# The Al Islam eGazette

Friday, December 5th, 2008 www.alislam.org

# We did not send Muhammad but as mercy for the whole mankind—Al Quran

Forty five percent of the white voters, two third of the Hispanic and majority of the Afro-Americans voted for Barrack Obama to give him a landslide victory, to become the 44<sup>th</sup> President of USA. We want to join thousands of publications that poured congratulatory notes on this historic victory. He is the first person with African background to lead any Western country in modern times.

As we celebrate this great milestone of human equality and a seismic shift in human relations, let us pause to reflect for a moment, about the greatest son of Adam, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who first gave mankind the vision of human equality.

Every year, during the Hajj, the world witnesses the wonderful spectacle of this international exhibition of Islam in leveling all distinctions of race, color and rank. Not only the Europeans but the Africans, the Arabians, the Persians, the Indians, the Chinese all meet together in Mecca as



members of one divine family, but they are clad in one dress. Thus there remains nothing to differentiate the high from the low and every pilgrim carries home the impression of the international significance of Islam.

Fourteen hundred years before USA elected her first Afro-American President Barack Obama who jokingly described himself a 'mutt' and a similar number of years before Nelson Mandela could be free and the

# Muhammad (saw): Mercy for all mankind

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#### Al Islam eGazette

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The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue. (Arnold Joseph Toynbee) Friday, December 5th, 2008 The Al Islam eGazette



leader of South Africa the Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> said, addressing a historic crowd of a hundred thousand people in the sparsely populated desert peninsula of Arabia, at the time of Hajj, "O men, all of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal. Allah has made you brethren one to another, so be not divided. An Arab has no preference over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; nor is a white one to be preferred to a dark one, nor a dark one to a white one."

Alphonse de Lamartine a French historian, who was also Foreign Minister of France in 1848, writes in his book, *History of Turkey*:

"Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may ask, is there any man greater than he?

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and outstanding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, and empires only. They founded, if any at all, no more than material power which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man merged not only armies, legislation, empires, peoples and

dynasties but millions of men in one third of the inhabited world, and more than that, moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls on the basis of a Book, every letter of which has become law. He created a spiritual nationality of every tongue and of every race." (*Historie de la Turqu*, Vol. II)

The humanity all over the world is coming closer and together, physically and metaphorically with every passing year. With the election of an Afro-American to the world's highest office, it seems that the Western civilization has finally caught up, in some sense with the vision of international brotherhood of the Holy Quran:

O mankind! Be mindful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul (early life forms) and from it created its mate and from the two created and spread many men and women; and be mindful of your duty to Allah, in Whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly in respecting ties of kinship. Indeed, Allah watches over you. (The Holy Quran 4:2)

This election is also finally the fulfilment of the wordings of Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

# **HUMANITY WILL BE BROUGHT TOGETHER**

In Sura Takwir of the Holy Quran, there are several verses predicting the society of the latter days. One of the verses states,

"And when the people are brought together."

The coming together of humanity has several dimensions. Air travel, internet and emails are some of the manifestations and coming together of races in brotherhood to each other is certainly another.



The first family of USA: Barack Hussein Obama, Michelle Obama, Sasha and Malea.



Sarah Hussein Obama (C), grandmother to U.S. President-elect Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), a Muslim by faith, listens to his uncle Said Obama and his stepsister Aoko Auma before addressing a news conference at her home in Nyangoma Kogelo village, 430km (267 miles) west of Kenya's capital Nairobi, November 5, 2008.

A village named Obama in Japan also held special celebrations after the election results were announced on November 4th.

### FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

Fourteen hundred years after the Holy Quran unambiguously declared, "There is no compulsion in religion," USA Presidential campaign was struggling with Islam phobia. A few days before the November 4 elections New York times wrote, nothing in presidential history since 1928 more closely resembles the smearing of Alfred E. Smith, presidential candidate than the aura of anti-Muslim agitation that has swirled around Barack Hussein Obama these past two years.

The insinuations of disloyalty to America, the caricature of the candidate as less than genuinely American — these tactics could have come from the playbook of Smith's basest opponents, the scholars say.

The biggest single difference may be the postmodern aspect of the attacks against Mr. Obama. He was vilified not for the religion he follows but for the one he doesn't, and much of his campaign's energy has gone into reiterating that he is a Christian. Either way, the

Malik the half-brother of US President elect Barack Obama is picked up by friends and family members after Barack's victory in the US election was announced, at the family's homestead in Kogelo village, Kenya, Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2008. The village is where Obama's step-grandmother lives. Barack Obama's Kenyan family erupted in cheers Wednesday, singing "We are going to the White House!" as Obama became the first African-American elected president in the US.



underlying premise of the rumors remains that a Muslim is unfit to be president.

