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Bernard Shaw's Latest on Islam

"Muhammad, the Saviour of Humanity"

"I believe that if a man like him (Muhammad) were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much-needed peace and happiness"—he says.

[In our last issue, we said in our note on Mr. G. B. Shaw that we had asked our Bombay correspondent, Mr. Munir Haindaday, B.A., to interview the distinguished tourist about his famous prophecy as to the Islamization, within a century, of Europe in general and of England in particular. The following is an account of the interview which, containing as it does, the views of one of the greatest thinkers of the present age on one of the most momentous issues of the day, must, we are sure, arouse world-wide interest.—*Editor.*]

ON January 13th I received your telegram to interview Bernard Shaw. The next day I tried to obtain a pass for the "Empress of Britain", the luxury liner which on its voyage round the world halted at Bombay for a week. The presence of the world-famous person attracted quite a stream of eager visitors to the "Empress of Britain" where admission was regulated by passes. Unfortunately I was told, that it was too late for me to get any pass, the number being limited. Disappointed, I proceeded the same day, January 14th, to Appollo Bunder where after each hour a tender was leaving for the "Empress of Britain," and determined to stay there as long as Shaw could be seen. I was really fortunate in having not to wait at all. A tall figure with silvery beard holding a binocular in his hands attracted my attention from a distance and I hurried to the spot to find that he was none other than the famous G. B. S. Here again I was partly unfortunate because only five to ten minutes were left for the tender to start. Hurriedly I went up to him and when his attention was drawn towards me, I put your wire in his hand which he took with a curious look at me. When he had read it I opened the conversation,



G. B. SHAW

telling him that the *Light*, a weekly Islamic journal from Lahore, had sent me that telegram to interview him in connection with his forecast in his book, *Getting Married*, regarding the Islamization of Europe within a hundred years. "Will you therefore be kind enough to explain the nature of this forecast more fully and clearly?," I asked him. I must confess I never expected I would be able to make Mr. Shaw speak because it was already getting time for the tender to leave. But he was most affable towards me as he was towards everyone who went to see him. Stroking his silvery beard and looking at his watch, G. B. S. thus spoke in his characteristic manner:—

"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capability to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. The world must doubtless attach high value to the predictions of great men like me. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of to-morrow as it is beginning to be acceptable

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to the Europe of to-day. The Medieval ecclesiastics either through ignorance or bigotry painted Muhammadanism in the darkest colours. They were in fact trained both to hate the man Muhammad and his religion. To them Muhammad was Anti-Christ. I have studied him - the wonderful man - and in my opinion far from being an Anti-Christ he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much-needed peace and happiness. But to proceed: it was in the 19th century that honest thinkers like Carlyle, Goethe and Gibbon perceived intrinsic worth in the religion of Muhammad and thus there was some change for the better in the European attitude towards Islam. But the Europe of the present century is far advanced. It is beginning to be enamoured of the creed of Muhammad. In the next century it may go still further in recognising the utility of that creed in solving its problems and it is in this sense that you must understand my prediction. Already even at the present time many of my own people and of Europe as well have gone over to the faith of Muhammad, and the Islamization of Europe, to use the expression of your own query, may be said to have begun."

It was at this point that the tender by which G.B.S. was to go back to the "Empress of Britain" gave out a whistle and the talk abruptly came to an end. I really felt sorry for my failure in obtaining the pass, otherwise there would have been a nice coincidence for me to go in the same tender with the great dramatist and I would have heard a good deal more from his own lips about this famous forecast. But whatever he did say is enough to indicate what one of the greatest thinkers of modern age thinks of Islam and the great role it has yet to play in redeeming a disordered and distracted humanity.

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forget that in the midst of the appalling darkness of the Middle Ages when people were sunk in horrible barbarity and the Roman Catholic church was burning at the stake all those who did not share their views, Islam lit the torch of Light which showed the way to the Renaissance.

But the miracle is not finished even to-day; in these days of materialism and atheism the words of the Prophet are making their way. Notwithstanding the desperate efforts to fight Islam which are made by the Roman Catholic church, the creed of the Prophet is gaining more and more followers, and the day is not far off when in Europe the words of the Prophet will be as well-known as in the East. Many distinguished philosophers have already declared that Islam is the religion of the future. In fact, we see in the words of the Prophet the echo of the greatest Truth

known by mankind, the wisdom of the Bible as well as the teaching of Christ, the words of Confucius and the Vedas.

There is nothing in Islam which could not be accepted by the brain as well as by the heart. There is no mystery as incomprehensible as in the Roman Catholic church, no intolerance, no hatred.

Peace is the meaning of Islam. Peace, fraternal love and charity, are its dogmas. Kindness, charity, courage and purity are the laws a good Moslem has to follow. Pray to God whenever you can, not only in the Mosque, but in the great temple which is Nature. You will feel Him through the splendour of the day, in the stars of the night, in the perfection of what He created and which people seem to neglect.

It has been said that man is a bit of the Universe and the Universe a very great man. The same divine spark has been given by God to all His creatures. Do not despise those who have not found the Light of Truth; pity them and help them to find the right path. Remember that the Prophet was tolerant, and the Holy Book says, "As long as you believe in one God and follow the moral rules derived from this belief, do not fear but that our Lord will reward you on the Day of Judgment."

Humanity is suffering and does not find hope or consolation. Many false theories are broadcast in the world and Soviet Russia is trying to make a blasphemous experiment, annihilating God. Look at the horrible results of this dreadful system, based on hatred. Millions of people are dying from hunger and misery; churches, mosques and synagogues are closed, and a horrible slavery installed in the land.

Our duty in life is to help our brothers, to help them find God and to reject all the false atheistic teachings.

I am glad that my declaration of faith helped you, as it helped a Russian Prince and a young Englishman to find the way towards Light, and I am receiving your declaration with the same gratitude to God as those of the two friends who made it to me.

"The East and the West belong to God," says the Koran. Love Him and you will love His creation. Read the wonderful Book revealed to him who was the last Prophet, meditate on it and you will find in its reading, consolation, hope and kindness. May God bless you in the new life you have started.

Take the name of Rashid which means "Understanding the Truth", and as guide take one of the great leaders of Islam such as Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman or Ali.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the "Light" and "The Muslim Revival" to let our brothers know that in the future you belong to the great creed which covers one-fifth of the world.

Paris.

KHAIR-UN-NISA.