

# EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY

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## Evangelical Review of Theology

*Articles and book reviews original and selected from  
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obedience of faith*

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them and *asking* them questions' ([Lk. 2:46](#)). His perceptive questions were a prelude to his perceptive answers. He is our Model.

### **Jesus—the Model for our Message**

It is clear that what he taught we must teach ([Mt. 28:19, 20](#)). The good news he brought was not simply *about* himself. He *was* the good news, and he appealed to men to accept him, believe on him, feed on him, drink from him. His apostles first and foremost preached Jesus Christ as Saviour ([1 Cor. 2:2](#)) and as Lord ([2 Cor. 4:5](#)). With the presence of the Holy Spirit with them, given for this very purpose ([Mt. 28:20](#); [Jn. 16:7](#); [Acts 1:8](#)), a new transcendental dimension was introduced into their preaching: the issue became primarily one of response to a living person. But this issue is clear only when Jesus is central in the Christian's ministry.

### **IN SUMMARY**

To ask whether Muslims are resistant to the gospel is probably the wrong question since the gospel was designed for them as for everybody else. What we should be asking is whether we are making it unnecessarily hard for them. A like problem existed in Antioch in the first century when for the first time Gentiles came in large numbers to faith. The Judaisers were all for insisting on circumcision. A chastened Peter, now clear on the issue, opposed **p. 114** them ([Gal. 1:11](#); [Acts 15:7](#)). Finally, James summed up in these words, 'It is my judgment, therefore, that we should *not make it difficult for the Gentiles* who are turning to God ...' ([Acts 15:19](#)). He then gave instructions that would make it easier for the two different cultures to live together and accept one another in Christ.

One question haunts me: Does the Christian church 'make it difficult' for the Muslims who are turning to God?

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**Dr 'Jock' Anderson, an ophthalmologist, served in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and was consultant ophthalmologist at University hospitals in Southampton and London. **p. 115****

## **How a Sufi Found his Lord**

**L. Bevan-Jones**

*(abridged)*

*Rev Bevan-Jones tells the story of the pilgrimage from Islam to Christ of Abdus-Subhan. His parents were pious God-fearing Muslims; and though they were deeply grieved at their son's defection to Christianity, they never persecuted him and always made him welcome at home.*

*The abridged section of this story tells of his brief excursion into the Roman Catholic Church, his appointment to head of the new department of Islamics at the Methodist Theological Seminary at Bareilly, his service with the Henry Martyn School of Islamics at Hyderabad and his election in 1945 as a bishop of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia. Bishop Subhan is remembered as an evangelist to his Muslim people. This booklet 'From Islam to Christ' was published by the Fellowship of Faith for the Muslims.*

## The Editor

Abdus-Subhan's ancestors had held high office at the court of the Mughal emperors in Delhi, but with the removal of that court to Oudh they had taken up their residence in Benares. There, in the turbulent days of 1857 when Muslims who had been associated with the Mughal rulers were hunted down as rebels, his father, Hafiz Allah Bakhsh, sought security in a change of occupation, and in time became highly efficient in the art of gold embroidery. Having gathered round him a group of craftsmen he eventually moved to Calcutta and there established a thriving business.

Thus it came about that, in 1897, the subject of this memoir was born in that great metropolis, far from the old family home. He had the inestimable advantage of being reared by affectionate parents; indeed, the tributes he pays to the love and tender care of his mother are both many and moving.<sup>1</sup> It was she who taught him and his three brothers to scorn to say or do anything that was deemed dishonourable. His father, equally puritanical, was nevertheless liberal in his views on religion, and among his books was to be seen a marked copy of the Bible.

While still a child Subhan revealed a strong inclination towards religion and this encouraged his parents to p. 116 hope that he might one day become a *maulvi*,<sup>2</sup> even a *hafiz*,<sup>3</sup> and, in fact, by the age of ten he had read the entire Qur'an. But by now he was more than puritanical in his observance of Muslim practices; he was a veritable 'boy-fanatic'. Cherishing a blind faith in Islam, he viewed all other religions as of the devil, hotly denouncing Hindus as idolaters and Christians as polytheists.

This was a zeal beyond the liking and purpose of his parents and elder brother; consequently they changed their plans for his education and, in the hope that it would curb his excessive ardour, had him enrolled at the Calcutta Madrasah. This was run on more modern lines and included the study of English.

