

BARRIERS BETWEEN MUSLIMS MUST GO

There are no sects in Islam

All the professors in the Kalimah are Muslims



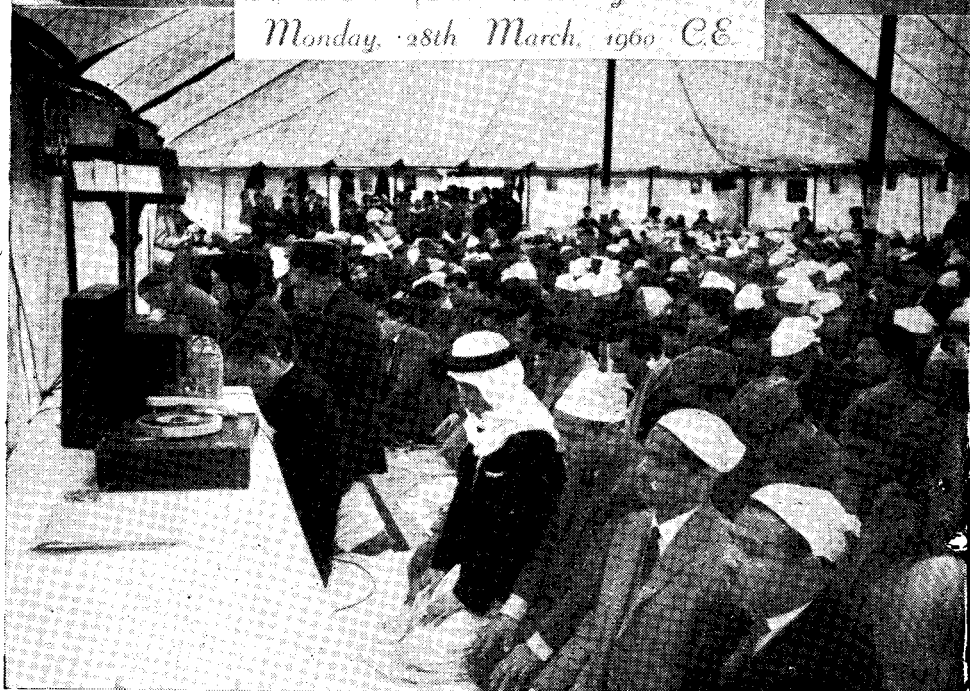
by

S. MUHAMMAD TUFAIL

www.aail.org



*Id al-Fitr (Fast Breaking Festival)
Monday, 28th March, 1960 C.E.*



BARRIERS BETWEEN MUSLIMS MUST GO

There are no sects in Islam

**Sunnis and Shi'ahs are two schools of
thought (*madhhabs*) and not sects**

All the professors in the Kalimah are Muslims

by

S. MUHAMMAD TUFAIL, M.A.

The Imam, The Shah Jehan Mosque,
Woking, Surrey, England

Published by:

**THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION
AND LITERARY TRUST**

WOKING — SURREY — ENGLAND

MARCH 1961

Text of the Sermon delivered on Monday 28th March 1960 at
'Id al-Fitr at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.

Striking Demonstration of the Unity and Solidarity of the World of Islam was shown when Muslims of different nationalities, races, colours and different schools of thought prayed together at the *'Id al-Fitr* at the world-famous Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England on 28th March, 1960 C.E.

Sayyid Medhi Khorasany, a Shi'ah Mujtahid from Iran, led the prayers and S. Muhammad Tufail, Imam of the Mosque at Woking, delivered the sermon

BARRIERS BETWEEN MUSLIMS MUST GO

The two festivals in Islam

There are two great official festivals in Islam, viz., *'Id al-Fitr* and *'Id al-Adha*. Strangely enough, they are connected neither with the birth of the Prophet Muhammad nor with his death. *'Id al-Fitr* is the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast, and *'Id al-Adha*, which is celebrated two months later, is the Festival of the Sacrifices. Both these festivals are connected with the performance of some duty — the duty of fasting, in one case, and the duty of the sacrifice in the other. The spiritual significance of this festival is that true happiness lies in restraint and the performance of one's duty towards God and towards fellow beings, and it is in this way that the good of humanity is inter-related with faith in God.

