, hereditary outlook on life simply because the world and its distances were fast disappearing. Philosophers and thinkers set themselves busy to preach to their folk that they all were the children of God and that they should love their neighbours. But the result of those pious preachings was nil. Mere catchwords and phrases and high-sounding ideology, which looked very promising on paper and sounded well on lips, did not lead them and their listeners very far. Here is a case in point. For two thousand years, from a hundred thousand pulpits, in a million sermons, human beings have been exhorted to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ; they have been told that they ought to be gentle, meek and kind and that they ought to think more of their neighbours than of themselves, that they ought to believe in the “Fatherhood of
God," and that they all are the children of God. But the result is that, after two thousand years of the reiteration of these high-sounding ideals, the behaviour of Christian crowds is indistinguishable from that of the crowds that believed in the virtues of clanism and tribalism before the days of Jesus. Therefore, it is correct to say that moral exhortations, even backed by religious authority, are not efficacious. There is something else which is wanted: There is still something that is missing. The diagnosis of Islam is that it is the lack of formalism and of institutions, through which man can get an opportunity to express his noble ideals, that is responsible for this discrepancy, this anomaly, between the behaviour of man and the high ideals he entertains and wishes to materialise. Now then how does Islam try to solve this difficulty which has been the bane of its predecessors, which, notwithstanding their high ideals, were unable to make these ideals part and parcel of the lives of their adherents? How does Islam try to remove the discrepancy existing between the sublime ideals of man and his behaviour?

The first thing Islam does is that it creates the suitable frame of mind by stressing in common with all other religious thinkers and sages of the world, the essential brotherhood of man. For instance, we read in Malachi: "Have we not all one Father?" St. Paul gives expression to the same thought in the following words: "He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." In the Qur-án the same idea is couched in these words: "O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families so that you may distinguish each other. Surely the most honourable of you in the eyes of God is he who is most careful (of his duty)" (Chapter 49, verse 13). The recent phrase used by the King in his Canadian tour, "Over them all is humanity," emphasises the same truth. Such words and phrases do indeed create a desire in men's
minds for a better world-order; they create, also, a fundamental change in men’s minds, but they definitely do not suggest how to express that change in practice.

As I said above, if words had been enough and efficacious in themselves, we should not have floundered in the quagmire of racialism, nor have suffered from class distinctions and clannishness. We should have been saved the horrors ensuing from the enunciation of the Nordic race and Aryan race theories. Thus Islam, unlike its predecessors, very boldly takes a step to put into practice the ideal of the fellowship of mankind (an ideal which has appealed to teachers in all ages), by devising institutions which enable every one to practise effectively and to learn visually that we are in fact “the children of God.”

In this connexion Islam and the followers of Islam are more favourably placed than other religions and their followers, because the life of the promulgator of Islam is historical, not shrouded in mysteries and myths as is invariably the case with the founders of its sister religions. Thus a Muslim is never at sixes and sevens how to decide upon the line of action that is the best for him and also the best for the general good of mankind. For he finds ready for him to follow a path chalked out by the Qur-án and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, whose actions and life-history are the exposition of the verses of Qur-án. Perhaps it will interest you to know that 13,000 men and women have reported the words and the actions of Muhammad. All these 13,000 men and women had seen, and talked to Muhammad. Further, the biographies of these 13,000 reporters have also been handed down to us, so that we can judge whose narration to accept and whose to reject. From this you can perhaps picture to yourself the flood of light that such a record of the events of the life of the Prophet Muhammad throws for the clear determination of actions and their motives in the life of a Muslim. Thusa
Muslim is never left to drift without anchor on the uncharted seas of all the modern complex contingencies of life. He always finds a substratum of code and creed which he can take for granted and on which he can rest. He derives his guidance from these finger-posts from the life of the Prophet (so comprehensive and rich); these finger-posts which are fixed on his path to his ultimate goal, which is, to use the words of the Qur-án, "to serve God."

All eminent scholars and thinkers now realise the necessity of having a detailed and comprehensive, accessible and understandable system of laws and rules of life for the guidance of the individual; for he has not enough time at his disposal to decide for himself each time an unforeseen event crops up in his life.