A change was, indeed, wrought in him, but not the one hoped for by his parents, nor expected by himself; and it was certainly not due to his study of English. An influence other than human had begun a good work in him; as he strikingly records: 'It was God's search for His lost child'; for now, at the age of 13, he felt his heart thrill at the call to set out in search of some treasure unknown.

Back of this new quest was an influence resulting from his reading of the Qur'an. He had been impressed by the frequent reference there to 'Books of God' given to Moses, David and Jesus. Where were these to be had? For read them he must. Yet, he felt, there could be no assurance that his heart's yearning would be satisfied even if he read them. To do so might gratify his thirst for knowledge of God but not his hunger for him.

Dissatisfied with a purely legalistic Islam, Subhan had turned aside, even at so early an age, to the study of Islamic mysticism; and it was through this that he came to distinguish, as the mystics do, between the mind's desire to know God and the hunger of the heart for him.

Concluding that mysticism was to be his supreme concern, he became interested, through the books he read, in magic and the use of charms, even allowing himself, for a time, to be used as a medium. His story might have ended very differently but for the wise counsel of his maternal grandfather—himself a mystic—who affectionately urged the

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<sup>1</sup> cp. his autobiography, *How a Sufi found his Lord*. (Lucknow Publishing House).

<sup>2</sup> A learned man.

<sup>3</sup> One who has learnt the whole Qur'an by heart.

infatuated lad to aspire to be a *Kamil*,<sup>4</sup> and not a mere *Amil*.<sup>5</sup> The occasion marked a turning-point in his religious experience.

Life henceforth was to be a Journey, himself a Traveller, and the quest for God not a matter of book-knowledge but spiritual experience. But this Journey could be attempted only under the direction of a Teacher, and so he sought to be initiated into the Quadri Order, of which his grandfather was a member. All unexpectedly he reached another 'milestone' in his Journey, when one day a copy of the Gospel was given to him by a Muslim friend who had himself received it from a Christian.

This then, he reflected, was the Book against which his Muslim mentors had warned him as being spurious, blasphemous, and injurious to p. 117 the faith; a copy of which he had once, in his blind fury, torn to bits! Yet now a secret longing to acquaint himself with its contents overcame his aversion and he began to study it, but warily. The result was dramatic. Far from finding in it anything that could possibly corrupt him, he soon recognized its teaching to be sublime and became convinced that this *Injil*<sup>6</sup> of the Christians was true. There was that in it which spoke to his inmost soul, as nothing else had done, of the deep things of God. But, best of all, he found in the Central Figure there portrayed the object of his heart's secret search.

It was a momentous discovery, but of a nature so revolutionary that he perceived, even then, that it was God's doing. It was the Loving Heavenly Father making himself known to his erring and once proud child.

There was now nothing for it, he must become a Christian. But he was to learn that to make the resolve to take this step was one thing, to put it into effect quite another. To begin with: to whom in that great metropolis should he, could he, disclose his heart's desire? He knew no Christians, had kept himself aloof from them; who now would be his counsellor and friend?

Picture him, then, as day by day he walked the streets of that great city waiting expectantly, hoping that someone would turn up to whom he might open his heart. Was it, for instance, this apparently well-known European, garbed in cassock and girdle, whom grown men followed and children hailed with delight? But no, as it turned out later in an interview, the padre knew no Urdu and Subhan's attempts at English proved incomprehensible. Once he ventured into a Roman Catholic Church while a service was in progress, but his too great curiosity in what he heard and saw was frowned on by the worshippers and he soon left. On another occasion he felt more hopeful on hearing an Indian Christian preacher addressing a crowd in Hindustani at a street corner. The man was urging his hearers to accept Christ as the only Saviour from sin. At the close Subhan made known his desire and was invited by the preacher to his home. That was the first of several visits and the talks they had proved helpful, but he found his friend's tendency to dwell on the one theme of how to meet Muslim objections to Christianity not only boring, but quite unsuited to his need; so he discontinued his visits.

Some compensation for this disappointment now came to him through a more systematic study of the Bible. He had procured a copy in English, with marginal references, and it became his delight to search out Old Testament prophecies that received their fulfilment in Christ. Moreover, he was able to compare and contrast the truths of Christianity as set forth in the New Testament with the distorted form of them current among Muslims. He gratefully acknowledges that all through this period, when he

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<sup>4</sup> One perfect in the Mystic Way.