We have gathered together here today to celebrate the festival of *'Id al-Fitr*. The beautiful flags fluttering around the marquee represent various Muslim countries. The present gathering consists of many diverse nationalities — members of different Muslim communities and schools of thought — they all add to the colour of this ceremony. This beautiful pattern which we see today could not be complete unless they were all present here. In spite of differences of nationality, race, colour, language, dress and outlook on political and spiritual matters, there still runs a chord of unity amongst all of them.

All Muslims believe in the same God, the same Prophet and the same Book

They all believe in the same God, the same Prophet and the same Book.

BELIEF IN GOD

Our God is one God. The God of Noah and Abraham, the God of David and Solomon, the God of Moses and Jesus, the God of all the nations of the world. He is the Creator of soul as well as matter. He is the Beneficent, and Merciful (*al-Rahmán* and *al-Rahim*). He is Affectionate and the Loving (*al-Rauf* and *al-Wadud*). He is the Pardoner, the Multiplier of rewards (*al-Shukur*), the author of Peace (*al-Salam*), the Granter of Security (*al-Mu'min*), the Bestower of Sustenance (*al-Razzáq*).

These and other attributes of God mentioned in the Qur'an serve the purpose of guiding us in our difficult and uphill struggle for life. It is He whom we serve and it is

He whom we beseech for help against the extravagance of our souls :

“ O my servants, who have been prodigal against their own souls, despair not of the mercy of God, surely God forgives the sins altogether. He is indeed the Forgiving, the Merciful.¹ And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him. Surely my Lord is Merciful, Loving, Kind.”²

BELIEF IN THE PROPHET

Our Prophet is the same Prophet. His advent was foretold by all the previous prophets and in turn he enjoined upon us to have faith in all of them, thus laying down the foundation of a universal brotherhood of man. He was a prophet for all people and all ages after whom no prophet would appear, neither new nor old, because in his person the prophethood had come to an end and it is he, through whom the world would receive always the spiritual blessings of God.

BELIEF IN THE QUR'AN

Our Book is the same Book, viz., the Qur'án, which has come down to us unaltered. It is with us as it was given to the Prophet Muhammad. It teaches us that guidance has been given to all the nations of the world :

“ The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers, they all believe in God and His Angels and His Books and His Messengers.”³

With the Qur'án, however, the law has been fulfilled and the revelation has been brought to perfection. As the Prophet Muhammad has verified the truth of the previous prophets, the Qur'án has also verified the previous scriptures :

“ And we have revealed to thee the Book with truth, verifying that which is before it of the book and a guardian over it.”⁴

Thus, we all believe — all of us who represent various nationalities, races, countries and schools of thought — we all believe in the same God, the same Prophet and the same Book. Why should there be any barriers among us then?

There are no sects in Islam

I have used the word schools of thought purposely, because there are no sects in Islam.

A simple question may arise in your minds at this juncture — if there are no sects in Islam, who are Shi'ahs and Sunnis? For lack of a better term, they have been called sects in Islam. But, in fact, they are different schools of thought (*madhhabs*). There are four schools of thought among Sunnis, viz., Hanafi, Sháfi'i, Málíki and Hambali, and their interpretation in the application of Islamic laws is sometimes different, although in the fundamentals of Islam they all agree. The same could be said of juristic differences between Shi'ahs and Sunnis. At times the differences between Hanafis and Sháfi'is or, for that matter, between Hambalis and Málíkis, are far and wide ; sometimes much more than they are between Hanafis and Shi'ahs, for instance, but still all the Imams of *fiqh*, i.e., Abu Hanifah, Sháfi'i, Hambal and

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ
 إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

“ And as for those who split up their religion and became sects, thou hast no concern with them. Their affair is only with Allah, then He will inform them of what they did ” (The Qur'an, 6 : 160).

Málík, are acclaimed as great jurists and honest men. If we have accepted the four schools of thought in Islam, let us accept a few more. Shi'ahs and Sunnis, in fact, are schools of thought and not sects in the sense that we understand the term.