I need hardly emphasise that Islam, like other religions, teaches us to be humble, charitable, to love our neighbour and to be righteous. But never does it forget that mere phrases and commandments have not solved human problems. All religions, as pointed out above, have taught us the concept of the "Children of God," yet we behave as enemies towards one another. Islam, however, devises a system of life which controls the threefold aspects of the life of a Muslim. It deals exhaustively with the physical, moral and spiritual life of the individual. To some this detailed control of the individual by the religion of Islam comes as an infringement of the sanctuary of the life of the individual. But such people forget that the regulation of the physical aspects of life is essential for the building up of the moral life, upon which, in turn, is based the spiritual life of the Muslim. Such objections betray an ignorance of the interrelation existing amongst these three aspects of life.

It is thus that Islam evolves out of the individual a harmonious whole, a complete being, in whom all the capacities have been regularly proportioned and developed.
It is therefore clear that, according to Islam, any system that develops one aspect of the individual at the expense of another, the physical to the detriment of the spiritual or *vice versa*, is failing in its function; and to this lack of equilibrium and of harmony between the three aspects of the life of the individual it is that all the troubles in the world are to be traced. But, after having dealt with the individual as an individual, Islam is equally anxious to link him up to society, to the world. How Islam has done this, I shall explain later. To achieve the individual's own evolution, unaccompanied by a knowledge of how to accommodate himself to the world-order, will but be leaving the problem in hand unsolved; perhaps it will be courting trouble. The individual's own life and the life of the society in which he may live have both been taken into consideration and fully dealt with by Islam. Thus the individual easily dovetails into his social group.

Islam tries to spiritualise the physical side of our life, or, in other words, intertwines the worldly with the religious. It is thus that every act of a Muslim is religious, no matter however worldly it may by from the point of view of a non-Muslim. In Islam there exists no distinction between religious and mundane life. Each action of a Muslim is motivated by the desire to seek the pleasure of God. It is this motive which spiritualises the actions of a Muslim.

In mere word-making Islam does not differ from the other religions. It is on a par with, if not superior to, its sister religions in theoretical enunciation. For instance, you have listened to the eloquent, philosophical and erudite lectures of the various speakers from this platform. I am sure that you must have been struck by the remarkable resemblance existing between them, causing you to wonder at the futile multifariousness of religions in the world. As a matter of fact, the similarity was so close that some of the speeches could have easily come from the mouth and pen of a Muslim. All that
he would have had to do would be to substitute some Muslim names. And what is more, he would not be guilty of plagiarism and literary trespass.

But where Islam excels other religions is in its laying down specific institutions and detailed rules to control, regulate and canalise the human instincts so that an individual can give expression to his innate desire of “human fellowship.” It is, therefore, my proud privilege to state that Islam has endeavoured to implement that desire for living with our fellow-beings as brothers into an actuality. In order to illustrate this I would now say a few words on the race or colour problems, and show how Islam adopts ways and means to materialise a brotherhood in which the phrase “children of God” becomes a reality. It goes without saying that in Islam there is no room for any caste system, because the polity of Islam is based on the concept of the absolute unity of the Godhead, which means that all members of the human species are necessarily of the same order in regard to God. It is truth and nothing but truth, when I say that no other religious system or organisation offers anything like that concept, nor does any other religion establish the necessary conceptions of right conduct that arise from it. In all religions the concept of the absolute unity of the Godhead has been dimmed, even in Judaism. To quote an example, Christianity lays stress on the value of human individuality and upon the dignity of the human soul, but, although it says that every human being can join the ministry for the service of God, and that every one can become a priest, yet the very fact that it allows sacerdotalism has dimmed the glory of that concept with which it started its career for the redemption of mankind. Christianity, in other words, instituted distinctions in the spiritual plane of the life of mankind. In one form or another, the same could be said of other religions.

No religion has escaped the blight of priestcraft which has in the long run arrogated to itself the functions of intermedi-
aries between the people and the Almighty, and has thus relegated into the background the importance of the dignity of the human soul. The importance of this cannot be over emphasised. For it is on this concept that all the legal concepts should be based and are based in Islam. If we begin to make distinctions at the very foundations, then the whole of the fabric of our legal and social system becomes perverted and suffused with ideas which create disharmony and amorphous social institutions and customs which harden and tighten, instead of mitigating, the existing distinctions.