<sup>5</sup> One who practises magic.

<sup>6</sup> The Gospel.

had no human counsellor to guide him, his Teacher was the Holy Spirit. Such manifestly divine aid enabled him to grasp p. 118 something of the doctrines of the Sonship of Christ and the Trinity, and to see that they are not blasphemous. He was experiencing the fulfilment of Christ's own promise, 'He will guide you into all truth'.

After an interval spent in such study, the guiding hand of God led him one day to the door of the central YMCA building in Calcutta. The door-keeper was distributing handbills about certain lectures to be delivered there and explained, in reply to Subhan's questioning, that the object of the institution was to help people to become Christians. 'Just the place for me,' he thought. On an appointed day he met one of the secretaries, the Rev F.W. Steinthal, of Denmark. This good man, though totally blind, welcomed the visitor and listened with deep interest to his story. Now it so happened that Dr S.M. Zwemer, then on a visit to India, was the one who was to give the advertised series of lectures, commencing that very evening. Once more we see how God was working his purpose out.

The lad understood only a little of that first lecture, but at the close he was introduced as an inquirer. In the course of conversation Dr Zwemer quoted from the opening chapter of the Qur'an the words: 'Guide us in the straight way', and went on to explain how Christ himself is the straight path and the real answer to this oft-repeated prayer of the Muslims. He also quoted Christ's own words, 'No one cometh unto the Father but by me'. The talk made a deep impression on young Subhan's mind and heart, because it encouraged him to believe that God had answered, in him and for him, this very prayer which, while still a Muslim, he had constantly repeated.

There followed a weekly appointment with Mr Steinthal for Bible study. Subhan could have had no more sympathetic and helpful teacher, for Mr Steinthal was a man much given to prayer, and Subhan was never allowed to leave his presence without a period spent on their knees before God. Hitherto, prayer for him had been mostly a matter of ritual, but when Mr Steinthal prayed he seemed to be looking on things unseen and to be speaking heart to heart with God. These new contacts and experiences only increased the lad's longing to become a Christian, but he was told that his baptism could not be considered yet because he was under age.

Once when with Mr Steinthal he was introduced to a visitor. This friend spoke to him on the closing portion of the first chapter of the Gospel of John. He called his particular attention to the fact that Andrew, on finding Jesus, went to tell his brother, Simon; and that Philip had declared to Nathaniel, 'We have found the Messiah'. Then he asked him whether he had been witnessing for Christ, stressing the fact that this is a primary obligation resting on all believers. Here was something entirely new for the young convert, and he was very conscious of the challenge it presented. But he courageously accepted it and was given grace to avail himself of an early opportunity to bear witness.

The very next day on arriving at school he began to speak to his class-mates about Christ, declaring p. 119 his new-found faith in him as his Saviour and Lord. Imagine the consternation! The news spread like wildfire through the assembling boys, and some seniors warned him that unless he retracted what he had said, such nonsense would be knocked out of him. When the class assembled boy after boy stood up and pointing at him, shouted: 'Christian!' 'Christian!' The teacher, taken aback, asked Subhan if it was true, thus giving him the opportunity to declare his faith; and this he had the courage to do. Pandemonium ensued, the boys all shouting: 'Blasphemy!' 'Blasphemy!' The scandalized teachers met and summoned him before them. They put to him question after question intended to shake his faith in Christ, but his answers only confounded them. Discomfited, they lost their temper and hurled curses at him, and he would have been instantly expelled from the school had it not been for the intervention of a non-Muslim teacher and the European Principal. As it was, Subhan left the institution that day, before the classes

finished, bearing on his clothes the marks of the indignities heaped on him by the students. They had spat upon him the red juice of the betel nut they were chewing. But he walked home in a strange exhilaration of spirit, rejoicing that he had been counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.

His father persuaded him to go with him to the school next day that he might find out exactly what his future was to be, and to give this son of his an opportunity to apologize to his Muslim teachers for his audacity in answering them back. The boy was prepared to apologize, should it be proved that he had been rude, but retract any part of his professed faith in Christ he certainly would not!