"What is similar in Smith's time is that there was a widespread belief there was something dangerous about electing a Catholic as president," said Allan J. Lichtman, an American University historian who is the author of "Prejudice and the Old Politics: The Presidential Election of 1928." "You couldn't be a good American and serve American interests if you were a Catholic, because you were beholden to a foreign potentate called the pope and Catholicism held autocratic tenets.

"Likewise today, there is a widespread belief that somehow you cannot be a good American and be a Muslim at the same time, that being a Muslim means you have loyalties outside the United States — and, like Catholics in the 1920s, they are dangerous loyalties to militant groups seeking to do harm. There's no truth to the allegations, then or now, but they are tenaciously held."

During the presidential campaign of 1928, a photograph began circulating in rural areas of the Southwest showing Alfred E. Smith shaking hands with a fellow politician on the roadway of a tunnel. The image depicted Smith as he was officially opening the Holland Tunnel, which had been built during his tenure as governor of New York.

The people thousands of miles away who received copies of the picture were given a decidedly different explanation: Smith planned to extend the tunnel under the Atlantic Ocean all the way to the Vatican, so he could take secret orders from the pope. As just about any informed voter that year already knew, Smith was the first Roman Catholic ever to win a major party's presidential nomination.

At the remove of 80 years, it is tempting to laugh off such a crude attempt at fear mongering and character assassination. With Catholics unquestionably part of the American mainstream — one of the most coveted swing groups of voters in the current race for the White House — the misrepresentation of the photo might seem the artifact of a benighted past.

"The most remarkable parallel to 1928 has to do with the idea that Smith was one of 'those people,' that the people he represented weren't real Americans," said Mr. Slayton, a professor of American history at Chapman University in Orange, Calif."

If there is a lesson from Al Smith about all this, then it came during a speech he delivered on Sept. 20, 1928, in Oklahoma City.

"This country, to my way of thinking, cannot be successful if it ever divides on sectarian lines," he declared. "If there are any considerable number of our people that are going to listen to appeals to their passion and to their prejudice, if bigotry and intolerance and their sister vices are going to succeed, it is dangerous for the future life of the Republic. And the best way to kill anything un-American is to drag it out into the open, because anything un-American cannot live in the sunlight."

 $\underline{http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/01/us/politics/01 religion.html?\_r = 2\&fta = y\&oref = slogin\&oref = slogin\&oref$ 

As we discuss the reasons for Islam phobia openly and fairly we will realize that it has no legs to stand on.

The human condition is, as Plato would make Socrates say in the Republic (7.514a ff.), comparable to that of prisoners of an underground cave, whose unfortunate fate is to confuse reality with passing shadows created by a fire inside their miserable abode and

kept in motion by clever manipulators, who in the name of politics, religion, science, and tradition control the human herd. Even today, the West is not allowing Islam a day in the court of public opinion and wants to hide it behind the smoke screen of false propaganda.

It is not easy to stand up for what is right, especially when everyone else is afraid to leave the comfortable path of conformity. But, in his endorsement of President Barack Hussein Obama, Collin Powell also spent several moments discussing the false rumors that Obama is a Muslim, saying he was upset he had even heard the rumors from senior Republicans.

"What if he is? Is there something wrong with being a Muslim in this country?" he asked. "The answer is no." He went onto say, I'm also troubled by, not what Sen. McCain says, but what members of the party say. And it is permitted to be said, such things as, "Well, you know that Mr. Obama is a Muslim." Well, the correct answer is, he is not a Muslim, he's a Christian. He's always been a Christian. But the really right answer is: What if he is? Is there something wrong with being a Muslim in this country? The answer's no, that's not America. Is there something wrong with some 7-year -old Muslim American kid believing that he or she could be president? Yet I have heard senior members of my own party drop the suggestion, "He's a Muslim and he might be associated with terrorists.' This is not the way we should be doing it in America.

Islam is an all inclusive religion. It is a religion for the whole humanity and stands for the rights of each individual, regardless of race, religion, gender or creed. Unlike Christianity it does not even monopolize salvation and repentance. Whereas, Christianity also believe in repentance, but on condition that the person who repents should be a Christian. Islam lays down no condition for repentance. The repentance of the followers of every faith can be accepted leaving out only the sin of denying the Book of God and His Messenger.