In considering what Islam has done in mitigating the racial, linguistic, and geographical discrimination for which nature, rather than man himself, is responsible, I would commend to you the testimonies of non-Muslim observers, who, while admitting the unparalleled success of Islam towards realising the brotherhood of man by the Islamic socio-religious institutions just do not have the courage to do so without adding some qualifying and modifying statements.

Count Keyserling, the well-known modern German Philosopher, in his book, *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, has the following observation to make on the Islamic structure of society: "... The national character always seems somewhat blurred wherever the crescent moon illuminates the landscape, which is particularly noticeable here in India, where the types are otherwise outlined so clearly. But its place is taken by a more universal and no less definite character: that of Mussalman. Every single Mohammedan whom I asked what he is, replied, 'I am a Mussulman.' Why has this religion alone understood how to substitute national feeling by something wider? And by something wider which is not less strong and significant? How is it that Islam, without a corresponding dogma, achieves the ideal of brotherhood, whereas Christianity fails in spite of its ideals? It must be due to intimate relations between the underlying tendencies of
this peculiar faith and fundamental traits in the nature of its followers, concerning which I am still in the dark.”

The above remarks can well be supplemented by the following, equally interesting, taken from another source:

“One of the most striking features of the Muhammadan world, which has been emphasised by many observers, historians, travellers and missionaries, is the feeling of unity in Islam which overleaps all the barriers set up by nationality or by geographical position. Islam has succeeded in obliterating race prejudice to an extent to which no other religious system in the world offers any parallel, and though, like other forms of human brotherhood, Islam has failed to realise its ideal of the brotherhood of all the believers, still the measure of its success is the more noteworthy feature.”—“Europe and Islam” by Sir Thomas Arnold in Western Races of the World, Volume V, published by the Oxford University Press.

Dr. Maude Royden, C.H., D.D., in her monograph The Problem of Palestine, London, 1939, page 37, has the following remarks to make: “The religion of Mahomet proclaimed the first real democracy ever conceived in the mind of man. His God was of such transcendent greatness that before him all worldly differences were nought and even the deep and the cruel cleavage of colour ceased to count. There are social ranks among Moslems as elsewhere, but fundamentally (that is to say, spiritually) all the believers are equal: and this fundamental spiritual equality is not a fiction, as commonly among Christians; it is accepted and is real. This accounts very largely for its rapid spread among different peoples. It accounts for its strength to-day in Africa, where the Christian preaches an equality which is everywhere mocked by the arrogance of the white races and the existence of the colour bar. The Moslem—black, brown or white—alone finds him-
self accepted as a brother not according to his colour but his creed.

"During the war in France I was told of some Indian Moslem soldiers who created a disturbance on finding black troops from Senegal served in the same estaminet as themselves. They were about to proceed from protest to violence, when one of the better-informed pointed out that these blacks were Moslems. Instantly the protests were silenced and an apology offered. White Christians do not always behave so, whether in London or American hotels. It was by the strength of their religion that the Arabs conquered and by its means they have made their great gift to civilisation."

A Muslim is never proud of himself as being "Chinese," "Persian" or "Indian." He is proud of his religious culture. The Islamic nations at the height of their culture and glory never thought of themselves as Arabs or Turks, but simply as Muslims. For them the difference between themselves and others was spiritual. They were Muslims and others non-Muslims. Muslims never despised, nor do they ever despise any people for the colour of their skin.

The Arabs never despised a Spaniard or Negro Muslim. An Indian Muslim inspite of the racial differences between himself and the Negro Muslim of West Africa never speaks contemptuously of his Negro brother-in-faith because he is a Negro or a Chinese. But, as stated already, it should not be understood that it was merely the theoretical verses of the Qur-án that enabled the Muslim to "blur the national character;" for beautiful homilies and platitudes are no less a common feature of the religious books of the world other than the Qur-án. All religions, including Islam, claim to have as their ideal the establishment of a world brotherhood of man. Every seer, every sage, every prophet, seems to have wished for it; for it is along the lines of world brotherhood of man that the world will have to travel for its ultimate salvation.
The secret of the miraculous success of Islam, as witnessed by non-Muslim writers, lies in the institution of prayer as conceived by the genius of Muhammad, culminating in the institution of the yearly pilgrimage to Makka. Let us, therefore, now proceed to view the part played by prayer and pilgrimage in the social life of a Muslim.