A surprise, however, awaited the father. The teachers refused to have anything to do with the young apostate, declaring that he was like one possessed and that nothing they could do would avail to bring him back to the fold of Islam. This attitude aroused the father's anger and scorn, and he let them know what he thought of their incompetence as professed teachers of the faith, seeing that they could not deal reasonably with a boy still in his teens.

This painful incident did two things for Subhan. It closed a door behind him; he had finished with Islam, and, though this was not his wish, his former friends were now his foes. On the other hand, he was proclaimed a Christian, and as such entered into the fellowship of those who owned the same Lord.

At this point we may again trace the merciful over-ruling of the Heavenly Father. Dismissed from one school he yet found admission to another, contrary to all expectation. It was the CMS (St Paul's) High School in Calcutta. The rule here was that none but Christian boys were to be admitted; even so, the Principal, the Rev S.D. Hinde, waived the point in the new convert's favour, and out of the kindness of his heart took him in.

The young boy now entered upon a period of supreme happiness. He not only found himself among keen Christian lads of his own age, but was initiated by them into various forms of service which they themselves had planned as part of the [p. 120](#) Christian duty. With them he took part in street-preaching and hospital visiting, rendering such help as he could to the patients.

It was still early days for him at St Paul's when the Principalship was assumed by one who was destined under God to do more for him in his growth in the Christian life than probably anyone else. This was the Rev J.H. Hickinbotham, 'a man of the most saintly character'. That is Subhan's tribute, and this: 'No sacrifice was too great and no suffering too painful for him to bring one individual to the knowledge of his Master. It seemed as if he had a share in his passion to save souls'.

Subhan was to find out during the vacations that his friend was an ideal missionary for work among Muslims. A man of the humblest disposition, he took every possible step to identify himself with the simple folk around him, eating Indian food and wearing Indian clothes. He spoke Bengali with as great fluency as he did English, and always the great longing of his heart was to win Muslims to his Saviour. To that end he laboured and prayed as a loyal ambassador of Christ, specially when in charge of the school at Chapra, in the district of Nadia, East Bengal.

Vacation tours along with other young Christians and in the inspiring company of their beloved Principal, exercised a formative influence in the life of our young friend. He took his full share in the communal life of the students' camp and was even privileged to join in the work of preaching to the simple villagers, although till then he had not been baptized.

Hitherto his desire to take this step had not been gratified, but now he began to plead with Mr Hickinbotham to arrange for it to be done. The latter, made wise by long experience, arranged in his own way to achieve this object. During a vacation he took the



boy with him into the interior, among a colony of Christians, most of whom were converts from Islam. Of that time Subhan writes: 'It was one of the happiest holidays that I have ever spent'; and with good reason, for here were those who had made a like momentous decision, so that he had much in common with them.

On returning to Calcutta, the Principal, well knowing what it would involve, advised him to come and live in the hostel as a boarder. This the lad was quite prepared to do, but the announcement of his plans at home positively shocked his mother. Undeterred, however, he gathered up the few things he required and left home to take up his residence at the school.

That night it was his turn to be surprised. He was called out after dark to the main door and found standing there his dear mother, who had come escorted by another son. It had cost this gentle lady much to risk such publicity, because she was one who practised the strictest *parda*.<sup>7</sup> There she stood, pleading tearfully that her wayward boy should return home. Looking back over the intervening years Subhan declares that he was at this point involved in one of the hardest struggles of his life. Here was no ordinary mother. Time after time he had had p. 121 proof of her boundless love for him; was he now to turn a deaf ear to her pleading? In his extremity the word of his Lord made clear his duty. 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' Nevertheless he told his mother that he would go back if she would allow him to declare himself a Christian. To this she was prepared to agree, provided that he kept the fact of his conversion a close secret from their friends and neighbours. Once again he remembered the Lord's word, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and of the holy angels.' He therefore told her that such a compromise was out of the question. Were he to act in that cowardly fashion he would prove himself to be unworthy of Christ, and less than honourable as her son.

At this juncture Mr Hickinbotham came on the scene and expressed a desire to speak to the mother. That for her was another ordeal, because she had never been face to face with a European. In the course of conversation it became clear that the real cause of her distress was her anxiety lest her son should come to harm while away from her protection.