The Qur'an does not recognize sectarianism

We have our differences, of course, but they are not of a fundamental nature. Therefore, the word sect, which implies basic differences between two groups, is not the right word to use in this context. Either we have to form an entirely different conception of the term sect or abandon this misleading word altogether. To any student of the Qur'an, it is clear that Islam does not recognize sectarianism :

“Hold fast by the covenant of God all together and be not disunited.”⁵

“And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear arguments had come to them.”⁶

“And as for those who split up their religion and became sects, thou hast no concern with them. Their affair is only with God, then He will inform them of what they did.”⁷

For minor differences Muslims cannot be dubbed as kafirs (unbelievers)

Minor differences, which are necessary towards the growth of a healthy society, have been magnified out of proportion by the extremists in Muslim schools of thought. For these minor differences Muslims have been declared

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ

“And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear arguments had come to them” (The Qur’án, 3 : 104).

infidels by Muslims. There existed differences among the companions of the Prophet Muhammad as well, but they never dubbed one another heretics and infidels. Khwárij in the history of Islam were the first to denounce Muslims as *kafirs*, and thereafter, this disease of denunciation of believers as heretics spread among the Muslim world. If we have to rise again as a living force, we must stand for a united Islam, where all the professors in the *Kalimah* (There is but One God, and Muhammad is His Messenger and Servant) must be regarded as Muslims.

The Qur’anic verdict — anyone who offers you Islamic salutation cannot be regarded as an unbeliever

The Qur’án declares it in unequivocal terms :

“And say not to any one who offers you salutation, Thou art not a believer.”⁸

The word *as-salám* means the Islamic salutation here. When two Muslims meet they say *assalámu 'alaikum* — peace be upon you. When a person has offered the Islamic salutation to make an outward expression of his Islam, nobody has a right to say :

“Thou art not a believer.”

The word believer is also significant here. A Muslim is he who has formally accepted Islam but a believer is one who in spiritual life is a stage higher than a Muslim. A believer (*mu'min*), in other words, is he who has translated his faith into practice. This distinction has been recognized by the Qur'an itself :

“The dwellers of the desert say : We believe. Say : You believe not, but say, We submit ; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts.”⁹

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ

“And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear arguments had come to them” (The Qur'an, 3 : 104).

Thus the Qur'an demands from us that a person who greets us with Muslim salutation should not be considered an unbeliever. Not only that, we should not say : *Thou art not a Muslim*, but we have even no right to say : *Thou art not a believer*, even though he may be belonging to an enemy tribe. The occasion for the revelation of the verse was that during the time of the Prophet, Muslims in search of the enemy came across a man tending his goats. He offered them the Islamic salutation without giving any other indication of Islam. He was suspected of being an enemy and, therefore, put to death.¹⁰ The following words were revealed to stop such cases :

“And say not to any one who offers you Islamic salutation : Thou art not a believer.”

Someone will perhaps ask : Should we consider a Christian, a Jew or a Hindu to be a Muslim simply by his

offering us the Islamic salutation? Of course, when a person is known to us as a Jew or a Christian and he does not want us to recognize him as a Muslim, he does not become so by offering us such salutation, but the plain injunction laid down in the Qur'án is that a Muslim cannot be called an infidel or an unbeliever if he shows his faith in Islam and wants us to recognize him as a Muslim simply by offering us the Islamic greeting.

The Prophet Muhammad on the question of unbelief and Islam

The Prophet Muhammad has made this point further clear beyond the shadow of doubt. On the best authority he is reported to have said :

“Whoever says his prayers as we say our prayers and faces the Qiblah (in his prayers) and eats the animal slaughtered by us, he is a Muslim and for him is the covenant of God and His Messenger, so do not look down upon the covenant of God.”¹¹

On one occasion, during a battle, a companion of the Prophet, Usámah by name, happened to kill a person who had recited the *Kalimah* just at the point of death. But Usámah still killed him because he thought that the man had no other intention except to save his life by his hypocritical declaration in Islam. The incident was reported to the Prophet. He was greatly perturbed at the news and went on saying for some time :

Did you kill him after he had recited the Kalimah —

There is but one God, Muhammad is His Messenger?

And Usámah says :

“I wished I had not become a Muslim before.”¹²

And when Khálid, another companion of the Prophet, made a similar mistake, the Prophet raised his hands towards heaven and uttered aloud :

“O Lord, I make myself free of what Khálid has done.”¹³

The conclusion we arrive at is simple and straightforward. Anyone who professes his faith in the *Kalimah* is a Muslim, to whichever school of thought he may belong. He cannot go out of Islam unless he, himself, rejects this basic formula of faith.