In the daily prayers all racial and tribal differences between Muslims are effaced, because they learn to stand in the mosque shoulder to shoulder in brotherhood. Although it is not essential to offer the daily prayers with the congregation in the mosque, yet the Prophet regarded such an act as highly commendable, inasmuch as it brings into contact different members of the community living in the same quarter of the town in an atmosphere, and on a level, of equality.

But, realising that it is not possible even for the most zealous members of the community living in one particular quarter of the town to attend the mosque of that quarter, the Holy Prophet Muhammad took a further step and made the attendance at the congregation once a week obligatory on every Muslim; for he wanted to make the social contact, already made feasible by the daily prayers, closer and more effective and to enable men to learn something of the reality of the Islamic ideal that all men are brothers and equal in the sight of God. The weekly Friday congregation requires all the Muslims of any one quarter of the town in which they reside to assemble in the mosque. This was enough to bring together the Muslims of one quarter, to give them the polish which we get only when we come into touch with others. Yet even this was not sufficiently comprehensive. He, therefore, instituted the two yearly congregations, where it was enjoined that Muslims of many quarters of the town should come together. But neither did Muhammad stop at this. For, although the daily prayers as well as the weekly Friday prayers and the two yearly gatherings—‘Idul-Fitr and ‘Idul-Adzha—
were effective and comprehensive enough, they were not cosmopolitan, catholic and international in character. Consequently, in order to pave the way for a world-brotherhood which was destined to arise from the ever-growing shrinkage of the world, he developed the two yearly congregations into an international gathering to take place every year at Makka. This marks the highest stage of social evolution in Islam—or in any other system of the world.

Now, in this connection I should like to say a few words with regard to the ceremonial side of the institution of the pilgrimage, so that you may get an idea as to how it succeeds in helping its votaries to visualise to themselves their complete spiritual equality before God. Performance of the pilgrimage to Makka is incumbent on every Muslim once in his lifetime, subject to the condition that he has the means to undertake the journey as well as to make due provision for those dependent on him. Security of life is also a necessary condition. The pilgrimage is performed in the month of Zul-Hijja, the twelfth month of the Muslim year, and the pilgrim must reach the town of Makka before the seventh day of that month. The principal points in connection with the pilgrimage are:

Entering upon a state of Ihram, in which one’s ordinary clothes are removed and all pilgrims wear one kind of apparel, consisting of two seamless sheets, leaving the head uncovered. It will thus be seen that the state of Ihram makes all men and women stand upon one plane of equality, all wearing the same simple dress and living in the same simple conditions. All distinctions of rank and colour, of wealth and nationality disappear. The king is indistinguishable from the peasant.

The whole of the gathering, which averages some 1,000,000 men and women from all parts of the world, assumes one aspect, one attitude, before its Maker, and thus the grandest and the noblest sight of human equality is witnessed in that wonderful desert plain called the “‘Arafát” which indeed
makes a man have a true knowledge of his Creator. The whole world is unable to present another such noble picture of real brotherhood and practical equality between man and man.

Sir Thomas Arnold, in his book, The Preaching of Islam, London, 1913, thus expresses himself on the institution of pilgrimage as conceived by the Prophet Muhammad:

"But, above all, and herein lies its supreme importance in the missionary history of Islam—it ordains a yearly gathering of all believers of all nations and languages brought together from all parts of the world to pray in that sacred place called the Ka'ba, towards which their faces are set in every hour of private worship in their distant homes. No fetch of religious genius could have conceived a better expedient for impressing on the minds of the faithful a sense of their common life and of their brotherhood in the bond of faith. Here, in a supreme act of worship, the Negro of West Africa meets the Chinaman from the distant East, the courtly and polished Ottoman recognises his brother Muslim in the wild islander from the farthest end of the Malayan seas."

Thus Islam has really succeeded in removing colour prejudice and hatred from at least 600 millions of people and, if it had done nothing else than this, it would have had good claim to hold the world its debtor for all time to come. We Muslims believe that the justification for our existence lies in our carrying through the world a practical brotherhood of man.