But a brief talk with the Principal revealed to her the affectionate nature of the man in whose charge her son was to reside. Thus reassured, she not only consented to his residence in the hostel, but promised that no legal steps would be taken to extradite him on the grounds that he was under age; nor, when he should come to be baptized, would any disturbance be created by members of the family or their relatives. In the event this meant much for Subhan, and though, normally, few Muslim mothers would have given such an undertaking and fewer still have had the power to implement it, this lady's influence with her family and friends was so exceptional that she was able to make good her promise.

A load was now lifted from the lad's mind, and the knowledge that no opposition would be made by his own people to his baptism filled him with happiness. Moreover, throughout those days of conflict and tension, his Lord had been teaching him some precious lessons. He would recall his mother's tears and the insistent counter-claim of his Master to his loyalty, and gratefully acknowledge that as he had held on in sheer faith, God had upheld him.

Steps were now taken to gratify his wish. On Monday, July 1st, 1912, in his fifteenth year, he was enrolled as a catechumen, it being arranged that his baptism should take

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<sup>7</sup> Seclusion, and the use of the veil.

place the following Sunday. Now it so happened that, on the preceding Saturday, a Bengali Christian worker from the Nadia District, a friend of Mr Hickinbotham, was in Calcutta and met Subhan. They talked of his forthcoming baptism, and all at once the visitor startled the lad with a stern challenge to his faith. Where was the evidence, he asked, that he was really relying upon God? Was he not putting his trust in the Principal, and counting on the presence of friends and the protection of the hostel? Had he yet been to tell his family and acquaintances the day and time of his baptism? And had he invited *them* to come and witness it? [p. 122](#)

Subhan winced under this interrogation, but once again he accepted the challenge. Off he went, on the spur of the moment, and with sublime courage proclaimed to relatives and friends not only the fact of his new-found faith in Christ, but the time and place of his baptism, adding an invitation to come and witness it.

He was away from the hostel for some hours, going to as many homes as he could in the time at his disposal. Meanwhile his Principal, duly appraised by the Bengali visitor of what had taken place, passed an anxious time, fearing lest the lad should suffer rough treatment at the hands of his friends. Great was his relief when at last the boy returned.

The baptism took place at the school church of Holy Trinity, during evensong. Principal Hickinbotham and one of the Bengali teachers beloved of Subhan, stood as his god-fathers. The church was filled to capacity when the Bengali pastor, in procession led by the choir, walked to the baptistry. There, after making his confession in the words of the Apostles' Creed, the lad was immersed. The name then given to him was John. Following the ceremony the pastor preached an inspiring and memorable sermon, on the words recorded of the apostle Paul after his baptism: 'When he had received food, he was strengthened'.

In common with many another convert from Islam, Subhan was to suffer some disillusionment of his preconceived notions concerning the spiritual life of the members of the Christian community. But whereas others have in consequence lost much of their early fervour, he found in the fellowship of the students and teachers of the school both refreshment and strength. He continued with unabated zeal to take part in the evangelistic activities of the students, and to prosecute his studies in the Bible at the YMCA. Meanwhile his pastor was preparing him for full membership in the church, and he was subsequently confirmed by the Metropolitan, Bishop Copleston.

The course of events in his life now took a new turn. Rather naturally he wished to study the Urdu and Persian languages for his matriculation examination, but no provision was made for these subjects in the curriculum at St Paul's. This, and the fact that he had been in poor health, led to his transfer to St John's School, at Agra.

But Agra was not Calcutta, nor was life in St John's hostel what he had known at St Paul's. He missed, above all, the comradeship of the Christian students' 'Brotherhood'. Fortunately for him the chief Warden of the Agra hostel at that time was Mr Shoran Singha, an Indian gentleman with a real concern for the spiritual welfare of the boarders. To him Subhan unburdened his soul, telling him frankly how he missed the spiritual fellowship with the students such as he had known in Calcutta. Mr Singha listened very sympathetically to what he had to say, as did another friend of the boys, Mr George Ingram, who frequently called in at the hostel to pray with the lads and urge them to make full surrender to Christ. The upshot of their talks was that the three of them resolved to start a Christian Union in the hostel. The [p. 123](#) idea was first broached to a chosen few and these were led to share with the leaders a concern for the salvation of their classmates. Fruitful seasons of prayer followed, leading on to evangelistic services. On one occasion this small group of boys arranged on their own for a team of 'preachers' to accompany the school hockey team when it went for a match up to the famous Hindu city



of Muttra, a place given up to idolatry. While the players were at their game, a smaller team of three took their stand in the crowded market-place and proclaimed the message of God's redeeming love in Christ to a huge crowd of Hindus. They met the expenses of that preaching trip out of their own pockets.