Barriers of separation among Muslims must be destroyed — Islam is faced with bigger spiritual problems than before

The barriers between the so-called Muslim sects or schools of thought must be broken down. The first step towards this is to meet together in a spirit of inquiry, sympathy and understanding. All the hatred, bitterness and antagonism is the result of lack of contact, understanding and trust, which in their turn have grown out of tension and separation. Let these barriers of separation be destroyed. The world of Islam is faced with a bigger challenge than ever before. The challenge comes from the outer world and sometimes from within the world of modern Islam. Nevertheless, the challenge is the same though couched in different language. Modern man says: Spiritual values are not

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْفَىٰ إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مِنَّا

“And say not to any one who offers you (Islamic) salutation, Thou art not a believer” (The Qur’án, 4 : 94).

important at all. The same voice is re-echoed in the Muslim world that Islam does not matter. The only thing that matters is the technical development; values have become more important than values. The majority of the high priests of science have no faith except in the reality of matter and material things.

Modern man has lost faith in the future destiny of humanity

The greatest tragedy of the modern age is that there is nothing substantial left for man to believe. All the scientific and technical feats of mankind have brought the appalling darkness of pessimism, cynicism and fear in man’s mind and soul. He has lost confidence in the future destiny of humanity. Let the Muslim world stand united to meet this challenge in co-operation with the other living faiths. This is not a challenge against Islam alone, but against Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism as well. Let every one of them contribute its share towards the spiritual welfare of man.

Man-made discoveries have brought man to the brink of disaster. Man is hoarding piles upon piles of weapons

of destruction — himself moving far away from the grace and mercy of God :

“ Say : in the grace of God and in His mercy, in that they should rejoice. It is better than that which they hoard.”¹⁴

Only positive faith in moral and spiritual values can rescue mankind from disaster

But let not fear prevail upon our minds. Whatever is going to happen to the world, we should not forget the most important aspect of human life, i.e., our duty towards God and towards fellow beings. Both are interconnected and interdependent. The basis of spiritual life is human relationship. All our rights and obligations arise out of our faith in God. It is in this way that belief in God is connected with the betterment of humanity. In the world we live in, the need of positive faith in the moral and spiritual values is of paramount importance. The need grows bigger and bigger. Such a faith alone can make the world a better place for living in. Every one of you can contribute his or her share in it.

To my Muslim friends who are living in this country, I say that you are the ambassadors of Islam in this part of the world. You come into direct contact with the people here. You live close to them in their homes, hostels and institutions. Your sense of duty towards God is judged by your relation with other people here. The future of your nation, your country, your ideology, depends only on you. Let every one of you realize this, and let every one of you offer his or her contribution towards this cause — the cause of Islam, the cause of the welfare of mankind.

May God help us all. Amen !

May God bless you and be with you !

I wish you all a happy '*Id.*

REFERENCES

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 The Qur'án, 39:53. | 8 The Qur'án, 4:94. |
| 2 <i>Ibid.</i> , 11:90. | 9 <i>Ibid.</i> , 49:14. |
| 3 <i>Ibid.</i> , 2:285. | 10 Al-Bukhári, 65:iv, 18. |
| 4 <i>Ibid.</i> , 5:48. | 11 <i>Ibid.</i> , ch. Prayer. |
| 5 <i>Ibid.</i> , 3:102. | 12 <i>Ibid.</i> , Kitáb al-Maghádhi. |
| 6 <i>Ibid.</i> , 3:104. | 13 <i>Ibid.</i> |
| 7 <i>Ibid.</i> , 6:160. | 14 The Qur'án, 10:58. |

WOKING SHOWS THE WAY

“ *The famous Shah Jehan Mosque gave a striking demonstration of unity and solidarity of Islam by having its 'Id prayers led by a Shia Mujtahid, Sayyed Mehdi Khorassany, and Khutba given by its Imam, Maulavi Muhammad Tufail.*”

“ *This is how the London Correspondent of the Pakistan Times of Lahore sums up his impressions of the 'Id al-Fitr celebration at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking.*”