Maureen Dawd wrote in NY times, talking about Collins Powell's crossing the party line and endorsing Barack Obama as a Presidential candidate: "But what sent Colin Powell over the edge and made him realize he had to speak out was when he opened his New Yorker three weeks ago and saw a picture of a mother pressing her head against the gravestone of her son, a 20-year-old soldier who had been killed in Iraq. On the headstone were engraved his name, Kareem Rashad Sultan Khan, his awards — the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star — and a crescent and a star to denote his Islamic faith.

'I stared at it for an hour,' he told me. "Who could debate that this kid lying in Arlington with Christian and Jewish and nondenominational buddies was not a fine American?"

Khan was an all-American kid. A 2005 graduate of Southern Regional High School in Manahawkin, N.J., he loved the Dallas Cowboys and playing video games with his 12-year-old stepsister, Aliya.

His obituary in The Star-Ledger of Newark said that he had sent his family back pictures of himself playing soccer with Iraqi children and hugging a smiling young Iraqi boy.

His father said Kareem had been eager to enlist since he was 14 and was outraged by the 9/11 attacks. 'His Muslim faith did not make him not want to go,' Feroze Khan, told The Gannett News Service after his son died. 'He looked at it that he's American and he has a job to do.'

In a gratifying 'have you no sense of decency, Sir and Madam?' moment, Colin Powell went on 'Meet the Press' on Sunday and talked about Khan, and the unseemly ways John McCain and Palin have been polarizing the country to try to get elected. It was a tonic to hear someone push back so clearly on ugly innuendo.

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The former secretary of state has dealt with prejudice in his life, in and out of the Army, and he is keenly aware of how many millions of Muslims around the world are being offended by the slimy tenor of the race against Obama."

# RACIAL EQUALITY AN ISLAMIC VIRTUE NOT A WESTERN VALUE

Arnold Joseph Toynbee (April 14, 1889 – October 22, 1975) was a British historian whose twelve-volume analysis of the rise and fall of civilizations, A Study of History, 1934-1961, was a synthesis of world history, a metahistory based on universal rhythms of rise, flowering and decline, which examined history from a global perspective. He believed that civilizations rose and fell on the basis of their resilience of their ideas and not their military and economic might.

Introduction of Toynbee in Encyclopedia Britannica online states:

"Toynbee began his Study of History in 1922, inspired by seeing Bulgarian peasants wearing fox-skin caps like those described by Herodotus as the headgear of Xerxes' troops. This incident reveals the characteristics that give his work its special quality—his sense of the vast continuity of history and his eye for its pattern, his immense erudition, and his acute observation.

In the Study Toynbee examined the rise and fall of 26 civilizations in the course of human history, and he concluded that they rose by responding successfully to challenges under the leadership of creative minorities composed of elite leaders. Civilizations declined when their leaders stopped responding creatively, and the civilizations then sank owing to the sins of nationalism, militarism, and the tyranny of a despotic minority. Unlike Spengler in his The Decline of the West, Toynbee did not regard the death of a civilization as inevitable, for it may or may not continue to respond to successive challenges. Unlike Karl Marx, he saw history as shaped by spiritual, not economic forces."

< http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/601310/Arnold-Joseph-Toynbee>

Arnold Joseph Toynbee has nailed the issue of racial equality for us in the following words:

"We can, however, discern certain principles of Islam which, if brought to bear on the social life of the new cosmopolitan proletariat, might have important salutary effects on 'the great society' in a nearer future. Two conspicuous sources of danger one psychological and the other material-in the present relations of this cosmopolitan proletariat with the dominant element in our modern Western society are race consciousness and alcohol; and in the struggle with each of these evils the Islamic spirit has a service to render which might prove, if it were accepted, to be of high moral and social value.

The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue; for, although the record of history would seem on the whole to show that race consciousness has been the exception and not the rule in the constant inter-breeding of the human species, it is a fatality of the present situation that this consciousness is felt-and felt strongly-by the very peoples which, in the competition of the last four centuries between several Western powers, have won-at least for the moment-the lion's share of the inheritance of the Earth.

Though in certain other respects the triumph of the English-speaking peoples may be judged, in retrospect, to have been a blessing to mankind, in this perilous matter of race feeling it can hardly be denied that it has been a misfortune. The English-speaking nations that have established themselves in the New World overseas have not, on the whole, been 'good mixers.' They have mostly swept away their primitive predecessors; and, where they have either allowed a primitive population to survive, as in South Africa, or have imported primitive 'man-power' from else-where, as in North America, they have developed the rudiments of that paralyzing institution which in India --where in the course of many centuries it has grown to its full stature-we have learnt to deplore under the name of 'caste.' Moreover, the alternative to extermination or segregation has been exclusion-a policy which averts the danger of internal schism in the life of the community

which practices it, but does so at the price of producing a not less dangerous state of international tension between the excluding and the excluded races-especially when this policy is applied to representatives of alien races who are not primitive but civilized, like the Hindus and Chinese and Japanese. In this respect, then, the triumph of the English-speaking peoples has imposed on mankind a 'race question' which would hardly have arisen, or at least hardly in such an acute form and over so wide an area, if the French, for example, and not the English, had been victorious in the eighteenth-century struggle for the possession of India and North America." (Civilization on Trial, published by Oxford University Press 1948)