Taking advantage of the keenness created by this adventure, there was inaugurated on the morrow (a month after Subhan's arrival in Agra), the St John's Christian Union. Its first official meeting was held in the Warden's house. New members pledged themselves to devote a certain amount of their time to some form of evangelistic service. There resulted a series of meetings for the deepening of the spiritual life, and regular preaching campaigns followed the services on Sundays. The activities of this Union awoke in the boys a new zeal for Christian life and witness.

Meanwhile Subhan was steadily advancing in the Christian way of life. His devotional study of the Bible and his contacts with senior teachers and friends led him to appreciate more truly the demands of a holy God upon his soul. This was particularly true regarding his conception of sin. As a Muslim he had thought of it as something not essentially evil, but only evil through the arbitrary decree of God. It was an external act, to which was attached a painful result—the pangs of hell. But with his acceptance of Christ and through gazing upon his Cross, his eyes were opened to see what sin is in the sight of God—an affront to his holy love, involving separation from him, and final death.

However, this fuller understanding did not, of itself, exempt him from temptation nor keep him from falling. That victory came to him through increasing experience of the grace of God; the grace that forgives when we repent of our sins, and the grace that avails to keep us from sinning.

Having duly matriculated, Subhan entered upon his studies at St John's College. In this larger world, offering more numerous contacts with members of the Christian community, he found rare friends and wise counsellors in the Rev Norman Tubbs and Canon A.W. Davies, Principals, respectively, of the School and College. Another friendship formed was with Professor Rajendra Chandra Das, who had joined the staff of St John's from Serampore College, Bengal. Under his inspiring leadership the college Christian Union experienced a genuine spiritual revival, and Subhan, as the Union's secretary, was privileged to share in the blessings that followed.

He gives us some interesting information about himself during his time at the college. He became acquainted with the late Dr J.N. Farquhar's comparative study, entitled [p. 124](#) *The Crown of Hinduism*, much in vogue in those days; and the theme suggested to him that a somewhat similar approach might be made to educated Muslims in commending the claims of Christ and Christianity in a friendly spirit.

He wrote at some length about this literary venture to his trusted friend, Mr Steinthal. While the latter appreciated Subhan's concern to break new ground in a friendly approach, and recognized his qualifications as an ex-Muslim for the task, he nevertheless uttered a word of grave caution. Dr Farquhar's title, he said, had been misleading, and so would 'The Crown of Islam' be. Christianity can never be proved to be the 'fulfilment' of Hinduism or any other religion, for 'truth can never be the fulfilment of error'. And later, long after Subhan had come to see that his project was a mistake, this friend had pointedly added: 'The only way to conquer the darkness is by letting in the light'.

But the mischief was done; the first part, 'The Truth of Islam', appeared as a separate volume and received a cordial welcome from the Muslim press. The second, 'The Crown of Islam', in manuscript form, was borrowed by an Indian Christian from another province and never seen again. Very humbly our friend records that his views on this question of approach underwent a radical change and that he came to see that Mr Steinthal's contention was true: truth can never be the fulfilment of error.

Once, on the occasion of the annual convention for the deepening of the spiritual life, the Rev Norman Tubbs arranged for him to join a party of his students at Sialkot, in the Punjab. It was a unique experience for Subhan, because he met there some of the choicest souls in the Christian Church in India. He heard inspiring messages from such men of God as Bishop Brenton Badley, and Sadhu Sundar Singh. 'I felt,' he tells us, 'as if I was privileged to taste some of the joys of fellowship which the saints will have in heaven.'

The Cross had always occupied a central place in his thought about Christ; he loved to dwell on its beauty, meditate on its glory and draw strength from its power. And now, at this convention, he was to be led with a host of fellow-believers to the foot of that same Cross as Bishop Badley presented Christ, crucified for them all. The hallowed influence of that hour remained for years as an incentive to more holy living.