“ *'The Shah Jehan Mosque,' the report goes on to say, 'has become a great centre of Islam in Britain and the West.'*”

“ *The Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Sheikh Muhammad Tufail, who delivered the Khutba, made the universal fellowship of men the sole theme of his sermon. The Qur'án described it as Islam's greatest gift to mankind, and he reminded that it welded those torn by mortal enmities among themselves into a brotherhood. The greatest tragedy that had befallen the Muslim peoples during the past centuries was not so much the loss of empires and territories as that of this greatest heritage of Islam — the universal brotherhood of Islam.*”

“ *The Imam called upon the resurgent world of Islam to hearken back to this core of the message of Islam, which was indeed the cry of the soul of the new humanity that is emerging. They must outgrow the medieval shells of narrow-minded, sectarian prejudices which were an anachronism in this Atomic Age.*”

“ *The Sunnis and Shias have been at loggerheads throughout history. It was the privilege of the Woking Muslim Mission to prick the bubble of this stupendous folly and bring the two great members of the family of Islam to a common pulpit. Differences that defied all attempts at bridging disappeared at the very touch of the Woking spirit, and the Sunnis and Shias, like two brothers long estranged, once more embraced each other.*”

“ *It is to be hoped that the lead given by the Woking Muslim Mission will find a re-echo throughout the world of Islam, and Muslims of various sects and schools, while cherishing their own views, will learn to sink those little divergencies into the larger unity of Islam.*”

“ *When the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din set out to plant single-handed the flag of Islam in the soil of the island home-*

land of those who ruled over this sub-continent, the 'mad venture', as it was considered, only caused a ripple of sneers and jeers among the Muslim intelligentsia of the day. This man must be stark raving mad to seriously think that the Englishman can ever see the light of Islam.

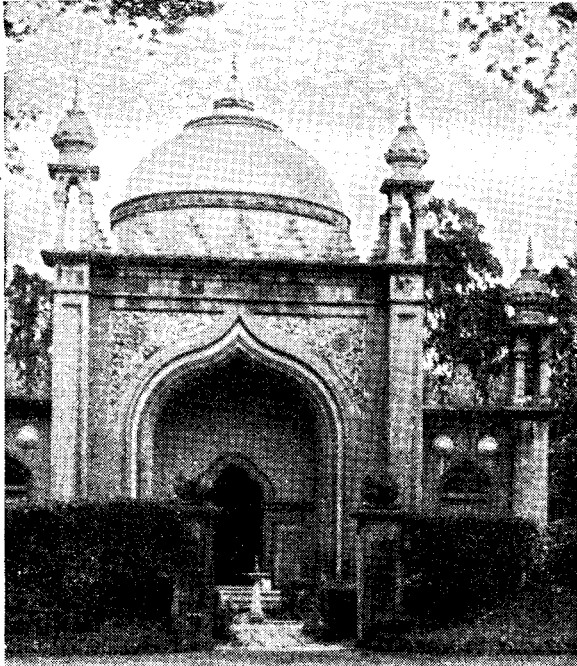
"Who could imagine then that within half a century this tiny outpost of Islam in the West would grow into the greatest centre of Islam, and the Woking leaven will influence the religious thought of the West, with the result that wherever the spirit of religious quest is abroad, it has perforce to turn to Woking for guidance and inspiration.

"The Woking influence is irresistible. There is something in the very air of the place which transports beyond all pettiness, all scepticism, all frustration, and fills the most sceptically-minded with a new vision and a new hope.

"If Woking really marks a revolution in Islamic thought in the right direction, the conclusion is irresistible that for recapturing the live spark of faith, mankind must rediscover and tap the higher source of knowledge known as inner experience, leading to direct contact with the source of life. The Muslim mind, however, still feels shy of any talk of inner experience, labouring under the false impression that since prophethood came to an end with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him!), it has snapped the age-long direct contact between God and man, which has been the sole yearning and quest of saints and seers since time immemorial.

"Never before in history was there so much of a hankering after things of the spirit, which alone can bring inner peace and social harmony. The answer to this universal quest lies in the kind of inwardness of religion which the Woking Muslim Mission symbolizes.

"The Woking spirit is indeed a beacon of Light showing the way towards the true urges of faith, which alone can raise man's vision above all pettiness and parochialism and bring man closer to man."—The Light Weekly, Lahore, Pakistan, for Friday 8th April 1960.