Let me now further develop the idea of understanding shown by Islam towards the members of other faiths. We read in the Qur-án: "Say: O followers of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but God and that we shall ascribe no partner to Him and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God" (3: 63).
In this verse broad bases are laid for a common understanding. But this was not regarded as enough. The Qur-án took another step and required every Muslim to believe in all the Prophets of God. A Muslim becomes outside the pale of Islam if he does not believe in the prophethood of any of the Prophets of God—Môsés, Jesus, etc. Thus the Qur-án did not leave it to the predilection of the individual to reject or to accept His Prophets, nor to his liberal education, which also might or might not make him accept the Prophets of God. It is nowadays in fashion to be broadminded and to respect the sentiments of the members of faiths other than one’s own. For instance, it would to-day be difficult to find people who would not acknowledge the greatness and even the prophethood of Muhammad. But, if you were to ask them if there is any sanction for such an attitude in their religious scriptures, I think they would find it difficult to make an answer in the affirmative.

Thus a non-Muslim can say anything he likes, even of a derogatory nature, about the Prophets of God, and no compunction for having done something wrong and ignoble would torment him; but a Muslim dare not do so. A belief in all the Prophets of God born anywhere in the world was made an article of faith because Islam does not believe that true and lasting amity between one man and another, one community and another, can be brought about, unless we begin to respect and reverence all those upon whom is centred the affection of people who do not see eye to eye with us. Thus a Muslim must respect all the Prophets of God and must regard them as the chosen ones of God. The Jew could, with impunity, condemn Jesus, and the Christian Muhammad, but Muslim could not do so. He must accept them both as Prophets of God. In the history of the spiritual education of man, Islam stands out like a beacon-light, because it taught its followers to respect the Prophets of God. As time passes, the real importance of this seemingly simple but far-reaching,
doctrine, potent enough to control the hearts of men (that supremely difficult task) will be increasingly realised and appreciated by the world.

Islam also is the first religion to take into account those factors which have stood in the way of the emancipation of mankind. Bondage can be of two kinds: either spiritual and mental or material.

The spiritual and mental exploitation of man Islam has dealt with by announcing to its followers, i.e., those who accept the Islamic outlook on life, that there is no intermediary between them and their Creator—God. Islam, like Christianity, has emphasised the dignity of the human soul, its personality and its equality in the eyes of God, but, knowing that priestcraft in its worst forms had crept into its sister religions, Islam took preventive steps against this insidious evil, so that up till now Islam is free from priestcraft in the sense in which it is understood in the West. Thus we have no altars, no baptism, no holy communion, no choirs in the mosque, because these practices and formalities either give rise to the institution of priesthood, or become an easy tool in the hands of those who can adroitly make use of them in exploiting man spiritually.

Thus, in Islam, not only is the individual emancipated, but he is also free from that schism in his own personality which is the common sorry lot of all those who believe that life within the four walls of a church is not subject to the same laws of commonsense as life outside it. For us the whole of the earth is the church, and the religious life, together with its doctrines, is as much open to scrutiny as our daily life. There is, therefore, nothing in the religion of Islam that can be regarded as the special domain of the clergy and as sacrosanct to them alone. If, on the one hand, Islam bravely launched the proposition of human brotherhood, based on the concept of moral and spiritual equality, and took steps to materialise this concept, on the other hand, Islam realised equally forcibly,
that this spiritual and moral equality would be frustrated if nothing was done to ensure the freedom of the individual from that economic pressure which capitalism in all ages has exerted upon the life of the individual. Thus Islam devised ways and means to alleviate the crushing weight of capitalism.

The means adopted by Islam to hinder wealth from getting concentrated into the hands of the few are:

(1) The socialising of all the forces of nature which are the means of all production and the object of great industry. If treasure-trove or mineral wealth is discovered in a piece of land belonging to a private individual, then its legal owner, according to Islam, is the state. This method brings all the forces of nature under the proprietorship of the state or the people.

(2) The Islamic law of inheritance, which does not recognise the law of primogeniture. The law of inheritance deals a death-blow to large estates and dukedoms. Property in Islam is continually divided amongst the descendants.

(3) The interdiction of usury and lending money on a non-risk-taking basis. Thus Islam deals a death-blow to capitalism so that wealth can never get out of hand.