He returned to Agra with a greater desire than ever for a closer walk with God. The college possesses a beautiful little chapel in a crypt and this became for Subhan a sanctuary to which he would retire for meditation and prayer. At the time of a college holiday he sometimes went to Sikandara, five miles distant, to spend the day in solitary reflection on the roof of the mausoleum of Akbar, the Mughal Emperor. On one such visit he had an experience to which he refers in some detail because of the effect it had on him. While wrapt in meditation he had a vision. Raising his eyes to the sky he beheld the figure of Christ upon the Cross. He was strangely moved. He felt as though his heart was on fire and experienced a sensation of 'pain p. 125 mixed with joy'. There ensued a state of ecstasy, but an ecstasy very different from the kind he used to have as a Muslim mystic. He might be said to have been 'caught up', like the apostle of old, and permitted to hear unspeakable things. The experience led him to a new dedication of his life to Christ.

This incident took place at 4 p.m. on 23rd September, 1919, when he was 22 years of age. He remembers the time and date because he made a record of his experiences. It was a time of solemn re-consecration. He then framed for himself these 'commandments':

Thou shalt freely confess Him whenever and wherever an opportunity offers.

Thou shalt feed thyself daily on Him.

Thou shalt retire in solitude to meet Him.

Thou shalt look into His face when the tempter comes to thee.

Thou shalt not do what thou wouldst not like Him to see, or go where thou canst not take Him with thee.

Thou shalt not put thyself in any place, company, sport, or amusement, or read or write any books or papers which even for a moment would drive Him from the centre of thy consciousness or interrupt the light which proceeds from Him towards thy heart.

It is in the fitness of things that this narrative should close with Bishop Subhan's tribute to his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ: 'In accepting Christianity I accepted the leadership of One who is able to change life, and give strength in weakness. He enables me to overcome things which mar and destroy life, and gives peace in my heart and grace to live victoriously, and grants the right of citizenship in Heaven. I find that Christianity is Christ, and that to be a Christian means to live in His fellowship, so that when faced with temptation and assailed on every side by the rising tide of doubts and despair or grief, it is enough to look into His face and yield all to His safe keeping, and He does the rest. My manifold needs are met by His manifold grace.'

'When I look back at the path already traversed in life, I find it strewn with many failures and faults and shortcomings, but it is marvellous how He has sufficed, and how He has made me rise when I fell and has given me strength when I proved to be too weak to walk.'

Yea, through life, death through sorrow and through sinning,

# On the Nature of Islamic Da‘wah

Isma‘il Al-Faruqi

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The Editor

Allah, *subhānahu wa ta‘ālā*, has commanded the Muslim: ‘Call men unto the path of your Lord by wisdom and goodly counsel. Present the cause to them through argument yet more sound’ (Qur’ān 16:125). *Da‘wah* is the fulfilment of this commandment ‘to call men unto the path of Allah’. Besides, it is the effort by the Muslim to enable other men to share and benefit from the supreme vision, the religious truth, which he has appropriated. In this respect it is rationally necessary, for truth wants to be known. It exerts pressure on the knower to share his vision of it with his peers. Since religious truth is not only theoretical, but also axiological and practical, the man of religion is doubly urged to take his discovery to other men. His piety, his virtue and charity impose upon him the obligation to make common the good which has befallen him.

## I DA‘WAH METHODOLOGY

### A Da‘wah is not coercive

‘Calling’ is certainly not coercing. Allah (s.w.t.) has commanded, ‘No coercion in religion’ (2:256). It is an invitation whose objective can be fulfilled only with the free consent of the called. Since the objective is an exercise by the called of his own judgement that Allah is his Creator, Master, Lord and Judge, a forced judgement is a *contradictio in adjecto* and hence punishable with *jahannam*. Humanistic ethic regards coerced *da‘wah* as a grave violation p. 127 of the human person, second only to homicide, if not equal to it. That is why the Holy Qur’ān specified the means of persuasion to be used. ‘Argue the cause with them [the non-Muslims] with the more comely arguments’ (16:125). If they are not convinced, they must be left alone (5:108; 3:176–177; 47:32). Certainly, the Muslim is to try again and never give up that God may guide his fellow-man to the truth. The example of his own life, his commitment of the values he professes, his engagement, constitute his final argument. If the non-Muslim is still not convinced, the Muslim is to rest his case with God. The Prophet himself allowed those Christians who were not convinced by his own presentation of Islam to keep their faith and return home in dignity.