Francis Collins, head of the Human Genome Project, writes in his book, the *Language of God*:

"Another striking feature of the human genome comes from the comparison of different members of our own species. At the DNA level, we are all 99.9% identical. That similarity applies regardless of which two individuals from around the world you choose to compare. This

remarkably low genetic diversity distinguishes us from most other species on the planet, where the amount of DNA diversity is ten or sometimes even fifty times greater than our own. An alien visitor sent here to examine life forms on earth might have many interesting



things to say about humankind, but most certainly he would comment on the surprisingly low level of genetic diversity within our species." (Pages 125-126)

Societies that have not had adequate environment could be lacking behind in certain aspects at a given time. But there are no differences in mental faculties among different races to write home about. Matt Ridley, editor of economist magazine, writes in a book titled Genome, "Indeed, the evidence from cases of cross-racial adoption suggests that the average IQs of blacks reared by and among the whites is no different from that of whites." (page 86)

### INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD

August and December 2007 eGazettes and also the January 2008 eGazette were on the topic of racial equality and international brotherhood in Islam please go to the following links to review:

http://www.alislam.org/egazette/

# **HUMAN DIGNITY**

Almost fourteen hundred years before the Geneva Convention, Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, the Prophet of Islam, who was mercy to mankind was setting unparalleled rights for the prisoners of war, who had not only been guilty of an illegal war but were also in extreme violation of basic human rights of the Muslims over a period of 13 years.

Five former U.S. Secretaries of State, both Democrats and Republicans, are calling for the nation's Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba to be closed. They include Colin Powell, who served under George W. Bush, Henry Kissinger, who served under Nixon, James Addison Baker III, who served under George H.W. Bush, and Madeleine Albright and Warren Christopher, who served under Bill Clinton.

All five spoke at a roundtable in Athens, Georgia, recently. Powell said: "Our image abroad has dropped significantly. Perhaps this administration has spoken a little too harshly in a unilateral way," and added, "There are some things the new president can do right away. I hope the new president, and it seems it will be the case, will close Guantanamo immediately. And say to the world that we are now going to go back to our traditional, respected way of dealing with people who have potentially committed crimes."

Kissinger called Guantanamo a "blot on us" and agreed it should be closed. James Baker, who headed the now forgotten Iraq Study Group, declared:

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"It gives us a very, very bad name, not just internationally. I have a great deal of difficulty understanding how we can hold someone, pick someone up, particularly someone who might be an American citizen - even if they were caught somewhere abroad, acting against American interests - and hold them without ever giving them an opportunity to appear before a magistrate."

 $\underline{http://www.nwprogressive.org/weblog/2008/03/its-time-to-close-guantanamo.html}$ 

Most of the populace of USA, amounting to 78% of the voters has come clean by choosing in the post election polls that they believe the country is on the wrong track.

In many cases prisoners of the battle of Badr were released without exchange or ransom as a matter of favor (Al Quran 47:5). Ransom could be very light. After the battle of Badr, it was announced that the ransom of a literate prisoner would be that he should teach Arabic alphabets to ten Muslim children.

The prisoners of Badr, who were seventy in number, were committed to the custody of individual Muslims. Among the prisoners was the Prophet's uncle, Abbas, who generally stood by the Prophet during the days at Mecca. Abbas had been compelled to join the Makkans and to fight the Prophet.

The Prophet Isaiah had spoken again and again of the justice of this Prophet, who had just emerged victorious from a deadly battle. Of this justice, there was a grand demonstration on this occasion. Returning to Medina the Prophet rested for the night on the way. The devoted followers who watched him could see that he turned from side to side and could not sleep. They soon guessed that it was because he heard the groans of his uncle, Abbas, who lay nearby, bound tight as a prisoner of war. They loosened the cord on Abbas. Abbas stopped groaning. The Prophet, no longer disturbed by his groans, went to sleep.