The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England

The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, was built in 1889 by Doctor W. G. Leitner, an Orientalist and ex-Registrar of the University of the Punjab, with donations from Indian Muslims, particularly Her late Highness the Begum Shah Jehan, ruler of Bhopal State, after whom the Mosque is named.

After Doctor Leitner had retired from the Punjab he conceived the idea of establishing an institution for the study of Oriental languages, cultures and religions. Unfortunately, before he could bring his scheme to fruition he died.

As there was nobody to look after the Mosque it remained silent and deserted for many years. Occasionally a few Muslims from London would come on 'Id festivals for prayers, for the rest of the year the Mosque was locked and unused.

In 1912 C.E. the late *Khawajah* Kamal-ud-Din, the first Muslim missionary to Europe in this century, came to England and after many difficulties the Mosque was restored to the use of the Muslims living in the United Kingdom. *Khawajah* Kamal-ud-Din established the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust and the Mosque soon became, as it has remained, a centre for the propagation of Islamic ideas and ideals to the British people, as well as the great religious centre of Islam in the West. The monthly journal of the Mission, *The Islamic Review*, founded by *Khawajah* Kamal-ud-Din, is also published from here.

The building is of Bath Stone and is executed in the Indo-Saracenic style.

BOOKS ON ISLAM

THE HOLY QUR'AN

The Holy Qur'an (Arabic Text), 7 in. x 9½ in., 848 pages	1 0 0
The Holy Qur'an (Arabic Text), Pocket Size, 2½ in. x 3½ in., 606 pages (printed in Pakistan)	8 0
The Holy Qur'an (Arabic Text), Pocket Size, 2¼ in. x 4 in., 494 pages (printed in Egypt)	8 0
The Holy Qur'an on one page, 22 in. x 26 in. (with magnifying glass)	1 0 0
The Holy Qur'an (Arabic Text), with English Translation and Commentary by the <i>Maulana Muhammad 'Ali</i> . Royal 8vo. LXX+1275 pages :	
Leather Bound: 1st Quality	3 0 0
Cloth Bound: 2nd Quality	2 0 0
The Holy Qur'an. Arabic Text with English Translation and Commentary by A. Yusuf Ali. In 2 vols. 10 in. x 6½ in., 1862 pages	5 0 0
The Meaning of the Glorious Koran, by Marmaduke Pickthall (an explanatory translation), 691 pages. Printed in U.K.	1 10 0
Ditto, printed in the U.S.A.	4 6

BOOKS BY THE MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI

Muslim Prayer Book. 4¼ in. x 6½ in.	2 6
The Religion of Islam. Royal 8vo. 784 pages	1 10 0
A Manual of Hadith. Demy 8vo. 408 pages	1 0 0
Muhammad the Prophet. Crown 8vo. 320 pages	13 0
Early Caliphate. Crown 8vo. 320 pages	13 0
Living Thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad. Crown 8vo. 142 pages	5 0
Introduction to Study of the Holy Qur'an. Demy 8vo.	5 0
The Anti Christ, Gog and Magog. 5½ in. x 7½ in. 91 pages	6 0
The Prophet's Marriages. 4¼ in. x 7 in., 36 pages	1 0
Punj Sura. Arabic and English Translation. 5¼ in. x 6¾ in., 98 pages	6 0
History of the Prophets. 4¼ in. x 7¼ in., 102 pages	6 6

BOOKS BY THE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

The Ideal Prophet. Demy 8vo. 274 pages	5 0
Threshold of Truth. Crown 8vo. 196 pages	6 0
Introduction to the Study of the Qur'an. Demy 8vo. 141 pages	6 0
Religion of Jesus and Traditional Christianity. Crown 8vo. 77 pages	2 0
Sources of Christianity. Demy 8vo. 113 pages	4 0
Message of Islam. Demy 8vo. 74 pages	3 0
Human Faculties and their Development. Demy 8vo. 35 pages	1 0
Hints to the Study of the Qur'an. Demy 8vo. 37 pages	1 0

Can be obtained from

The Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust

The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England

Azeez Manzil

Brandreth Road, Lahore 7, W. Pakistan