(4) The interdiction of monopoly to private individuals and the "cornering" of commodities.

(5) The law of Zakat, which serves as an efficacious brake on private profit-making property. Islam accepts that, potentially, any man is entitled to anything because all the world's goods have been created by God for the use of man. But, by instituting private property, Islam has set a limit to this right. It would, however, be erroneous to suppose that property as a right is unlimited—it finds a limit in
its very nature and the end to which it may be subservient. Islam, like Roman law, does not give to the individual the right of using his property in any way he pleases. Muslim law ignores the _jus utendi et abutendi_ of Roman law, and brands as a form of squandering any consumption of wealth not required by real use.

Islam considers every useless consumption of wealth as sin. In its eyes, prodigality is a form of mental disease, which ought to be legally restrained. It insists on moderation, on following the middle way in the use of riches, as being most consonant with the nature of the law of Islam and with the purpose for which God has bestowed goods upon mankind.

But, in addition to the above principle, Islam institutes the principle of _Zakat_, which is a fixed annual levy on all private profit-making property. This is one of the most potent limitations, but still a natural one, placed on keeping private profit-making property within its legitimate bounds. From the above remarks it is clear that Islam does not forbid private property. Rather it recognises its existence, because an average man of to-day finds it difficult to give up the world and adopt a secluded life like a recluse. It may be remarked in passing that the tendency of the teachings of Islam and the Islamic outlook on life is towards mysticism rather than towards asceticism, which latter is condemned in Islam. It also remembers that an average man cannot make submission of his higher self entirely to the materialistic side of life. Where is he to find the true way? Christianity and Buddhism, as an answer to this question, would suggest a flight from the world. But Islam adopts a positive attitude, and gives a fearless answer to the query of the average man. It says that the duty of religion is to hold the golden mean between what a man is and what a man ought to be. A religion that does not strangle the natural instincts of man, but rather brings
them within proper limits and trains them; is the religion that requires. The free play of natural instincts, just as much as their strangulation, is harmful and hampers both the material and the spiritual aspects of man. Only that religion can claim to solve this problem which conforms to the nature of man. The religion of Islam realises, that, if it were to ignore the production of goods and their consumption and the circulation of money, it would not accord with the natural instincts of man. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said "poverty is my pride," but this does not mean that the Prophet Muhammad condemns the acquisition of riches. Islam does not try to abolish personal and private profit-making property. When Bolshevism enacts that everybody should be set to the species of work which will visibly do service to the largest number of people, it forgets that it is cutting off originating action, such as non-industrial research and speculative study, liberty to follow which things is as plainly the inborn right of any person as is the right to seek material welfare up to the limit of trespass on the rights of others and the rights of society. Islam establishes an equilibrium between the two equally natural extremes, guarding the interests of both. How is this accomplished?

What Islam does is this: It seeks to establish a balance—an equilibrium—thus making personal profit-making property and riches serve mankind. In Islamic countries, private profit-making property remains and continues to exist as private property, but in a certain sense it becomes public property. Islam entrusts, so to speak, public property into the hands of a private individual for the benefit of the public. But this does not mean that the point of view of Islam is to spend the whole of such money on social or charitable purposes.

It is reported that a certain man came to Lady 'Ayesha the wife of the Holy Prophet, and said, "I want to make a will."
She said, "How much money do you possess?" He said "3,00 dirhems." She said, "How many children have you got?" He said, "Four." She said, "The Qur-an says, 'Bequest is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth for parents and near relatives, according to usage, a duty (incumbent) upon those who guard against evil' (II: 180.) So leave this for your children."

What Islam has done is that it has connected the social side and social aspects of property with the private life of the individual. The individual remains and becomes responsible to the society. It recognises the existence of private property and also the existence of a public right over private profit-making property. The recognition of this right is known in Islam as Zakat. Zakat in a sense provides for the preservation of the individual and also for the preservation of the society. Without the observance of Zakat a Muslim is not a Muslim. As a rule, this levy ranges between 2½ and 20 percent of the profits, according to the nature of the property. Charity is compulsory in all religions, but in Islam not only is it made obligatory but it is also regularly defined and specified—that is to say, how much was due—from one kind of property and how much from another.