A little later he woke up and wondered why he no longer heard 'Abbas groan. He half thought Abbas had gone into a swoon. But the Companions guarding Abbas told him they had loosened the cord on Abbas to let the Prophet sleep undisturbed. 'No, no,' said the Prophet, 'there must be no injustice. If Abbas is related to me, other prisoners are related to others. Loosen the cords on all of them or tie the cord tight on Abbas also.' The Companions heard this admonition and decided to loosen the cords on all the prisoners, and themselves bear the responsibility for their safe custody.

The Holy Prophet directed that the prisoners should be dealt with gently and their needs and comfort should be looked after. In this connection, Sir William Muir, a Christian missionary has observed in *Life of Muhammad*:

"In pursuance of Muhammad's command, and in accord with the passage [of the Holy Quran] already quoted, the Citizens, and such of the Refugees as had houses of their own, received the prisoners with kindness and consideration. Blessings on men of Medina, said one of these in later days, they made us ride, while they themselves walked on foot; they gave us wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the captives, yielding to these influences, declared themselves Believers, and to such their liberty was at once granted. The rest were kept for ransom. But it was long before Quraish could humble themselves to visit Medina for the purpose. The kindly treatment was thus prolonged, and left a favorable impression on the minds even of those who did not at once go over to Islam."

# NON-MUSLIM WRITERS ABOUT UNIVERSAL VISION OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Prof K. S. Ramakrishna, a Hindu by religion, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Government College for Women University of Mysore had the following to say about Prophet Muhammad's vision and achievements in the field of human equality, "The principles of universal brotherhood and doctrine of the equality of mankind which he proclaimed presents one very great contribution of Mohammad to the social uplift of humanity. All great religions have preached the same doctrine but the prophet of Islam had put this theory into actual practice and its value will be fully recognized, perhaps centuries hence, when international consciousness being awakened, racial prejudices may disappear and greater brotherhood of humanity come into existence."

Miss Sarojini Naidu, the first Indian woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to become the governor of a state in India, who has been dubbed as the Nightingale of India, speaking about human equality in Islam says, "It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy; for in the mosque, when the azan is sounded and the worshippers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim, God alone is great."

The great poetess of India continues, "I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes a man instinctively a brother. When you meet an Egyptian, an Algerian an Indian and a Turk in London, it matters not that Egypt is the motherland of one and India is the motherland of another."

Mahatma Gandhi, in his inimitable style, says, "Some one has said that Europeans in South Africa dread the advent of Islam, Islam that civilized Spain, Islam that took the torch light to Morocco and preached to the world the Gospel of brotherhood. The Europeans of South Africa dread the Advent of Islam. They may claim equality with the white races. They may well dread it, if brotherhood is a sin. If it is equality of colored races then their dread is well founded."

For a more detailed quote from Prof K. S. Ramakrishna, please see: http://www.alislam.org/library/mohammadtheprophet.html

### **EPILOGUE**

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; And We have made you tribes and sub-tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Al Quran 49:14)

Rosa Parks, whose act of civil disobedience in 1955 inspired the modern civil rights movement, died on Monday, the 25th Oct. 2005 in Detroit, Michigan. She was 92. Because they denied Rosa Parks a seat in the front of the bus, today an Afro-American is sitting in the most powerful seat in USA. In Alabama, in 1956.



Rosa Parks sits on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama in 1956

the very same Presidential race

the Muslims were denied the possibility of competing for the office when false allegations were raised that Obama is a Muslim. Assumption being that a Muslim cannot be elected to the highest office. One day destiny will bring the Muslims, who believe in international brotherhood, to the highest offices in politics; as the prophet Muhammad has prophesied, "In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the West."

"This reminds me of one of my favorite American heroines, Harriet Tubman," Senator Hilary Clinton told one of her campaign rallies; she was talking about the brave Afro-American lady who has also titled Moses of her people; Clinton said, "Tubman made it to freedom after having been a slave and she got to New York and she could have been so happy . . . but she kept going back down South to bring other freed

slaves to freedom. And she used to say, 'No matter what happens, keep going,'"

Hillary Clinton continued, "So we're going to keep going until we take back the White House! As Tubman would add,

Keep going...

No matter what happens... keep going.



Rosa Parks De Bus at Detroit Henry Ford Museum

When you hear the dogs in the distance.... keep going.

When you see the lit torches nearby.... keep going.

When voices are calling out behind you in the dark.... keep going."

This is the message for all those who are discriminated on the basis of their color, ethnic back ground, creed or religion. We will keep going until the Islamic vision of international brotherhood is fulfilled in all its dimensions.

In the words of Sir George Bernard Shaw, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925, "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 capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity." At another occasion he said, "I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad, that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today." (Sir George Bernard Shaw in 'The Genuine Islam,' Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936.)

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